
Practical Aspects of Tales (Sadhu Katha): An Analytical Study

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Abstract:

Tales or Sadhu Katha, written in harmony with the child's mental world, plays a significant role in expanding a child's mental horizon. Assam, the land of fairy tales, is quite interesting in this regard. The collection of Assamese Tales is rich in the oral form, and in the collection of books of various tales, etc. These tales are full of morality and entertainment. Almost all children read and listen to tales in their childhood but not all children are aware of its practical aspects. Today's children, on the other hand, are more attracted to TV, mobile phones, etc. than these tales. In this case, the parents have a lot to do. Tales can help a child to develop various qualities like morality, language skills, creativity etc. as well as healthy mental development. In this research paper, we have tried to discuss such important aspects of the practical aspects of Tales.

Key words: Tales, Assamese Tales, Pragmatism of Tales.

Article Received: 16th October, 2020; Article Revised: 30th December, 2020; Article Accepted: 08th January, 2021

0.00 Introductions:

Tales are one of the richest resources of oral literature around the world and one of the most popular branches of children's literature. Written in harmony with the child's psychic world and continued by oral tradition, these tales have played a significant role in expanding the child's mental horizon. That is why people in every country love tales very much. Different people have come up

with different definitions and opinions about these tales, although the simple and palatable meaning of the tale is - the advice of a learned one, whose story can be arranged on the basis of true or false imagination.

Assam, the land of fairy tales, has a lot to offer in this aspect. There are innumerable tales prevalent in the oral culture of the Assamese people. The Tales of Panchatantra, The Tales of Hitopadesha, The Tales of Jatak, etc. are some of these tales which have enriched the rich collection of different kinds of literature of India. These tales have been translated, collected and edited into Assamese language and they play an important role in the childhood of the Assamese children. Among such innumerable books of tales, there are two collections of tales in Assamese which are very popular among the children of Assam - Lakshminath Bezbaroa's 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' and Atul Chandra Hazarika's 'Isapor Sadhu'. Like the books of other tales, the stories contained in

these two books are full of morality and entertainment.

There is no fixed form of tales and its value is not very high in the history of literature. But in anthropology, sociology and practical aspects, its study, discussion and practice are of special importance. Children naturally love to hear the stories, they read and understand these stories but these children are not really aware of its practical aspects. Tales play an important role in the development of a child's morals, language skills, imagination, etc. Contrary to the importance and necessity of tales, today's children find watching TV, mobile phones etc. as more attractive. There is a lot of work to be done by parents to use these tales in the practical direction. Tales have enriched the repository of Assamese literature with its popular and written form. Due to the importance and popularity of the practical side of tales, various children's programs, newspapers and magazines etc. have been formed at present.

0.01: Purpose and Importance of Study:

Tales can make a significant contribution to the healthy mental development of a child. Contemporary mechanical lifestyles have taken the place of the experience and feeling that a child used to have by hearing and reading tales in the past. And this mechanical lifestyle is incapable of grasping the intellectual, mental, and moral resources necessary for the life of the child. For this reason, it is time to rethink the practical significance of the present tales. This is because these tales or stories can hold the necessary intellectual, mental and moral resources for the child. Realizing this great purpose and importance of tales is the

reason why the necessity of a detailed study of the practical aspects of was raised.

0.02: Methods of Study:

The method of study used in this paper is Descriptive method. Both primary and secondary sources will be used for data collection.

0.03: Scope of Study:

This discussion paper is an attempt on understanding the practical aspects of tales based on 6 select stories taken from two Assamese Story books like 'Tejimola', 'Burha-Burhi aru Siyal', 'Siloni Jiyekor Sadhu', from Lakshminath Bezbaroa's "*Burhi Aair Sadhu*", and 'Khorikotiya aru Barundevata', 'Beli aru Botah', 'Lora aru Burhimaak' from Atul Chandra Hazarika's "*Isapor Sadhu*."

1.00: Practical Aspects of Tales:

The practical aspects of tales are mentioned here as the contributions that can be made by tales for the overall development life of the child. Tales are necessary for the development of various fields which includes the moral, mental, intellectual and linguistic knowledge of the child. In addition to such contributions to the mental health of the child, these tales have made a name for themselves in the repository of Assamese language and literature. Attempts have been made at various levels to give these tales a place in Performing Arts, hereby giving it a formal form. Children's Literature, children friendly newspapers, discussions and events etc. have also tried to successfully capture the practical aspect of the present tales.

"There are two kinds of Tales. The first kind is the one which is primarily written to

give moral lessons: like the stories from Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, and La Fontain. The other kind is the one that opens the imaginative prowess of the readers' mind and entertains them, irrespective of their age group, but especially entertains the children's mind." (Bezbaroa, Patani). This means that there is a need for these tales to enrich and develop the moral and imaginative power of the children.

Tales or Sadhu Katha especially helps in the development of children's morality. Most of the time, there is a moral idea, a message behind the tale, which helps in strengthening the moral character of the child, and in the formation of good character. From this it is clear that, "the Assamese people have considered these tales as the advice of the learned one or the Saints from the olden times. It can be clearly understood that the educated and the learned people used these tales to give moral lessons or advice to other people and to their children through oral tradition. That is why it is called Sadhu Katha." (Bezbaroa, Patani). A closer look reveals that almost every tale is full of morality. Although some tales are written for entertainment, in the midst of it one can find morality. For example, 'Tejimola' under 'Burhi Aair Sadhu' can be seen as a tale. In the end, Tejimola was sentenced to death due to extreme cruelty to Mahimak (Step-mother), but Tejimola got back to life because she was on the right path. Despite the pressure of miracles, the principle that truth always prevails is presented here in an artistic manner. In the same way, The 'Kharikatia Aru Barun devata' from "IsaporSadhu" clearly shows that 'Greed is a sin and sin leads to death'. There is a reward, even if it is late, for the one who works selflessly but one who abandons everything for some selfish reason and moves forward will eventually face defeat. Such a message has

been sent through this tale. In the same way, the abuse of power is shown in the tale 'Beli aru Botah' where it gives the message that abuse of power can cause destruction to others as well as oneself. In the end of the tale it is said that,

"Gaat bol thakilei nohoi dangor
Mridu shokotiu pare hobobhoyonkor."

In the same way, the tale "Lora aru Burhimaak" gives the message that too much affection can spoil a kid. The grandmother doesn't stop her grandchild when she finds him stealing for the first time. If she had stopped or punished her grandchild during his first case of stealing, he would have never been hanged to death for poaching. In our society, it is seen that many mothers and fathers immediately satisfy the child without judging the needs and wants of their child. As a result, children are destroyed or spoiled in the name of luxury. This explains the practical value of a tale in the moral development of a child.

Tales are especially helpful in exploring and enriching the child's language repository. The child enjoys reading and listening to the tales, as well as learning the language, without knowing it. One can be introduced to a very special form of Assamese language through these tales. This is because these tales are full of magic tricks, proverbs and sayings. The magical power of the author's language is one of the main reasons why he has been widely admired by the readers of "Burhi Aair Sadhu" for centuries. The language of the tales in this book is in pure Assamese language. The language is beautifully adapted with the situation, environment and characters described in the tales. It is safe to say that similar words and complex syntax are not included in these tales."

(Kotoky, 64) For example, a paragraph is quoted as saying:

“Saudini(The Merchant’s Wife) thought, ‘This is a good opportunity for me. Within these few months I can get rid of my utmost enemy. I will satisfy my mind by harassing her. She also thought, ‘I have to permanently get rid of this one this time or else I will have to give away half of my belongings to her as dowry during her marriage. She is the daughter of my husband’s other wife. I am not blessed with any offspring of my own myself, what is the point of raising this one! The amount of money or property that would be wasted in the name of her marriage can serve my father’s family for ages. And that is why it would be wise to get rid of her before her father comes back.’” Thinking this, the stepmother started to harass Tejimola right from the day the former’s husband and the latter’s father set off for his trip.” (Tejimola, 38)

In this way, every tale of the “*Burhi Aair Sadhu*” is written in a way so that everyone from children to the elderly can enjoy reading them. The Assamese Tales have given an ultimate form to the Assamese Language because these tales are written in pure Assamese contrary to how it is normally narrated in the oral form. Familiarity with this form is essential for the children.

These tales enhance the child's imagination. In the imaginary world of the tales, the child wanders off to an imaginary world and gets immense pleasure and that is one of the greatest accomplishments of these tales. This development of imaginative power in childhood encourages the child to pursue creative endeavors. But sadly, many parents deprive their children of this by using mobile phones and video games and feel supreme pride and relief with this. But every child in

childhood needs to roam in this imaginary realm. This is because it will develop the perceptual capacity of the child and will be curious to know and understand what is being said.

“These tales have been developed primarily to develop the curiosity in children’s minds. It is developed in such a way that the children readers’ mind is imprinted with these tales and no other thoughts come to their minds. The writer’s excellency in his subject matter is expressed in these flawless writings. The writer paves a way for the readers to open their imaginative power and wander in that world. And that is why a human can conceive a cat in these tales and a cat conceives a human girl. A crab and a tiger can work together in the cultivation field, folks marry their child off to a catfish by cutting raw limestone and areca nuts, Champavati is married of to a boa, a frog stays in a human family as a guest, Lord Brahma married his daughter off to a human, tests are done to identify fishes with their gender! Cats, Monkey, Fox, Crows, Tiger, Crab, Cuckoo, Catfish, Eagle etc. all are characters in these tales. These animals, which are part of the nature around us, co-exist and develop friendship with humans in these tales. There are tales with only humans as characters too. Human’s cunningness, their power to take any chance they get and also their presence of mind etc can also be seen in these tales.”(Kotoky, 83)

Tales bring a lot of joy to the child's mind. For example, '*Burhi Aair Sadhu*' includes the '*Burha-Burhi aru Siyal*' tale, where the old woman is talking to the fox, creating various humorous situations through which the child reader can get immense pleasure. Here the moon, the sun, the stars, the trees all can speak. The presence of intellect of the old

woman can also be perceived as humor. Not only this tale but most of the tales are full of humor, for which the child wants to hear it again after hearing the tale once.

The seeds of patriotism germinate in the minds of the children through tales and the children are introduced to the idea of nationalism. This is because the child hears or reads in his mother tongue. Therefore, tales play a special role in exploring patriotism starting from the child's mother tongue. This is because these tales act like the autobiography of any nation. And a child starts exploring its nationality by listening to these tales in their mother tongue. "Every nation and every country has its own language and folklores in their language. Just like any language self-expresses the autobiographical aspects of any nation's national right from its roots, the old tales also self expressed the autobiographical aspects of the olden days in the same way. And just like language covers up all the aspects that form a nation; educated and uneducated, civilized and uncivilized, wise and foolish, all these qualities that are possessed by the people belonging to that nation, in the tales of the olden times all the cultural aspects of the people belonging to that nation, like their behaviors and mannerisms, their rites and policies, thoughts and imaginations, nothing remain untouched. Therefore, in order to know the unwritten ancient history of human life, it is necessary to know "Philology" and "Mythology" as well as "Folklore"."(Bezbaroa, Patani)

Tales increase the concentration capacity of a child. "Tales help in developing the language of school children and children weak in their mother tongue. Listening to the tales on a regular basis increases the child's concentration, expressions of thoughts which

can be expressed in words, the child's ability to participate in conversations and the child even learns to use his thoughts, words and sentences correctly. Even a second language can be easily used by a child to learn a second language. Especially children whose mother tongue is not the same as the medium of instruction can be made to speak and understand the two languages in the medium of tales. (Tamuly, Introduction)

Tales thus help in the mental development of the child in various ways. It should also be noted that these tales have enriched the Assamese language and literature in particular. The development and expansion of the printing industry strengthened the foundation of tales. Along with this, Assamese language and literature also progressed on the path of development.

2.00: Conclusion:

From this discussion it is clear that there is a special need for tales for the mental development of the child. Therefore, keeping in view the practicality of the narration of tales, parents should encourage their children to speak and listen to the tales. In this case, there is a lot to be done by everyone from individual level to national level institutions. We all need to take appropriate action to create a formal environment in which the tale is accepted as a Performing art form. This will increase the practicality of the tale. This is because the practice of tale is still very much in its infancy. In this case, if everyone can take the importance of tales with proper thought and practice, then the children will be able to take the lead in the Assamese language-literature as well as increase their attraction towards tales.

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