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Literature and Media: A Lecture by Prof. Shivanand Kelaginamaniⁱ

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Abstract

Over the years the media became so powerful that it is in a position to make or break governments. The media is widely known as the Fourth Pillar of Democracy, supporting the traditional three (Executive, Legislature, Judiciary) by informing citizens, providing a platform for debate, and ensuring government transparency and accountability, which is vital for a healthy democracy. The media should be a partner in national development. Literature and media seem to be in opposite directions. While Literature seeks to establish a close relationship with the inner self, the media seeks to find its existence in the open, among the public. But both are active without keeping one away from the other. The media itself must do the work of taking literature and art to the public. The present paper brings out the translation of a lecture given by Prof. Shivanand Kelaginamani, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Adikavi Sri Maharshi Valmiki University, Raichur, Karnataka in an academic event on the topic 'Sahitya Mattu Madhyama' (in Kannada) held at the University on 10th December 2025.

Keywords: Media, Literature, Language, Cinema, Internet, News.

It is rare to come across a vice chancellor engages classes for the students though he would be busy in his administrative activities in his busy tenure. But it is wonder to know that the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Adikavi Sri Maharshi Valmiki University, Raichur engages the classes for the students of the Department of Kannada daily for one hour makes everyone inspire and also punctual. Prof. Shivanand Kelaginamani who hails from Haveri, was born in 1967 in the village of 'Sunakallabidari' in Haveri district. He was a good orator even as a student. He was attracted by the ideologies of Basavanna, Ambedkar, Periyar, Lohia etc. He is recognized in the cultural world through his writing, thinking, and dialogues. He is known for his efforts to document ideas with naturalness and commitment in the fields of Kannada literature and culture studies, folklore studies, tribal studies, comparative studies, editing, etc. He is also involved in teaching and writing. He has already written more than forty works. He completed his Ph. D in Kannada on the topic "Navya Literature of Sri Gopalakrishna Adiga- A Study". His notable works are Adima Belaku Valmiki(Research)-2016, Sahitya Samsthi-2015(Criticism), Vrishti-Samashti-(Intellectual)2015, Manasijana Maye-(Lierary) 2014,

ⁱ Original: A Delivered lecture in Kannada by Prof. Shivanand Kelaginamani, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Adikavi Sri Maharshi Valmiki University, Raichur

Vachana Sahithya 2010 (Criticism), Hallikeri Gudlappa (Biography 2006), Suvarnanagari Sunnakallabidari (Rural Study 2005), Kannada Chalanachitra Chanthana Manthana 2014. Around 25 research scholars have been awarded Ph.D in Kannada under his guidance. He was awarded many a times including 'Fa.Gu. Halakatti Rashtriya Prasasti' in 2009 and 'Snehasethu State Level Award' in 2010.

To have his knowledge, the other Departments' students of Adikavi Sri Maharshi Valmiki University Raichur demand Prof. Shivanand Kelaginamani to engage classes for them too, he started delivering lectures to each willing department whenever time permits him. On account of this he delivered a lecture in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of ASMVUR on 10th December 2025 on the topic "Literature and Media".

In his lecture he briefed that in any democratic country the media plays a vital role in creating, molding and reflecting public opinion. Over the years the media became so powerful that it is in a position to make or break governments. The media is widely known as the Fourth Pillar of Democracy, supporting the traditional three (Executive, Legislature, Judiciary) by informing citizens, providing a platform for debate, and ensuring government transparency and accountability, which is vital for a healthy democracy. The media should be a partner in national development.

Literature and media seem to be in opposite directions. While Literature seeks to establish a close relationship with the inner self, the media seeks to find its existence in the open, among the public. But both are active without keeping one away from the other. The media itself must do the work of taking literature and art to the public.

Kannada literature features a rich array of detective, renaissance, and progressive novels that gained prominence through various media, particularly starting in the modern era with the introduction of printing, journalism and other media.

As new discoveries in science emerged, new possibilities of media also increased. When cinema came along, it captivated the community as a wonderful, exciting medium. Although the external form of this form was different, literature became the main thread in its core. The elements of story, song, dialogue, image, movement, etc. were combined to become a film. The poems of important Kannada poets also began to be used as songs for films. The practice of writing songs considering the context of the film also became the norm. Composing songs for films came into existence as a separate genre. Similarly, the practice of writing stories and screenplays for films also grew.

In addition, there were experiments in making films based on stories and novels that had made a name for themselves in literature. In Kannada too, some literary works reached a large audience as films. Since this media is a different, it is not possible to bring a literary work in the print media to the screen properly. In such a situation, it is natural that a literary work and a film based on it are different from each other. However, arguments arose regarding these. Arguments and discussions took place not only between writers and filmmakers, but also in public.

Ta.Ra.Su., when his novel 'Nagarahavu' was made into a film, there was a big debate in the newspapers and the controversy. The film was based on a combination of three novels by T. R. Subba Rao (*Nagarahavu*, *Ondu Gandu Eradu Henu*, and *Sarpa Mathsara*). After watching the movie, the original novelist T. R. Subba Rao reportedly remarked that Kanagal had turned the "cobra" (*naagarahaavu*) into a "rat snake" (*kerehaavu*), implying a significant departure from the original characterization of the protagonist, Ramachari.

Belli Moda (Silver Cloud) is a classic Kannada novel by Triveni (Anasuya Shankar) that impactful novel was famously adapted into a landmark 1967 Kannada film by director Puttanna Kanagal. The film *Gejje Pooje*, based on the novel by M.K. Indira, did not create a similar, widely reported public controversy between its director and author. M.K. Indira's novel and the film adaptation were both

socially relevant works exploring the plight of a Devadasi's daughter and were critically acclaimed for their sensitive handling of the subject. The film 'Edakallu Guddada Mele', based on the novel by Bharathisuttar, gained popularity but was criticized by the original author. Puttanna defended to his criticism.

When U.R. Ananthamurthy's novel 'Avasthe' or 'Samskara' was made into a film is still remembered by many. Sometimes, meaningful exchange of ideas has been possible through such debates.

It is believed that when a literary work is adapted into a film, it is not appropriate to expect it to be completely faithful to the original work. When literature is adapted to film, it is transformed according to the elements of image, sound, editing, music, etc. that the medium relies on. Also, a film should be a response to a work by a director in a contemporary context. Audiences who enter the theater without knowing the work watch the film without any connection to the work. So here the dilemma arises as to whose opinion should be important. Cinema is essentially the creation of the director. It is up to the director's discretion how faithful it should be to the literary work. Because the greatest films of all time were created based on works that were considered mediocre. For instance A film directed by Siddalingaiah based on T.K. Ramaraya's Bangarada Manushya.

There are also examples of films based on classic novels that have failed to reach audiences and critics. The novel *Kanooru Heggadithi* (meaning: Proprietress of Kanuru), written by Jnanpith awardee Kuvempu in 1936, was adapted into a critically acclaimed Kannada film of the same name in 1999, directed by fellow Jnanpith awardee Girish Karnad. The film was shot on location in Malnad and was praised for its authentic portrayal of the feudal society described in the book but it was not so popular as 'Bangarada Manushya'.

Likewise, the philosophical songs were composed and sang by Mysore Anantsawami which were authored by Narasimhaswamy K.S. became very popular in those days and still they are remembered and was created a dichotomy in those days for which they are to be credited, whether to the author or the composer or to the singer.

From the world's greatest works, such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Bible, to the great writers Milton, Shakespeare, Dickens, Tagore, and Kuvempu, their works have been made into movies.

Similarly, TV serials and short stories on television continue to generate debate. Since literature is attached to the print media, even today we have the habit of perceiving television stories and serials on that background. Although we know that it is a different medium, the perception and sensitivities there are different, when a literary work read in print is adapted to this media, our way of perceiving it does not change completely; the criteria used for its criticism and judgment do not change either. Sudha, Taranga, Kasturi and Karmaveera are popular Kannada language magazines known for featuring serials (serialized fiction/stories).

With the help of media, literature has become not only the property of scholars and researchers but also close to the common people. Due to this, literature has become a part of everyday life. The most positive impact of media on literature is the expansion of readership. Animated series and films based on classics have introduced young audiences to literature. A poem written in a small village in India can now be read by anyone in foreign countries through online platforms. Social media has enabled ordinary people, who are not professional writers, to publish and share their creative works. This has blurred the boundaries between the writer and the reader.

Great thinker, Mirji Annaraya who belonged to a small sect in Jainism that practiced farming. He explored successfully the complexities of such families in his writings. Though he knew Marathi and English, he wrote in his regional language Kannada. Exploring the different dimensions of human life, writing with local consciousness in his novels like Nisarga, Ashoka Chakra, Shreyamsa, Rashtra

Purusha with deep critical insider's point of view. He is well known for the younger generation too because of the media.

Literature and media are necessary for each other. Literature will remain in a limited sphere; literature will become empty entertainment. In today's era of globalization, it is necessary to get popularity, dissemination, and publicity. But we must be careful not to damage its original value and dignity. The coordination of the speed of the media with the power of literature will be the strength of the new era. We must not underestimate the influence of the media on literature. While cinema is often primarily associated with entertainment, literature is traditionally seen as a medium for reflection, profound understanding of the human experience, education, and social transformation. Media has led to more diverse and creative forms of literature and has expanded the world. If literature maintains its strength and depth while taking advantage of the opportunities that media offers, both can grow together.

The revolutionary developments in information and technology in recent decades have revealed even more new media and their immense power. In the past, literary criticism was limited to newspapers. But nowadays, blogs, YouTube, and online forums have become big platforms for literary discussion. Readers' reactions start the moment any work is published. This has transformed the interactive medium for discussing and criticizing literature in the literary world.

News channels today offer the primary benefit of keeping the public instantly aware of global and local events, but they are often criticized for pervasive bias and sensationalism. Many channels are perceived as being owned by large corporations or influenced by political ideologies, leading to biased reporting and propaganda. To gain higher Television Rating Points (TRP) and attract advertising revenue, channels often exaggerate stories, focus on negative news, and create unnecessary panic. In-depth analysis and purposeful interrogation are often sacrificed for breaking news graphics and repetitive, emotional "debates". The constant stream of negative news, tragic incidents, and crime can have a negative impact on viewers' happiness and mental well-being. The race to be "first" or "fastest" sometimes leads to the spread of unverified or false information.

Hundreds of TV channels, the possibilities of the Internet, blogs, websites and many other possibilities have changed the very nature of media. The literature that the Internet, blogs and websites are giving rise to is one that opens up a wide range of cultural interactions. The full potential of these media, and the literature that is being created in these media, still needs to be properly analyzed. Because the language which they use are not the pure language of the literature which can be led the people a cultured life.

Conclusion

Literature is a reflection of human inner feelings, thoughts and experiences, and the media is the bridge through which those feelings are conveyed to society. In the olden days, literature reached people only through oral tradition, lectures, and books, but in today's era, it is rapidly becoming global through newspapers, radio, television, cinema, the Internet, and social media. Due to this process, literature has not only become extensive, but also significant changes have occurred in its forms. At the same time there are many things that are wrong with the society, and the media should engage itself in the betterment of society and the nation as a whole.

Note: The delivered lecture's audio in Kannada by Prof. Shivanand Kelaginamani on 10th December 2025 is available in the studio of Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of Adikavi Sri Maharshi Valmiki University, Raichur, Karnataka

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