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Role of Children's Magazines in Promoting Children's Literature in Sindh: An Analysis of Selected Magazines from 1947 To 2020

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Abstract: Wordsworth a renowned English romantic poet calls a child a father of man. Children of today are the citizens of tomorrow. Literature plays a pivotal role in shaping human personality and moulding human beings into responsible beings. For shaping thinking, ideology, personality and literary as well as the psychological development of the child, Children's literature plays a very significant role. Though Children's Literature is a much-neglected field, in Sindhi Language this field has remained a very important and popular area of literature. A large number of writers, who are prominent writers of today, had started their careers as children's writers. In promoting children's literature, Children's Magazines play a very important role. The current study which is qualitative in nature discusses the role of some selected children's magazines published in Sindh in the Sindhi language from 1947 to 2020 and presents a conclusion that how these magazines were the befitting platforms of literary development for young writers.

Key Words: Children's Literature, Children's Magazine, Sindhi Literature, Young writers

Introduction

Children are indeed the beauty of the world. They symbolize purity and innocence. They ensure the continuity of humanity as Tagore puts it eloquently that the presence of children suggests that God still believes in humanity. William Wordsworth calls the child the father of the man. This suggests that children are indeed the future of the nation. To invest properly in children is in fact investing in

national integrity and a bright future (Gul, 1996).

Literature plays a pivotal role in shaping human personality and moulding human beings into responsible beings. For shaping the thinking, ideology, and personality development of a child, children's literature plays a very significant role. Throughout the world, children's literature occupies a very important place in the study of literature. For

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children literature is taken as the foundation of everyday literary studies (Reynolds, [2011](#)).

Reynolds (2011) defines children's literature as the literary material written either by children or adults but to be read by children and young people for learning, fun, pleasure or aesthetic purpose.

Children's literature encompasses everything from folk and fairy tales, myths, legends, ballads, nursery rhymes, fiction, mystery, fantasy and even computer games. Children's literature shapes the thinking of children and their understanding of the world. Gul (1996) writes that children require special attention and along with their physical nourishment, their mental and psychological development is also mandatory. In order to achieve the mental and psychological upbringing of children and to help them grow into mature and responsible citizen; children's literature need to be promoted and patronized. Moreover, children's literature also contributes to the richness of any languages in which it is produced.

Renowned Sindhi scholar Babani ([1980](#)) adds that children are the future of any nation and in order to make our future bright, enlightened and befitting, these children need to be brought up well, educated well and equipped with a better understanding of life. All this can be easily achieved through the promotion of children's literature. He further adds that though children's literature seems a simple attempt, it always requires more maturity, extra care and added effort to produce it. That is why in every aspect, children's literature enjoys superiority over all other forms of literature. Children's literature is the foundation stone of nation-building.

Pathan ([1979](#)) states that there is no denying the significance of children's literature and every piece of writing addressing the interest of children can be included in children's literature regardless of the age of the writer. But when we discuss the importance and significance of children's literature, we must keep in mind the efficacy and use of those literary pieces that help in grooming children's

personalities, character development and solid foundation of their understanding of life. Keeping in mind the discursive tending of the modern world, it is the responsibility of every writer to produce such works that may guide the young generation to a better understanding of life and instead of creating confusion among them, nurture a better and enlightened view of life for them.

Commenting on the state of Children's literature in Sindh, the renowned poet Adal Soomro states "Generally pure children's literature is an ignored area of literature throughout the world. But in Sindh, it is more ignored for the majority of renowned writers in Sindh hesitate in writing for

children owing to various reasons. They feel as if their future as a writer would reduce if they write for children" (Soomro, [1984](#)). The claim of Adal Soomro is also endorsed by Ayaz Gul in his article (Gul, 1996) with the addition that around the world highly renowned literary figures including William Wordsworth, William Blake, Rabindranath Tagore, Chandra Chatterji, Mirza Kaleech Baig, Kishnchand Bewas, Gujrati writer Gaju Bhai, Adal Soomro, Ayaz Gul and Tariq Qureshi, have excessively contributed in children literature. In children's literature, Children's magazines play a very important role as a platform for budding writers. In Sindh, a large number of renowned writers had started their literary careers as regular contributors to Children's Magazines.

Role Of Children's Magazines

Throughout the world, Children's Magazines are considered the best platform for Children's literature. These magazines don't only suffice the need for children's literature but also act as tools of learning and classroom aids. These magazines offer rich language beautiful and colourful art work along with a multitude of literary texts of different genres to help students learn various skills, innovative ideas, new concepts and diverse topics for learning along with fun, pleasure and entertainment.

Along with learning and reading, these children's Magazines offer a variety of writing opportunities. Thus, Gagliardi ([2022](#)) describes

these magazines as a springboard for writing. Teachers use these magazines to promote writing skills among students where students create their own poems and short stories, nonfiction, experience sharing and short travelogues after being inspired by the senior writers.

Crippen (2012) believes that children must be given access to all varieties of literature for it helps them to be successful individuals. She encourages educators, parents and community members to help students develop a love and passion for reading and this could be achieved through their access to literary magazines, especially children's magazines.

Bonna Norton (2010) identifies the significance and value of children's literature and literary magazines by saying that children's literature not only provides students with the opportunity to respond to literature but also appraises them of the appreciation of their own cultural heritage along with knowledge of other cultures. Moreover, through children's magazines the students

develop their emotional intelligence and creativity that finally contribute to their personality development.

Dutta (2020) asserts that children's magazines play a significant role in developing children's literature for they provide knowledge according to the need, age and level of children. Their topics vary from character building to existing scenarios of society, superstition, everyday life affairs, politics, economics and other cultural constructs. Researching the role of magazines in Assamese children's literature, he concludes that these magazines keep students informed about their surroundings and information about foreign countries. These magazines inspire children to read more and enhance their understanding of life.

Azad (2016) highlights that in Sindh, children are inspired and engaged in literary pursuits through children's magazines and periodicals for they keep them updated and informed about literary pursuits, reading habits, writing opportunities, information

about their culture, history and civilization and above all busy in constructive activities. "Children prefer to read Magazines and periodicals over books because these magazines provide them with stories, poems, comics, information and other interesting reading material in a single volume. Moreover; these magazines and periodicals offer them opportunities for publication as well. Thus the children associate long-term affiliation with these magazines" (Azad, 2016, P.17). These magazines and periodicals act as nurseries of children's literature. All great writers and future literary stars begin their literary careers from these magazines and periodicals.

Brief Review Of Sindhi Children's Magazines Before 1947

The British did a great favour to Sindhi literature when they finalized the Sindhi alphabet with Arabic manuscripts in 1853 (Mallah, 2018). This brought a literary revolution as a large number of books, both in creative work, and translations started to be published. In this era, a large number of books were published for children as well. But the credit of the first Sindhi Children Magazine goes to "Hopeful Academy Magazine" published in May 1914 by Hopeful Academy School Shikarpur which is now known as Govt. High School No. 02 Shikarpur. This was in fact a school magazine which was published biannually. This Magazine was bi-lingual as well for it was published in Sindhi and English language.

In 1925, the Koro Mall Literary Society (Koro Mal Sahitiya Mandul) initiated a three monthly Children's Magazine "Gulistan". Some of its editions were published from Sukkur as well. In

1930 two children's Magazines started their publication in Sindh named "Gulzar" and "Balak" Hakro (2009) praises the quality and importance of the Magazine "Balak" in his valuable treatise "The Contribution of Shikarpur in Sindhi Literature", and adds that it was a unique literary Magazine that attracted a large number of readers and inspired many young writers to write and get published. Thus

before the creation of Pakistan quality children's literature was published through these children's magazines.

The most important children's Magazine of this era was the Monthly "Gulistan" published in Karachi in 1933. This magazine also initiated its literary forum "Balkan Ji Bari" (Fertile Patches of Children) and opened its branches throughout Sindh. This magazine systematically encouraged children to read and write literature and it included stories, poems, comics, General Knowledge section essays,

games, riddles and much more.

Azad (2016) reports that about 15 children's magazines were published in Sindhi before the partition of Pakistan. Most of them were owned and edited by Hindu writers and the partition brought a heavy blow to this trend of publication. But very soon Sindhi scholars and intellectuals resumed their literary activities with a new spirit in Sindh and since then a new era of Sindhi literature begins. Details of Children Magazine published in Sindh before partition.

Table 1

Names	Frequency	City
1. Hopeful Academy Magaz	(Bi-Annual)	Shikarpur
2. Gulsitan	(Quarterly)	Hyderabad
3. Gulzar	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
4. Balak	(Monthly)	Shikarpur
5. Gulistan	(Monthly)	Karachi
6. Sadharshan	(Monthly)	Karachi
7. Pushp	(Monthly)	Dadu
8. Moj	(Monthly)	Shikarpur
9. Baranion Bolion	(Fortnightly)	Karachi
10. Gul Phul	(Monthly)	Karachi
11. Dilbahar	(Monthly)	Hyderabad

Analysis Of Sindhi Children Magazine in Sindh (1947 TO 2020)

The partition of India and the subsequent migration of Hindu writers, authors and publishers brought colossal damage to Sindhi literature. All the leading children's Magazines in Sindh were owned by Hindus except the Monthly "Gulzar" and they ceased to exist resulting in heavy loss to the cause of Children's literature in Sindh (Azad, 2016). However, with the rapid growth of literature in the post-partition era, the publication of children's literary Magazines in Sindh revived with the publication of the Monthly "Gulistan" from Hyderabad in 1951. This time The Monthly "Gulistan" was initiated by two brothers from Hyderabad Ghulam Murtaza Bhatti and Maqbool Ahmed Bhatti. Thus the platform of Children's Magazine was restored

in Sindh.

"Monthly Gulistan" continued its publications till 1960 and was approved by the Education Department in Sindh. However, in 1959, the Government of Sindh made a great decision of publishing a fully-fledged literary Magazine for children through the "Sindhi Adabi Board" entitled "Gul Phull". The project of "Gul Phull" was patronized by renowned Sindhi Scholar Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo and Ghulam Rabbani Agro the Ex-Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters became its first editor. "Gul Phul" still gets published with little sporadic closures. "Gul Phul" was stopped from publication for seven years from 1966 to 1973. But in 1974 it was restored under the editorship of renowned literary figure Shoukat Hussain Shoro. In his first editorial of "Gul Phul" Shoro (1974) writes:

"The Publication of "Gul Phul" was initiated in 1959 by Sindhi Adabi Board to fill in the gap in Children's literature in Sindh. The Magazine served as the platform for budding writers and won great popularity and success in Sindh. However; the dictatorial regime of Ayoob Khan brought adverse impacts on Sindhi literature and "Gul Phul" also fell victim to these policies and its circulation was stopped in 1966. Since then a huge gap has been created in children's literature in Sindh. This loss has been irreparable. However; the republishing of "Gul Phul" has revived the hope of the revival of children's literature in Sindh. Our aim is to encourage young writers to give their best in creative faculties and hopefully, this platform would bring quality children's literature to Sindh. In this great project along with children, we need the cooperation of senior writers as well. These senior writers will help young writers as mentors, guides and inspirations. These young writers have to emerge as the leading writers of the future. This is a very sensitive project and our little negligence in this may create an adverse impact on our future".

Thus "Gul Phul" sufficed the need for children's literature in Sindh but it was supplemented with other children's Magazines as well. In 1973 two children's Magazines were initiated from Mirpur Khas and Hyderabad entitled "Itfal" and "Gounch" respectively but they could not last long. In 1975, "Surhan" was initiated from Sehwan patronized by renowned poet Ustad Bukhari and edited by Parwano Sehmani. More than 100 issues of this magazine were published and attained huge success.

In 1978, monthly "Sathi" was issued but was soon stopped after Martia Law. Mahesh Maleerai (Mahesh Kumar) was its first editor. In 1982 this magazine was renamed as "Sathi Samachar".

In 1980 monthly "Balak" started its publication under the editorship of Niaz Panhwar who is editing the renowned Sindhi Daily Kawish these days. This magazine was later merged into the Monthly "Nao Niyapo". From 1989 to 1996 Monthly "Murk" was published

from Karachi under the patronage of Sikandar Sarwan.

In 1987, renowned journalist and a popular writer in Children's literature Asrar Shiam started the publication of "Sindhi Barira". This magazine became very popular among Sindhi children.

The decades from 1990 to 2000 and from 2000 to 2010 witnessed a huge surge in the publication of children's literary magazines in Sindh. From 1990 to 2000 there were about 40 magazines published in Sindh. These magazines were fortnightly, Monthly, and quarterly. In 1993 two leading Sindhi dailies "Ibrat" and "Kawish" started the publication of children's magazines namely "Irchik Mirchik" and "Barran jo Sindh Rang". As these magazines were associated with leading newspapers, they were easily available at every newspaper stall in Sindh.

In the decade 2001 to 2010, about 30 children's magazines were published in Sindh from various parts. From 2010 to 2020, this number is reduced to half. The arrival of technology and lack of interest in children's literature has adversely affected the publication of these magazines.

The publication of such a large number of children's magazines in Sindh shows that there has been no dearth of children's literature in this part of the world. These magazines helped young writers to compose poetry, write short stories, and express travelogues and translations from world literature. Young writers used to compose school reports, their recreational stories, success stories and their understanding of the world, politics, religion, everyday experiences etc and got them published. The regular contributors to these children's magazines in those yore days are the renowned literary figures of Sindh. All the leading poets, writers and authors of today's Sindh were regular contributors to these magazines. To name a few among them Adal Soomro, Ayaz Gul, Mukhtiar Malik, Mahar Khadim, Amar Iqbal, Niaz Panhwar, Zahid Shaikh, Zulfiqar Siyal, Mehboob Ali Golo, Ishaque Samejo, Rasheed Shaikh, Malhar Sindhi, Masood Lodhar, Altaf Malkani, Yasir

Qazi, Khalid Azad, Naseer Mirza and many others initiated literary careers while contributing in these magazines especially in “Gul Phul”. Thus, these literary magazines are the foundation stones of literary activities. They not only helped young writers to develop their literary taste but also helped millions of children to be good readers. Sindhi literature is very rich in all genres in comparison with other regional literatures

in Pakistan and the credit goes to these children’s magazines which acted as the nurseries of literary activities. The vast number of publications and large number of circulations of these children’s magazines in Sindh suggest that Sindhi children read these magazines with enthusiasm along with their academic pursuits.

Table 2

Detail Of Children’s Magazines Published in Sindhi From 1947 to 2020

Names	Frequency	City
1. Gulistan	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
2. Gul Phul	(Monthly)	Jamshoro
3. Itifal	(Series)	Mirpurkhas
4. Gulan Jehra Barira	(Monthly)	Karachi
5. Surhan	(Series)	Sehwan
6. Gonj	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
7. Sathi	(Monthly)	Ghotki
8. Balak	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
9. Sindhi Barira	(Series)	Hyderabad
10. Laat	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
11. Murk	(Bi-Monthly)	Karachi
12. Gulistan	(Monthly, 1991)	Hyderabad
13. Balak Rang	(Monthly)	Karachi
14. Nayab	(Monthly)	Tandojam
15. Sathi	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
16. Gulra	(Bi-Monthly)	Shikarpur
17. Chandan	(Monthly)	Dadu
18. Irchik Mirchik	(Fortnightly)	Hyderabad
19. Bariran Je Sindh Rang	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
20. Bariran Ji Bari	(Series)	Bhan Saeedabad
21. Kanwal	(Monthly)	Bhan Saeedabad
22. Aas	(Quarterly)	Thatta
23. Dosti Publication	(Series)	Rajo Niamani
24. Mahak	(Series)	Shikarpur
25. Roshan Tara	(Series)	Kandiaro
26. Roshan Ragoon	(Series)	Pingrio
27. Gulra	(Monthly)	Tandojam
28. Hoslo Publication	(Series)	Ruk
29. Tandano	(Monthly)	Ratodero
30. Popat	(Monthly)	Umarkot
31. Bakh	(Monthly)	Mirpur Baharo
32. Randiko	(Monthly)	Khanwah
33. Roshan Dunya	(Monthly)	Tandojam

34. Roshan Rah	(Monthly)	Karachi
35. Sarang	(Monthly)	Shahpur Chakar
36. Hubkar	(Series)	Dakhan
37. Sangti	(Bi-Monthly)	Shikarpur
38. Baran Ji Dunya	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
39. Soch	(Series)	Khairpur Mir's
40. Guldasto	(Quarterly)	Ratodero
41. Rangeen Dunya	(Monthly)	Jamshoro
42. Surhan	(Series)	Umerkot
43. Indlath	(Monthly)	Jamshoro
44. Gulzar Sindh	(Series)	Hyderabad
45. Ada Saeen	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
46. Roshan Tara	(Series)	Jati
47. Sujagi	(Monthly)	Hyderabad
48. Phulwari	(Series)	Hyderabad
49. Chand	(Series)	Sanghar
50. Pankhryoon	(Quarterly)	Umerkot
51. Utsaah	(Monthly)	Karachi
52. Baran Ji Sangat	Quarterly)	Hyderabad
53. Mithra Baar	(Series)	Hyderabad

And a lot of numbers of other magazines for more than ten issues.

Conclusion

The given data suggests that Children's Magazines have been very popular in Sindh and have been published in bulk. These magazines served as platforms of learning. The young readers read them with interest and enthusiasm along with their academic books. These magazines provided the youth with a real platform for the publication and helped them to express their creative genius. A large number of writers in these magazines emerged as writers of national repute. Thus, the contribution of these children's Magazines is not only significant but also necessary for the promotion of literature. In this digital world, the publication of these magazines has been

affected but timely decisions and little investment may shift these magazines from paper prints to e-magazines. The shift from printed editions to e-edition will also help our youth to use modern technology in a positive way. The e-editions may include video clips as well. It is recommended that official organizations working for children including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Culture Department, Sindhi Adabi Board, Sindhi Language Authority, Pakistan Academy of Letters and others must initiate such projects where young children be provided with opportunities for learning and publication. Children's Literature needs special attention as it is the foundation of real literature.

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