

Literature - A Fountainhead Of Values For A Better Society

P. Raja Sekhar Reddy¹, J. Bala Mohan Raju², M. Madhavi³,
Jhansi Rani.L⁴, Chandrakala Somarowthu⁵

1. Associate Professor in English, Department of H&BS, Aditya College of Engineering, Surampalem.
2. Associate Professor in English, Department of H&BS, Aditya College of Engineering, Surampalem.
3. Assistant Professor in English, Department of BS&H, Pragati Engineering College (A), Surampalem.
4. Assistant Professor in English, Department of BS&H, Dhanekula Institute of Engineering & Technology, Ganguru, Vijayawada,
5. Assistant Professor in English, Department of H&BS, Aditya Engineering College (A), Surampalem.

Abstract

A value based education plays a vital and pivotal role in the upliftment of the society making it the best and a blessed place to live in. The values and morals that literature cultivates and advocates help the society become morally strong, ethically undaunted and psychologically stable and secure. Literature imparts values through various literary works by citing examples with the help of stories, novels, poems, essays and epistles. In this article we tried enumerating all these.

Keywords: Literature, fountainhead, society, moral, ethical.

Introduction:

Number of prominent thinkers very aptly stated that man is capable of flying like a falcon, swimming like a shark or a whale. However, man has never learned to behave like a man on this planet. We have to admit the truth, very bitter a pill to swallow though, that even the education system nowadays does not focus on reforming the students. We must admit that it is rather producing sycophants and psychopaths instead. Lack of proper moral values, extreme

selfishness of humans, ever-changing economic situations, a totally corrupt political system, incapable persons at the top rung, wrong practices in the name of democracy, and many other aspects have been driving us to the wall with no other option except to look for a better approach and investigate and explore experiential methods to inculcate values in the society with the help of the following research work.

When we look into the past, we see that number of philosophers, critics and writers converted literature into a reservoir of values and ethics making it a vast resource of ideals for the good of the society. These virtues can encourage new strategies and techniques to take in values in various domains of the society making the mortals morally strong.

The Question: Why Do We Need A Value-Based Education?

We always face problems with our values. Values like humanism, kindness, honesty, justice, truthfulness and patriotism are to be nurtured and conserved so as to influence lives of humans and regulate them in a well-ordered manner. The lack of understanding the role of moral values leads to a crisis of values. The abasement of values can be sorted out if we feel concerned and have consciousness of the ethics and moral values that have been deep-rooted in the society. The modern society today we see is only concerned with material possessions and the status of a person is measured by the position they hold. Feelings like mercy, sympathy and kindness are considered of no value and are deliberately differed with. They are considered to be meaningless since humans have emerged only to be money earning machines. People are tied up in knots only with material gains and they do not find time to think about the dire straits they are passing through. The wellbeing of human race lies in the values it embraces and follows. Contemplating that social values are more important than human values leads to a crisis of our values and in the course of time, it may become a major problem to the society. If we need to create a better future for our future generations, we need to ensure quality education so that we can transform the society strongly based on moral values.

The meaning of value-based education can be defined as establishing congruous habits and behaviour which encompass a set of moral values and habits. As they say, charity begins at home and the same way value education should be initiated from the family itself and it should be continued at the school through teachers who play a very quintessential role in imparting value education. Teachers play a very vital role in shaping the character of students as most of the students try to ape and follow what the teacher says in the classroom. Organizing seminars, workshops and conferences related to value-based themes alongside engaging families in these activities will certainly help inculcate quality value based education among students. The need of the hour is a value-based education and it cannot be offered only by teachers but there are various factors which augment the inculcation and implementation of values. This, in turn, will result in a healthy society and responsible citizens.

LITERATURE AND ITS VALUE:

We can say that literature is the gamut of the society. For times immemorial, literature has been the driving force for students of all ages. The real function of literature is not just entertainment but also offering wisdom to readers. It helps students understand different cultures, and passions of humans like love, anger, jealousy and greed. If the students can have self-control over their emotions, it will help them strike a perfect balance of their professional lives too. In a nutshell, we can say that literature serves a dual purpose of not just gaining the knowledge of English language but also value education.

Literature is the best way of teaching character-based education. As Prestwich puts in 2004, literature offers itself to come out of certain dilemmas of morals alongside examining specific character traits. Students can identify themselves with the characters and its traits when they go through the literature instead of having been explained each trait of the character. This is called catharsis meaning establishing the relation between the reader and the character with all its traits. This approach had been forwarded by Prestwich in 2004 and Lowe in 2009. As per Jalango(2004) and Lowe(2009), discussing difficult topics such as incarceration, bullying, death and abuse can be aided by literature. It is, of course, useful in providing

emotional and social support to students. Lowe(2009) says that literature offers an opportunity to the students find solutions to their internal conflicts and this process can be named Bibliotherapy or therapeutic reading. As children are attracted to picture books, children's literature can be put to use to offer value-based education. It can be used to communicate ideas of children since a visual image or a picture leaves an enduring impression on the young minds, as put by Jalango(2009). Moreover, students are often relate themselves with picture books rather than to books without pictures. Pictures instigate students to assimilate abstract concepts and that is the reason why picture more beneficial in providing character-based education. In addition to this, children are more attracted to stories. These stories are considered gifts from the teacher as said by Sanchez and Stewart(2006). This will help students remember the lessons with more solemnity.

TEACHING VALUES THROUGH LITERATURE:

Teaching English literature really opens a new window for the students. The abilities to possess a compendium of ethics and values to live with are nurtured by literature. Reading short stories and novels will help students have more mental and emotional balance in their day-to-day lives.

I. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE:

In her book *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Donna Norton(2010) emphasized on value-based education through literature. Periodicals such as TWINKLE, CHAMPAK have tried their best to impart value-education through their fables. Making children have the habit of reading will definitely help them understand their surroundings and the circumstances, and also realize the value of values and morals. Books like Panchatantra and Aesop's fables played a very important role in shaping the characters of students for innumerable generations.

Mark Twain, thorough his books *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckle Berry Finn*, tried to impart some moral values into the brains of not only children but also grown-ups.

Enid Blyton tried to teach courage and integrity of character in children with his book *Famous Five*. Anthony

Robbins, in his *Awaken the Giant Within*, mentions one Mrs. Marva Collins, who taught her students through Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Sophocles.

Students are encouraged by children's literature as it helps develop their personality. Books like *And Tango Makes Three* (Pamell & Richardson, 2005), *Molly's Family* (Garden, 2004), *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Newman & Souza, 1989), and *Daddy's Roommate* (Wilhoite, 2000) are some examples wherein students are taught values of life to be followed. Tolstoy's *Little Girls are Better than Men* teaches how elders quarrel while little kids forget their trifles and mingle with each other in no time.

II. POETRY

Poetry is considered one of the most powerful tool of instruction in shaping the character of students of any age. Leigh Hunt, in his *Abou Ben Adam* explains how the love for fellow humans gains someone a place next to the God Himself. The same morals with some modifications were explained in his another poem *The Plate of Gold*. Students can broaden their horizon with the help of poetry as it not only enhances their language skills but also makes them aesthetically sensitive for the feelings of others too. When a student is explained the poetry in a effective manner, he/she would definitely relate themselves to the poet and the poem which will manifest their hidden sensibilities into the light.

III. CONCLUSION

Social and moral human values are the most fundamental elements of the corporate lives of any community without which modern society cannot continue to sustain. Thus, human values should be protected and preserved with high priority. Today, Human values are observed to lose their importance and human values are degrading with the passing time. The degradation in the moral life of the human community leads to the loss of moral integrity. General awareness should be created by socio-cultural groups regarding the value of education of traditional customs and heritage. Thus, English literature carries ability in the attainment of ethics and morals through value education. It helps to understand those beyond the visible- values, beliefs, and attitudes for sustainable life and help to learn to build bridges from one culture to

another.

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