

Minahal Fatima

Date: 24 Dec 2025

Day: M T W T F S S

Literature is the lonely planet of idealist.

Outline

I Introduction

Thesis: Although critics hold that literature is an idealist and useless pursuit, it is practical guide and companion of man that sharpens cognition, imbibes critical skills, instills empathy, and contributes in social reform.

II Contextualizing scope and genres of literature

III Literature is pursuit of idealist: a counterperspective

IV Literature is practical and caters to realistic needs of man and society:

A - In education, literature opens the new and effective ways to impart wisdom in students

i.e. Socratic method of questioning

B - Literature prepares practical ground by mobilizing people for social reform

- Abolition of serfdom in Russia

C - The voices of minorities and down-trodden get an agency in form of literature to express their needs and demands

- Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

- E - Literature helps in changing oppressive outlooks of governments
 - The God of small things by Arundhati
- F - In mitigation of climate crisis, literature has played an instrumental role
 - the minimalism movement in West induced by literature
- G - For individual, literature works as a means of cognitive development
- H - Empathy, the dire need of present era, is natural corollary of literary works
 - Characters in Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamzov
- I - In legal arena, literary works influenced legislation
 - Voltaire's writings and Napoleonic Code
- J - For gender mainstreaming, literature remains the most effective tool
- K - Literature created awareness about animal rights
 - Peter Singer's work on animal rights
- L - Literature enriches language and preserves cultural heritage of a nation
- M - Man needs entertainment, and literature offer it in an artistic and aesthetic form
- N - Religious tolerance, a practical need of man, flourishes through literary agency i.e. Manto's works
- O - Literature helps in fighting social evils bred by ignorance

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

- V Dwindling culture of reading literature in present times: causes
- Vi Viable recommendations to revive culture of reading literature
- Vii Conclusion

Essay:

Pen is mightier than sword and ink performs the reformatory work that sacrificial human blood fails to. Man has multiple aspects of being: aesthetic, emotional, psychological, physical and mental. Literature caters to all these human needs. In history, man of action and practice got help of literature to accomplish their desired goals. Rousseau and Voltaire wrote extensively to inculcate reason, creativity and critical abilities in man. Their works helped masses to end oppression, slavery and arbitrariness of rulers. Besides, their literary works influenced legislation manifest in Napoleonic code. Moreover, practically literature gave voice to marginalized voices and minorities. In curbing cataclysm of Global Warming, literature induced the social consciousness in man, leading to the movement: Minimalism. Likewise, Literature makes human beings tolerant, empathetic and enlightened. However, there are critics who believe literature is an idle and futile enterprise of an idealist with no practical import. They name the literary

Pixe

Date: _____

Day: **M T W T F S**

writers and hold that these literary laureates led miserable lives and achieved nothing in material terms. Nevertheless, the position of critics is myopic, part partial and void of holistic analysis. Arguably, literature is not a lonely planet of idealist, it is a practical enterprise, affecting individuals, societies and fate of nations.

To begin with, literature is a composite concept that includes various forms of writing both in prose and poetry. Fiction and non-fiction writings comprise most of the literary works. Travelogues, biographies, diaries and letters, to name a few, are the genres in non-fiction prose. In fiction, drama, comedy, novel, story and tragedy take the dominant place. Similarly, poetry is an artistic and aesthetic form of expression in literature, that is musically composed and sung that has therapeutic effect on humans. These genres of literature have real-life and practical import on individual and collective life of man.

However, critics maintain that literature is a lonely planet of idealist with no practical uses. They opine that writing and reading literature is not worth giving time, for it has no utility in real life. They take the names of towering literary figures, and point that they failed to achieve something material in life. To substantiate their assertion, they point to

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **M T W T F S**

Socrates, Karl Marx, Sadat Hassan Manto, Mirza Ghalib, Voltaire and Rousseau, to name a few, and assert that these men of literature led destitute and hapless lives. Besides, what they wrote and presented by pen is utopian and has no real-life impact.

Nevertheless the position of critics is myopic and fails the objective and impartial analysis. Literature, first of all, is practical and caters to material, realistic needs of man and society. In education, literature opened the new and effective ways to impart wisdom in students. In the process of learning and teaching, literature informed people about the Socratic Method of questioning. Plato wrote this method, in his masterpiece work of literature, "The Republic", with examples wherein the process of questioning an assertion exposes the inconsistencies in it. It sharpens mind and breeds creativity in man. Therefore, literature provides for educational needs of man which is an indispensable practical need of man.

With provision of educational skills, literature opened new vistas for man of letters in the field of literary criticism. Reading and analyzing the text critically for objective analysis has been an enduring pursuit in academia. This need is practical and realistic. Towering literary writer, Jacques Derrida, furnishes this facet of knowledge through

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

his method: deconstruction. In this method, a work of text is exposed to critical analysis beyond contextual meanings. Beyond binaries of opposites, a text has further opened to possible meanings and interpretations. Ergo, literature provides for academic ^{needs} and literary criticism. Does this not suggest that literature is practical and not an idealist's planet?

Moreover, literature prepared ground for social and political reform. Concerning social and political evils, man of literature took pen and wrote extensively for collective good and reform. Voltaire, through his satires, targeted obscene clergy and tyrant kings. Furthermore, In Russia, writings of Chekhov and Tolstoy led to the abolition of serfdom and forced labor. Gradually, literary writings awakened conscience of rulers and enlightened minds of masses, leading to socio-political reform. Hence, literature serves practical and real necessities of life for humans.

In similar way, the down-trodden and less privileged of earth get an agency in form of literature to project their cause. Ethnic minorities, for example, express their voices in literary artifacts. Poetry of Black people in South Africa mustered wider support for ending apartheid and racism. Similarly, "The Wretched of the Earth", a well-known book by Franz Fanon

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

presents the view of post-colonial societies like Algeria. This clearly establishes that literature does the work of a man of action.

What is more, literature helps in changing the oppressive outlook of governments. Men of literature write and depict the true picture of a government, that works as a mirror for the government. This constructive criticism of writers influences and power-corridors and policy circles, thereby leading to the change in the governance. To illustrate this, Arundhati Roy's novel, "The god of small things," clearly presents the picture of Indian polity. Minorities, and poor untouchables are meted out inhuman treatment. Her writings portrayed their bleak picture, enlightening society and thereby transforming the attitude of government. So, literary writings make governments humanly.

Besides influencing governments, literature has had an instrumental role in mitigating climate crisis. In reducing Carbon emissions and saving ozone layer, literary writings created a movement in West known as "Minimalism". People, after reading from the literary works the onslaughts of disaster of climate, are moving to simpler and moderate living. Consumer goods and extra paraphernalia are voluntarily donated to poor and needy. This simple personal movement has contributed in cutting the ratio of carbon

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

emissions. Fossil fuels of burning for production of household items has greatly reduced. All in all, literature is casting meaningful influence in mitigating climate impacts.

Additionally, for individuals literature works as a whet to sharpen cognition. Literary writings happen to be engaging and active pursuit. The reader gets the feeling of ideas, characters and happening that he reads. The literary and psychological studies reports by University of Pennsylvania show that readers of literature tend to have extraordinary cognitive abilities. Mental faculties get sharpened and become active by reading of literature. Does this not bring to home that literature has tangible and practical import in man?

Together with sharpening cognition, literature imparts empathy in man. Empathy is what one feels after observing the pitiable plight of man and thereby he sympathises with him. In twenty-first century man needs empathy more than ever. Studies on literature reveal that readers of literature happen to have empathy in heart about humanity. Literature reveals the weakness of human nature and his powerlessness before forces of nature. In Dostoyevsky's works and Shakespeare's dramas the reader observes these forces at play influencing individual life and society. Hence, the reader of literature does not

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

become judgemental of man and tends to have empathy in mind for humans.

coupled with instilling empathy in man, literary writings help of humanization of law. Laws that govern individual behaviour and societies happen to be arbitrary and moulded to serve certain classes and families in a society. In France, before French revolution the law was tailored to serve whims of kings. It was based on inequality and discrimination. The mighty literary writings of Rousseau and Montesque changed the laws and made them uniform and more humane. Napoleonic code offers a glaring example of this reality, where influenced by literary criticism the law became just and uniform. Does this not prove that literature has real-life consequences on individuals and nations?

Furthermore, in the mainstreaming of gender, literature works as a massive human movement does. In improving the plight of women and ensuring their sociopolitical, legal and economic rights, literature exposes the inherent flaws in constitution of society and the impacts of patriarchy that subjugates women, depriving them of fundamental human rights. For remedying these discrepancies literary writers write and inform people of the consequences of

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

discrimination- Literary writings centered on women create awareness in women about their rights. Once enlightened and informed, women join hands to change their fate. To illustrate this, the "Second Sex", by Simone de Beauvoir, and "The Feminine Mystique", by Betty Friedan, has had tremendous impact on enlightening and empowering the women. Both authors exposed the discriminatory nature of society and laws, depriving women of their humanness. The works of literature on women achieved in three decades what violent movements could not do - the legal and socio-political equal rights for women. Therefore, for improving women's fate and gender mainstreaming literature worked miracles.

Next, literature bred worldwide consciousness about animal rights. Man had never treated animals in moral viewpoint. Animals were never thought to have feelings and emotional side in their lives. Literary writings, centered on ethics, led to the general recognition that animals learn, feel and understand their surroundings. Based on this ethical writings of Peter Singer created a community of pet and animal lovers that demanded for ethically justified treatment for animals. This utterly changed the Utilitarian view of morality that revolved around pleasures of man, rendering nature and animals as means to

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **M T W T F S S**

pleasure. So, literature created general acceptance of animal rights.

Further, literature enriches language and preserves cultural heritage of nations. Every nation has distinct identity, language and culture. The survival of a language depends upon the agency of literature. A nation that has living literature saves its language. A report on world languages by UNCCR shows that every year three language die. This extinction of languages is attributed to the paucity of literature in the decaying language. To ensure survival of a language, literature does the work what food does for bodily sustenance of man. Hence, literature saves a language and culture and preserves historical heritage of both.

Literature fulfils the entertainment needs of humans. Man needs recreation and intellectual pleasure along with physical joys. Literature offers a variety of genres to individuals to choose from based on individual liking. Travelogue, comedy, tragedy and satire, to name a few, serve individual intellectual needs of humans. One may enjoy reading comedy, another may have liking for tragedy. Every individual can have his favourite genre for entertainment.

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

Studies on recreation show that driving fun from reading has far more positive impacts than videos-watching and pictorial form of enterprise. Ergo, literature has practical impact of entertaining man.

Literature instills religious tolerance. In contemporary times, man needs societal tolerance more than ever. Multi-ethnic, national, religious societies struggle for stability in society and harmonious coexistence. The works of literature transform individual psychology and mental outlook in religious and ethno-national sense. Literature broadens mind and rids of rigidity and fanaticism. Manifest in Sadat Manto's writing, literature criticizes inhuman treatment meted out to humans based on religious differences. His writings evoke critical analysis of violent religiousity, and imparts a sense of respect for religious diversity. All in all, literature breeds religious tolerance.

Last, to fight social evils and ignorance, literature works as a panacea. Nothing ever more educates man than literature - It equips man with necessary knowledge to abhor evil and do good in society. Plato's literary writings bring to home the reader's the fact that all evil in a society is due to ignorance. Ignorance causes evil tendencies in man,

Date: _____

Day: **M T W T F S**

believed Plato. Fighting evil requires literacy and education. He believed an enlightened mind and knowledgeable person is less prone to committing evil. To rid society of evils, states need to make people literate. Does this not prove that literature has a practical import of fate of individual and a nation?

Having established the practical consequences of literature in individual and collective life of man, it is necessary to shed light on causes of dwindling culture of literature-reading and writing in modern times. Multiple factors have contributed in reduction of literature-reading and writing. The technological advancement in computer and visual media, globalization, social media sites and podcast culture have reduced the literary pursuits. People, today, rely on watching videos, watching serial movies and short reels for information and entertainment. However, the fun of reading and impact of reading literature cannot be achieved by modern methods of technology. Watching videos and browsing sites is a passive activity while reading literature is an active and engaging pursuit.

To revive and reestablish the regressing culture of reading literature

Pixel

Date: _____

Day: **MTWTFSS**

individual, societal and governmental initiatives need to be undertaken. In family, the parents must start reading and writing in front of young children to prepare them for prioritizing literature over other means of entertainment and knowledge. In educational institutes, literary societies be activated to conduct healthy literary competition with academic incentives. Certain courses comprising benefits of literature be incorporated in regular academic degrees. Society must hold public seminars and gatherings centered on literary programs. Following these steps can rejuvenate the dying literary culture.

To conclude, literature is a real life enterprise with practical effects on societies and nations. The assertion that literature is the only planet of an idealist fails to stand the critical and holistic analysis. Man is a composite being having multiple facets of existence: emotional, psychological, intellectual and physical. Literature serves individual and collective need of man and society. It sharpens cognition, creates empathy, reforms laws, and creates a harmonious society. The dwindling culture of reading and writing literature can be revived by individual and collective steps at home, school and societal level. Bacon rightly reminds, "seek ye good of mind first, bodily good will be automatically served or its absence not felt."