

EFFECT OF CARTOONS ON COGNITIVE ABILITIES OF CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Mostly cartoons are about kids and for kids and movies that depict stories of children and kids. They may range from anime to real-life life like characters. So, the question is what is their purpose? Are they merely for the purpose of entertainment? What are their effects on the developing minds? Are they just art for art's sake or are didactic in nature? And many more such questions. When we are kids, we just watch and enjoy such things; we don't give a second thought or never question: Why? When? How? What? So, the current paper will try to analyze Doraemon based on these questions.

Keywords: Doraemon, Selfie with Bajrangi, gadget, cartoon, Nobita, animation

Cartoons or animations are favorite among kids. In fact, people from all age groups are fond of cartoons as they are good source of entertainment. Accessibility to these kinds of series and serials is just a click away during these days of technology. So, it is important to understand what kind of content and themes are dealt in such animated series as they can be a great source of learning for kids who can spend innumerable hours in front of screens watching *Selfie with Bajrangi*, *Gadget Guru Ganesh*, *Doraemon* and so on.

To begin with, first let's try to know little bit about these cartoons/ series as they are very popular among Indian children. First is *Selfie with Bajrangi*, it is an action-comedy animation TV series which is set in the small town of Funnipura in the contemporary North India. It is produced by Cosmos-May and the first episode was aired on 6th of Oct. 2017. The series revolves around a 9-year-old boy, Ankush, whose life changes when he meets Bajrangi, who

is the child incarnation of Lord Hanuman. Bajrangi is only visible to Ankush and helps him in everyday tasks and troubles. He also protects Ankush from his classmates, Ranga, Minus and Minus 2, who continuously bully him.

Another series is *Gadget Guru Ganesha*; it is produced by Cosmos-May and directed by Dheeraj Berry. Its first episode was aired on 22nd of August, 2020 on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. It is the story of a boy named Guru and his soft toy Ganesha, which is the child avatar of Ganesha. Ganesha comes to life whenever Guru is in trouble or wants help from him. Ganesha helps him with various gadgets which are akin to Doraemon's gadgets. Moreover, just like Nobita's dependency on Doraemon's gadgets lands him into trouble, similarly Guru also finds himself in trouble every time he overuses the gadgets.

Third in list and the topic for this paper is *Doraemon* which is a Japanese anime series created by Fujiko Fujio (pseudonym used for writing team of Hiroshi Fujimoto and Motoo Abika) and the series is about a robotic male cat belonging to 22nd century, who travels back in time to help a schoolboy of nine years, named Nobita Nohara. Doraemon belongs to the city of Kawasaki, Kanagawa (same place where Manga originated) and was created on 3rd September, 2112. His actual owner is Sewashi Nobi, great grandson of Nobita Nohara and lives in 22nd century. His family conditions are not very fine, so he decides to send a high-tech super robot to his ancestor Nobita, but due to his meager allowance, he manages to get only a defected and rejected robot, Doraemon which he sends to Nobita Nohara, who lives in 1970's. He is nine years old boy, living with his mother and father. Until now he is a failure, who always gets zero in class tests and is continuously bullied by his classmates especially Suneo and Gian who also happen to be his only friends along with Shizuka.

The show was highly criticized in Pakistan in 2019, where the claim was made on its harmful impact on children. It is a very popular TV series since its inception, and it is still running. In 2007, Oricon conducted a survey of thousand people, and Doraemon was ranked as second favorite Manga character while first was *Dragon Ball*. In fact, in 2008, Doraemon was made "anime ambassador" by Japan's foreign ministry to promote Japanese anime worldwide. In 2014, fifty-one magazines of Shogakukan featured Doraemon on the cover. Many famous personalities are compared to Doraemon either because of their popularity or the resemblance of some kind. So, it is not only popular in kids but also in adults. Now, the question is that is it really having all positive effects or also teaching dependency at every little step because when Nobita receives the robot, he completely starts depending on it for every single thing: from

doing homework, to protect himself from fights, for travelling to get grocery and all such things. To further look into the details one episode of Doraemon will be analyzed among many which are mostly all alike, where Nobita is in some problem and Doraemon comes to rescue. The problem in most of the series is a normal day to day hindrance faced by almost every kid on the planet, like preparing a class test, preventing a fight, escaping wrath of parents, losing something and so on.

The show is aired in many different languages and is available worldwide. So, it is not merely about Japan anymore, but its impact and effects are embedded throughout the world. The episode that will be analysed for current study is titled “Body Parts Swapping”. At the very beginning of the episode, we come to know that summer break is almost about to end but Nobita as always has not finished his summer homework so his mom is very angry at him and wants him to complete his homework as soon as possible and tells Nobita that he cannot do any other thing until he finishes his homework. Nobita thinks that only if he was as smart and intelligent as Shizuka he might finish his homework on time. So, as always Nobita asks Doraemon for gadget that might help him complete his homework.

Doraemon gets Body Part Swapping Machine gadget from his 4-D pocket (where he keeps all his gadgets brought from 22nd century) which would help Nobita by switching brain with Shizuka, his classmate, who is dedicated towards studies so Nobita decides to switch brain with Shizuka and complete his homework. He requests her to switch her head with Nobita so that he can complete his homework and play. Shizuka agrees and switches her body with Nobita. Both enter a machine/gadget and switch their body so now Shizuka’s body is attached to Nobita’s head and Nobita’s body is attached to Shizuka’s head. Nobita prepares to leave for home to do his homework while Shizuka goes to her home to watch TV. On seeing Nobita having beautiful legs of Shizuka, Doraemon is tempted to have such long legs as he always desired to have longer legs, so he requests Nobita to switch legs of Shizuka with him for some time to which Nobita agrees and now Nobita is having legs of Doraemon and remaining body of Shizuka. Doraemon gets very happy to have longer legs and runs everywhere out of happiness. He encounters Suneo and on being asked, he narrates the whole story to which Suneo goes to Nobita and requests him to lend him Shizuka’s hands for some time. Suneo is seen adoring his new beautiful hands by Gian, who also always wanted flat stomach, so he goes to Nobita and requests him to lend him Shizuka belly for some time, Nobita does the same so at the end of this mess, Nobita looks like a collage for he was having belly of Gian, hands of Suneo and legs of Doraemon.

The whole episode is nothing but nonsensical and leaves a very idiotic message to kids who can't comprehend such things but as always there is also a silver-lining in this darkest cloud. Doraemon, though created much earlier than technology overpowered humans, where virtual world is dearer than the real one and is actually pushing people into depression as when real problem falls, technology is of no use and so is the virtual world which actually exists nowhere. Here also, in Doraemon, there is hell dependency on Doraemon (aka technology) but the result is always adverse and awful, because whenever Nobita over uses any of Doraemon gadget, he befalls in problem and things turned worse for him and at the end of almost every episode Doraemon says that he was told this before that do not depend on the gadget (or technology). Doraemon is also unable to help Nobita when he calls himself trouble by depending on gadgets more than on himself. Similarly, dependency on technology (like mobile phones, internet etc.) too much nowadays is leading people towards all the troubles. But this is quite difficult for the younger kids to comprehend more dependency brings more trouble; they just need a Doraemon, Bajrangi or Ganesha for them.

After switching body parts with Nobita everybody goes their ways. Doraemon leaves to meet Mi-Chan, his cat friend. Doraemon tries to show off his legs to Mi-Chan, she gets scared and runs away. Meanwhile, Gian reaches home to have food which he loves so much but he can eat very little and gets full which he does not enjoy because he was having Shizuka stomach, meanwhile Shizuka leaves for bath after watching TV show where she undresses herself and watching Nobita's body and male parts, she screams. All run towards Nobita, who has not even started doing his homework. All ask for their body parts again and Nobita who is with Doraemon's legs, Gian's belly and Suneo's arms first resents but then agrees to return everybody's body parts so there is extreme chaos and one by one everybody enters the swapping machine and get their body parts but after much difficulty everyone gets their body parts back but Shizuka gets stuck with Doraemon's body and shouts and scolds at Doraemon, they both again enter the body swiping machine and come out as normal. So, again at the end of the episode we see Nobita at his study desk trying to finish his homework which if he might have started at the morning, instead of going after gadgets, would have been near completion.

In most of the episodes, we see Nobita falling into trouble and asking Doraemon for his gadgets but at the end of almost every episode, the gadgets are of no use to him and he falls into trouble for their over use so it can also be take it as an advice that the dependency on technology is not good but the idea is not clearly understandable for kids who just watch the show for

entertainment and think that what if there was a gadget for every single solution but they are unable to see that the gadgets actually are of no use to Nobita and will not be of any use to them as well. These shows are good for the purpose of entertainment but as they might leave an impact on the young minds and s/he might start thinking like Ankush from *Selfie with Bajrangi*, Guru from *Gadget Guru Ganesha* or Nobita from *Doraemon* and rely on imaginary friends and things for help.

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