

UNIT – 4

ART AND LITERATURE

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

SUMMARY

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (1931 – 2015), was the eleventh President of India and is addressed as “People’s President” because of his simplicity and humility. He was an outstanding aerospace engineer, a progressive mentor, innovator and a visionary. He is the architect of India’s ballistic missile and launch vehicle technology, hence he is popularly known as “Missile Man”. Kalam received several prestigious awards including the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honour. He brought in an air of informality to his laboratory and developed team spirit. He is a rare example of today’s world, where most of the people are engulfed by mediocrity, hypocrisy, and corruption.

The present lesson ‘Art and Literature’ is one of the chapters of “*Indomitable Spirit*” a book authored by Abdul Kalam. The book talks of the importance of art and literature in moulding one’s life, emphasising how these fill our minds and souls with joy. The cover page of the book says it “brings together the values, thoughts and ideas of President Kalam as reflected in his speeches and addresses.

The world has witnessed the rise and fall of several civilizations. The civilizations which had the capacity to perceive the future and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of change managed to survive. Our Indian civilizations absorbed the dynamic changes and produced the tradition creating epics like the Mahabharata and classics like Thirukkural, Kabirvani and Narayaneeyam for the continuance to survive and flourish over the centuries.

Books – Our Eternal Companions

Books enrich life and will guide us during our life and lead the future generations as well. Albert Einstein was gifted a book on Euclidean plane geometry by his mentor Max Talmud, at the age of twelve. This book helped him to explore the concept of pure thoughts and universal truths just by using the power of the mind, without any expensive laboratories of equipment.

Abdul Kalam was an avid reader. But he mentions three books which are close to his heart. The first book is *Light From Many Lamps* edited by Lillian Eichler Watson. He found solace in this book when he was sad and when he was excited, the book balanced his thinking. The second book, Thiruvalluvar’s Thirukkural provided the code of conduct and elevated his mind as it cuts the barriers of nation, language, religion, and culture. The third book is *Man the Unknown* authored by Dr. Alexis Carrel, a doctor turned philosopher and a Nobel Laureate. The author believes that both the mind and the body need to be treated, in case of a disease, as they are integrated. Dr. Kalam suggests this book to the children who aspire to become doctors. The book teaches that the human body comprises psychological and physiological systems with a complex and sensitive feedback system.

Authors of books play an important role in human life. Books are great sources of knowledge and wealth for many generations. Some authors may not be recognised during their lifetime but will be accepted with the passage of time. Most of the classics are eternal. The Tamil author



Jayakanthan believed that literature's success lies in transcending the reader beyond himself or herself. He explained that a literary mind longs for change and that change is possible only with the knowledge of socialist thinkers and the courage of freedom fighters. Even if people treat him as an 'outcast' as Jagath Guru Adi Sankaracharya was criticized as 'buddhist in disguise', Jayakanthan continued with his concept of change taking it as God's will. Kalam was moved by Jayakanthan's statement. Citing this example, Abdul Kalam extols authors and states that literature elevates the mind and authors take the society forward. They create leaders amongst the younger generation and inspire them to possess the 'indomitable spirit' that can expel darkness and despair and lead them to success.

A country may be wealthy due its natural resources, biodiversity, and people but, it is the thinkers who prepare people to accept change and broaden their vision. Hence, children should be gifted books so that they would be encouraged to read them and become knowledge centres and transform the society into a knowledge society.

Music, dance and drama

India is one of the oldest civilizational heritage centres with a blend of literature, music, dance, and drama. Artists can be the instruments to bring global peace. Besides military, economic, and judicial approach to combat terrorism, music and dance can be used as tools for containing terrorism. Music and dance spread the breeze of happiness. The Carnatic music trinity proved that language can never be a barrier when they sang their kritis in all the South Indian languages. Uday Shankar was great pioneer in reviving Indian arts during the 1930s and 1940s and introduced Indian forms and music to the Western world. He gained a place on the world map, even though he did not receive any formal training. Even the rural folk and tribal communities have great admiration for music and dance. They sing and dance whenever there is a slightest opportunity. This helps them not only in coping with the adverse conditions of the countryside but also preserves, propagates, and develops our age-old cultural traditions. The intermingling of diverse streams should be supported as it enriches our tradition of artistic expression.

Drama energises human mind and is a great source of entertainment but, it is losing its significance with the advent of Cinema, TV and multimedia. So, it must be revived. However, film artists too have the power to rouse different types of emotions in audience.

According to M.F.Hussain paintings are reflection of society. Artists and painters search for beauty in every event. They use the known to reveal the unknown. When Dr.Kalam composed the poem entitled 'Life Tree' a young artist, Manav painted pictures of Mughal gardens, and gave life to the poem. Thus, there was an amalgamation of painting and poetry which transmits beauty and peace.

Students of art and literature play a vital role in the transformation of India into a developed nation. They have scope for building their career and, connect the people and the policy makers and also the people and the scientists and technologists.

To sum up, art adds flavour to life and depicts life in its noblest form. Art is a benign form of expression. Art fills life with love, humour, affection, and peace in a strife-stricken world. It imparts meaning and depth to human existence and enhances the beauty of life lost in the meaningless pursuit of materialistic pleasures.



A. Answer the following questions in about 50 -100 words each.

1. How has the Indian civilization managed to survive the different forces of change?

Ans. Several civilizations developed on this planet but only a few which had a vision of the future and could adapt to change survived. India is a country with a population of a billion who follow diverse cultures, multi languages and multi-religions. The spirit of unity in diversity has strengthened Indian civilization. Our civilization accepted and absorbed the dynamic changes of multicultural impact. Ancient philosophers, and great thinkers, who have produced epics like the Mahabharata and the classics such as Thirukkural, Kabirvani and Narayaneeyam, contributed to the survival of the Indian civilization. Later, Indian civilization has been enriched by the contributions of great scientists, technologists, economists and sociologists.

2.What are Kalam's favourite books, and how have these influenced him?

Ans. Kalam was a great lover of books and a vivacious reader. He enjoyed reading any book, but he had some favourite books. "Light From Many Lamps" which he considered as a close companion for more than five decades pacified him when he was in problem and balanced his thinking process when he was in ecstasy. The second book was Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural. Kalam had great respect for the book as it enlightens the human mind with its code of conduct for life and breaks the barriers of the narrow concept of a nation, language, religion, and culture. The third book is "Man the Unknown" by Dr. Alexis Carrel, a doctor turned philosopher and a Nobel Laureate. The book highlights how, in an ailment, both the mind and the body need to be treated as the two are integrated.

3.Why should children be encouraged to read books?

Ans. Books are best companions during our life journey and continue to guide the next generations as well. They are a source of inspiration and provide a route map to transcend beyond the world. Albert Einstein could explore universal truths just with the help of a little book on Euclidean plain geometry. The works of eminent thinkers and writers inspire the younger generation and produce great leaders. They enlighten the heart and spirit of mankind and make them realise that weakness and despair can be conquered with 'indomitable spirit'. Books enrich the knowledge of the youth who in turn can transform the society into a knowledge society. Hence, children should be encouraged to read books.

4.What is the power of drama and films on human lives?

Ans. Artists and scientists are heroes of the imagination or of the deep insight into the nature of things and of society. Filmmakers have sufficient power to impact the minds of the young population. Drama and films directly impact human lives specially the younger generation. They act as a binding force and elevate human mind and spread the breeze of happiness. They add some spice to life and are great antidepressants. Abdul Kalam believed that music, dance, drama and films can be one of the tools for controlling terrorism as they cut the barriers of language and unite people. They help in preserving, propagating and developing the age-old cultural traditions. Drama and films are great forms of entertainment and mediums for conveying messages to the people. Watching a movie can either make life better, destroy it, or



have a neutral or no impact. Violent films make people aggressive and dangerous, while good films and dramas help to learn about ancient times or fill out some knowledge gaps.

B. Answer the following questions in about 250- 300 words each.

1. What is the importance of art and literature in one's life, according to APJ Abdul Kalam?

Ans: Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam (1931-2015) was the eleventh president of India and is also popularly known as "Missile Man". He received several prestigious awards including the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. The present excerpt, 'Art and literature' is one of the chapters of Abdul Kalam's book titled, 'Indomitable Spirit'. The book highlights the importance of art and literature in moulding one's life.

Literature enhances knowledge and enlightens the human mind. Books are a source of great knowledge and wealth for many generations. Abdul himself was a great lover of books and authored many inspirational books. He quotes Jayakanthan, the Tamil author and recipient of 38th Jnanpith award, "Going past you (reader) is my (author's) success. Thus, a writer provides the foundation for the reader to perceive and go beyond himself or herself.

Art plays an important role in the development of mankind. India has a rich civilizational heritage of more than five hundred years blending literature, music, dance, and drama. Dr. Kalam felt that music and dance can be used instruments for ensuring global peace and act as a binding force. Apart from military, economic, and judicial approach, art can be one of the important tools for containing terrorism. It spreads a breeze of happiness and peace. Kalam opines that music cuts the barriers of language and unites people. In this context, he mentions the trinity of Carnatic music who sang their kritis in Telugu, Sanskrit, Kannada, and Tamil. Uday Shankar, the pioneer of renaissance in Indian arts during the 1930s and 40s, introduced Indian dance forms and music to the western world and won their admiration. The rural folk and tribal communities also contribute in preserving, propagating and developing our age-old cultural traditions.

2. How do different arts influence human civilization?

Ans: Art is the reflection of any society. It influences and shapes the civilization of a society. It is intertwined in the lives of human beings. It enables human beings to share their ideas or thoughts in a way that brings solace to the mind. When a man cannot express anything through speech, art fills the gap. Civilizations flourish because art transforms the values of human beings and reflect the ever-changing culture of a society.

The culture of any society inhabits the styles of beauty, power and expression that are established and reinforced by the art of that time. It appears on the walls of museums, buildings, and caves; resonates in our ears with its sounds of music. It also encompasses many genres such as paintings, poetry, drama, music, photography, and novels. It equips a person to learn morals and values of their ancestors and understand their living styles. Art makes man's life meaningful and helps him appreciate the world. He is, in turn, appreciated for creating art. This elevates the mood of a person, improves the ability to solve problems and open minds to generate new ideas. Art makes human more human.

Art can be used for politics and social agendas such as editorial cartoons and paintings directed at political or religious figures. Different forms of art influence people to see things from



different perspectives. Besides, art soothes human beings through poems, songs, drama, and cinema.

Since times immemorial artists have been patronized by the rulers as they were instrumental in elevating human mind. Art mirrors the society and is eternal. Moreover, it carries forward the ancient culture and tradition of any civilization to posterity.

3. Kalam believed that ‘Students of art and literature are important contributors to transforming India into a developed nation’. Do you agree with this statement? Elaborate your answer.

Ans: Dr.APJ Abdul Kalam (1931-2015) was the eleventh president of India and is also popularly known as “Missile Man”. He received several prestigious awards including the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian honour. The present excerpt, ‘Art and literature’ is one of the chapters of Abdul Kalam’s book titled, ‘Indomitable Spirit’. The book highlights the importance of art and literature in moulding one’s life.

I agree with the statement that ‘Students of art and literature are important contributors to transforming India into a developed nation’. “Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”— Pablo Picasso

Students of art and literature add flavour to the nature. They use art to express religious beliefs, educate people and criticise the elements of society. Since the early dawn of civilization, art and mankind have evolved together. A country gains reputation when the writers lead the society ahead of its time, and make the society accept the change. Artists and writers create the enlightened leaders amongst the youth and make them realise that there is a need for ‘indomitable spirit’ to conquer any signs of weakness and despair. Thus, they help mankind endure adversities and succeed in life. Furthermore, they are instrumental for ensuring global peace and combatting terrorism. The different forms of art and literature produced by the younger generation unite the people and spread the breeze of happiness. They not only elevate the soul but also preserve and propagate our age-old cultural traditions. They enable balanced thinking and relieve the human mind from pain suffering.

Thus, the students of art and literature play a pivotal role in the development of a healthy nation.

Grammar

Exercises

A. Spot the cliché in the following sentences and then re-write the sentence to avoid the cliché. Note that when reconstructing the sentences, there is no one correct answer; but be careful to not change the original sentence altogether. (pg103)

1. Leading the team is **very easy**.
2. Injustice **infuriates** me.
3. At work, she was always ready to **make the extra efforts**.
4. He had to **adhere to rules** to keep his job.
5. Yesterday’s World Cup quarter-final match was an **expected event**. Everyone expected it to be an **easy victory** for India, but Kenya took the right measure to this opportunity and showed that can **employ ruthless methods and tactics to succeed**. The **unexpected contender acted honestly without being kind**; on the other hand, as the match was **passing slowly**, the



favourites were unable to **follow the ball**. Ultimately, last year's champions **succumbed** as Kenya **did extremely well** and advanced to the semi-finals.

C. Cross out unnecessary words from the sentences below.

1. She summarized the report.
2. The announcer was inaudible at the back of the hall.
3. The committee is reviewing our recommendations.
4. Fetch and belongings, please.
5. We must encourage innovation.
6. The police chased the thief.
7. They should learn to cooperate.
8. He ordered two plates of biryani.
9. The person responsible for this mess should be fired.
- 10. The money we have is sufficient.**

D. Simplify the following passages. Note that there may be more than one correct way of re-writing these sentences; but be careful not to change the intended meaning.

1. During the weekly meetings, the final decisions taken by the members of the planning committee must be arrived at unanimously.
2. The only query I have is to know when the meeting will begin.
3. Mr. Venkat Aluri, the CEO of Sai Food products, said that he is not bothered by the news report as his company has a good track record on matters of safety.

Essay Writing

A. Use the points provided for topic, 'Machine Civilization' to expand into a complete essay of 500 words.

The intellectuality of man made a profound mark in making his identity on earth and is reflected in his inventions. Machines are one such great inventions which made his life easier, comfortable, and timesaving. Right from the hand axe to the smart gadgets of the current era, machines have become a part of humans' lives. This sweeping change paved way to an industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century.

In the early nineteenth century, there has been a rapid acceleration in technical innovations which affected every field of work like agriculture, medicine, textiles, chemicals, transportation etc. In the late nineteenth century, industrialization amplified, and machines occupied every phase of life resulting in the transformation of economies based on agriculture and small scale-industry to economies based on mechanization and large-scale industry. Subsequently, innovative ways of organizing work using new machines and power sources led to productive and efficient outcome. The changes that took place in one mode of industry improved the operations of another mode of industry. Furthermore, travel from one place to another has become incredibly faster with new modes of transport. Machine civilization has also made its presence in the field of information technology and boosted communication through mobile phones and other smart gadgets. But as every coin has two sides technological developments have both advantages and disadvantages.



The greatest advantage of machines is that they generate more production with minor energy, with a minimal man force within a limited time. This paved path for man to improve his standard of living and enjoy more leisure. The luxuries and comforts that evolved as a result, made his life comfortable. Machinery has harnessed forces of nature in the service of man. People can send quicker messages, generate electricity through waterfalls, lift loads, complete the work quickly and accurately with the help of computer and other smart gadgets. Besides, revolutionary changes occurred in transportation, where travel has become faster by land, air, or sea. Inventions like radio, television, cinema, internet, e-books provided entertainment and relaxation.

On the other hand, machine civilization has some disadvantages too. Firstly, machines changed man into another machine without emotions and feelings. They strained the relations resulting in the decline of the quality of life. Secondly, the emissions from industries increased the pollution to dangerous levels and disturbed the ecological balance. The inventions in the automobile industry created noise pollution and led to road rage and road accidents. Technological advancements made man more and more dependent on machines suppressing his innate skills. Thus, optimal use of machines can ensure safe environment and a healthy and happy life.

