

Role of Literature in Education and Society

***Dr. Pradeep Kumar Chaswal**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Netaji Subhash
University of Technology, East Campus, Geeta Colony, (Delhi) India*

&

****Dr. Deepak Chaswal**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avvaiyar Govt. College for Women, Karaikal,
Puducherry (UT) India*

Abstract

No doubt literature plays crucial role in the development of individual's critical faculties so that one can understand the pros and cons of the problems we face in life. Literature plays important role in character building. It is through the study, analysis and evaluation of literary texts that we are able to define individual's role in the development of society. There are many popular languages in vast world of ours. It is in schools and colleges and universities that we learn many languages and the masterpieces of these languages. It is through literature that we interact with other societies, their literature and their culture. It is through this interaction with other cultures that we are able to develop a holistic world view of literature and society.

Literature is an inseparable part of society and education. It helps the learners develop language skills that not only help in socialization but also in opening new doors of career opportunities in the present-day competitive world. Literature develops cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills in the learners.

In the following way literature impacts education:

- **Creativity:**

Another name of literature is 'creative writing'. Poems, stories, plays and novels are nothing but an extension of writer's creative vision. The readers imagine and experience the same creative instinct while reading a literary text. It helps them enrich and enhance the creative abilities in self. Samier opines, "Allowing ourselves to put forward creative ideas, independently

of judgements, frees our mind and unbridles creativity, as if we again embraced our childlike carefreeness." (94)

- **Reading skills:**

We perform all the activities with a purpose in mind. Reading may be for "pleasure" or for getting "information" (Grellet⁴) It is observed that literary texts improve the reading skills and concentration of learners. They are able to focus more by devoting hours and hours in reading the interesting literary texts.

- **Literature and technical courses:**

Introduction of literary texts in technical curriculum is the need of hour. At present, the industry needs creativity, innovation and problem solving skills and literature teaches these skills with dexterity. Literary texts makes one see the things from fresh perspective. They develop our critical

faculty. In the words of Wang and King, “From many perspectives, to learn without critical reflection is labor lost” (11). They tell us how to self assess our abilities and how to relate ourselves with the society and the contemporary time.

- **Science fiction and inventions:**

It is pertinent to know that scientific fiction has inspired many inventions of science and technology which have made our life very easy, advanced and comfortable in all respects. For example the invention of submarine was inspired by Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. Igor Sikorsky, inventor of the modern helicopter, was inspired by a Verne book, *Clipper of the Clouds*. H.G. Wells’ novel, *War of the Worlds* inspired the creation of rockets by Robert H. Goddard. H.G. Wells published a novel, *The World Set Free*, in the year 1914. In this novel, he imagined the emergence of “artificial” atomic energy by 1933 and the same came true when in 1932 Physicist Leo Szilard happened to read this book. After reading this book the physicist was able to solve the problem of creating a nuclear chain reaction. Similarly cell phones, robots, metaverse, space travel and radars were initially predicted in science fiction and later these imagined things became reality. So we can also safely assume that science fiction and their translation into reality are one and the same thing as both are creation of human intelligence.

- **Literature and religion:**

It is well known fact that all the literature of old civilizations is preserved in the form of religious texts. It was a wonderful way to transfer wisdom and knowledge from one generation to the other. Religious text are not only about worship of God but also are storehouse of moral and ethical ways of life. For example holy books like Bible,

Ramayana, Mahabharat, Geeta, Zend Avesta, Quran and Tripitaks are guiding source for moral, cultural and virtuous ways of life.

- **Literature and philosophy:**

Aristotle defined *Manas* asocial animal. Life is a quest to achieve fulfilment. In the modern times materialistic ambitions are belittling the importance of philosophic and virtuous aspect of life. Philosophic literature makes readers confront the problems of life in a logical manner.

- **Literature and mental health:**

There are literary works by R.W. Emerson, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats and many more writers which are even recommended by doctors and psychiatrists to the patients who are suffering with stress and depression. Literature and creative writing is also a good way to express one’s feelings and emotions in the form of words.

- **Literature and society:**

There are different ways one can approach literature. Two popular forms are: Art for the sake of art and art for the sake of society. Art for the sake of art highlights various aspects of art only. On the other hand Art for the sake of Society means the focus of art is man and its institutions. Generally art for the sake of society adopts realistic approach in understanding the complex nature of social milieu.

- **Literature and National Unity:**

Literature is a great tool to unite people and achieve the goal of national integration. In the freedom struggle almost all countries have witnessed the power and effectiveness of literature to communicate the message of unity, brotherhood, equality and freedom to the fellow people. In India too, during the freedom struggle, songs, stories, epics, novels and plays contributed effectively in igniting the lost self confidence and patriotism among the

natives. These texts helped them to unite emotionally for the common goal to achieve independence. Poets like Ravindranath Tagore through his famous 'EklaChalo' and Novelists like Bankim Chandra Pal through 'VandeMatram' ignited the undying fire of patriotism in Indians against the oppressive rule of Britishers. We also got educated through the books like 'Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India' written by Dada Bhai Naroji. In this book he exposed the drain of Indian wealth and economic exploitation of India by the Britishers.

Literature as mirror of society:Literature is a mirror to society. A writer or poet usually reflects what he sees or experiences in society.Plays of Arthur

Works Cited:

Grellet, Françoise. *Developing Reading Skills :A Practical Guide to Reading Comprehension Exercises*. Cambridge UP, 2010.

Samier, Henri. *Intuition, Creativity, Innovation*. Wiley, 2018.

Wang, C. X. Victor, and Kathleen P. King. "Transformative Learning and Ancient Asian Educational Perspectives." *Assessing and Evaluating Adult Learning in Career and Technical Education*, edited by C. X. Wang, Information Science Reference, 2011, pp.11-22.

Miller, Eugene O' Nell, Shakespeare, Samuel Beckett beautifully reflect the philosophic and literary history of their times. In India, Premchandwrote stories and novels to highlight and criticise the repression of rural masses by the landed gentry.

Conclusion: On the basis of above discussion, we can safely conclude that literature and society are two faces of the same coin. Literature reflects society and helps the civilization to prosper and make human life more rational and meaningful. It is recommended that literature must be an integral part of curriculum if we wish to make an equal, rational, judicious and empathetic society.