

RELEVANCE OF LITERATURE IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Ankita Paul

Research Scholar, *Amity Institute of English Studies and Research, Amity University,*
Uttar Pradesh (INDIA)

ABSTRACT

Literature has been an indispensable part of human life since times immemorial. Literature paints a true picture of society and reflects the life of man in relation to his circumstances- social, political, cultural, economic as well as at the domestic front. Literature is a form of documenting one's experiences of and observations on life so as to give an access to others to that information in an attempt to make them aware about various situations in life. Science and Technology, on the other hand has taken the world a step forward leading to the invention of new facts and through which communication and exchange of information has become easy, thus bridging the gap between people of different countries and cultures and making the world become a global community. But despite the fact that technology has come a long way, literature still continues to remain important for all people, even those belonging to the domain of technology. So it is important to make literature a compulsory course in technical colleges.

Keywords: *Literature, science, technology*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has been an indispensable part of human life since times immemorial. Literature paints a true picture of society and reflects the life of man in relation to his circumstances- social, political, cultural, economic as well as at the domestic front. The fusion of feelings and thoughts gives rise to a good literary piece which is capable of stimulating people both emotionally and intellectually at the same time, which is important for every human being irrespective of which field he belongs to. This research aims to point out the relevance of literature in the field of technology and why it is important to make literature a compulsory subject in technical colleges.

II. LITERATURE AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN LIFE

Literature "*heightens our awareness of human life*" [1]. All emotions of life- happiness, joy, delight, agony, anguish, disappointment, despair, hope etc. get expressed through the art called literature. Literature is informative and imaginative and it provides one with the platform to experience or know about things or situations one hasn't experienced or doesn't know about, through the experience and knowledge of others. According to some people belonging to the literary field, literature is a study of human condition and knowing about human condition and understanding it from other's perspective is certainly a way to broaden one's perspective and gain wisdom. Literature makes readers experience events which help readers derive valuable lessons from it.

Literature being an important medium, gives readers the scope to revisit the ancient world through the documentation that is present in the form of Indian epics such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Even the eras belonging to British literary history- from medieval to Renaissance to Elizabethan to Restoration to Romantic to Victorian to Modern, can be accessible through its literature. It transports readers to any particular era and gives a glimpse of the lives of people at that time and informs about the different cultures and belief systems, traditions and customs of each era through well documented pieces which are then made available to people of that particular era and beyond. Literature also helps to mirror the various mannerisms of an age and exposes the various virtues and vices of that age by bringing alive the mannerisms through literary characters.

Literature is a portrayal of a real society in its state of well-being as well as in its time of crisis which makes readers go through the sentiments of the characters in order to give them an experience of a real event. The readers can feel the different emotions that the characters in literary pieces go through- from feeling their pain to living their joyous moments to laughing at their jokes to crying with them. It is a constant companion to the varying moods of man as well as a constant source of knowledge, inspiration and enlightenment. It enriches lives of individuals in many ways by deepening their thought process and making them feel profoundly about things. The aesthetic satisfaction that a literary piece exudes is unmatched. It has a universal appeal since it is connected to real life and has the ability to take one towards the path of moral truth and wisdom.

It is a universally accepted fact that literature documents the social, political, cultural and economic issues of any time. Apart from that it is seen that many a times it has also been a source of revolution against various social and political injustice over the years. Literature infuses the spirit of revolution in man and makes him question the various social and moral codes that he has been following blindly; it questions the inhumanity and insensitivity of human beings towards fellow human beings. Literature lays the facts in front of its readers and asks them to judge things from a neutral point of view. The oppressions and exploitation experienced by people of colonial countries by the colonizers has been recorded in postcolonial literature. Similarly Dalit Literature is an example of the exploitation that had been subjected to people belonging to the Dalit community. Other identity-based literature, like Black literature, Slave narratives etc. also gives readers inputs on lives led by several oppressed classes who have had no voices of their own and have always been represented by others. These stories needed to be told for readers to have a glimpse of the kind of life these people had led and also come to empathize with their situations. It is an attempt to sensitize readers to people of all communities and impart the teaching that all human beings are same and all communities should be respected equally.

III. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD

Science and technology, on the other hand has taken the world a step forward which leads to invention of new facts and through which communication and exchange of information has become easy, thus bridging the gap between people of different countries and cultures and making the world become a global community. But despite the fact that technology has come a long way, literature still continues to remain important for all people, even those belonging to the domain of technology. Technology “deals with things which exist independently of the mind. In other words, [it] has the objective outlook. Metaphysics, ethics, law, political economy, chemistry, physics have an objective approach to truth. Thus they are distinct from literature” [1].

IV. RELEVANCE OF LITERATURE IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

4.1 Helps in communication skills

In this era of globalization where Multinational companies are ruling the corporate world, communication plays an extremely important role in all sectors, especially in the field of technology. To be able to communicate fluently it is important for one to master the art of speaking in English, it being the widely used language internationally and the most preferred language of communication in corporate offices. The fluency in a language comes from reading its literature and so literature studies should be encouraged in technical colleges. It makes one adept in the language and helps to enhance creative thinking of an individual.

4.2 Helps in facing job interviews

Literature enriches one's mind by offering new perspectives on things, by providing new information about facts and creating awareness about various subjects. Awareness is very important for every individual, irrespective of which field he belongs to and is a great way of enlightening people. It is important for people to know about the past and present scenarios and come to see it from different perspectives through the eyes of different authors. Literature emphasizes the importance of characteristics such as *“altruism, charity, civility, compassion and generosity”* and *“introduce aesthetic values to the student”* [2]. So it is important to be a responsible and conscientious human being and it is highly recommended for people belonging to the fields of science and technology to take literature as a course to be well informed and aware about general things related to life and build analytical skills as it might be of great help to them to face job interviews, which are primarily based on a person's outlook on life.

4.3 As an alternative career option

Even if any person working in the field of science and technology is keen on switching to a new field after a prolonged period of being in the technological field, literature can make a great career option. Literature helps one improve their written and oral communication skills [3]. It also *“helps one understand the interconnectedness of all areas of knowledge- how it all fits together”* [3]. As literature is the documentation of thoughts and facts so it has a major contribution to subjects such as history, psychology, sociology, philosophy and political science; even documentation of scientific facts and analyzing them is something that is influenced by literary writing. Nowadays with a background in literature along with technical courses, one can have a career in creative writing, journalism, content writing in companies, editing jobs to name a few.

4.4 Brings positivity in the minds of readers

Literature has always been an important part of human lives. It helps restore hope and positivity in human beings; encourages people to dream and inspires people to work towards their goals. Any literary piece is the result of the wisdom of a great person who is able to articulate his feelings and share his thoughts and observations on life thus attempting to inspire others and have an impact on them. So reading literature makes one be inspired by the best creative minds. Literature studies are essential in pointing out the needs of any society and how society can be changed for the better. So reading literature helps a person to learn more about

things that one is surrounded by and aids in the growth of mind. Literature awakens the conscience of readers and helps them to have a positive outlook towards things. Literature teaches about moral values, kindness and integrity. It can turn an individual from being self-centered and narrow-minded to a more responsible, sensitive and conscientious person. It helps in making people understand that his/her problem is not the end of the world and there's more to life so one should not fret over small issues but display the qualities of kindness, affection and forgiveness in regular life. Literature helps to shape one's personality and build up one's image and gives the confidence to ace against all odds by providing moral growth. *“Great literature should do some good to the reader: must quicken his perception through dull, and sharpen his discrimination though blunt, and mellow the rawness of his personal opinions”* [4]. So it is advisable for every individual, including the ones belonging to the field of technology to develop the habit of reading literature to be able to feel good about oneself from inside as it changes life for the better by having a positive impact on the mind of the reader; and a positive mind can be the most productive mind.

4.5 Offers relaxation from stress coming from workload

Due to the pressure mounted on individuals working in the fields of technology and due to their long working hours and busy schedules it is advisable for them to take resort to literature which can be a source of relaxation and also offer respite from such gruelling schedules and workload and monotony of office hours. Besides it works as a stress buster. So literature being therapeutic in nature should be introduced in technical colleges for students to be in practice of reading and healing from inside. Besides, there are numerous genres in literature-comedy, tragedy, romance, satire, gothic etc. and people can choose from these genres according to their tastes and varying moods.

4.6 Adds value to one's degree

Studying literature along with technical courses gives exposure to students to a different stream and allows them to absorb the values that it has to offer as well as make them understand and appreciate the role of other streams and it also adds *“value to one's degree”* [2]. So literature should be made a compulsory course in all areas of education, including the technological field.

4.7 Helps to know about other nations and cultures

Literature gives an opportunity to people to know about other nations and cultures. The era of globalization and the strong presence and performance of multinational companies around the world is taking man to places around the world for education and work. The best way to know a place is through its literature. By going through the literature of a nation one can have an idea about its culture, people etc and form an idea about the place beforehand. So literature is an extremely important subject in giving people a bird's view of the world around.

4.8 A different genre named science fiction for science lovers

Science and technology has been a matter of discussion in literary pieces since ages. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published on 1859. Since then many writers have discussed about science and technology in their books, the most popular writers of this genre being “H.G Wells”, “Jules Verne”, “Issac Asimov”, “Arthur C.

Clarke”, “Frank Herbert”, “Ray Bradbury” to name a few [5]. In fact there is a separate genre in literature called “*science fiction*”. Science fiction “*is a form of fiction that deals principally with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals*” [6]. The use of science and technology has become an everyday reality and very much a part of human lives and fiction based on science and technology has become popular among readers. So people belonging to the field of science and technology can access science fiction books and make it a hobby for their leisure time to enhance their scientific imagination skills.

4.9 Helps in building emotional intelligence

However, human life is more than just machines and mechanical inventions. It is undeniable that machines have made human lives easier and faster but people’s daily lives are based on real human emotions which cannot be replaced by machines. Building one’s emotional intelligence is also highly required for one to stay in control of oneself which comes from learning about alternative views. So it is advisable for students and professionals belonging to the field of technology to take some time out of their busy schedule and devote it to literature so that they can learn the various kinds of emotions that exist and gain an understanding about life from others’ perspective and be respectful of that. Regarding this, Joyes Carol Oates beautifully states: “*Reading is the sole means by which we slip, involuntarily, often helplessly, into another’s skin, another’s voice, another’s soul*”

V. CONCLUSION

A popular figure in the field of technology, Steve Jobs once said that technology “*alone is not enough- it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our hearts sing*” [8]. Like Jobs, many popular figures from the field of technology have time and again been vocal about the positive impact of humanities, especially literature in their lives. It is the power of literature that instills great values in the minds of human beings by taking them forward from the dark ages to the era of enlightenment. Like a pole star literature guides one through the different crisis situations that one goes through in life. It is a companion in a true sense as it helps one seek solace in the situations it presents which gives a sense of wisdom and security to its readers by offering a broader perspective about life. It helps in shaping the personality of readers by making them more responsible and wise thus acting as a catalyst in the growth of human mind. Literature bridges the gap between people, places, countries and cultures. It transcends the boundary of nation, culture and beliefs. It serves as an experience that can be lived by everybody. In this era of man’s insensitivity and indifference towards fellow human beings literature can be a source of inspiration through tales of bravery and sacrifice, of happiness and fulfillment, of overcoming obstacles and emerging stronger etc., thus leading to the evolution of human mind by offering alternative perspectives on life. Reading literature makes one more human, gives meaning to life and is instrumental in uniting the human race by conveying this message that every human being is equal.

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