



## **Role of English Literature In Upholding Human Values**

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### **Abstract:**

*Literature has played a crucial role in promoting human values and contributing to the development of morally virtuous individuals and societies. By fostering empathy, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the human experience, literature offers a powerful tool for ethical growth. While various paradigms exist for improving students' soft skills and communication, literature serves as an authentic source for teaching English. Students can learn social aspects and human values through reading novels, short stories, poetry, and dramas. Moreover, literature plays a significant role in the English language classroom, enhancing both language acquisition and moral development.*

**Keywords:** Human Values, English Literature, Empathy, Moral Development, Language Acquisition

### **Introduction**

Literature is the mirror of society. Literature, from time immemorial, has appealed to students of all ages. Literature gives happiness to anyone who reads with diligence and passion. John McRae (1964) makes an earnest attempt to differentiate between classical literature and Pulp Fiction by using 'L' and 'I' respectively.

Colonisation almost came to an end in the late 1640's and 1650's. Once colonisation came to an end, literature of different countries gained prominence. Apart from traditional literature of UK and the USA, literature from other parts of the world

captured the imagination of readers. In the earlier times people were really sceptical to think beyond Shakespeare and Milton. 21<sup>st</sup> Century reflex, the changing mind set of people all over the world.

The rise of English language teaching led to the gradual sidelining of literature. As focus shifted to the functional use of language. Though there are different views on the definition of literature, it is true that literature is intimately linked with human values. Man is the centre of all literary activities. Even the religious texts which are meant for spiritual experience are for the well

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being of human beings. Alexander Pope rightly said “the proper study of mankind is man”. The saint poet Chandidas also said :

“Listen, o brother Man is the greatest truth  
Nothing beyond.”

The above lines teach us the value of human beings. Literature leads man from darkness to light. Man becomes conscious of his environment through literature.

Literary works not only delights, but also instructs us to be good human beings, to be compassionate kind and righteous.

We Also learn the message of tolerance and sacrifice from Literature. The oriya saint poet Bhima Bhoi said “ Who can tolerate the scene of unlimited , sorrow and agony of leaving beings. Let my life language in hell , but the world must be saved.”

The Messages of great literary works have been noble virtues such as love, brotherhood and peace. The saint poet Rihani says :

“ Now, mosques and churches - even a Kaba Stone, Quran and Bibles even a Marty’s bone- All these and more, my heart can Tolerate for my religion is love and love alone.”

Literature fulfils the requirement of telling and talking, Dialogue and communication, Vital to the present age. In this age , there is enough networking of communication, But there is a lack of communication among human beings. There is distrust and misunderstanding. Literature can play a vital role in bridging this gap. It Has been found that literature has

played significant role , in changing the psych of human beings. Gandhiji wrote for social change to bring peace and understanding. His writings inspired our countrymen to love the downtrodden. Thus Literature place the roll off upholder of human values. Pure literature always nurtures moral values and ethics.

Writers like Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Banabhatta, wrote to protect and preserve the values of life. Some of the writers created literature for social awakening. Their writings worked as an instrument for social change.

Some Of the English novels that prominently teach human values are- “Great expectations” by Charles Dickens. It teaches Loyalty and affection over social status.

“1GG4” by George Orwell Is a critic of totalitarianism and the importance of individual freedom. “To Kill a mocking bird” by Harper Lee Emphasizes empathy and justice.

“The Catcher in the Rye” by J D Salinger, Deals with teams of alienation , authenticity and the struggle to find meaning in life.

“The Little Prince” by Antoina de Saint Exupery, Is a philosophical tale about love, friendship And the importance of Seeing the world with child like wonder.

“ The old man and the sea” by Earnest Hemingway Deals with perseverance and resilience.

“The great gatsby” by F Scott Fitzgerald Emphasizes the dangers of materialism.

“ Pride and prejudice” by Jane Austen Deals

with social responsibility and self awareness.

“A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens Deals with compassion and redemption. “Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain Deals with integrity and honesty. Many other literary works teach us Human values like honesty, compassion, courage, responsibility, integrity, Empathy, justice And perseverance to the readers. Literature imparts philosophical value as the readers Get to explore the nature And the extent of human knowledge. It also compels the readers to think about self Awareness and perception. Literature provides the opportunity to contemplate the standards And limits of a good life, Human creativity and it enables the readers to see and observe through the perspective of others and therefore it becomes a looking glass or a lens into the world as others view it. It can be considered as a journey that is scribbled down in pages and is fuelled and powered by the readers imagination.

Literature provides a gateway to enlighten the reader about experiences of life and evoke feelings. It helps the reader to acquire knowledge of different cultures And traditions of the world, and it also helps the readers to appreciate these cultures and traditions through which human values like tolerance and acceptance are instilled. In our increasingly chaotic world, the skills of identification, imagination and empathy are very essential. We can develop these concepts by reading literature.

In today's world children and teens are

bombarded with conflicting, ever shifting standards of ethics and morality. At the same time, we're trying to teach and instil good values at home. Fortunately, a really great book has the power to counter balance these outside influences and teach children important lessons as they grow. Shaping the personality of the student is the basic need. Literature will play a pivotal role in this direction if it is inculcated in students right from the Beginning. Students find it really fulfilling to read authentic text instead of the artificial language used in certain sources. Certain factors should be taken into consideration while selecting authentic material in teaching literature in the classrooms.

The factors are:

- They should have a positive impact on students.
- They should expose students to real language.
- They should cater to the different needs of the students.

Literary texts exposed students to use the appropriate language according to the situation and condition. Cruz (2010) Speak about the importance of fifth skill that is learning culture apart from the four skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading and writing. Students will really enjoy learning culture which they firmly believe in and also accepted by society. Care should be taken in selecting appropriate texts which instil the right cultural Values in students. If Literature is made part of the curriculum, Language learning will become a really

enriching experience for the students.

### **Conclusion**

Literature works on different levels, Emotional, Ideological, Normative and logical. Morals can be instilled by utilizing various literary forms, Such As poems, Novels, Fictions and plays. Literature helps the reader to learn the skill of imagination. Many literary works teach us human values, Morales and different cultures. Literature helps us to know the history of the cultures followed by many countries. The moral shades in the works of great artists from Elizabeth's to the Victorian to recent times have been shown to establish the fact that Literature provides the best platform to raise our moral standards.

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