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Abstract

The word 'Humanities' in its condensed form is generally associated with teaching of English. But it has a major role to play in area of arts and literature, philosophy, language, history etc. It also involves analytical practices, interpretation and critique: annotation and editing, historical research, interplay of self and society. Associating one more term 'digital' with Humanities gives a new perspective to look at humanities. One can say that it is persuasion of knowledge with digital methods/digital tools. The activities of DH scholars include enhance of digital section where human experience remain the central concern. Digital tools illuminate efforts for humanities. There has been gradual transformation of traditional humanities to Digital Humanities since the invasion of computer and computational methods.



Present upheavals in world due to Covid -19 have forced all of us to change our each and every conventional definition of socio-cultural life and life standards. Almost complete dependency on technology for knowledge sharing by using different digital tools has made us think about possibilities never thought before. For ex. Work from home culture, a digital off shoot of traditional working method, was never taken a serious note before Covid -19. In time to come, it would also affect literature and history or any dominated discipline of Humanities, as the prime job of humanities is to pen-down all these historical changes. The raw material of Humanities itself has changed and hence the final product has to be and shall be entirely different.

Present paper aims at an indication and possibilities in rise of Digital Humanities during this pandemic time of Covid -19. Humanities has a familiar world of



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knowledge that depends on library or classrooms that is basically associated with print and books. But terms like social distancing, quarantine, WFH culture has positively boosted a new perspective to look at geo-political, cultural, economic experiences. It has provided raw material to both- Humanities and Digital Humanities. Traditional Humanities would pen down the experience in print form. Digital humanities would help create coexistence of traditional knowledge along with effective use of digital technologies.

Key Words: Humanities, Digital Humanities, (side) Effects of Covid-19, persuasion of Knowledge, Digital Scholar activities, Digital tools



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Humanities. The word, in its condensed form, majorly is understood as teaching of English language and literature in academics. Till the date, the term in technical institutes is considered in a limited sense. To consider the term at broader level, Wikipedia defines humanities as “academic disciplines that study aspects of human society and culture.” Hence one can state that it is not only about English but about range of disciplines. It includes the dominated disciplines of arts and literature, philosophy, language, history etc. It also involves analytical practices, interpretation and critique: annotation and editing, historical research, interplay of self and society. According to Prof. Ashok Thorat, Director, Institute of Advanced Studies in English, “The main concern of Humanities is creation, preservation and interpretation of



humanistic knowledge.”(Thorat, Ashok. *“Need to Incorporate Pragmatics and Digital Humanities in Curriculum of State Universities”*. You tube. Uploaded by Langlit’s Educators. 30 April, 2020). Traditional humanities preserve conventional knowledge and human experience in print form.

Now, when one associates a one more term ‘Digital’ with Humanities, it upgrades/ adds in the meaning of Humanities. It means digital learning, researching (as well as teaching) of humanities with effective use of technologies. It is a field of research, study, teaching / learning and invention with the junction of computing and different disciplines of Humanities. Johanna Drucker defines it as “an area of scholarly activity at the intersection of digital technologies and the disciplines of the humanities. It includes the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, as well as the analysis of their application.” (Johanna Drucker, *‘Intro to Digital Humanities: Introduction’*, 01)

One can say that it is persuasion of knowledge with digital methods/digital tools. There has been gradual transformation of traditional humanities to Digital Humanities since the invasion of computer and computational methods. Digital Humanities scholars use a variety of digital tools for their research, which may take place in an environment as small as a mobile device or as large as a virtual reality lab. According to Prof. Krunal Chattopadhyay, Professor of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, “Digital humanities has accumulated robust professional apparatus in last 40 to 50 years. Present day experience of Humanities are all profoundly impacted by the digital technologies, weather we are talking of literature, films, Music.”(Chattopadhyay, Krunal. *“Digital Humanities and New Literature: Archiving and Digitisation (Eng.)”* You Tube. Uploaded by Vidya-Mitra, 05 September, 2017) It is not simply a matter of personal choice weather we are more



comfortable with printed books and magazines or online texts. Rather it has been so impactful that it has helped the research of knowledge from oral to print and from print to digital. Like Humanities, DH also analyses human experience but restores it through digital platforms. One can say that it is reshaping and remodelling of Humanities.

Humanities has a familiar world of knowledge that depends on library or classrooms that is basically associated with print and books. But terms like social distancing, quarantine, WFH culture has positively boosted a new perspective to look at geo-political, cultural, economic experiences. It has provided raw material to both- Humanities and Digital Humanities. Present paper finger points/indicates possibilities in rise of Digital Humanities during this pandemic time of Covid-19.

Present upheavals in world due to Covid 19 has affected and changed the way of living and experiencing life and life standards. Humans are forced to change their cultural way of living where starting from greeting gesture to food habits has been affected. Terms like social distancing, quarantine and lockdown have been incorporated in routine language. The geo-political, cultural, economic experiences went through a completely different situation ever faced before. Delegates, government officials, media and even common man has shifted from physical print to digital print of information and knowledge. Teaching and learning has almost gone digital. Almost complete dependency on technology for knowledge sharing by using different digital tools has made us think about possibilities never thought before. For ex. Work from home culture, a digital off shoot of traditional working method, was never taken a serious note before Covid -19. According to Economic times, there has been remarkable rise of different apps for reading, learning language, telecasting and much more. For ex. On Monday, 27 March 2020, Zoom



surged to become the No. 1 app in India on Google Play store as the 9-year-old platform has emerged as the go-to service for official meetings and informal gatherings. The app is not only being used by millions for work but also social gatherings, yoga classes, book clubs, and entertainment concerts (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/> March 30, 2020).

All these knowledge sharing experience has been novel due to novel Corona. Hence Covid 19 has helped enhancing the digital intersection where traditional questions are being answered at digital platforms. Deploying new digital tools has helped understand this new situation that affects human nature, human culture and experience of knowledge gain. One can say that influence therefore flows from humanities to digital and not vice-versa.

The activities of DH scholars include enhance of digital section where human experience remain the central concern. Digital tools illuminate efforts for humanities. The latest example one can cite is efforts by Prasar Bharati. As part of Prasar Bharati's initiative to keep its listeners engaged during the lockdown, All India Radio (AIR) will broadcast a series of short stories by renowned author Ruskin Bond which will be read by the writer himself. This can be a wonderful example where Humanities through literature, using digital platform has kept it more effective. Listening the whole series of Ruskin Bond in his voice would else have been impossible without this mutual illumination of both- The writer and the digital platform. Hence one can say that this digital intersection made human experience more pleasurable.

Second example is, Awarded money from the King's Together Coronavirus Rapid Response Fund, the *World making in the Time of COVID-19* project is being led by Professor Catherine Boyle of the Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin



American Studies and Principal Investigator of the AHRC-funded Language Acts & World making project.

The project investigates the ways in which COVID-19 has been narrated across the world. It seeks, through studying key terms in several languages, to contribute to the understanding of the cultural and geopolitical significance of Coronavirus. How do the terms we hear in the UK – around, for example, the concepts of war, contagion, invasion, isolation, and community – compare and relate to those that might circulate and form meaning in other cultures? What can we learn from this? The project will employ the skills of Modern Languages and Digital Humanities to ask how we use language to shape the world around us in times of crisis.

Traditional Humanities would pen down the experience in print form. Digital humanities would help create coexistence of traditional knowledge along with effective use of digital technologies. In time to come, it would also affect literature and history or any dominated discipline of Humanities as the prime job of humanities is to pen-down all these historical changes. The raw material of Humanities itself has changed and hence the final product has to be and shall be entirely different. Hence, in time to come, DH might record the socio-cultural, political or economic upheavals occurred in pandemic time where it will prove that DH does not stand in opposition to past (Traditional Humanities) but on its shoulders. To conclude on a lighter note, one can say that traditional tailoring (simple stitching and sewing) would now probably take shape of Boutique where the designer has to be ambidextrous to understand the taste of buyer (or reader) and prepare designer clothing accordingly.



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