

# IMPORTANCE OF LITERATURE IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

**Anuradha Pandey**

## ABSTRACT

*This paper, very briefly, focuses on the role of literature in technical colleges. Though we are living in epoch of technology yet we cannot ignore significance of art, music, dance and the most importantly literature which enables us not only to touch but also to feel, and not only to see but also to perceive.*

*In this paper I have attempted to deal with indispensable role of literature in modern life. Since topic is open ended and I do not claim any preposition of finality, I have briefly elucidated the functions of literature, viewing them as remedy to many consternations prevailing in the lives of those who are involved in technical education. As denouement, I reflect that Literature of high standard must constitute an integral section of any course prescribed in a college of technical education.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Before we start let us have a look at what actually constitutes ‘Literature’? Or to put it other way round, ‘what is literature?’

Literature is a written work with artistic values. It may be in various genre like prose, poetry, fiction, drama. In its recent incarnations of intricate amusing emerald in high aesthetic values, what’s app messenger.

However, to look for finality while defining literature is futile. Great scholars in past, have made this attempt. But I think, in present context I need not to go in classical details provided in voluminous thickness of Rasa shashtra as we all are a bit aware about broader counters of literature.

## II. FUNCTIONS OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Elevates us

Here I have looked into function of literature keeping in mind geek who nudge his/her existence through a world of technology. Yet here too, classical theories about the functions of literature are relevant to an extent.

A Sanskrit scholar has talked about ‘Rasa’. This is primary function of literature. ‘Rasa’ simply means that element of writing /any art work which ‘pleases’ our senses, and fills our souls with satisfaction:

*“Rasa, ( Sanskrit: “essence,” “taste,” or “flavour,” literally “sap” or “juice”) Indian concept of aesthetic flavour, an essential element of any work of visual, literary, or performing art that can only be suggested, not described. It is a kind of contemplative abstraction in which the inwardness of human feelings suffuses the surrounding world of embodied forms.”*

From (<https://www.britannica.com/art/rasa>)

In arena of technical Education such sources of rejuvenations of one’s mind and soul can work wonder in terms of productivity. It is hard to generate through other means the “contemplative abstraction” which is so

poignant that can align and amalgamate “inwardness of human feelings” to the “embodied forms of Surrounding world.”

One can argue that there are many sources of satisfaction and pleasure. So, what is special with Rasa derived from literature?

Definitely, there is dissimilarity. Pleasure derived from consumption of good literature **elevates us**. When we go through an enlightening piece of writing it ‘purgates’ our ‘instinct’. It helps us to go beyond our animal self. Also, there has been an old adage in Sanskrit: **Sahitya Sangeet Kala vihin: Sakshatpashu: puchhvishanhin**. In most of the cases, this adage is used to demean those who do not share any positive interest in various art forms. But here I am not quoting this in traditional sense. Since as per this definition, majority of populace involved in annals of technical education are animals. However, There is no wrong in being a good animal yet Literature is significant in the sense that having animalistic tendencies, One cannot progress much in any field be it science, be it technology be it corporate. **We need purification of our senses, our instincts. A good story does so. A poetry does so.**

## 2.2 Reading as a therapeutic measure

In college campus, we have found ‘stress’ a gigantic problem. It works as a seed to give way for so many other related problems in students’ life. In their clueless effort to do away with stress, students fall prey to various malice like alcoholism. Since Stress is a complex phenomenon, it is abstruse for any agency to offer a single handed all and all formulae to counter stress. Implications of Stress are almost same for everyone, but its genesis in one’s life lies heavily on personal history of their background and psyche. Albeit institutes and Universities have started offering courses and counselling for ‘stress-management’, such efforts are not seen bearing much fruit.

Under such situations, if they are provided with a sufficient dose of a good literature which can heal their wounds, and can rejuvenate them with positive spirit then it would be a boon not only for their lives but for the society at large.

Here comes literature in play. When we go through a work of fiction, this not only tells us a story but does a lot more. Modern psychotherapy suggests reading in itself can be a therapeutic measure and this is true also. When we read a story in which a predicament is struggling to wade through unfathomable uncertainties and insecurities of life and ultimately lifts himself/herself to victorious position, one who reads it attains same victorious essence deep down within his/her nerves. **Therefore, reading breeds perseverance in one’s ‘psyche**. There is no other way to do it in a student’s life in an academic context.

To put it in a theoretical context, we can take “Catharsis” as example.

*“A Catharsis is an emotional discharge through which one can achieve a state of moral or **spiritual renewal** or achieve a state of **liberation from anxiety** and stress. Catharsis is a Greek word and it means cleansing. In literature it is used for the cleansing of emotions of the characters. It can also be any other radical change that leads to emotional rejuvenation of a person.*

*Originally, the term was used as a metaphor in Poetics by Aristotle to explain the impact of tragedy on the audiences. He believed that catharsis was the ultimate end of a tragic artistic work and it marked its quality. He further said in Poetics:*

*“Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; . . . through pity [eleos] and fear [phobos] effecting the proper purgation [catharsis] of these emotions” (c. 350 BCE, Book 6.2).”*

(From <https://literarydevices.net/catharsis/>)

Hence, technophiles must indulge in worthy literature.

### 2.3 Literature trains our emotions

Till late 1980s, it was believed ‘Emotions do not play any role in one’s professional success. However scene got reversed with new research conducted by a series of scholars. Among all these, Dr Daniel Goleman emerged as pioneer. He in his famous book ‘Emotional Intelligence’ (Bloomsbury Publishing India Private Limited; Latest edition (2017)) proved that behind all rational human decision (for business administration management etc.) a complex network of emotions play a very crucial role. Succinctly, topical theoretical discourse does not dare to belittle emotions as a weakness. Rather it is strength if applied/ channelized wisely.

With this background, we can invoke another function of literature to serve as facilitator in a technical education. **Literature trains our emotions.** It teaches us how to get angry, how to love, how to hate, how to envy, how to feel and ultimately not to be destructive while going through all these mentalstates. And to this process we can call channelizing our emotion for a constructive output.

### 2.4 To Re-live others perspectives

Literature can **help us to understand world around us.** In an age of technology and social media networking, human life has been very multifarious. With the changing times, social norms are changing, joint families are disembaring to form nuclear set ups. Challenges being faced by a working woman at workplace and back at home are posing very serious questions on the hierarchy of social organisations.

Here literature can play a vital role for those who are involved in technical education either as a teacher or as a student.

When we go through a literary work we get to know other’s perspective and emotions .Obviously, there are other channels of communication which enables us to peep into others perspective and emotions, advantage of looking into somebody world through thecapillaries of literature like fiction or poetry is to **“re-live”** those emotions and human conditions.

This **re-living is different from mere ‘knowing’.** When we re-live others ‘human conditions’, we encounter a completely different world .This is a world where ‘I’ is not the centre around which world is revolving. Therefore, in a way we transcend limits of human perception.

### 2.5 Mirror to Society; Gender and Identity

This is a saying, banal and unremitting: Literature mirrors Society. Obviously, changing realities of society reflect in any piece of work being produced in a particular social context. Therefore literary text can prove a viable medium to make students aware and active participants in the change.

Our civilization inherits a rich cultural legacy from ancient times. Its glittering sides no doubts erects an epitaph of greatness where high human values are placed before us. But on the other side, there definitely exists a bunch of stereotypes related with women and position of man in society.

This is through a good story in which a girl or a women suffers the burns of patriarchal tendencies, we can make students awake about the gender discrimination prevalent in our society.

### **2.6 Transition of values; Literature and Culture**

How to transfer cultural values from one generation to another has always been a matter of concern to an enlightened society. Only through religious preaching or didactic books, values are difficult to transfer to younger generation. Prosaic moral clichés are far less efficient in terms of impact if compared to a story or a poetic work delivering the same message.

Also, in its vivid descriptions, a good work of literature preserves the cultural nuances of a society, otherwise destined to be lost in meadows of time.

Therefore, sufficient input of well-meaning literature into chronicles of technical education will only benefit us without any negative repercussion. It is beyond doubt that good reading makes us more human. In an age when Countries hasstockedsuch huge number of nuclear war heads capable of destroying this planet many a times, nearly thirty million people in India only go to sleep with their bellies half filled, leave alone the sorry state of affairs in sub African countries where a large population is at verge of starvation. So, it is our moral responsibility as technical educators to produce more human doctors, Engineers, and Skilled professionals. Literature can help us a lot in this.

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