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**Literature and Media: Roles and Responsibilities in Nation Building**

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**Shani Mishra**

Research Scholar,MATS University

Raipur, Chhattisgarh

**Abstract**

We read the newspaper every day. And it contains all kinds of news. The real news is not highlighted. We are interested real issues. What is happening to the country at the economic level, to a certain extent, the political front and even the weather? And then there are non-issues. It could be film related: celebrity statuses and the happenings in their lives make the main content. When it is Literature, it should be always with a social purpose. And the Art part of it falls in place automatically. Literature written today should be empathetic and sympathetic. Whatever is written should move people to reach out and contribute in solving the relevant issues which in turn help building a strong nation. The purpose of writing should be well understood. Is it pure entertainment or is it going to bring about radical changes. Our TV channels, which are the main source of entertainment and news show serials in which people may choose to show gender sensitization, doing away with caste system or giving respect to women and girls.

**Keywords:** Literature, Media, Peace

Literature and Media, if used in the

positive direction can move mountains and multitudes and bring peace. Literature can make a man hapless in the best of situations and vice versa. They play a vital role in shaping a peaceful nation. There are posts on social media which become viral. The lives of people through Goal cast or Ted Talks are inspiring. People listen to motivational speeches of spiritual gurus and make changes in their lives. Astrology is in focus and if there is some matter which makes people want to do something instead of waiting for the stars to change their position, then Literature and Media would have done their job.

Television and newspapers should focus on the main issues that plague the country today. Instead of showing which hero or heroine or film achieved success, the media should focus on what is the literacy rate and how many people are employed or how many people are below poverty line etc. People indulge in knowing what their stars foretell however; they are not interested in working or persistently doing what they are passionate about. There is price rise and the farmers do not have crops due to less rains or excessive rains. But is the media reporting that? Media will

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report that someone committed suicide. There is shortage of water and electricity and due to media's interference; there could be water everywhere if it reports what can be the solution. A Ranu Mondal, sings soulfully and she gets reported and look what has happened to her. She has become an overnight sensation. So, the role of art, literature and the media in India has become of great importance. Literature can be just for the sake of Literature or it can be for a social cause. Literature can sometimes be only for sheer entertainment and not for propagating social ideas. Proponents of this view are Keats, Tennyson, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot in English literature, Edgar Allan Poe in American literature, Agyeya and the 'Reetikal' and 'Chayavadi' Poets in Hindi literature, Jigar Moradabadi in Urdu literature and Tagore in Bengali literature.

Literature can also serve the people, and help them in their struggle for a better life, by arousing the people's emotions against oppression and injustice and increasing their sensitivity regarding the people's sufferings. Proponents of this school are Dickens and George Bernard Shaw in English literature, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Harriet Beacher Stowe, Upton Sinclair and John Steinbeck in American literature, Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert and Victor Hugo in French, Goethe, Schiller and Erich Maria Remarque in German, Cervantes in Spanish, Tolstoy, Gogol,

Dostoevsky and Gorki in Russian, Premchand and Kabir in Hindi, Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Kazi Nazrul Islam in Bengali and Nazir, Faiz, Josh and Manto in Urdu.

We have in India, writers who have written purely for entertainment and also writers who have written for social purpose. George Bernard Shaw writes his plays almost exclusively with a social purpose in mind – to combat social evils and reform society. Whether it is 'Major Barbara' or 'The Doctor's Dilemma', or 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' or 'Misalliance' or Captain Brassbound's Conversion', his plays are a powerful denunciation of social injustices and evils. Similarly, Dickens in his novels attacks the social evils in England in his time e.g. the terrible conditions of schools, jails, orphanages, the judicial system, etc. Literature – the art of the word, the art which is closest to thought – is distinguished from other forms of art (e.g. painting and music) by the greater emphasis on thought content as compared to form. 'Literature for social purpose' may be expressed not always in a direct way, but also sometimes in an indirect, roundabout, or obscure way, e.g. by satire. It can also be in a religious garb e.g. much of the Bhakti poetry in Hindi.

We need in India, Literature and Media, focused on Literature for social purpose only. We are struggling to cope up with poverty, unemployment, - these 2

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combined defines the phase of a youth. The cycle goes on. The truth is that there is hardly any good art and literature today. Where is the Sharat Chandra or Premchand or Faiz of today? Where is the Kabir or Dickens of today? Today, there seems to be a total artistic and literary vacuum. Everything seems to have become commercialized. Writers write not for highlighting the plight of the masses but only to earn some money, for the TV or Films. The people are thirsty for some good Literature. On all social media platforms, we see people writing about their personal lives. It not only makes an interesting read, it also gives us the courage as to face problems. The thought is, “if they could, why not us”? Peace is necessary for individual well-being but it is often misunderstood as the absence of war.

Media, as regarded as the ‘Fourth Pillar of Democracy’, presents not only the facts but also interprets facts to formulate public opinion and to propagate new ideas and opinion.

It is opined that media could mould public opinion and belief. It is also often argued that, if media could support forces that lead to conflict, it could also contribute towards mitigating conflict and foster peace in the region. Peace media workers from various newspapers, radio, television is necessary to work for the unbiased reporting while describing the parties involved in conflict but not as a mere passive observer.

Wolfsfeld had observed that media in many ways can contribute to reshape the course of events in a peaceful direction. In Nagaland for instance, media can stress the advantages of peace building by promoting the peace talks.

Culture and arts-based approaches add new dimensions to media for peace building. The media represents a mediator and tool through which the message of peace and reconciliation can reach to the masses and adding a hint of culture and art goes parallel to the sentiments of the people and results in a successful peace-making and peace building process. The largest peace building organization in the world, frequently engages the arts in many of its programs. These methods include participatory theatre, as well as comic books, radio and television”. The confidence building, celebration of peace agreements etc. can be brought to the public through press releases, radio programs and even rock concerts, as music can also act as a tool to spread the message of peace. Media can reach to thousands of people and with an innovative and sincere way media can not only transform conflict and build peace and normalcy, but also sustain peace and normalcy.

The new media literacy movements stress the value of understanding and respect for cultural diversity and dialogue among cultures. It respects the autonomy

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and uniqueness of each culture, and it also builds bridges in order to construct a universal dialogue among them that fosters the spirit of understanding and the gradual, painstaking construction of shared values. In this way, the media literacy movement is against stereotypes and prejudices and in favour of the potential of the media and ICTs to build a universal culture of peace. Educational curricula in many countries are increasingly taking media education into account and are including it as one of the key target competences in recent educational reforms. In this context, strategies are merging aimed at making media literacy a part of lifelong learning. The introduction of media studies by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in selected schools in 2010 is part of this global trend. Another important trend noted by the Tornero and Varis is the link of the democratic sphere and intercultural communication with the development and spread of media literacy. They argue that for promoting a fluid, healthy public sphere in which cultural communication should play an essential in the new culture of peace largely depends on media literacy.

**Media: Driver of Peace or Driver of Conflict?**

What people listen to in the Radio or watch on television can affect people. If negative things are shown, then the people react negatively. Social cohesion is of

utmost importance and this can be achieved by people coming together. Literature has been a source of peace and harmony, and its impact on societies is highly appreciated. There have been instances when Literature has been used to kill or assassinate: Rajiv Gandhi, Former Prime Minister of India, his was straight from the novel ‘The Negotiator’ written by Frederick Forsyth. Books have to carefully scan to check if there is any matter which will incite tension.

Literature inspired people towards concepts of tolerance, truth, liberty, liberalism, gender equality, coexistence and diversity, and enlightenment. In addition, it represented a culture of peace approach for preventing violence and conflict, as well as eradicating racial discrimination. Furthermore, it reflected several social movements and problems all over the world. It, to some extent, succeeded in representing the need for social change. It helped paving the way for peace movement and revolutions to attain specific purposes and reformations. Several reformation movements were provoked by literature, and could change the status quo of several countries. At that time, people were enthusiastically eager to read any sort of literature, be it prose, drama or poetry. Beside romance, fantasy and imagination, they could find plenty of messages about consciousness, civic rights, and emancipation. My Doctoral Research

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entitled Identity Politics involves with 3 novels. It is related to Afro American Literature. The writers wrote about experiences and then when read by people, the thought process changed. They found literature an effective tool to express their views and attitudes on the impacts of identity politics which in turn ruined women. We have social media today which is hugely popular. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or Professional platform like LinkedIn are used to discuss the various aspects of life. The interactions have become different. Presentations, discussions, debate happen in all the social media. People express freely. Today in every society, majority of people have become addicted to social media Apps, noticeably Face book, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat. They are ready to sit for hours chatting, posting, or watching YouTube videos.

On the contrary, if they are asked to read a novella or a short story, they will excuse that they do not have time to read in spite of the fact that most of literature is now available in e-books and can be easily viewed or downloaded. As a result, social media have killed the logical reasoning in people and made them unable to think critically about prominent issues and problems around them, or to question anything they read either. The same viewpoint is expressed by Kalev Leetaru, when he notes, "Social media platforms

have reprogrammed an entire generation to no longer make such distinctions: just put every thought that pops into your mind on the web for all to see, ridicule, endorse or despise". Thus, its problems.

With regards the social influence of social media and its relation to activism, most revolutions, demonstrations, strike, protests and other forms of social phenomena and activism have been organized via social media particularly Facebook and Twitter. Social media could motivate a lot of activists, liberals, and other civic organizations, and brought about several demonstrations and civic disobedience. Social media has the ability to instantaneously spread messages to the masses, unrestricted by time or space. Therefore, it is vivid that social media did succeed in leading the masses to march and make a social change; it definitely helps to bring about a positive change.

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