



RAINBOW WORLD OF SWAMI AND HIS FRIENDS AND ITS COMPARISON WITH THE WORLD OF VIRTUAL FRIENDS

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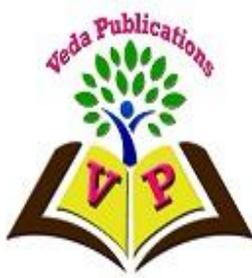
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ABSTRACT



This paper throws light on the importance of having real friends over virtual friends. The main emphasis is to make children aware that having online friends is good but they can't ever substitute real friends. Novels like 'Swami and Friends' have an important contribution to Children Literature as they present before the children a beautiful world of real friends and the fun, laughter and enjoyment associated with it.

Keywords: *Virtual friend, Children Literature.*

- Virtual friend is a real person with whom you talk to or play games with over the Internet.
- Children Literature is the literature which is not just written to entertain kids- it is written to teach them something good and valuable. It helps them learn right from wrong.



R. K. Narayan is a name in English Literature that does not need any introduction. He is regarded as one of India's greatest 20th century English writers. Narayan is as relevant today as he was during the early days of English Literature. His novel 'Swami and Friends' is the story of a 10 year old boy Swami and the colourful world of his friends with whom he spends most of his time. Narayan has beautifully portrayed the world of Swami and his friends. Narayan's construction of the child and childhood is an important aspect of the novel. We get an exact picture of the thoughts, activities and emotions of the world of Swami and his friends. This could have been a very ordinary story but Narayan has somehow turned it into an extraordinary and interesting work. He has woven together all from the depths of his imagination, the colourful rainbow of Swami and his friends.

He has very realistically presented the friendship of boyhood without any glorification. He has not hesitated to say something in words to express his views. We see in the novel a world of friends including their pranks and punishments that every one of us has come across. We have Samu, Shankar, Mani, Samuel and Rajam. All these friends have different characters but they are indispensable part of Swami's world. From the characterization, it is proved that Narayan was a good observer of society. He has so realistically portrayed the rainbow World of childhood. He has depicted a circle of friends which is so convincing and real. There is no artificiality. He has described the hatred, jealousy, petty quarrels, joys, sorrows, enjoyments, broken and patched friendship of the children. Very beautifully he has shown the psychology of children and their world. He has dived deep into the mind and heart of the characters to present before us a very real world of Swami and his friends. They are shown together during the school hours and even during the vacations. They pay visits to each other's residence. They share everything without partiality or any kind of hesitation. They help each other in any critical situation. The school boy world presented in the novel is universally true, for it is the same everywhere. Boys are basically the same. The narration of school incidents is full of which is

entirely natural. There is fun, laughter, enjoyment and entertainment.

But when we see the children of today's era, most of them have not come across the incidents mentioned in the novel. Children today are not living in the world portrayed in the novel. Children nowadays are addicted to computers and internet. They have matured before time now. They are unaware of the joy and fun of having real friends. They are attracted towards glitz, glamour and show off. The time they should spend with friends and family is spent on social media. Rather than going outside and playing outdoor games they give more preference to online games and watching videos. Lack of physical activity has led to weight gain among children at a very early age.

Children have got access to almost anything and everything through internet. They have begun watching other stuff that is not good for them. Children are drawn away from reality and they enter a world where they feel that they can say or do whatever they want. Children tend to adopt the bad habits faster. Spending too much time on internet affects their studies also. It also causes migraine, eye defects, weight gain. This also hampers the natural process of falling asleep and cause sleeping disorders. Children are so engrossed in messaging and connecting with their distant virtual friends that they turn blind towards their real friends and family. Playing outdoor games with real friends is essential for proper growth and development of kids but they prefer online games these days and are glued to the internet. Actually they are missing the adventure and joy of being with real friends which Swami and his friends are shown to have in the novel. Swami and his friends are shown involved in the numerous activities which keep their mind and body busy all the time. This is very essential for proper mental health. Children who spend their time on the internet are comparatively less healthy both physically and mentally. They show a peculiar kind of behavior which is marked by an urge to be online for maximum time. Sometimes virtual friends disappear overnight leaving these children disappointed and depressed.

Children should be motivated to read good books like 'Swami and Friends'. This novel presents



before them a world of real friends as well as joy, fun and adventure of having more and more real friends .They will also develop the habit of reading which is very important for inculcation of basic values and virtues . Children should be made to realise that real friends are actual friends. They give us emotional support, they help us during difficult times and makes us feel special. As it is evident from 'Swami and Friends' that teenagers go through numerous emotional, physical and mental changes. Many of these problems cannot be discussed with our parents and other family members. However if there are real friends around us we can easily share these with our friends. We can expect only likes and shares from our virtual friends which we have made on Facebook or other similar social sites. The emotional touch cannot be easily replaced by internet chats, comments and posts.

Outing with friends, gossiping with them for hours, indulging in crazy activities and even fighting with them is all extremely fun. So we can say that Narayan's contribution to Children Literature is unmatched. His novel 'Swami and Friends' can be of great utility for children. By reading such kind of books children will feel and admit the superiority of real life friends over virtual friends

CONCLUSION

'Swami and Friends' is a novel which brings in front of our eyes a beautiful portrayal of such a lovely life with friends. The growing nuclear family system has made people realize the importance of friends all the more. Children should be made to understand and believe that the world of real friends is superior to that of virtual friends.

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