UNIT 2  EDITING POETRY/RHYMES FOR CHILDREN

Structure
14.0 Objectives
14.1 Introduction
14.2 Dismissive and condescending view
14.3 Adequate knowledge of age group
  14.3.1 Different approaches for different age groups
  14.3.2 Suitable images and pictures
  14.3.3 Familiar and natural imagery
  14.3.4 Poems written by children
14.4 Overdose of patriotism
  14.4.1 First rhymes
  14.4.2 Riddles and games
14.5 First lessons through rhyme and poetry
  14.5.1 Values
  14.5.2 Epics and history
  14.5.3 Humorous verses
  14.5.4 Rhymes in English
14.6 Let us sum up
14.7 Check your progress: possible answers
14.8 Selected reading list

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the importance of editing rhymes and poetry for children;
- list out the various types of poetry for children of different age groups;
- distinguish between oral traditions and the written traditions;
- identify the pattern, themes and the rhyme scheme in children’s verses;
- explain the importance of folklore for children;
- analyse why nature in poetry is important for children;
- discriminate between poetry for children and poetry for the adults; and
- discuss poetry as a medium of tutoring for children through riddles, games, epics, odes and humour.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Editing reading material and poetry for children is perhaps the most challenging of the various editorial tasks. This is so because of various obvious reasons, the foremost concern of an editor of children’s books should be to ensure that the material chosen should foster the intellectual and moral development of the child.
As, the child’s mind is in the process of constant making, it registers images, suggestions and impressions very quickly. Some of these may leave a lasting impression on the child’s psyche. Therefore, while editing children’s books all care should be taken by the editor to work as a filter to drain out such impersonations.

Children are highly sensitive in the formative stage. They have not yet developed their defences nor do they rationalize as elders do. They have not yet hardened enough in their stances, preconceptions, prejudices and stereotype to work as censor. The child has to be conducted through the world of books and the editor has to perform his task without becoming visible and also without seeming to do so.

### 14.2 DISMISSIVE AND CONDESCENDING VIEW

It is very important for being a successful and competent editor of children’s literature and poems in particular, that we do not take a reductionist or dismissive view of childhood. In fact, it is the primary requisite of an editor to do so. An editor must not maintain a condescending view and must be both fair and non-judgemental.

A dismissive or condescending view implies that:

1. We may consider children as unfit for certain kinds of knowledge.
2. We may be unduly protective about children, trying to shield them from certain kinds of experience. In the process, we may be excluding or debarring them from experiences which could lead them to improvise life-skills.
3. We may take the work of editing a child’s book lightly, for after all only a ‘child’ will read it. The child, let us not forget, is equally discerning and discriminating as an adult, but in his own way. No doubt, the canvas is limited but the brush strokes are no less deft.

While editing books for children an editor is well advised to divide his labour between the form (language, style, vocabulary, imagery, length of sentences, punctuations) as well as the content of the book. Sometimes, it may be necessary to make the writer appreciate the necessity of chopping away or suitably amending certain sections or parts of the work under the scrutiny of an editor.

As an editor of children’s verses you must know that positive reinforcement vs deterrence. You must know what will help to reinforce concepts and what can cause any kind of prevention.

Here I would give you an example from a poem to justify the above point:

**Swift**

Let’s face it
English is a stupid language.
There is no egg in the egg plant.
No ham in the ham burger.
Neither pine nor apple in the pineapple.
English muffins were not invented in England.
French fries were not invented in France.

We sometimes take English for granted
But if we examine its paradoxes we find that
Quick sand takes you down slowly
Boxing rings are square
And a guinea pig is neither from Guinea or a pig
English was invented by proph, not computers
And it reflects the creativity of the human race
(Which of course isn’t a race at all)

That is why when the stars are out they are visible
But when the lights are out they are invisible,
If you want to know what God thinks of
Money, look at the people he gives it to.

And why it is that when I wind up my watch it starts,
But when I wind up this poem it ends.

(Anon)

The golden rule is not to underestimate the child or his capacity of understanding. The poem will make the following point clear. Here understanding and interpretation should not be confused by an editor. A child may not be able to interpret a poem; he may not even be able to put his ideas on record i.e. he may not be able to articulate or formulate his responses. And yet he may be deeply affected by a poem. Again he may not necessarily make out the same meaning of the poem as us, the trained elders; nevertheless the poem may ‘connect’ with the child in numerous ways. One striking image may transform the ‘status’ of the poem for the child while for us it may be a routine or commonplace description. So the editor must have his sensor fine-tuned so as to detect images or word pictures which might captivate the child’s imagination.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

1) What is the primary requisite of the editor of children’s literature and why?

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14.3 ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE OF AGE GROUP AND THEIR NEEDS

14.3.1 Different approach for different age groups

The editor should be very clear about the target age group for whom the poems have been selected. The whole strategy and approach of editings is based on the specific needs of the particular age group of the children. There may be a certain degree of inter-group overlapping in terms of maturity or mental development, or I.Q. depending on variance in socio-economic vectors. But taken over a broad spectrum, a workable consensus about the age groups can be reached by an editor.

14.3.2 Suitable images and pictures

For the youngest group of readers, who have conventionally been called the small readers, the most important fact to be kept in view is that an abundant use of audio-visual imagery should be encouraged. Abstract ideas are to be avoided as far
as possible and the editor must see to it that a concrete picture emerges out of the imagery used. Humanisation and personification are two very effective means of engaging the child's imagination.

When projected or illustrated, natural objects are very useful in delighting the child's response. Examples could be the smiling rose, the weeping clouds, running docks and clouds, galloping books or rivers. Editors, while editing poems for the 2-6 years, may also consider the idea of supplementing the written word with suitable pictures. For example, a poem that compares rain drops with the bars of sky or clouds may be accompanied by a picture, which gives a face to the clouds, with tears falling from the eyes. This will make the image sink more readily in the mind of our young reader.

Let me take a poem to clarify this point:
The moon comes every night to peep
Through the window where I lie:
But I pretend to be asleep;
And watch the Moon go slowly by,
And she never makes a sound!
She stands and stares! And then she goes
To the house that is next to me,
Stealing by on tippy-toes;
To peep at folk asleep maybe
- And she never makes a sound!

— (James Stephen)

(New oxford Modern English BK.3 David and Nicholas Horsburgh Delhi OVP 2008)

Natural objects and the stars and planets have an abiding mystique and attraction for children of 2-6 year age group. Here the imagery of the moon provides immense reading appeal to the reader. The images can be thus supplemented with beautiful pictures of the moon, the house and folks sleeping.

14.3.3 Familiar and natural imagery

The strongest point in favour of natural imagery is that it does seem to grow old or pass into discussion, while imagery taken very powerful contemporary sources despite immense appeal, might with the passage of time, loose their application. For instance, the image of a boy flying aloft a broomstick like Harry Potter may be highly effective today but may not retain its popularity 15 years from now. But the moon, clouds, rain, stars might never loose currency. Again nature and its imagery is natural and accessible to children of all social classics. Another time tested method is the use of family relationship with which children are familiar. For instance, in India, in many of the Hindi rhymes and songs the moon is addressed as mama or maternal uncle and the cat is addressed as mausi or mother's sister. These associations which are part of a growing child's world can be usefully employed as images in a poem.

Again rhyme and onomatopoeia (a word in which the sound echoes the sense, for example tap, woof, meow, twitter, whisper etc) should be more liberally used as very young readers enjoy such sounds and it is much easier to memorise such poems. Poems and jingles which incorporate elements from the counting and multiplication tables and from various configurations of alphabet are very popular with children. This is so because discreet and judicious use of these elements is part of the daily response of the child. Also an improvisation by the child on these lines is easier because he knows his numbers and letters well. Also, if the child likes the poem because of his familiarity with the numbers it also works the other way round. It reinforces his attachment to letters and numbers, colours and sounds.
A discreet and judicious use of colours and colour patterns must, as a matter of policy, be encouraged, promoted and insisted on by the editor. Nature is awash with colours and so is the man made world. We all know that there are felicitous combinations of colours and there are also jarring combinations. There are colours which soothe and colours which agitate. All reading material for children, (specially the poems) should inculcate a sense of balance and symmetry in colours. This should be kept in mind specifically by the editor. If done carefully colours can set fire to the imagination. Take for instance, the first movement of the poem ‘Ode to the West Wind’ by P.B. Shelly:

O wild West Wind, thou breathe of Autumn’s being,
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale and hectic red,
Pestilence stricken multitudes...

In the expression, “Yellow, and black, and pale and hectic red”, the visual sensory appeal is interesting. Here the anomalous and paradoxical utterances create humour as well as teaches and instructs to decide. There are times when an editor must demand, dictate about what should go into a text and what should remain out. What needs to be done is to take the writer into confidence and try to convince him of the specific needs of children.

Now here the West Wind is being addressed by the poet and we can see that to visualise a powerful westwind blowing is not easy for a child of tender age to understand and perceive. ‘Stricken multitudes’ are simply not avoidable to the child. And even if we are willing to grant that the idea of ghost (bhoot) is readily available to sample group (thanks to parents and peer group), transference of this idea, that the poem demands is difficult to achieve.

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Check your progress 2

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

2) What things can woo children towards rhyme and poetry?

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We could thus conclude that the poem would be more acceptable to and suitable for our next group i.e. children in the age group of 6-9 years or that of 9-14 years. Now let us turn to another well known poem to illustrate our point. The poem is ‘The Tyger’ by William Blake. Take the first stanza.

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

Now let us see what Kenneth Koch has to say about these above lines in the highly acclaimed work. Koch says: “I stopped a number of times in discussing it to draw them (the children) into it by way of their own experiences. Had they ever seen a dog’s or cat’s eye glowing in the darks? Did the eyes seem to be made of fire? What could be so strange about the tigers’ heart? I asked the children to close their eyes put their fingers in their ears, be very quiet and listen. That strange thumping thus heard was their heart. A tiger’s heart may sound even stranger than
that. The children seemed particularly stirred by this experience. Also new to them was the idea of symmetry, which I stopped to talk about it. I made a diagram on the blackboard to show what symmetry meant and then pointed out that they were symmetrical too. Excitedly touching their own knees, elbows, arms and ears the children had had a feeling of amazement about symmetry... Likely to be felt less strongly by someone already familiar with symmetry as an abstract conception."

14.4.4 Poems written by children

Reading poems written by children by the editor is the surest way of discovering what children like most. Basically there are two approaches when it comes to selecting poems (or reading material in whatever form) for children by an editor. The first approach believes in selecting such reading material as would be interesting for the child. This approach invests in the act of engaging the child's imagination and curiosity. After this primary objective has been achieved, the instruction or moral part of the reading can follow in due course. This approach does not believe in instruction through entertainment. It proposes that entertainment is a primary value as such and it need not play second fiddle to moral or intellectual instruction. Entertainment can be a purpose in itself and need not contribute essentially to a higher purpose. It also believes that entertainment, when it achieves its mark can be very instructive and ennobling. It, therefore, believes that we should not be dismissive or diffident about prioritising entertainment as a value in itself. It also believes that if the poem is not able to sufficiently engage the interest of the child, it may very likely also fail in imparting the message embedded in the poem. The horse is first to be brought to the water before it can be made to drink.

The other approach by the editor underscores the assumption that entertainment is only a means and not an end in itself. For want of a more suitable term, this approach may be called the technological approach. It is purpose oriented and the purpose towards which it strives is the moral learning of the child. Its main focus is on building the aesthetic sense or taste of the young reader. It does not trust the child. It is a kind of 'catch them young' version of aesthetic training. This model lays down a clear list of features and entries for children's literature. Its list of exclusion is equally detailed. It believes in a kind of moral policing right from childhood so that young minds may not get contaminated early on. In its attempt to provide the message, it often neglects the medium and form and the meaning of instructions fail to register or make a mark on the young minds. The message or moral is too obvious and the young reader immediately becomes conscious of the 'palpable design'. Many a times such attempts at 'administered moralising' lead to reading material that is ridiculously singular. The material compiled is dry and didactic resulting in rejection or reaction by the young reader.

Check your progress 3

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

3) Do the responses of the children of different age group to the same object vary? Why?

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14.5 OVERDOSE OF PATRIOTISM

While editing patriotic poems for children, the editor should realize that an overdose of it might disinterest the child. Recent studies have pointed out to one extremely disconcerting aspect of value teaching to children. It tends to highlight the fact that values dear to a particular dominant and political social formation, may become dated, causing serious problem of psychological integration. This should be taken into account by an editor. For instance, what was taught to children in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945 and which the children took to be gospel truths suddenly became suspect after the fall of the Third Reich.

Now, people would normally agree that patriotism or love and sacrifice for one’s country is a value worth instilling in young minds and hearts. But it is a psychologically proven fact that any imbalance in the emotional and intellectual diet and nutrition has often led to serious special maladjustment and a noble virtue. Motherland, Mother board, Mother- dead like patriotism may lapse into chest thumping jingoism. The editor must guard against cultural, racial and linguist stereotypes which might have crept into a poem unwittingly. Other culturally neutral values like environment protection, planting trees, cleanliness, importance of time, teamwork and sharing, strength in unity, perseverance, preservation of monuments and heritage, lesson from great lives, hard work and many more such values may be instilled in the children. Let us take for instance the following poem which will make the above point clear:

One dozen sparrows  
Merry and gay  
Together kept house  
For many a day.

One cleaned the windows  
One swept the floor  
One washed the dishes  
One painted the door.

One did the shopping  
One wiped the plate  
One did the cooking  
One shut the gate

One laid the table  
One made the bed  
One called the other  
And one served the bread. (Anon)

The poem captures the imagination of the children and also emphasizes on unity as a central value. This value is cleverly portrayed to the child by using sparrows as the central figures. The editor should keep a special watch for such kinds of poems.

Case study (reference Chinua Achebe, 1977):

The Deer’s Lament was a story written for children by Achebe which was rather partial for their understanding. A supplementary poem by Christopher Okigbo made all the difference and made the story comprehensive and clear.

“The Deer’s Lament” is an ingenious literary device which further illustrates one of Achebe’s strategies in the transformation of the original story. He sought and obtained the collaboration of the late, great Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo for the insertion within the story of a poem, a kind of dirge, which articulates the
history of the tragedy. Okigbo, who was killed fighting for the Biafrans in the civil
war, was truly in his element when he composed "The Lament of the Deer":

O Leopard our noble king,
Where are you?
Spotted king of the forest,
Where are you?
Even if you are far away
Come, hurry home:
The worst has happened to us,
The worst has happened to us,
The house the animals built
The cruel dog keeps us from it,
The common shelter we built
The cruel dog keeps us from it,
The worst has happened to us
The worst has happened to us...

(21)

In short, the process of transformation involved three authors: John Iroaganachi,
who provides the original framework; Achebe, who re-configured the tale; and
Okigbo, whose poem fulfilled the role played by the Chorus in classic tragedies.
"The transformation of the story was made to retain the essence of Igbo philosophy,
while at the same time extending its wider implications. It was also shaped in
terms of dialogues, narrative sinew, cultural notions and moral values in order to
suit the envisaged readership -children -while maintaining an appeal to adults
(Ezenwa-Ohaeto 125).

To suit the tastes of children, the story was beautifully illustrated by Adrienne
Kennaway. Children can follow the narration through the pictures and decipher at
their level the content and meaning of the story, much as they would have to do
for a riddle, another popular, traditional pastime. To the adults, nevertheless, the
story is just a parable. Unwrapping the more mysterious symbols in this story will
be an adult exercise.

Interpreting "The lament of the Deer" (the song the deer intoned at the point when
he was thrown out by the dog from the house built by all the animals) will be an
intellectual task for adult readers. Matching animal names, locations in the forest,
and specific events and conflicts with their equivalents in the Nigerian civil war
situation will no doubt remain a complex and controversial puzzle for all times.
All these elements will keep the story and events of the Nigerian civil war alive
from generation to generation. Chinua Achebe could not have achieved a greater
artistic feat. The music of words, the soothing symphony of sounds, the balmy
care of soft and gently tunes - all these have played an important role in the
world of children from time immemorial."

14.5.1 First rhymes

An editor must be well aware of the first rhymes that a child gets acquainted with.
Familiarity with such kinds of content, that is easily available, will make his work
more approachable and specific to the needs of the children. A child’s first awareness
of the world around him comes from cradle songs and lullabies sung to him by his
parents, grandparents and others. There is something common to all such songs.
The words are simple, the tunes soothing and they deal with subjects the child is
familiar with. Usually a single idea forms the theme of a song. In most cases they
are about concrete things which can be seen, felt, heard or touched. To take an
eample, the moon is a favourite subject in cradle songs and rhymes because the
moon is one of the first things a child is taught to recognize.
By and by, as the child grows older, the pattern and themes of verses and rhymes also change—keeping pace with his growing interests. After lullabies and cradle songs we have verse—games, riddles, and simple poems about nature that talk of the sun, moon, rain, clouds, birds, animals, trees and the like. Then follow easy lessons through rhymes—the alphabet, numbers, tables and word-meanings. Another popular and traditional form of children’s verses consists of prayers and stotras, and short, simple poems teaching the basic values of life, such as speaking the truth, respecting the elders, helping one’s brothers and sisters, making use of time, and so on.

Sometimes serious themes, such as social equality, the evils of caste system, the importance of being united, and so on, are deliberately written in the form of nursery rhymes, the words carrying double meaning, in order to render them more effective. No doubt, we have the delightful category of fun-rhymes and nonsense-verse, lively and entertaining, which are popular with the old and the young alike.

It should be remembered by an editor that all Indian rhymes and verses for children owe their origin to the folklore and oral tradition handed down from one generation to the next. It is impossible to say who composed them and when exactly they came into existence. This is true of Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, and other Indian languages. Though the languages are different, we find great similarity in both theme and treatment. No matter what the language, we share a common culture and heritage, values and beliefs in India.

An editor needs to know that children’s rhymes fall into two broad categories. One rhymes and verses which have entertained and educated children over the years make a large group although they were not specially written for children. The main bulk of children’s poetry written during the earlier part of this century, and all that came before falls into this category. The ‘Sishu Lela Padas’ composed by Shankar Dev in Assamese, the ‘Krishna Leela Pada’ composed by Surdas in Brijboli, some poems by Meerabai in Rajasthan, the ‘Vani’ of Guru Nanak Dev in Punjabi, the ‘Chudi Padas’ of Avvaiyar in Tamil, portions of ‘Allah Khand’ and the ‘Pahelians’ by Amir Khusro, the ‘Dohas’ of Kabir—all these and many more belonging to this class were familiar to children and were widely used for entertaining them.

The second category of children’s rhymes is those written specially for children. Around the mid-nineteenth century many of our educationists felt the need for providing books meant and written for children. They also realized that whatever they wanted to teach would seem far more attractive to young people and would be better impressed into their minds if told in verse. The primers and ‘first books’ brought out by them contained many rhymes and verses. Foreign missionaries and educationists, who were keen on spreading education amongst the masses, also played a significant role in bringing out children’s books. In Bengal, we had the School Books Society, established in 1817, and the Vernacular Literature Society, established by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in 1851. In Tamil Nadu the Christian missionaries brought out Bala Keepakai and Bal yan nesa around 1840. There is an impending need for an editor to be concerned with such beautiful works.

Young children are attracted to the music of words more than the meaning. Most rhymes and verses meant for this age group are rich in onomatopoeia. An editor can make sure that words are repeated and are constant so that they reinforce the desired effect. We have, for instance, the musical sound of the words puts the child to sleep. Many of these lullabies are sung to tunes. The most popular theme which occurs in a lullaby is that of a mother putting her child to sleep. Sometimes she calls the fairies to her aid. Sometimes it is a direct invocation to sleep itself.
“Aa jaa ri nindiya tu aa kyon na jaa
Mere lai ko lula kyon no jaa” (Hindi)
(Do come, oh sleep. Why don’t you come?
Why don’t you put my baby to sleep?)

Nature — trees, flowers, birds, animals, the sun, moon, stars, rain and the like — plays
an important role in the world of children. These simple and yet rich songs are
immensely likable for the children. Especially as they have already learnt to recognize
these things and are interested in them. An editor must be aware of them. ‘Bhela
charair geet’ (Songs of the bel bird) in Assamese are some of the important
examples. We have the ‘Chadeir geet’ (Songs of the tailor-bird) in Oriya:

“Bai chadei re bai chadei
To ma jaichi gai charei
Gairu anibo pakla bei
Mo kuna khaile hoibo gel”
(Oh, tailor-bird,
Your mother has gone to graze the cows
On her return she will bring a ripe bel-fruit
And my baby will be happy to eat it.)

There are several bird rhymes in Bengali too:
“Aye re pakhi naj jhola
Khoka ke niye kor khela”
(Come, long-tailed bird and play with my baby)

Animal rhymes are in style too. In Kannada the following rhyme about cats is
dearly loved by children:

“Elee bekkee roopindali
Hulejaathige screenendu garbisabedaa
Balumeye ninnali udeee
Iiligale hidiyuvu daralaythu ninnya shuirya”
(Oh, cat, you look like a tiger,
But do not boast that you are one.
I know your power
You can merely catch mice.)

We have another beautiful rhyme about stars and the night in Malayalam, written
by G. Sankara Kurup, where the child says—

“Mathave, ee nakshatrangal
Avykkku bhayamille
 Rathriye, chutthum ulla iruttune?”
(Oh mother, these stars
Are they not afraid of the night
And the thick darkness all around?)

To which the mother replies—
“Omane, nhan aduthullappol
Nee enthunu pedikkunnu
Rathriavarude mathavalle
Avar koode ilee
Avere rakshhikan”
(My darling, when I am with you?
Why are you afraid?
The night is their mother.
She is with them,
Protects them all.)
An editor, thus, needs to be well acquainted with such songs and lullabies. This will help any content become more attractive and enjoyable.

14.5.2 Riddles and games

The little toddler is soon old enough to play games and enjoy them. An editor must equip himself with such riddles as they are hugely popular amongst the children. We have a number of game-rhymes in all Indian languages. For example, in Maharashtra children play the following game of identifying animals by their voices and the places they live in –

“Dong rachya ghali
Karvandachya jalit
Laplay kon? Laplay kon?
Gur...gur... gur...!
Gharachya darat
Phaitilya unhat
Zoplay kon? Zoplay kon?
Miaow... miaow... miaow!”
(Marathi)
(In the valley between mountains Where the blackberries grow in bushes, Who is hiding? Who is hiding? One who says, gur... gur... gur! By the door of the house In the open sunshine Who is sleeping? Who is sleeping? One who says miaow... miaow...miaow!)

Check your progress 4

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

4) What qualities in verse or rhyme fascinate children most?

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14.6 FIRST LESSONS THROUGH RHyme AND POETRY

A child’s first lessons are – knowledge of the alphabet and numbers which is invariably taught through rhymes. So we have ‘Varnmala geet’ (song of the alphabet) and ‘Ginti geet’ (counting songs) in every language. An editor can make sure that such songs are taped along with alphabet books and are published.

14.6.1 Values

All our earlier verse –writers for children felt that children should imbibe the right values in life and learn to revere God, respect their elders, and love their fellow beings right from childhood. This is obvious from the large number of children’s verses in every language which have these as their central themes. An editor must make sure that the verses have some intrinsic value.
14.6.2 Epics and history

The editor while understanding these first rhymes must also be well acquainted with tales from our mythology. They have an immense appeal to young minds as they are familiar, having heard them from the adults at home. Stories from our epics and old lore—the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas follow the growth of the child. We also have verses depicting the varied aspects of our couture and our festivals. We have all these and much more in all the major Indian languages. Your awareness, as an editor, with such types of rhymes will help you to publish anthologies and other collected works for children.

Our poets have been proud of our country—its epics, lore, history and its heroes—and have always tried to pass on this sense of pride to children by rendering stories about them in simple verse. In fact, they have always been specially enjoyed by the little one. In Bengali we have Upendra Kishore’s Chotto Ramayan. In Tamil we have Ayyaswami’s Bala Ramayanam and in Malayalam, Kumaran Asan’s Balaramayanam. Ramasaraswathi’s Badha Kavyas in Assamese describe the adventures of the heroes of the Mahabharata. Of these, Bheema-charit is most popular with children and has gone into numerous reprints.

14.6.3 Humorous verses

As children respond well to humour, the editor must be aware of such rhymes. Childhood is the time for spontaneous fun and merriment, so we find a lot of fun and nonsense rhymes in every language. These have been loved by both the old and the young. Many of them are about absurd situations and absurd characters and are extremely funny.

14.6.4 Rhymes in English

English nursery rhymes have been an integral part of our lives for more than a century—especially for urban children who know the language nearly as well as their mother-tongue. We can hardly think of a child who is not familiar with ‘Jack and Jill’, ‘Little Jack Horner’ and ‘Little Miss Muffet’, so much so that many of the popular English rhymes have been made integral to the Indian context and incorporated into our own languages. An editor should be alert to such rhymes.

Check your progress 5

Note: 1) Your answers should be about 30 words each;

2) You may check your answers with the possible answers given at the end of the Unit.

5) What are the diverse elements synthesised in Indian poetry for children?

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to feel that bringing out rhyme-books for children is not ‘paying’! The few which are brought out are, with some exceptions, shoddily produced and garishly illustrated. As a result there is no temptation to pick them up. It has not been realized fully how important rhymes and verses are to young and growing children. And publishers do not seem to realize that one cannot create the taste for poetry-books in children unless they are readily available, well produced and there is a fair variety to choose from. One can only hope that our publishers will wake up to the fact before long. The heritage, being continuously enriched, needs to be preserved and cherished.

### 14.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

**Check your progress 1**

1) The primary requisite of an editor is to take a dismissive and condescending view of childhood. Because unlike adults they are not fit for certain kinds of knowledge and it needs a careful and skilful effort to write for them.

**Check your progress 2**

2) Children take interest in images and pictures of natural objects, birds and animals and things familiar to them. Their learning process starts with the colourful illustrations and beautiful and easy rhymes.

**Check your progress 3**

3) Yes. This is because of the differences in the level of their awareness and consciousness. Their perception and response of things vary from age to age. The response of grown up child differs from a novice.

**Check your progress 4**

4) The familiarity, melodious, musical nature of them attracts the children’s attention and involvement. Their interest in learning these rhymes arises due to simplicity and musical nature of the rhymes.

**Check your progress 5**

5) Indian poetry for children is rich with epics, adventures, folklores, ballads. Though they are in different languages but there is uniformity in theme and the treatment. They celebrate the rich cultural heritage with moral and ethical values.

### 14.9 SELECTED READING LIST


In Diaspora: Theories Histories Texts.

New Delhi- Indialeg publication Pvt, Ltd.2001.

English At The Workplace, Dept. of English, University of Delhi, Macmillan India.