

## **The Role of Literature in Personality Development**

**Dr. Anita**

Department of English, D.A.V College, Abohar, Punjab, India

**Corresponding Author:**

Dr. Anita

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses about 'The Role of Literature in Personality Development'. Literature is a form of language that intensely influences the minds of people of all times, and each language has its own literature. It has been comprehensively agreed that literature is the mirror image of the social order. Literature being the mirror of society, a book written at a particular point of time gives the details of the people, their thoughts, their traditions, and the influences of that era. This paper describes that the study of literature not only support personal growth but also specifically it can encourage personal growth to meet future requirements and challenges. Thus, literature may be defined as a serious and organized expression of the actual thoughts about different spheres of life, created or transformed in the minds of writers. Authors of literature considerably transfer the real-life incidents of their society into creative writing and show it to society as a mirror with which people can take a look at them and reforms where essential. This paper also explores that when we read, our imaginations take over and we cannot help but become part of the plot in a fiction or non-fiction work. We find ourselves empathizing with the characters and living through them as they plod on and deal with the predicaments they find themselves in. We see how they solve their problems, the mistakes they make and how they could have made better choices. We learn how the personalities of different characters deal with situations and intermingle with each other. We live and learn through the experiences of the characters.

**Key words:** Literature, personality, development, requirement, society

### **Introduction**

Literature exists in different forms; poetry, folktales, drama, autobiography, short story, essay and novel. It helps to create empathy and understanding in the reader. In fact, according to many literary critics, literature improves 'Theory of Mind', which is the capacity to read the minds of others. When someone reads, he or she literally reads the mind of others, since they have access to character's internal thoughts. These days with so much of our time spent being entertained by movies, video games and the like, less is spent reading and enjoying the literary works of celebrated writers from the past and present. This is unfortunate because there is so much we could learn about life and ourselves if we take time to read more. When we read any kind of literary work, our imaginations take over and we cannot help but become part of the plot in a fiction or non-fiction work. We find ourselves empathizing with the characters and living through them as they plod on and deal with the predicaments they find themselves in. We see how they solve their problems, the mistakes they make and how they could have made better choices. We learn how the personalities of different characters deal with situations and intermingle with each other. Without having to experience the tragedies, difficulties and pain ourselves, we broaden our understanding of human nature and the human condition. We live and learn through the experiences of the characters.

Likewise the timeless works of the great literary authors such as Shakespeare, Dickens, Voltaire, Hugo, Cervantes, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy to name a few, enhance and intensify our understanding by giving us great insight into human nature and the consequences of

human action. Some other famous contemporary writers include: James Joyce, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, D.H. Lawrence and Vladimir Nabokov also deepened our thinking and knowledge. Thus there are many benefits of reading various books of various authors:

- Provides liberal and positive attitude.
- Encourages open-minded and flexible thinking.
- Stimulates the mind, imagination and creativity.
- Provides a healthy escape, relieves stress, anxiety.
- Healthy entertainment.
- Makes you more interesting person.
- Increases vocabulary and language skills.
- Enhances reading and creativity skills.

By reading literature of all types and genres the understanding of human nature in a variety of ways can be developed or expanded. We can become multitalented or versatile person by reading more and more books. Hence our personality can be developed by reading the works of different authors.

Personality development is the development of the organized pattern of behaviors and attitudes that makes a person distinctive. Adults, especially parents and teachers, are principal components of these environments and therefore play a powerful role in helping or hindering children in their personality and cognitive development. Children's personalities and social skills grow and develop within the context of society and in response to society's demands, expectations, values, and social institutions, such as families, schools, and other child care programs. Children personality does not occur over night. They learn and experience new things in life and how they relate to these experiences affect their personality. Literature permits personal growth to happen incidentally and unconsciously through the pleasurable experience of reading or producing a variety of literary texts. However, personal growth through literature can also be a very focused and conscious activity if we target particular twenty-first century skills in the texts and tasks we choose. Through person-centered and needs-based approaches, literary texts can promote students to think logically and creatively, be collaborative, solve problems, and make use of various intelligences. Creation of one's own literary texts can lead to self-discovery, self-understanding, and self-expression. Literature helps us grow both personally and intellectually. Literature permits us to transcend our immediate time, place, and culture and to make relations with other human beings and their worries. Literature promotes us to develop mature compassion with all forms of life such as human, animal, plant.

Now general human and national values and ideals become more significant; the formation of an intellectually developed, creative personality becomes more topical. Language and literature are the study of man, the study of life, conscience, honor and self-esteem. It means that language and literature is very closely connected with the inner world of the personality and the formation of the value system. Those give a possibility for the pupil to experience the life of the literary heroes, their fate, different models of people's relationships, moods and emotional feelings as well as enjoy the power of the word and develop the sense of language. Being the mirror of society literature plays a supreme importance in the development of a lingual personality. Already in the first half of the previous century the specialists on teaching the language and literature unanimously agreed that literature takes a special place in the learning content and it should be taught as the art subject because one of its most important tasks is the education of man and cultivation of the intellectual world. The experience should reflect in the child's soul; it should cause a reaction there which results in the intellectual growth, development and formation of the young individual. The main task of the teacher in teaching the creative work is to create in pupils deep and true emotional experience, to reveal the mastery of the language's applicability, to encourage pupils to form their own utterances

by learning from the works of language masters. A literary work allows the child to learn the life in its diversity, to admire the good, the beautiful and noble, to suffer and to learn the evil, foul, and violent through the experience of others – the heroes of the piece of art. Thus it is so important to encourage a serious dialogue between the pupil and the teacher, the pupil and the piece of art in the lessons of the Latvian language and literature, which will result in the formation of the children's and young persons' value system, understanding of the world, the development of their sense of language and the idea that a book is an essential accessory of a modern personality. In general, both literature and psychology are trying to comprehend the human soul; to look closely at the subconscious processes that form his thoughts, behaviors and emotions; to observe human as "whole" without separating him from his environment. Literature teaches us how to live on earth as a civilized person. Literature makes the reader visit places, experience events, meet people, listen to them, feel their joys and sufferings. It takes years to get so much wisdom that a single book of literary merit instills in a reader. Literature mirrors the society and its mannerisms. Good literature takes the reader to times, places, and circumstances that are distinctive or abnormal, but keeps the big ideas of the work relevant to the reader. That is the power of literature to widen our outlook and experiences without ever leaving our chair. Literature provides a place where we can find most important things such as sympathy, information, emotion, excitement etc. It does not have the same boundaries that our world does. It has the ability to explore any situation, any emotion, create characters and change the rules of everything, including physics. Hence literature helps us to move into other worlds beyond our own, because we are used to thinking within the rules that govern our lives, and literature does not have to abide by them. Literature is first a mirror to our own lives and selves; as we see the flaws and failures in others, we also see them in ourselves. Aside from that element of self-examination, literature reflects the times and places of history. We have the sensation of living in a different time and place without ever getting up from our chairs. Thus we can say that personality tends to continuous development and the main purpose of this improvement is to develop mature and balanced personalities.

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