



LITERATURE AND SOCIETY: ENGLISH LITERATURE AND IT REFLECTS TO PRESENT SOCIETY

Dr Kanderi Sridevi

Associate Professor in English, Government Degree & PG College Puttur

ABSTRACT

Literature is a reflection of the society is a fact that has been widely acknowledged. Literature indeed reflects the society, its good values and its ills. In its corrective function, literature mirrors the ills of the society with a view to making the society realize its mistakes and make amends. It also projects the virtues or good values in the society for people to emulate. Literature, as an imitation of human action, often presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society. The history of literature dates back to the dawn of human civilization. The societies were formed by the human beings with objectives of fulfilling the human needs and aspirations. The history of Literature dates back to the dawn of human civilization. The societies were formed by human beings with objectives of fulfilling human needs and aspirations. The Literature cannot sustain without society, the society too cannot be unnoticed in literary pieces in one way or another. This paper is about the importance of Literature and how it influences the minds of people in leading a good life.

KEYWORDS: English Literature, Cultural Identity, Academic Discipline, Diversity, Indian Culture, International Recognition

INTRODUCTION

Birth of English Language in India is said to be emerged with the arrival of East India Company in 17th century. East India used English Language as official Document with Govt Bodies. Gradually it spread among the masses. It came in the form of both as written and verbal. It then came in Academics. It spread with the start of first newspaper, Hickey's Bengal Gazette. It spread more widely coming it in academics. Gradually, it became the part of syllabus and thus English Language turned into English Literature. Literature comes from Latin 'Literatura' or 'litteratura' a word meaning publish, writing in a particular style on a particular subject. It is an umbrella term that includes everything we see, hear, talk, read, touch and taste. It is the thing to express ideas in printed form or as colour, sound or in any other form for the welfare of all ages of generation covering a wide range of all spheres of lives; animate or inanimate in the whole universe. It involves exploitation, humiliation, or degradation of a particular group, may be related to a particular caste, creed, colour, gender, and religion. It explores certain bonds: patriarchal, caste and religion etc. It expresses culture, tradition: locally, state, and country-wise. It gives the true and real picture of the society. It shows the belief of the people in certain gods or deities. It is a record in 'vast bookish forms', 'painted designs', and 'code forms' stored in different shapes like hard and soft, symbolically and any other one. It contains different styles and forms in different languages. It contains all what we believe, think, work, imagine and what happens every moment. Sources of literature are immense. It may come through medias: electronically and print, from different literary scholars and within a group of a certain field. Definition of English Literature as mentioned in Oxford Dictionary, "Literature is taken to include oral, dramatic, and broadcast composition that may not have been published in written form,

but which have been (or deserve...)"

Literature as the Image of Society: Every part of world Literature more or less reflects the society. There is clear reflection of ancient social history of countries in Italian, Greek, German, English or Indian Epics. Contents of Beowulf, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Ramayan, and the Mahabharat reveals the picture of ancient society. Essayists like Charles Lamb, Huxley, Stevenson, Carlyle, Churchill etc have reflected much about the literature. It is Literature that gives the wide History of present, past and Future perspectives. It presents the ideals of the past heroes, work of freedom fighters and details of the tradition and culture that is common in India. Through Literature, one can predict the outcomes for future. "Post-independence Literature reveals that there has been the women's quest for her identity and self which provides the society a better look. The indigenous contributing factors like Western Civilizational Development, the Indian Freedom Struggle, and Indian Constitutional Rights of Women tyend the women poets to write freely and openly for the bold issues like realistic attitude to sex, lust, and frank autobiographical expression," (Roy & Gami: Dayal, 7).

Tagore has depicted Culture and Tradition of India so vividly and widely through his work. Tagore has been humanist in every approach. Tool for Women Empowerment: Literature is a great tool for the empowerment of women. It gives the knowledge of Indian Epics like Ramayana, and Mahabharat. It presents ideals of Rama and Laxman to develop brotherhood feelings and respect of Laxman to Sita to inculcate such feelings in youth to respect women in the way.

It is Literature that describes how women were treated in different Yugas: Satya Yuga (Golden Age), Treta Yuga (Silver

Age), Dwapara Yuga (Bronze Age), Kali Yuga (Iron Age). Indian Hindu great Epic, Ramayana depicts about Treta Yuga in which Purushottam Ramchandra ideals are presented. It also depicts how Sita faces Fire Ordeal. Sita declares before the huge public in the presence of Valmiki rishi that she never thinks of anybody else besides Ram, touching any one is rather more thing. If I am really true in what I am saying or absolutely sacred, Prathvi devi (earth mother) should engulf me so as to take me in her lap. She again repeats and emphasizes that if she worships Ram with mind, soul and heart, Bhagawati devi (earth mother) should engulf her to take her in her lap.

In Ramayana Uttar Kand, Valmiki narrates Sita's another 'fire ordeal'. "Yathaham Raghavadanyam mansapi na chintaye, Tatha me madhavi devi viveram datumarati...vivaram datumarati," (Ramayana.94/14- 15/899). Draupadi uttered, " Pandavas You had courage to protect me agaudt the small gust of wind. You!, bear this calmly and the wicked pulling me violently before the whole assembly. ..but this Dusasan is causing me unbearable pain staining the glory of Kauravas with sin. You!, tell me clearly, if I am not of yours and then I will decide what to do." (Mahabharata,86/217-218)

The role of literature in society Good literature is one which reaches out to people and makes an impact on the society said Tamil Writer Ponneelan on Delivering the Tamil Writer D. Jayakanthan endowment lecture at Tamil University, Literature has a major impact on the development of society. It has shaped civilizations, changed political systems and exposed injustice. Literature gives us a detailed preview of human experiences, allowing us to connect on basic levels of desire and emotion. However, just as it has constructed societies, the writings and works of certain authors have degraded societies to their most primitive form. Literature's main role is to picture society; it is both the eye and light of society which enables reflections of the structures of society. Literature portrays people engaging in social interactions. We can observe our society as it is distilled and reflected in literature. Everybody wants to live in a world of imagination escaping from reality, because everybody in their daily round passes though the same world which tires them, the same human existence, and the same human nature or character either in him or in others. Therefore, everybody wants some kind of beautification or glorification of things which one experience in one's own life and which are comparatively either ugly or colorless. It is imagination that makes thing colorful, while it is reality that makes thing rather charmless and even unpleasant. So it is the works of the imaginative writers that provide food for recreation to the readers because they allow the readers to have a temporary escape form reality of life; while the world of realistic writers serve as the mirror of society and contemporary life and times. Literature reflects both good and bad values of the society. In reflecting the bad values it makes us to rectify and solve the issues. In reflection of good values in the society it makes us to emulate. Often as reflection, literature presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society.

Relation Bound between the literature and society: Literature expresses social sympathies; naturally it is bound to exercise some positive influence on our mind and attitude. Society reacts

to literature in a living way. An inspiring poem creates general influence on society. It rouses our feelings and enthusiasm for welfare. Shelley has called poets the unacknowledged legislators of mankind. The function of a legislator is to lay down the law, a settled course of action that men may follow. Poetry and literature generally do this in a quiet and unobtrusive way. Novels are known to have changed the direction of the human mind and set in motion movements that have altered our ways of life. The influence of literature on society is felt directly or indirectly. Thus Miss Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was directly responsible for a movement against slavery in literature and life in USA of those days. The novels of Dickens had an indirect influence in creating in society a feeling for regulating and removing social wrongs, calling for necessary reforms. Sarat Chandra's novels have gone a long way in breaking conservatism as regards women in our society. It is, however, clear that if we are interested in literature, and its influence is bound to move us amply. Literature is made out of the lore of life. No doubt, the realistic artist brings to a focus the oddities and cruder aspects of life overmuch. But to know life fully, not only the bright side but also the seamy and dark side of life is to be known.

CONCLUSION

Literature is an imitation of human life and action; it is a reflection of the human society. Literature not only reflects the society but serves as a mirror in which members of the society a look at themselves and see the need for positive change. There are many parts of literature we can find like prose, theater or poetry, drama etc. They all forms are mostly gives entertainment and pleasure and knowledge to the society. But the main faction of literature is to "Reform" the society. If there is a proper them related to society and its problems it can reform or vanish such kind of problems. So, there is a close relation between society and literature.

REFERENCES

1. Anita Rau Badami, Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?(2006)
2. Seth, Vikram. A Suitable Boy: Penguin India, 1993.Print
3. Tharoor, Shashi. The Great Indian Novel. New Delhi: Penguin Indian, 1989.
4. Adams, Hazard. Critical Theory Since Plato. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York: 1971.
5. Burke, Kenneth. "Literature as Equipment for Living." Critical Theory Since Plato. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York: 1971.
6. Harrington, Austin. Art and Social Theory. Polity Press Ltd., Malden: 2004.
7. Moretti, Franco. "The Dialectic of Fear". New Left Review 1/136, November-December 1982.
8. Kamala Das, An Introduction (1965)