

Changing the Scenario with Children's Literature

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Abstract – "It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own."

—Katherine Patterson

Today's world is full of discussions, conferences and seminars on topics related to environmental conservation but only words without positive thoughts and actions cannot change the scenario. If we really want to change our coming days, we need to sensitize our children about environment, its beneficial aspects and conservation. This paper is focused on Children's books about the environment. Reading books does not only strengthen our brain but it really changes our mindset. We can implant seed of sustainable development in our future generation by making them a minute observer of nature and its urgent needs. The paper provides a glimpses of various Children's books by Ruth Spiro, Sophia M. Gholz, Lee Constable, Jeanette Winter, William Kam kaamna etc. All these writers all around the World are trying to guide the new energy towards waste-management and eco-experiments.

This paper is a discussion on the stories presented in famous Children's books and how the writers are developing a sense of responsibility in kids towards making our Earth a safer planet for many generations.

Keywords – Children's Literature, Waste-Management, Sustainable Development, Environmental Movement

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Art and literature reflect the trends and habits of society and also focus on the circumstances around the artist. As we know that environmental conservation is the need of today's world, Literature is a great tool for developing positive thinking and habits in this field. This paper is a discussion of various children's books in which environment works as a major theme. Many ecologists and writers have been working in this area and they are trying to teach the new generation eco-friendly habits and also sensitizing them towards their responsibility for environment as their early lessons. It is a fact that when we learn something in our childhood and keep revising it we are sure to remember and follow it. If today's kids learn all about science and environment in a logical manner through the books they surely will bring a positive change for a healthy environment.

Ruth Spiro from Chicago, one of the children books' writer is famous for her 'Baby Loves Science' series and 'Made by Maxine' series. She is very famous among young readers as her beautiful picture books

present scientific facts to the kids in a very simple way. Her picture books are illustrated by Irene Chan. In her books Ruth is introducing the young minds to very difficult terms as Quantum Physics, Molecules, carbon footprints etc. in a very easy manner. In the book 'Baby Loves Green Energy' Ruth is clarifying the term 'Global warming' to small kids in such a way as they understand their toys and games. She presents Air is the blanket of Earth and as the baby feels warm in its blanket, in the same manner the earth is getting hot day by day due to the green gases. She promotes hydroelectric energy, solar energy, geothermal energy, wind energy and green energy to help the planet Earth and at the same time making it safe for all the creatures to live.

Sophia Gholz, another children's books author is fond of reading, riding horses and enjoying amid green environment. Her picture book 'The true story of Jadav Payeng : The boy who grew a forest' inspires the young readers to work and think of environment. The book is illustrated with beautiful

pictures by Kayla Harren. It is a real story of an Indian boy Jadav Payeng who as a small kid was very disturbed to see deforestation and soil erosion in his island near Brahmaputra river. The common villagers as well as the animals had to face great devastation due to floods. He was worried about the idea of a picture of their village after some years. If all this deforestation, floods and soil erosion caused by it; continued both human beings and animals will surely lose their homeland. Some elderly people suggested him to implant more trees and following their instructions, Jadav started his journey of growing a forest all alone. He initiated his plantation project with twenty bamboo saplings and treated them with manures and water accordingly. And as a result even on a sandbar of river with infertile land and salty water of ocean all around he was able to grow the bamboo sapling into mature plants. And after that he never looked behind. With earthworms, termites, hardwork, positivity and visionary mind he changed the soil into fertile land and grew acres of forest land.

Through the story of Jadav Payeng, the forest man of India Sophia M. Gholz has presented an example that even a single individual's effort and determination can bring a great change in environment. Most of the times the elder people keep on advising and guiding their juniors but they themselves never make proper efforts. If the young scholars keep on studying such inspiring books they surely can transform into innumerable Jadavs as the kids are never out of time, energy and hope.

'How to save the whole stinkin' Planet' subtitled as 'A Garbological Adventure' is a gift on the World Environment Day in 2019 by Lee Constable, another children's book author. She is famous for her presentations of children's science shows on Television, especially SCOPE. As a science communicator and biologist she also founded the Colab with the help of street artists and scientists in order to present live public science communication events. Through these events the team wants to establish a connection between various science theories and real practical life. The story 'How to save the whole stinkin' Planet' is illustrated by James Hart. This book teaches the fresh minded kids to turn the rubbish and garbage of their homes into compost. It also instructs how we can reduce the amount of waste in landfills. This book will really help the kids to enhance their understanding about waste management and properly train them as Waste Warriors. It is a journey named as Garbological journey in which how the waste from homes complete its journey through dustbins, various streets and landfills. Either the waste can be changed into some recycled material which can be used once again or it can stay there forever as garbage troubling the whole world with its stinking smell and germs. Not only growing children but also the adults can learn how to reduce their daily garbage and even transform it into compost and manures by using simple tricks. In this way we are not only reducing pollution but also improving the quality of soil by treating it with self-

made manures, which can be used for our own houses or parks nearby or even we can use it as a financial support.

THE BOOK IS A COMPLETE JOURNEY OF WASTE AND GARBAGE

from where it comes from; what routes it travels through; and what is its destination and final point. The young readers are given several DIY projects which they have to complete as young Eco-experimenters and scientists. They are experimenting for a better Earth and after completing their projects they also earn different badges as a reward for their performance. As the title itself suggests, the book is an attempt to save the beautiful planet Earth from its worst condition. In order to win and achieve a lot all the people are chasing each other in the thoughtless rat race. In the name of progress all people are contributing in creating more and more waste which is neither used nor recycled by us.

Jeanette Winter is yet another writer of children's books. She is famous for illustrating picture books with her beautiful paintings. Her books inspire the new blood with great thoughts and life experiences of various environmentalists. In her story 'Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story of Africa', She talks how Wangari Mathaai, the founder environmentalist of 'Green Belt Movement' attempts to inspire other women from her country to implant more and more trees. In the same manner in her another book 'Our house is on Fire : Greta Thunberg's call to save the Planet' the author shares the story of the Swedish Climate Activist Greta Tintin Eleonora Ernman Thunberg. While studying about climatic changes and environment in her class Greta was greatly worried about the environmental responsibility. She was on the stage of depression when she pondered over the devastation brought by the so called progressive mind of humanity. She even asked her parents and elders about their responsibility for environment. Her mother had to limit her career as Greta denied them to travel through plane in order to control their carbon footprint.

Jeanett Winter has discussed how for the cause of environment a teenage girl left her studies and went for school strike. At start her parents were also dissatisfied with her stand because she was missing her school lessons. But later on, when other students also accompanied her for the greater cause everyone realized that the demand of new generation for a safe and beautiful planet is far more important than the theoretical knowledge given by books. The older generation has enjoyed the beauty of the planet in all means. Then for their petty profit they have extremely contributed to pollution ignoring everything. They in their dreams were creating a better and rich technical world for their lovely children but actually they just did all this at the cost of the health and happiness of those kids itself.

The last story book to be discussed in this paper is 'The Earth Book' by Todd Parr. Todd Parr is a famous television producer and an American children books' author. Children love to read the beautifully illustrated story books by Todd Parr. The present book by Todd is in a way a conclusion of the present paper. He has directed the young generation to follow the basic nine steps to save their beautiful world. If all the people whether they are young or old follow these basic nine steps then they can surely help in conservation of environment and making the world a better place to live for generations to come. According to him we should try to use public conveyance or eco-friendly vehicles like bicycle to save the air around us from getting polluted and making the sky more blue for bright stars to shine. We should use each and every bit of paper and while shopping we must take our own cloth bag in order to save papers as we love trees and we want various birds to stay happily in their nest on beautiful green trees. All of us should save water while brushing, cooking, washing and cleaning because we all want the beautiful fish to dance in the dark blue oceans. We should save electricity by switching off the extra lights and other electric equipments in order to save the beautiful Earth from global warming and letting the Polar bear enjoy his abode in the snowy mountains. We should also not leave any food in our plates and we should not waste and type of edible material in order to allow each and every being to get its share of food. We should not throw the garbage and waste material here and there. We should always segregate and put the waste accordingly to the recyclable waste bins, liquid waste bins and dry waste bins. In this way our parks and beautiful gardens will be cleaner for us to walk barefoot and enjoy the softness of the grass. In a way it's our duty to keep our Earth clean and green and by following these simple steps, we can make heaven here on the earth itself. Like the above mentioned authors, various other aware and serious minded people are trying their efforts to sensitize the people about their primary need of saving environment. Earth is a planet for each and every one, but most of the people ignore their own duty and try just to preach. The day when each and every person will consider saving and cleaning the earth as his own individual duty, the problem of conservation will itself go away. If we all try and decide to have a sustainable progress then surely we can enjoy all the benefits of technology as well as of nature without harming anything. The difference of attitude of an adult and a child is just the sincere efforts made by them. Most of the adults are busy in earning to spend for their children but they do not know that in this race of earning they are directly or indirectly spoiling the happiness of their own children. All of us have heard the story of Midas who in order to get the boon of golden touch spoils the beautiful natural garden of her daughter and at last even have to lose his beloved daughter and wife. Later on Midas got his wish undone but in the real world the damage done by us is almost impossible to be undone. So in this world as suggested by Parr we should do simple and little things in order to make a great difference.

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