

## **Narrative Techniques of Sudha Murthy and Ruskin Bond in writing Children's Fiction in Indian English Literature.**

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### **Abstract:**

This abstract explores the narrative techniques prevalent in Indian English children's literature, delving into the creative strategies employed by authors to craft compelling and culturally rich stories for young readers. Within the vibrant tapestry of Indian English literature for children, authors skillfully blend indigenous storytelling traditions with contemporary narratives, catering to a diverse audience. One of the distinctive features is the integration of multilayered storytelling, where authors seamlessly interweave folklore, mythology, and contemporary themes, providing young readers with a nuanced understanding of their cultural heritage. Additionally, the use of magical realism, linguistic diversity, and intergenerational storytelling further enriches these narratives, captivating the imagination of children while fostering an appreciation for the linguistic, cultural, and social diversity of India. Through these narrative techniques, Indian English children's literature serves as a powerful medium for nurturing young minds, encouraging them to embrace their cultural roots and fostering a global perspective in the process.

### **Introduction:**

The literature for children in India holds so much importance. The culture of children's literature in India is very deep rooted, tracing back to the Panchatantra by Vishnu Sarma. Its value is multifaceted, benefiting both the culture and society and these stories provide moral and social responsibilities of a person there by enhancing the all-round development. Indian storytelling has a strong tradition of oral storytelling, and this is often reflected in children's literature. Authors use storytelling techniques such as folk tales, fables, and oral narratives to engage young readers.

### **Exploration of the significance of children's literature in India:**

It aids the preservation of cultural heritage. Children's literature is a means of preserving and transmitting the rich cultural heritage of India. It introduces young readers to the country's diverse traditions, languages, and folk tales, ensuring that cultural knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. For example, "Tales and Legends from India" is a work published by Ruskin Bond which introduces us to the myths and legends associated with every nook and corner of our country. These kinds of books draw the readers closer and bring a sense of belonging among them.

Literature written for children especially using our very own themes and stories promotes multilingualism. In a linguistically diverse country like India, children's literature often showcases multiple languages. This promotes linguistic tolerance, encourages bilingualism or multilingualism, and fosters an appreciation for the country's linguistic diversity.

Children's literature helps children develop a sense of cultural identity and pride in their roots. It connects them with their heritage, fostering a stronger understanding of who they are and where they come from. Children's fiction often reflects the diversity of our world. It introduces young readers to different cultures, traditions, and perspectives, fostering empathy and a greater understanding of the world's multifaceted nature. They also increase social awareness among children. Many children's books in India address contemporary social issues in a manner that is accessible and relatable to young readers. This helps in raising awareness, empathy, and a sense of responsibility among the younger generation. Example: In Ruskin Bond's "The Blue Umbrella," the story is set in a small Indian village, providing a vivid portrayal of rural life and culture. It promotes cultural exchange through translations and adaptations, children's literature can bridge cultural gaps and foster international understanding. It allows Indian children to explore stories from around the world and vice versa. Example: "The Puffin Mahabharata" by Namita Gokhale is a retelling of the ancient Indian epic, the Mahabharata, tailored for young readers, introducing them to Indian mythology.

Children's literature serves as an essential tool in promoting literacy and a love for reading from a young age. Reading children's fiction exposes kids to a richer and more varied vocabulary than they might encounter in everyday conversation. This exposure helps expand their language skills, improves their understanding of sentence structure, and enhances their communication abilities. It lays the foundation for lifelong learning and critical thinking skills. It encourages empowerment and Inclusivity. Diverse characters and stories in children's literature promote inclusivity, and often, they offer strong role models for children. This can empower children, irrespective of their gender, background, or abilities. It enhances imagination and creativity. Reading imaginative and creative stories stimulates a child's own creativity and imagination. It encourages them to think beyond the ordinary and to dream big. Developing a love for reading at an early age is a lifelong gift. Children's fiction can be the starting point for a lifelong habit of reading for pleasure, which can bring joy, knowledge, and personal enrichment. Engaging with children's fiction encourages critical thinking and problem-solving. Readers are often presented with dilemmas and challenges in the stories, which prompt them to analyze situations, consider consequences, and make judgments. Children's literature plays a vital role in cognitive development by enhancing vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. It introduces young minds to different perspectives and worldviews.

The literature for children in India injects moral and ethical values. Many children's stories impart moral and ethical lessons through engaging narratives. These lessons provide a foundation for children to develop a sense of right and wrong. Authors use storytelling techniques to convey these lessons through allegory and character development. They teach important values such as honesty, kindness, empathy, and the importance of making good choices. It also helps in increasing emotional development: Fiction allows children to connect with characters and empathize with their experiences and emotions. This emotional engagement helps them develop social and emotional intelligence, allowing them to better understand and manage their own feelings and those of others. Children's fiction often portrays characters who face various life challenges. These stories can serve as valuable examples of how to cope with difficulties, deal with adversity, and find solutions to problems.

Reading children's books together can strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories. It encourages parents and caregivers to engage with their children, fostering emotional connections. Above all, children's literature is a source of entertainment and enjoyment. It encourages a love for storytelling and reading for pleasure, which is a lifelong source of joy and intellectual stimulation. Reading fiction can expand a child's horizons and expose them to a wide range of experiences and ideas. This broad knowledge base prepares them to be informed, open-minded, and adaptable individuals in a rapidly changing world. Many children's books feature characters who overcome challenges, achieve their goals, and make a positive impact. These characters can serve as role models for young readers, inspiring them to aspire to greatness and work toward their dreams. Example: "Swami and Friends" by R.K. Narayan follows the adventures of a young boy named Swami, capturing the challenges and joys of growing up in pre-independence India.

children's literature is a powerful tool for nurturing cultural awareness, education, empathy, creativity, and personal development. In a diverse and culturally rich country like India, it holds a unique role in helping children understand their cultural identity, appreciate their heritage, and prepare for a more inclusive and informed future. It adds immense value not only to the individual child's development but also to the broader culture and society. Additionally, the enjoyment and enrichment gained from children's fiction can have a lasting positive influence throughout a person's life.

### **Narrative techniques of children's fiction in Indian English Literature:**

Narrative techniques in children's fiction of Indian English literature are diverse and multifaceted. They are used to engage young readers, convey cultural nuances, and often incorporate elements from Indian folklore, mythology, and everyday life. Here are some key narrative techniques commonly employed in Indian English children's literature:

**Cultural Context:** Indian children's literature often incorporates elements of Indian culture, traditions, and values. Authors use narrative techniques to introduce young readers to Indian festivals, rituals, and customs, providing a rich cultural backdrop.

**Oral Tradition:** Indian storytelling has a strong tradition of oral storytelling, and this is often reflected in children's literature. Authors use storytelling techniques such as folk tales, fables, and oral narratives to engage young readers.

**Mythology and Folklore:** Indian mythology, with its vast pantheon of gods and goddesses, epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and a wide range of folk stories, are frequently used as a narrative backdrop. These tales are retold in a way that is accessible to children.

**Multilingual Narrative:** India is a linguistically diverse country with numerous languages and dialects. Authors often use multilingual narratives, incorporating words or phrases from different Indian languages, to provide authenticity and expose young readers to linguistic diversity.

**Magical Realism:** Many Indian children's authors use elements of magical realism, where fantastical elements seamlessly blend with the real world. This allows for imaginative storytelling and often incorporates elements of Indian folklore and mythology. Example: Salman Rushdie's "Haroun and the Sea of Stories" blends reality and fantasy, incorporating magical elements to tell the story of a young boy's adventure in a fantastical world.

**Coming-of-Age Narratives:** Stories often focus on the growth and development of the protagonist. The narrative techniques used help young readers relate to the challenges and experiences of the characters as they navigate the transition from childhood to adolescence.

**Moral Lessons:** Indian children's literature often imparts moral and ethical lessons. Authors use storytelling techniques to convey these lessons through allegory and character development.

**Social Issues:** Indian children's literature also addresses contemporary social issues, such as gender equality, poverty, and environmental concerns. Narrative techniques are used to make these issues accessible to young readers and encourage critical thinking.

**Humor:** Humor is a prevalent narrative technique in Indian children's literature. Authors use witty dialogue, situational comedy, and humorous characters to engage and entertain young readers.

**Regional Diversity:** India's vast geographical and cultural diversity is reflected in children's literature. Authors use narrative techniques to transport readers to different regions of the country, showcasing the uniqueness of each place. Example: "Tiger by the Tail and Other Stories from the Heart of India" by Puffin Books presents tales from different regions of India, showcasing the country's diversity in culture and traditions.

**Child-Centric Perspective:** Narratives often adopt a child's perspective, making it relatable and appealing to young readers. This allows them to connect with the characters and their experiences.

**Illustrations:** Visual storytelling is integral to children's literature. Vibrant and culturally rich illustrations complement the text, helping children visualize the story and its cultural elements.

**Interactive Elements:** Some children's books incorporate interactive elements like puzzles, activities, and riddles to engage young readers and encourage their participation.

Indian English children's literature employs a wide array of narrative techniques to engage, educate, and entertain young readers while also introducing them to the diverse and culturally rich landscape of India. These techniques are designed to create memorable and enriching reading experiences for children.

### **Narrative style of Sudha Murthy:**

Sudha Murthy is a renowned Indian author. Sudha Murthy, born in 1950 in Shiggaon, Karnataka, is an accomplished writer, philanthropist, and the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation. She has written extensively for children, crafting stories that promote ethical and moral values while celebrating the diversity of Indian culture. She is known for her children's fiction, and she has a distinct narrative style and technique that make her books appealing to young readers. Sudha Murthy's writing is characterized by its simplicity. She uses straightforward and easy-to-understand language that is accessible to young readers. Her narrative style ensures that children can comprehend the story without difficulty. Another notable feature of her writings is realism and relatability. Many of her stories are set in everyday settings, making them relatable to children. She often explores themes that resonate with young readers, such as school life, family, friendships, and common challenges faced by children.

“Quantitatively speaking, 'conversation' is inversely proportional to economic standing. If you are traveling in a bus, your fellow passengers will get into a conversation with you very quickly and without any reservation. If you are traveling by first class on a train, people will be more reserved. If you are traveling by air, then the likely hood of getting into a conversation is quite small. If you are in

first class on an international flight, then you may travel 24 hours without exchanging a single word with the person sitting next to you.”

— **SudhaMurthy, Wise and Otherwise**

Sudha Murthy's children's fiction often imparts valuable moral and ethical lessons. Her narratives are designed to convey these lessons subtly through the experiences of the characters. Children can learn important values like honesty, kindness, and empathy through her stories.

“Life is an exam where the syllabus is unknown and question papers are not set. Nor are there model answer papers.”

— Sudha Murthy, *Wise and Otherwise*.

Her books typically feature a diverse range of characters representing different backgrounds and cultures. This diversity reflects the multicultural nature of India and helps children learn about and appreciate various perspectives. Sudha Murthy's stories are not limited to a single genre. She explores a wide range of themes, from adventure and mystery to historical fiction and mythology. This multifaceted storytelling keeps young readers engaged and offers them a variety of reading experiences. Many of her books incorporate elements of Indian culture, traditions, and festivals. She weaves these aspects into the narrative to introduce young readers to India's rich cultural heritage.

“Suddenly Yudhisthira saw a yaksha approaching him. The being sat in front of him and began firing questions rapidly at him.

What is bigger than the Earth? theyaksha asked.

"A mother" replied Yudhisthira.

What is taller than the sky?

"A father"

What is faster than the wind?

"The mind, of course". Yudhisthira smiled.

What grows faster than hay?

"Worry"

What is the greatest dharma in the world? queried the yaksha

"Compassion and conscience"

With who is friendship never-ending?

"With good people" responded Yudhisthira patiently.

What is the secret to never feeling unhappy?

"If one can control his or her mind, then that person will never feel sad"

The yaksha increase his pace now.

What is the greatest kind of wealth.

"Education"

What is the greatest kind of profit?

"Health"

What is the greatest kind of happiness?

"Contentment" said Yudhisthira, ever prompt with his replies.

What is man's worst enemy?

"Anger"

What disease will never have a cure?

"Greed is incurable"

The yaksha smiled again. A last question my friend. What is life's biggest irony?

"It is the desire to live eternally. Every day, we encounter people dying but we always think that death will never come to us."

— SudhaMurthy, *The Serpent's Revenge: The Unusual Tales from the Mahabharata*

**Character Development:** Murthy pays attention to the development of her characters. Readers witness the growth and transformation of the protagonists as they navigate challenges and make important life choices.

Some of her books are narrated from a child's first-person perspective, allowing readers to directly connect with the protagonist's thoughts and feelings. This style enhances the reader's engagement with the story. Sudha Murthy often writes collections of short stories for children. This format is well-suited for young readers who may prefer shorter, self-contained narratives. Each story within the collection explores different themes and situations. Many of her children's books include illustrations that complement the text. These visuals help young readers visualize the characters, settings, and events in the story.

Notable examples of Sudha Murthy's children's fiction include "How I Taught My Grandmother to Read," "The Magic Drum and Other Favorite Stories," and "The Upside-Down King," among others. Sudha Murthy's narrative style and technique are centered on making her stories accessible, relatable, and educational for young readers. Her works often encourage them to embrace values and learn about the diverse culture of India while enjoying engaging and heartwarming tales.

### **Narrative style of Ruskin Bond:**

Ruskin Bond, a prolific and beloved Indian author, born in 1934 in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, is one of India's most beloved authors for children. He has been writing for several decades and has authored numerous books for children and young adults. Bond has been recognized with various awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award. He is a literary icon known for his enchanting tales that transport readers into the heart of the Himalayas and beyond. With a writing career spanning several decades, Bond has established himself as a master storyteller, capturing the essence of nature, human relationships, and the everyday magic of life. His works, often set against the backdrop of the picturesque landscapes of Northern India, have a timeless quality, weaving together the simplicity of rural existence with profound wisdom and a deep appreciation for the beauty of the world. Ruskin Bond's literary contributions have endeared him to readers of all ages, making him one of India's most cherished authors.

Ruskin Bond's writing is characterized by its simplicity and clarity. He uses straightforward language that is accessible to young readers. This simplicity allows readers to immerse themselves in the story without encountering linguistic barriers. Bond's narratives are enriched with vivid descriptions of the natural beauty of the Himalayas and the small-town life of India. He paints a detailed and evocative picture of the settings, which enhances the reader's immersion in the story.

"But the trees seemed to know me. They whispered among themselves and beckoned me nearer. And looking around, I noticed the other small trees and wild plants and grasses had sprung up under the protection of the trees we had placed there.

The trees had multiplied! They were moving. In one small corner of the world, Grandfather's dream was coming true, and the trees were moving again."

— **Ruskin Bond, Rusty: the Boy from the Hills**

Many of his stories are set in everyday settings, often in the backdrop of the Himalayas or small Indian towns. These familiar settings make his stories relatable to both Indian and international readers. The Himalayas, particularly Mussoorie and Dehradun, often serve as a prominent backdrop in his stories. Bond's strong sense of place is a hallmark of his work. Readers can feel the atmosphere and surroundings, almost as if they are physically present in the story. Deep Connection to Nature: Bond's narratives frequently highlight the author's deep connection to nature. His love for the natural world is evident in the way he weaves descriptions of the environment and wildlife into his stories. This theme often imparts valuable lessons about environmental conservation to young readers.

"It is always the same with mountains. Once you have lived with them for any length of time, you belong to them. There is now escape."

-- Ruskin Bond, Rain in the Mountains: Notes from The Himalayas

His characters, often children or young adults, are relatable and face common challenges and joys, making them easy for young readers to connect with. These characters often have a sense of innocence and curiosity. Many of Bond's stories are coming-of-age narratives, where young protagonists undergo personal growth and self-discovery. The challenges and adventures they experience resonate with the experiences of young readers. Bond's stories often convey moral and ethical lessons subtly. Young readers can learn valuable life lessons, including the importance of kindness, friendship, and empathy.

His works explore a range of themes, from adventure and mystery to friendship and the magic of storytelling. This variety keeps readers engaged and provides a diverse reading experience. Humor and Wit: Bond often infuses humor and wit into his stories, making them enjoyable for both children and adults. The humor adds a light-hearted quality to the narratives. Notable works by Ruskin Bond in children's literature include "The Blue Umbrella," "Rusty, the Boy from the Hills," "A Flight of Pigeons," and "The Room on the Roof." His narratives have an enduring charm and continue to captivate young readers, fostering a love for literature and an appreciation for the natural world.

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