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Reflecting Impacts of Epic and Cultural Tales on Young Minds**Dr. Pooja Singh, Dr. Archana Durgesh & Neha Sahu***BBD NITM, Lucknow, (U.P.) India***Abstract**

This paper has looked at the potential beneficial impact of cartoons based on cultural tales and epic on children's lives. Discussion usually centers on cartoon's negative effects but, it has been observed in many studies that cartoons based on epic and cultural tales can enhance moral values such as giving respect to elders, helping others as well as pro-social behaviors and critical thinking practices. Cartoons are neither good nor bad for children, but its impact is complicated in the way it affects children's knowledge, beliefs and values. Cartoon films based on the epics and cultural tales are the best sources now days to inculcate values in children. Therefore through a range of these epic and cultural tales like Hanuman, Little Krishna, Ramayan etc. it is clear that these cartoons can result in positive changes in children's social behavior including increases in 'altruism, helpfulness, generosity, and other social skills. By watching cartoon films, children become more creative. They try to do things in different ways. So their imagination and creativity is enhanced. Therefore through a range of these epic and cultural tales like Hanuman, Little Krishna, Ramayan etc. it is clear that these cartoons can result in positive changes in children's social behavior including increases in 'altruism, helpfulness, generosity, and other social skills.

Key Words: cartoons, mythology, social behaviors.

"Everything depends on upbringing" (Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace) Cartoon films are the most important part of many very young children's lives and it is the main tool used by parents to inculcate values, morals and in socialization process. Many parents are impressed with the educational, cultural and moral benefits of cartoons and how it can teach positive behaviors. Cartoon Animation has great impact on children's mind, because all children love to see cartoons. In the media world nowadays, the animated cartoons based on Indian epics and cultural tales are getting more popular. It positively effects the new generation with more heroic characters and helpful minds in

sociality. Moreover it helped their learning of right behavior. Cartoons have changed drastically over the years but have their long term impacts on children. For children fantasy is a real world where they want to go. Fairytales, fairylands, flying in the air, magic world, tree houses, cloud houses, chocolates, forests and friendship with wild animals attract children a lot. Children connect themselves to these things as if they are the part of it. This is a work of imagination that means there is nothing to do with reality and children like this imagination a lot because these things are so much appealing to them. Imagination plays a very important role in everyone's life. There

are so many things in our lives which affect our imagination and sometimes we do things according to our imagination or what we observed or adapted from our environment.

“According to Aristotle, the imagination bridges the gap between "images" and "ideas," implying that rational thought takes place in the form of images, and are stored and combined in the imagination. Thus, imagination is implied as an actual space or medium in the individual's mind, and in this space it has a power to combine images and ideas to do the work of reason.

According to Lacan's mirror stage, the child's perception of the Imaginary is an essential stage of recognition of what is real and what is unreal. If the Imaginary is the child's reflected image in the mirror, it is probable that the imagination is the mental faculty for integrating this 'represented' image into the child's experience of himself in the world. By Lacan's division of the Symbolic, the Real and the Imaginary, the real is that which resists representation. If the imagination is a counterpoint to perceptible reality, Lacan's implication is that the Imaginary is in fact representational. This representation is the mirror.”

The production of animated movies based on epics is increasing in India day by day. There are several medium for animation like cartoons, movies, advertisements and video games. Animation attracts youths and kids because it reflects their imagination.

Animated made movies are doing wonders to young viewers. Children enjoy animation because it gives life to their fairytale stories and imagination. Since digitally made movies have so many benefits they are

bound to be loved by all. Children do react while watching these cartoons and it has been found that mothers are the only one who can observe the changes occurring in the personalities of the their children. For example once a mother was sharing her experience and told that her 4 years old Son watched a small story about a dustbin. In that story, nobody used dustbin and that is why the dustbin got annoyed with everyone. He became so much obsessed with this story that one day when his father throws a tissue on the floor, he straightforwardly said to his father: “papa dustbin will get upset with you”

Therefore it would be unjustifiable to conclude that cartoons have only negative impacts on children. Cartoons have a tremendous impact in improving the cognitive aspects among young children. Children become more creative by watching cartoon films. They try to do things in different ways so their imagination and creativity is enhanced. When parents buy different storybooks, watch different cartoons and children programs with their children or let their children to cinemas for watching movies.

Cartoon films based on the epics and cultural tales are the best sources now days to inculcate values in children. It used by parents to help manage busy schedules, keep the peace. Many parents also express satisfaction with the benefits of these cartoons and how it can teach right behaviors and connect the young generation to the ancient tales and culture. “A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” by Marcus Garvey.

First and most important impact of watching cultural tales and epic based cartoons on children is the development of young minds. By watching cartoon films, children at every age learn so many things. Kids start learning what is right and what kind of behavior is wrong. Also, they can improve overall cognitive knowledge among young children. When a kid watches cartoon in his very early age, he learns many things before going to school. He takes up things easily and tries to learn how to speak and conduct himself.

Secondly it helps in improving languages and speech. Good media increases the vocabulary of the kids. Children also learn to interact in various languages with help of cartoons. For instance children, who don't have English as their first language, learn English more readily, from watching these cartoon films as compared to their teacher and books.

These cartoons build Self-Confidence of Children. While watching their favorite cartoon show, kids adopt many things and sometimes they talk and behave in the same manner as their favorite characters do. Doing so, they feel more comfortable and confident that they can talk to people and even can perform in front a crowd. Children are very much influenced by the Indian jungle stories and princely tales which are being presented as cool and trendy.

It gives wings to the imagination and creativity of a child. By watching cartoon films, children become more creative. They try to do things in different ways. So their imagination and creativity is enhanced. The children get new ideas with which they can show their talent. Their response to sound with body movement (dance and sing);

recognize how sounds can be changed, sing simple songs; match movement to music, make constructions, drawing and dances; and use their imagination in art, design, music, dance, imaginative role play and stories.

It has been rightly said by Jesse Jackson "Your Children need your presence not your presents." Cartoons also improve parent-children relationship. When it comes to the cultural tales, parents like to watch them with their kids which improves the generation gap i.e. parent-children relationship. When parents watch different cartoons and children programs with their children or let their children to cinemas for watching movies. In each of the above case parents spend time with their children. As a result parents-child relationship is improved. Many parents are happy to see that epics and cultural tales through cartoons are imbibing values in their children in a fun way.

Cartoon films are also a source of entertainment for every child even for infants and toddlers. Like infants and toddlers enjoy sounds and movement and at the same time they also learn from it. Cultural tales and epic based cartoons give the right understanding of the world. Find out and identify some features of living things, objects and events and also some features in the place they live and in the natural world; ask why things happen and how things work; begin to operate simple equipment; begin to differentiate between the past and present; find out about events; gain awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others.

Cartoons help in developing the personality of children. Minute details are noticed by a child while watching cartoon. Movement

with control and coordination (songs and dance actions); show awareness of healthy practices (brushing teeth, and washing hands); recognize the importance of keeping healthy (safety/road issues). . In India, now also, larger families have children who watch mythological stories, freedom fighter stories, as well as local king's stories which influence personality development.

Because children identify readily with cartoon characters, such characters can be positive role models that encourage good moral behavior. Children react in the same way in their real life and try to reflect their ideal character as best as they can. Hanuman, for example, is honest and brave, constantly standing up for the rights of others. The characters in the "Ramayan" movie move heaven and earth to save seta from villain Ravana, while Birbal demonstrates the value of studying and intelligence. Even Krishna, who lives in a world where violence solves problems, can encourage children to eat their butter.

Most of the Indian Mythological cartoons character convey moral lesson. It can help speed up the learning process in children. People notice how certain characters act and how others perceive those characters and then act in accordance to

1. Akbar Birbal



Akbar & Birbal entertains the viewers with its clever wit and exciting storytelling." Birbal who was in the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar was considered to be one of the best loved figures in the folklore of India. He is seen outsmarting everyone even the Emperor sometimes by his exceptional wisdom, presence of mind and his excellent problem solving skills. Therefore it makes the children learn the skills of perception and deduction from Birbal's fine examples. Children have become the fan of Birbal and want to be clever and witty like him.

what they believe is the correct behavior. Children watch what is going on in the cartoons and try to imitate them in real life. The main purpose of epic based cartoons is to teach the moral lesson to the young generation. Therefore cartoons also help shape the development of self, forming the culture of the people who are watching the shows.

It has been said by Albert Einstein "He who cherishes the values of culture cannot fail to be a pacifist."

These animated cultural stories provide an excellent introduction to the Indian Culture. To many parents these cartoons based on epic and cultural tales are of much importance because according to them they are the best way to introduce the ancient tales to a new generation that seems to be losing touch with its heritage. They are happy to see their kids learning the epics from animations films. Now kids are aware of the deities like Hanuman, Krishna, and Ram etc. with an updated form. They are much influenced with the stories of Ramayan and Mahabharata.

With the list of selected mythology based cartoons, it can be well explained that these cartoons have many positive impact on children's thought and actions.

2. Little Krishna

The show revolves around the darling of Vrindavan little Krishna. Little Krishna is eye candy of



all the people who lives in Vrindavan village. He helps all the villagers and his friends from all the calamities. It is based on epic of Lord Krishna. They are very real, lovable and adorable persons that children love to relate with, distinctly different from the cold, harsh world of reality. This is the happy world they love to go to. While talking to my colleague she shared her experience and told me that after watching Krishna her 3 years old son Atharv has started calling her “Maiyya” and now he greets elders with “Pranaam”.

3. Ramayana

Ramayana is the most popular Indian story ever told. Long Long Ago, in Ancient India. Rama,



the prince of Ayodhya is the eldest son of King Dashrath, dark and handsome, a great warrior and epitome of all virtues. Rama is the original Indian super hero and fights an epic battle of good over evil with an amazing demonstration of heroism. So children at an impressionable age can be taught through this medium, how Rama is supremely powerful and a great person who saved her wife Sita from the villain Ravana.

4. Mahabharata

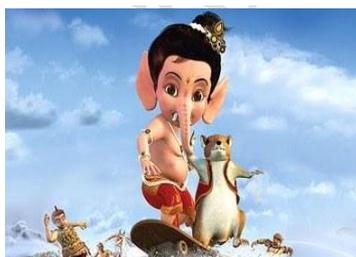
In 2001, the Cartoon Network broadcast the first Indian mythology show, "Pandavas," a version



of a tale from the classical Hindu epic "Mahabharata" about the travails of five princely brothers. Since then, the channel, which reaches more than 27 million homes, has shown seven Indian animation series, along with international programs. Through this animated epic each and every child is now aware of the negative character “Shakuni Mama” and his misdeeds. Many children even want to be brave boy like Arjun.

Ganesha

Cartoons have included the elephant-headed Ganesh who is naughty but respect his parents a lot



and a very sincere son. The little young character is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati. In this cartoon children love to watch the adventures of a heroic and debonair stalwart Ganesh and his mouse. Ganesh swallows the sorrows of the **Universe** and protects the world. They enjoy knowing how Ganesh taught lesson to some of arrogant people on heaven. He became the best friend of kids and his craze is now manifesting on T-shirts, pencil box and lunch

boxes.

6. Hanuman

These days, one of children's favorite superheroes is a cool cartoon version of Hanuman, the monkey-headed Hindu god. It is awesome to see the gods laughing, singing and flying in the air and how he sets Ravana's Lanka at fire. The fights are really good, and in the end Hanuman sets everything right. A father shared his experience and told that his son Divyesh is so much impressed with the character Hanuman that he wants to be a strong boy like him and save the planet earth.



As children grow, they hear many stories from parents, grandparents, playgroup teachers etc. Most of the stories have characters which are good, and savior of group, locality and world. The cartoons also paint characters as super hero. Children, watching such stories, extract good qualities and heroic deeds and absorb in themselves. Someday in life, these qualities do come out. Cartoons characters like Krishna, Hanuman, Choota Bheem etc. characters are being shown doing good things to save weaker people. Children keep on watching such cartoon shows every day. Slowly, children start imagining themselves at the hero's place. They think that they are the hero, and they have the qualities to save

people. It also creates deeper impact on children's behavior then and in future.

Therefore through a range of these epic and cultural tales like Hanuman, Little Krishna, Ramayan etc. it is clear that these cartoons can result in positive changes in children's social behavior including increases in 'altruism, helpfulness, generosity, and other social skills. Other skills associated with social behavior include self-control, sympathy and empathy for others, learning to persist in a task, and reduction of stereotypes. Parents need not to monitor their kids closely when they watch Indian animated epics or cultural tales.

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