

Enhancing Young Readers' Expectations in Sri Lankan Chapter Book Series: A Review Based on User Feedback for 'Kacha Kacha Simona'

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Abstract – “Kacha Kacha Simona” was a pioneering chapter book series of Sinhala literature, categorized under chapter books the children story genre, authored and published from the year 2017 by the Sri Lankan writer I.M. Uthpala Madhuwanthi alias ‘Sandha Uthpalawee’. At present, “Kacha Kacha Simona” book series which is also considered a significant milestone of the author’s writing career has evolved into a trilogy targeting not only readers aged 7 to 11, but also beyond. The book series “Kacha Kacha Simona”, accompanied with delightful illustrations, captures the essence of the author’s childhood experiences. The series revolves around the protagonist, a talkative, playful, yet innocent girl with a strong determination for her studies. The books showcase Simona’s family, pets, hobbies, and her profound appreciation for the little joys of life. Also the storyline revolves around Simona’s journey as she prepares for and faces the grade five scholarship examination, a significant challenge that alters the course of her life. The first book in the series, “Kacha Kacha Simona” was an island-wide success, not only among children but also with adults. The author’s personal handling of story development, illustrations, book layout, cover design, publishing, distribution, sales and marketing showcased her multifaceted talent. The positive reception received from the audience including fan mail and drawings from readers inspired the author to create the second installment of the series, “Kacha Kacha Simona - Vibhaga Boothaya” in 2020. In the year 2021, the third book “Kacha Kacha Simona - Duwana Iskole” was also published and they all received an overwhelming amount of love and attention from young readers. The author introduced a unique page layout and a presentation style, setting a new trend in Sri Lankan children’s story books. The trilogy was also recognized for its educational value by the Ministry of Education as all three installments were certified as suitable for Sri Lankan school libraries. The series’s success can be attributed to four key elements consistently praised by its young audience based on their feedback. First, the narration style is engaging and captivating, keeping children enthralled throughout the reading experience. Second, humor is artfully woven into the narrative, providing moments of laughter and joy. Third, the author’s simple writing style resonates well with young readers, making the books accessible and relatable to their real life experiences. Fourth, the delightful illustrations complement the story, enhancing the overall appeal of

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the series. Taking “Kacha Kacha Simona’s user feedback into consideration, this study reveals the desired expectations of young readers of Sri Lankan chapter book series.

Keywords: Children’s literature, Book series, Chapter books, User feedbacks, Expectations



Fig.1 - First three installments of “Kacha Kacha Simona” Book Series



Fig.2 - First three installments of “Kacha Kacha Simona” Book Series