

Format of Final Report

COVER PAGE

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

INNOVATION PROJECTS 2015-16

FINAL REPORT

1. PROJECT CODE: MH 302
2. PROJECT TITLE: CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS IN INDIA: RETHINKING HISTORY, STORYTELLING AND PEDAGOGY
3. NAME OF COLLEGE/INSTITUTION: MIRANDA HOUSE
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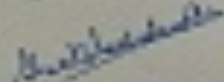
*These students finished with their III honours examinations and passed out in May 2016 so five new student members from English joined us from June 2016 to September 2016.

University of Delhi

Certificate of Originality

This is to certify that the research work carried out and the final report submitted by the Project Investigators and the students of Inception Project having Project Code:MH 382 and Title: CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS IN ENGLISH-RETHINKING RHETORIC, STORYTELLING AND PEDAGOGY OF MERANDA HOUSE is original. Any plagiarism/academic dishonesty reported at any stage will be our responsibility.

Signature of the all PIs:



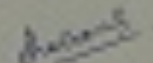
Dr. Shweta Sachdev, B.A.

Assistant Professor, Deptt. of English



Dr. Ishrat Piyushkumar

Assistant Professor, Deptt. Of Elementary Education



Ms. Ambika Kumbhar

Assistant Professor (Temporary), Deptt. Of English

**Utilization Certificate
Innovation Project 2015-16
Project Code -MH-302**

Project Title : Children's Picture Books In India : Rethinking History, Storytelling And Pedagogy

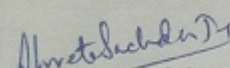
Audited Financial Statement under Innovation Project scheme

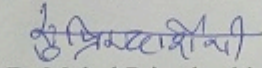
College: **Miranda House**

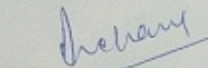
Principal Investigators: Dr. Shweta Sachdeva Jha, Dr. Mukul Priyadarshini, Ms Archana Kushwaha

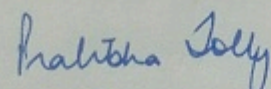
Grant sanctioned	(in figures) Rs. 3,50,000 (in Words) Rupees three lakh fifty thousand only/-			
S.No.	Budget head	Amount sanctioned	Total Amount utilized	Amount Remaining
1.	Equipment/Consumables	1,00,000	87,444	12,556
2.	Travel	55,000	48,893	6,107
3.	Stipend	1,20,000	1,20,000	Nil
4.	Honorarium	25,000	25,000	Nil
5.	Stationery/Printing	20,000	18,689	1,311
6.	Contingency	30,000	29,978	22
Total amount utilized	Rs. 3,30,004 (Rupees Three lakh thirty thousand four only)			
Amount Remaining.	Rs. 19,996 (Rupees nineteen thousand nine hundred ninety six only)			19,996

Certified that out of Rs. 3,50,000/- (Rupees Three Lakh Fifty Thousand Only) Sanctioned to Innovation Projects MH-302, Rs 3,30,004 (Rupees three lakh thirty thousand four only) has been utilized during the period of the project. The remaining amount of Rs. 19,996 (Rupees nineteen thousand nine hundred ninety six only) is being returned back to the University.

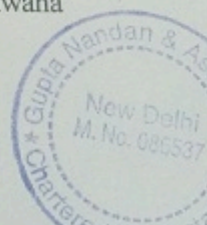

Dr Shweta Sachdeva Jha


Dr Mukul Priyadarshini


Ms Archana Kushwaha


Signature of Principal
Principal / MIRANDA HOUSE
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय / University of Delhi
दिल्ली / Delhi-110007

Financial Audit Clearance
And Stamp of Chartered Accountant
Dt. 04-11-2016



Final Report

1. **Project Title:** Children's Picture Books in India: Rethinking History, Storytelling and Pedagogy
2. **Project Code:** MH 302
3. **Abstract:** Apart from the established Children's Book Trust, National Book Trust and N.C.E.R.T, the last two decades of publication history of Children's Picture Books in English and Hindi for the age groups 3-7 in India, has seen the emergence of independent publishing houses such as Katha, Tulika Books, Tara, Pratham and Eklavya. This has been possible due to increasing viability of book publishing for children and its success is significant considering the popular perception about declining levels and standards of readership and increasing consumption of technology and audiovisual forms of information, education and entertainment such as cinema, television, internet, and social media. Books by these publishers display a shift in approaches to storytelling in the form of the proliferation of folktales illustrated using tribal art forms, interest in themes of gender, family, disability, retelling of mythology, translations from Iranian, Norwegian, Finnish and Nordic picture books, and fantasy as a genre. In terms of pedagogy, picture books now display a growing awareness of theories of early language acquisition, bilingualism and experiment with a wide range of visual forms such as tribal art, mixed media techniques, collage, tactile books, handcrafted books, and those illustrated by children. Although the field of children's picture books has become more vibrant and varied, the circulation of these books is hardly 700 copies per book which still leaves a huge untapped market. Need for higher levels of literacy and a revamping of an extremely weak public library system accompanied by increasing levels of awareness amongst parents and educators on the multiple use of picture books as an educational tool could change this scenario further and help in creating new and effective tools for the young to acquire language and think out of the box.
4. **Introduction:** India has one of the largest young populations in the world with an increasing number of children born each year. In the consumerist

society that we live in today, children constitute the target audience for mass media in the form of cinema, advertising and television. Children in India, now have access to all kinds of technology in the form of digital media, mobile phones, Ipads, tablets, Kindle, netbooks and even Facebook. In this fast transforming world of technology and digital media, it becomes historically imperative to study the role books play in the lives of children and to archive the changes in terms of production, consumption of these books and their relationship with learning and reading practices.

Children's picture books become invaluable sources to study changing discourses of childhood in different historical contexts to analyse how and why certain books are classified as 'children's literature' and to engage with debates on early literacy, language education and its relationship with print culture. Picture books for the age groups 3-7 have been neglected as a significant pedagogical tool, historical evidence and aesthetic form which can help us rethink and understand the shifts in discourses on childhood and change the way we approach early education, art and childhood in postcolonial India. India is also a land of contrasts and diversity and children also belong to a varied set of socio- economic and cultural backgrounds. We need to expose them to these myriad stories which needed to be shared and learned from. Picture books can play a pivotal role in this learning process be it early language acquisition and visual literacy or thinking laterally. In practice, picture books are hardly used across government and private schools or by parents specifically in the age group of 3-7 year olds. Our project aims to chart the field of picture book publishing in India and highlight its significance as a pedagogic tool for children and a historical source for understanding childhood as it has transformed over the years.

5. Research objectives:

- a. Study the history of six publishers of Children's Picture Books
(*Children's Book Trust, Katha, Eklavya, Tara Books, Tulika Books*
and *Pratham*)

- b. Familiarize ourselves with theories of early language acquisition and the role of picture books in the development of children's language (ages 3-7)
- c. Design an academic blog with regular updates on the documentation, field visits and research findings of our project
<https://childrenspicturebooksinindia.wordpress.com>
- d. Interactive sessions with traditional storytellers and forms such as *Pata Chitra Katha* from West Bengal and *Kawad* from Rajasthan
- e. Analyse changing dynamics of book illustration, emergence of traditional as well as contemporary painting styles and mixed media techniques
- f. Understand circulation and readership patterns through visits to libraries and visits to book fairs

6. **Methodology :**

- a. Joint workshops for student team with lectures and discussions with publishers, authors, academics and storytellers, visualise, filmmakers.
- b. Visits to Children's Book Trust (Delhi), NCERT (Delhi)
- c. Field visit to Eklavya (Bhopal) – Publishing House, School and Pitara (Resource Centre); Visits to libraries and resource centres (Ilmgah Resource Centre, BC Roy Memorial, Bal Bhawan Library, British Council Library, National Centre for Children's Literature) to study patterns of readership of children's picture books through interviews conducted with the librarians.
- d. Collection of visual and textual data through books, membership registers and catalogues
- e. Visits to Bookaroo, World Book Fair, Jaipur Literary Festival, IGNCA Kathakar Festival
- f. Attended sessions on Children's Publishing and Disability (Parag Trust, World Book Fair), Fiep Westendorp and her legacy as an illustrator (Embassy of Netherlands and A & A Publishers, World Book Fair)
- g. Analysis of secondary material in early language learning, illustration styles, storytelling, visuality

- h. Making of a short documentary, exhibition, catalogue of picture books and two picture books (in process of being submitted to *Eklavya* for consideration and possible publication)

- 7. **Result:** Children's Picture Books in India is a vast yet neglected field of research in India. The role of picture books and visual literacy is an uncharted territory in the Indian education system especially for age group 3-7 year old. New research in this field requires departments of English, Art and Elementary Education to come together to understand the role picture books can play as an educational tool for educators, teachers, parents, illustrators which might have lasting consequences in our understanding of children and their needs.

Certain themes and issues such as 'disability', 'gender' and 'tribal art' have been identified by us in our catalogue and are relevant to children in the age group below 7. These can be taken up by publishers to possibly attract better writing and illustrating talent and be of use for parents and educators to introduce more complex topics such as changing definitions of family, home and aesthetics. Visuality and its links to imagination, art education, lateral thinking, picture reading and storytelling amongst children is an area that needs more documentation and analysis. Projects such as ours further this understanding and are possible only with interdisciplinary collaborations.

Beside the well known set of International publishers of children's picture books such as Scholastic and Macmillan in English, six publishers of CPB in India are significant: *Tara Books*, *Tulika Books*, *Pratham*, *Eklavya*, *Children's Book Trust* and *Katha*. Their use of a diversity of publishing formats, experimentation with illustrations, their approaches to childhood, early language literacy and engagement with the visual medium as a significant aspect of storytelling makes their books unique and significant. This emergence of independent publishers, authors, illustrators, readers in the field of children's literature is in itself an interesting phenomenon considering the rising popularity of television, cinema, videos and digital

forms of publishing. Increase in popularity of Book Festivals with specific ones for Children such as *Bookaroo* and the possibility of commercial viability of publishers of CPBs, their attempt to experiment and innovate hints towards a widening readership. Although a detailed study of the class, linguistic and social configuration of this readership is yet to be done.

Such a study is imperative because along with rising numbers of publishers of children's books, there is also a rapid decline in membership in public libraries for children such as Bal Bhawan and B C Roy Memorial Library. More time and space for extending this project might help us understand the relationship between this decline in public library systems and growing presence of local publishing, a future research project can lead to a more nuanced understanding of this field and help us design interesting pedagogic tools such as a database of picture books and short documentaries to be used as tools for teachers, parents and artists and as evidence for historians of childhood.

8. Innovations shown by the project

- a. Freely downloadable Children's Picture Book Catalogue based on themes that could be used as lesson plans by educators or of be interest to parents, available at our blog
- b. Blog that charts the work done as part of our project including bibliographies for further research

<https://childrenpicturebooksinindia.wordpress.com/>

- c. Freely downloadable short documentary *Painting Words: The World of Picture Books and Children* on the significance of picture books for children available on our blog and Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YB91Zu5-Y8&feature=youtu.be>
- d. Two picture books *Chutki aur Chiro* and *The Secret* under consideration for publishing by *Eklavya*.

9. Conclusion and Future direction:

Our project had initially aimed to make a website on children's picture books produced in India to showcase the rich and varied nature of these texts and to also make the information the basis of a pedagogic tool which would be useful to educators, parents, storytellers and illustrators interested in picture books. Our work on the blogs and the documentary further made us realize the immense potential these have to become the basis of an extensive database project based on our classification of picture books, bibliographic materials and links, accompanied by a set of short documentaries made on the pedagogic relevance of picture books would prove to be an excellent tool using ICT. Such a database would be ideal for schools which have access to internet, parents, children's libraries, education departments, literature departments with an interest in children's literature, art educators and illustrators.

10. Publication/s from the work: Two book manuscripts to be submitted to Eklavya for consideration:

Chutki aur Chiro (Hindi Picture Book, story by MH team and illustration by Sakshee Singh)

The Secret (MH Team led by Pemmaraju Sindhoora, illustration by Shreya Prasad); sample spreads are attached.

Picture Books Catalogue 2016.

11. Conference Presentation/s: Abstract accepted for a paper on 'Interrogating the Folk and the Indigenous in Children's Picture Books in India' at the XXVII FILLM Congress (The International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures) to be held in New Delhi from 15-17 March 2017.

12. Patent/s and Technology Transfer : None

13. Media Coverage: Our project was covered in the *DU Beat* issue of 17th January 2016. It can also be accessed here:

<http://dubear.com/2016/01/miranda-house-organises-a-workshop-on-childrens-picture-books/>

14. **Pictures related to the project:** 19 photographs (this is a sample of field work visits, making of exhibition, documentary shooting and library visits) all our photographs and footage including recorded videos of our exhibition are available on our blog. <https://childrenpicturebooksinindia.wordpress.com/>

15. **Annexure/Any other information:** DVD of our short documentary, *Painting Words: The World of Picture Books and Children* (12 min)





The rest of the photographs are available on our blog along with the rest of the documentation.

<https://childrenspicturebooksinindia.wordpress.com/>