

## BOOK REVIEW

### My First Aeroplane Journey

Geyin Boli\*

**Title:** *My First Aeroplane Journey*  
**Author:** Pankaj Chaturvedi  
**Translator:** Neera Jain  
**Illustrator:** Irshad Kaptan  
**Publishers:** National Book Trust, India  
**Year of publication:** 2012  
**Price:** ₹105  
**Pages:** 23



#### ABOUT THE BOOK

As the title suggests, the book is about a pictorial expression, inviting the readers to share the experiences of a little girl and her first aeroplane journey. It presents the perspective of a little girl who excitedly and curiously experiences her first aeroplane journey. The detailed aeroplane journey is shared with the use of child-friendly illustrations on the whole, the book acts as a package of information almost like a virtual aeroplane travel tour from children's point of view.

#### RELEVANCE

The book opens with a picture of a cute little girl wearing a white dress with pink polka dots on the inner cover page. The girl is shown flying a paper aeroplane with the trail of marks in loops and swirls. The book begins with the little girl boarding an auto rickshaw with a person who is most likely her father. It is obvious that they are going on a journey. On reaching the airport, they both do all

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the formalities systematically such as getting their tickets checked at the entrance by the guard, getting their luggage checked inside the airport, collecting the boarding pass from the counter and going through the safety check. To adults, these are mere formalities; to the little girl, it is all very new and interesting. She is wide-eyed, taking in all these novel experiences. After this, they both get inside the transit bus to catch the plane. Perhaps the child did not even know that one has to take a bus from the terminal to the aeroplane! Through the bus window, the child looks excitedly at the activities happening in the aerodrome. Shortly after, while boarding the aeroplane, the child observes the other passengers putting handbags and attaches in the overhead bins then she looks out of the window. She observes the clouds, trees, houses, birds, etc., and the ariel view of the city through the aeroplane window from a totally different perspective. On landing, the child experiences a big bump as seen in the bounce of the flower in her hair; this also simultaneously and indirectly indicates explaining the possibility of danger and the importance of wearing a seat belt while travelling. Finally, coming out of the aeroplane they collect their bags from the belt and then leave for her aunt's house. The book ends with a picture of a flying aeroplane with clouds and a city.

The book is useful and relevant as it beautifully explains the journey by air. It satisfies the child's curiosity of being in an aeroplane. It gives

reassurance to children and to people who are perhaps scared to travel by flight. It acts as an information provider to people who would be traveling by flight and satisfies the curiosity of those who have never done so yet.

### **THEME**

Children's literature is relatively recent; in India this genre is only 175 years old. Currently, books are being produced, marketed and circulated for young readers from pre-school up to 18 years of age, under various types: fantasy, adventure, or fun facts. The common element in all of these is unfamiliarity— unknown lands, bygone eras, or imaginary worlds. Although air travel is far more common now than it was a decade ago when this book was published, still there is a sizeable section of Indians, both adults and children, who have so far not travelled by air. The theme is one of the most unusual themes for children's literature since it is rare to find a children's book wholly written about a journey by air.

### **LANGUAGE USED**

The language used in the book is very simple and age-appropriate. Every page has either one-line or has no words at all. The journey is told basically with the help of illustrations. This makes it easy for children of any linguistic background to understand the narration. The one-line sentence on pages acts as a supporting device

for young readers. The sentences reiterate what the pictures depict while giving an opportunity to children for adding new words to their vocabulary store.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

There is one large illustration on every page, and quite a few are centre spreads. The illustrations are bright, with vivid hues. The illustrations in the book are in full colour. The picture of the little girl appears in almost every page. The faces of the various characters depicted are expressive of a variety of emotions; curiosity, boredom, happiness, etc. The little child is full of excitement, and curiosity since the journey is hers.

The child seems to be flying with an adult in the book but in the entire book, there is no mention or confirmation that she is traveling with her father. It may definitely be her relative, father, uncle, older brother, teacher, etc. He cannot be a stranger since the little girl seems to be comfortable with him. However, it

indicates that a little child needs an older person to fly with.

The appearances of people, their dresses, and the designs of the transportation modes shown in the book such as the auto-rickshaw, bus and the aeroplane suggest that the journey happens in India.

The illustration in this book generally shows no background work which makes it clear that the focus of the book is the undivided attention to the process of journey.

It is an undisputed fact that young children's aesthetic appreciation about printed material is shaped by the books that they get access to. Children, by their very nature, pay attention to colours, font and designs. Through the book, the author and the illustrator seem to be re-visiting their childhood when creating this delightful book. It is hoped that this well-illustrated and interesting book will kindle the enthusiasm of young minds, and encourage them to learn more about everyday flights as well as flights into the unknown.