

**“Significance of Arts and Humanities”**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research paper focuses on the theme of arts and humanities. Both the subjects are similar as they deal with human culture and experiences, but are not same as art is an area of humanities and is seen as an inclusive field, whereas humanities, as a subject, is diverse in nature. This research paper will differentiate these two subjects and discuss their fields. Talking about the historical background, this paper highlights how arts and humanities came into existence starting from Ancient Greek and Ancient Roman time to Renaissance period and challenges by postmodernist philosophers.

The importance of reading this research paper is that it discusses the significance of arts and humanities as subjects and how it will help an individual to think critically, creatively and express them. This paper also examines the impact of capitalized society on humanities and challenges to study these subjects in today's world. This paper discusses contemporary relevance of these subjects in today's real world. Arts and humanities are an essential part of our education system and help in developing essential skill sets, which are important for the future of an individual. This paper challenges the argument of technology taking over humanities fields and how technology and humanities combined is better for creation and innovation.

**Keywords:** Arts, Humanities, technology, today's world, future, expression

**INTRODUCTION**

In the field of knowledge, Arts and Humanities are said to be two oldest fields which were existing at that time. Humanities are branch of subjects dealing with the human beings, their culture and society from critical perspective. It includes the study of language, history, literature, religion, arts, anthropology, law, philosophy, archaeology etc. People who believe in the philosophy of humanities and humanism are known as Humanist Scholars. Other subjects which are intertwined with humanities are Arts. Arts are considered as part of humanities and are related to act of creation, which could be visual or by performance. These are concerned with human values, feeling and thoughts. Arts are medium used to express

ideas and emotions. Arts can be classified into two types: visual arts and performing arts. Arts such as paintings, sculptures, literatures, classics are type of visual arts and arts such as music, dance, and theatre are part of performing arts. Both Arts and Humanities might look same as they both deals with human culture and experience but are not. Arts are seen as inclusive field and part of humanities, whereas humanities are more diverse subjects. Arts include the acts of creation in the form of visual or performance, whereas humanities are more related to research and critical analysis. They prioritize more on human condition rather than their work. Therefore, in simple sense, arts involve ‘doing any work’ and humanities involve ‘talking about them’. In fact, a historian is most often a humanist, but a poet or imaginative author is most likely an artist. But now the difference between them is becoming blurred and both arts and humanities go hand-in-hand and both the subjects are part of man’s life, no matter if they want it or not.

## **BACKGROUND**

The word ‘Humanities’ has been derived from Latin word ‘humanities’, which means human nature or culture. The ‘*Studia Humanitatis*’ was a field of study in the fifteenth century that included language, literature, poetry, history, and philosophy, mostly drawn from the knowledge of Latin and Greek literature. Humanities are found to be originated during ancient Greece period as a field of education for citizens. Rulers at that time made it necessary education for its people. According to Dr. Mike Lippman, the Humanities emerged in Greece in the fifth century BC, with the first systematic development of theatre, comic, literature, and history, all of which are now used in the Humanities (Lippman, 2010).<sup>1</sup> Also, the Romans played an active role at a certain time when they incorporated mathematics, music, astronomy, grammar and philosophy in their course, which are now called humanities studies. However, opinions toward these studies were more specific and ordinary before then. These courses comprised the majority of middle Ages teaching, with a focus mostly on humanities as abilities or ‘forms of doing’. Major development took place in 15<sup>th</sup> Century during the period of Renaissance in Europe, where the humanities as a field was taken seriously and made it subject to study rather than to practice it. This was the period when art, poetry, history etc. were given great importance. This idea was questioned in the twentieth century by the post - modernist philosophy, which tried to reinterpret the humanities in more equitable terms suited for a democratic system, given that the Greek and Roman civilizations wherein the humanities emerged weren't really democratic. Talking about the history of the arts, the origin of art has been found in various ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egyptian, Roman and Greek, Indian etc. The devotion of the person's physical form in Ancient Greek art resulted in the creation of similar techniques to demonstrate strength, grace, elegance, and physically accurate dimensions. Gods were represented in Roman

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<sup>1</sup> *Where the humanities come from---Greece in the fifth century BCE* (2022) *Humanities Seminars Program*. Available at: <https://hsp.arizona.edu/course/spring-2013/where-humanities-come-greece-fifth-century-bce> (Accessed: January 19, 2023).

artwork as ideal beings with specific distinctive traits. During Renaissance, arts were used in form of sculptures, painting, literature to bring the social change and the reformation in Europe. Performing Arts also began in Greece during sixth century as poets used to write the plays and dance used to happen. In 14<sup>th</sup> century, religious plays were started by the church to celebrate their religious days and important events. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, USA saw emergence of new elite class of humanities, which were called as postmodernists. Postmodernists were of the view that humanities should not only be restricted to ‘white males’, but also include work of women, people of other races and without religion biasness. The modernist believes that there are a number of masterpieces in literary works that have intrinsic value, but the postmodernist believes that all such concepts of excellence were highly associated with gender and society. The modernist favours careful review of a few literary works, whereas the postmodernist advocated greater literary texts of a wide range of works. Let’s discuss the various fields in arts and humanities.

## **FIELDS**

Humanities include more work related to comparative research and critical method of study. So, fields under humanities are as follows:

Anthropology- It is the scientific study of humanity, which studies their evolution, culture, language and society. Some considers anthropology to be part of natural science as it includes biological aspect and some experiments. While it also can be included in humanities as it studies humankind history, culture and society. Anthropology applies both science and humanities elements to better comprehend all areas of humans. The 4 key branches of anthropology examine the study of humans from four distinct angles.

1. Cultural Anthropology is the study of humanity, including beliefs, customs, ideals and inventions.
2. The nature of human origins and biology is defined as physical anthropology.
3. Linguistic Anthropology is concerned with the nature of linguistic structure, such as past relationships between languages and the numerous linkages involving cultural identity.
4. Archaeological Anthropology is the study of historical and contemporary material artefacts and surroundings in terms of learning about their civilizations.

History- History is study of past events. These events could be in written or may be oral. Events which took place before it was written were part of prehistory. The word "history" refers to historical events along with their recollection, finding, compilation, arrangement, presentation, and analysis. Historians use primary records like written records, oral narratives, artwork and ancient relics, and environmental indicators to learn about the past. History is considered as part of humanities as it studies records of human, society, culture and events.

Literature and Language- The study of language is known as linguistics and various fields of humanities like history, literature, philosophy is dependent on language. Literature is based on language and includes the written work in the form of prose, poetry, drama, novels etc. and is considered as vital component of humanities.

Religion- religion is a system under which people of particular community follow or worship particular faith or belief. Religions originated both in western and eastern world, nearly in the sixth century BC. Over ages, a wide range of faiths arose throughout the globe, with Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism in India, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism in Persia among the oldest prominent religions. These Religions should evolve and develop throughout time in order to stay ahead to their followers. New faiths will develop after old religions unable to answer some issues.

Arts- Art is a field under humanities, which are of two types: visual arts and performing arts. Visual art is art which one see with his eyes. Visual arts comprise not just drawing and sculptures, but also household usages, and the furniture of our residences, universities, cathedrals, and some other structures. Artists convey the values, desires, and dangers of their period by this concept they choose and the shapes they develop.

- Drawing is the process of creating an image with a range of resources and methods. Pencils, pen and ink, brushes, colour, crayons, pastels, are popular tools.
- Painting means to apply colours on any surface, canvas, or wall in artistic way, with the help of drawing. These arts are used to deliver the feelings to people directly. As Artist are considered as sensitive people, painters can be attracted by anything in the world which a normal person would ignore and he paints the scenes with beauty which normal person ignored earlier. 'Mona Lisa' is considered a most famous painting made by Leonardo da Vinci.
- Sculpture is the process of constructing 3-D objects from diverse materials. These normally comprise stretchable materials such as clay and metal, but they may also contain tool to cut down required shape, such as stone.

Performing Arts are performed by artists in front of audience and it includes music, dance, drama, comedy, film, theatre etc.

- Music as an area of study emphasizes primarily on two skill sets: singing in front of audience and music instruction to others. Other than just to play music, students also learn its theory, history, and composing. Music is often conducted in the art field to increase the talents in the people who do not know music by imparting qualities such as attentiveness and awareness.

- The section of the performance involved in enacting narratives before the crowd through a variety of voice, movement, song, performance, light, and display — perhaps many more aspects of the other fields of arts — is known as theatre. Theatre can have many other formats, including operas, dance, mime, and so on, with addition to traditional story dialogue approach.
- Dance involves movement of performer's body and presents their performance with help of expressions, body language and gestures. Dance is also used to express happiness with rhythmic body movement. Dance could of any form such as social, cultural, religious, and moral and so on. Act of composing dance is known as choreography.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

Humanities are far beyond than just philosophy, history, art and literature. It gives everyone greater understanding of history and how well the society has changed over the years. But from the other side, humanities may facilitate a better understanding; form opinions based on past failures, and honour all wonderful things humans have achieved. But, with needs of sciences and technology, people are neglecting the significance of humanities. As a result, modern generation are lacking understanding about these topics. In consequences of this, they also lack critical reasoning skills as well as the capacity to study, analyse, and express (Patton, 2016).<sup>2</sup> It is essential to establish and clarify the primary objective of humanities to increase comprehension of the field. The goal of humanities is to examine and review life experiences, to make relationships between different social events, and to provide relevant solutions for the society. Adams and Goldbard identify different objectives of art it may generate interest, provide fresh ideas, and express various approaches to interpret our surroundings. We feel about things as a result of our direct participation with the arts. As a result, the arts will be the heart of education (Goldbard, 1990). Other than just studying past events and human experiences, humanities help lot more in gaining certain skills such as:

- Communication skills- Humanities help in building communication skills, both orally and in writing, which helps us to support our ideas and opinions better. Talking about writing part, students have to write essays and research papers in humanities, where they have to analyse the content critically and convey it effectively and simply.
- Critical Thinking- Humanities helps in building critical thinking, which helps us to form strong opinions on any issue. Students are required to study multiple resources, analyse the facts, and build a convincing argument, which helps to

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<sup>2</sup> Patton, D. (2016, June 24). *studymoose.com*. Retrieved from <https://studymoose.com/the-importance-of-arts-and-humanities-essay>

reach analysing results. It also helps in learning how to recognise biasness and apply rational thinking.

- **Research-** Humanities helps to find important facts, study materials, and gather meaningful data through the study; students also should produce rational and convincing arguments. Students use primary materials, descriptive articles, statistics, and visuals, among other things.
- **Creativity-** Humanities encourage creativity by enabling participants to analyse in complicated, subtle ways and to simply ignore biases. Being capable of providing creative concept or develop fresh methods of presenting arguments may benefit individuals in a variety of professions, such as commerce and Science, which rely primarily on management of problems. Creativity enables us to construct new imaginative systems.
- **Analytical skills-** Because students should think rationally over materials and construct valid reasoning depending upon their research, humanities can enable them to improve in their analytical abilities. As numerical data are more commonly used in the natural sciences, qualitative resources are largely used in logical reasoning in the humanities? Such abilities allow one to think clearly and examine things before making any decision. You can interpret the world better if you have critical thinking skills.

Talking about the contemporary relevance of humanities, subjects like political science, history and sociology helps students to teach about multiple events which somehow affected global history, as well as about historical mistakes which took place. It is all extremely essential and useful as legislatures develop national policies that will surely impact the future path of the country, also adopt appropriate measures in addressing the country's major challenges. Studying law and politics will assist people in accurately criticising and attacking the government whenever a bad policy is adopted, thereby preventing historical mistakes from repeating again. Subjects like geography and economics are also very important for people as well a nation to work properly. Geography helps us to understand the importance of natural resources which are available on our planet.<sup>3</sup> Some of them are non-renewable resources which are present limited in nature might get exhaust from nature in some years. Citizens should be provided with this knowledge so that they use these resources judiciously. Economics help a nation to build and stand on its own without being dependent on anyone. With the help of economics, nations can see where they stand in the world and compare themselves with other countries. By studying humanities subjects, you ask the question 'What

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<sup>3</sup> Goldbard, A. (2014) *Adams, Don and Goldbard, Arlene, Crossroads: Reflections on the Politics of Culture, Talmage, Academia.edu*. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/6799225/Adams\\_Don\\_and\\_Goldbard\\_Arlene\\_Crossroads\\_Reflections\\_on\\_the\\_Politics\\_of\\_Culture\\_Talmage](https://www.academia.edu/6799225/Adams_Don_and_Goldbard_Arlene_Crossroads_Reflections_on_the_Politics_of_Culture_Talmage) (Accessed: January 19, 2023).

if", which is necessary as it creates curiosity among the individuals which is crucial for development and resiliency in individuals.

## **CHALLENGES**

In today's capitalist world, where everything is focused on profit-maximisation, has brought various challenges and attack on humanities. Such blows on language, the crafts, theories, culture may generate a large number of buzzes, however in today's time, money is considered as important factor overall. However, a number of prominent experts have repeatedly claimed that such methods are only characterised as short-termed and eventually self-harming, because humanity requires far more things than just money, which is also necessity but only serves as a route for other milestones. While humanities are not capable of ensuring employment more than the STEM fields, but they are relevant for us. Understanding about the humanities is more like understanding about the history and why the world is like as it is now. Humanities encourage the development of reading, reasoning, and communication skills, which are essential for effective professional advancement. The data comes from a Harvard study on declining humanities enrolment numbers; the conclusion they reached was that humanities enrolees are declining since the courses have not given them instant post-graduate jobs. As most of the humanities fields deals with theoretical part and involves different cultures, so it becomes confusing and boring for students to just learn these theories. In today's time where everything is science and technology oriented, humanities become outdated stream has everyone wants quick earnings from jobs and STEM stream provide that to them.

Since we are concerned about technology taking control over humanities, the on-going COVID-19 pandemic has proved that technology seems to be at the service of mankind. Humans come first as they only have made these technologies. Humanities help us in shifting our focus and give more importance to humans rather than machines, and we must take unanimous decisions to better manage the detrimental effects of technology. Humanities can help us to find and solve the issues which are arising in this digital world. However, integration of humanities and STEM will allow greater understanding for an individual and will open new opportunities for invention. The integration between humanities and STEM might help STEM students to understand their course better, in research and hypothesis, enhance their critical thinking, communication skills which would be good for their overall development. STEM could also help humanities in different ways such as by using STEM technology to promote humanistic practice. Integrating technology will also help humanities students as music and visuals might help in their learning things faster and deeper. Also, humanities students might get benefitted with technology in taking notes, with their research as they can get access to various books, journals, articles from library databases, in their writings and with proofreading.

## CONCLUSION

Arts and humanities are very important for our education system as they deal human experience, culture, society and helps in building various skill-sets such as communication, research skills, critical thinking, analytical skills, creativity and much more. Arts and humanities are considered as foundation of many modern-day subjects in our education system. So, teaching STEM subjects to someone, who does not have knowledge about philosophy, literature, history and are therefore able to come out completely unable to understand the interrelationship between earlier culture of human and the present condition might be inappropriate. As consequence of this, societal growth would stop functioning. As technological discovery can never be developed unless the research study is approached analytically and creatively. But, due to coming of technology in humanities, communication becomes quick but traditional form of communication such as literature is in danger due to increase in technology. All the materials of library are now available in computers. The renowned scientist Stephen Hawking claimed that machines could either be best innovation or worst innovation for mankind, as they have potential to swiftly replace and even dominate humankind. But we should know that humans only made these technologies and should not consider technology has superior than them.