



# Cultivating Young Minds: The Educational And Moral Dimension In Nabakanta Barua's Children's Literature

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## ABSTRACT

Nabakanta Barua, a prominent and pioneer in Assamese Children's Literature, beautifully weaves educational and moral dimensions into his whimsical and imaginative stories. Through his works such as Hiyali Palegoi Ratanpur, Akhoror Jokhola, Monot Porar Hobdo, Vot-U-Kare Vu, Kishur Upanishad, Barua employs humor, satire and absurdity to impart life lessons and ethical values to young readers. Additionally, in some of his works such as Mur Kitap, and Leseri Butola Barua tries to teach Assamese alphabets, various insects and different color names and general knowledge which help young readers to shape their cognitive, social and emotional development. His characters and narratives reflect universal truths, encouraging critical thinking, empathy and a sense of justice. Barua's stories mainly focus on themes like courage, honesty, empathy, love and the consequences of greed making them both engaging and instructive. This paper explores how Nabakanta Barua's unique mix of fantasy and realism serves as a powerful tool for moral and intellectual development, reflecting his enduring relevance in Assamese Children's literature. By exploring specific examples from his works, this study shows how Barua's storytelling transcends mere entertainment, offering timeless lessons that resonate with readers across generations.

**KEYWORDS:** Nabakanta Barua, Assamese Literature, Children's Literature, satire, moral dimensions, education.

## INTRODUCTION

*"Poet of the Crossroads"*, Nabakanta Barua was an influential figure in Assamese literature, belonging to the new generation of poets in Assam. He touched many genres in the realm of literature such as poetry, novel, essay, lyrics and was also a prominent writer of Children's literature. Nabakanta Barua also known as *"Ekhud Kokaidu"*, was born in 29 December 1926 in Guwahati, Assam. His parents were Nilakanta Barua and Swarnalata Barua. His father Nilakanta Barua was a school teacher. Barua did his schooling in Nagaon district of Assam. His schooling life wasn't that joyful. Amongst his classmates Nabakanta Barua was the smallest looking kid and he had a natural limitation of speaking, a stammer and these characteristics of him made his friends undesirable to get along or to play with him. Thus, he was compelled to spend time alone at the school. This alienation evoked a sense of loneliness

in him and an aloneness which enhanced his interest in books. He wasn't able to relate himself with others and that led him where he is absorbed in the world of books and the world, he found himself emerged in.

After completing his schooling, Barua joined Cotton College, Gauhati in 1941 but for some ongoing social circumstances he left his studies in 1942. Therefore, in 1943 he had to start afresh. Since he desired not to join the same college so, he was sent to Shantiniketan, Calcutta and it was the time when his father got retired as a school teacher and Shantiniketan was the best economically ideal institute for his family. Additionally, it was for his family's adoration towards Rabindranath Tagore, the stupendous writer from Calcutta.

Barua in 1957 got married to Bina Das, a woman who stood with him till the last. Bina was a supportive wife in nature who helped Nabakanta Barua with his literary pursuits. Barua was the youngest of four sons and two sisters, one elder and other younger. His two sisters' death put him into a state where the pain could not be measured. Ever since his sisters' death he started longing for a sister. Unfortunately, his youngest daughter also met with an untimely death and that added salt to the wound that was wounded by the death of his two sisters. It was the pain he was never able to describe. Nabakanta Barua was conferred with many prestigious awards. Assam Prakashan Parisod Award for his collection of poems "*Mur Aru Prithibir*", in 1974, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975 for the novel "*Kokadeutar Har*", Soviet Land Nehru Award for his translation "*Ahot Moral*", in 1980, Assam Valley Literary Award in 1993, Kamal Kumari National Award in 1998 and the third highest civilian award Padma Bhushan award from the government of India in 1976 for his contribution to literature. Barua was among those who contributed immensely in the canon of modern Assamese poetry. The turning point that gave him great fame was when he published his first collection of poems "*He Aranya, He Mahanagar*", in 1951. This compilation allowed him to be recognized by the great poets and the enthusiastic readers of Assam; Nabakanta Barua was profoundly influenced by some renowned English writers and it is transparent in his writings. The poets he mostly Influenced by are T. S Eliot, Kahlil Gibran, Ezra Pound, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Walt Whitman etc. Barua took the ideas and skills from these writers and created something new that only belongs to him. Barua wrote many works for kids and they are highly fascinating and eloquent not only for kids but also for adults. His writings are very simple yet enjoyable and captivating. The tone and words are melodious. Barua's writings for the children are – "*Hiyali Palegoi Ratanpur*", (1955), "*Akhoror Jokhola*", (1958), "*Vot-U-Kare Vu*", (1960), "*Amkhone rura Puwali*", (1962), "*Monot Porar Hobdo*", (1980), "*Moi Tuniyee Tunyunale*", (1981), "*Gulap Aru Beliphul*", (1981) etc. Barua's literary ventures have carried him far beyond borders, allowing him to engage with fellow writers and intellectuals from various countries, exchanging ideas, insights, and fostering rich dialogues across various traditions and perspectives.

"When we write for the children our mind should be turned into that of a child's. Ultimately, it does not seem possible, therefore we try to enter their world aided by the reflection of our own childhood". (Akademi, Sahitya, 2022, 40:46)

The statement cited above suggests that, since he was writing in his old age, he had to reflect and reminisce on his own childhood days to write for the children.

Nabakanta Barua's life and literary contributions stand as a testament to the profound interplay between personal experience, historical context, and artistic creativity. His early life and education provided him the foundation for a nuanced understanding of human struggles, while his cultural and philosophical influences enriched his narrative with layers of meaning and moral complexity.

**THEMES AND NARRATION IN BARUA'S CHILDREN'S LITERATURE :**

The language of Nabakanta Barua's writing is easy and appealing to the children. Because of his thrilling stories and writing style Barua has established a special place children's literature. Barua was a great lover of children and his inspiration to write for the them was because of his love. Barua stepped into the children's literature in the 1940s and his first written work for children was "*Ekhud Kokaideu*" (Small brother). If we don't understand the mind of a child then it is hard to write for them and Barua was well aware of it. Thus, his works were suitable for the kids. In the history of Assamese children's literature Nabakanta Barua would be the only one who tries to teach how to pronounce Assamese words, how to identify colours, name of the various types of insects, tastes of the edible things, Assamese alphabets and digits through his writings. And these characteristics of his writing make him someone who is really devoted to do better for the kids. Through his writing he tries to educate and shape children with good characters. Barua was influenced by many prominent writers of children's literature including Sukumar Rai (1887-1923), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Lewis Carroll (1832-1898), Edward Lear (1812-1888), etc.

Children's literature most of the times explores themes that are universally relevant and age-appropriate, assisting young readers to understand complex emotions and social concepts through simple and engaging narratives. Therefore, in this chapter, I will be dealing with the themes that are universal and age-appropriate as well as the literary devices in Barua's writings for children.

**THEMES IN SIYALI PALEGOI RATANPUR:**

*Siyali Palegoi Ratanpur (Jackal Has Reached Ratanpur)*, is a play by Barua and was first published in 1956. The play's main character is Jun who is around 8 years old. The story begins with Jun standing in a crossroads trying to figure out which way he would take to reach the place his grandmother earlier talked about. The unusual thing about the crossroads, were its 10 different paths. Now he is baffled unable to choose which way to move ahead. Ratanpur is his destination, so he takes a road and goes ahead but he returns to the same place where he started the journey. Jun is now talking to himself which way to move ahead and suddenly he hears voices coming from the roads inviting him to move forward to them. Since there were ten roads, he is unable to decide which road he should take. All the roads promise him that if he goes through them then he would reach Ratanpur at the earliest. He questions himself how all the roads would lead to the same destination and says all them must be crazy.

The roads say together that "just like your uncle says that every way leads to your room we would lead you to the same destination" (Barua 6). The roads keep insisting Jun to choose one of them but he gets irritated and decides not to go on any of them. Finally, chooses the worst conditioned road and once he steps on it the road moves by itself. He keeps moving and he hears a telephone ringing. He picks it and asks who is on the other side. The telephone itself replies it's me. He is shocked by the answer because he usually talks with other person on the other side of the phone. When they are having conversation, Jun notices an eagle flying toward them holding a big bamboo sieve. On the sieve there are people whom Jun knows personally. Suddenly the weather gets dangerous so the eagle tells them to aboard including Jun. From the bamboo sieve two wrestlers jump into the river. Following them Jun falls down from a crack on the sieve and he hits on his head and sees stars playing around. The stars point out to Jun and they are shocked to see a star without light. One of the stars ask him his name so, he introduce himself as Jun. The meaning of the name Jun is the Moon. So, one of the stars ask him why he has no light on him. Jun replies the moon has no light and the light the moon gets is from the Sun. Time flies by and when Jun was surrounded by the stars, somehow, he is able to escape from them. After moving some distance from the stars, he sees a pothole which is very big, unfortunately Jun hears the voices of the stars calling him to play with them. But Jun says no to them and continues his journey and bids them goodbye.

Another encounter occurs and this time it is an ant asking him if Jun has read geography. Jun replies yes and ask the ant why he is asking him about it. They share some time together discussing about geography. It is noon and the ant leaves him. Now again Jun is alone and thinks of giving up going to Ratanpur. Now he realises that there is no need of going there and wishes to reach back home. Jun is again on the same crossroads and this time he decides to move on the red road. The red road asks him to stop and have something but Jun doesn't listen to it and moves forth. After covering some distance, he sees a lesser adjutant taking nap. Jun tries to wake up the big bird and the lesser adjutant wakes up. Jun asks the bird about Ratanpur.

The bird seems to be not aware of the place so Jun thinks of moving forward but the bird stops him and ask him to stay with him and take a good sleep together instead of worrying about reaching Ratanpur and in the same time a tailorbird flies over Jun's head. The bird chants something and ask Jun to close his eyes. When he opens his eyes, he finds himself in a dark eerie place and notices a Golden Jackal writing something under a tree. Though Jun was afraid to approach the Jackal, he still decides to move toward it. The Jackal asks what he wants and gives options like poem, novel, history, geography, science etc. But Jun tells the Jackal that he would be happy with whatever he offers. Both of them spend time together for a long time. And later the cows also join them. The jackal shows everything he has written and Jun reads all of them. They also play quiz game where Jun loses every time against the Jackal. Out of nowhere an old man appears and upon seeing the old man all of them hide except Jun. The old man asks him about the jujubes and in the same time the telephone comes near Jun and tells him to answer, the jujubes are behind the bamboos. A dog wearing police dress appears and salutes the old man and starts staring at Jun and barks at him. The old man runs towards Jun to beat him but the telephone tells Jun not to be afraid because the old man just escaped from a mental hospital and if someone asks the old man where he is from then he would feel shy and afraid. Thus, Jun does the same as the telephone suggests him and the old man runs away from Jun. As the story progresses Jun now finds himself surrounded by cats and they are pinching Jun. He gets irritated and catches a cat and when he holds the cat, it slowly gets smaller and in no time the cat disappears and the ringing starts but this time Jun doesn't pick up. And his uncle enters into his room and wakes him up invites him to go and listen to Lilliput's story. The story ends with two questions. "From where these ants came from? Why did you keep biscuits under the pillow?". The ending of the story reveals that all the incidents happening with Jun were actually in his dreams.

The main character Jun starts a journey navigated by curiosity about the place which was once told by his grandmother. Ratanpur is the place he wants to go and explore. On the way the encounters of mythical or unusual creatures (ant, stars, eagle, lesser adjutant, cats, tailorbird, jackal, etc) and uncommon events (falling from the sieve, crossroads, etc) symbolize human desire to witness and explore the unknown and seek answers. The recurring theme of crossroads and Jun's inability to progress reflect the cyclical nature of decision making and how people often revisit the same dilemmas in life. The Jackal's writings and references to literary genres highlight the transformative power of story-telling and creativity in helping individuals make sense of their experiences. The story also portrays Jun facing unfamiliar and often intimidating situations such as the Jackal, dog and the eerie landscapes symbolizing the courage needed to confront one's fears during life's journey. Additionally, the theme of interconnectedness of knowledge and imagination through the characters like the Ant discussing about geography and the Jackal offering literary genres emphasize the significance of knowledge and imagination in navigating life and understanding the world. The ending of the play where Jun's dream connects to the biscuits under his pillow, suggests that even imaginative adventures can contain practical lessons about responsibility and awareness in daily life.

The play nicely intertwines themes of curiosity, self-discovery, the nature of dreams, and the importance of imagination. The story reflects how storytelling and exploration are integral to understanding oneself and the world.

## Symbolism

1. **Crossroads**, which is of the ten-ways, symbolize life's choices and the confusion of decision making. Each road represents a different potential path in life, reflecting the complexity and uncertainty of human existence.
2. **Stars**, that Jun meets symbolize guidance and knowledge but also mystery as they question Jun's lack of "light". This represents self-awareness or enlightenment.
3. **Jackal's writing**, the offering choices between poetry, history, novel, drama, and other genres symbolizes the power of stories and knowledge to shape identity and understanding.
4. **Ant**, questions Jun about Geography which indicates how foundational knowledge such as understanding one's surroundings is essential in navigating bigger life questions.

## Personification

1. **Talking Animals:** The Jackal, ant, the birds, cats and the other animals are given human feature such as speech and reasoning, representing the inner dialogue and the voices of guidance or confusion people encounter in life.
2. **The Cell Phone:** The phone answering "Kune aru kobo- dekha nai- moie matisu" (p7), and speaking to him personifies communication and connection, reflecting modern anxieties about dependence on external guidance.

## Allegory

The play as a whole, functions as an allegory for growing up, self-discovery, and the search for meaning. Each character that Jun meets can be interpreted as a guide or obstacle, reflecting different situations that shape a person's journey. The dream setting allows for abstract representations of life's challenges and questions.

## Irony

1. **The Journey:** Jun's inability to escape the crossroads despite his firm determination to reach Ratanpur is ironic. And it demonstrates that movement without proper knowledge of the direction can lead back to the same starting point.
2. **Dream Ending:** The disclosure that the whole journey was a dream contrasts with the profound, surreal adventure Jun experiences, suggesting that great lessons can arise even from imagined events.

## Imagery

- Eerie place that is dark where the Jackal is sitting and writing evokes mystery and fear, indicating the unknown.
- The sieve flying in the air highlights the unreal, gravity-defying nature of dreams.

## Metaphor

- The search for Ratanpur represents a quest for purpose or a destination in life. It is a metaphor for how people often search for something elusive.
- The star questioning Jun's lack of light and referencing the Sun, indicates the need for guidance and inner clarity to illuminate life's path.

**THEMES IN MAKHONOR KUKURAPUALI.**

*Makhonor Kukurapuali (Makhon's Chick)*, a short story by Barua explores themes such as identity, belonging, and acceptance. The main character of the short story is Makhon, who is around 6-8 years old. It is a story about his little chick and the ducks and here the chick is being raised by the duck mother and around her ducklings. The story highlights the struggle of identity and the quest for belonging. The chicken raised alongside the ducklings begins its life being accepted as part of the duck family. However, as time goes by, physical and behavioral differences emerge, emphasizing the chicken's distinctiveness. The central moment at the pond, where the mother duck signals to the chicken that it does not belong in the water, symbolizes an inherent recognition of difference. The chick's realization of its inability to swim serves as a metaphor for the universal experience of individuals coming to terms with their unique identity, especially in spaces where they do not fully belong.

Makhon's relationship with the chick reflects a deep sense of empathy. From the beginning, he makes an active decision to include the chicken egg in the duck's nest to give it a chance at life. Later, as the chicken grows and faces alienation or exclusion, Makhon's concern reflects his sensitivity to the emotional experiences of animals. In the end, his act of giving the chicken away to one of his friends' family who have chickens, shows Makhon's genuine connection with the chicken. This action also underscores the human responsibility to care for and find solutions for animals under their stewardship.

**LITERARY DEVICES IN MAKHONOR KUKURAPUWALI:****Symbolism**

1. **The Chick:** individuality and the struggle of being different is symbolized by the chick that Makhon cares the most. It represents those who try to adapt to a group but unfortunately face exclusion due to inherent differences. The chick's inability to join the duck and the ducklings in the pond highlights its distinct identity compared to the ducks.
2. **Pond:** The pond symbolizes boundaries and natural divisions that separate groups. It reflects a point of realization for the chick, as it becomes aware of its difference.

**Allegory**

The story serves as an allegory for the human experiences of exclusion and belonging. The chick's growth reflects the difficulties faced by individuals who are different in any community or group. The chick's isolation after the pond incident parallels the emotional experience of alienation in human relationship.

**Pathos**

Makhon's empathy and love towards the chick through his decision to give away to a family with chickens, connects to the readers. From the egg to its growth, Makhon does everything to keep the chicken safe and happy. He would wake up and check the chicken everyday if it's doing well or not. But soon he realises that the chick never belonged to the ducks and his decision in the end reflects his compassion and the emotional weight of separation.

**THEMES IN HAHIRAMOR HAHI:**

*Hahiramor Hahi (Smile of Hahiram)*, it is a story about faith in God's plan. The protagonist of the short story is Hahiram and it is a name in Assamese given to someone who always holds a smile on his face no matter good or bad life is. He has a Mango tree and it gives an ample quantity of mangoes. Hahiram loves to share mangoes with the kids in the village. Another important character is God himself. God doubts Hahiram's faith towards him because he says that whatever god does, he does it for his

good, and this anchors the story. His faith never shakes even when God repeatedly tests him. After the devastating wind destroys his beloved mango tree, the villagers mock him about his faith towards God. Hahiram respond them with a smile because he believes that the tree's removal allows sunlight to nourish other plants in his garden. He does not want to cut down the tree himself because he loves to share the mangoes with the kids of the village but God does it for him. Despite repeated difficulties, Hahiram shows the power of positive mindset by reframing every challenge as a divine blessing. After the earthquake leaves cracks in his land, he believes that God himself came and ploughed his garden to make his farming easier, and it is a divine intervention for him. The story portrays a series of difficult trials from God, each designed to test the depth of Hahiram's faith and his ability to trust in divine decision. For instance, the windstorm that destroys only his mango tree, the thunderstorm that turns the remaining of the mango tree and the earthquake that leaves cracks in his garden, sparing all other properties in the village. The villagers' scepticism intensifies the test by pressuring Hahiram to doubt his belief.

Hahiram shows love and respect for nature, particularly the mango tree, which he adores and shares with the children of the village. He views nature as part of God's creation and trusts its role in the divine plan. His gratitude is a defining aspect of his character. He thanks God not just for blessings but also for hardships, recognizing their hidden benefits.

The story emphasizes that faith, resilience and gratitude can transform even the worst situations into opportunities for growth and renewal.

## LITERARY DEVICES IN *HAHIRAMOR HAHI*:

### Symbolism

- 1. The Mango Tree:** The tree represents Hahiram's earthly attachment and his generosity towards others (The kids of the village). The destruction of the mango tree symbolizes the transcendence of material ties.
- 2. Cracks:** Cracks in the garden after the quake symbolize disruption that leads to a new birth and growth.
- 3. Ashes:** The ashes represent the end of one phase and the ideal ground for new beginnings. "Had been thinking of planting eggplant seeds, whatever happened is for good, God has given ample amount of wood ashes bid" (Barua112). Hahiram is happy here because the ashes of the mango tree are beneficial because it can provide essential nutrients like potassium and phosphorus, benefitting vegetable growth.

### Personification

The wind, thunderstorm, and earthquake are given intentional purposes by God to test the faith of Hahiram. Nature is personified as a medium of God's will.

### Allegory

The story functions as an allegory for spiritual faith and resilience. Despite the worst scenarios, Hahiram remain faithful to his God. The villagers try to instil doubts on his faith but he is an incorrigible person who stands strong in his belief. One faces many challenges in life but still should remain faithful to God in order to overcome it, which is beautifully presented by Nabakanta Barua through the protagonist Hahiram.

**THEMES IN *SIYAL ARU SAH*:**

*Hiyal Aru Sah (Jackal and the Shadow)*, a short story which delves into the themes such as illusion vs reality, pride and humanity, adaptation and practicality and the passage of time. The story emphasizes the perception and reality, when the Jackal sees its shadow as big as an elephant because of the sunlight, believes that he should and can hunt an elephant fostering an illusion of grandeur. The owl's advice when the Jackal is resting after the failed attempts to hunt the big animals, represents a call to focus on achievable goals rather than chasing unrealistic dreams. "Dear, instead of trying to hunt big preys in the day light, you should continue again as you used to hunt at night in the villages and have something small. If not then you'll die of starvation" (Barua 186). The Owl advises the Jackal that instead of hunting in the daylight he should hunt in the night as he used to do before and go to the village if he can hunt any small prey. If not then he would die of hunger. Time serves as a teacher making the Jackal physically weaker and mentally more aware of his true capabilities because as the time passes during the process of hunting the big animals, the Jackal grows thin and weak, eventually realizing his earlier folly.

The themes of illusion vs reality, pride and humility, practicality, survival are evident in the story. The jackal's misinterpretation of its shadow reflects the risks of overestimating one's abilities based on illusions or falsified perceptions. Just because the jackal sees its shadow as big as an elephant it thinks of him as the hunter that sized of it, leading its own weakness and starvation. The pride that forms by its inflated sense of self, reflects the consequences of excessive pride and the need to remain grounded in reality.

The owl's wise advice highlights the importance of adapting to one's actual circumstances, focusing on practical and achievable goals rather than chasing day and night the unrealistic ambitions. The story underscores the need of prioritizing survival and maintaining humility, especially when facing one's limitations and the jackal realizes this only after the failed attempts that lead to the brink of its death.

**LITERARY DEVICES IN *HIYAL ARU SAH*:****Symbolism**

- **Shadow:** The Jackal after seeing his shadow starts thinking that he is as big as the shadow which is about the size of an elephant. The shadow symbolizes illusion and self-deception.
- **Owl:** The bird symbolizes wisdom and guidance because it gives to the Jackal, practical advices. "Dear, instead of trying to hunt big preys in the day light, you should continue again as you used to hunt at night in the villages and have something small. If not then you'll die of starvation" (Barua 186)

**Irony**

The Jackal thinks of hunting an elephant "If I don't eat an elephant then my hunger won't go away" (Barua 185), after seeing his own shadow he says the line, meaning that if he does not eat an elephant then his hunger will never be gone. Unfortunately, the Jackal ends up weak and unable to catch even a small chicken. This situational irony reinforces the moral.

**Personification**

The Jackal and the Owl are attributed with human like traits, such as pride, ambition and wisdom making the story relatable and engaging to the young readers. The Jackal's desire to eat and hunt an elephant after seeing his shadow shows pride and unattainable ambition. Even after the failed attempts, while sitting under the tree, the Jackal again thinks of hunting an elephant and during this thinking

process, the time has changed from night to day without being noticed by the Jackal. And lastly the Owl's suggestion after seeing the Jackal in its condition, advises the Jackal to hunt as he used to do before and satisfied with his small hunts reflects the wisdom of the Owl.

## Imagery

The description of the shadow, the weak and exhausted Jackal sitting under the tree, the night setting, the sun rising, and the owl observing the jackal perched on the tree create vivid mental pictures that enhance the story's moral impact.

## THEMES IN *MAKHONOR VATOU*:

*Makhonor Vatou (Makhon's Parrot)*, the story highlights how living beings, like the parrot thrive when given proper attention and interaction. Neglect leads to no change, while care fosters growth. In the starting of the story, the parrot is left alone with no proper interactions with the family of Makhon, and only mimics the crows. And finally, when Makhon interacts with the parrot during his illness, it begins to mimic his sounds, reflecting its newfound connection. The parrot learns to mimic the crow's sounds because of its surroundings and no exposure with the people. Later the parrot also imitates the coughing of Makhon demonstrating that learning often achieves through imitation and exposure to one's environment. The story also portrays the emotional connection between animals and humans, demonstrating how they can influence and support each other. When Makhon is sick he asks for the parrot's company; "Mom, bring Vokot to my room, I'll pass time seeing it" (Barua 114), Makhon is asking his mom to bring the parrot to his room so he can keep looking at it. And the parrot also begins imitating Makhon's cough, indicating their growth. Makhon learns how to teach the Parrot to speak and spends his time with the Parrot after classes are over.

## LITERARY DEVICES USED IN THE STORY

### Symbolism

1. **Vokot:** The name of the parrot is Vokot. The parrot symbolizes untapped potential and influence of care and environment on growth and learning. The parrot in the initial phase is left alone and it can hear only crow's sounds and as a consequence it starts making sound of a crow. "Father, father, not a crow- it's Vokot" (Barua 114). When the parrot is kept with Makhon, it imitates cough sounds of Makhon, leading the family to think as if it is sick. Hence, we can say that environment and proper communication is most important factors in one's life.
2. **Crow's sounds:** The crow's sounds represent how surrounding's impact on behaviour, as the parrot mimics what it hears the most often.

### Metaphor

The parrot's learning process indicates as a metaphor for human learning and the importance of exposure to ideal environments. The parrot's mimicry of the sounds it hears, reflects how children or individuals absorb what they see and hear around them.

### Irony

The family members in the house believe that the parrot is sick when it mimics Makhon's cough, but the parrot is actually imitating what it has observed and learned. Whenever Makhon tries to feed medicine to the parrot, it replies "nakhao" (won't consume) suggesting that the parrot is doing well. The supposed illness of the parrot turns out to be evidence of its ability to learn through observation.

## Juxtaposition

The behavior of the busy family is juxtaposed with the parrot's mimicry, indicating how the family's neglect inadvertently shapes the parrot's actions. Makhon's family is of four members- Father, mother and sister (Monika). His father is always busy doing job, mother is busy with house works and Monika has no genuine interest in the bird, and Makhon has no idea on how to guide the parrot to speak. The family's lack of attention leads to the parrot mimicking crow instead of learning human speech.

### THEMES IN *DUJON SUBURIA*:

*Dujon Suburia (Two Neighbours)*, a short story of two neighbours living next to each other- one is rich and the other poor. The rich man is stingy and self-centred, the poor is generous and has a gentle heart. The rich man lives in a beautiful house while the poor lives in a hut. The poor man loves when the house sparrows come to his hut and rest there, in addition to this the poor man also allows the sparrows to build their nest. But the rich man is just the opposite.

Whenever the sparrows come and try to make their nest around his house, he chases them away.

One day the poor man notices that a newly hatched sparrow has fallen down from the nest and its leg is broken. Therefore, he wraps the sparrow's leg with cloth and place it back in the nest. The newly hatched bird is an angel. When the bird is able to fly, its mother appreciates the old man by offering some rice seeds. And before the sparrow leaves it says- "Sik sik

Moi horu sorai (I am a small bird)

Diboloi eku unai (Nothing to give you much)

Mur punati bosai dila (You saved my child)

Tarei aiya dan (This is the gift for it)

Dhankeita lua (Take the paddy seeds)

Hakonite rua sik sik sik (Plant them nearby)" (Barua 293)

The old man soon sows the seeds and starts taking care of it. In a few days the paddy starts to grow and within few months the paddy seeds grow into gigantic rice plants. The size of the plants are not as usual ones, the grains are bigger than the natural one. And when the poor man opens the husks, he finds Diamonds, golds, and pearls. He sells them and gets rich and later establish a school. Despite being rich now his behaviours are still same unlike the rich neighbour. Seeing the poor man getting rich, the rich neighbour goes to his house with a bottle of rice beer and ask about his sudden prosper. "How have you gotten this much of wealth" (Barua 294). The poor man reveals everything that earned him the wealth. And after having the conversation the rich neighbour returns to his home and starts searching for a sparrow nest. The one who use to chase away the sparrows now ironically searches for it. The rich man finds a nest and sees three newly hatched sparrows so he decides to throw one of them. Even after the drop, the sparrow has no injury therefore, he holds it and breaks one of its legs and binds it with some clothes. He keeps the sparrow back in its nest. After a while the mother sparrow comes and gives him some paddy seeds and says;

“Tumi korila jene (Just like you did)

Lavu hobo tene (you will be benefitted)

Dhankeita dilu (given the rice seeds)

Tumi rui thoba (you sow them)

Ki bisari kinu pua (What you desired and what you get)

Takea vabi saba” (ponder it) (Barua 294)

The rich man without wasting time, sows the seeds in his garden. He starts pouring water and adds fertilizers on the seeds believing he will get diamonds, golds and pearls just like the poor man. Time passes and the paddy plants are matured now. He checks the grains but finds nothing. And out of nowhere he notices an old man sitting among the plants carrying some documents, and it says “You have borrowed so much money from me in my previous life, see these documents, you had not even returned one percent of it, from now onwards your house and lands are mine” (Barua 294). The old man comes to take back his money which he lent him when he was alive. The old man says that he did not even return a single rupee that he borrowed, and shows the proof through the documents. The old man takes all the properties of the rich man and now he is compelled to live like a slave in his own house. But the rich man’s character does not change. One day the poor man who is wealthy now, ask the rich man to take care of his bag filled with gold because he believes that they are good friends now. When the poor neighbour returns and ask the rich man to give back the bag, he sees only sand inside the bag. The poor neighbour asks about it but the rich man replies “janu ki hol heitue aitu hol.” (Barua 295). means that he doesn’t know anything whatever happened it happened by itself. The poor man says nothing and leaves. After some days the newly rich man buys a monkey and teaches him some words “heitue aitu hol.” (Barua 295). In the school he established all the kids around the area study and among them the rich neighbour’s son is admitted too. And when the rich man comes to take his son back, he sees no one in the classroom so he runs to the owner (newly rich man), and asks about his son. The owner points out to the monkey claiming that is his son. He gets shocked and does not believe him. So, the owner suggests him to confirm by asking the monkey itself. When the rich man asks the monkey, it replies “heitue aitu hol.” (Barua 295). The rich man realises his past mistake of hiding the gold. Actually, it was a prank to avenge the rich man. Since he realises his mistake, the owner of the school gives his son back who was studying in another room. But the rich man refuses saying that the boy should stay under his guidance because if the boy stays with him then he would be spoiled. The story ends with the line “later the neighbours became good friends” (Barua 296), suggesting a happy ending and the beginning of a new friendship.

The story with the themes such as generosity vs selfishness, consequences of actions and value of gratitude can be discussed here. The contrast between the rich man’s selfishness and the poor man’s generosity forms the core of the narrative. It reflects how selflessness and kindness can lead to greater reward than greed. The story also teaches how one’s actions, whether good or bad have consequences. The poor man’s good deeds bring unexpected blessings, and while the rich man’s greed and cruelty lead to downfall.

## LITERARY DEVICES USED IN THE STORY:

### Irony

The rich neighbour, who at first chases away the sparrows, later seeks them out in hopes of gaining wealth, underscores the futility of greed.

## Personification

Here the sparrows are personified, giving them the ability to talk with humans. This makes the story more engaging and relatable for the readers.

## Symbolism

1. **Sparrow:** The sparrows symbolize fragility, innocence and gratitude through its actions.
2. **Paddy Seeds:** The seeds given by the sparrow symbolizes the reward of kindness and nurturing.

Barua by using various literary devices and universal themes, make his work more engaging as well as help the young readers navigate complex ideas and emotions in ways that are accessible and meaningful. Literary devices make the works of a writer colorful and memorable. Literary devices foster imagination and critical thinking by inviting readers to interpret layers of meaning. In the stories such as *Hiyali Palegoi Ratanpur*, *Makhonor Kukurapuali*, and *Dujon Suburia*, through the use of animal characters to explore human traits makes abstract concepts such as kindness and courage, more relatable and comprehensible for young readers. Themes also reflects universal life lessons, like self-discovery, friendship, and resilience. By addressing these topics, stories help children connect with their own experiences and develop empathy or togetherness. Books with themes of facing and overcoming challenges can guide children in processing difficult emotions and understanding moral values. Literary devices and themes by their perfect blending can enhance the overall impact of a story.

## MORAL DIMENSIONS IN BARUA'S CHILDREN'S LITERATURE :

Before diving deeper, let us have a look on the *Social Learning Theory* by Albert Bandura (1925-2021). The question Can we only learn through direct experience, or also from studying others? Psychologist Alber Bandura came up with an interesting experiment to answer that exact question and formed a theory. Bandura came up with the **social learning theory** in the 1960s, and it was the time dominated by brilliant scholars who did not believe Bandur's idea of arguing that learning was always a result of classical and operational conditioning. To prove that children can learn by mere observation, Bandura came up with the BOBO DOL EXPERIMENT, a set of controversial studies which involved preschool children, adult and a stand-up punch doll. Through this theory Bandura explains that people learn by observing others and copying their behavior. Learning happens by watching others, not just through direct experience. Children often imitate parents, peers, or fictional characters in stories. In children's literature, the theory reflects the power of positive role models, relatable characters, and repeated moral lessons to shape behavior and values. Writing that show good behavior being rewarded or promote empathy through diverse representation can encourage children to adopt those traits in their own lives.

Perhaps, it won't be wrong if we say whatever is done for children is holy. A mother knows how a child grows slowly and how with their little knowledge, to construct their own imaginary world and hover inside it. Their little world can be filled with colors only by the adults. But this work is not easy as it required a person to leap into their little world and this task was done by Nabaknata Barua. In the canon of Assamese literature, Barua started a new trend. *Siyali Palegoi Ratanpur*, was the beginning of his trend. Barua's writings should be collected and preserved since his achievements and works are little known by the people. Barua not only focused inside the country but also collected and translated works that were suitable for children from other parts of the world. Nabakanta Barua was a genuine lover of children and it is evident in the lines he has written for the children. In the preface of the book Barua writes, "Moromor jun, hun, aru kun (My dear, Moon, Gold, and who)" (Barua 40). He calls the children or the future readers, as his dear ones. Jun and Hun are names that are given to someone who is very close to heart in Assam, especially within the family members. In the preface he also expresses his desire

to go back in time. “Tohotok aru tohotor burok dekhi amaru akou ebar ghuri jabo mon jai (Watching you and others like you, we crave to return to our childhood days)” (Barua 4).

***Bogoli Aru Kekura (Crane and The Crab)***, a story of Crane and a Crab, where both of them shares a little conversation highlighting moral lessons like trusting own instincts, cunningness, hidden intentions and self-preservation. The Crane named Tingkhong landed in muddy field and meets a Crab who is inside his little cave. The Crane asks the Crab to come out slowly from its hole “Aingkori Bengkori ulai aha lahe lahe kori boge haua kori jau” (Barua 271). The Crab here also given a human name ‘Rohimola’ and she rejects the invitation by replying that she cannot come out because of its illness. The Crab’s decision to remain inside its hole, reflects the value of trusting one’s intuition. Even though the Crane appeared amicable, the crab senses the danger and avoids a fatal mistake. The Crab’s fake illness shows the importance of thinking quickly while facing any kind of danger. Instead of confronting or panicking, the crab uses wit to outsmart its predator. This teaches that cleverness or cunningness can be powerful non-violent weapon, overcoming obstacles or threats. The Crane’s seemingly friendly invitation covers its predatory intent reflecting the line not everyone acts in your best interest. Crab’s refusal to leave the hole is a lesson in the importance of protecting oneself, even when tempted. It reflects that in life, safeguarding own boundaries and safety is not selfish but wise. The tale serves as a reminder of the importance of wit and resilience in difficult situations.

In ***Konlorar Kotha***, the hero of the story is Konlora, who one day encounters a Rhino while coming back from his school. The rhino is in the paddy fields devouring the plants. Konlora remain calm even though it is his first time encountering a rhino. He runs back to his village and informs them about it. Later they prepare themselves well and go to paddy field and chase away the rhino, “Gaon r manuhe ting bojai, jui jolai, hai huruli kloriboloi dhorile. Gorhtu lahe lahe paharor namonilo gusi gol”. By his clear thinking Konlora, saves the villagers from the upcoming damage the rhino could have brought. The villagers praise him for his quick thinking instead of getting panicked in such situations.

***Kadom Aru Basapi***, a tale of two small girls, reflects the importance of learning survival techniques. One day the girls go to play near the river Doyang. After playing for some time together, Basapi decides to run along the river through the stones. Unfortunately, she slips and falls into the river struggling to stay afloat. Even though Kadom wants to help her friend still she cannot because she can’t swim. Luckily, Kadom’s brother is also nearby on a jujube tree. After seeing Basapi drowning, he suddenly jumps into the river and saves her. After being saved, both the little girls decide that they would learn swimming “Kadom aru Basapi thirang korile, hehoti hatur hikibo” (p-272). This story highlights why one must learn basic survival skills such as swimming, self-defence etc.

***Kantakramor Budhi***, a short story of a porcupine family. The family has a son named Kantakram. One day his mother and father get extremely sick and they can’t go to get themselves to feed their stomach. Before Kantakram used to eat all the fruits that were gathered by his parents. Time comes when he is no longer able to hold his appetite, so his parents ask him to go eat by his own this time. But kantakram is hesitant and replies asking what would they eat? “Kintu tumaluke ki khaba?” (Barua, Nabakanta: Kantakramor budhi, line 4). His mother finally convinces him by saying that they would eat once they get better “Amar ga bhal palei khamgoi, atiya tumi khaagoi ja”. He still feels bad for them and unwillingly moves to get some pears. Once he reaches the pear tree after traveling some distance, he sees many pears hanging on the tree as well as on the ground. He collects all the pears on the ground placing them on a place, thinks of an idea since he does not want to eat alone. He then turns his back towards the pears and sting its needle. He manages to get some pears on it and goes back to his parents and shares the pears among them. Seeing the son’s act they proudly acknowledge him saying though his thorns are fragile, but his mind is sharp ‘Amar kantakramor kaitburhe kumol, budhitsu hole bor suka’ (p173).

The central message of the story is selflessness and creativity. Kantakram shows selflessness by not wanting to eat the pears alone while his parents are sick. Even though he is sad still he demonstrates creativity by his unique ability with the thorns. The story highlights the value of thinking outside the box, caring for others and the importance of family.

***Bagh Aru Kawoi Tilika***, story begins with a tiger taunting a climbing perch fish, mocking its confined life within the pond. The tiger believes that he has a better entertaining life than the fish because it can travel around the land and witness many things. “Tohotor jibontu aidore pani khedali thakutei gol. Mur dore jodi matit ghuribo parilioheten.....kot je ki dekhiliheten (Your whole life has been wasted living in the water, if only you could walk like me on the land.....the wonders you’d see” (Barua 273). The fish also replies maintaining a calm demeanour. Their arguments keep growing and finally they reach to a settlement where they would race against each other. A bear hears their dispute and suggests the rules of their race, the fish would race along the water’s edge and the tiger would run along the shore. The tiger thinks that his one or two long leaps can earn him victory. The race begins and the tiger quickly runs ahead. After covering some distance, the tiger turns back and calls out to the fish, “Kawoi tilika, kunkhini paisahi” (line-18). To his surprise, a voice answers from ahead suggesting that the fish is already ahead of the tiger in the race. Confused, the tiger picks up speed to overtake the fish. He calls out again but once more the climbing perch fish’s voice comes from further ahead, taunting the tiger that it still can’t reach the fish. The process continues for a while and now the tiger is exasperated and exhausted, eventually gives up and goes inside the jungle in shame.

Unbeknownst to the tiger, the clever climbing perch fish has devised a plan. The fish placed its friends along the water’s edge to respond whenever the tiger calls out, creating illusion that the fish is always ahead. By using wit, the fish has turned the tiger’s arrogance against him.

The story’s moral is that intelligence and strategy can overcome strength and arrogance. The climbing perch fish, despite its physical limitations, uses its cleverness to outrun the tiger, reflecting that brains often triumph over brawn. This story also reminds the readers that no matter how small or weak ones’ opponent might seem, it is wrong to underestimate them.

***Hinghor Biya (Marriage of the Lion)***, is a tale of a lion that lives a life of pride and privilege. He never hunts or works, but only roars to command respect. One day the spoiled lion sees a girl and keeps staring at her because of her beauty and at first glance he falls in love with her. The girl comes to the jungle to collect woods. Later she leaves and the lion keeps thinking of her all the time and would not eat even when he is presented with his favourite deer meat by his mother. Finally, the girl again comes back to the jungle and while she is leaving after collecting woods, the lion follows back to her house. The lion meets her father and directly tells that he likes his daughter, “Apunar suwalitu mor bor bhal lagise (I like your daughter so much)” (Barua 275). The father thinks that the lion would eat his daughter. But the lion clarifies that he wants to marry the girl. Even though the father is scared, still gets enraged and denies strongly to the proposal since he cannot let his daughter marry an animal. The denial makes the lion angry so he leaps upon the father and says that how could he refuse the king’s request, “Ki koli? Hinghok suali nidio? Ro tuk moja dekhuam. (What did you say? Refusing to give the girl? Let me show you my rage)” (Barua 275). Terrified but clever, the father shows concern that his daughter might be frightened by the lion’s teeth and claws, and suggests that the lion cut them to make himself more acceptable. The obsessed lion agrees and returns to his territory searching for a barber and a dentist. His mother upon knowing this, requests him not to do so but he does any way. However, when the lion comes back to get the girl, the father beat him with a sturdy stick. The lion unable to defend himself, fled back to its territory in shame, realising too late the consequences of his pride and rash decisions.

Through the character of the lion, Barua tries to teach some important moral lessons such as pride leads to failure, thinking before acting, cleverness overcome strength and respecting own boundaries.

The lion's arrogance and sense of entitlement result in his ultimate humiliation by the father, showing the importance of humility. Lion's decision to cut his teeth and claws without thinking its negative effects reflects the consequences of hasty choices. The girl's father with his cleverness and resourcefulness demonstrate that intelligence can sometimes defeat physical power. The lion's own humiliation comes because of his stupidity not realising that he belongs to the jungle and he should have remained there. By showing the urge to marry the human girl, it crosses the natural law. The tiger does not care or ask about the girl's consent which reflects the lion's unethical character. The story also serves as a reminder of respecting other's boundaries and decisions.

***Gaat Rod Nologa Aru Borohun Nopora Manuh (The human unaffected by Rain and the Sun)***, is a short story by Barua that portrays the importance of focus in life. In the story the king gets old and he cannot continue his works as he does before. The king has two sons but whenever they are asked to do work or help the king, they refuse by saying that today is very sunny, or it is raining they can't do "Aji bor rod. Iman rodot koloiku jabo nuwari (Too sunny today, can't even go out)" (Barua 282). Seeing the laziness of them the king's lefthand man gives an idea to the king, and says only the one who does not get wet in the rain and the sun light cannot affect, can become a king and further says that the king is the living example of it. The elder prince does not believe that his father has such kind of mysterious power. The old adviser tells him to explore the world so then only he could find such a man. The prince travels around the world for several days but he finds no one with such ability. He then returns to his kingdom disappointed and on the way back he notices that a man working in the field with a spade while the sun is scorchingly hot but his friends resting under a tree enjoying its shed. The prince gets curious seeing the man working in such weather so he approaches the man and asks why he works so hard without taking rest "Tumi iman rodot kio kam kori asa? (Why are you working in the scorching sun?)" (Barua 282). The man replies that he must complete the work by evening and he does not have time to care about the sun's hotness "mur ai kamkhini aibelate heh koribo lagibo. Rod botahor sinta koribor mur homoi nai (I must finish my work by this evening, I don't have time to think about storm and the sun)" (Barua 282). Interestingly the man while answering the prince's question does not look at him, fully focused on his work unbothered by its surroundings. The prince continues his journey back home and again one day he sees a man transplanting the seedlings of paddy in the pouring rain. The prince asks the man why he is doing so in the rain and the man replies if he does not do it in this rain, then the roots of the seedling would get dried. The prince gets amazed by their answers and returns to his kingdom.

Once the prince reaches home, the minister asks if he could find the man who does not get effected by the sun's scorching light and rain. The prince replies no but says that he met two interesting people and tells everything about them. And the minister immediately tells the prince that the people he is talking about, are the ones who does not get effected by the rain and sun. And adds that to be a king is more difficult than those, and the king has been working so hard in order to maintain its reputation. Since the king is old now and if he does not have heir who can withstand every difficulty on its path then he would lose the kingdom to others. The prince realises and he becomes a very hardworking prince helping the king in every way possible.

In life while one tries to do something big, on its way there will always be obstacles to stop him from the path of success. This story motivates readers why one must not be lazy and must be focused to achieve greatness. The men working in the fields despite the bad weathers, reflects the need of focus and determination in life. And the prince's change of mindset was because of the men in the fields.

Gundho Aru Sa (Smell and shadow), A tale of a poor boy named Monbor, sent to meet his aunt who has been inviting him many times from before. His mother insists and he agrees. Just like any other kids, Monbor also wants to have some cookies on the way since the destination is quite far. But for that he needs money but his mother does not have money so she wraps some rice using leaves and gives it to Monbor. He starts his little journey and after covering some distance he gets hungry and decides to

have the rice his mother packed for him. He stops by the market where there is a stream. He fetches some water from the river and unwraps his rice. While having his meal a lady who is frying fish, asks Monbor to buy and have the empty rice with the fried fish. Monbor refuses to buy the fish and later completes his meal. Surprisingly, once Monbor completes his meal the lady asks for money. Monbor gets confused and asks what is she asking money for “tumah akou hikitu kio dim? (Why should I pay?)” (Barua 285). The lady replies that he ate the smell of the fish so he must pay for the smell of the fried fish “toi voja masor gundho paisili ne nai? (You got the smell of the fried fish or not while eating?). (Barua 285)”. Monbor refuses to give money for it because he did not eat anything from the greedy lady. The lady keeps asking for the money and to settle it, the market owner comes and asks about the matter. The owner agrees that Monbor has eaten the smell of the fish so he should pay for it. Monbor gets disappointed but soon he realises that the owner is in his favour. The owner tells the lady that since Monbor ate the smell he would also pay the shadow of the money “Monboretu tumar mas khua nasil gundhotue kahaisil. Gotike tumi poisa nupua, poisar sa tue paba (Monbor did not eat your fried fish only ate the smell of it. Therefore you won't get money but the shadow of the money)” (Barua 285). Monbor goes to sunlight and asks the lady to take the shadow of the money. And the owner also adds that if she sells fish then she will get money, but if she sells smell then she will get shadow. The lady leaves after being humiliated and Monbor reaches his aunt's house happily.

The story demonstrates how greediness can lead someone to its downfall. The lady's greed by asking money even though it was just the smell, shows how one's greediness can lead to extreme unethical behaviours. The owner by killing the poison by another poison is a hope of justice for Monbor highlighting that one should never be intimidated by the devils in society. This story serves as a guidance for the younger generations as well as for adults.

Val Beya (Good and Bad), the teacher while teaching his children in the classroom, two late students arrive, they are Madan and Anil. The teacher asks them why they are late, Anil first hesitated and almost said that his mother delayed in cooking breakfast but he changed the tone and tells the teacher that on the way he saw people gathered enjoying the bear and monkey dancing near the road. And he also joined the crowd and got late for class. Now the time comes for Madan to tell the reason, he says that on the way he saw a blind man trying to cross the road, the teacher interrupts and says that if he was also staring at the blindman just like Anil “Tumi hobola take takei sai sila?” (line 19). Madan denies it and says that he got concerned about the blind man getting hit by the cars on the road so he held the stick of the blind man and led him to the other side of the road. After hearing both of their explanations, teacher ponders for a while and says that Anil has wasted time in unnecessary scenes and that's why he would get punished but Madan is late because of a good deed and he does not deserve any punishment. Before Anil gets scared of punishment the teacher adds one important points that he could have lied but he did not. Both of them are exempted from punishment because of their truthful nature and helpfulness.

Because of the teacher's act the students get happy and encouragement in being always truthful and helpful. The characters of Madan and Anil can relate to the young readers and their acts of kindness and truthfulness encourage them doing good which are ethical. Anil who could have lied to the teacher chooses to tell the truth resulting his exemption from the punishment he could get and this character encourage the readers to always tell the truth and the character of Madan reflects kindness by helping the blind man, encouraging the young ones to help the needy people.

Ishar Jar Hohai, the meaning of the title is God that helps. The main character here is Hajrat Mahammad who is a believer of Muslim god Allah. Hajrat is taking rest under a tree because of the exhaustion after travelling a long distance. On the tree a bird is singing a song which was melodious and pleasant so he falls asleep. After sleeping for some hours, he opens his eyes and sees a big man holding a sword trying to kill him, Mahammad asks calmly why he is trying to kill him “tumah ki lage

vai? (What do you want?)” (Barua 297). The man replies that he wants his life “Tumar pran (Your life)” (Barua 298). And explains more by saying that Mohammad is atheist because he is trying to destroy the ongoing religion which is very old and orders him to stop preaching Allah immediately and if not then he would kill him. The preacher says that he won’t stop preaching because he knows that God is always with him and tells the killer to do whatever he wants “tumar ji mon jai kora (Do whatever you want)” (Barua 298). The preacher sits down and starts his prayer. The killer moves forward intending to kill Mahammad but once he approaches near him, he sees mysterious lights coming out of him and objects that looks like the words Mahammad is citing and spinning around him trying to protect him from the killer. Suddenly the sword of the killer automatically flies away, somehow later the sword is in the hands of Mahammad and he smiles and asks the killer who would help him now, the killer gets afraid and says no one is going to save him. Mahammad understands his helplessness and tells him that he has saviour but he does not know, the merciful mighty god will help him too “Ase. Nissoi ase. Tumihe najana. Param dayalu ishware tumak roikha koribo (Certainly there is. The almighty merciful god will help you)” (Barua 298). And after saying that Mahammad throws the Sword somewhere far.

This story is a reflection of unwavering faith towards God suggesting that no matter how perilous or dangerous situations come one must keep alive the faith towards God. Through God, everything can be achieved and he is the one that helps in need. The story encourages young readers to be devoted to God.

In Barua’s writings for children, often the characters grapple with ethical dilemmas encouraging young readers to reflect on values such as honesty, courage, gratitude, respect, empathy, family, truthfulness and many more. Barua’s potential to balance entertainment with deepest moral inquiry underscores the potential of literature to influence the moral character of children. His ability to portray relatable children character as well as the animals, explore complex moral issues and his writings for the kids remain influential in fostering moral awareness and critical thinking in young readers. The characters depicted in his stories consist of those who are good and those who are evil or bad. Good characters exhibit good qualities such as obedience, smartness, friendliness, unity, wisdom, helpfulness, hard work, responsibility etc. Meanwhile the evil one displays stubbornness, bad temper, arrogance, greed etc. As a writer for children, Barua’s task was to evoke empathy, love, pity as well as to educate them to grow as a pure form of human. Kids grow up with pure hearts and innocent minds, and the stories they read have great contributions in keeping their purity unaffected.

Nabakanta Barua always believed that the future of the great society lives inside the children of the present time. He acted as if all the children are his grandchildren and he was a man who loved children, it is evident in the poems, novels, dramas, short stories etc that are written for the young readers. For example, in the preface of the book *Siyali Palegoi Ratanpur*, he expresses his love addressing the young readers as his dear ones. Two years after the birth of a child to the adolescence his works never fail to inspire. For the kids around two to five years he has written Assamese alphabets and numbers, adding poetical magics. And the rest could be read by any age group after the basic learning of the Assamese language. His works are still studied in the schools of Assam. He has written works for every stage of the children.

## CONCLUSION:

Children’s literature is written especially focusing on the young readers and just like any other literature, children literature in its first form was oral. After centuries only it turned into written forms. Oral stories are the source of Children’s literature. The stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas were first told in oral form by the grandparents, aunts, aunties, uncle, and parents, the kids loved listening to the stupendous stories of the ancient books. In the first stage the kids mostly love to listen to the stories that are filled with mythical characters such as angels and animals. Second stage the stories of kings, queens, prince, princess etc. In the third stage which includes the kids around the age of seven to eleven, they

love the stories of warriors or the ancient heroes as well as king and prince. And lastly comes the fourth stage of children that are from the age of eleven or twelve to fourteen. In the third phase's kids are very important as the learning of its age mostly to stick to them and shape their characters. To shape their moral character, it is important to feed them with good contents of knowledge and ethical behaviors and to do that they must be provided with the great writers' works such as novel, short stories, autobiographies, dramas etc.

Kids grow slowly and with time they establish a great position in the society, their minds and hearts should be in harmony and to do so, the stupendous writers who adores the young little ones, takes the step to feed them with good knowledge and their main purpose is the vigorous growth of the children through their writings. Nabakanta Barua was one among those literary giants.

Morality has to do with the sense of good and bad. Through the characters of human and animals, Barua has beautifully articulated the ethical and educational lessons in his stories. Barua has greatly contributed in shaping the moral and intellectual development of the younger generation. Through the detailed discussion of Barua's writings, it is clear that his writings mostly focus on moral themes such a bravery, family, friendship, compassion, isolation, faith etc. These themes are precisely interwoven into narratives that are relatable and instructive, making them accessible to the children. His stories are filled with characters and scenarios that work as the mirror of everyday life, allowing young generations to identify with the stories and internalize the values presented.

In the history of Assamese literature Nabakanta Barua was the only one who had mixed lullabies, Assamese alphabets, pronunciation, word meanings, important general knowledge, thoughts and language of his own in his writings for children in the genres such as poem, short stories, novel, drama etc. Barua's children's literature serves as an effective educational tool. His writings combine lessons on morality and education. Barua's book *Mur Kitab*, teaches the young readers starting from the alphabets of Assamese language to the colors and names of animals. In the preface Barua states that the book would be suitable for the first stage of children who starts speaking for the first time. The language and tone of the poems are very simple and can be easily grasped.

Through the stories of Barua in children's literature we can get a glance and imagine the lost traditional way of story-telling in Assamese society. For instance, in the book *Na Aitar Kotha* reveals the old tradition of story-telling where an elderly man or woman would sit surrounded by kids under a tree or in the night on the veranda or near the hearth and narrate the amusing stories to the children. His writing also highlights the lost proverbs, jumbles, metaphors and various sayings.

Barua was influenced by many great children's literature writers and he accepted their influence on him. In the preface of the book *Siyali Palegoi Ratanpur*, he writes that once the young readers get matured after reading his book, they should read Lewis Carroll and Sukumar Rai's stories as well as the fables of Aesop. Barua had a highly imaginative mind and was able to put his imagination in the form of writings. He mixed his childhood experiences and the stories of the famous children's literature writers, creating something that is his own and present them for the children that are highly influencing. His skill runs through the lines of his works.

After the detailed study of his lesser-known works it is not wrong to say that as much as his famous works are important, other works of him deserves the same attention. Each of his work serves as educational tool for children as well as shape their character with the highly effective and universal moral lessons. On facts, animal sounds and names, Assamese word pronunciations, names of traditional foods, starting from the Assamese alphabets to the numbers in Assamese etc., he left lessons for the children in the pages of his books. The stories of him encourage the young generations to choose always the right path.

Barua used characters of animals so that the story gets more splendid and entertaining. The animals he used in his stories were mostly common and found in the villages of Assam and perhaps

Barua to make his works more engaging to the young readers he used them as the central characters in the stories. His stories also have kids as the central characters having different behaviors that a common kid has, adding to the effectiveness of his writings.

The ecological surroundings have also great effect in making his stories more engaging. In Konlorar Kotha, Barua gives a picture of the village through the words. The description of the road and paddy field creates a picture in the minds of the readers. Gundho Aru Sa, gives the description of a river with clean water and a market nearby. Kadam Aru Basapi, in this story there is also a description of a river named Doyang, on its shore the stones and jujube trees, reflecting the beauty of the nature in the old times.

Barua's writing also reflects the old Assamese society. In the stories the daily life of the common people of Assam and their practices are depicted. Birds, chickens, ducks, cats, dogs and most importantly cows were the common domestic animals in the houses of Assam. And taking care of these animals were their daily routine. The culture of Assamese people is also evident in his writings and prime example would be the lyric named Gorhor Gan, where a rhino is shown singing and playing dhol (drum). The poems of Barua's are lyrical, and in the lines the Assamese traditional foods are evident.

Barua used many pseudonyms to publish his writings mostly in children literature such as Ekhud Kokaideu (younger brother), Natun Kokaideu (New brother), Sapun Koka (Grandfather of the dreams), Aita (Grandmother) etc. Unlike other famous writers who used pseudonyms because of the societal issues, Barua used the names to be able to relate with the young readers. He believed that if the children read the name of the writer and finds them as their loved ones then they would be more enthusiastic thinking the original writer as their younger brother, grandfather, grandmother, and the grandfather of the dreams.

The study indicates that his writings also work as an effective educational tool. In the book named Na Aitar Hadhu, Barua gives information to the readers such as about the life span of animals, the tallest tree name, Assamese fruits names in English, origin of animal rearing, passport and visa, important days in the calendar, solar system etc. Additionally, another important book named Leseri Butola, tries to teach the readers about the sounds that various animals make, location of India, The color of national flag, five senses, festivals in Assam, name of the colors, source of the flood in Assam, about Christmas, etc.

Barua's narrative style is simple and has poetic rhythm making it appealing to young readers while maintaining literary depth. He uses elements like allegory, symbolism, irony, pathos etc., that reflect Assamese cultural traditions, mixing local folklore with universal storytelling techniques. Barua creates vivid imagery and profound emotions enabling readers to comprehend complex ideas through seemingly simple skills highlight his great ability.

His works serve an important role in fostering moral imagination among the children. Themes such as fear, loss, trauma, Barua creates narratives that encourage empathy and critical thinking. Stories that address personal and communal challenges motivate readers to reflect on ethical dilemmas and create problem solving skills. The study suggests that Barua's writings not only entertain the young readers but also educate them adding valuable insights into the development of moral reasoning.

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