

**LITERATURE A WEAPON FOR PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT****JESINTHA THELLA**Asst. Prof. of English  
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We live in an information dominated society. To withstand this dominated society, one should have a good personality in the society which is not the outward but the inner world personality. Personality development is the act of elevating one's own physical, emotional and psychological being. The personality of an individual is viewed as one's inner characteristics that organises one's behaviour. So to enhance the personality of an individual, language and literature plays a paramount importance in the development of a lingual personality because an individual learns the life in its diversity, to admire the good, the beautiful and noble, to suffer & learn evil, foul & violent through literary work. Hence, this paper deals with how the literature acts as a weapon for personality development of an individual.

**Keywords:** Enrich Physical, emotional, psychological, paramount, lingual personality, diversity and weapon.

**Introduction:**

Literature is derived from the Latin term 'litera / littera' means letter, any printed matter written in a book, a magazine, or a pamphlet, a faithful reproduction of man's manifold experience are blended into harmonious expression. Literature paves the way for us to listen to the voices of the past and work with the present. It's the way for the present to connect to the possible future. By unlocking the culture of the time period gives wisdom and knowledge to the modern society about life.

As we live in an information dominated society, one should have a good personality to with stand this dominated society. Personality development is the act of enriching one's own physical, emotional & psychological being. The personality of an individual is viewed as one's inner characteristics that organises one's behaviour. It always plays a significant role in enhancing the thought process, temperament as well as the character of a person. Responding to emotions, perceiving things and looking at the world depends on his/ her own characteristic way of behaving. No two individuals are similar. In an individual's entire life span, personality is nothing but the aggregate conglomeration of memories and incidents. Environmental factors, family background, financial conditions, genetic factors, situations and circumstances also contribute to an individual's personality. To enhance the personality of an individual, literature plays a paramount importance in the development of a lingual personality and the works of literature and art enable individuals to question life and their existence by knowing their personalities and individual differences. In

many ways literature, in its different forms, can modulate one's perspective towards living. The visual representation of literature is films because they give life and action to the words written on a page. Not only films but also magazines, newspapers, the television, the radio, and even the internet contain literature. It is found everywhere and anywhere. The supremacy of literature affects all of us because it is complex and long lasting.

How does enjoying literature contribute to personal development? Our imaginations take over. The timeless works of the great literary masters such as Shakespeare, Dickens, Tolstoy, O. Henry, enrich and deepen our understanding by giving us great insight into human nature and the consequences of human action. Literature serves as a weapon of transcending such barriers. When we read the historic work of the Greek poet Homer who was the author of the ancient Greek epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, we get to know about the socio-economic and cultural background of the ancient places such as Troy, Ithaca and Sparta etc. Thus literature transcends the time and social barriers. Classical literary works serve as a food for thought and encourage 'imagination & creativity'. With the presence of the great Ramayana, Mahabharata & the Vedas, India has been called the Golden Bird (sone ki Chidiya). Similarly, Greece is called the mother of European civilization due to its great literature. So, in the words of Tolstoy, without literature-

**“Men would be like wild beasts because it endows an understanding, an empathy in the reader, even for someone who is much separated to him by time & distance.”**

Literature is present during the era of the ancient world. Even without the invention of words & language, literature was already manifested in the earliest human civilisations. Carving & paintings in walls inside caves of stone give evidence about the lives of prehistoric people. They explain their way of life.

### **Literature explains human values and culture:**

Stories have been of central importance to the human race ever since it began, as far we can tell. Cultures are built on stories- histories, myths & legends, fables, religion and so on. If anyone want to understand and participate in the culture to which they belong, they must first learn about the stories that culture has been built around. Even though books aren't the only kinds of stories out there, they are one of the most important. The works of Plato, Socrates and Aristotle contain virtues that promote perfection to a society if only human beings have the willingness to uphold & practice them.

### **Changes one's perspective towards living:**

Literature help a person, take a closer look at the different facets of living. In many ways, in its different forms, literature can change one's perspective towards living. Biographies of great people, real-life stories of courage, sacrifice & other good values never fail to inspire readers.

‘The story of my life’ by Helen Keller, blind-deaf women is the best example for the people who are struggling with physical imparity. It is gripping and satisfying and a great lesson in perseverance and importance of getting education.

### **Mirror of society’s actions:**

Literature is the mirror of society’s actions. It reflects the good and bad aspect of society. Literature is basically a view of human action and behaviour in words. Literature of a particular period and era can be used to study the social state and structure of that area. With the example of Gulliver Travels, this fact can be better understood.

Through the character of PiP-Philip Pirip in Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, Portrays that happiness in life can be achieved only by hard work & that great expectations not grounded in reality can only lead to tragedy and heartache. It’s a novel about contentment & humility, as well as honour. It touches on every aspect of common emotions like pride, ambition, envy, greed & arrogance.

### **Develop Language skills:**

Considering many great books or writings, new words are being coined and borrowed. It increases our vocabulary without our knowing. For example- by listening to the cries of women, Macbeth says- “I have suppe’d (experienced) full with horrors; Direness.....” (act 4 scene 5). Having a large and wide-ranging vocabulary is essential to compete. If your vocabulary is large, you can have the more in depth and thoughtful discussions on important topics and issues, both in and outside of the classroom. People tend to by using a fairly limited vocabulary; to become exposed to new words is to read literature.

To build and enhance vocabulary a great way is to read literature. In any novel, plenty of words are included due to its descriptive nature where students have likely never seen or heard before. They’ll see those words in context, learning their meanings passively rather than having to drill. And because they’re reading a story and not drilling, they probably won’t even realize they are building their vocabulary

Writing skills can be learnt, to some extent. But the one way to become a better writer is to read often. When you read you are being immersed in language, in the way it sounds and feels when put together in the right ways. Students who are encouraged to read have a more intimate knowledge of the ways in which language works, and so have an advantage when it comes time for them to write. This effect can even be made them to perceive by encouraging students to try writing in a particular book or author's style.

### **Teaches the perspective of live:**

In Macbeth story, tomorrow & tomorrow speech, Macbeth compares life to a series of four images-

1. “Out, out, brief candle!” – Compares life to dying candle, losing its flame. (act 4, scene 5)

2. “Life’s but a walking shadow.” – Compares life to a walking shadow. (act 4, scene 5)
3. “.... Frets his hour upon the stage; and then is heard no more.” – compares to a poor player. (act 4, scene 5)
4. “It’s a tale told by an idiot, full of sound & fury signifying nothing.”- Life is a tale. (act 4, scene 5)

### **Literature teaches History:**

This is true when we consider ‘the festival of the sacred tooth relic in srilanka’ based on the travelogues of FaHien, a Buddhist monk, compiled by Ashok Jain, example of History. In this the writer strengthened the cultural link between India and Srilanka and portrayed the history of the sacred tooth of the Buddha.

In the Hawk and the tree, a short story written by Mohammad Azam Rahanaward Zaryab, shows the moral bankruptcy of a certain section of society. We can observe the moral stillness of the people through physical descriptions that convey immobility and decay like dead tree, live caught, sleeping in darkness, lifeless eyes.... etc. He wants the readers to attain moral values and be sympathetic to others and should get rid of the negative emotions like ego, jealousy, apathy, insecurity....etc. Readers are encouraged to introspect and change their behaviour as well. We understand that every human has his own faults and one need to check oneself at all the times and should make an attempt to change his/her unfavourable behaviour. One shouldn’t get defeated by the life’s miserable conditions.

In the story ‘The cop and the Anthem’ by O. Henry, portrayed with negative emotions, several shades throughout the story. We get the moral that everyone should introspect. The end is ironic because it didn’t happen when is expected: and happened when it shouldn’t.

### **Conclusion:**

It has been found that, people who are interested in literature have more social relationship than people who are not interested in literature. Thus, literature has meaningful effect on social relationship of people. It brings results in the intellectual growth, development and formation of the young individual. A common situation today is that literature is used to a certain extent in English classes, but not among all students and not by all teachers. Literature expands our minds, helps our imagination fly like the eagle. It portrays the values and aspirations of people and society, even the political atmosphere, economic situation and social attitudes of the times. Thus literature has a deep impact on the reader’s mind and acts a weapon to develop their personality and in turn, their lives.

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