

**ROLE OF TEACHERS IN INCULCATING VALUES IN
GITHA HARIHARAN'S THE GHOSTS OF VASU MASTER**

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Abstract

Teachers are role model for students in the society. They influence the future generation people through their action and teaching. Values are important for each and every human being. Moral values are behaviour, characters, goodness, knowledge, discipline and sociability. Githa Hariharan's novel *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* deals with the role of a teacher in inculcating values in his students. The protagonist of the novel Vasu Master is a school teacher. He worked in a school and got retirement. After his retirement life, he starts to take classes for few boys at home. He's only student at home was Mani, a mentally weak boy. Vasu master inculcates values into the mind of Mani day by day by telling stories and taking to teach and to get experience personally. The role of a teacher is well expressed by Githa Hariharan in this novel. Thus moral values are taught and learnt from teachers by large and wide all over the world.

Key Words: Role Model, Discipline, Sociability, Experience, Knowledge, Behaviour, Teachers, Values.

Introduction

Githa Hariharan is a writer living in New Delhi at present. She was born in 1954. She is having six novels as a credit and four short story collections. She is a social activist by filing a case against the guardianship issue. Her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, published in 1992 got the common wealth writers award in 1993. Then her other novels are *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege* (2003), *Fugitive Histories* (2009) and *I Have Become the Tide* (2019). Her writings and teaching career is in progress form the beginning till now. Autobiographical elements are in the second novel of Githa Hariharan *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. She is a teacher and she likes to say stories. So she says many tales in the name of Vasu Master in the novel.

The Ghosts of Vasu Master:

The second novel of Githa Hariharan is *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. It tells the story of a teacher. Vasu Master worked in P.G. Boys School for nearly forty years. He was the in charge of the class 6B every year continuously. He is an English teacher working in Elipetti. He got retirement and he thinks about his memories at school, class room, with his colleagues, with him wife, father, grandmother, friends and with his wife's friend Jameela. The Ghost in the title refers to the memories he remember after his retirement from school. He is haunted by the memories of above mentioned people during his working period. After the retirement function gets over, he remembers about the note pad and pen given to him by his class boys and he starts to write on the note. At that moment many student joined in his tuition class started by Vasu Master. The last student and the only student for him is Mani. He is also called as "Papaya Head Mani" in the novel. Vasu Master describes the physical feature of Mani in the following words, "It was as if his head, the ripe Papaya that hung so heavily from a skinny tree, could no longer

wait for picking.” (9) Vasu Master tried many ways to change the behaviour of Mani for teaching, learning process. At last Vasu Master finds a solution to Mani’s difficulty by telling stories from “Panchatantra” and also from “Jataka Tales”. Slowly Mani’s attitude changes from silence to some expression and meaningful drawings. At the end of the novel, Mani reacts to Vasu Master’s words and learnt few things from him. Mani nods his head and smiles a while towards Vasu Master. So Vasu Master has some satisfaction over the Change which occurs in the life of Mani as a good teacher.

Vasu Master as a good Teacher:

Vasu Master worked for forty years in a school as an in charge of 6B class students. His retirement, his wife’s death, his son’s separation lead Vasu Master to write over his memories in a note pad. In the meantime, he gets a set of students to arrive his home for tuition. Mani is the only boy left to Vasu Master at the end of tuition process. Mani is a twelve years old boy but he is having the maturity of six or seven year old boy. He was a normal child at the beginning and later on he’s head become like a Papaya. He becomes a ridiculing factor for his class master and teachers. The consequence of this is that he becomes an arrogant child, then as a silent boy without talking to anybody. Vasu Master tries to identify the problem with Mani by giving him a paper and pencil. He torn the paper and thrown it into the ground as bits and pieces. Vasu Master then starts to say stories to Mani one by one from myth and legendary tales. Mani gains attention little by little through his activities. The stories of animals and also about insects changed the mind of Mani. He tries to relate himself to the characters in the stories and he starts to expect many stories from Vasu Master. The stories of Vasu Master become a healing thing to the mind of Mani. Stories are like teaching values to Mani and they are improving man’s character and behaviour. In relation to this Jerome Singer notes down about stories as,

It must be recognized that our own private experience and images, our own symbolic alterations of the natural world or our mythological elaborations of it, are as much a part of our reality as the physically measurable stimulus field that surrounds us. Our task is not to ignore the more private set of experiences in favour of close attention to the external environment, but rather gradually to learn the condition under which we can use both sources of stimulation for adaptive purposes. (1975:30)

Values of sociability and discipline are inculcated by the stories of Vasu Master. Vasu Master says stories to Mani with reference to his own picture and symbols. He could easily relate many stories with his own life and experience. So at one time, he seems to be in a mood of bewilderment as he correlates the story of mascot with his own childhood. In many of the stories, Vasu Master identified the response of Mani not in words but with expressions in his eyes and mouth. One day Vasu Master had drawn two pictures in a card. One of them is the picture of Mango and another is of the Cane. He had shown these two pictures to Mani and all of a sudden Mani took the picture card of Mango and torn the picture card. A drastic change was realized by the teacher through story telling method. Sarita Prabhakar says about the story telling technique of Vasu Master as,

Vasu continued to hold Mani's attention as long as he talked about animals and insets, no matter how long the story was or what it was about. Vasu's gain too was by no means less. Stories inculcated in Mani the habit to focus and indispensable habit for a child to grow. (2011:139)

Teaching and Learning Process:

Narration and listening are the two things important for the teaching and learning process.

Vasu narrates many stories to Mani to make changes in the character of desirable way. He wants to mold Mani into a good shape with clay, water and tools. Clay refers to stories and water as well as tools is the drawing paper and pencil. With the help of telling animal stories Vasu teaches Mani few good qualities and also knowledge. Inference of Mani improves because of teaching process. As teaching happens in a good manner, learning becomes an easier method to Mani. To make learning in a simple way, Vasu Master takes Mani to real places and inculcates many values like sharing knowledge, ideas, emotions and reality. Vasu's healing and teaching process both entertain and educate Mani for a better life and future. It is noted down by Sara Cone Bryant in her work about the storytelling process as,

Storytelling is first of all an art of entertainment, its immediate purpose is the pleasure of the listener-his pleasure, not his instruction, Especially when you are with children, unless you have their attention captured all attempts to derive results from best of the story will be futile. (2004:5)

Learning for Mani becomes a troublesome one. He struggles a lot at home, class room, outside his home and also at hospitals. His normalcy changed without any physical harm. He all of a sudden undergoes a change without his knowledge of slow-down in perception. Everybody ridicule him and that make Mani a boy of arrogance in behaviour and silence in mouth. After changing so many schools Mani's father brought him to Vasu Master. Teaching and Learning for Mani become a big problem as years go. The last step for Mani's development comes into the hand of a teacher. So the importance of a teacher for a student to teach good values is given in a detailed manner. Moral values to a student can be inculcated through teachers. They are also responsible for building a good future generation. Vasu Master is a retired teacher and he tried to be a teacher after his retirement.

Conclusion

Thus the role of a teacher to inculcate values to students is given in Githa Hariharan's *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. Vasu Master, as a teacher identifies the troublesome case of Mani. He imbibes value to him through telling stories. In olden days story telling is a technique used by grandparents to teach values. In the same way teachers like Vasu Master inculcate values to students like Mani through stories and showing real world.