



STORYTELLING AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILD'S PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Ansuli Basumatary¹ Dr. Rupashree Hazowary²

1 Ph. D. Research Scholar Dept. of Bodo, Bodoland University, Assam, India.

2 Assistant Professor, Dept. of Bodo, Bodoland University, Assam, India

1.1 Introduction:

The term 'Storytelling' is an inclusive term that includes all the genre of narrative forms such as myth, legend, folktales, anecdotes, fairytales and story which may have been told or printed in verse or prose form. It is one of the oldest human activities that involve both the storyteller and listener. The storytelling activity was practiced by the people of different community throughout the world since the time immemorial. But no community or culture can claim that the storytelling activity was first begun by them. It is difficult to mention that who, where and to whom the first story was told.

The history of storytelling can be trace only after the development of written language. No history was recorded before the written language was come into existence. Anne Pellowski in his book *The World of Storytelling* mentions "the first written description of an action that at least vaguely resembles storytelling appears to be in the Egyptian papyrus known as the west car papyrus, recorded sometimes between the twelfth and eighteenth dynasties (2000-1300 BCE). It describes an encounter between Khufu (Cheops) and his sons."¹

"Know ye a man who can tell me tales of the deeds of magicians? "Then the royal son Khafra stood forth and said "I will tell the majesty a tale of the days of thy forefather Nebka"². Besides the above description Pellowski in his book *The World of Storytelling* mentions several indication and evidences and possibilities of practicing storytelling in the religious scriptures of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian. There are also numerous written documentations of storytelling activity by different schools throughout the world that have been practiced in different period by storytellers, poet, play writes and philosophers. India has a long history of oral tradition. The earliest evidence of storytelling is mention in Rig-Veda recorded in (approx 6000 BC). *Grimm*

¹ Pellowski, Anne: *The World of Storytelling*, published by The H.W. Wilson Company, 1990, P.3

² Ibid., P.4

Brother's fairytales, Aesop's Fable, Jataka Tales, and Panchatantra is the best known collections of today that strongly reflects the existence of storytelling tradition in the later period.

1.2 Aims and Objective:

- a) To highlight the aspects of personality development through storytelling among the children.
- b) To understand the pivotal role of storytelling plays in human development.

1.3 Methodology:

This study employs both analytical and descriptive methods to examine the subject matter.

1.4 Data Collection:

This research relies on secondary data gathered from literature including books, Journals articles and credible internet source.

1.5 Importance of the Study:

An analysis of cultural practices across various ethnic groups worldwide indicates that storytelling has historically played a significant role in their traditions. Its roots can be traced to oral literature, where narratives were transmitted verbally from one generation to the next. Storytelling has served not only as a means of entertainment but also as a form of artistic expression and a vehicle for conveying moral, cultural and social values. Through this practice, both storytelling and listeners engage in a shared experience that contributes to personal and communal identity formation. However, with the increasing dominance of scientific advancement and modern technology many communities are witnessing a gradual erosion of their traditional storytelling customs. Therefore it is crucial to recognize the value of storytelling, ensure its preservation and explore innovative ways to adapt and sustain it within contemporary contexts.

1.6 Discussion:

The origin of storytelling can't be described in a few words. The earliest civilization of human begins in the jungle and caves and it is inevitable to go back to the root to find some indications of origin of storytelling. *Arthur Ransome* in his book *origin of storytelling* attempted to study how story must have developed in a structured narration form. According to him, in the beginning storytelling was not an affair of pen and ink. It began with the warning examples naturally told by mother to her children, and with the 'embroidered exploits' told by a boaster to his wife and friends. The mothers of every generation have known the necessity and effectiveness of warning children against danger by an example in the form of a story, such warning stories must have also been aimed at any member of the community who violated the conventions and traditions of the society. Another form of story narration, 'embroidered exploit' may have originated as a report of hunters encounter with some wild animal. In this form exaggeration was inevitable with every retelling. Many scholars have attempted to find the evidence of earliest storytelling by studying the early

civilization of man. Anne Pellowski mentioned some of the finest concepts of earliest origin of storytelling which can support the others theories of different scholars:

1. That it grow out of playful, self entertainment needs of humans.
2. That it satisfied the need to explain the surrounding physical world.
3. That it comes about because of an intrinsic religious need in humans to honor or propitiate the supernatural force(s) believed to be present in the world.
4. That it evolved from the human need to communicate experience to other humans.
5. That it fulfilled an aesthetic need for beauty, regularity, and form through expressive language and music and body movement.
6. That it stemmed from the desire to record the actions or qualities of once ancestors or leaders, in the hope that this would give them a kind of immortality.
7. That it encoded and preserved the norms of social interaction that a given society lived by.³

The above concepts by Anne Pellowski are sufficient to assume that how the storytelling must have developed among the humans. It can be understood that the origin of storytelling activity was need based rather than simply evolved and was so purposive to accomplish the necessity of man. Whatever the situations of origin of storytelling in due course of time the storytelling activity has turned into a prime medium of Entertainment. Eventually human civilization has transformed in many ways. Scholars have attempted to discover the deeper significance of storytelling in the society. Apart from the entertainment the educational aspects of storytelling cannot be ignored since its inception. The modern scholars' educationist philosophers have analyzed the input of storytelling in the line of character formation, moral teaching, and personality development of the children and so on. Storytelling was one of the important devices of education before the schools were established as of today. It was the only medium to inculcate moral teachings to the children in the past. Children's are always fond of stories. Stories are told by grandparents, parents and other family members in the family. Stories are the alternative source of gathering knowledge. The good stories help the children to develop their personality.

The word personality means a combination of character and the qualities of a person. It refers to an individual's way of thinking behaving, values, self concept and emotional patterns. Personality development of the children differs according to the surroundings they undergo. Different factors such as heredity and environment may matters in the process of personality development of the children. In these circumstances the storytelling serves as a common tool of growing children personality. It can play vital role in enhancing and expanding the Childs personality in many ways such as –

³ Pellowski, Anne: *The World of Storytelling*, published by The H.W. Wilson Company, 1990, pp.10-11

1. Enhance Imagination: Imagination is a process of creating mental image which a person may not have been experience in real. It is also a process how a person can think creatively. It is said that no society can progress without creative person. To be creative one must be able to imagine. Storytelling can be one of the devices that promote the imagination of the children. While listening to the story the mind travels along with the context of the story creating mental image. Different aspects of the story create multiple dimensions to imagine what the story is all about in the useful form in the mind of the children. That is how the capacity of imagination through storytelling can be improved.

2. Problem Solving Skills: Problem is the part of human life. Sometimes human being could not overcome from the obstacles due to lack of ideas. In such situations storytelling can be a guiding force to overcome from the obstacles. The characters of the stories are presented to face many tough situations and they have to overcome from the challenges they are given .The role played by the characters in the story inspires the children and develop the problem solving skills in their real life experiences. Different challenges faced in the characters in the stories allow the children to think critically.

3. Enhance Vocabulary: The more listens the more children learn new vocabulary. Storytelling is a natural way to engage the children in acquiring new words. Through storytelling children are familiarized with abundance of new words, sentence structures and different meanings in the context thus improving communication skill and vocabulary of the children.

4. Cultural Knowledge: Storytelling was the oldest medium of preserving the cultures of once community. Cultural knowledge was transfer from one generation to the other generation through oral tradition. Due to the modernization the youth and children are derailing from their root thus facing crisis the cultural identity. The narratives myths, legends and the folktales carry the cultural and traditional values. Telling and listening of such kind of stories cultivate the cultural knowledge of the children.

5. Moral Boosting: Storytelling is the earliest medium of entertainment and also the tool of communicating moral values in the human civilization. When there was no school as of today storytelling played vital role in educating the illiterate masses in early periods. '*Panchatantra*' is one of the widely known Indian fables that educate illiterate and immoral three son of *King Raja Ravi Verma*. Storytelling provides an ample scope to the children to learn valuable life lessons. The good characters in the story become the role model of the children and they learn essential human values by observing those characters.

6. Strengthen the Memory Power: Memory is a very important part of human in learning, storing and recalling that had happened in the past. It is essential part in the process of learning. While listening to the stories children engaged their brains in remembering the structure of the stories, the incidents, characters and the emotions. The practice of storytelling by the children tends them to recall the context of the stories making them skillful communications and also sharpens the memory.

1.7 Conclusion:

The present study is an effort to understand what storytelling is and the significance of storytelling in Child's personality development. Before analyzing the personality development of storytelling it is inevitable to know about the origin and history of storytelling. The history reveals that no storytelling was recorded before the written language was developed. But it can be assumed that it was practiced since the inception of the human civilization. Several evidences and indications of storytelling were discovered from different sources by the scholars in the later period. Scholars have also put their rational judgment about the origin of the storytelling. Though storytelling was found to be the prime medium of entertainment in the early periods, gradually it was observed and studied in many different ways by the Scholars. The modern scholars have discovered that the storytelling can be the tool of child personality development. The present write up has attempted to present in a very brief manner how storytelling can be an alternative device of man making process. The present education system focused too much on book centered education that lacks creativity. Children can gain life centered education through storytelling. Hence the social significance of storytelling can never be ignored rather it must be popularized among the children as much as it is possible.

References

- Brahma, Dr. K. (2008) *Aspects of Social Customs of the Bodos*, Bina Library, Guwahati, Assam, Reprinted Edition.
- Dorson, R. M. (1982) *Folklore and Folklife an Introduction*, Published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, Paperback edition.
- Endle, Rev. Sidney (2017) *The Kacharis*, Published by Sri Santiranjan Dey, Bina Library, College Hostel Road, Panbazar, Guwahati -1, Assam, First Bina Library edition.
- Fludernik, Monika (2009) *An Introduction to Narratology*, Published by Routledge, 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, OX144RN, Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada.
- Jha, Amit (2016) *Oral Tradition in Ancient India*, Published by Research India Press, E6/34, Sangam Bihar, New Delhi – 110062, First Edition
- Pellowski, Anne (1990) *The world of Storytelling*, Published by The H.W.Wilson Company, 950 University Avenue Bronx, NY 10452.
- Praksh, Swetha (2016) *Indian Storytelling Traditions*, Published by Authorspress, 9-2A Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi – 110016 (India) First Edition.
- Ransome, Arthur (1909) *A History of Story-Telling*, Edited by Arthur Ransome, London: T.C.&E.C. Jack 16 Henrietta street, W.C.
- Thompson, Stith (1946) *The Folktale*, Published by the Dryden Press, New York.