Article

How Can Stories in Primary Education Support Sustainable Development in Bangladesh?

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Abstract: Stories are considered to be the most popular form of lore, which can facilitate the moral and ethical deliberation of sustainability for our children. It is evident that children respond better to stories than any other form of communication. Once the stories end, the lessons remain. The values tangled with the lesson transmit as they grow. Stories have always been instrumental and the most conventional way of teaching values by using illustrations from our lives. The major aim of this paper is to explore the values expressed in Bengali childlore through stories and tales and develop a framework by using a scaffolding and mapping approach. This framework attempts to analyse two commonly recognised stories, namely "Shukhu and Dukhu" and "Jackal, The Judge", by scaffolding them with the generally acknowledged principles of sustainability and mapping them to investigate how stories can influence children to build a pro-sustainability attitude. This approach has been chosen, as recent research already points out the issues in implementing sustainability in education, but no one has yet found the way forward. The premise at the core of this theoretical article is that an interdisciplinary approach and different pedagogical tools could help build the bridge towards implementing sustainability in education as well as in society.

Keywords: Bangladesh; primary education; stories; sustainability; sustainable development; pro-sustainability attitude

1. Introduction

A Native American proverb says, "Tell me a fact, and I will learn it. Tell me the truth, and I will believe it. Tell me a story, and it will live in my heart forever" [1]. A story always tells a little more than just the story line. It leaves a reason for the listener to think and re-think, to try to understand better the people and the world, to share experience and knowledge, to scare and challenge, to plan and dream. A story is an anthropological vehicle from the teller to the listener to transmit a message or a lesson [2]. According to Pellowski [3], a story is any connected narrative, in prose, poetry, or a mixture of the two, that has one or more characters involved in a plot with some action and at least a partial resolution. It may or may not have fictional aspects. The use of storytelling can create a dramatic narrative that not only stirs the emotions but also adds to their cognitive power, making valuable contributions to moral learning [4].

Storytelling is increasingly being used in educating and communicating for sustainability "to simultaneously convey information, explain problems and evoke emotions" [5]. It is a powerful pedagogical tool in the classroom to either represent reality or create an imaginary situation. The story stipulates people (who), facts and situations (what), place (where), reason with consequences and resolution (why). Through the story and the teacher-learner interaction, the audience can smoothly relate a current situation, its facts, consequences and resolution while a moral lesson is transmitted. With the idea of sustainability often being traced to traditional cultures, storytelling can also build a bridge between the past and the future by combining different bodies of knowledge, values and practices—local and global,

indigenous and scientific. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) specifically highlights the potential of storytelling for transformative engagement [6], encouraging reflective discussions that deepen students' understanding and promote critical thinking [7]. Storytelling can have a transformative pedagogical role at all levels of education for sustainability—from kindergarten to university.

Notwithstanding this, storytelling is often overshadowed by other pedagogical tools [7] and is not properly integrated into the classroom's learning process. This could be a missed opportunity to link wisdom from the past with the search for solutions for today and tomorrow, particularly given the complex and multifaceted nature of sustainability, which may be difficult to communicate to younger people. While storytelling is being rediscovered for teaching sustainability, the art is as old as time and has been used through history to influence human views and experiences [8]. It has become a way to counteract content dominated by facts and figures by bringing in emotions and values [8].

Nowhere is storytelling as important as at the beginner's stage of formal education, where it fosters imagination, creative thinking and cognitive skills as well as cultural and moral understanding [9]. The stories, fables, myths, legends and songs used in storytelling come not only from literature but also from folklore. Every culture has its own stories that explain natural phenomena, describe human behaviour, answer difficult questions, nurture values and develop emotional connections. They can be communicated orally and through the written word. Such stories are vivid and entertaining; they symbolise cultural beliefs and contain fundamental human truths by which people have lived for centuries [10]. They are also brief, and although they may contain elements of fantasy, they always hold a resolution or a moral lesson about the problem.

Teachers as storytellers play an essential role in this process not only through their knowledge and approach but also through the interpersonal relationships of trust and respect that facilitate communication in the classroom. Children are usually quick to separate fact from fantasy and are able to grasp the underlying message of the story [11]. They can sort out the good from the evil and identify with the positive characters. This paper examines the power of storytelling within the context of primary education in Bangladesh, with the aim of facilitating the development of sustainability values that can withstand the test of time and any influences contributing towards making our world untenable. The main argument of the study is that folklore-based storytelling can be a powerful tool in primary education in Bangladesh, a country that has embraced the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals [12].

Given the age of the students and the formative importance of primary education, the emphasis of the study is on the development of moral and ethical reasoning related to sustainability. While morality and ethics are closely related, there are some differences. Ethics describes what is acceptable within certain social settings or a community, while morality relates to a person's individual judgement of what is good or bad [13]. From this point of view, it is important to use ethical stories to teach moral lessons in primary schools.

2. Materials and Methods

The objective of this study is to explore the use of folklore-based storytelling in primary education in Bangladesh. It is based on a qualitative analysis through a traditional literature review with a thematic analysis of current or recent sources [14]. Being a non-structured qualitative analysis, such a literature review does not aim to provide completeness of coverage but instead aims to understand the nature of the problem [7]. No date restriction was used in the searches so that we could capture relevant literature and identify gaps. The databases consulted are the specialised Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), which contains education-related journal articles and other materials, as well as the broad Google Scholar.

Three bodies of literature were canvassed using appropriate keywords. Firstly, literature describing the use of storytelling in primary education (keywords: storytelling in primary education) is reviewed to identify the practical problem in Bangladesh. Secondly,

literature related to framing the use of storytelling in the classroom (keywords: framing storytelling in the classroom) is explored to develop an approach to identifying and utilising existing story material. Thirdly, two folklore-based stories are analysed using the developed framework to draw morals from the perspective of sustainability. The researchers applied their own reasoning and preferences in selecting the literature sources to build an informed context about the issue and provide suggestions.

The main materials for identifying appropriate folklore-based stories are two eminent Bengali books. The first is "Thakur Ma'r Jhuli" or "Grandmother's Bag of Tales" in English. Around 1907, its author, Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar, collected folk tales from villages and towns across Bengal and rendered them into a unique collection to preserve the old tradition of Bangladesh. This collection was praised by the 1913 Nobel Laureate in Literature Rabindranath Tagore, who acknowledged the importance of turning these outstanding oral tales into a hard copy, preserving the ancestorial creativity of Bangladesh. The second book is "Chalak Shiyal o Boka Shiyal" or "The Clever Jackal and the Foolish Jackal", a masterpiece of children's stories by Shah Jahan Kibria. Known as one of the best childlore writers in modern times, Kibria [15] served as director of Bangladesh's Children's Academy for more than a decade. In almost all his works, he combines the spirit of children's rights with storytelling. He has also enriched Bengali children's literature by translating foreign fairy tales and folklore with pro-life and welfare ideas.

According to Hofman-Bergholm [7], traditional literature review is a fruitful method when seeking the way forward. It does not aim to cover all possible sources but instead uses the researchers' reasoning to draw insights and conclusions about the role of storytelling in building sustainability values in primary education. As the study is based entirely on publicly available information, no ethics approval was required.

3. Storytelling in the Primary School's Classroom

Regarding the impact of oral storytelling on children's self-concept [16,17], it was found that it exposed children to "long-standing archetypal models" [17] that engaged the imagination, stimulated sympathetic responses and helped children process their social experiences at school. Stories play a significant role in shaping children's psychological development and have pedagogical value in the classroom to develop critical reading skills [18]. Valuable research and evidence on storytelling from around the world show that this ancient art can be blended with contemporary needs and tools to improve children's development and skills [19–21], including values acquisition [22], moral lessons [23], and the development of identity and empathy [24]. Moreover, research shows that the most engaging stories used in the classroom are those to which children can relate [25].

Stories or folktales are considered a source of entertainment, able to create interest and excitement in children. Fables in particular present moral truths, while certain characters can represent powerful symbols in themselves of the good and bad or weak and strong [26,27]. As one of the major forms of folk literature, folktales can help in evaluating the intrinsic relationship of humans with the natural world and can assist in developing a nature consciousness and responsibility towards Mother Earth.

However, research on storytelling in Bangladesh's educational system, particularly the use of this educational tool in primary education, has been scarce. On the other hand, Bangladesh is rich with folklore-based stories with traditional or folk values considered to harness the principles of sustainability [10]. In the past, children were entertained and instructed with folktales. This tradition has been overtaken by the written culture. Some writers have tried to preserve the oral tradition of Bangladesh in books aimed at children with the intention of instructing and entertaining them. The folk stories' succinctness, action, fantasy elements and characters to whom children can relate, combined with happy endings, make them appealing to young listeners and help them develop a sense of morality [28]. They guide children in distinguishing the good from the evil in the world and encourage them to start identifying with the good.

The stories in 'Thakur Maa'r Jhuli' by the legendary Sri Dakhhinaranjan Mitra Majumder, published in 1907 [29], have inspired the children of Bangladesh in the past. Many remember the famous story of the Rabbit and the Tiger, where the Rabbit could find a way to save its life and punish the Tiger only with prompt intelligence, saying that the Rabbit could do so because it "regularly eats vegetables". Thus, the message given is that having vegetables regularly makes you intelligent. The stories of the Prince and the Demons describe how the Prince fights the Demons with massive courage and crosses thousands of hurdles to bring back the Princess's life or for other greater causes. They teach children to be confident, courageous and ready for sacrifices to reach the goal and to bring good to the journey of life.

Other Bengali folk stories have also survived the test of time. For example, the word "Bhombal Dass" [30], taken from a folktale, is stipulated in our day-to-day lives to give someone a name who is considered a fool. The story of "Tetan Buri and Boka Buri" (The Two Old Women), a Bengali folk tale [31], graciously inspires young children to share their belongings with each other. The story "takar apod" from the collection of Shukumar Roy's [32] stories can help you realise that money cannot buy peace and happiness and teach you how to be happy with less with the famous tale "Shukhi Manusher Golpo" (The Story of a Happy Man).

Although these folk stories are still alive in Bangladeshi culture, many children, especially those born and raised in the urban areas of the country, are not in touch with the oral traditions of their ancestors. In their city lives, they are rarely exposed to the richness of Bengali folklore. Using storytelling in the classroom can help establish connections between present-day life and the cultural heritage of a country. This, however, is not as simple as reading or telling a story, as many folk stories also contain outdated ideas, such as recognising the gender of the baby from the way the pregnant mother looks [33] or patriarchal attitudes now considered misogynist, such as kings with multiple wives or male dominance [34]. The art of using this precious folk material is to slightly tweak the story while preserving its goodness and conserving the right attitudes and honourable behaviours [34]. As the award-winning author, educator, poet, storyteller and translator Sutapa Basu [34] explains, if you bring the enchanted realms of folk stories to the classroom, somewhere in the process they will change the way children view the world.

The intertwined environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability are often present in folk stories. Developing a conceptual framework is essential for bringing any story into the primary school's classroom as a tool for value education and encouraging sustainability [35]. For example, nature and the natural environment can be represented in different ways in folklore, with negative (e.g., being frightening) or positive (e.g., offering shelter or beauty) messages to humans and other species [36]. Stories are rememberable and entertaining [37]; they develop the landscapes of action and consciousness [38]; and in the form of a fairy tale, they can improve the language, creativity and self-expression of the students in the classroom [39]. In addition to the development of basic skills such as listening, speaking and reading, stories help young children's emergent literacy outcomes [40], analytical capacities [41], make them more resilient and encourage their ability to make meaning and understand the world [42]. It is this power of stories that needs to be brought out when educating for sustainability.

## 4. Conceptual Framework for Analysing Stories

Storytelling is a useful pedagogical tool in primary education to develop values that encourage sustainability and transformation [7]. To achieve this, the selection of stories and their suitability become major decisions for teachers to make. The conceptual framework for analysing the suitability of stories in teaching sustainability used in this study is synthesised from a constructivist perspective as a bridge between theory and practice [43] based on the theoretical and empirical literature on storytelling. Scaffolding [44] is used in this study as a framework for examining how stories in the classroom may facilitate moral or ethical reasoning. According to the constructivist perspective, the teacher does not directly

present the knowledge but guides the students in the learning process to develop this knowledge [45]. Scaffolding is a metaphor to describe the educational process, like putting support in place in the construction of a building that is removed upon completion.

The approach is grounded in Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development in children based on thinking about concepts and ideas [46] that the student can learn with the support of a better-informed individual. It was first introduced in education by Wood, Bruner and Ross [47] in the 1970s and has since been frequently used to explain the role of the teacher in the learning process from kindergarten to university [48]. According to Zurek, Torquati and Acar [49], "educators engage in scaffolding by providing the necessary level and type of support that is well-timed to children's needs". In this way, they improve student engagement and motivation to achieve better cognitive outcomes [48]. Supported by teachers, children can use storytelling as a scaffolding process for making meaning, comprehending the complexities of the surrounding environment and developing cultural values. This helps lay the foundations of self-regulation and responsible behaviour [50].

In the literature, there is no agreed-upon way of determining exactly how scaffolding should be used [51] and different approaches have been put forward. The 3C approach (Context, Content and Concept) [52] is used as scaffolding to analyse the suitability of folk stories to teach sustainability (see Figure 1). This approach has been endorsed in qualitative research to capture unstructured observations and offer insights into human behaviour [52] or to explore intangible techniques, such as creativity in communicating meaning [53]. It allows the teacher/storyteller to determine the compatibility of the story from a sustainability perspective. The context represents the circumstances—theoretical or real-life—in which sustainability is introduced. This could describe a school within a particular community with a certain demographic and socio-cultural profile. Content refers to the matter of the story—what happened, including characters, their actions and consequences. The concept is the larger theoretical or practical sustainability issue, which the story and its moral help explain. Figure 2 shows the application of the 3C approach and attempts to link the approach and mapping to create a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability perspective.

Figure 1 portrays the 3C approach (Concept, Content and Context) that will help the teacher/storyteller predominantly determine the compatibility of the story with the sustainability perspective, while Figure 2 presents the link between the approach and mapping to create a comprehensive understanding of the sustainability perspective. Given the rationale and framework for the study, the research sought to outline the approach to analysing two commonly recognised stories from Bengali folk tales and mapping them with the major aspects of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental) to investigate how stories can influence children to build a pro-sustainability attitude.
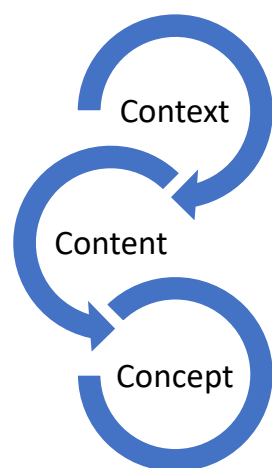
Figure 1. The 3C (Context, Content and Concept) scaffolding approach.

Figure 2. Mapping with the scaffolding approach.

The selected stories can function as a linguistic resource in pragmatic interaction between the teacher and students [35]. This process can create a web of interactions in the classroom and give the teacher an opportunity to bring sustainability into the conversation. Specifically (see Figure 2), the context of the folk story will determine: the demographic understanding of the platform of the story (e.g., folks and place), the socio-economic rationale of the folks and the cultural interpretation of the folks where the story belongs. The content of the story will determine the characters of the story, the actions taken by the characters and the consequences revealed from the actions. Finally, the concept of the story will determine the ultimate motif of the story and the sustainability perspective carried out by the motif. This approach is used below for two commonly recognised Bengali folk stories, after the process of their selection is explained.

5. Two Examples of Folklore-Based Stories

Two stories from Bengali childlore are selected for story-telling in the classroom. According to Dundes [54], folklore reflects the past and the present, but it can also be used in primary education to shape the future. Fairy tales, combining animal tales, fables and anecdotes, are particularly appropriate as they are simpler and can be used as examples to carry a unique lesson or moral. They can illustrate certain moral points, as is the case with Bengali folk stories such as Lalkamal-Nilkamal, Byangoma-Byangomi or Duo rani—Suo rani. An objective of such stories is to help stimulate children's imagination and relate the moral to their own lives and circumstances. They create avenues for thinking and questioning as well as adopting certain values.

There is no prescribed method that a storyteller or the teacher must follow to select and prepare a story for telling [35]; each storyteller finds a method that works best for them. Mundy-Taylor [35] emphasises the importance of devoting care and time to the selection of stories, as the success of any storytelling relies on the acceptance and enjoyment of the stories by both the teller and the listener. In our case, stories should originate from folklore and need to be published with content appropriate for the 5–11-year-old age group. They should play with the themes of good and evil to provide a value judgement. Another consideration is the teacher's personal knowledge and experience in being able to convey the context, content and concept of the story.

Any religious bias or cultural taboos should be avoided or explained. The two selected stories, respectively from "Grandmother's Bag of Tales" (Story 1: 'Shukhu and Dukhu') [55] and "The Clever Jackal and the Foolish Jackal" (Story 2: 'Jackal, The Judge'), are presented in Appendix A. The first story, once translated by Sutapa Basu [56] as Princesses, Monsters, and Magical Creatures, is from the original book of "Thakur Ma'r Jhuli" ("Grandmother's Bag of Tales") by the author Dakshinaranjan Mitra [54], but has been slightly modified to reflect modern-day reality. It is very difficult to translate the texture of a language and the interlacing of the words [57], but care has been taken to adhere as closely to the original as possible. The second story did not require modification.

6. Discussion

Both stories comply with the three criteria identified by Buell [58] for evaluating a literary text for its sustainability educational value, namely: (i) The non-human dimension is an actual presence in the text and not merely a façade implying that the human and non-human worlds are integrated; (ii) The human interest is not privileged over everything else; and (iii) Humans are accountable to the environment and any actions they perform that damage the ecosystem [58]. The moral messages conveyed in the two tales help instil an ethics in the minds of the young listeners that will help them grow into mature adults who are caring, considerate, responsible in their consumption and free of greed. They encourage joy and satisfaction with life that can persist no matter how much people age. The pedagogical use of the stories, however, needs to be understood within the 3C scaffolding approach.

6.1. 3C Approach: Context

The analysis of each story begins by setting it within the respective geographical, socio-economic and cultural context, incorporating religious and other social aspects into its narrative [59], while keeping the core objectives unchanged. A teacher has some freedom inside the classroom to make any adjustments to the content, background and other elements of the story as needed, taking into consideration the socio-economic status of the children, achievable competences and cultural, including religious, characteristics. For example, when the story 'Shukhu and Dukhu' was originally written in 1907 [55], polygamy was culturally accepted, and the main characters were the two wives and daughters of the weaver. However, in the modern context, having two wives is not legally acceptable. Hence, these characters are replaced by two daughters and their husbands. The teacher (as well as everybody else) should have the freedom to make reasonable adjustments when narrating folk stories to the children while preserving the moral message. As Castle explains [60], folk tales are continuously changing and have always done so, but they also exist in a time where magic is possible. This magic brings hope and conveys confidence in children that if they do the right thing, they will live in a beautiful world. Such values and attitudes are extremely important for sustainability.

When a story is presented to children through a contextual agent, such as the teacher, its acceptance will increase, and the desired response or result will be obtained. Although stories are being translated and analysed from a research point of view, in a practical application, it will be easier for a teacher to present his/her own rearranged plot if the text is converted into the context. In fact, the story's text is translatable while the context is not [58], and this is essential to the scaffolding approach.

The story 'Shukhu and Dukhu' (see Appendix A) portrays the simplicity of rural Bengal, as many other Bengali stories do. They transmit cultural values of simplicity and living of one's own accord. The story also reveals that nature rewards or punishes humankind based on how humans treat the land, air, water or any other living beings that exist on this planet. The younger daughter-husband duo merely managed to make ends meet, yet they were humble, thankful for what they had and kind to other beings. Dukhu's own misery could not stop her from being kind to the animals seeking help on her way. Shukhu, on the other hand, is greedy and aspires for more possessions and wealth without due consideration of other living beings. This story conveys a picture of how rural people in Bangladesh find happiness in simple living and how a greedless life brings ultimate joy, making the story relevant with an educational focus on sustainability. Unrestricted consumption and greed lead to an ugly, unhappy existence and, ultimately, death. The story's focus is intended to explore the moral understanding of the children in the classroom. It is presented as a metaphor for a naturalistic view of two sides of society where one group is overall more successful in finding peace and joy.

The second story, 'Jackal, The Judge' [15] (see also Appendix A), begins by illustrating how poachers are hunting the tigers for their own satisfaction. Its plot can be used to explain to children how animal poaching is causing the extinction of different species and

impacting biodiversity. The traveller was asking for the opinions of four people before making a final decision, and this represents how the justice system works as well as how to give importance to other people's opinions in social life. Furthermore, the story incites young minds to keep patience in danger and still be tactful in the decision-making process.

6.2. 3C Approach: Content

Archetypal characters are preeminent in folk stories, and their function is to harness a child's understanding by establishing clear connections between the particular and the universal [61]. In both stories, the characters of the humans and the animals are archetypal, but they are used to carry morally simplistic meanings. Giving non-human objects, such as plants and animals, a voice is intriguing. In many tales, animals and plants speak to people in a cooperative relationship [62], warning them of dangers and about remaining loyal. This also provides such characters with significant importance. Without them, the traveller, or Dukhu, would not have made the journey. Dukhu was rewarded by every non-human character in the story for her kindness towards them, while Shukhu received the opposite for her cruelty and selfishness. In the second story, the man's life was saved by the wisdom and spontaneous intelligence of the fox. For a child, this teaches them to take care of inanimate objects and other non-human living beings in the same way that they would care for a human.

It is conventionally acknowledged that good teachers are good storytellers [63], but analysis of how stories function pedagogically lags behind this recognition. A close textual analysis of the content and process of storytelling is needed to grasp the full importance of teachers' storytelling [64]. As the stories are mostly examples, with the teacher and students using them to convey opinions and value judgements, they give the opportunity to generate a sense of connection [65]. This creates an avenue where the learner will be able to relate the content—characters, equipment, any specific event of the story, consequences etc.—through the value inherent in the content to real-life experience related to sustainability.

In most folktales, as in the two used here, a lesson about what happens if the human is grateful for the animal's aid and the consequences of being ungrateful is also communicated [65]. Children with an emotional attachment to non-human beings are likely to become more friendly towards the natural environment in adulthood [66]. The beliefs, values and ways of life that have evolved from living close to nature naturally have a stimulating effect on people by inducing empathy, developing environmental ethics and creating ecological values and pro-environmental emotions [67].

6.3. 3C Approach: Concept

Moral principles are considered the fundamental gateway to achieving sustainability [68]. In the words of Albert Einstein: "The most important human endeavour is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life" (in [69]). The reason for using folk stories for the purposes of moral education is that they are archetypes, comprehensible and accessible to be explored [61]. Each story should represent an example by being a 'moral tale'. In each example, a problematic incident is presented and then interpreted, with children having the opportunity to comment on the behaviour of the characters involved [70]. The students and teacher share the storytelling process, using exchanges to bring out moral values. These stories possess interrelated evaluative and social functions for the listener [71], who can create a relational construct not just based upon the characters in the story embedded in relationships, but through the relationship of the listener to the characters themselves. Likewise, stories provide commentary upon significant life experiences and can be understood as a means of "constructing and seeing one's self in relation to others, appreciating difference, and evaluating ourselves" in relation to others [72].

The two stories offer the children several possibilities as to the intended implicit morals and values: if you are kind to nature, you will be rewarded; no matter how poor

you are, you should not be greedy and live the simplest possible life even when you are offered abundant wealth. Children were given the example of a bad ethical decision and the consequences for the greedy pair who were unkind to the creatures seeking help. This will create an avenue for children to imagine the contribution of a tree, a cow or a dog in their everyday lives and how they should be treated in return. All living, non-living, human and non-human beings are crucial for a joyful co-existence on our planet and, hence, for sustainability [66,67]. Children are evidently capable of recognising a wide variety of good and bad ethical behaviours within the context of one simple story whose moral will persist in the primary school classroom.

The emergent themes from this research explore how the process of storytelling in the classroom can be used to scaffold moral/ethical deliberations. First, the storytelling process and facilitation offer complexity and multi-dimensionality to the discussion of ethical issues because students are asked to place themselves in the context of the story. Students demonstrate their own interpretations of the context as it applies to their real lives. It cannot be generalised how students will interpret and relate to individual stories because their interpretations and understandings of the morals are drawn from their own experiences. While children may be able to reason abstractly about the right thing to do, this does not necessarily equate to their ability to handle moral situations that arise in their daily lives. The narrative approach to moral education serves to create a situation in which the individual student reasons through the process of reflecting upon oneself in the place of a character that one has thought of metaphorically [72].

6.4. 3C Approach: Scaffolding

A folkloristic approach [64] demonstrates how a teacher can bring up the actual topic by using stories along with the textual content to emphasise sustainability in the content of the story. Another aspect of a folkloristic approach is that, just as different genres of folklore have been transmitted orally from one generation to another, through this approach, a teacher can first introduce children to a pro-sustainability attitude that will persist through their education. The first stage brings the textbook story of the past into the present situation by removing the boundaries of time and space, and then draws the student in the present context into relevant sustainability behaviour. Teachers have limited authority in the classroom, particularly as we transition to student-centred models of education in the 21st century [73]. They can only speak from their own experience, and their understanding of the experiences of others is filtered through their own experiences. Therefore, in the second part, the teacher narrates any story or tale and not only interprets the textual content but also brings together personal and local knowledge with professional, academic, nationalised and localised knowledge of sustainability.

If the first of these exercises enables children to deconstruct the values embedded in the narrative, the latter allows them to begin to reconstruct the moral of the story in light of the ethical sense they make of the characters' actions. However, both the content and context used allow teachers to glean new insights into the children's complex ethical dilemmas and how they reason through them. This is a benefit of the use of storytelling in the classroom. The complexity inherent in storytelling allows for interpretation. Students interpret their own meanings—those that are most relevant to their personal experience and most closely related to their own ethical deliberations. This interpretation by the students then provides insights for teachers to better understand how the students apply ethical reasoning in their everyday experiences. The flowchart in Figure 3 represents the steps needed to be taken by the teacher when using storytelling in the classroom.

Education is considered an opportunity for change towards sustainability through value development [74]. The teacher should be able to reach out to the children's hearts with sustainability messages and tell them they need to be gentle on earth, modest in living and kind to others [75].

Figure 3. Using storytelling in the classroom.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to add to the body of work around sustainability education by offering an approach building on the socio-emotional effects and benefits of oral storytelling in primary school. Despite the significant benefits to children's education and development, oral story telling at school is underutilised in primary education around the world [24] and specifically in Bangladesh. Hence, the paper stressed that the integration of folk values from stories into primary education would particularly help build moral values encouraging sustainability. It provided a way to design activities that bring sustainable development into the classroom [76,77].

Stories are a convenient, available, and easily resourced tool to incorporate values in primary education and to transmit values between generations [78]. The moment we start a story, a child connects to it through their imagination, which drifts from one layer to another as the plot unfolds. This journey creates an opportunity to introduce the child to the real purpose of the story and then subtly transport them back to reality. While the story ends, it leaves a footprint on the child's subconscious mind and psyche. This helps them relate to the reality of life.

However, students will learn better from folk stories when they receive guidance from their teacher through the scaffolding approach that can be traced back to Russian psychology, including the work of Vygotsky [79]. Scaffolding needs to build on the context,

concept and content of the folk story as they relate to sustainability. We put forward two folk stories, namely 'Shakhu and Dukhu' from the book "Grandmother's Bag of Tales" by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar and 'Jackal, The Judge' from the book "The Clever Jackal and the Foolish Jackal" by Shah Jahan Kibria, which can be used in primary education in Bangladesh to convey sustainability values, such as simple living, kindness, being humble, patience and careful decision-making. The two examples demonstrate that folk stories contain powerful messages that help build capacity in learners to act in a self-determined, competent way.

There are many other folk stories that teachers can adapt and use. It is important, however, that the stories reflect the realities of modern life and are brought up to date so that children can make sense of the situations and lessons portrayed in them. The scaffolding approach allows to clarify the context—targeted demography (including gender issues), socio-economic background (e.g., social status) and cultural interpretation (as it relates to a particular geographic place and its cultural history), develop the concept—build appropriate characters (to which students can relate), their actions and consequences, and reflect on the concept with the main motivation being educating children for sustainability through appropriate perspectives. It is important to keep in mind the diversity of impacts storytelling can have and guide them towards building sustainability values in children.

Storytelling is a tool that teachers can use to foster awareness, challenge assumptions, clarify values and ideas about what sustainability means, and empower individuals and groups to act accordingly. Teaching at the primary level is a challenging and responsible job that plays the role of a curator in the most crucial period of educational life, sowing a seed that will sprout and bloom into a sapling and eventually turn into a tree.

Appendix A. Two Folklore-Based Stories

Story 1: Shukhu and Dukhu

A weaver sadly passed away, leaving behind two married daughters. The older daughter and her husband took all the wealth and the better places of the house while throwing the other pair into the dark, dingy chambers behind the house with no resources for surviving. The younger daughter, Dukhu, spins a little cotton and makes a towel or tablecloth from it and sells them in the market, which is hardly enough for a meal for the two of them.

One day, Dukhu sits and watches damp cotton dry in the sunlight. Suddenly, a mischievous little breeze swooped on the cotton balls, leaving Dukhu crying. Mother Wind, who was passing the crying Dukhu, said, 'Do not cry, dear Dukhu. Come with me. I will get your cotton back for you'. Wiping off the tears, Dukhu rushed after Mother Wind and was soon called out by a cow. 'Dukhu, Dukhu! Where are you going? My cowherd has forgotten to sweep my shed. Will you please do it for me?' The soft and kind-hearted Dukhu could not brush off the request and hurriedly swept out the cowshed, put fresh hay and water in it, and started running again behind Mother Wind. Soon a banana tree called out: 'Dukhu! O Dukhu! Weeds are choking my roots; please pull them out for me.' Dukhu tugged out the weeds from the roots of the banana tree and rushed after Mother Wind. Soon she was called out again by a banyan tree to sweep away dry leaves from its branches and by a horse to give him a few handfuls of grass. Dukhu could not

avoid either of them despite being stressed by her own agony. Hence, Dukhu swept the dry leaves, making the turf under the banyan tree neat and clean, pulled out clumps of green grass and placed them in front of the horse before she continued running behind Mother Wind until they came upon a silver-white mansion. Dukhu passed large, clean halls, gleaming courtyards and sparkling windows until she reached a wide staircase where an old woman was sitting and spinning yarn on a wheel and weaving it so quickly on a loom that a pair of saris flowed out before Dukhu could blink. This enchanting old woman was nobody else but the Moon Lady, or the Granny of the Moon. Heavily nervous, Dukhu came close to Granny, bowed to her and pledged to return the cotton. Otherwise, she and her husband had to starve, as these cottons were the only source of the little food they earned. With a honey-sweet voice and a heart full of kindness, the Granny said: 'Oh, my good child, bless you! You have come such a long way. Why do not you bathe, eat some lunch and rest first? In the next chamber, you will find a towel, some scented oil and soap. There are also saris for you to choose from. You can bathe in the pond behind the mansion. Once you feel fresh, go to the other chamber and have lunch. Then I will give your cotton back.'

Dukhu found the next chamber full of towels of all kinds, saris of silk, cotton and muslin in all colours, and shelves full of oil and soaps. Despite all the fancy items, she only took a simple sari, a little towel, a few drops of oil and a little soap. The moment Dukhu dipped her head into the pond, she became more beautiful, with long, thick hair, soft peach skin, large eyes and red lips. She found herself covered in gold jewellery around her body after the second dip and wrapped in the silk sari. After finishing the bath, Dukhu found a hall full of feasts but chose to eat very little. The Moon Lady then asked Dukhu to pick up her cotton casket from the next chamber. Out of all the big caskets, Dukhu picked the smallest, as she knew she did not own any big caskets. Amazed by the honesty of this poor girl, Granny bestowed her blessings on Dukhu, who happily started her way back home. Here came the horse, who called her out and offered her his pakshiraj (little pony); the banyan tree gave her a large jar filled with gold coins; the banana tree gave her a large bunch of golden bananas; and finally, the cow gave her lucky calf to Dukhu.

Seeing her coming back home, her husband streamed down with joy and surprise, revealing his wife had become more beautiful with all the jewels and gifts. After hearing everything that had happened, Dukhu's husband delightfully went to the older sister's door and offered a good share of all the jewels and gifts. Scowling, frowning and making ugly faces, Shukhu's husband refused to take anything from them and slammed the door on his face. At the same time, a beautiful baby came out of the casket and gave love and joy to the sweet and kind Dukhu. The lucky cow gave them bucketsful of creamy milk and they rode the Pakshiraj everywhere. Dukhu and her husband then lived in peace and comfort.

Greedy Shukhu and her husband could not resist but sitting on the same plot of drying cotton piles in the sunlight. Shukhu's husband went to bathe, leaving Shukhu with the cottons. Soon the wind blew and lifted Shukhu's cotton pile. Wasting no time, Shukhu started following Mother Wind, and she encountered the banana tree, banyan and horse the same way Dukhu was called out. However, the shellfish Shukhu paid no attention to them. She even did not show any respect to the Moon Lady when she arrived in the same mansion and rather yelled at her to give out the gifts. The Moon Lady felt intimidated and softly asked her the same thing she did with Dukhu.

Shukhu hurried into the next chamber and picked the best towel and sari for her to rush to the pond. She recalled Dukhu's steps in the first dip, which gave her beauty; the second dip gave her ornaments. The greedy Shukhu dipped her head three times and was horrified when she looked in the mirror. Her face had swollen into a black balloon and ugly blisters had broken out on her skin. The Moon Lady calmed her by saying that what is done cannot be undone; she should not have taken the dip three times. The Moon Lady then asked her to have food and choose a casket from the next chamber. The greedy Shukhu ate until her mouth was full and picked the largest casket. With no farewell wishes or greetings, she left the Moon Lady, showing no respect. On her way, she begged for help and everyone refused. The horse kicked her, the banyan dropped a thick branch on her and the banana tree dropped a bunch of bananas on her back. The cow lowered its head to stab her. Stumbling and staggering, panting and gasping, Shukhu reached home. The devastated husband and wife waited for the night when they were expecting a baby to come out of the casket, and their misery would be over. Shukhu's husband found out that Shukhu was gobbled up instead by a huge python that was inside the casket. Sobbing and howling, Shukhu's husband battered his head on the wall until he died.

Story 2: Jackal, The Judge

The bravest of all beasts in the jungle, a tiger, was trapped captive by a group of poachers. He was feeling tired and helpless after all his attempts to get out of the cage. A moment later, the tiger requested that a gentleman who was passing by open the locker for him to go out and drink some water from the river. He promised to come back. 'You will break my neck and eat me if I open it; I do not trust you', said the passer-by with fear and doubt. The tiger made a gentleman's promise, and his heartfelt plea melted the traveller's heart. He freed the tiger from the cage.

The nature of the wicked tiger said: 'I will eat you before drinking water'. The traveller realised he had brought his own danger, but there would be no use of force here; rather, he was thinking of using his intelligence. 'I know you will eat me, but before that, the opinion of four juries should be taken', trickily said the man.

A moment later, they approached a gigantic banyan tree. The traveller asked the banyan tree and said this tiger was imprisoned in the cage of hunters. 'I freed him up at his request. Now he wants to eat me. How can he do so?' The banyan tree sighs: 'I stand in the sun and give shade to people; they sleep comfortably under me. Following that, they broke my branches, lit a fire at my base, and cooked rice. Humans are very ungrateful. Thus, this man should be fed.'

'Get ready for death', said the proud tiger. 'We are yet to ask three more juries before you eat me', said the frightened man, looking for the second jury.

After going some distance, they met a dog. The dog heard everything and said: 'When I had strength, I used to guard the master's house without sleeping all night. Once, I saved the life of the master's little son by lifting him out of the water. Now that I am old, I cannot work like I used to. The master stops my meal and chases me away when he sees me. Humans are ungrateful, and this man should go into the tiger's belly'. Death was coming closer, and then they came across a cow.

The traveller said to the cow: 'I have done a favour to this tiger by freeing him from the hunter's cage. Now he wants to eat me. Is this the result of helping anyone?' Hearing all this, the cow said: 'In my youth, I ploughed my master's field, pulled cartloads of goods, gave birth to five calves, and the master fed my milk to all his children. Now I am old, I cannot give milk, and I cannot pull a car. The master has stopped feeding me and will sell me to the butchers. Humans are ungrateful, and this man deserves to be in a tiger's belly'.

The devastated traveller was looking for the last jury, the last hope, and a jackal was passing by. After hearing everything, the jackal understood that the traveller could not be saved if he did not have a little wisdom. The jackal pretended not to understand the matter and said: 'I cannot make a proper judgement without seeing with my own eyes how the matter happened'. The overjoyed tiger explicitly demonstrated the whole story: 'I was sitting inside the cage when this man was passing by the back of the cage'.

'How can the man open the door from behind the cage?', pretending not to be understood, the jackal said with wonder. The tiger became impatient and jumped into the cage and said: 'I was here.'

The jackal said: 'What was the condition of the door?'

The tiger said: "The door was closed.'

The jackal said to the passerby: 'Close the door', and the man closed the door without delay.

The jackal said to the tiger: 'You are ungrateful. The man opened the cage door at your request and set you free, as he felt pity for your suffering, and you wanted to eat him instead'. Never harm those who do you a favour or benefit you.

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