

The Development of Children's Literature from the Nineteenth Century to the Present

Dr. Priya Pandey

Guest Faculty - English Department
Government TRS College, Rewa, M.P.

Abstract: *Children's literature has evolved dramatically from the nineteenth century to the present, transitioning from primarily didactic and moralistic texts to imaginative, entertaining, and socially reflective works. This paper traces the key phases of this development, highlighting the "Golden Age" of fantasy and adventure in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the expansion of realism and series fiction in the twentieth century, and the contemporary emphasis on diversity, visual narratives, and young adult (YA) crossover appeal in the twenty-first century. Influenced by shifting societal views of childhood—from innocence and Romantic ideals to complex social realities—the genre now incorporates graphic novels, digital formats, and inclusive representation. Drawing on historical analysis of primary works and scholarly sources, the study demonstrates how children's literature mirrors cultural changes while fostering empathy, imagination, and literacy. The Harry Potter phenomenon exemplifies modern impacts, boosting publishing markets and series formats. This evolution underscores the genre's enduring role in shaping young readers amid technological and social transformations.*

Keywords: Children's literature, Golden Age, fantasy literature, young adult fiction, diversity in children's books, historical development, graphic novels, Harry Potter effect.

