

# English Literature Studies in Indian Institutions

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**Abstract - Literature is mirror of Society. Every society has their own way of life. India is a multicultural country has numerous social values. English literature refers to study of texts from around world, written in English language. Education is mostly depending upon student's social cultural background. For social and cultural barriers many Indian students fail to attach English Literature. They study English Literature in colleges and universities only for degrees instead of developing values of life. Study of English literature must focus on universal literary senses and beyond. In twenty first centuries, people's knowledge, values, thoughts are changing rapidly. Higher education in Indian institutions should emphasis on multidimensionality of learning.**

**Index Terms - Society, Culture, Mirror, Literary, Students, Universal, Postmodernism.**

"Literature is not only a mirror, it is a map and geography of mind"

- Margaret Atwood.

Literature is a reflection of the society is a fact that has been widely acknowledged. Literature 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. In literature, we find stories designed to portray human life and action through some characters who, by their words, action and reaction, convey certain messages for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. It is impossible to find a work of literature that excludes the attitudes, morale and values of the society, since no writer has been brought up completely unexposed to the world around him or her. What writers of literature do is to transport the real-life events in their society into fiction and present it to the society as a mirror with which people can look at themselves and make amends where necessary. Thus, literature is not only a reflection of the society but also serves as a corrective mirror in which members of the society can look at themselves and find the need for positive change.

Literature is all based on a society. Plays, dramas, novels, poetry and all forms of texts share common themes which prevail in a society. Each region's literature is a mirror of culture and tradition there. Texts focus on the characters, dialect, customs, topography, and other features particular to a specific geographical area. English Literature is one of the most popular majors in colleges and universities in the India, with a huge number of students enrolling every year due to its diverse nature and numerous graduate opportunities. But with such a broad area of study, prospective students are often confused about what a degree in English Literature actually provides. Common uses of an English Literature degree include becoming a writer, researcher, or teacher. However, there are many other ways to utilize an English Literature degree. Some students use it as a stepping stone to a degree in Law, or in this day and age, some will use it to begin a path in the digital marketing world. Whichever route you end up on, this degree can open doors to many fulfilling career options English Literature refers to the study of texts from around the world, written in the English language. By studying a degree in English Literature, students learn how to analyze a multitude of texts and write clearly using several different styles. Generally, literature refers to different types of text including novels, non-fiction, poetry, and plays, among other forms. However, literature is a contested term, as new mediums for communication provide different types of contemporary literature. Literature is generally defined as writing with artistic merit. However, other types of text such as screenplays, nonfiction, song lyrics, and online communication through blogs and other means, could now be considered literature under the contemporary understanding of the term. The English Literature programs in most major Indian institutions largely study the traditional literary texts. An English Literature major examines texts including poetry, drama, and prose fiction, perhaps briefly covering more contested forms of literature in their chosen path. If a student choose to study Literature in the India, he or she would learn how to read different texts and analyze the style, use of different types of language, and meaning, in depth. He or she would also learn how to write clearly, concisely and analytically in stylistically different forms. Generally, Literature courses are divided into different focuses: British Literature, American Literature, World Literature, and periods (pre-1800 and post-2000). The Students of English literature have core courses in several of these topics and also be expected to choose a focus of individual student's own interest, such as creative writing or drama. Students ultimately gain a much more in-depth understanding of the texts you cover than is possible from solo-reading, and learn how to express students knowledge through written analysis and presentation or class discussion. Study is mostly depend upon student's social cultural background. India is a country that boasts of a rich culture. The culture of India refers to a collection of minor unique cultures. The culture of India comprises of clothing, festivals, languages, religions, music, dance, architecture, food, and art in India. Indian society, especially rural and suburban Indian society is totally different from others part of the world. Daffodil is one of the best-known works of the most influential English Romantic poet, William Wordsworth. The poem was composed in the year 1802. The title of the poem informs about the loneliness of the poet which he faces after the death of his brother. However, the endless view of the golden daffodils in a field across the lake filled him with joy. This view was the greatest gift of nature to him. Whenever he remembers it, his depressed mind and heart find the joy of living again. For oft, when on my couch I lie. The poem The Second Coming by WB Yeats is about the turmoil created by World War II. The poet is seeking the second birth of savior and Prophet (Christ). After World War II, there was a complete disconnect between humankind and divinity. The speaker describes a nightmarish scene: the falcon, turning in a widening "gyre" (spiral), cannot hear the falconer; "Things fall

apart; the center cannot hold"; anarchy is loosed upon the world; "The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned." The best people, the speaker says, lack all conviction, but the worst "are full of passionate intensity." Surely, the speaker asserts, the world is near a revelation; "Surely the Second Coming is at hand." No sooner does he think of "the Second Coming," then he is troubled by "a vast image of the Spiritus Mundi, or the collective spirit of mankind: somewhere in the desert, a giant sphinx ("A shape with lion body and the head of a man, / A gaze as blank and pitiless as the sun") is moving, while the shadows of desert birds reel about it. The darkness drops again over the speaker's sight, but he knows that the sphinx's twenty centuries of "stony sleep" have been made a nightmare by the motions of "a rocking cradle." And what "rough beast," he wonders, "its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

Indian origin religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. All of these religions are based on karma and dharma. Furthermore, these four are called as Indian religions. Most of myths in India derived from these religions. Although Hinduism believe in AVTARBAD, It is tough for Indian reader to attach to The Second Coming.

Many students in Indian colleges and universities lose their interest in literature. They only focus on writing and speaking English fluently because English is global language, there is high opportunities to find a job for English known people. But it is not the only aim of English literature teaching. Of course, teaching literature fosters reading skills and acts as a 'jump-off' point for both writing and discussions in the classroom. Furthermore, students benefit from literature in the sense that by becoming emotionally involved, they are motivated and this in turn contributes to their personal development.

Although there are some differences ; in the literary features of literatures across the world; the similarities among them are considerably pronounced. German author Goethe made his famous statement in January 1827 : "poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. ... I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach".

It is obvious that for a considerable time the efforts of the best writers and authors of esthetic worth in all nations have been directed to what is common to all mankind. In every field, whether the historical, the mythological, the fabulous, or the consciously imagined, one can see, behind what is national and personal, this universal quality becoming more and more apparent. Colm Hogan discriminated between the genuine pursuit of literary universals through comparing the Literatures of linguistically, geographically and genetically desperate groups ( for example, Sanskrit, Japanese and Xhosa) and the chauvinistic imposition of one culture's particular norms on all cultures, which Hogan Instead level pseudo universal. Universals need not occur in every distinct literary tradition, but must arise independently in enough of them to suggest that their presence is more widespread than work be expected by chance. Hogan has provisionally identified a large number of literary universals, beginning with omnipresence throughout human cultures of verbal art itself. The list includes symbolism and image patterns, assonance and similar forms of verbal parallelism, plot advice link foreshadowing, and circular structure, basic genre, distinctions between poetry, narrative, and drama, and some basic plots and character types found in many different traditions of romantic comedy and heroic tragedy. The study of literary universals does not occlude cultural specificity, but may actually help elicit it. Literature is a term used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. Derived from the Latin word *litteratura* meaning "writing formed with letters," literature most commonly refers to works of the creative imagination, including poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction, and in some instances, journalism, and song. literature represents the culture and tradition of a language or a people. The concept is difficult to precisely define, though many have tried; it's clear that the accepted definition of literature is constantly changing and evolving. For many, the word literature suggests a higher art form; merely putting words on a page doesn't necessarily equate to creating literature. A canon is the accepted body of works for a given author. Some works of literature are considered canonical, that is, culturally representative of a particular genre (poetry, prose, or drama).The teaching of English literature has been carried on in our Country for well over a Century. The British left India more than seventy years ago, but even today the importance of English language and literature is being increasingly felt. Our teachers and students are fully aware of the benefits of 'English' as a broad, flexible, and liberal discipline, although there have been consistent attempts in recent years to minimize its importance. Indian teachers and students have to face certain difficulties at the initial stage in appreciating English literature. They have no easy access to the inwardness of the language and the whole body of allusions, customs, and manners. They have to study books of social history and of literary and mythological reference before they hope to make a dent in it. Literature teachers in college or university provide instruction in the interpretation and analysis of literary works, such as novels, plays and poetry. They usually deliver course materials through a combination of reading assignments, lectures and small-group discussions. Focusing on universality is important in English Literature teaching is important in India. But the teaching must go beyond this. Because The notion of universality is based on the assumption that there are irreducible features of human life and experience that exist beyond the constitutive effects of local cultural conditions. The concept of a universal human being can be traced to the movement of western humanism. Although itself a contentious term, various movements have been working alongside it and have been named under the umbrella of humanism. Humanism has been described as a belief that underlying the diversity of human experience it is possible, first, to discern a universal and given human nature, and secondly to find it revealed in the common language of rationality. The downside of humanism is that although it applies the yardstick of universalism to all humanity, yet it insinuates that some humans are more human than others, based upon their knowledge and knowing. This implies that the 'others' of that inner group of knowers, in this case the non-native speakers of that language or those communities belonging to the peripheries of this knowledge system, will be marginalized and excluded from being on the same footing. Dipesh Chakravorty describes Humanism as a "Eurocentric historical phenomenon and system of thought", that had no consideration of the 'other'. Indeed till the 20th century, western humanism did not move even a step out of European universalism. Asserting the primacy and normative nature of this European universalism, functions as a crucial factor in establishing hegemonic control over other communities. Ashcroft et al say, that "Universalism offers a hegemonic view of existence by which the experiences, values and expectations of a dominant culture are held to be true for all humanity". By rejecting and denigrating everything which was not

based on reason, including religion, tradition and the 'others' of this system, Europe held a hegemonic superiority over the world. The later Enlightenment held reason, rationalism and science to be the basis of knowledge. It posited knowledge as a closed system with given answers. This positivism, says Canagarajah suppressed the knowledge systems of the peripheries, "Science was defined as a universally applicable project...The many different forms of knowing and learning represented by minority communities...were suppressed under the Universalist claims". Following Enlightenment philosophy, Modernism, also characterized by an emphasis on reason, held sway over Europe throughout the 19th century. It rejected all other systems of knowledge which did not conform to its own position. Modernism had its heyday till the early twentieth century but eventually had to give way to postmodernism which advocated pluralism and diversity of positions. Subsequently, theorists of other social movements such as postmodernism and poststructuralists, challenged the notion of a universal human being as being totalitarian and hostile to the challenges of otherness and difference. Sharing many positions with postmodernism, post colonialism has a special interest in the theme of universalism present in the metanarratives of the English canonical texts. Postcolonial theory holds the diversity of humans as the very foundation on which domination and imperialism can be questioned. Understanding and accepting the difference between humans is the basis on which rights of others are recognized. Ashcroft et al say that, "The concept of universalism is one of particular interest to post-colonial writers because it is this notion of a unitary and homogenous human nature which marginalizes and excludes distinctive characteristics, the difference, of post-colonial societies". But it is relevant to ask what the unitary and homogenous human nature is? And from whose point of view? Canagarajah argues that this is decided by those who are in power: "The question as to which community's knowledge paradigm becomes the operating explanation of things is settled by an exercise of power". The West's technological superiority gave it a lead to dominate and colonize Asia, Africa and Latin America, and thus undertaking the 'white man's burden' to monopolize education systems and language, positing its form of knowledge and apprehension of reality to represent all sensibilities. From the postmodern perspective, the basic universality of texts is challenged. Linda Hutcheon explains this "Postmodernism opposes the universalizing of arguments and positions; and rejects meta-narrative or any one privileged discourse and sees disagreements over meaning as integral to its own position and welcomes diversity and variety of analysis, which can only be approached by each observer from his or her opinion". This description of postmodernism amply explains why the claim of universality of English literature is being questioned and rejected as the sole representative of an increasingly varied and disparate readership. In twenty first century, English Literature studies India should focus on plurality, diversity, complexity, hybridity.

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