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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIGITAL LITERATURE: A LITERARY TREND OF THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract

Literature has stood the test of time, though there were many changes in its form. It truly reflects, as a mirror, the happenings of the society. Literature in the twenty first century has a deep and far-reaching root in the social networks, impacts of environment studies in literature, and so on. It is influenced by the perspectives of how scholars engage and study literature in the present age. The twenty first century literature can collectively be classified under three types of literary writings, namely, informative literature, environmental literature and digital literature. The latest trend of the twenty first century is the study of literature through the digital platform, introduced during the postmodern era. This literature is created to promote the exchange of ideas and to increase easy access of literary works through e-books, blogs, webpages, including audio and graphics. The benefits of digital literature are easy accessibility and the digital contents are engaging and inspiring because of their interactivity. Moreover, online text and webpages are never out of stock. Key Words: Literature, digitisation, interactivity, society, demand

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Introduction:-

Literature has stood the test of time through its infinite changes in its form by truly reflecting as a mirror, the happenings of the society. It is moulded as per the trends of the young generation. The literature of modern trends in the twenty first century has a deep and far-reaching root in social networks, impacts of environment studies in literature, and so on. The history and origin of literature is as old as humanity itself. The antiquity of art began from cave paintings and classical writings that later became strands of the literary roots. With the invention of printing press, books were found everywhere. For many centuries writers portrayed the lives of people and society via poetry, novels, dramas and paintings. While considering the mid- 1800s literature, a demand for novels and books arose on a larger scale. The eighteenth century recorded Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* on an average that sold up to 35,000 copies per month and the *Old Curiosity Shop* sold 100,000 copies in a month. This was because during the eighteenth century when the rise of the novel became prominent, people including the illiterate working class concentrated on the informal readings. Previously, a poet or storyteller or a novelist acted as a mediator who brought societies' insights into the lives of people into the limelight.

Accessibility of books were at peak until the creation of digital media in the 1990s. The twenty first century literature is influenced by the perspectives of how scholars engage and study literature in the present age. The literature of the modern era is piled with creative genres like 'illustrated novels' which are presented partially with words and the rest with pictures; the readers should be able to interpret the images in order to comprehend the story.

Next is the 'Digi-fiction' or 'Triple Media literature' which is a combination of books internet website and movies/videos. The Graphic novel which is a familiar genre of the twenty first century presents narratives in the comic book format. It also thematically links short stories and fictional stories. Chick literature focuses on the issues of the modern womanhood often narrated humorously in a light tone. It always features female protagonists.

Next is the fiction that is brief or flash fiction which usually ranges from one word to a thousand. For example, the six-word flash fiction "For sale: baby socks, never worn" by Ernest Hemingway. The literature of ideas or Science fiction is another prominent genre that incorporates literature with futuristic science and technology, space and travel. Other most famous and most effective ones used are the web blogs and pages; these are websites that have brief opinions and interpretations of an individual. Doodle fiction and Text- talk novels are also an emerging trend of the century. Yet, the twenty first century has its writing interests that can collectively be classified under three types of literary writings, namely, informative literature, environmental literature and digital literature.

Informative literature or non-fiction text is designed to provide facts about the natural and social world. These writings do not formulate on a fixed form or setting because the core motive is to convey facts and to share knowledge. For example, magazines, autobiographies, journals, reference books (dictionaries, encyclopaedia, almanacs, handbooks, advertisements, etc.) Unlike fictional works, informative literatures do not revolve around characters; nor do they use general nouns in their narratives. The narratives in informative literature are not always linear. Fixed audience cannot be found for writings of informative literature, as there are only topical readers either who are being skilful or non-skilful on the nearly opted topics of interest. The authority of the meaning is not allotted to the writer; the information can be retold if the fidelity changes over the ages.

Another trend of the modern literature is the environmental approaches to literature. A study of the relationship between literature and man, society and earth's environment is called the environmental criticism or Eco criticism. The eco-critics navigate a work of literature on the basis of exploring how nature and earth are presented and imagined in the literary text. Nature study is not just associated with cultural aspects but along with the shifting gender perceptions. As like other studies, the literary history of environmental studies will enhance the excellence of literature to understand the contemporary attitude towards the studies of eco-criticism. The scope of green literature or eco-criticism has not only inspired books and theories but also increased the impact of ecology on other media such as films, stories, narratives of animal life, architecture, sociology and science.

Digital Literature

The latest trend of the twenty first century is the study of literature through the digital platform that was first introduced during the postmodern era. This literature is created to promote the exchange of ideas, to increase easy access of literary works through e-books, blogs, webpages, including audio and graphics. Apart from the books that are converted into the e-book format, there are other new creative concepts that emerge in digital literature fields such as hypertext fictions, interactive fictions, and videogames with literary narrative approaches. Usually digital stories are not meant to be printed as they are enclosed with many other media art, such as images, sound, video and hyperlinks. The transformation of the literary culture based on taste and value is moved from a verbal medium to visual medium. The literary culture of the electronic or digital literature is expressed in visual images. The imagery in literature acts as a powerful simile and this visual imagery is an uplifted concept especially in contemporary literature.

Among the three modern trends of literature mentioned above, the digital literature is the most effective literature trend of the twenty first century. The popularity and the massive genres in media form have gone viral and exclusive in recent times. During the course of time, the findings and development of digital technologies have engrossed a bigger platform than any other invention that has evolved. The universal prominence of technology while reflecting society or culture is that, it typically breaks down boundaries through quick and easy access. A preconceived knowledge about digital media discloses that internet or media is flooded with information similar to literature. Books, novels, poems, theories are beyond numerical classifications. The choices offered to choose one book among millions, only paralyse people because of incompetent access to books. This void is filled with digital media which allows an access to world libraries and bookstores; it also has access to literature debates and discussions.

The media culture has given new dimensions to produce, preserve and read a literary text. Media literature re-alter the existing form of literary art. Stories through media are equally engaging and empowering (visual culture); be it in education or entertainment sectors, challenging the conventional method of reading literature. For example, movie,

Kindle, and nook can give the same impact of reading a story from literature. The reading cannot be distinguished as an e-book or paper-book. The modern trends of literature also mark various kinds of digitalized genres like websites, blogs, emails, films, YouTube and videogames.

The first and foremost wide spread media or digital literature was through films. Film was the highest order of an advanced medium that telecasted literary text to influence its users. Literature and films are two exceptional distinct works of art. Literature was popular during the eighteenth and the nineteenth century while films are a widespread art of the twentieth century. Yet, unlike literature, films have gone a step higher with the improved technology by visually presenting pictures on screen that invite the audience to get a closer connection with the moments. Literature provides a journey through the imaginative world and films in contrary bring those imaginative world to life through visuals.

Literature through website is one of the oldest and largest provider of electronic literature. It is the most used and most applicable format of electronic literature as every individual can contribute and post his interpretation through websites and webpages. This also allows users to have easy access to download 30000 free e-books in the digital technologies like personal computers, Kindle, iPhone, Sony Readers and many more. Further, it affords access to classical works and many unknown texts in other languages, with the help of specialized features called translations inbuilt in these online technological advancements. Millions of books, poems and novels are collectively brought under this one kind of electronic literature which has a worldwide access.

Literature and Videogames

Literature through videogames is one of the upcoming trends of electronic literature. Videogames in modern age are being successful in adapting literary narratives. To some extent, they are even different from the existing digital culture of films and other videogames. Videogames with literary perspectives and narratives demand the interactivity through decision-making from its users, beside the fact that the user is the player. The unique feature of videogames in digital literature is the liberty inbuilt to explore the game and story in individual terms, typically as 'to choose one's own adventure.' The player becomes a co-producer of the game through interactivity, as the choices made by the player will mostly give different conclusions. This is a very exceptional feature that cannot be found in any other forms of literature.

Videogames provide a 'narrative experience' by walking in the shoes of the character. For instance, the classical poem of Dante's "Inferno," the first canticle from *The Divine Comedy* is made into a videogame. The player is Dante and in the game presented as the Templar Knight; he explores the entire area of hell to rescue Beatrice from Lucifer and to defeat all his enemies. The game concludes in a manner giving an option to the player to choose whether to kill or punish the enemies. The very concept of transforming an epic poem to fit into the trends of modern literature achieved such a massive success that within the first month nearly half million copies were sold. Likewise, Andrzej Sapkowski's contemporary novel *The Witcher* is adapted into digital culture in the form of videogames. The character of the protagonist is role played by the player who have to be a co-creator to progress with the story narratives. This fictional universe of the novel *The Witcher* is created across short stories, novels, graphic novels, television series and videogames. The success and popularity reached its peak due to the videogame concept. This proves that literature evolves along with the cultural taste of the society.

The benefits of digital literature have big edge when it comes to accessibility as it can be accessed anytime and anywhere. Millions of books are compressed in one hardware through internet. Online text and webpages are never out of stock. The digital contents are engaging and inspiring because of their interactivity. Digital textbook or webpages have supplement access in which note-making can be done in digitalised format, such as electronic notes, highlighters and annotations. The content of a digital material can be preserved irrespective of its age and time. No information can be possibly lost in digital literature. They are environmental friendly and contents are easily updated, as there will not be paper wastage. Unlike the books, time is not consumed to search information. Digital literature formulates on the basis 'world in fingertip' since any required information can be accessed anywhere, anytime without much time consumption.

Digital literature is a definite alternative to books for people who want to explore the world of literature. Stories constantly told in literature are presently suffering in the digital formulated world. Language which is the heart of literature is just one of the forms of expression. When the print is merged with the screen narrative its popularity and

success is highly warranted. The fast growing literature of the present age is available in the form of films, webpages and videogames. This proves that digital literature is highly popular in the current age.

Conclusion:-

With the changing interest in culture and human values, literature overshadowed the depletion of the print culture in the nineties with the rise of digital technologies. The flexibility offered by the digital literature attracts the attention of the readers. Readers' willingness to participate as a co-author through interactivity will definitely have scope and aid in the success of electronic literature in future because literature evolves with society. Literature will definitely have its appeal as long as human race subsists and will help refine human sensibilities in whatever form it appears as it is concerned with man both in his greatness and smallness. He also changes according to the time, as he knows very well that the old order changes yielding place to new.

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