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LITERATURE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: REFLECTION OF SOCIETY

Prof. S. P. Jadhav

**Head, Department of English, M. S. Kakade College,
Someshwarnagar, Tal: Baramati, Dist: Pune.**

ABSTRACT

In the present paper attempt has been made to focus on how literature and social science are co-related to each other and go hand-in-hand to achieve its final goal. However, before illustrating the co-relation between both I would like to deal with Literature and Social Sciences. The word literature is hard to define. Many interpretations are made about the word 'literature' but all are incomplete. Some view that it is the 'mirror of life', criticism of life, reflection of life and expression of society, through, various forms of literature: Novel, drama, poetry, short story, biography, autobiography.



Social science is also another separate branch of knowledge in which systematic arrangement of events, incidents, happenings, constitution, chronological changes, historical moments and movements are curved on the pages under various titles on the accounts of its proper classification. It includes various sub – sections of society as history, political science, geography and so on. In the secondary level syllabus, all these subjects are included in the social science and implemented in syllabus but on the higher level there is need of specialisation for details that classified all these subjects under separate titled as, history, Social Science, Political Science, Geography and so on.

One thing I released that those all subjects have been mentioned above around the 'society' and its reflections in it. And I think literature has lions share to reflect and represent the each and every aspect of the society. Then doesn't matter it is in the English, Marathi or Hindi literature, which is titled due to its medium of language used in it. It is not referred to its region or material or country e.g. English literature, as literature of England or Britain but English language is used to present this information. Thus, the paper concludes with the key role of both literature and social sciences in the awakening of society. These disciplines go hand-in-hand in its functions and usefulness to the society and I am sure no any one can cover the circle of an object aim. Both these disciplines complement to each other and help in enriching the understanding of literature in its present context.

KEY WORDS: Chivalry, bourgeoisie, amelioration, legal machinery.

INTRODUCTION

This present research paper tries to investigate co-relation between literature and social sciences. Social science refers to 'society' for much more clarification, which is at the core of all the subjects. Literature is a social institution and various literary devices are primarily social in origin. It is not created in a vacuum but it is a social product. And, hence a proper understanding of any art or literature is bound up with a study of the particular

social system that has given shape to it. Thomas Warton, the first real historian of English poetry argued that literature has “peculiar merits of faithfully recording the features of the times and of preserving the most picturesque and expressive representation of manners”. In addition, to him and many of his antiquarian successors, literature was primarily a treasury of costumes and customs, a source book for the history of civilization, especially of chivalry and its decline.

Literature as a social document that it can be made to yield the outlines of social history, e.g. Chaucer's The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales was early seen to offer an almost complete survey of social types through all his characters. Shakespeare in the Merry Wives of Windsor, Ben Jonson in several plays, Thomas Delaney about Elizabethan middle class, Addison, Fielding and Smollett depict the new 'bourgeoisie' of the eighteenth century, Jane Austen about country parsons in 19th century, Dickens the Victorian world, Defoe's social traditions, customs, and middle and down classes, Wells's lower middle classes and Bennett's the provincial towns are the excellent examples of it.

I would like to highlight the Indian literature in the light of social document. Throughout almost all the periods of Indian English literature as colonialism, Nationalism, Modernism and Post Modernism onwards, Indian writers have been focused on some social situations and contemporary social events criticising or praising. The great Indian writers also referred literature as effective tool, which will pave the way for reformative purpose. Here I would like to make little survey of Indian literature for how it is reflection of society or expression of society. E.g. Dr. Radhakrishnan's prose The Hindu Ways of Life and Religions in India, Gandhi's The Young India, and Economic History of India, reflect the Indian culture and realistic situation, Niradh Chaudhary's immense contribution to India is provided national record, regional novelist R. K. Narayan's realistic and imaginative reflection of Malgudi. Mulk Raj Anand's Sociological novel Untouchable reflect social evils and down trodden, Kamala Markanday's Nectar in a Sieve about rural life in India and its aspects, Arun Kolatkar's discovery Jejuri reflects social and religious journey of people and so on.

In this way, main purpose of this research paper is to focus on how literature reflects the social life of contemporary periods of the writer in his works. And how both social science and literature are two sides of one coin which we can never be separated from each other. Both are important and apt at its places integrated. Victorian Novels of Charles Dickens reflects his biographical influence on his literary works. The first years of Dickens's childhood were spent comfortable at Portsea where his father works as a clerk in the Navy pay office. But then situation changed and his father arrested for debt and Dickens has to live a wretched life. He also observed the pitiable and miserable condition of the people living in the cities. My purpose to give the background information of novelist is as it is the origin of Dickens as the 'social reformer' as these experiences and observations of real life get reflected in his novels.

His well-known novel David Copperfield highlights the co-relation of social situation and creation of art of literature. This novel is social document of Victorian age. Corruption and evils were running rampant everywhere in Victorian society and so he directed his pen to root out the evils of society of his age. He became very popular novelist because he harnessed his writing for the amelioration of the pathetic conditions of the poor factory workers, children groaning under the whips of tyrannical school masters and prisoners Thus the novels of Dickens, therefore perform a double function: as they reflect the social ills and aim at their correction. This fact is reflected in his literary works.

Dickens felt profound sympathy for the poor and child labour so he tried to strike a blow for the poor and did well through his novels. He attacked on the employment of child labour in factories as there were no factory laws, and trade unions and factory- owners exploited tender children for their own profit. Children have to work many hours in suffocating atmosphere and they receive hardly wages, e.g. character David suffers much and his suffering is the suffering of many a poor and helpless Victorian children.

Another social problem tackled by Dickens in his novel is the pictures of the squalor and dirt, drinking and gambling, sorrow and suffering of prison life frequently found in the novels of Dickens. E.g. realistic picture of Kings Bench prison for debtors where prisoners were treated like beasts and animals. Social problem of educational system of the Victorian age is also focused in literary works. The horrors and ills of the system, profit motivates schools, private persons schools and harsh treatment of children, and ignorance of the principles of

education etc. as corrected with his ideal concept of school. It is one more serious social problem related to the social science is reflected in the Victorian novel. Here Dickens criticized the abuses of the legal system, delay of justice, selfish lawyers who exploit the legal machinery for their own benefit, exploitation of ignorant clients.

Dickens remains a great social reformer and his works contribute a great deal to the work of social reformation in the Victorian age. Crompton Rickett has said about Dickens.

“Dickens proved to be that rare type of reformer who could moralise with a smile on his lips, and mix his sermonic powders in such excellent jam, that his contemporaries did not realize for a while that he was doctoring them for their good.”

Thus, the paper concludes with the key roles of both literature and social science in the awakening of society. Both these disciplines go hand-in-hand in its functions and usefulness to the society and I am sure no one can cover the circle of an object aim. Both the disciplines complement each other and help in enriching the understanding of literature in its present context.

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