

# The Role of Literature in Today's Society

---

## Abstract

Literature is a medium through which communication occurs between the writer and readers. The way in which content is written can be misconstrued or taken as a positive source of knowledge. However, the need for authenticity and validity has been questioned in today's society, with the amount of 'fake' news circulating on social media platforms. In addition, literature can make or break an individual's life. This research aims to understand the role of literature in today's society and how it can help towards societal progression. Literature written well can provide individuals with thought provoking ideologies and become a source of inspiration. It is a dominant component of life particularly in the field of research where it provides individuals in today's society with historical artifacts strengthening a nation's culture and heritage. Through studying literature written by historic authors and writers including novels, poetic works and research, modern day individuals have a deeper insight into understanding the challenges and beauty of life and relationships. Literature has the power to transform life

perspectives and facilitate societal change. From authors like Shakespeare to Karl Marx they have created a great impact upon global societies through their work. Where Shakespeare's work revealed strong themes still relevant in today's society like the power of love, death, free will, power, fate and ambition, Karl Marx was instrumental in providing important ideologies for a society transitioning to industrialisation from agriculture affecting numerous nations.

## 1. Introduction

Literature is a medium through which individuals can read historical documentation written by individuals to learn about life on earth (Austin, 2022). Through this, readers of literature can culminate a better understanding of notions and ideologies relating to numerous topics, facilitating cultural and societal progression. Literature can enrich the mind of readers on any subject they desire (Magulod, 2018). Within society today, literature is available on a multitude of subjects that

can be utilised for educational or recreational leisure purposes. They can provide an insight of historical events, simultaneously provide entertainment for the reader and facilitate personal growth (Somani, 2020). Literature can be found in the form of physical manuscripts, books, journals, artifacts in addition to technological mediums where online literature is available at one's fingertips. The accessibility of literature provides an opportunity for readers to study content and process it as knowledge. Individuals have the intellectual capacity to transform true belief within literature to knowledge and into an opportunity (Peels, 2020). Thereafter it can be applied with positive intentions in today's world, contributing towards societal betterment. However, if knowledge gained is utilised through a negative intention it can result in detrimental results for societies. The way in which content is written can be misconstrued or taken as a positive source of knowledge. However, the need for authenticity and validity has been questioned in today's

society with the amount of 'fake' news circulating on social media platforms. In addition, literature can make or break an individual's life (Clarke, 2021).

Societal progression throughout history is documented through literary mediums which can help measure societal development. Within literature, readers can find common themes transcribed through a multitude of thought processes. Different facets of the lives of individuals in societies are portrayed allowing readers to use their imagination and develop creative traits. When individuals read good literary work, they are subjected to thought provoking ideas and a medium through which knowledge acquisition can be achieved. In contrast, when individuals are not exposed to classic literature, they do not have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and lose an opportunity to be facilitated towards personal growth.

### Objectives

This research aims to understand the role of literature in today's society and how it can help towards societal progression.

## 2. Results and Discussion

Literature written well can provide individuals with thought provoking ideologies and become a source of inspiration. It is a dominant component of life particularly in the field of research where it provides individuals in today's society with

historical artifacts, strengthening a nation's culture and heritage. Through studying literature written by historic authors and writers including novels, poetic works and research, modern day individuals have a deeper insight into understanding the challenges and beauty of life and relationships (Zala, 2013). Literature has the power to transform life perspectives and facilitate societal change.

Literature provides a platform through which individuals can record their thoughts and feelings. However, the way ideologies are transcribed is an art that can relate to its readers, generate interest, and provide knowledge. This can be articulated through the language that is utilised, for example poets express their feelings through their poems, writing in a way that relates to readers creating an unspoken bond of understanding between the author and reader.

### 2.1 Importance of literature in the life of an individual

Literature is an important element of the life of an individual, particularly because it represents diverse

languages, traditions, cultures, and heritages. It provides societies with a multitude of different experiences which can generate understanding and an introduction to novel experiences faced by others. Authors like Shakespeare to Karl Marx they have created a great impact upon global societies through their work. Shakespeare's work revealed strong themes still relevant in today's society like the power of love, death, free will, power, fate and ambition (McMahon, 2022). Karl Marx was instrumental in providing important ideologies for a society transitioning to industrialisation from agriculture affecting numerous nations (Hugh, 2012). They provide individuals with an opportunity to embark upon a journey that can educate the mind while connecting to the imagination and emotions despite being written in words. Individuals are subjected to multiple lenses opening a window into the life of another individual generating empathy and understanding. It can break



Figure 1

down barriers, as literature has the power to provide an insight into what other people within societies have experienced within history and what they are currently experiencing. The journey of another is documented despite factual or fictional, literature can generate new thought processes and change existing ideologies through knowledge acquisition which is important for personal growth (Somani, UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF MOTIVATION AND LIFE SKILLS THROUGH LITERATURE, 2021).

## **2.2 Literature and society**

Literature plays a vital role in societal development particularly as it consumes a dual role. It can take a reflective and passive role, alternatively it can be an engaging and active role (Zala, 2013). The act of an individual reading related to the active role, through which individuals then generate concepts and ideas regarding the world and societies. This contributes towards personal development and can only occur when an individual is motivated to read and engage their thoughts. When an individual is at a crossroads within life, or unsure about their next step, they can be motivated through reading works written by renowned philosophers or writers that have cultivated strong ideologies. For example, after reading the work by Karl Marx an individual may agree or disagree with his thought processes and ideologies thereby deciding to embark upon becoming a social activist. Many personal decisions are influenced by reading literature.

In contrast, individuals can read literature to reflect and understand what others in society are thinking

and feeling. It also provides an insight into the functionality of societies and why events in the past occurred. Through mistakes made within the past documented within literature, societies can correct mistakes within the future. For example, through the diary of Ann Frank readers can analyse events that occurred and what Jewish children and adults were going through as they hide from the Nazi's in 1942. She was a victim of the Holocaust and is renowned for keeping a diary of her experiences (Museum, 2021).

Through literature, societies can generate empathy for others, impacting attitudes and mindsets resulting in altering societal thought processes. For example, an inspirational literary work can facilitate societies towards feeling motivated and enthusiastic towards creating positive change amongst people within societies. When literature has been successfully written and has resonated with numerous individuals in society, sometimes the literature can be adapted into a film. Harry Potter is an example of how literature has been converted into a film. It is "a film series based on the eponymous novels by J. K. Rowling. The series is produced and distributed by Warner Bros" (Wikipedia, 2022). In contrast, legislation is documented and provides a framework for law to be followed. Legal literature is thoroughly followed setting laws of lands and can be challenged if individuals break the law and can have severe repercussions. They provide guidelines for societies to follow and maintain law and order.



Figure 2

## 2. Conclusion

Individuals that enjoy reading literature are perceived to possess more knowledge to find solutions to challenges that today's societies may face. The quality of literature is dependent upon the writer's mindset and the clarity within which ideologies and notions are conveyed to readers. The writer's vision and outlook are documented within the literature and provide seeds of thoughts, and a foundation for future actions for their readers. Therefore, the role of literature is vital in today's society,

however readers should cultivate an open mind and seek to understand facts and viewpoints of the writer. Critical thinking skills should then be cultivated to form personal judgements of how teachings from literature can be utilised to help facilitate positive societal progression in today's society.





# Behind the Research

## Dr. Anjula Murmu

Academic Mentor, Sido Kanhu Murmu University (India)  
Email: anjulamurmu@gmail.com

### Research Objectives:

To understand the role of literature in today's society, and how it can help towards societal progression.

### Bio

Dr Anjula Murmu is an academician, social worker, writer, singer, and an anchor in the domain of Dumka district in Jharkhand, India. Mentoring the students of PG Dept. of English at Sido Kanhu Murmu University, she too serves as an OSD(Academic) in the same University. She has penned down couple of Hindi poetries in two books: 'Ardhashat par Purn Satya' and 'Darpan ko Arpan'. She has edited a collection of poetries, 'Udte Parindon ka Asmaan'. Her works of art has been published in many magazines, souvenirs, books and newspapers. She is multilingual and has passion in bringing up the tribal women by shaping up their future through the words of knowledge and creativity. In India she has been awarded for such activities by different organizations.

### References

Austin, S. (2022, 01 25). The Importance of Literature in Modern Society. Retrieved from Find courses: <https://www.findcourses.co.uk/inspiration/hobby-fun-leisure-articles/the-importance-of-literature-in-modern-society-17411>

Clarke, J. (2021, 09 01). How Literature Can Change Your Life. Retrieved from Litwise: <https://litwise.com/blog/how-literature-can-change-your-life>

Hugh, C. (2012). 'Ideology and Law', Marxism and Law, Marxist Introductions. Oxford Academic.

Magulod, G. C. (2018). Innovative Learning Tasks in Enhancing the Literary Appreciation Skills of Students. SAGE Open.

McMahon, S. (2022, 04 02). Why Shakespeare is still relevant over 400 years since his death. Retrieved from Oxford Homeschooling: <https://www.oxfordhomeschooling.co.uk/blog/why-shake>

### Keywords:

Literature, Society, Karl Marx, Shakespeare

speare-is-still-relevant-over-400-years-since-his-death/#:~:text=His%20themes%20are%20timeless,That%20aIso%20makes%20them%20relatable.

Museum, U. S. (2021, 08 03). ANNE FRANK BIOGRAPHY: WHO WAS ANNE FRANK? Retrieved from Unites States Holocaust Memorial Museum: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/anne-frank-biography>

Peels, R. (2020). How Literature Delivers Knowledge and Understanding. The British Journal of Aesthetics, 199-222.

Somani, P. (2020). CURRENT TRENDS IN MODERN DAY LITERATURE. . International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, 18-28.

Somani, P. (2021). UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF MOTIVATION AND LIFE SKILLS THROUGH LITERATURE. In M. R. Rajwade, D. M. Nerkar, S. R. Kosambi, & S. S. Waghmare, The Reflections of Pandemics on Literature, Culture and Society (pp. 10-20). Mauritius: LAP.

Wikipedia. (2022, 03 04). Harry Potter (film series). Retrieved from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry\\_Potter\\_\(film\\_series\)#:~:text=Harry%20Potter%20is%20a%20film,%E2%80%93Part%202%20\(2011\).](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_(film_series)#:~:text=Harry%20Potter%20is%20a%20film,%E2%80%93Part%202%20(2011).)

Zala, J. B. (2013). Literature and Society. Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, 26-31.