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Malaya Borah

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Pompy Bhuyan

Associate Editor

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বীক্ষণ বার্তা

বীক্ষণ ??

অনুবীক্ষণ নেকি? হয়।

দূৰবীক্ষণ নেকি? হয়।

নিৰীক্ষণ, পৰীক্ষণ-পৰ্যবেক্ষণৰ

সমাদৰি বৈজ্ঞানিক দৃষ্টি,

বিশ্লেষণ, সংশ্লেষণ, নিগমন, আগমন

সকলো সামৰি লৈ ---

বীক্ষণে কৰিব খোজে --- 'প্ৰজ্ঞা'ত বুৰ মৰা

প্ৰজন্মৰ সৃষ্টি।

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আৰু হ'ব ---

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বিতৰ্ক আৰু বিচাৰৰ থলী।

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বীক্ষণ আগুৱাব অভিমত অতিক্ৰমি

প্ৰজ্ঞাক উদ্দেশ্যি।

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প্ৰয়াসীৰ সহযোগ পথৰ সাৰথি।

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অন্ধ বিজ্ঞানক দিয়ে দৰ্শনৰ দৃষ্টি।

BEEKSHAN

*The Philosophical Journal of Jagannath Barooah University
(Since 1999)*

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Editorial

In an age defined by rapid technological advancement and deepening global interconnectedness, humanity finds itself confronted with an unprecedented deluge of information and an ever-expanding reservoir of knowledge. Although the modern world appears to be in a state of continuous progress, a profound uncertainty continues to shadow the direction and ultimate purpose of such advancement. Human values and ethical responsibilities have assumed paramount importance across all spheres of life. Despite extraordinary scientific and technological achievements, individuals frequently lack the discernment necessary for sound and ethical decision-making, thereby exposing a fundamental paradox: progress, in isolation, does not guarantee meaningful or humane development. True human advancement lies not merely in innovation, but in the deliberate alignment of progress with ethical wisdom. This realization calls for deeper philosophical reflection—one that nurtures the capacity to think critically, wisely, and profoundly. In this context, philosophy emerges as an essential tool for navigating the complexities of contemporary life. Scientific and technological innovations must be guided by rigorous philosophical reflection, particularly in their existential dimensions, which interrogate the meaning, purpose, and consequences of human action. In the absence of a robust ethical and philosophical foundation, progress risks becoming aimless, and knowledge itself may be divested of its essential quality as wisdom.

The systematic and critical nature of philosophy as a discipline investigates the nature of knowledge and reality together with the conditions that limit human comprehension. The study attempts to solve fundamental problems about existence and truth while examining the basic ideas and methods that people use to create knowledge. The discipline of philosophy helps people develop clear thinking skills together with logical reasoning abilities and self-awareness, which form the basis of genuine academic work.

Philosophical research has become more important in today's academic environment because knowledge disciplines keep expanding and becoming more specialized. Academic fields depend on each other, which creates a demand for evaluation systems that can examine various ways of knowing. Philosophy operates as an evaluative discipline that unites different academic fields by examining assumptions and developing theoretical frameworks that connect distinct areas of research.

Academic research demonstrates that knowledge exists between different areas of study because scholars exchange ideas between fields. Philosophy creates a framework that maintains analytical integrity together with conceptual understanding to help people grasp complicated topics in a complete way.

Philosophical inquiry continues to explore how tradition and modernity interact with each other. The study examines current advancements while maintaining respect for traditional academic knowledge which enables critical evaluation of both elements. The study of two different realms increases the range of philosophical thought while demonstrating its value for solving problems that arise in changing academic and social contexts.

BEEKSHAN (ISSN 2250-0898), *Volume XIII*, is a double-blind peer-reviewed biennial and bilingual philosophical journal published by the Department of Philosophy, Jagannath Barooah University, Jorhat. The current academic environment emphasizes interdisciplinary study, which demonstrates how essential philosophy is to academic work. The objective of this volume of *BEEKSHAN* is to promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research in philosophical studies, encouraging deeper, clearer, and more expansive modes of thinking. The current *Volume XIII* of *BEEKSHAN*, presents its latest academic publication, which marks a major milestone in its scholarly developments. The current volume of the publication serves to expand scholarly participation, which remains dedicated to conducting research in the field of philosophy. The current issue of the journal presents research articles from scholars who work in various academic fields, which provides the journal with a range of different viewpoints. The volume establishes philosophy as its core framework while its content allows for multiple disciplines to explore their relationships with philosophical ideas. The studies that include scientific viewpoints particularly from quantum physics research demonstrate how philosophical inquiry maintains its value for understanding and evaluating modern scientific advancement. The volume dedicates its content to Indian Knowledge System studies because this system possesses valuable intellectual heritage that helps achieve a complete understanding of both knowledge and society. The journal demonstrates its dedication to promoting productive discussions through its inclusion of different knowledge systems, which it presents alongside its philosophical foundation.

The academic research framework of *Volume XIII* receives its academic enhancement through implementation of double-blind peer review which protects the identities of both authors and reviewers from disclosure, embodying a renewed commitment to academic excellence and intellectual integrity. The evaluation process functions as an unbiased assessment method which enables expert reviewers to examine each manuscript through three evaluation criteria: originality, conceptual clarity and academic rigor. The journal achieves increased credibility through the implementation of this system which establishes scholarly standards for its content. We strive to foster a vibrant platform for scholars to share their original thoughts, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and societal well-being.

BEEKSHAN has functioned as an academic platform since its establishment in 1999 for scholarly discussion and deep analysis. The journal maintains its relationship with Jagannath Barooah University to demonstrate its dedication to supporting serious academic research and intellectual development.

We are pleased to announce that, from *Volume XIII* onwards, the journal has been formally recognized as a double-blind peer-reviewed publication and is now being made available through an independent website. Furthermore, with the upgradation of Jagannath Barooah College to Jagannath Barooah University, *BEEKSHAN* will henceforth be recognized as the philosophical journal of Jagannath Barooah University, published by the Department of Philosophy.

The publication of *Volume XIII* of *BEEKSHAN* successfully achieved its goal through the combined efforts of academic researchers and institutional backing which we now acknowledge with heartfelt thanks. The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Jyoti Prasad Saikia, the Deans, the Registrar and the Academic Registrar together with the administrative staff of Jagannath Barooah University deserve our deepest appreciation because they continuously provide us with their support and motivation. Their dedication to academic excellence has enabled us to bring this volume to its final state.

We sincerely express our deep gratitude to all those associated with the first publication of *BEEKSHAN*, including the Chairperson, Anjana Chaliha, Ph.D.; the Professor-in-Charge of the journal, (Late) Panchami Bhattacharya Borah, Ph.D.; the Editor, Ganesh Bahadur Chetry; and the esteemed members of the editorial board. We express our sincere gratitude to all members and editors who have contributed to its earlier volumes.

We owe our gratitude to the Advisory Board and Editorial Board members who provided us with their expertise throughout the publishing process while they stayed involved with our work. We express our gratitude to the scholars/contributors whose research work contributed to this volume through their academic contributions. The peer-reviewers and subject experts deserve our sincere appreciation because they performed essential tasks during the double-blind peer-review process which maintained the publication's academic standards and ethical principles. The faculty members and staff of the Department of Philosophy together with all who helped us complete this volume deserve our deepest gratitude. Our gratitude also goes to MULTICO Printers for their commitment to excellence in printing.

Malaya Borah, Ph.D.
(Editor, *BEEKSHAN*)

Pompy Bhuyan
(Associate Editor, *BEEKSHAN*)

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Vedic Teachings on Environment and Its Visible Impact on Rabindranath

Anjana Chaliha

Abstract

Richer ideas of environment protection have been expressed by the Vedic seers long before the advent of today's environmental studies. *Paryavarana*, the environment consists of the relation between the living and the non-living, as the same five gross elements (*Pancabhutani*) constituting the physical universe constitute the human bodies too. The seers deified these elements and protected these in the outer world with divine respect for the benefit of the human beings. They named the cosmic law as *Rta* which maintained not only the changes of *ritus* (seasons) in *Prakriti*, but also the *ritu* periods of the woman folk. Three regions of the physical environment of the sky, air and earth are under control of the three main deities *Dyous or surya*, *Anila or Vayu*, *Anala or Agni respectively*. The five gross elements are deified and conceived with much respect. Earth or *Bhumidevi* is *Hiranyabaksha* who contains wealth on her bosom. To them, one who pollutes water, where in the deity of *Parjanya* is inherent, goes to hell. They conceived Vayu (air) in physical world to be akin with the five *bhutas* that reside within the organism. *Vayu* is source of medicinal qualities. *Akasha* is to be kept unpolluted as it should be kept clear for free emissions of sunshine the source of one's health. These three spheres of *bhurloka*, *bhubarloka* and *svarloka* are conceived as related with our mental and intellectual growth also. Birds and beasts too form man's environment, so they should be protected. The plants and herbs are gifts to mankind from the goddess *Aranyani* so "*Bananina nah Prajahatani*" — forests should not be destroyed. Ayurveda is based on the medicinal values of the *osadhis* (the herbs). Rabindranath, the twentieth century poet shows his respect for the Vedic seers as it is revealed in his works in Santiniketan. Apart from taking the model of the *Tapovana vidyalayas* of the past in making his institute in Santiniketan, his performance of many of the Vedic rituals for protection of environment too says to the same.

Keywords: environment protection, man–nature relationship, pañcabhūta (five gross elements), role of vāyu

As the vision of the beauty of life and nature in the Vedas are very rich so we find richer ideas on the study of environment in the Vedas. Environmental Science and Ecology are modern concepts; these are established as science in the 20th century. Yet in the Vedas we see that the seers were quite aware of such scientific

knowledge (Max Müller, 2000; Dasgupta, 1975). Environment consists of the relation between the living and the nonliving. The Sanskrit term for environment is “Paryavarana”, meaning that which surrounds us. The Vedic view of nature is expressed in their concept of Pancabhutani (Five gross elements of Kshiti, apa, teja, marut and vyom- earth, water, fire, air and ether.) The relation of human beings with these five gross elements of natural environment was conceived by the Vedic seers as of close interdependence (Radhakrishnan, 1962). Human beings should not do anything to disturb the natural balance. When they experienced flood or heavy rains, scorching heat of the sun, intense lightnings etc. they conceived as forces beyond human power and they worshipped and prayed these with awe and fear. They attributed divinity to nature. Vedic seers worship these natural aspects praying for plenty and abundance of natural resources (Macdonell et al., 2016).

The Vedic Rishis coined the word Rta to mean the symmetry and harmony prevailing in the natural environment which reduces chaos and makes nature a cosmos. Again, it is this “Rta” which is the root of splendor and beauty in nature. This “cosmic order” or “Rta” later on elevated to a moral principle that even the gods cannot ignore it (Dasgupta, 1975). It is this “Rta” which causes changes in “Rtu’s” in Prakriti. The word “Rtus” is used to name the rhythmic menstrual cycle of a young woman in Hinduism where the root of the word is the same “Ritu”. It speaks also of the close harmony between laws of nature and of human survival as the same five gross elements or pancabhutani constitute both the living and the non-living organisms. The principle regulating the periodical recurrence is the same in both the prakritis -woman and nature.

The Rigveda speaks of a deity viz. god Varuna as the keeper of this harmonious order-the order that works in the physical realm, works also in the moral realm. None should obstruct the course of natural law (Max Müller, 2000).

The physical environment is classified into three regions by the Vedic seers, viz the lower region of prithivimandala, the middle region of air or antarikshamandala and the upper region of sky or heaven-the dyau. There are three presiding deities in the regions-Agni in earth, Vayu in atmosphere (antariksha) and Surjya (Sun) in the sky (Akash-dyauh) (Macdonell et al., 2016).

Each of these three presiding devas work with the help of ten others and so there is the concept of thirty-three deities which later on increased in quantity upto the concept of thirty-three crores in the Puranas. The three gods are the main sources of energy-fire on earth, air in atmosphere and light in the upper region i.e. sky. Heaven and earth (dyavaparthivi) are conceived as our parents (pitara and matara). They nourish all creatures. Earth is described as a goddess in the Rigveda. One sukta of the Atharvaveda, viz the Bhumisukta calls the earth Basudha, which contains all wealth, Hiranya Aksha for having gold bosom (Max Müller, 2000).

The earth is the support of our food and prosperity. The earth supports varieties of herbs, so many resources in the hills and mountains and the reservoirs of life-saving water like rivers, lakes and oceans. Earth also holds agni (fire) and vayu (air). The Vedic seer prays, “O Prithivi! thy centre, Thy novel, all forces that have issued from thy body, set us amid those forces, breath upon us” (Atharva Veda 12.1.12; Max Müller, 2000).

Vedas in speak of water as a part of human environment. It is seen five forms of rain, natural springs, lakes, rivers, wells/canals. The seers say that water is the source of joy for living a healthy life. The rain cloud depicted as god Parjanya. The sages advice to keep water pure and free from any kind of pollution (Macdonell et al., 2016) and condemns water pollution saying, “the person who pollutes waters of the ponds, wells and lakes goes to the hell.”

The Vedic seer knew all about air in the atmosphere and also about air inside the body. They speak of five types of Vayu inside the body viz. prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana. They knew that unpolluted pure air would be the source of good health, happiness and long life (Dasgupta, 1975).

They conceived Vayu to be the source of medicinal qualities. Ether or Akasha- the fifth of the bhuta is also to be kept free from pollution. A saying in the Yajurveda is there with the advice, “Do not destroy anything of the sky and never pollute the sky. Sun shines in Dyuloka and we get light from the sky” (Macdonell et al., 2016).

Sunrays are essential for strengthening our inner power. The Gayatri Mantra states, “*Oum! Bhur Bhuvar sva, tat savitur varenya Bhargodevasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prasodayat.*” By daily recitation of this Gayatri Mantra the dvijas tried to realize the essential unity of the world with the conscious soul of man (Radhakrishnan, 1962).

The self-same eternal spirit whose power creates the earth, the sky, the stars and at the same time it also radiates our minds with the light of consciousness that moves and exists into unbroken continuity with the outer world. Importance and care for earth, air and sky is openly expressed in this Gayatri Mantra. The Vedic seers were much careful in keeping the three worlds of Bhurloka, Bhubarloka, and svarloka- the realms of earth, air and sky pollution free which are again related with our mind and intellect-our consciousness. So, they were eager to keep pollution free also the cultural environmental consciousness with the teachings of sense control and mind control. The animals too, the birds and beasts all, when looked from man’s view point form man’s environment. The Vedic seers teach that the animals should live in peace, be safe and protected. Regarding the plants and the herbs, the Aranyanisukta in the RigVeda addresses the goddess of forest for her gifts to man and also for her charm and beauty and wishes that forest should be always green with trees and plants. RigVeda states, “*Banani nah prajahitani*”-forests should not be destroyed (Macdonell et al., 2016). Ayurveda is based on the medicinal values of the osadhis (herbs). It refers to the ‘Osadhi sukta’ of the RigVeda. Plants are conceived as life forces and the earth is called the keeper of creation, container of forests, trees and herbs. Later development of the Vedic traditions is seen in the epic and the Puranas. The Padmapurana states, “Dasaputra sama druma-one tree is equal to ten sons” (Radhakrishnan, 1962).

Rabindranath the world poet was a lover both of man and nature. Of course, he did not belong to the western movement of “environmentalism” as it was introduced nearly two decades after his demise. He was a lover of the Vedas and the Vedic seers and in many aspects, he resembled the epic poets-Vyasa and Valmiki

who preached the Vedic or the Upanishadic message in their own unique way (Radhakrishnan, 1962). Rabindranath was a “poet” and the Sanskrit word equivalent of poet, viz. “Kabi” is of much richer connotation. Kabi means “a Seer” i.e. “Drasta” whose vision is related also with the future events. When the Gita says, “Kabya api atra mohitah” even poets are here bewildered (verse iv, 16) then the word “Kabi” is used in such a sense (Radhakrishnan, 1948). Rabindranath’s vision in his attitude to environment gets comparison only with those of the epic poets who reflect a rich culture based on forest-based institutions. To Rabindranath, the family environment, the economic environment, the educative or academic environment, all must be harmonious elements of the whole where man and nature both are constituent parts of the one identical eco-system (Tagore, 1917/2009). His respect for nature goes in the same line with the Vedic seers who composed hymns to pay homage to the gods and the goddesses inherent in the natural elements (Dasgupta, 1975). We meet pancabhutani repeatedly in poet’s writings. In the series of articles published in the monthly journal Sadhana in the caption of pancabhuta or pancabhuter diary, these gross elements of nature appeared as the living personalities-characters made by the poet with the names like Kshiti, Srotasvini, Dipti, Samir and Vyom (earth, water, fire, air and ether) (Tagore, 1921/2001). His establishment of Visva Bharati institution in Santiniketan started in reminiscences of the forest institutions- Tapobana Vidyalayas of the ancient Indian sages. Those sages lived and imparted teachings to their disciples in close kinship with nature (Tagore, 1921/2001). As a forerunner of Indian renaissance Rabindranath fought against much of prevailing superstitions and blind faith and worked for growth of scientific spirit. But he was against scientism. He said, “Our scientific world is our world of reasoning, it has its greatness and uses and attractions. We are ready to pay the homage due to it. But when it claims to have discovered the real world for us and laughs at the worlds of all simple-minded men, then we must say it is like a general grown intoxicated with his power, usurping the throne of his king. For the reality of the world belongs to the personality of man and not to reasoning which useful and great though it be is not the man himself” (Tagore, as cited in Ray, 1992, p. 1392). To the poet direct and immediate relationship between man and nature alone can bring to him the living awareness of reality. In the Atharvaveda in a hymn to the earth the sages observed satya, Rta, and Tapah. To the seer nature is the resort and protector not only of man’s present and past, but also of future. Further nature not only fulfills one’s physical needs; it is also considered to be the fulfilment of one’s spiritual aspirations. The Vedic seer was eager to leave the earth behind him well preserved and prosperous for the future generations too. Rabindranath too expressed that a need was felt for maintaining adequate balance between human activities and environment, between economic perspective and environmental health. His play Muktaadhara (water fall) centres around a mountain stream and a dam constructed by an engineer employed by the king. Free flow of the stream was obstructed and then a third character, the prince, revolting against the king and the engineer could finally succeed in shattering the dam and letting the current of the stream flow with usual course. The play gives Tagore’s message of strong objection against human effort of resisting nature. The poet always opposed the suicidal human activities performed in the name of material progress or the urbanization

caring little about nature, paying no heed for a balance between man and nature (Tagore, 1922/2008). He said “By destructing forests greedy peoples have uprooted trees which give us clean air, help us making our land fertile. Completely forgetting their own welfare man has destroyed all that is the gift of God” (Tagore, 1986, pp. 372–373). Of the root of the present crisis of man-nature dichotomy Tagore points to the western civilization which originated from their cradle of brick and mortar starting with the anthropocentric teachings of the Bible. Tagore rethinks of Indian ideology that our civilization was born and nurtured within the expansive natural surroundings of the forests. The separative attitude of the west lead them to treat all non-human species and inanimate things as lower and make them blind to the essential kinship between man and environment. Tagore says that to them unlike the Indian perspective nature is alien, inert and incommunicative. Science following the time-honored western tradition is treating nature simply as instrumental to fulfil human needs, remains busy in exploring the materialistic universe. In the Personality Tagore says, “Science is at the beginning of the invasion of the material world and this goes on a furious scramble for plunder” (Tagore, 1917/2008, p. 25). Contrary to the western view point Tagore paid due honour to our Indian Heritage. Man is in close kinship with nature, the message is preached by the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the epics. The poet’s love for nature was experienced not only in his writings; we feel his love and respect for nature in many of the colorful festivals held in Santiniketan. He Introduces on the 7th August, 1922 (Baishe Sraavan) the function of Barsamangal (invocation of rainy season) in Visva Bharati to welcome the advent of rain without which agriculture suffers. On 14th July 1927 started Briksharopan festival (the tree planting ceremony) at Santiniketan and on the next day Halakarshan festival (the blessing of the plough ceremony) at Sriniketan. Colourful festivals are held in the advent of the seasons like Saratotsab, Basanotsab (Holi), Nababarsha, etc. Students’ involvements with these functions could definitely evoke in their minds and hearts the feelings of deep kinship with nature. The different natural spots at Santiniketan like Tinpahar, Salbithika, Palashbani, Amrakunja, and the river Kopai etc. are not mere spots of natural scenery, to the students and the teachers of Visva Bharati institutions they are much more, as if some living legends. Message of Rabindranath on the man-nature relationship become acceptable to all due to his activities at Santiniketan. The poet refused to see any uncompromising antagonism between man and nature and said, “When a man does not realize his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison house whose walls are alien to him” (Tagore, 1913/2008, p. 27).

Rabindranath Tagore cannot be placed in any of the two divisions of the Contemporary environmentalists like that of anthropocentric and biocentric. His environmentalism might be named as theo-centric. As Radhakrishnan says, “he [Rabindranath] does not love nature for its own sake, but because he views it as attribute of the divine (Radhakrishnan, 1961, p. 89), not for the abundance of joy that it brings into life, but for the information it gives of a higher spiritual life. To him even a blade of grass or an atom of dust brings a message from the unknown. To him every flower is a symbol of worship, every garland is a Gitanjali, every forest a

temple and every hill top god's dwelling place. The sound of the running water, the rustle of the leaves and the song of the birds are so many hymns of praises to the great God" (Radhakrishnan, 1961, p. 89).

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Orientalising Indian Philosophy: Hegel and Sri Aurobindo

Purushottama Bilimoria

Abstract

The paper reflects on the influence of Orientalist frameworks in the interpretation of Indian Philosophy within European thought. It tries to analyze the intersection of Western and Indian Philosophy with a focus particularly on Hegel's philosophy of history and its impact on later interpretations of Indian thought. Hegel's own philosophy of history presents a teleological progression of Spirit which historically positions Eastern traditions as an earlier stage of intellectual development in human history. This paper explores how this framework influenced reinterpretation of Indian philosophy beyond the Western frames as well, especially in the work of Sri Aurobindo. The paper compares the Hegelian framework to Sri Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution, which centres on the progressive manifestation of consciousness. It seems that Sri Aurobindo's conception of evolutionary progression and Hegel's dialectical movement of Spirit have certain structural similarities. The paper argues that Sri Aurobindo reconfigured the Hegelian model, prioritizing individual spiritual realization over the utopian, grandiose state found in Hegel

Keywords: orientalism, Hegel's Philosophy of History, Sri Aurobindo's spiritual evolution, cross-cultural philosophy

Introduction:

Many Indian philosophers or scholars working on Indian philosophy have worried about the Orientalist distortions introduced into the modern, slightly pre- and post-Enlightenment era work on Indian thought.

But first a word on "Orientalising". The thesis draws on Raymond Schwab (1984) and later Edward Said's overly celebrated work, *Orientalism*, wherein "Orientalism" is elucidated as a "technology of power" by which Europe or the Occident authorizes itself to represent the silent other, in the image of its own invulnerable (or vulnerable) essences and universalized self (Schwab, 1984; Said, 1978). Said candidly notes: 'The construction of identity [of one's self...involves the construction of opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from 'us.' Each age and society re-creates its "Others".' In the construction of the 'Orient,' a construction that highlighted the

European's (and later, the American's) ease of access to (and manifest destiny in) Asia, particular pains were taken to evaluate the 'Other' in terms of European achievement, society, literature, and so forth. In addition, Said points out: ... and the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period (Said, 1978, p. 332).

Ninian Smart in his ground-breaking book, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*, argued that the modern reconstruction of Indian philosophy rests not so much on Orientalism but on two dogmas: a singular focus on problems of natural theology enacted in propositional analysis (in the context mostly of Western monotheism), and, its neglect of a totality of worldviews, ranging over a wide compass of doctrines, ideologies, myths and symbolic patterns, sacred practices, and ultimate concerns (Smart, 1992). Smart went on to suggest a three-tiered prolegomenon for neo-Indian philosophy, structured around the *comparative* analysis, the *history* of thought, and the *phenomenology* of a range of experiences, normative principles and action (Smart, 1995, p. 31).

But is Smart suggesting anything very new? Consider, the “comparative” component in philosophy had long been established and practiced, among European philosophers and religionists who had some, however sinister, interest in philosophies of the East as of other non-Western cultures. Herder, Novalis, Hegel, Schopenhauer, later Deussen and even Nietzsche to an extent dabbled in this area.

Thus, at the close of 19th century Max Müller, the classic patron of British-German Indology, was still discovering Europe ‘in this cradle of the human race, the native land of the highest philosophy’ (Müller, 1967). But the recovery of the old disclosed an “idealism”, a happy blending of religion (i.e. the “Hindu Bible of *Vedas*”) and philosophy (of the *Upanishads*) in the “Science of Religion”, which, like medieval theology, enriches our “new world” but is not equal to its modernist challenges (Müller, 1928). It is in part a misaligned legacy of this dialectic of the reconfigured intellectual periodicity that trumps the superiority of the Greek (Hellenic) origins of Western philosophy (which is echoed again and again from Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and even Richard Rorty). And here Herder's contrary position is relevant. For Herder, the East or what came to be identified as the Orient does not begin as the West's or Occident's “other”, its distant enemy and so on; rather the former marks the historical condition for the possibility of the latter in a dialectical space created by his idea of *aufhebung* (negating and synthesizing, or sublating in Hegel's terminology), the necessary movement of the infinite over the finite. Temporal cultures are not necessarily marginal to the present; they may even be central to it; it is only that their memory has receded from sight, along possibly with all its artifacts. This view was to have an impact on Hegel.

Discussion:

A. Hegel:

Hegel was arguably the most influential of 19th century philosophers in the development of the discipline

came to be known as the Comparative Philosophy. This study is the extent and depth of Orientalism that informs his, doubtless quite remarkably scholarly and informed, intervention in this field. He left behind quite a legacy that in the 20th centuries continued its impact on an array of significant German and European thinkers: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Habermas, and Žižek, and on the south Asian studies front he had a huge influence on Paul Hacker, S. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Wilhelm Halbfass – despite the conscience of his friends J. L. Mehta and J. N. Mohanty – and to this list may be added K. C. Bhattacharyya, albeit on a rebellious note. Indeed, Hegel was ‘the single most influential figure in the overlap between German Indology [Oriental scholarship] and philosophy’, He effected most if not all of the key changes in European thinking from the 1790s to the 1820s, not least in respect of Indian philosophy. His most sustained engagement in this area appeared in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History and History of Philosophy* (Hegel, 1969). Hegel possessed a near-encyclopedic familiarity with Indian material, for which he relied on the Indologist Franz Bopp, and consulted English translations of Sanskrit works by Colebrooke and William Jones; but he shared nothing of scholarly respect and grounding in Buddhist thought, dismissing it as ‘naivety of emptiness’. Nor had Hegel much acquaintance with the metaphysics of the *Upanishads* that his rival Schopenhauer at least brought to Western philosophy (there is no evidence that Hegel read closely Duperron’s *Oupenakhat*). When he later comes across the detailed empirical-analytical pursuits of Sāṃkhya and Nyāya, he modifies his account, though not his substantive view (Halbfass, 1992).

The Romantics too were impressed by the worthy contribution of Indo-European to the whole history of human thought. So, there was a new-found scientific self-consciousness based on the linguistic importance of the Orient to Europe. But an Orient only of the long-gone past, as Herder was to pronounce, and decidedly not of the present-day nepotistic or corrupted Asia or parts of North Africa, and certainly not the more recent Islam (forgetting that it was Arabic scholars who had preserved Aristotle’s texts and developed among the first scientific instruments after borrowing “zero” and other mathematical notations from India). Hence, for example, the Purāṇas were considered to be degraded forms of earlier, lofty traditions. The new signal (or “buzz”) word was “Āryan” (Āiryanam, in Avestan-Persian. It is to be noted that the term itself comes from Sanskrit *ārya* meaning “the noble”, as the Buddha was also called – signifying the mythic descendants and linguistic predecessors of the original Indo-European inhabitants, possibly somewhere in the steppes of Central Asia, – and it is this “Āryan”, as I will argue later that re-appears in Sri Aurobindo, albeit with a vengeance (he even called his monthly journal *Arya*)

Another element that marked early 18th century Oriental scholarship was historicism – the belief, still in a crude form, that history has its own teleology, *-telos* – purpose, direction, end-goal, –that there is progression within it regardless of human intentionalities, contingencies or accidentals; and that all cultures are inextricably entangled in this forward-thrust. If that is the case, then, again the Orient must inevitably hold out great secrets for historical anthropology in collaboration with philology and indeed philosophy. Hegel was unnerved that no

one had yet tried to articulate the whole history of philosophy, the role of religion within it, its relation to freedom and the state, and the spaces occupied by the new-found intellectual traditions of the Orient.

A properly-effected philosophy of history – which is also the history of philosophy – must be able to show how the Spirit (*Geist*) is mediated through nature, substantiality, ideality and thinking, i.e. Concept (*Begriff*), to yield the unity of spirit in rational knowledge, and how each stage of development is dialectically related to the preceding and futural stages. Hegel then gives us an epistemography, a graduated diagram of how knowledge comes to be in the march of history. This historical progression of the *Geist* (or Spirit) is delineated through three differentially interrelated modes of inquiry, each creating a discourse or rather presupposing a discourse which can be readily identified with, namely, history (of people and regions), philosophy (which covers ethics and polity), and philosophy of religion (which includes theology). Under each one of these modalities, Hegel includes extensive discussion of the Oriental world and discursively gives measure to the total contribution and worth of the corresponding Oriental tradition to this particular face of truth (Bilimoria, 2020).

The structure he gives to these broad configurations (namely, of Identity, Difference, Ground; Abstract Universal, Concrete Particular, Concrete Universal; Unity, Plurality, Totality; Immediacy, Rupture, and Reconciliation) is basically reduced into and identified with the triad of Indeterminacy, Determinacy, and Self-Determination - which parallels the triadic structure of the Concept in terms of Universality, Particularity, and Individuality (in *Philosophy of Right*) (notice the variations in the order), juxtaposed with the triad of negation of logic (the movement from thesis, anti-thesis to higher thesis or synthesis). Within each there is what Hegel calls *aufgehoben* or sublation, assimilation, of the prior to the latter, more determinate stage. It should be noted, if not already obvious, that these sequences in history are identical with the sequences or moves ‘in the logical deduction of the conceptual determination of the idea’ in the systems of philosophy, and so it follows that ‘every philosophy is a particular stage of development in the whole process and it has its specified position at which it has its true value and meaning’. The timeless logical categories take on a phenomenal clothing that constitute in historical experience the successive phases of the self-progression of the Absolute (Hegel, 1969).

To be sure, the culmination, by *Geist*’s movement in history, for Hegel occurs the civil state, possibly beginning with the utopian Prussia. For one can ask the following questions: Is such a collective rational realization of human freedom fully possible? How might this be actualized? And is it significantly the proclivity of Western history to be a function of dialectical development in human self-knowledge?

B. Sri Aurobindo:

A similar dialectic appears in Sri Aurobindo’s idea of integrative evolutionism, with a significant difference. (For Sri Aurobindo too there is a latent evolutionary impetus or principle in the development of human kingdom through the self-progression of the Absolute (Aurobindo, 2005); Mahapatra 2023, calls it ‘integral evolution’. However, the culmination is not to be had in the grandiosity of the state, but rather in the human person (not necessarily confined to the Prussian nor for that matter gentlemen, though the latter may lead the first harbingers

of the gift). Unlike Hegel, for Sri Aurobindo the state is not ‘the highest achievement of human society’. Sri Aurobindo did speak of ‘nation-soul’ which is distinguished from ‘national ego’ that leads to stolid nationalism – that the European imperial powers were mixed with — the reason he refused to see Mahatma Gandhi who he thought was rallying up nationalism in India. ‘Nation-soul’ for him signified the unity of the collective that has achieved a high-level awareness, self-reflection and freedom.

And this is very different from Darwinian-Lamarckian idea of natural evolution: creatures have developed genetic mutation that created divisions between species, while they all have a common origin. The living beings that are more likely to survive in the long run are the ones who inherit or experience the genetic variations that are the most adapted to their environment. This process was a “natural selection” by Darwin and constitutes the driving force of evolution (Darwin, 1859).

The idea of evolution of one kind or another was very much in the air in the 19th century, and Sri Aurobindo was arguably among the first Indian intellectuals to have adopted this line of thought, albeit with a significant variation, to reconfigure the history of human development – away from development of institutions, law, dharma, economics, politics and so forth. One doesn’t find anything like an evolutionary ethos in classical thinking; some scholars have argued that the system of Sāṃkhya embeds that, but I think that is more an emanationist theory (as Voltaire was to suggest using the ‘spider and web’ metaphor), than an evolutionary process that could be marked and chartered in historical matrix: that is what progression implied: the movement in the course of history, propelled by forces acting on history, hence the work of historicity, to yield stages of development from the primitive or primordial to a highly developed, indeed evolved stage. However, at the turn of the twentieth century, Darwinism and evolutionism were adopted and adapted by South Asian intellectuals, but often in distinct, selective, and highly syncretic ways rather than as a wholesale adoption of Western materialistic thought (C. MacKenzie-Brown 2020).

Hence it is argued that the idea of the progression of the Absolute, or put it another way, the progression from the mundane to the Supramental and its return, i.e. the theory of mutual ascent from below and descent from above, is a variation of the ideals of emergent evolution, and appear to be near identical in Hegel and Sri Aurobindo. In spirit’s self-conscious development, ‘spirit’s self-determination [manifests] in time under the idea of freedom.’ There is an in-built *telos* or impetus of *spirit*, to gradually yet progressively undergo natural, moral, rational, cognitive and spiritual determinations. Sri Aurobindo took seriously Hegel’s criticism of Sankara’s concept of Brahman is being static, lacking in dynamism of substantiality and purpose, a simplistic abstraction as was Buddhism’s ‘universal principle of The Nothing’, because India stalled somewhere in the evolutionary progression of the Spirit and became unstruck in Nature, in dreamy somnambulist mother unable to beget its incarnation. Hegel’s philosophical orientalism spills over (his reservations about Śaṅkara were expressed in a reply letter to Prof J. N. Mohanty whether he (Sri Aurobindo) was committed to a monist Vedanta metaphysics).

It may be that Sri Aurobindo was influenced by Hegelian concept of evolutionary progression which he

nonetheless used for his own spiritual philosophy. In place of Hegel's Reason, Sri Aurobindo substituted the Conscient; and the three-step dialectic we have in Hegel re-appears as forces that move consciousness toward progressive evolution. Evolutionary growth follows a triple process; expanding, ascending and descending that propels from inward movement for the emergent Absolute Consciousness to integrate at manifest levels. Life, Mind, and Supermind are the three significant stages (though there is Matter that supports Life and Mind, but left behind *willy nilly* in the descent of the Supermind, or ascend to. Another triad epigram appears in progression form the Outer being, the Inner being, and the Psychic Being (Aurobindo, 2005).

S.K. Maitra begins by noting the similarities of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy with the speculations of Plato, Śaṅkara, Bradley, Bosanquet, and Bergson. But he underscores differences because they jettison the Absolute (the Transcendent) away from the Manifest world regarding the phenomenal world as variation to something a shadow-puppet-show – unreal, illusory, hallucinatory, a dream-effect, delusional, etc. (Maitra, 1993).

According to Maitra, 'The only philosopher I can think of who has succeeded in maintaining a continuity between the Absolute Reality, the Creator and the created world is Hegel.' Maitra added this caveat: 'But Hegel did this work with the help of logic and by making Thought [read Reason] all in all, which suffered from the very serious defect that it gave no recognition to Will or to the suprarational powers of cognition' (Maitra, 1993).

Maitra is not quite correct on this point of critique and difference between Hegel and Sri Aurobindo, as a closer reading of Hegel will show that both have will as *volition* (albeit at stages of the unconscious) and extrasensory perception (transcendental cognition on the part of the Incarnation, even the chosen Philosopher-Emperor of the Prussian state, is no mere magic feat but part of the episteme-physical progression of the Spirit from its slumber to its self-realization of "I" as the supreme consciousness and self-consciousness in the utopian completion of Being-for-itself).

Elsewhere Maitra makes allusions to the similarities in the idea of the evolution of the Spirit through various stages of hide-and-seek and unconscious, and then conscious, and finally self-conscious developments that have striking confluence in the *Life Divine* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* respectively. Return to the first short comment: "The only philosopher I can think of who has succeeded in maintaining a *continuity* between the Absolute Reality, the Creator and the created world is Hegel" (Hegel, 1807/1977, p. xx). The hiatus that many transcendental idealists, including Immanuel Kant who left it hanging or in animation, hold between the Absolute and the manifest world of entities, motion, space and time... needs to be bridged and not left in some epiphenomenal animation.

Śaṅkara is famously considered to hold the most extreme form of idealism matched in recent times by Spinoza and more especially Bradley, T H Green and McTaggart. Hegel criticizes Śaṅkara, as did Sri Aurobindo. For both, while the grand idea of Being (Brahman-Atman) as the ground of all, is the basic concept of the

metaphysical tradition and in Vedanta thought it is even more emphatically crucial, Brahman was too static a Concept that embedded no *potential* and was not capable of any creative actualization etc., let alone progression. From the hermeneutical lens of both, the impersonal, abstract, ahistorical, atemporal concept of ‘Brahman’ much dear to Vedanta philosophy is but a ‘dead’ metaphor, in as much as it is grounded in *eidos*, *logos*, and *ousia* and therefore has its life or sustaining significance entirely within the discourse of metaphysics (as Heidegger would say of all grand metaphors of the subject). Thus Brahman stood to be de-structured, dismantled, disseminated, deconstructed by being subjected to the same rigors of hermeneutical destruction that Hegel had suggested. It may then be possible to recover the latent, the *unthought*, and to reanimate the tradition in more creative ways than has occurred either through the revivalism of neo-Vedānta or the Romanticism of 19th century philological Indology, of which Hegel was a central protagonist. This love for re-doing Indian philosophy was certainly in the air.

Aurobindo by contrast to Śaṅkara and neo-Hegelian idealists in Britain, is in traditional terms closer to the *Bhagavad-Gītā*’s ontology (a merger of Sāṃkhya with Upaniṣadic pantheism, like that of Íśa and Śvetāsvatara) into a form of panentheism and more so to Ramanuja’s Viśiṣṭādvaita. (Just anecdotally but a poignant intervention: J N Mohanty wrote to Sri Aurobindo as to which version of Vedanta he preferred: Advaita or some other? Response report: Viśiṣṭādvaita).

However, what Sri Aurobindo did not specify is that even the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and Rāmānuja’s panentheism are in a sense *static*; yes, there are traces of developmental progression but then there is a lot of entropy and devolution leading to *pralaya*, the cyclical cosmic process. Avidya remains as *avidyā*, *ajñāna*; God as Brahman remains God and the world does not evolve more than the as symbolic body of God into full Spirit either by the descent of God in full or by ascent of Nature back to being Godhead in full. Where as in Sri Aurobindo, God or Brahman or Spirit does evolve and progress.

Conclusion:

And at this juncture, a moot question arises “Did Sri Aurobindo read Hegel?” (Hegel, 1969; Maitra, 1993). His language, use of dialectical thinking, and the very focus he puts on consciousness, knowledge, sparks of intelligence awakening Nature from its otherwise inert, unconscious, incontinent stages to consciousness, self-conscious ascent of the Mother *qua* Nature/Prakṛti, the conscient, the Overmind’s descent via Supermind linked to intermediary of intuition/knowledge or revelation, the engagement of the will, the suturing of *sat-cit-ānanda* and other triads – always in 3s echoing Hegel’s dialectic of thesis-anti-thesis-higher thesis – are so reminiscent of and resonates with Hegel’s highly-charged language of the phenomenology of spiritual evolution. He could have chosen pure physical-biological/neurolinguistic evolution if *evolution* is all he was interested in – and there were models already gaining fame with Darwin, Spencer, Lamarck. Alternatively, there might even be a mix of material-biological and spiritual-soul mind evolution – as in Jainism. Although a little complicated to go into here, we may note that Jains have evolution happening at both planes as mentioned, albeit, in staggered

stages: at least at the level of higher order beings. Thus, according to the Jains, many eons back the predecessors of today's human beings were described as being six feet long with large brain and middling physical motion; they appeared perhaps to be a cross between dinosaurs and the Neanderthals. Nevertheless, there is a little evidence of a Darwinian Lamarckian account of biological-neurological evolution in Sri Aurobindo, but one certainly do Hegelian evolutionism which too skipped the burgeoning and fashionable discipline of evolutionary biology and both opted for what someone has described as Integrative spiritual-mental evolutionism.

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From Physics to Philosophy: The Role of Quantum Mechanics

Anil Chandra Borah

Abstract

Quantum mechanics has long been a subject of philosophical intrigue, significantly shaping discussions in various domains such as metaphysics, philosophy of science, and ethics. However, its actual influence on mainstream philosophical discourse remains a matter of debate. This paper explores the extent to which quantum mechanics has shaped philosophy, particularly in the areas of metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, ethics, and realism. While some philosophers have sought to integrate quantum mechanics into their frameworks, mainstream philosophy has largely remained skeptical or indifferent to its broader implications. The paper also critically evaluates claims that quantum mechanics has led to revolutionary shifts in philosophical thought, particularly through the pragmatist interpretation put forth by Healey. Ultimately, the question remains whether quantum mechanics has substantively altered philosophy or whether its influence has been overstated.

Keywords: quantum mechanics, philosophy of science, metaphysics, consciousness, scientific realism

1. Introduction:

Quantum mechanics has prompted profound and ongoing philosophical discussions, particularly concerning the nature of reality, determinism, and consciousness. Despite its revolutionary impact on physics, the extent to which it has influenced mainstream philosophy remains a matter of contention. Many key philosophical debates, such as those surrounding realism, free will, and the interpretation of probability, have engaged with quantum mechanics but have not necessarily been transformed by it. This paper examines whether quantum mechanics has meaningfully shaped philosophical debates, how its interpretations bear on metaphysical and ethical discussions, and whether the so-called philosophical revolution it purportedly initiated holds under scrutiny. Quantum mechanics, often described as quantum physics or quantum theory, fundamentally shifts our understanding from classical physics by exploring the behavior of particles at the atomic and subatomic levels. Here are the core concepts:

- i. **Wave-Particle Duality:** This principle, which emerged from experiments like the double-slit experiment, suggests that quantum entities like electrons and photons can exhibit characteristics of both waves and particles. In scenarios like the Compton effect, particles behave as discrete entities (Compton, 1923).

The double-slit experiment by Thomas Young (1804) demonstrated interference patterns, indicative of wave properties when particles are not observed. This duality, formalized by de Broglie (1924), questions the classical distinction between waves and particles, suggesting that entities at the quantum level can manifest differently based on observation.

- ii. **Superposition:** Superposition is the quantum mechanical principle where a system can exist in multiple states simultaneously until measured. This is famously illustrated by Schrödinger's cat thought experiment (Schrödinger, 1935). The state of a quantum system is described by a wave function, with the probability of each state given by the square of the wave function's amplitude (Born, 1926). The act of measurement causes the wave function to collapse to one state, leading to philosophical discussions on the nature of reality and observation (von Neumann, 1932).
- iii. **Entanglement:** Quantum entanglement refers to the phenomenon where particles become interconnected such that the quantum state of each cannot be described independently, even at great distances. Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen (1935) critiqued this with their EPR paradox, questioning the completeness of quantum mechanics due to what Einstein called "spooky action at a distance." John Stewart Bell (1964) provided a way to test these correlations, with experiments later confirming entanglement and violating local hidden variable theories, challenging classical causality and locality (Aspect, Grangier, & Roger, 1982).

These foundational concepts of quantum mechanics—wave-particle duality, superposition, and entanglement—challenge conventional views of physics, introducing a probabilistic, observer-influenced, and non-local universe. They not only describe how the quantum world functions but also provoke deep philosophical inquiries into the nature of reality, the role of measurement, and the interconnectedness of all things. The references cited provide a pathway into the extensive literature on these topics, reflecting the ongoing discourse between science and philosophy.

1.1 Major Interpretations of Quantum Mechanics:

Quantum mechanics, despite its predictive power, has given rise to several interpretations due to its paradoxical nature. Let us discuss some of the most influential interpretations, each with its own set of philosophical implications.

- i. **Copenhagen Interpretation:** The Copenhagen interpretation was developed primarily by Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg during the 1920s (Bohr, 1934; Heisenberg, 1927). According to Bohr (1935), the act of measurement causes the wave function to collapse into a single observable state. Bohr introduced the principle of complementarity, where properties of quantum systems are mutually exclusive in their manifestation (Bohr, 1928). Heisenberg's uncertainty principle (Heisenberg, 1927) suggests that the act of observation impacts the system observed, leading to discussions on the role of the observer in defining reality. This interpretation has led to discussions on realism, with scholars like

Howard (2004) arguing its implications for anti-realist views in physics.

- ii. Many-Worlds Interpretation (MWI): Hugh Everett III proposed the MWI in his 1957 dissertation (Everett, 1957). Instead of collapsing, Everett suggested that the wave function branches into all possible outcomes, creating parallel universes (Everett, 1957; DeWitt & Graham, 2025). All quantum possibilities are realized in some universe, removing the mystery of wave function collapse. MWI has profound implications for concepts like identity and free will, with philosophers like Lewis (1986) discussing modal realism in this context.
- iii. Bohmian Mechanics (Pilot-Wave Theory): David Bohm introduced this interpretation in 1952 (Bohm, 1952). Bohm proposed that quantum particles have definite positions guided by a ‘pilot wave’ (Bohm, 1952). This theory reinstates determinism, suggesting that quantum events are not fundamentally random but determined by hidden variables (Bohm & Hiley, 2006). Bohmian mechanics provides a deterministic interpretation, discussed by philosophers like Goldstein (2001) in terms of realism and causality.
- iv. Quantum Bayesianism (QBism): It was developed by Carlton Caves, Christopher Fuchs, and Rüdiger Schack in the 2000s (Fuchs, 2002; Fuchs, Mermin, & Schack, 2014). QBism posits that quantum probabilities reflect an agent’s personal degree of belief rather than objective properties of the system (Fuchs & Schack, 2013). The quantum state is seen as an agent’s state of knowledge or information about the system, not an external reality (Fuchs, 2010). QBism has been discussed for its radical shift towards subjectivity, with Mermin (2014) exploring how it changes the philosophical landscape of quantum mechanics.

Each interpretation of quantum mechanics provides a unique philosophical lens through which to understand the universe. The ongoing debate among these interpretations not only shapes our scientific discourse but also deeply influences philosophical inquiries into reality, knowledge, and consciousness. The references cited provide a starting point for further exploration into these fascinating interpretations.

1.2 Philosophical Implications:

Quantum mechanics, with its counterintuitive principles, has led to profound philosophical inquiries into the nature of reality, causality, consciousness, and the fundamental structure of the universe. Some key philosophical implications are discussed briefly here.

- i. Reality and Objectivity: The Copenhagen interpretation suggests that reality might be partially constructed by observation, leading to philosophical debates on whether reality is objective or subjective (Bohr, 1935; Heisenberg, 1958). The very nature of quantum mechanics challenges realism, the philosophical stance that there is a mind-independent reality. Philosophers like van Fraassen (1980) argue for constructive empiricism, where we should only commit to what is empirically adequate.
- ii. Causality: Quantum entanglement challenges traditional notions of causality, particularly locality, where actions are confined to their immediate vicinity. The violation of Bell’s inequalities in experiments (Aspect,

Grangier, & Roger, 1982) suggests that causality might not be as straightforward or local as previously thought, leading to discussions on whether quantum mechanics allows for superluminal influences or requires a rethinking of causality itself (Maudlin, 2011).

- iii. **Consciousness:** The measurement problem in quantum mechanics, where observation appears to collapse the wave function, has led some to speculate about the role of consciousness in quantum mechanics (Wigner, 1961). This has sparked debates about whether consciousness might be fundamental to the universe or if measurement can be explained without invoking consciousness.
- iv. **Determinism vs. Indeterminism:** The probabilistic nature of quantum mechanics, as opposed to the deterministic laws of classical physics, has reignited debates on determinism. Quantum mechanics suggests an inherent indeterminacy at the microscopic level, which might extend to macroscopic events (Heisenberg, 1927), challenging the classical notion that every event has a cause.

Quantum mechanics does not just challenge our scientific understanding but also our philosophical frameworks concerning reality, causality, and consciousness. These implications have sparked ongoing debates in philosophy of science, metaphysics, and epistemology, with each interpretation of quantum mechanics offering different philosophical landscapes to explore.

1.3 Ethical and Epistemological Considerations:

Quantum mechanics, with its profound implications, not only challenges our understanding of physics but also poses significant ethical and epistemological questions. Quantum mechanics has led to the development of *quantum cryptography*, offering theoretically unbreakable encryption methods (Bennett & Brassard, 2014). However, this also means that any attempt to measure or eavesdrop on quantum communication would be detectable, raising ethical questions about surveillance and privacy rights in a quantum-secured world. The advent of quantum computers could potentially break current encryption methods, posing risks to data security (Shor, 1994). This scenario necessitates ethical debates on how to transition to quantum-resistant cryptography and protect sensitive information during this shift. Quantum technologies, like any advanced technology, have dual-use potential; they can be applied for both beneficial and harmful purposes. Ethical considerations include the responsibility of researchers and developers to foresee and mitigate negative applications, such as in weapon systems or surveillance. Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle fundamentally limits our ability to know certain pairs of properties (like position and momentum) with precision simultaneously, suggesting inherent limits to scientific knowledge at the quantum level (Heisenberg, 1927). This challenges the traditional view of science as a pursuit of absolute truth. Quantum mechanics shifts scientific explanation from deterministic to probabilistic models. This change prompts epistemological questions about what it means to explain a phenomenon when outcomes are not certain but only probable (Ghirardi, Rimini, & Weber, 1986). The role of the observer in quantum mechanics has led to discussions about constructivism in science—where the observer's interaction with the system defines the reality of the system. This can be seen as supporting a constructivist or even an

antirealist view of scientific knowledge (von Foerster, 1981). The intersection of quantum mechanics with philosophy necessitates an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge. Understanding quantum mechanics might require philosophical insight into concepts like reality, causality, and the nature of observation, thus blurring the lines between what is considered scientific versus philosophical inquiry (Bokulich, 2008).

The ethical and epistemological implications of quantum mechanics extend far beyond the physics lab, influencing how we think about privacy, security, the ethics of technological advancement, the limits of human knowledge, and the very structure of scientific explanation. These considerations require ongoing dialogue between scientists, philosophers, ethicists, and policymakers to navigate the complexities introduced by quantum phenomena. The references provided here offer a gateway into these rich areas of study, highlighting the need for a multidisciplinary approach to tackle the challenges and opportunities presented by quantum mechanics.

2. Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness:

The intersection of quantum mechanics and human consciousness has been a topic of debate among physicists and philosophers, challenging the dominance of classical computational models of the mind. Two prominent perspectives stand out: Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff's Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory and the interpretation of quantum mechanics by John von Neumann and Eugene Wigner, later revived by Henry Stapp. These theories propose that consciousness is not merely an emergent property of neural activity but may be fundamentally tied to quantum processes. However, both remain controversial and have been largely sidelined by mainstream neuroscience and philosophy of mind, which favor materialist and computational explanations.

2.1 Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR)- Penrose and Hameroff's Theory:

Roger Penrose, a distinguished mathematical physicist, and Stuart Hameroff, an anesthesiologist, developed the Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory, which links quantum mechanics to human consciousness (Hameroff, S., & Penrose, R., 1998). Penrose argues that classical physics alone cannot account for consciousness and that quantum processes are essential to cognition. According to Orch-OR, quantum computations occur within microtubules—tiny structures inside neurons—that sustain quantum coherence, a state where particles exist in superposition (Penrose, 1989, p. 400). Penrose theorizes that these quantum states undergo “objective reduction,” a gravitationally influenced collapse of the quantum wave function. This orchestrated collapse, rather than a random one, is proposed to generate meaningful conscious experiences.

Penrose suggests that the brain operates beyond the capabilities of a classical Turing machine, involving non-computable processes rooted in quantum mechanics. He speculates, “Somewhere deep in the brain, cells are to be found of single quantum sensitivity. If this proves to be the case, then quantum mechanics will be significantly involved in brain activity” (Penrose, 1989, p. 400). This could explain uniquely human traits like intuition, creativity, and understanding, which current artificial intelligence models struggle to replicate.

2.2 Implications and Potential Impact:

If validated, Orch-OR could revolutionize artificial intelligence by suggesting that human cognition fundamentally differs from classical computational systems. It would also offer a physics-based explanation for consciousness, connecting the brain to the fabric of space-time. Despite its speculative nature, the theory continues to inspire interdisciplinary research across quantum mechanics, neuroscience, and philosophy. Critics contend that there is no empirical evidence to support the idea that quantum coherence can persist in biological systems long enough to influence cognition. Mainstream neuroscience dismisses Orch-OR, favoring classical models of neural networks and synaptic firing. Many scientists argue that consciousness emerges from complex neural interactions rather than quantum effects, rendering Penrose and Hameroff's proposal fringe and untestable with current methods.

2.3 Consciousness and the Quantum Measurement Problem:

John von Neumann and Eugene Wigner introduced an alternative quantum interpretation, proposing that consciousness collapses the quantum wave function, resolving the “measurement problem” in quantum mechanics. In quantum theory, a wave function evolves deterministically via the Schrödinger equation, but measurement causes it to collapse into a definite state. Von Neumann and Wigner suggested that a conscious observer is required to trigger this collapse, implying that mental phenomena are fundamental to physical reality. Wigner argued that this undermines materialism, the view that consciousness emerges solely from physical matter.

Physicist Henry Stapp has revived this idea, suggesting that quantum mechanics provides a framework where consciousness actively shapes reality (Stapp, H. P., 2004). He builds on von Neumann and Wigner, proposing that the mind's choices influence quantum processes in the brain.

2.4 Marginalization in Philosophy of Mind:

Despite its radical implications, this interpretation has had minimal impact on mainstream philosophy of mind. Most scholars view the idea of consciousness determining quantum reality as speculative and lacking empirical support. Alternative quantum interpretations, such as decoherence and the many-worlds theory, address the measurement problem without invoking consciousness. Philosophy of mind remains committed to materialist explanations, rooted in neuroscience and computational models, rather than quantum mechanics. Scholars like Jeremy Butterfield (1997) have critiqued these quantum approaches, finding them unconvincing, and the “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy” entry on “Quantum Approaches to Consciousness” notes their fringe status.

3. Quantum Mechanics and Metaphysics: Philosophical Context:

The interpretation of quantum mechanics inherently involves philosophical, particularly metaphysical, questions about the nature of reality (Muller, F. A., 2015). The “reality problem” in quantum mechanics—determining what constitutes physical reality—resides in metaphysical territory. However, the rise of analytic

metaphysics since the 1960s, spurred by the decline of logical positivism and the embrace of realism in philosophy of science, has largely ignored quantum mechanics' philosophical challenges.

In "Every Thing Must Go", Ladyman and Ross criticize analytic metaphysics for its disconnect from scientific advancements, including quantum mechanics (Ladyman, J., & Ross, D., 2007). They argue that debates over substance, universals, and identity often prioritize armchair intuitions over empirical discoveries, echoing Quine's call to naturalize philosophy by grounding it in science (Gibson, R. F., 1987). Ladyman and Ross advocate for a "naturalized metaphysics," suggesting that philosophy of physics could suffice as metaphysics.

Ironically, the effort to interpret quantum mechanics has been a form of naturalized metaphysics since its inception, inherently tied to scientific inquiry. The call to naturalize metaphysics thus partly invites analytic metaphysicists to recognize quantum mechanics' philosophical significance (Schrenk, 2017). Yet, despite this potential, quantum theories of consciousness remain peripheral, overshadowed by materialist paradigms in both neuroscience and philosophy of mind.

The proposals of Penrose and Hameroff (Orch-OR) and von Neumann, Wigner, and Stapp represent bold attempts to bridge quantum mechanics and consciousness. However, they face significant skepticism due to a lack of empirical evidence and the dominance of classical computational and materialist frameworks. While these ideas persist on the fringes, inspiring niche research, mainstream neuroscience and philosophy of mind continue to favor explanations grounded in neural processes over quantum speculation. The philosophical problems of quantum mechanics, though deeply metaphysical, have yet to reshape the broader discourse on consciousness, leaving these theories as provocative but unproven outliers.

3.1 The Metaphysical Implications of Quantum Mechanics:

Quantum mechanics has perpetually intersected with metaphysical inquiries, particularly through the interpretation problem and questions about the nature of reality. Despite its relevance to topics like causation, probability, and objectivity, the rise of analytic metaphysics since the 1960s has not been significantly molded by quantum mechanics. Instead, as Ladyman and Ross (2007) note, the decline of logical positivism and the resurgence of realism were the primary catalysts for this philosophical shift, with analytic metaphysics often remaining abstract and detached from empirical science. Ladyman and Ross advocate for a naturalized metaphysics—one aligned with scientific advancements—yet much of contemporary metaphysics continues to operate independently of quantum mechanics' insights. While quantum mechanics carries profound metaphysical implications, its influence has largely been confined to the philosophy of physics rather than reshaping broader metaphysical discourse. This limited impact underscores a disconnect between the empirical grounding of quantum theory and the speculative tendencies of traditional metaphysics.

3.2 Contingency, Modality, and Everettian Quantum Mechanics:

Alastair Wilson (2020) delves into the metaphysics of contingency through the lens of Everettian Quantum Mechanics (EQM), also known as the many-worlds interpretation. Wilson posits that EQM, a widely favored

framework among theoretical physicists and presupposed in quantum cosmology, offers fresh perspectives on traditional metaphysical debates about necessity, possibility, and modality. He argues that EQM—having passed rigorous empirical tests and been refined by advances in decoherence theory and probability over recent decades—represents quantum physics “purified” of the instrumentalist and supernatural distortions David Lewis (1986) criticized. Lewis famously dismissed quantum mechanics’ ontological lessons, insisting on a metaphysics free of “double thinking deviant logic” and “pointer readings” (Lewis, 1986). Wilson counters that EQM meets Lewis’s demands, providing a naturalistic foundation for rethinking modality without superfluous theoretical baggage. Despite its potential to revolutionize metaphysical foundations, EQM’s influence has been largely restricted to specialized philosophy of physics debates, with broader metaphysics yet to fully embrace its implications. Pioneering work by Simon Saunders (2010) first highlighted EQM’s relevance to contingency and necessity, though Saunders’s views have since evolved, shifting away from relationality and embracing the “many worlds” framework more explicitly.

3.3 Persistence, Time, and Quantum Objects:

Quantum mechanics also challenges metaphysical notions of persistence—how objects endure through time—as explored by Pashby (2013, 2016). In “Do Quantum Objects Have Temporal Parts?” Pashby (2013) critiques perdurantism, the theory that objects persist by having temporal parts, akin to spatial extension. While classical physics supports this view with objects extending symmetrically through space and time, Pashby argues that quantum mechanics disrupts this symmetry. Spatial localization in quantum systems is possible via position operators, but a “no-go” theorem demonstrates that no analogous temporal localization exists due to the spectral condition of Hamiltonians, which lack a well-defined time observable. Consequently, quantum objects do not possess temporal parts, falsifying quantum perdurantism and leaving endurantism (objects wholly present at each moment) or temporal holism (objects as four-dimensional entities) as viable alternatives, with Pashby favoring the latter in relativistic contexts. In a 2016 study, Pashby further contrasts classical pertension (full occupation of spatial regions) with quantum spanning (non-local spatial presence), reinforcing that quantum systems lack continuous spatiotemporal paths. This discreteness undermines both traditional perdurantism and endurantism reliant on immanent causation, prompting a reevaluation of persistence in light of quantum theory’s distinct treatment of time versus space.

4. Ethics and Quantum Mechanics:

We will discuss here the Free Will Theorem, integrating Conway and Kochen (2006) and Landsman (2017b) to explore its ethical relevance and limited mainstream traction, framed against historical debates. It focuses on Lewis’s (2004) ethical rejection of MWI, expanding to recent Everettian discussions, and emphasizing the bidirectional influence between ethics and quantum interpretation. The scope to quantum mechanics’ role in the realism debate (Van Fraassen, 1991) and Healey’s (2017) philosophical claims, assessing its constrained influence on ethics and philosophy at large has also been discussed in this section.

4.1 Quantum Mechanics and the Free Will Debate:

Quantum mechanics intersects with ethical discussions, notably through its implications for freewill, though its influence on mainstream ethical theory remains negligible. Conway and Kochen (2006) propose the Free Will Theorem, a variation of Bell's theorem, asserting that quantum mechanics guarantees human free will. In a standard Bell experiment with an entangled two-particle system, they demonstrate that a local deterministic model—assuming Alice and Bob can freely choose their spin-measurement directions—contradicts quantum mechanics. This suggests an inherent indeterminism, potentially resolving debates tracing back to Augustine of Hippo's fifth-century struggles with predestination and moral agency. However, Landsman (2017b) critiques this, arguing that the theorem's concept of free will aligns with Lewis's local miracle compatibilism, challenging compatibilist views in a contrived EPR context without bolstering libertarian free will. Despite its provocative implications, the theorem has not penetrated mainstream ethical discourse, which remains dominated by neuroscience, psychology, and moral philosophy. A survey of recent free will anthologies reveals quantum mechanics' absence, underscoring its limited impact on ethical debates about responsibility and determinism.

4.2 Ethical Objections to the Many-Worlds Interpretation:

Ethical considerations also emerge in critiques of quantum mechanics' Many-Worlds Interpretation (MWI), particularly from David Lewis (2004), who rejects it on moral grounds. Lewis argues that MWI, by positing infinite worlds where counterparts of individuals endure suffering due to low-probability catastrophic events, amplifies suffering infinitely—an outcome he deems ethically untenable. This perspective suggests that the metaphysical extravagance of MWI poses a moral dilemma, questioning its acceptability beyond its physical plausibility. Recent discussions of the Everett interpretation, a variant of MWI, have further highlighted ethical dimensions, reflecting a growing interplay between philosophy of physics and ethical theory. Yet, as with free will, Lewis's argument has not significantly shifted mainstream ethical theory, which continues to grapple with traditional questions of moral responsibility without engaging quantum mechanics. Instead, this ethical critique has influenced philosophical discourse on quantum physics itself, illustrating a rare instance where ethics shapes scientific interpretation rather than vice versa.

4.3 Quantum Mechanics, Realism, and Philosophical Influence:

Quantum mechanics plays a notable role in the philosophy of science, particularly in the realism debate, though its ethical implications remain peripheral. As Van Fraassen (1991) observes, quantum mechanics exemplifies the underdetermination thesis, with empirically equivalent rivals like the De Broglie-Bohm theory and Ghirardi-Rimini-Weber theory challenging realist claims that science describes reality literally. The proliferation of interpretations complicates realism, suggesting that quantum mechanics' target reality may elude science's grasp—a point Healey (2017) explores in **The Quantum Revolution in Philosophy**. Healey argues that quantum mechanics, filtered through his pragmatist interpretation, transforms philosophical concepts like probability, explanation, and objectivity, though his claims largely reflect his personal philosophical shift rather than a universal

revolution. While quantum mechanics has undeniably birthed the philosophy of physics as a subfield, its broader influence on philosophy—including ethics—remains modest. Beyond some recent metaphysical intersections, such as causation and fundamentality, and despite Healey’s assertions, quantum physics has not meaningfully engaged major philosophical issues, like those on the Chalmers–Bourget list, leaving its ethical and philosophical impact largely confined to specialized domains.

5. Quantum Mechanics and the Realism Debate:

Quantum mechanics has played a key role in debates about scientific realism, particularly through the underdetermination thesis. The existence of empirically equivalent interpretations—such as the De Broglie-Bohm theory and the Ghirardi-Rimini-Weber theory—challenges the idea that science provides a literal and singular description of reality. The proliferation of competing interpretations complicates realist commitments, leading many philosophers to adopt an instrumentalist or anti-realist stance when discussing quantum theory.

Moreover, the many interpretations of quantum mechanics pose a direct challenge to scientific realism. If the goal of science is to offer a literal, objective description of reality, then quantum mechanics appears to resist such an endeavor. This challenge has led some philosophers, such as van Fraassen, to argue for a form of constructive empiricism, in which scientific theories are regarded as useful models rather than definitive accounts of reality. Thus, while quantum mechanics has not settled the realism debate, it has certainly complicated it.

6. A Critical Examination of Healey’s *The Quantum Revolution in Philosophy*:

Healey (2017) asserts that quantum mechanics has revolutionized our understanding of key philosophical issues. However, upon closer examination, his claim appears to be less about quantum mechanics itself and more about his own pragmatist interpretation of it. Healey’s argument that quantum mechanics has transformed our approach to scientific representation, probability, and objectivity is compelling but does not necessarily translate to broader philosophical agreement.

Until a substantial majority of philosophers adopt Healey’s pragmatist perspective, it remains premature to declare a philosophical revolution. The skepticism surrounding his claims reflects the broader trend that quantum mechanics, while a subject of significant philosophical engagement, has not yet led to a radical transformation of philosophy as a whole.

7. Conclusion:

While quantum mechanics has generated significant philosophical discussions, its direct influence on mainstream philosophy remains limited. It has had an impact on specialized areas, particularly in the philosophy of physics, but has not significantly reshaped broader philosophical debates in metaphysics, ethics, or the philosophy of mind. The extent to which quantum mechanics should shape these fields depends on the specific issues under consideration. However, for now, its role remains largely peripheral, with most philosophical discussions continuing to be guided by traditional frameworks and methodologies rather than quantum mechanical insights.

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Can Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology Have a Dialogue with Each Other?

Ananya Barua

Abstract

The study explores whether analytic philosophy and phenomenology, traditionally seen as separate, can come together to form a common perspective. It focuses on mental content as a promising area for this collaboration. The article argues that neither analytic philosophers nor continental philosophers can fully address the issues alone. Instead, a mutual exchange of ideas between both groups is necessary. Through our participation in such a realm we come to know something of how others feel, of what they believe, desire and hope, of who and what they are, along with what we are, what our beliefs, desires, pains, pleasures, fear, disappointment are. Yet within modern philosophy, in particular, our access to such a realm, and so our access to the feelings, beliefs, desires, hopes and identities of others, have been viewed as questionable. The so-called “problem of other minds” is just a problem of whether we do indeed have access to such inter subjectivity and, with it, to the subjectivity of others, as well as of the nature of that access. The article aims to dispel the misconception that these two disciplines are entirely separate and incompatible.

Keywords: analytic philosophy, phenomenology, consciousness, intersubjectivity, mental content

Introduction:

Before we discuss why a dialogical process between the analytical philosophy and the phenomenological tradition is needed, let us try to understand what this analytical methods. Wright states on analytical method as, the logical positivism of the 1920's and the 1930's was a main, though by no means the sole, tributary out of which grew the broader current of philosophical thought, nowadays commonly known as analytical philosophy. Wright is quick to add that it would be quite wrong to label analytical philosophy as a whole brand of positivism. To clarify the position of analytical philosophy, Wright holds that in spite of the many tributaries which have, in the course of the years, emptied their waters into this river, I think it is right and illuminating to call analytical philosophy the mainstream of philosophic thinking in this century. In all its heterogeneity it retains the two features which I already mentioned as typical of its origin: the emphasis on logic and the alignment with science.

It is, in short, the philosophy most characteristic of a culture dominated by scientific rationality. For analytical philosophy now the problem that draws attention is the hard problem of consciousness and this is where another possible meeting point between analytical philosophy and phenomenology will be fruitful (Wright, 1994).

This issue of explanatory gap, Chalmers applies to the hard problem of consciousness as he comes up with the distinction between the easy and the hard problems of consciousness. For the easy problems of consciousness, once the relevant mechanisms are well understood, there is little or no explanatory work left to do. Experience however does not fit this explanatory model. Though experience is associated with a variety of functions, explaining how those functions are performed leaves important questions unanswered. We would still want to know why their performance is accompanied by experience, and why we have this kind of experience rather than another kind. So, for example, even when we find something that plays the causal role in triggering a sensation of pain, we can still ask why the particular experience of pain is associated with that triggering. So, Chalmers states, it is undeniable that some organisms are subjects of experience. But the question of how it is that these systems are subjects of experience is perplexing. Why is it that when our cognitive systems engage in visual and auditory information-processing, we have visual or auditory experience: the quality of deep blue? It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis but we have no good explanation of why and how it arises. Why should physical processing give rise to a richer inner life at all? (Chalmers, 1996).

So, the hard problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining the relationship between physical phenomena such as brain processes and experience. The unanswered questions that come up in this explanatory gap of hard problem of consciousness are the questions like why are physical processes ever accompanied by experience? Why does a given physical process physical truth, even though phenomenal truths cannot be deduced from micro-physical truths. Thus, the hard problem relates closely to the problem of the qualia or the phenomenal content of the mental. The qualia as we have discussed refers to the intrinsic, phenomenal aspects of our mental lives. Chalmers has shown that qualia can not be reduced to any physical states as this issue is an issue of hard problem of consciousness. In contrast, the easy problems are concerned with the objective mechanisms of the cognitive system. The problem of the qualia or the hard problem of consciousness deals with the issue of subjective experience that involves the inner aspect of thought or perception. Thus, subjective experience is unique to the subject and can not be expressed in propositional terms. The experience remains unique, ineffable and mysterious. The explanatory gap as we have already pointed out, tries to study if the gap, between the subjective (the phenomenal aspect of the mental) and the objective (the intentional aspect of the mental) can be bridged. Consciousness is indeed what makes the mind-body problem difficult; it is also what makes life worth living and philosophy, Descartes, Kant and Husserl so exciting. In order to “understand” consciousness we will have to see how it fits into the structure of the world, the world that is already defined by quantum physics, evolutionary biology, cultural history, cosmology and so on. But our understanding of consciousness takes us back to Descartes again: It begins with our own experience of consciousness. The

following passage accounts the emergence of the phenomenological school of thought:

At roughly the same time that analytic philosophy was emerging, Edmund Husserl was developing his “phenomenological” approach to philosophy. He too emphasized high standards of clarity and precision, and had some fruitful engagements with analytic philosophers such as Frege. Husserl, however, sought clarity and precision more in the rigorous description of our immediate experience (the phenomena) than in the logical analysis of concepts or language. He saw his phenomenology as operating at the fundamental level of knowledge on which any truths of conceptual or linguistic analysis would have to be based. In “*Being and Time*” Husserl’s student, Heidegger, turned phenomenology toward “existential” questions about freedom, anguish and death. Later, French thinkers influenced by Husserl and Heidegger, especially Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, developed their own versions of phenomenologically based existentialism. . . . These analytic philosophers (Gilbert Ryle was a leading figure) regarded the continental appeal to immediate experience as a source of subjectivity and obscurity that was counter to their own ideals of logical objectivity and clarity. The analytic continental division was institutionalized in 1962, when American proponents of continental philosophy set up their own professional organization, The Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP), as an alternative to the predominantly (but by no means exclusively) Analytic American Philosophical Association (APA).

Phenomenology or phenomenological method, founded by Husserl focuses on the contents of the human mind and how phenomenological processes shape our experiences. Nagel’s *The View from Nowhere* proposed a new philosophical or, for that matter, scientific discipline, which should stand in opposition to the paradigm of modern science, though he himself belongs to the analytical tradition. Modern science, he argued, stood under the assumption, or the ideal, of a truly objective science, a science, in other words, that increasingly eliminates the subjective, human standpoint in order to strive towards a “view from nowhere” (Nagel, 1986). While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with such an approach, it leaves something missing. Hence, opposed to this ideal he proposed a science of the first-person perspective. Only in this manner of consideration will one be able to ascertain “*what it is like*” to be a subject with a certain view point on the world. This science of the subjective was accepted by phenomenologists and in general continental philosophers and in Nagel we immediately see a meeting point of phenomenology with analytical philosophy. However, such a science is, especially to Husserl, nothing new at all. It was precisely what Husserl had in mind all along. Husserl’s phenomenology is a rigorous (eidetic) science of the first-person perspective; it is decidedly a discipline that takes its starting point from this first-person perspective and, while it strives for general results, never abandons this perspective. As Smith defines phenomenology as, Phenomenology is a philosophical discipline alongside ontology, epistemology, logic, ethics, and the like. Yet phenomenology is still not so well understood as these other disciplines. Some philosophers have defined phenomenology as a movement, a historical tradition including the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and more recently Gurwitsch, Mohanty, Føllesdal, and many others. Other philosophers have defined phenomenology as a practice of a particular philosophical

methodology: transcendental reflection on the meaning of our experience, proponents of continental philosophy set up their own professional organization, The Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP), as an alternative to the predominantly (but by no means exclusively) analytic American Philosophical Association (APA) (Smith, 2007). Zahavi calls the phenomenological self as that where the investigations or analysis of the self and the experiences involved have to be intertwined (Smith, 2007).

Cavell notes that recognizing someone to have an authority is recognizing her as a being or a creature with whom we can enter into a dialogical process. Cavell thus states... our account of self-knowledge must recognize the ways in which the external world, including relationships with others, is part of the fabric of the inner world, as one's first-person experience provides the only approach to one's knowledge of the external world (Cavell, 1993).

Cavell points out that we human beings are thus those creatures who possess both an "inside" world and an "outside" world. However, these two possessions are not antagonistic of each other. Both these two worlds are mediated through the external world i.e. the way in which we experience our self viz., memory, discipline, language and interplay between organism and the body, or what may be called the "body subject." Cavell's idea of the mind-world relationship can be grasped when she says that the "(subject) is embedded in, and fabricated from, interactions between world and mind". cognitive account of first-person authority, according to Cavell, is that which "ignores the fact that the first-person perspective of any one person is part of what constitutes that person" (Cavell, 1993).

Thus, for Cavell the notion of "intersubjective" is an essentially relational realm: it is the realm that lies between the subjects and ourselves (for we, of course, are among the subjects to whom the term refers). As it lies between, so it also represents the realm that is common to all, the realm of what is essentially public and open, the realm of communication and active engagement with others.

Thus, the robust distinction of the "subject centric" or the "object centric" dichotomy will be eliminated only when we bring in the concept of subjectivity and in turn, inter subjectivity which ushers in both the subject and object in its framework. As a concluding note, the proposal subjectivity of experience without the subject of experience has been floated. The idea of inter subjectivity too has been discussed at length and this work has tried to show how this idea of intersubjectivity can be put into practice. Thus, this work demonstrates how the analytical and the phenomenological traditions have merged together in recent times, in various issues. If a phenomenological method is needed for a proper understanding of the mental content, the analytical approach too cannot be left behind. Both the movements play significant roles in problematizing the issues of the mind and the mental content.

Phenomenology and analytic philosophy are the two most influential philosophical movements of the twentieth century. Thus, subjectivity turns out to be an important requisite for objectivity and the pursuit of scientific knowledge, than say microscopes or scanners which are of no use unless the scientist is an experiencing

subject. Thus, a realization has dawned in both the analytical and the phenomenological traditions that a mutual exchange of ideas will not only benefit each other but will also help them and if possible, to work together. The domain in which this interaction can be most fruitful is to find a way out of the traditional mind-body and other related problems.

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Theorizing Memory: From Antiquity to Modernity

Deepanjali Baruah

Abstract

The simplest way of understanding memory is to recall or recollect the past which the mind stores. Memory not only signifies a matter that the mind stores, but connotes multiple layers of meanings. The concept of memory has evolved from the classical Greek heritage to its modern-day interpretations. The classical concept has its Philosophical roots dealing with the concepts of the ancient Greek philosophers. Modern concept of memory differentiates itself from the classical concept as it posits in the understanding of the mental faculty and its processes while the classical concept deals with memory as a function of the brain that can be understood and localized. The modern reconceptualization of memory has led towards newer and scientific way of understanding, remembering and forgetting in collective and individual contexts. The concept of memory has undergone significant transformations from antiquity to modernity, reflecting changes in philosophical, historical, and cultural perspectives. Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have offered varied ideas on memory which subsequently influenced the thoughts of the contemporary thinkers and philosophers helping them to form newer ideas on the concept. Starting from Plato's belief that knowledge and memories are innate, and Aristotle's view on the knowledge of time, memory has passed a passage of behavioral/cognitive approach to the present approaches of collective and individual memories. Paul Ricoeur has questioned whether it is possible to develop the art of forgetting which may be placed with that of the art of memory. This might lead to the erasure of memory instead of memorialization. In this paper an attempt has been made to theorize memory, its progress from antiquity to modernity and also the concepts of forgetting and remembering which are integral to memory.

Keywords: analytic philosophy, phenomenology, consciousness, intersubjectivity, mental content

Introduction:

Memory is something that the mind stores which helps in recalling or remembering an event of the past. It helps profoundly in cementing relations and interacting with a wider world. The concept of memory has significantly evolved from its Greek heritage to the present age which involves perceiving, representing and

narrating the self along with the others. The modern concept of memory differentiates itself from the classical concept as it posits in the understanding of the mental faculty and its processes while the classical concept deals with memory as a function of the brain that can be understood and localized. The modern reconceptualization of memory has led towards newer and scientific ways of understanding, remembering and forgetting in collective and individual contexts. In this paper an attempt shall be made to theorize memory, its progress from antiquity to modernity, examining how the understandings of memory, forgetting, and remembering have shaped our relationship with the past. Anjali Gera Roy (2020) states that, “The obsession with memory must be attributed both to the fear of forgetting and the desire to remedy the amnesias of history. The memory turn in history has been ascribed to the limitations of traditional histories that are inherent in the nature of historical study” (Roy, 2020). Memory gives space to forgetting intentionally and unintentionally. The modern world is now obsessed with memory for the fear of forgetting or to recover from amnesia. By tracing the evolution of varied concepts of memory, this article sheds light on how our understanding of memory shapes identity, community, and cultural heritage, offering insights into the complex interplay between remembering and forgetting in individual and collective contexts. This highlights the article’s relevance to understanding memory’s role in shaping human experience and its broader implications.

The Greek Heritage of Memory:

The problematization of memory is as old as Western Philosophy. Plato spoke memory as the present representation of an absent and also opined that humans have the capacity to preserve the experienced memories. This concept centers round the theme of the *eikon* which refers to an image, likeness or representation. In philosophical contexts *eikon* is sometimes used to describe a copy or representation of reality, as in Plato’s theory of forms. This concept played a significant role in understanding how memories are formed, stored and retrieved. Plato described the *eikons* as imprints or stamps on the soul which could be recalled later. The Greek concept of *eikon* remains an important idea in the history of philosophy, influencing subsequent discussions of memory, perception and knowledge. Whitehead (2009) opines that, “Plato’s model of memory process implies that the images or objects or thought are to some degree material: they are stamped or incised into matter and are stored there so that they can be available for subsequent recall” (Whitehead, 2009).

On the other hand, Aristotle said that memory is of the past. Aristotle’s treatise *Peri mnemes kai anamneseos*, is part of a collection of nine treatises. In this treatise Aristotle stated that the persistence of memory does not depend on its recall but its presence to mind in relation to recollection. The act of remembering, according to Aristotle, takes place when time is elapsed. This interval of time is thus crucial, the initial impression and its return which ultimately leads to recollection. So, the knowledge of time plays an important role in the methodical way of remembering. The concept on *mneme* by Aristotle refers to the mental image or representation of a past experience that is retained in memory. Aristotle also noted that emotions play a significant role in memory as they can enhance or impair the ability to recall experiences. As for *anamnesis* which means recollection

of past lives or knowledge, comes from sensory experience. Aristotle believed that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate and through experience, the mind acquires knowledge. In this view, instead of remembering knowledge from a past life as Plato suggested, Aristotle proposed that we come to know things through direct interaction with the world round us, primarily through perception and reason. Aristotle's focus was more on empirical observation and the process of learning from the world rather than recalling knowledge from previous lives or from a non-material source. Plato, the other Greek philosopher spoke of memory as the present representation of an absent thing. He opined that humans have the capacity to preserve the experienced memories. He believed that knowledge is not acquired through sense experience, but rather through recollection of immutable truths. Plato's concept of memory is closely tied to the idea on *anamnesis* or recollection. Recollection, according to Plato describes realities that are contingent and also a transformation of the spirit under the influence of a noble love. On the other hand, Socrates explained that objects of perception are a succession of constantly changing awareness, whereas objects of thought are those objects of perception to which we have given some degree of stability by imprinting them on the mind. For Socrates, the act of remembering is primarily active: it is when we 'want to remember'. In the *Meno*, (a Socratic dialogue written by Plato) Socrates discusses the idea of recollection, suggesting that learning is not the acquisition of new knowledge that the soul already knows. He posits that the soul is immortal and has experienced many lifetimes, and thus has excess to all knowledge. When we learn something, we are essentially remembering knowledge that our soul already possessed before birth. This process of recollection happens through questioning and reasoning, as Socrates often used his method of dialectic to help people remember what they already knew. Thus, Socrates viewed memory as a means of accessing innate knowledge, rather than simply storing experiences or facts. Memory in this sense is not about just retaining information but about uncovering truths already exists within us.

Modern Thinkers and the Theorizing of Memory:

Corporeal Memory and Memory of Places

The present age may be termed as the age of memory boom which began in the late 1990s owing to the thinkers working in the interdisciplinary fields on memory. As stated in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "memory is a trend which reinvigorated and transformed older philosophical debates by bringing them into contact with empirical and theoretical developments in psychology and the sciences of memory more broadly" (Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Modern thinkers have defined memory in varied ways. Paul Ricoeur, the John Nuveen Professor, Dept. of Philosophy at the University of Chicago wrote a landmark book on memory: *Memory, History, Forgetting*. He talks about two types of memory: corporeal memory and memory of places: "Corporeal memory can be enacted in the same manner as all the other modalities of habit, such as driving a car, when I am at the wheel" (Ricoeur, 2004). It is modulated according to the feelings of strangeness and familiarity. But sickness, wound, trauma of the past invite corporeal memory to target precise instances of recollection. Corporeal memory may also be termed as body memory or somatic memory which is frequently

attached to the idea of repressed memory. This memory is termed as body memory since it is concerned with the workings of the different organs of the body such as muscles, nervous system, tissues rather than just the brain. Corporeal memory operates outside of verbal language, allowing the body to recall experiences and emotions without conscious awareness. The traumatic experiences of a past event can be retained by this memory even though the conscious mind does not. The body plays a significant role in storing and recalling trauma which is acknowledged by the corporeal memory. According to Boyarin (1994), “Perhaps the most obvious link between memory and the body is through mnemonic marking. Intriguingly, nonstate collectives seem most often to mark individual bodies as a sign of inclusion, whereas states most often mark bodies precisely to exclude them” (Boyarin, 1994).

Ricoeur has also discussed the memory of places. Ricoeur (2004) states, “It is on the surface of the habitable earth that we remember having travelled and visited memorable sites” (Ricoeur, 2004). The relationship between place and memory results at the juncture of memory, history and geography. The act of inhabiting constitutes powerful human connections with particular time and locations. Ricoeur opines that the most invigorating experience of these memories is the visit of a place together which helps one to develop a communal feeling and to return to the past in a group. This memory is also termed as spatial memory. Therefore, the inhabitable places are memorable par excellence. These are memories of skills or routines associated with a place like navigating a familiar neighbourhood or performing a task at work. Our brains create cognitive maps of certain geographical locations allowing us to explore and recall the layout of the location. Positive memories of places can enhance our emotional wellbeing and provide a sense of comfort. Our sense of identity and belonging is strengthened by our memory of places. The memory of places is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that continues to be explored in various fields including psychology, neuroscience, architecture and geography. Another thinker Edward Casey also suggested the importance of memory of places. According to him there is a strong bond between memory and place since places can hold and preserve the memories through which the past can survive and also can revive itself.

Anne whitehead in her book *Memory* (2009) has stated about massive migrations taken place all over the world and other historical events during the 20th century ushering in displacement and dislocation. The process of migration creates nostalgic ruminations of former homeland. The desire for the lost roots and mementos sharpens the nostalgia which subsequently have popularized the discourses on memory. Whitehead (2009) opines, “At the same time, there has been a marked rise in concern with popular memory, and a proliferation of archives, particularly oral archives, established to preserve the memories of ordinary people” (Whitehead, 2009). Collective memories of catastrophic events in human history like the World Wars, Holocaust, genocides, ethnocides etc. have lingered in the minds of survivors, bystanders, perpetrators and even among those who did not have the first-hand experience of those events. The oral archives are one of the best tools for preserving memories of events. Mieke Bal has named memory as a concept of travelling. Bal’s contention is that memory

travels between discipline, culture and historical period and between academic communities. Memory, is therefore, historically conditioned bearing its own time and culture.

Collective Memory:

Maurice Halbwachs' in his phenomenal book *The Collective Memory* published in 1950 has stated memory having a collective entity for instance a group or the society. According to Halbwachs remembering takes place in the presence of others. It must be known that an individual always belongs to a group so he/she has innumerable experiences while living in a collective entity. Therefore, the individual memory takes possession of itself through the instruction/advice given by others. At the same time Halbwachs (1950) opines that it might not occur that remembrance takes place in a shared perspective, "but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories" (Halbwachs, 1950). The personal thoughts are placed in the frameworks of social and collective memories and then the act of recollection takes place. Collective memory is generally shaped by the surrounding social and cultural atmosphere. Another philosopher Henry Bergson gave a different approach on memory which influenced the idea of Halbwachs. However, Bergson's was a highly individualistic philosophy who considered our past experiences to be stored in the unconscious in its entirety which may be recollected when situation demanded. According to him the personal memories are reflected in dreams. But Halbwachs opined that memories are not unorganized, disoriented, irregular like dreams. So, dreams are illusions and the past cannot be evoked in dreams. Halbwachs consequently approved collective memory as he believed that the group constitutes of individual members and it is they who remember. Individual memory is replaced by collective memory in Halbwachs' contention on memory. Memory is shared as it is communicated by individuals and is subsequently mediated through different agencies like social groups and other institutions of the state. The twentieth and the twenty first centuries have witnessed multiple genocides, migrations and collective catastrophes. Therefore, collective memory has become indispensable factors of human lives. The Nazi Holocaust may be understood as one of the foremost determining factors of the study of memory at present. Marianne Hirsch (2012), the professor of Comparative Literature and Gender Studies, has argued that, "urgently and passionately, those of us working on memory and transmission within and beyond the study of Holocaust have argued about ethics and aesthetics of remembrance in the aftermath of catastrophe" (Hirsch, 2012). The traumatic memories not only affect the first generation (those who had the first-hand experience of the event) but also these memories impact the subsequent generations of people in a collective way specifically those who are indirectly connected with the event. The Partition of India marked the division of the Indian sub-continent into India and Pakistan. It is regarded as one of the darkest events in the history of India. Tiwari (2003) states, "In the ferocious massacres that followed at least one million Hindus and Muslims lost their lives. Hundreds of thousands of children were lost and abandoned; between 75,000 and 1,00,000 women were raped and abducted apart from the families that were torn apart" (Tiwari, 2003). Partition has been archived in literature, films, documentaries and museums. But the Partition stories are

alternative histories which are personal and collective “constructed through memory, gender, and ideas of self and span the subcontinent” (Khan, 2013). The traumatic memories of Partition have been documented through personal experience and collective suffering through literary register. Urvashi Butalia (1998), the renowned Indian activist and feminist, has opined about Partition that Partition histories are “difficult to forget but dangerous to remember” (Butalia, 1998). Collective memory and commemoration go hand in hand. Remembering and commemorating collectively a particular historical event like Partition fosters identity and sense of belonging. This is also called memorialization. According to Baruah (2021), “This memorialization in effect serves to prepare the ground both for reconstructing the past and rethinking the ways in which the narratives about Partition have been constructed in the past. It initiates, in other words, a new way of knowing” (Baruah, 2021). Therefore, such an event is commemorated collectively by observing the Martyr’s Day in India. In this way, collective memories are recounted and kept alive.

Forgetting and Remembering:

Forgetting and Remembering are integral elements of memory. Memory depends on the selectivity and its importance to a group or an individual. As stated by Albano (2016), “Theoretical speculations on processes of remembering in psychology provide us with a useful framework to consider the dynamics of remembering and the persistence of what is unremembered, not only individually but also socially, culturally and transculturally” (Albano, 2016). Forgetting suggests the extended explanations of encoded information within the system of memory. Forgetting occurs due to unretrieved memories. Remembering of the past may take place voluntarily or involuntarily. It depends on the prevailing circumstances and the person or group. Ricoeur (2024) states, “Forgetting is experienced as an attack on the reliability of memory. An attack, a lacuna. In this regard memory defines itself, at least in the first instance, as a struggle against forgetting. And our celebrated duty of memory is proclaimed in the form of an exhortation not to forget” (Ricoeur, 2004). But Ricoeur also states that the human memory has an access to forgetting, otherwise there will be immense suffering among the humans in this world. Memory lacking in forgetting could be a phantasm or an illusion resulting in the non-functioning of the normal human condition. Such forgetting needs to be encouraged which bears a collective traumatic past. Forgetting also helps one to gaze the present with a refreshed attitude. Before modernity, people could make out the difference between the present and the past. But with the advent of modernity this distinction became sharper between the things which are noncontemporaneous or unmodern and others contemporaneous or modern. American scholar David Gross (2011), has stated three different types of noncontemporaneity: absolute noncontemporaneity, relative noncontemporaneity and enduring noncontemporaneity. By absolute noncontemporaneity Gross (2011) means, “that part of the past that has been completely obliterated except for a few shards or fragments preserved in museums” (Gross, 2011). Through this he points out to a particular phase of the past which has been erased from the minds of humans. Some traces of the past may be available only in the form of material memory, preserved in museums or other institutes. Gross (2011) argues, “I mean

a part of the past that, while also over and done with, has nevertheless left behind more immediately and continuously experienceable physical or cultural traces than those housed in museum displays” (Gross, 2011). This forgotten phase of the past can only be brought back through references. This referential way of rediscovering the past may be of great value for the present scholars and researchers on memory. The third one is enduring noncontemporaneity, “which denotes those modes of thinking and behaving that have somehow managed to survive not piecemeal but intact into the present age” (Gross, 2011). Gross wants to state here that this noncontemporaneity is basically antiquated or strange for the people of the present time. Therefore, its elements are generally pushed to the periphery of social life or sidelined due to its out of sync nature. But still, they continue to live on though in the state of a reduced condition within the circumstance of a present. These fragile noncontemporaneities create a heightened sensitivity that something has not only passed away but on the verge of complete disappearance. This process may sensitize us about the fleeting and transient nature of material and human existence and to value whatever is perishing or forgotten. Forgetting is a condition of memory as it is closely related to it. People who undergo ordinary forgetting are according to Ricoeur is “happy memory”. It is important that people should forget certain phases of life to regain happiness and peace of mind. There are harsh realities of life, circumstances that change peoples’ lives. Innumerable incidents of rape, murder, arson, violence and bloodshed in the society create trauma and psychological imbalance. Therefore, it is generally suggested that such incidents should be forgotten and begin life afresh. Forgetting becomes an antidote to the sufferings undergone by victims of tragic incidents. A positive self-image may be maintained by forgetting negative details, fostering creativity and flexible thinking. Freud also opined that forgetting helps to ward off certain unpleasant experiences of life which he termed as pathological forgetting. Forgetting may also enable forgiveness which allows one to free himself/herself from the burden of the past. But the notion of forgive and forget seems to be unrealistic because forgiveness does not wipe out the past events, instead it ushers on the creation of a new relationship or situation that has been altered by the past experience.

Remembering refers to our capability of grasping the past. Remembering is the mental process which involves retrieving stored memories from the brain which can be triggered by memory cues, emotions or associations. The process can vary in clarity, accuracy, depending on the factors such as time, significance and attention to detail. When we remember, we often reconstruct moments, sometimes blending facts with interpretation, emotions or gaps with knowledge. It is a vital part of human cognition that helps us to make sense of the present, learn from the past experiences and guide future actions. There is individual and collective remembering. An individual remembers because he/she has the power to recollect and also recognize things. Individual remembering is a personal and subjective experience, influenced by one’s unique perspective and emotions. Strong emotions such as joy, fear or sadness can enhance memory consolidation and retrieval. According to Anne whitehead, collective remembering seems to be more effective in social groups. Collective remembering ensures shared recollection and commemoration of past events and cultural heritage within a

group or community. It helps fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Collective memories are often constructed and passed down through narratives such as stories, myths or histories. Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith state that a culture chooses the things to remember and forget based on hegemony, power and also gender. Michel Foucault also talked about how a culture orders, selects, preserves the past and determines remembering. The alternative histories such as memoirs and oratures have served to remember the stories of women or other disenfranchised groups which the official histories do not generally document. Whitehead (2009) comments, "This makes evident the relative degrees of power and powerlessness, privilege, and disenfranchisement that have shaped dominant memory discourse" (Whitehead, 2009). There are interesting texts by authors written in the context of different events of history in the form of novels, short stories, memoirs etc. A perfect example may be cited in connection to remembering is the Assamese novel *Makam* by Rita Chowdhury, a prominent novelist of Assam, published in the year 2010. It is a historical fiction which reminisces a forgotten historical epoch of Assam. *Makam* narrates the story of the Indians originally from China who were brought by the British from China as indentured labourers during the colonial times. They married the natives of Assam and assimilated with the Assamese culture and tradition. Later they were suspected of being spies as they were the descendants of Chinese villagers during the India-China war in 1962 and were forced to leave India. These stories were not told, remained under the carpet for a long time, until Rita Chowdhury unfolded this chapter of displacement, trauma, loss of identity of these forgotten people through extensive research and interviews. *Makam* thus serves as a story of remembering and post memory creating sensation in India after its first publication. There are several such silenced facts in history which are needed to be remembered and chronicled so that these events are not condemned into oblivion.

Edward S. Casey in his book *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (1987) provides a description of human memory. He talks about recognizing, reminding, reminiscing and commemorating. Casey (1987) also talks about primary and secondary remembering. "Whatever the exact duration, "primary memory" refers to the way in which what was just experienced (the "*soebengewesen*," as Husserl terms it) is drawn out and allowed to remain accessible" (Casey, 1987). In order to elaborate primary remembering he gives the example of tea-tasting. This tea-tasting becomes a momentary retention of the mind as this sinks away from explicit awareness.

Secondary remembering follows primary remembering which may be termed as recollection "*Wiedererinnerung*" (German word for remembering again or re-remembering). Casey (1987) states, "Its operation is conceived as that of rescuing former experiences from oblivion" (Casey, 1987). An object is brought back, revives anew from a reservoir. "The "re-" of secondary remembering takes on special significance in this activity of mnemonic re-enactment or re-presentation, a significance lacking in primary remembering" (Casey, 1987). Mnemonic modes are forms of remembering whose description cannot be confined to only psychological analysis. Edward Casey (1987) has suggested three distinctive mnemonic modes. "Each of

these modes involves outstanding factors that cannot be contained within the meshes of mentalism: factors that are external to mind itself such as physical reminders, the concrete discourse of reminiscing, and other human beings as objects of perceptual recognition” (Casey, 1987).

a) Reminders: I am being reminded of a possible action which I may undertake very soon or eventually, though not precisely when I shall perceive the reminder. (We may be reminded by a perception or by a thought). Heidegger termed it as “being-with-others.” It arises as discourse in the company of others. It is a matter, in short, of remembering with others. Therefore, Casey (1987) opines, “We do not reminisce something, we reminisce about it” (Casey, 1987).

b) Recognizing: *“A figure comes my way on the road. ‘Hi, is it Deepanjali?’ ‘I can’t recognize him instantly but as soon as he removes his specs I suddenly recognize who he is. He is one of my batchmates, Sazad.’* There should be the availability of identity in the process of recognition. A sudden glimpse of recognition helps me by revealing the identity of the person associated with a particular body. At the same time, a distinct sense of “nearing” accompanies availability and enhances it. Consolidation is a second, somewhat less obvious, factor. It is just because Sazad came closer to me which resulted in a strong appearance to be recognized as the man I knew. His consolidation and coming closer, both served as tools of recognition for me.

c) Commemoration: If I am remembering a memorable event of the past in a group, it is commemoration. So, Casey (1987) states, “I am remembering with them, and they with me. It is a matter of something thoroughly communal” (Casey, 1987). These two are communicational factors juxtaposed between myself, *the commemorator* and the thing that I commemorated, *the memorandum*. Commemoration is never wholly private. Commemoration aims at keeping a particular past event alive through ceremonial observance. Commemoration of a past event is important because slowly the past becomes remote with a fear of oblivion. Forgetting and remembering thus are integral features of memory which help people to keep pace with the daily situations of life. Forgetting does not mean the complete loss of memory. Memory is possible through the forgetting that is preserved.

Conclusion:

The concept of memory has undergone significant transformations from antiquity to modernity, reflecting changes in philosophical, historical, and cultural perspectives. Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have offered varied ideas on memory which subsequently influenced the thoughts of the contemporary thinkers and philosophers helping them to form newer ideas on the concept. Starting from Plato’s belief that knowledge and memories are innate, and Aristotle’s view on the knowledge of time, memory has passed a passage of behavioral/cognitive approach to the present approaches of collective and individual memories. Paul Ricoeur has questioned whether it is possible to develop the art of forgetting which may be placed with that of the art of memory. This might lead to the erasure of memory instead of memorialization. According to Whitehead, some amount of forgetting is necessary for the maintenance of civic health. Meaningful memories

should be shared so that people know the past better and learn from it. Memory travels in a fascinating way. People locate their memories according to their convenient time and place so it gives an opportunity to look at history from varied perspectives. Therefore, memory is historically conditioned. The modern concept of memory is that it is changeable and expedient which helps us to understand the past, specifically, the past historical events like the Partition which have left ineffaceable mark in the minds of human beings. The remembrance of the past also helps in the formation of identity at the present. Memory is a dynamic force influencing culture, identity and narrative itself, revealing the present through the past recollections and serving as cultural archive. The above discussion proves that memory is multidirectional which includes cross referencing and borrowing. Memory helps in establishing intercultural dynamics and a platform to articulate a vision of the past to shape up a meaningful present.

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Understanding the ‘Self’ as a Way Leading to Peace: Jiddu Krishnamurti

Mausumi Bhattacharjya

Abstract

Krishnamurti puts fundamental importance on living life. In his opinion, the only concern of man should be living. At the same time, he also maintains that true living requires certain things and peace is one of them. However, in his opinion, we are devoid of peace because we are constantly living in the midst of conflict and contradiction. And as far as Krishnamurti is concerned, the very reason for our being in conflict is lack of our proper understanding of ourselves. So, in order to have peace, we need to put an end to our conflict which can be made possible through understanding of the ‘self’. The present paper is an endeavour to find out how understanding of the ‘self’ can lead to peace in the Philosophy of Krishnamurti. In order to venture into that, the present paper also takes into account what does Krishnamurti understand by the ‘self’. The paper ends with some observation.

Keywords: Krishnamurti, self, understanding, conflict, peace, thought

Introduction:

Krishnamurti puts fundamental importance on living life. In his opinion, the only concern of man should be living. At the same time, he also maintains that true living requires certain things and peace is one of them. He is found to consider peace as a necessity: “We must have peace in order to grow, to flower, to understand, to have time to look around, to explore into ourselves and see what we can find here” (Krishnamurti, 2011, p.18). Krishnamurti sees the world as devoid of peace since chaos, disorder, violence, war, conflict and the like pervade the entire world. In his own words, “There is no peace in the world. There is chaos, disorder, great danger, terrorism, threats of war. These are all facts. We live every day of our lives with all turmoil, with all the labour that people have to do, with all the problems we have to face. The politicians talk about peace, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church talks about it, so do the Hindus and the Buddhists and the Muslims, but actually there is no peace” (Krishnamurti, 2011, p. 17-18).

We find Krishnamurti saying that we lack peace in the outside world because there is no peace inside us. In his opinion, the inner and the outer are not different from each other as the outer is the projection of the inner. In fact, according to Krishnamurti, it is the individuals that make up the world as he says, “The world is only the individual in his relationship with others based on what he thinks of himself” (Krishnamurti, 2013, p. 152). That is why, he says that to have peace inside the individual is essential to have peace in the outside world.

Krishnamurti says that we lack internal peace as we are in the midst of conflict and contradiction. As we are in conflict, so also the world is: “Whatever our ambitions, our pursuits, our aims, it is upon them that we base the structure of society. So, because we are in contradiction, there is lack of peace in us and therefore, outside of us. There is in us a constant state of denial and assertion—what we want to be and what we are. The state of contradiction creates conflict, and this conflict does not bring about peace” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 7). By conflict and contradiction, Krishnamurti understands the constant struggle of one trying to become something which one is not as he says, “You understand what I mean by contradiction—this constant struggle to be something apart from what I am. I am this, and I want to be that” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 7.). In other words, according to him, being in conflict means to have opposing desires, interests and pursuits such as I want to be honest, and I am not able to be.

Krishnamurti asserts that we are required to understand this contradiction in us in order to have inward peace: “Life is a series of contradictions and without understanding those contradictions, there can be no peace” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 10). And Krishnamurti is found saying that this understanding of contradiction is possible through the understanding of the self. To understand the self is to know the self in his Philosophy. Thus, it is self-knowledge that leads to peace, both inward and outward. In my paper, I am trying to show how understating of the ‘self’ can make possible peace to take place. In order to accomplish this objective, I have made a discussion on how the ‘self’ is treated in Krishnamurti’s Philosophy.

Krishnamurti considers the ‘self’ or ‘I’ as the cause of conflict and suffering as he is found to say, “As long as the self exists, there must be conflict, misery” (Krishnamurti, 2012, p. 30). The reason behind such a consideration is his findings of the ‘self’ as a matter of the past and our life as a movement. According to Krishnamurti, our life is continuous; it is always in the present: “After all, life is constantly changing environment” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 46). Life is forever new and living life requires our meeting as it comes. In his view, life is full of challenges and to meet the challenges adequately, we need to stay in the present and staying in the present is possible only when we free ourselves from the past, from the knowing; otherwise, conflict arises. And freedom from the past demands that we should not act according to knowledge from the past. We generally try to mould the present in the light of the past which are the teachings we have been given, the beliefs we have been taught to hold, the knowledge we have accumulated and so on. As a result, we land in conflict. Krishnamurti says, “Life is and must be, a series of challenges and responses. The challenge is not according to

our particular desire, but assumes different forms at different times. And if we have the capacity to meet that challenge adequately, fully, directly, then there is no problem. But because we do not meet that challenge, a problem arisen” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 211-212).

According to Krishnamurti, the self is a constituted being and it gets created in our awareness that we are nothing; everybody is aware of this emptiness, consciously or unconsciously. This feeling of emptiness makes one to feel insufficient, “One is aware, consciously or unconsciously, of a sense of emptiness in oneself, a sense of being nothing, a sense of being insufficient” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 356). And in Krishnamurti’s view, the feeling of being nothing makes one desire to be something which one is not. This duality of what one is, which is nothing and what one desires to be, creates the feeling of incompleteness. To fill up this incompleteness one tries to become something. This very urge for attainment makes one to look for comfort, for security which results in resorting to authority. This resorting to authority prevents meeting anew, afresh. Thus, according to Krishnamurti, it is because of this desire of the self to be something that makes one unable to understand the ever-changing life that consequently gives rise to conflict between ‘what one is’ and ‘what one should be’. He says, “You have a set of values established through experience, through tradition, and those values have become your guide; with these past standards and values you approach a fresh experience which must naturally create a conflict” (Krishnamurti, 2007, p. 120).

In the philosophy of Krishnamurti, to understand the self is to know that there is no self or I. The moment we know the non-existence of the self, we stop thinking for its security, for its permanency and thereby we stop conflict to take place.

According to Krishnamurti, understanding of the self ends conflict and suffering since it is because of the ignorance on our part about ourselves that we create the ‘self’. It is because of our not knowing what makes up the ‘self’ that we give permanency to it. There is no self in reality according to Krishnamurti. The very concept of a permanent self is considered as an illusion in his philosophy as he observes the ‘self’ as nothing else but our thoughts; the two are identical. He does not believe in the existence of a self that exists separately from our thought. To put it differently, there is no thinker who thinks; the thinker itself is thought. It is because we desire to allot permanency to the self that we create the idea of the thinker existing separately from thought as we find Krishnamurti saying, “The observer and the observed are one. To experience the thinker and his thought as one is very arduous, for the thinker is ever taking shelter behind his thought; he separates himself from his thoughts to safeguard himself, to give himself continuity, permanency. The thinker is his thought, the thinker and his thoughts are not two different processes” (Krishnamurti, 2013, p. 80). In fact, according to Krishnamurti, it is the thought that creates the thinker, “It is the thought that makes the thinker, and if there were no capacity to think at all, there would be no thinker” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 70). The entire thought process is conceived of as self by Krishnamurti. In his opinion, self is the way one talks, the beliefs that one holds, one’s reactions to situations and people, one’s desires and intentions. And as our thoughts change in every passing

moment, so also the self; we create or give permanency to the self by identifying ourselves with the ever-fleeting thoughts.

As far as Krishnamurti is concerned, there is no substantial self that continues, one is not continuously one thing. For instance, if one is honest at a particular moment, he cannot claim to be so throughout his life because in the very next moment, he may not be honest. So, Krishnamurti opines that the ‘self’ comes into existence due to one’s thought of oneself as the enduring being. It is the result of considering oneself possessing certain characteristics. But since one change from moment to moment, so one cannot be continuously ‘honest’, ‘violent’, ‘generous’, ‘kind’ etc. What one is at a particular moment is true for that moment only; it does not continue. It is when a person identifies himself with an image he has of himself that he confers permanency, eternity to his self. “So, what is the self? The name, the form, the body, certain characteristics identify themselves with the ‘me’” (Krishnamurti, 2015, p. 34). Therefore, the permanency that we ascribe to self is apparent, not real as per Krishnamurti. What I am at a particular moment is true for that moment only. As the moment gets over, the ‘I’ of that moment vanishes. And a new ‘I’ gets revealed with the next experience. But due to the absence of the understanding of the self, we carry the ‘I’ of a particular moment beyond that moment. If I was kind yesterday, my thought carries the notion of the ‘I’ as kind which right now I may not be. At the present moment I may be cruel. Therefore, Krishnamurti says that the ‘I’ has to be discovered anew from moment to moment.

For the discovery of the ‘I’ anew in every passing moment, Krishnamurti asks us to observe it passively from moment to moment. This observation, then, reveals the transitoriness of the ‘I’. This is what Krishnamurti means by understanding of the ‘self’; it is the understanding that the self does not exist. What actually exist are our thoughts. There is no ‘I’ who is violent, but simply violence. I am not different from my violence. In his own words, “I am not different from the greed or envy or hate or jealousy. Suffering is me. But I have separated anger, jealousy, sorrow from me so that I can control it, shape it, run away from it. But if that is me, I can do nothing about it but just observe it. So the observer is the observed, the thinker is the thought, the experience is the experienced. The two are not separate” (Krishnamurti, 2005, p. 13).

This revelation can happen only when one passively observes the ways of the self in freedom. In other words, understanding the self is possible in *choiceless awareness* of the self in freedom. It is through freedom that we can confront the truth of the self that it is not something continuous, something permanent. In the philosophy of Krishnamurti, freedom is freedom from all sorts of conditioning as he says, “without freedom truth cannot be discovered, without freedom there can be no experience of the real. Freedom must be sought out—freedom from the self-enclosing walls of good and bad; freedom from authority and imitation, freedom from self, the cause of conflict and pain” (Krishnamurti, 2013, p.49). Conditioning makes one to observe one’s self with choice; one tries to choose between ‘what one is’ and ‘what one should be’, i.e., between the actual and the ideal. But the observation in freedom is required not to have any choice: “Freedom does not imply

choice” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p.182). Krishnamurti’s view is that one cannot actually choose as there is no ‘I’ existing separately from one’s thoughts as its controller; one cannot mould the present according to one’s desire as that desire itself is self. One cannot control over the fact. So, he talks about passively aware of the ways of the self without any condemnation or judgment or scrutiny. Such awareness brings the understanding of oneself as mere desire and nothing more than that. And in this understanding, the self comes to see itself as false. Thus, one’s understanding of the background of the self that it is conditioned, it is made out of desires and thoughts leads one to understand the falsity of the self. Then the ‘I’ ceases and when there is no ‘I’, there is no conflict. And in the absence of conflict, peace comes upon.

The present paper finds that while talking about the understanding of the ‘self’, Krishnamurti actually talks about *destruction of the ‘self’*. In fact, his primary concern is how to destroy or dissolve the ‘self’ or the ‘I’. In his own words, “I am concerned with the dissolution of the ‘me’, of the ‘I’, the negation of the self” (Krishnamurti, 2012, p. 31). When we understand the ‘self’, it leads us to destroy it. As the ‘self’ is our creation, we create it through not having knowledge about it, so its understanding leads us to destroy it. This very destruction of the ‘self’ brings peace as there remains no center from which conflict emanates. As per the discussion made, we land in conflict because we constantly struggle to become something which we are not. It is because we do not know that we cannot change the actual; we cannot choose between ‘what we are’ and ‘what we want to be’, as we are nothing but our desire which are ever fleeting. When we fully understand the self as false, we destroy our own created ‘self’ and thereby, stop our attempt to act against the actual which results in cessation of conflict. And when we make ourselves conflict-free, we can hope for taking place the same in the world outside.

Another point revealed from the forgoing discussion is that Krishnamurti makes peace in the individual level is a necessary pre-requisite for attaining world-peace as he is found to make no difference between the individual and the world; the world is what the individual projects himself. So, his view is that until and unless we establish peace within ourselves, it is a futile attempt on our part to establish peace in the world outside. If the individual himself is the source of conflict, then naturally everything he does will breed conflict and nothing else. Therefore, Krishnamurti puts fundamental importance in bringing about radical revolutionary transformation on the individual level in order to transform the world. In his own words, “We want to bring about changes in the world—economic changes, social changes, and so on, but it seems to me that one cannot really bring about a significant outward change, unless there is a radical psychological revolution, transformation. For the inner, surely, always overcomes the outer. What one is, that one creates outwardly. And unless this transformation takes place, mere outward reforms, outward changes, however carefully worked out, will inevitably fail because the thing that is missing is this inward revolution, this inward transformation” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 362).

This inner transformation that Krishnamurti talks about is possible through self-knowledge. This self-knowledge is nothing but understanding of oneself according to him. He is found to say, “So, it is essential to

begin with oneself; to bring about the transformation in one's own attitude, actions and direction. That transformation, surely, must begin with self-knowledge, because without self-knowledge, there can be no radical revolution. Revolution is not according to an idea, according to a pattern; then it is not a revolution—it is merely a modified continuity. But, if one can understand the psychological process of oneself, the inward demands, pursuits, fears, ambitions, hopes; and if one can go through the whole process of them—then it is possible to bring about a transformation. And, therefore, it is necessary, surely, to understand oneself before one can bring about a transformation, outwardly or inwardly” (Krishnamurti, 2014, p. 363).

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Revisiting Political Philosophy within Ancient Indian Knowledge System and Traditions: Key Elements

Kasturi Bharadwaj

Abstract

India's intellectual heritage, spanning millennia, encompasses a diverse and multifaceted knowledge system. This system, developed across fields like philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, arts, and governance, is deeply intertwined with the cultural, philosophical, and spiritual traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Its influence persists in contemporary knowledge and practices. This paper examines political philosophy within the Indian Knowledge System and its relevance to modern political and administrative practices. Political philosophy has historically been a cornerstone of India's intellectual tradition, emphasizing principles such as ethical leadership, a dharma-based administration, decentralized governance, sustainability, and the concept of a welfare state. It offers valuable perspectives on statecraft, policy formulation, administrative customs, and governance structures that have evolved over centuries. The ancient Gram Sabha system and the Sangha in Buddhist tradition serve as notable examples of democratic and decentralized practices in ancient India. Similarly, concepts like Sarvodaya (the welfare of all) and Antyodaya (the upliftment of the most vulnerable) illustrate models of inclusive development and welfare administration within India's historical political frameworks. Much like the broader Indian Knowledge System, ancient Indian political philosophy is a complex and varied domain, shaped by a multitude of texts, thinkers, and schools of thought, all influenced by India's rich cultural and spiritual values. These political philosophies are well-documented in ancient texts such as the Rigveda, Upanishads, Manusmriti, Arthashastra, and Mahabharata, as well as in Buddhist texts like the Vinaya Pitaka, Digha Nikaya, and Jataka stories, and Jain texts such as the Acharanga Sutra, Bhagavati Sutra, and Nitivakyamrita. Ancient Indian political philosophy offers a comprehensive and ethical approach to governance. By integrating key elements of this historical wisdom, India can enhance its governance and public administration framework to promote inclusive and equitable development. Furthermore, combining ancient Indian insights

with contemporary governance needs may provide valuable solutions to address global challenges related to governance, ethics, and sustainable development.

Keywords: political philosophy, Indian knowledge system, governance, administration, ethics, sustainability

Introduction:

Ancient Indian Political Philosophy comprises of Vedic folklore, the Vedantic idealism, the Jain and Buddhist visions and the gradual emergence of what A.T Embree (1992) refers to as formation of the Hindu way life reflecting the confluence of diverse streams of Indian civilization until first Muslim conquest of parts of India. The political ideas and state formation in India in the ancient phase may be illustrated by the different political ideas and structures prevalent in Vedic, post -Vedic, Mauryan and post Mauryan period of Indian history. Ideas and institutions of kingship, government and state during the period show a trajectory of evolution from society-centred political formations of multifunctional nature to political structures of more specialised functions centred on the king, government, and the state. However, Dharmashastra tradition was more prolific than Arthashastra tradition in classical writings. In Classical Hindu writings, the abstract purana or mythic mode of writing generally prevailed over positivist or factual itihās (history) mode of writing. Even Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is more of an abstract treatise on statecraft than significantly contextualized in time and place and dynasty (Singh, 2023). Nevertheless, one sees the faint beginning of political ideas in the Vedas, Upanishads and epics, and then their crystallization in the myths of creation of state in several Brahminical and Buddhist texts. While the *Rigveda* does not contain a systematic or theoretical approach to political philosophy in the way later texts like the *Manusmṛiti* or the *Mahabharata* might, it provides foundational ideas on governance, justice, social roles, and cosmic order. It suggests that governance is ideally a spiritual duty, with rulers, priests, and the community all playing interconnected roles in upholding the law of 'ṛta' to ensure the prosperity and harmony of society. The concept of 'ṛta' in the *Rigveda* can be viewed as a guiding principle of both cosmic and social order. It is the law that governs both the universe and human society. 'Ṛta' was associated with truth, law, and the right order of things, implying that just actions lead to cosmic and social stability. This connects with the role of kings and rulers, who were expected to ensure that justice and fairness prevailed in society, reflecting the cosmic order (Sondhi, 2023). Political angle in these earliest texts is suggestively implied and inferred from cosmological hierarchy.

Most significant texts in the culmination of Vedic literature are the Upanishads that developed Vedantic philosophical discourse. The political philosophy of the Upanishads is deeply intertwined with spiritual and ethical concerns. One of the central themes of the Upanishads is the idea of *Brahman* (the ultimate reality) and *Atman* (the self or soul) being one. It presents a vision of interconnected universe with a single, unifying principle behind the apparent diversity in the cosmos, any articulation of which is called Brahman. Brahman resides in the atman, the unchanging core of the human individual. This principle of non-duality is foundational

in understanding the Upanishadic approach to human society. While it does not outline specific political systems or institutions, it suggests that a just society is one in which rulers act with wisdom, virtue, and in alignment with cosmic order. The ultimate message is that political and social harmony arises when individuals realize their interconnectedness, align with universal principles, and practice self-discipline and wisdom.

Against Vedantic monistic idealism, Jain Philosophy assumed plurality of souls and emphasized experience in the material universe. Hemachandra in his poetic composition on the 24 Jain Tirthankaras and other eminent patriarchs and legendary rulers in Jain mythology portrayed the ideal king in terms of puritanical character, reformist legislation and given to charity and welfare of people. Such a ruler will establish his own era upon Earth, (Mahiviracharitra, 12. 59-770, excerpted in Embree 1992, pp. 84-85) Somadeva a Digambar Jain writer of 10th century portrays the characteristics of the ideal king in less puritanical and pompous garbs. In his, *Nitivakyamitra* (17.180-84) he says, “A true lord is he who is righteous, pure in lineage, conduct and associates brave and considerate in his behaviour. For the prosperity of his subject’s kingdom is the tree and the king the root. His order is a wall that none can climb. The king is the maker of times and his kingdom in the reigns in due season and all living things are at peace. In view of pluralist and non-violent temper of the Jain philosophy, their theory of kingship would appear to be less idealist in terms of political thought in less inclined to what is called realism in modern theories of international relations.

Like Jainism, Buddhism too took a reformist stance towards the ritualistic and aristocratic features of early Vedism. A major Buddhist text, *Digha Nika-ya* address the question of origin and evolutionary profile of the state. It postulates to get out of the evil and degenerate the ways of society. People gathered and reasoned and resolved: “Let us choose one man from among us, to dispense wrath, censure and banishment when they are right and proper, and give him a share of a rice in return.” (Digha Nikaya, 3.80 ff). Thus was the *Mahasammata* approved by the whole people *Mahajana* as Lord of the Fields (Khettnam) and hence Khatiya (Kshatriya). In the opinion of A.T Embree (1992) this is probably one of the world’s oldest versions of the contractual theory of state (Singh, 2023). Jataka Story also contains important insights into political philosophy, particularly in relation to governance, justice, and the welfare of society. Many Jataka tales feature the figure of a wise and just king, often demonstrating the ideal qualities of a ruler. These stories emphasize the importance of justice in governance. Rulers are depicted as upholders of the law and fairness, acting in the interest of truth and righteousness.

Thus, the Idea of ethical governance is deeply rooted in ancient philosophical, ethical, and administrative traditions of India. It encompasses principles from Vedic texts, Dharmashastras, Arthashastra, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist tradition and various other indigenous sources that guided the social, economic, and political order in India for centuries. The key element of Political Philosophy encompasses these multifaceted traditions are:

Dharma:

Ancient Indian political philosophy emphasizes that governance transcends mere administration, focusing

instead on the establishment of righteousness, justice, and comprehensive well-being. Dharma, serving as the core principle, provides the philosophical foundation for governance, upholding social order, justice, and ethical conduct. The term “Dharma” originates from the Sanskrit root “dhṛ” (धृ), signifying “to uphold” or “to sustain.” It encompasses righteousness, duty, law, and moral order within society. In the context of governance, Dharma constitutes the ethical framework that rulers and administrators are expected to adhere to, ensuring harmony and justice. It serves as a guiding force for both rulers (Rajadharma) and citizens (Prajā). Dharma has been a fundamental concept in Indian philosophy, ethics, and governance. Governance aimed to maintain a balance between Dharma (the code), Artha (economic prosperity), Kama (desires and well-being), and Moksha (liberation), the “tetrad” of Purushartha in Hindu philosophy. A competent ruler was expected to uphold these aspects while ensuring justice, fairness, and the well-being of all.

Sociologically, the “Varna system” is a distinctive feature of Hindu social structure, with each unit defined by social customs that regulate marriage, dietary habits, occupation, and other aspects of life. Ancient Indian texts generally portray society as a hierarchical structure, governed by caste (Varna) and duty (Dharma). While society was divided into groups, the ideal was that all individuals, regardless of their position, contribute to societal well-being. The Arthashastra and Manusmriti reflect a highly organized social order, where roles were often defined by Varna and occupation. Kautilya also stressed the importance of balancing different social groups to prevent marginalization. Notably, during the post-Vedic period, the state’s role shifted towards maintaining social stability, enabling various groups to live according to their respective Dharma (Embree, 1992, p. 207). Ancient knowledge systems also depict Dharma as a dynamic and contextual concept, unlike rigid laws. The Mahabharata’s assertion, “Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah” (Dharma protects those who uphold it), highlights this adaptability. The essence of governance lies in interpreting and applying Dharma based on time, place, and circumstance. Dharma’s role as the foundation of governance is elaborated in various ancient texts. Vedas & Upanishads – Establish the moral and ethical foundations of governance. Ramayana & Mahabharata – Offer practical examples of Dharmic rule through the lives of Lord Rama and Yudhishtira. Arthashastra by Kautilya – Provides a strategic and administrative interpretation of Dharma in statecraft. Manusmriti & other Dharmashastras – Outline laws and codes of conduct for rulers and citizens.

Concept of Raja and Rajadharma (Dharma of a King/Ruler):

In ancient Indian philosophy, the role of the king (*Raja*) or sovereign extended beyond mere power; it was deeply rooted in ethical and religious obligations. The ideal ruler was envisioned as a protector and moral compass, embodying the concept of a *Chakravartin*, a universal sovereign dedicated to establishing social harmony through *dharma*. This *Rajadharma*, extensively detailed in texts like the Mahabharata, outlined the king’s duty to safeguard his subjects and uphold justice. A primary responsibility was shielding the realm from external threats and internal disorder. This encompassed maintaining law and order, ensuring security, and resolving conflicts. Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, a seminal work on statecraft, provided a pragmatic, and sometimes

stringent, approach to governance. It advocated for a strong, centralized authority led by a skilled ruler, emphasizing strategies for espionage, diplomacy, and warfare.

The king's role as a guardian of *Dharma* mandated just rule and the prioritization of public welfare. This involved equitable treatment of all subjects, regardless of social standing, and the establishment of a fair legal system. While compassion was essential, the enforcement of *Dandaniti* (punishment) was also crucial for maintaining order. Punishment, viewed as a corrective measure rather than retribution, aimed to preserve social stability. The *Arthashastra* stressed proportionate and just application of penalties.

Buddhist and Jain traditions also contributed to the ethical framework of kingship. The Buddhist concept of *Dhamma* emphasized compassionate governance and fairness, while Jainism, grounded in *Ahimsa* (non-violence), advocated for the protection of all life. Jain texts promoted just rulers who prioritized the welfare of all beings.

A crucial aspect of *Rajadharma* was balancing *Artha* (economic prosperity) with *Dharma* (ethical values). The ruler was tasked with fostering economic growth and ensuring equitable resource distribution. The *Arthashastra* provided detailed guidelines for economic management, highlighting the connection between a prosperous society and effective governance. The philosophical tradition of *Rajadharma* emphasized the moral and ethical dimensions of rulership. The ideal sovereign governed justly, prioritized public well-being, upheld righteousness, and maintained stability. The Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita explored the ethical dilemmas inherent in leadership, emphasizing the importance of acting according to one's *dharma*, even when faced with difficult choices. The core principle of *Rajadharma* was the alignment of governance with moral principles, fostering a society characterized by justice, peace, and ethical values. This framework, establishing duties and obligations, shaped ancient Indian political thought and continues to influence contemporary discussions on leadership and justice.

The notion of **Political Obligation** was extensively explored in ancient India. A cornerstone of this concept is *Dharma*, which encompasses moral and ethical duties relevant to both individual and societal roles. Within the political sphere, *Dharma* dictates that rulers must prioritize justice, protect their subjects, and ensure the state's prosperity. Conversely, citizens are expected to demonstrate loyalty and obey laws, while retaining the right to critique and oppose unjust governance.

Kautilya, in his *Arthashastra*, articulated that a king's primary duty (*Rajadharma*) is to safeguard the people's welfare through law enforcement, economic development, and national security. Citizens, in turn, are obligated to adhere to laws and contribute to stability. However, they are also granted the right to resist or depose a ruler who becomes oppressive or neglects their responsibilities. This highlights that, within the Indian tradition, the king is not considered above the law and is bound by rigorous moral and ethical standards. Corruption, exploitation, and unethical conduct are strictly prohibited. The ruler's actions must serve as a model for their subjects, and they are held accountable for their decisions. Texts like the *Manusmriti* and

Arthashastra indicate that citizens are not only permitted but expected to oppose a king who deviates from Raja Dharma.

Buddhism and Jainism offer distinct perspectives on political obligation, emphasizing personal ethics and governance rooted in non-violence (Ahimsa) and moral integrity. The *Tattvartha Sutra* of Jainism, for example, posits that while political authorities possess power, its exercise must align with the fundamental principles of Ahimsa and Satya (truth). Ancient Indian Political Philosophy presents political obligation as a complex interplay of *Dharma*, justice, and morality. It underscores the reciprocal responsibilities between rulers and citizens. The state is tasked with upholding justice, peace, and welfare, while citizens are expected to obey laws, act virtuously, and, when necessary, challenge or remove rulers who fail to fulfil their ethical and moral duties.

The nature of the Political System and Statecraft formed a crucial component of ancient Indian political philosophy. Governance and administration, as reflected in historical records, predominantly centered around monarchical structures, where the king (Raja) was ideally envisioned as a public servant.

The *Manusmriti* provides a detailed framework for this monarchical administration, positioning the king as the central figure. Specifically, it advocates for a centralized monarchical system, granting the king ultimate authority. The king served as the administrative head and final legal arbiter, his authority often perceived as divinely sanctioned, with a primary duty to ensure public welfare, encompassing peace, justice, and prosperity. Similarly, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* also places the king at the core of its governance model.

Kautilya conceptualized the state as an intricate, interconnected system of various components, including the king, ministers, officials, and the populace. Effective state function required the harmonious operation of these elements. A well-structured administration, with clearly defined roles for officials and bureaucrats, was deemed essential for maintaining order and prosperity. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (4th century BCE) offered comprehensive guidelines for effective governance, covering statecraft, administration, espionage, taxation, military strategy, and diplomacy. It emphasized the need for a pragmatic, wise, and morally upright ruler, while also advocating for the strategic use of diplomacy, espionage, and calculated force. The *Arthashastra* remains a significant treatise on statecraft, offering insights into leadership, governance, and political strategy.

While the king held supreme authority, the *Manusmriti* also underscored the importance of advisors and ministers. Kings were expected to consult with experienced individuals before making critical decisions, reflecting a form of consultative governance. This ensured that policies were carefully considered and just. Kings were often advised by a *Mantriparishad* (Council of Ministers), comprising scholars and experienced advisors.

Although ancient Indian governance was primarily monarchical, it contained elements that resonate with democratic principles, particularly in terms of collective decision-making, justice, consultation, and public participation. The *Rigveda* mentions early democratic assemblies like the *Sabha* and *Samiti*, where people

participated in governance. Republics, known as *Mahajanapadas* or *Ganasanghas*, were also prevalent, characterized by collective decision-making and rule by councils rather than singular monarchs. A system of decentralized governance, dividing administration into *Gram* (village), *Janapada* (province), and *Mahajanapadas* (state), was well-established. Village *Panchayats*, acting as autonomous units for local governance, played an integral role in representing local interests.

Vedic and Buddhist teachings both emphasized the community's role in decision-making. The Vedic *Sabha* served as a forum for crucial governance decisions, made by consensus among various community members. In the Buddhist *Sangha*, decisions were made through mutual consensus and collective participation of monks, reflecting values such as inclusivity, equality, and the collective will of the community.

The concept of **Welfare Administration** holds a significant position within Indian political Philosophy, emphasizing social justice, the provision of fundamental needs, and a proactive governmental role in enhancing public well-being. Kautilya, in his *Arthashastra*, advocated for a ruler's active involvement in state welfare, stressing resource management and economic prosperity as direct contributors to the people's welfare. The monarch was tasked with ensuring basic needs—food, security, and infrastructure—were met. However, this ancient perspective differs from modern welfare state notions, focusing more on a sustainable social structure rather than purely procedural welfare mechanisms.

Furthermore, the Indian Knowledge Traditions underscores inclusive development grounded in principles of equity, justice, and social inclusion. It prioritizes the upliftment of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, ensuring equal participation in economic, political, and social spheres. The *Arthashastra* illustrates this through state-regulated trade, taxation, and industry, promoting inclusivity. Dharma-based economies encouraged ethical trade practices. Indian philosophical and religious traditions, including Buddhism and Jainism, strongly emphasize equality and social inclusion. The distribution of wealth and resources is a recurring theme in Vedic and Buddhist texts, advocating for a cooperative social and economic model.

The Jain tradition promotes non-violence and universal equality, highlighting moral choices that influence both society and governance. These ideals contributed to democratic concepts of inclusivity and equality. Sarvodaya and Antyodaya highlight a holistic and inclusive approach to human welfare and development. Sarvodaya, with roots in Vedic, Upanishadic, and Buddhist philosophies, champions universal welfare, compassion, and shared societal responsibility. The Vedic concept of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (the world is one family) reflects this, advocating for dignity and respect for all. Buddhist compassion (Karuna) and the ideal of Nirvana for collective benefit further emphasize communal welfare over individual success.

Antyodaya, emphasizing the upliftment of the most marginalized, draws from spiritual, philosophical, and social justice principles within Indian traditions. The Vedic and Upanishadic emphasis on the unity of all beings underscores the interconnectedness of individuals, regardless of social standing. The ancient Indian vision of social and economic justice emphasized universal access to necessities—food, shelter, education, and spiritual guidance.

Ancient Indian political philosophy is deeply interwoven with spiritual and moral principles. The ideals of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Satya (truthfulness) served as fundamental guides for both those in power and their constituents. This philosophical tradition presents a nuanced interplay between statecraft, ethics, spirituality, and social structure. It emphasizes the significance of virtuous leadership, the maintenance of equity and order, and the collective welfare of the community. While acknowledging the presence of authority and social stratification, it also positioned the ruler as a public servant, bound by obligations and dharma. The diverse array of ideas found in texts such as the Mahabharata, Arthashastra, Ramayana, and Manusmriti continues to shape contemporary political and ethical discussions in India.

Governance, as conceptualized within this ancient framework, was comprehensive, morally grounded, and distributed. It was anchored in Dharma, economic prosperity, and justice, thereby establishing a robust foundation for societal stability and advancement. Concepts such as Rajadharma, collaborative decision-making, and ecological sustainability continue to inform modern governance approaches. Many facets of this historical governance are evident in India's Panchayati Raj system, models of ethical leadership, decentralized administration, and the ethical values enshrined in the Indian constitution. From the monarch's responsibility for the populace's well-being to the philosophical focus on social parity and the empowerment of marginalized groups, these principles continue to guide contemporary Indian welfare and development policies, ensuring that the needs of all citizens are addressed comprehensively and inclusively. In contemporary contexts, concepts like Sarvodaya and Antyodaya also resonate with global development objectives, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which advocate for inclusive prosperity. This necessitates policies that proactively address the needs of the most vulnerable, whether concerning economic opportunities, healthcare, education, or social integration. Incorporating these principles into modern governance can foster a more ethical, equitable, and sustainable society, offering practical solutions to global governance and administrative challenges.

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The Discourse on Kuṇḍalinī

Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta: An Examination

Shubhra Jyoti Das

Abstract

The whole text of *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta* is repeatedly dotted with the advice to leave *kāminī* and *kāncāṇa* i.e. objects of sexual and material desire. They have been described as the main hindrances in the path of yoga. According to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, even a little of *viśayabuddhi* does not permit the vision of God. Therefore, everyone is expected to put his or her best self – effort in order to get rid of these two impediments on the path towards enlightenment. But at the same time, in his discourse on kuṇḍalinī energy, Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa asserts that due to presence of kuṇḍalinī in the mūlādhāra cakra, a common human mind abides in the genital organ (liṅga), the anus (guhya) and in the naval (nābhi) region. One can't get rid of the pull of *kāminī-kāncāṇa* until the energy rises up to anāhat cakra, located in the heart. Thus, it seems futile to give such an advice to anyone. The paper explores the possibility of reconciling this contradiction present in the text and examines whether it is real or not. Moreover, the rise of the kuṇḍalinī energy is not solely dependent on human effort. As per the prescription given in the Kathāmṛta, a devotee or seeker can only pray for it; but it depends primarily on the Divine-Will. Therefore, further, the paper looks for a solution to the question of freewill that springs as an implication of this discourse.

Keywords: *kāminī-kāncāṇa*, kuṇḍalinī, free will, bhakti, Advaita Vedānta

Introduction:

The whole text of *Śrī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta* is repeatedly dotted with the advice to leave *kāminī* and *kāncāṇa* i.e. objects of sexual and material desire. They have been described as the main hindrance in the path of yoga. The text, in Bengali, reads: “*kaminikancanijogerbyaghat / bastubicarkorbe/ meyemanushersharire ki ache – rakta, mangsha, charbi, naribhuri, krimi, mut, bishthaeishob/ sheishorireruparbhala basha keno?*” (Gupta, 2007, p.61) (transliterated from Bangla by author). According to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, even a little of this *vicayabuddhi* does not permit the vision of God in the same way as wet

match – sticks cannot be used for the purpose of ignition. As a matter of fact, these two are portrayed as synonyms of *māyā*. The text further reads: “*kaminikanchani maya/ urbhitoranek din thakle hoosh chale jay/ mone hoy beshachi/ methorguerbhar boy/ boiteboiteaarghennathakena*” (Gupta, 2007, Vol.1, p. 80). This, of course, is in a kind of Ethico – Philosophical nomenclature and is not used in the metaphysical sense. Until and unless this form of *māyā* is discarded, no aspirant can look forward to have an experience of God. Therefore, everyone is expected to put his or her best self – effort in order to get rid of these two impediments on the path towards enlightenment. But in addition to this strict injunction found in the *Kathāmṛta*, one parallel, if not contradictory, discourse seems to exist in the same text.

A very important discussion, in this context, takes place during his dialogue on the uprising of the *kuṇḍalinī* energy. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa asserts that a common human being’s mind abides in the genital organ, the anus and the naval region. “*Shadharaonjibermom linga, guhyaaarnabhite*” (Gupta, 2007, Vol.1, p.504). It seems that the condition of the mind is primarily due to the fact that the *kuṇḍalinī* is seated in the *mūlādhāra* – the lowest of all the *cakras*. According to him, Divine mother is present in every human body in the form of *kuṇḍalinī*, as if a serpent is sleeping in the four – petal lotus in the coiled form. The energy rises through the *suṣmnānādī* after yogic practices. Only when the energy reaches *anāhat cakra* located in the human heart, after crossing *svādhiṣṭhāna* and *manipura cakra*, the mind relocates itself from its usual abode and the seeker gets the glimpse of the Divine Light. The dialogue further continues to illustrate what happens to the seeker as the energy rises up to the *viśuddhi*, the *ājñā* and how it culminates in the *sahasrāra* where *śiva* unites with *śakti*. According to him, God can’t be realised unless *kuṇḍalinī* rises and, *bhakti* is the easiest of all methods to meet this end. Therefore, he advises everyone to pray to the Divine Mother so that She wakes and moves up: “*jago Maa kula-kundalini, tuminityananda swarupini prashupta bhujagakaraadharapadmabashini*” (Gupta, 2007, Vol.1, p. 504).

Mapping the issue:

Now, to the author’s mind, there appears to be a subtle contradiction when both these expositions are placed together. One can definitely ask – What is the point of advising someone to give up *kāminī* – *kāncāṇa*, as due to the natural location of *kuṇḍalinī*, the mind is bound to reside in the *linga*, *gūhya* and *nābhi* only? And since the movement of the energy depends on the Divine grace only, it is virtually impossible for the aspirant to get rid of the carnal pull by means of self – effort. It unnecessarily inserts a lot of negativity and strong feeling of remorse, when one fails to control the natural tendencies of the mind, for anyone who practically attempts to tread the advised path. Moreover, the subsequent question could be – is there any room of freewill for the seeker of Truth, at all, at least in this context, where the entire process takes place as a consequence of Divine Blessing? But a counter thesis can be argued based on the fact that the advice is qualified by various conditionals at various stages of the total recorded conversation.

One may argue that Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa’s sets of advice differ from group to group – viz. the disciples, the

devotees and the visitors. He actually has asked the *sannyāsīns* (Gupta, 2007, Vol. 1, p. 142) to give the duo up in toto, and the householders are supposed to renounce them mentally. But in practice, mentally giving them up presents a more difficult challenge than the physical abandonment since, even for the ascetics, there exists always a trap of *mithyācāra* as described by the *Bhagavadgītā*. As the text reads or rather warns with its subtle psychoanalysis –

“*karmendriyāṇisamyamya yāstemanasāsmaran/
indriyārthānvimu
uḍhātmamithyācāraḥ saucyate*” (*Bhagavad Gītā*, 3.6)

meaning, one who ponders over the objects of desire mentally, after giving them up externally, is a hypocrite. And therefore advises –

“*yastvindriyāṇīmanasāniyamya ārabakte ’rjuna/
karmendriyaiḥ karmayogamasaktaḥ saviśiṣyate*” (*Bhagavad Gītā*, 3.7)
“*tasmā dasaktaḥ satataṁ karmaṇ karma samācara/
asakto hyācāraṇ karma paramāpnoti puruṣaḥ*” (*Bhagavad Gītā*, 3.19)

The first verse means, “Controlling the sense-organs with the mind, he who commences the yoga of action with the organs of action, unattached, is held to excel, O Arjuna” (Warrier, 2000, p. 107); and the second one means, “Therefore, unattached, always do the work that has to be done; for, doing work with detachment, man attains the Supreme” (Warrier, 2000, p. 116).

This could be the reason why Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, at one place, goes onto say that complete renunciation is not meant for everyone. Some people will have to enter the life of a householder. They would attempt *niṣkāma karma* and break the jackfruit with the protection of mustard oil. Thus, at times he appears very adamant and at times quite flexible.

In addition, some people argue that, at places, Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa has advised the devotees to turn the vices like *kāma* and *krodha* towards God. One should have *kāma* i.e. desire to have a vision of God and should direct his or her anger towards all the obstructions that stand in between. Otherwise also, in the larger discourse of the *puruṣārthas*, we find a similar trend where *dharma* has been depicted as the controlling principle of *artha* and *kāma*. But still, in the author’s opinion, the subtle issue remains, at least partly, unaddressed since, for Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, even an iota of *viśayabuddhi* does not allow the seeker to realise God and absolute elimination depends only on the grace of the Divine Mother.

A re-look at the discourse and its implications:

Therefore, there is a need to have a re-look at Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa’s thoughts, in order to understand his advice of giving up *kāminī-kāncāṇa* and its implications in the larger context of Indian Ethics. With a little intense reading, it seems that devotion and surrender towards the Divine mother is the corner stone of his scheme. Objects of sexual and material desire can be given up, in the absolute sense of the term, so that it leads

to emancipation, only by dint of Divine intervention. Therefore, as a matter of fact, a devotee is supposed to engage in intense devotion and subsequently worldly desires will fall as the petals of flower falls after fructification. In other words, *saguṇabhakti*, in his exposition, gets established as a means for the eradication of the carnal and material cravings.

This has important suggestions in the domain of *Advaita Vedānta* Philosophy. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa seems to have appropriated the path which was denoted as secondary by Śaṅkara. In his introduction to the *Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara writes, “The Vedic law of works, promoting prosperity in the world, and enjoined on the class and life stations, promotes the purification of mind when it is observed with a sense of dedication to God and without any expectation for reward; though normally i.e., when done for desire for fruits, it leads its practitioners to the higher stations of heavenly being and so forth. It also indirectly subserves the attainment of emancipation, since such work purifies the mind and the purified mind becomes fit for practicing the discipline of knowledge which, in due course generates the liberating knowledge itself” (Warrier, 2000, pp. 4–5). In the *prasthāna* framework, it can be denoted as a selective reading since all the three paths are independent and equally valid according to the *Gītā*. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa has supplemented this deficiency in Śaṅkara *Vedānta*.

There is no doubt about the fact that Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa’s thoughts contain seeds of the *Advaita Vedānta*. In addition to his acceptance of the possibility of *jivanamukti*, in *Kathāmṛita* only Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa says that at times, due to intensification of *devabhāva*, he used to feel restless until someone would come and prostrate before him. This is an echo of Śaṅkara’s ‘śivohamśivoham’ (Bāl Padāvali, 2016, p.34). He, while identifying Brahman and Kālī, agrees with Śaṅkara’s position on *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* Brahman, to the extent that both are different aspects of the same Reality and improvises upon it claiming that experience of a personal God is possible.

The author doesn’t subscribe to the view that *Advaita Vedānta* is a copyright of Śaṅkara only. *Advaita* begins from *Upaniṣads*. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka calls it the supreme way and the supreme achievement, and goes up to Ramana Maharshi. The exponents and the commentators have appropriated the paths and the details present in the *Upaniṣads*. Therefore, I don’t think there is a need to create new terminologies with each appropriation, unless the commentator himself does that; by *Advaita* the author mean the end where there is no two-entity left.

Similarly, the problem of freewill also gets a balanced treatment in him. Though the awakening of *Kuṇḍalinī* can’t be met through self – effort, but the practice of devotion is a choice for the seeker of Truth. Therefore, freewill exists by dint of God’s *māyā* (Gupta, 2007, Vol.1, p.175) and since that *māyā* is real till the knowledge of Brahman dawns, freewill is real for every aspirant. According to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa this so called freewill is placed in the individual by God only and it is not unreal from the relative standpoint. As and when the seeker realises that there is no freewill in the absolute sense, by then, he becomes a *jivanamukta*.

Conclusion:

As the concluding remark, the author proposes his own interpretation of the tension that erupts due to the prescription to leave sexual and material desire on one hand and the declaration that human mind cannot come out of the whirlpool of such desires until *Kuṇḍalinī* rises to the level of *anahata*. It is perhaps true that one cannot fully get rid of the pull of *kaminī-kāncāṇa* until the *Kuṇḍalinī* crosses the first three *cakras*. But that should not lead one to conclude that there is no need to make any effort to get rid of the carnal and material desires at all. As a matter of fact, the process of awakening and rising of *Kuṇḍalinī* and the operation of giving up of the desires is complementary to each other.

This phenomenon is comparable to the operation of converting a piece of iron into a piece of magnet by means of the process of electromagnetic induction. When the piece of iron is subjected to voltage difference, it immediately gets converted to a perfect magnet. But when the voltage difference is withdrawn, it no more remains the perfect magnet; however, it does not become a perfect piece of iron either. As a matter of fact, in lieu of going to the aboriginal state, it retains a little bit of magnetism in it. When the same piece is subjected to the voltage difference once again, it becomes a perfect magnet more easily; since, it has to begin from a certain level of induction. When the process is repeated time and again, the process becomes easier in every cycle, till the iron becomes a perfect magnet.

In the similar pattern, the process of self-control and the rise of *Kuṇḍalinī* promote each other. If the energy awakens, it helps in getting rid of the desires and in those individuals, who try to control their carnal desires; and in those seekers who direct their desire towards God, as a form of *bhakti*, *Kuṇḍalinī* rises very fast. One progress facilitates the other process. Therefore, the conflict that is noticed between the two processes, *prima facie*, actually does not exist at more fundamental level. But, in order to realize this truth, one has to dive deep into the practice of *Vedānta* instead of just engaging in theoretical reflections.

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Integrating Diverse Ethical Paradigms: Philosophical Reappraisal of Capability Approach

K. Nirupama Singha

Abstract

The development of the capability approach as a normative framework has substantially advanced studies in human rights, justice, and well-being by redirecting attention from aggregate utility or material prosperity to the real freedom of individuals. While the capability approach incorporates ethical debates, there is little emphasis on a systematic study of comparing this approach with fundamental ethical doctrines such as Virtue Ethics, Consequentialism, and Deontology. Virtue ethics advances by stressing moral character and inner righteousness, supplementing the capability approach's exploration of external freedoms, incorporating an internal aspect of moral advancement. Consequentialism also guides this approach in addressing moral dilemmas and helps in resolving conflicts that arise from the scarcity of resources, facilitating a well-organized strategy for valuing capabilities. Deontological theories reinforce the capability approach's obligation to universal ethical principles, presenting a steadier groundwork for legal justice and human rights. Delving deeper than conceptual enhancement, the study will examine how incorporating these ethical perceptions strengthens the capability approach to evolve into a more refined ethical paradigm.

Keywords: capability approach, virtue ethics, consequentialism, deontology

Introduction:

The Capability Approach, as developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, has reformed modern-day examinations of the idea of justice, well-being, and human rights studies. It emphasizes individuals' concrete freedoms to accomplish valued functionings. Contrasting to conventional theoretical models of economics or utilitarianism, the capability approach emphasizes achieving freedom and well-being – individuals' capability to lead a lifestyle they consider as valuable. This approach has significant implications in policymaking in fields like poverty analysis, education, healthcare, gender studies, and so forth. But regardless of its wide-ranging pertinence, the capability approach continues to lag as a methodical philosophical discourse in comparison to well-founded moral philosophies like virtue ethics, consequentialist ethics, and deontological ethics.

This analysis contends that a systematic comparison between the above-mentioned ethical theories and the capability approach is important to refine the approach's moral reasoning, strengthening its capacity to deal with more intricate moral conflicts. Each of the theories offers viewpoints that can enhance the capability approach's moral argumentation. Virtue Ethics emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and moral character, which the capability approach has limited consideration of. Consequentialism presents a systematic outline to assess moral negotiations, an issue capability approach grapples with when deciding which capability should be given priority at the time of conflict. The objectives of this study include:

1. To ascertain harmonizing factors and competencies.
2. To discuss the capability approach's conceptual flaws.
3. To broaden the ethical scope of the capability approach.

The study starts with an overview of the core principles of the capability approach. Subsequently, it attempts to do an in-depth review of the three dominant ethical discourses, emphasizing their moral principles and commitments. Then, by making comparisons, this paper tries to examine how these theories can reinforce and enlighten the capability approach to its philosophical insight as well as its practical applicability. Subsequently, by incorporating these understandings, this paper shall synthesize major philosophical junctures and paradigmatic conflicts, highlighting the points where the capability approach can take inspiration from these theories. Further, the study also believes that such cross-disciplinary dialogues will not only enrich the normative basis of the capability approach, it also widens the approach's pertinency as a moral framework to address complex contemporary ethical challenges.

Capability Approach: An Overview:

The Capability approach, as mentioned earlier, is a normative tradition that examines justice, development, and well-being by emphasizing individuals' real freedoms or opportunities to lead a fulfilled life. This approach offers a comprehensive understanding of well-being by emphasizing human freedom and agency as significant requirements to achieve a flourished life (Sen, 1999). Sen, along with Nussbaum, considers human well-being as the uppermost moral concern. Human flourishing should not be measured solely by the accumulation of resources. Rather, it should be measured by people's having the actual freedoms to accomplish valuable functionings. Capabilities and functionings are two core concepts in the capability approach. The concept of functionings means 'the various things a person may value doing or being' (Sen, 1999). Thus, functioning indicates various components of living that enhance human well-being, e.g., human ability to acquire knowledge, participate in social life, be healthy, and experience career fulfillment. Capabilities, on the other hand, refer to 'the various combinations of functionings that the person can achieve' (Sen, 1992). Therefore, by capabilities, Sen has comprehended people's freedom to embrace a lifestyle they consider valuable.

The Capability Approach and Virtue Ethics:

Virtue ethics stresses that morality is rooted in the refinement of character, incorporating courage,

wisdom, and justice. The current section examines the mutual influence between the virtue ethics of Aristotle and the capability approach by drawing attention to elements of similarity and differences. Even though these two frameworks vary in their core concerns, capability thinkers, preeminently Martha Nussbaum, have widely used Aristotle's ideas in forming their ethical discourses.

Aristotelian ethics is primarily based on the notion of *eudaimonia*, usually rendered as the ultimate goal of human existence or human flourishing. For Aristotle, virtues refer to the properties or merits that lead us to the realization of *eudaimonia*. He opines, "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason, the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim" (Aristotle, 1980). Nevertheless, the good he talks about is a non-singular, diverse entity. Different spheres of human learning and activity aspire for various expressions of goodness and moral excellence. However, regardless of this diversity, Aristotle argues that there exists a supreme good that can be achieved by action, i.e. *eudaimonia*: "the highest of all goods achievable by action" (Aristotle, 1980). As different from goods that have instrumental value only (e.g., wealth), *eudaimonia* is an 'end in itself'. It has an intrinsic value and does not act as a tool or medium to attain another objective. Martha Nussbaum borrows this idea of Aristotle on *eudaimonia* to enhance her understanding of human well-being. According to her, happiness is 'something like flourishing human living, a kind of living that is active, inclusive of all that has intrinsic value' (Nussbaum, 2005). Considered in this light, virtue ethics offers a foundation for the capability approach, since Nussbaum endorses a moral framework seeking assurance for individuals to be offered the privilege to realize their potential and live a flourishing life.

Despite the resemblances, both approaches differ in many respects. One important distinction is evident in their moral consideration of character formation and motivation. Virtue ethics stresses cultivating the character of individuals through proper motivations and integration of righteousness within oneself. However, Nussbaum is less concerned with this psychological process and more with socio-political circumstances that allow individuals to realize their potential. She emphasizes people's having the actual opportunity to utilize or demonstrate their capabilities in a meaningful way. Thus, the capability approach offers a moral framework that incorporates individual capabilities with outward social conditions. It highlights the idea that human flourishing is not only an abstract ideal but a concrete reality based on realizable opportunities. Therefore, the capability approach may be regarded as a value-based framework that transcends mere individual virtues. It examines well-being against the backdrop of social life, political freedom, and economy, which makes it more relevant in contemporary ethical debates on justice, policy-making, and human rights.

The Capability Approach and Consequentialism:

The ethical theory of consequentialism examines the moral significance of an action by considering its outcomes or results. According to this theory, moral principles should be directed towards the attainment of maximum well-being for the maximum people. These are often calculated in terms of material prosperity, utility,

or sometimes happiness. For Amartya Sen, consequentialism is a theory that stresses the idea that ‘every choice, whether of actions, institutions, motivations, rules, etc., be ultimately determined by the goodness of the consequent states of affairs’ (Sen, 1987). Hence, the goal of the capability approach is to scale up the freedoms and opportunities of individuals, including their material prosperity, which can be roughly viewed as having a consequentialist aim. However, this interpretation is too basic and does not fully grasp the core contrast between the two approaches.

The major criterion of comparison between the two frameworks is how both have addressed the issue of poverty and social justice. Peter Singer, a prominent consequentialist philosopher, points out that poverty can be reduced on a global level through redistributive measures and policies like a philanthropic contribution or voluntary aid to the disadvantaged by wealthy people (Singer, 1972). He contends that such initiatives will help an overall increase in utility by mitigating suffering and enhancing well-being. In a similar manner, the capability approach also aims to lessen poverty and increase opportunities for the poor. But they differ in their ethical justification. The former aims at aggregate utility, and the latter emphasizes human dignity and the individual’s intrinsic worth. The aggregate outlook of consequentialism, particularly utilitarian ethics, overlooks individual uniqueness, quantifies the general welfare, and fails to deliberate on the subjective nature of well-being. Nussbaum criticized this by maintaining that ‘aggregate data aren’t enough for a normative assessment of how a nation is doing: we need to know how each one is doing, considering each as a separate life’ (Nussbaum, 2000).

The next point of comparison between utilitarianism and the capability approach is their consideration of cultural diversity and moral pluralism. Both Sen and Nussbaum acknowledge the significance of considering contextual and cultural differences in evaluating well-being. Conversely, utilitarianism usually thinks about the universalized concept of well-being, using utility as a single criterion to measure good. This attitude results in overlooking the essence of generational and cultural differences in determining a good life. So, the capability approach criticizes this assimilation by highlighting the importance of differences in social evaluation and moral reasoning. In comparison to consequentialism, the capability approach offers a more comprehensive account of well-being by considering human freedom, agency, and capabilities along with material opulence. Consequentialism is concerned with only external factors, whereas the capability approach incorporates internal affairs by holding that well-being realization requires not only material possessions but also substantive freedom to pursue a meaningful life.

The Capability Approach and Deontological Ethics:

Deontology and the capability approach illustrate a close association, particularly in terms of moral duty, intrinsic worth, and human dignity. Kant’s moral principle that strongly strike a chord with capability approach is the maxim: “So act that you use humanity, in your own person as well as in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means” (Kant, 2011). This imperative resonates with the fundamental commitment of the capability approach to treat individuals as ends in themselves, and not just as

means to social or economic policies. Sen's emphasis on the function of human agency in assessing human life, requiring that individuals must possess agency to make life decisions on their own so that they can lead a valuable life, mirrors Kantian understanding that moral actions are based on personal autonomy and rational agency. Similarly, Nussbaum builds upon Kantian philosophy by integrating human dignity as the foundation of the 'list of capabilities' prepared by her (Nussbaum, 2005). Kant's assertion that every individual possesses an intrinsic worth, independent of his/her external situation, is represented by Nussbaum in her analysis of justice, where dignity is considered to be the normative foundation of the justice system.

Sen and Nussbaum, by emphasizing the functioning concept, give weight to what individuals should be capable of doing and becoming, corresponding to deontological ethics of moral obligation and duty. The capability approach somewhat manifests deontological principles by directing moral agents to act and become what they aspire for. Functioning has two dimensions: doing and being. The 'doing' aspect of functioning has deontological implications, whereas the 'being' aspect corresponds more closely to virtue ethics, emphasizing the type of person one ought to develop into.

Conclusion: The Capability Approach as an Evolving Ethical Paradigm:

This study unveils valuable perspectives that align with the overall objective of this analysis, emphasizing how the capability approach incorporates and rises above traditional ethical discourses to evolve into a more efficient ethical paradigm. One crucial feature of philosophically sound ethical theories is their ability to coordinate manifold moral reflections – character, outcome, and duties— without slipping into reductionism. The capability approach maintains this middle ground by incorporating:

1. **Virtue Ethics:** Sen (followed by Nussbaum), by focusing on human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) and the realization of capabilities, embraces Aristotle's philosophy of a flourishing life. But unlike the Aristotelian version, this approach does not look to an intangible abstract vision of virtue. Instead, the approach presents policy-driven, concrete suggestions to ensure that people have real freedom and opportunities to exercise as well as cultivate their capabilities.
2. **Consequential Ethics:** While criticizing a completely utility-oriented blueprint, the approach of capability acknowledges the significance of considering outcomes in evaluating well-being. But unlike consequential ethics, this approach emphasizes people's well-being and agency. Capability philosophers do not see individuals as mere facilitators of social welfare; rather, they advocate for analyzing their defined conditions, opportunities, and freedoms. This advancement has helped Sen and Nussbaum's approach to uphold an ethical emphasis on justice without committing the same mistake as utilitarianism (neglecting individual entitlements in the interest of collective well-being)
3. **Deontology:** The capability approach endorses Kant's moral principles by advocating that no individual should be regarded as a mere instrument to attain some end, emphasizing the idea that justice implies appreciating individuals' autonomy and their fundamental worth. But unlike established deontological

principles, this approach abstains from strict ethical absolutism by considering insights from social and economic principles, hence enabling greater moral flexibility.

To sum up, we can say that refined with the philosophical insights of traditional ethical theories discussed above, the capability approach gains prominence as a more ethically refined and philosophically nuanced framework. It not only safeguards the fundamental principles of these ethical traditions but also succeeds in surmounting their shortcomings. This makes the capability approach strategically qualified to address the contemporary issues of justice, well-being, and development.

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Relevance of the Sāṃkhya Principles in Modern Education System

Champak Deka

Abstract

This paper delves into the enduring relevance of Sāṃkhya philosophy within the context of contemporary educational systems. The foundational principles of Sāṃkhya, including the dualism of puruṣa and prakṛti, the theory of guṇas, the evolutionary framework of principles and its epistemological approach, offer valuable insights for fostering holistic and effective learning. By emphasizing the balance between subjective and objective knowledge, understanding individual temperaments, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging interdisciplinary connections, Sāṃkhya provides a framework for addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern education. This paper argues that integrating Sāṃkhya principles can contribute to a more balanced, personalized and ethically grounded educational experience, ultimately cultivating well-rounded individuals capable of navigating the complexities of the 21st century.

Keywords: Sāṃkhya, prakṛti, puruṣa, guṇa, mokṣa

Introduction:

The Sāṃkhya system is considered to be one of the oldest and important systems of Indian philosophy. It occupies a unique and esteemed place in the system by virtue of rational and realistic approach towards systematizing the philosophical thinking. Some scholars explain it as derived from the Upaniṣads, but others maintain that it is an independent doctrine. Whatever be its origin, it maintains a prominent place among all the systems of Indian philosophy, since it is either supported or contradicted by every philosophical system. It offers a unique perspective on the nature of existence, consciousness, and the universe. Thus, the importance of this system is recognized by all the schools of Indian philosophy.

Education has always been a keystone of human civilization, nurturing minds and forming societies. As we progress further into the 21st century, the demands placed upon educations have evolved significantly. The educational system of present time requires a thoughtful integration of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge

to obtain the diverse needs of students and prepare them for ever-changing world. In this objective, turning to the infinite enlightenment of ancient philosophies may provide valuable guidelines or ideas. The Sāṃkhya system offers valuable insights that can be applied to modern educational systems.

The aim of this paper is to explore the relevance of the Sāṃkhya principles in the context of modern education system. By understanding its fundamental and intricate nuances, we can find the probable applications of the teachings of Sāṃkhya philosophy to grow holistic and well-rounded development in students. We embark on this journey with the intention of bridging the gap between the wisdom of the ancients and the demands of the present.

Objective of the study:

The study intends to attain the following specified objectives:

- To analyze the basic concepts of Sāṃkhya philosophy.
- To explore the impact of Sāṃkhya principles on educational practices.
- To explore the ethical values of Sāṃkhya and their relevance in education.

Methodology:

The research paper is primarily based on qualitative approach. The present study uses both the primary and the secondary sources. The primary sources are the classical Sāṃkhya texts, commentaries and modern scholarly interpretations. The secondary sources are related to the journal, article and various websites.

The present paper is descriptive in nature. Thus, the descriptive outlook paved the way for bringing to the fore the objectives of the research. Additionally, the study incorporates educational research, case studies and observations to explore practical implications for integrating Sāṃkhya philosophy into educational practices.

Key Principles of Sāṃkhya Philosophy:

Dualism of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* :

The Sāṃkhya system is known as a dualistic system, because it advocates the dualism of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. According to this system, the world has been explained only with the reference to *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, described as two distinct and independent principles. Of them, *puruṣa* means the self and *prakṛti* is the ultimate ground out of which the world evolves. The Sāṃkhya does not establish the existence of God, because according to them, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are sufficient to explain this universe.

Nature of *prakṛti* :

The word *prakṛti* literally means the nature. It is the basic nature of intelligence by which the universe exists and functions. In the Sāṃkhya system, it is explained as *mūla-prakṛti* (root evolvent) because it is the root of all other evolves, while it has no root of its own. The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (10-11) of Īśvarakṛṣṇa describes *prakṛti* as – uncaused, unmanifest, unsupported, non-mergent, non-intelligent, eternal, all-pervading, immobile, single, part-less, independent, constituted of the three *guṇas*, indistinguishable, objective, common and productive.

In the *Sāṃkhyapравacanasūtra* (I.61), it is stated that *prakṛti* is constituted by the three *guṇas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Prakṛti* is the unity of the three *guṇas* held in a state of equilibrium. The most important characteristic of *prakṛti* is that it is out and out productive. It undergoes changes. It changes into forms and categories. *Prakṛti* has two movements: *anuloma* (forward) and *pratiloma* (backward). In its forward movement *prakṛti* becomes the generating agent of all *sargas* (evolutes), while in the backward movement, it retraces the stages through which it is developed.

Nature of *puruṣa* :

According to the Sāṃkhya, *puruṣa* is a pure spirit and entirely different from *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is beyond of all empirical attributes. It is unchangeable and immutable. It is eternal in the sense that it is not affected by the change of time, and that it is an uncaused ultimate principle. It is independent and is not supported by anything else. The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* describes *puruṣa* or *pumān* as intelligent, conscious, non-productive, devoid of attributes etc. The fundamental point regarding the point of *puruṣa* is that it is always the subject of knowledge and never an object of it.

The Sāṃkhya system believes in the plurality of the *puruṣa*. According to them, the self is not one, but many and it is different in different organisms. Further reasons are advanced by the Sāṃkhya philosophers for the plurality of the *puruṣas*. The arguments are as follows – (i) from the individual allotment of birth, death and the instruments, (ii) from the simultaneity of activities and (iii) from the diverse modifications due to the three *guṇas*.

Relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* :

The Sāṃkhya holds that though *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are quite opposite natures, there is harmony between these two realities. In their view, there can be no evolution unless these two realities are somehow related to each other. According to Sāṃkhya, the contact between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is not an ordinary kind of conjunction. The said contact means that the *prakṛti* is influenced simply by the presence of *puruṣa*, just as our body is sometimes moved by the presence of a thought or a piece of iron is moved by a piece of magnet. *Prakṛti* is unconscious and active, while *puruṣa* is conscious but inactive. But through the union or contact between these two, the unconscious *prakṛti* appears as if it is conscious and similarly the neutral *puruṣa* appears as if it were the agent. However, the evolution of the world cannot be due to the *puruṣa* alone, for its inactivity; nor can it be due to *prakṛti* alone, because it is unconscious. Hence for the evolution of the world, the activity of *prakṛti* must be guided by the intelligence of the *puruṣa*. The Sāṃkhya philosophers say that though distinct from each other, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* can co-operate for the evolution purposes, just as a lame man and a blind man can co-operate with each-other and came out of the forest.

Theory of the *guṇas* :

According to the Sāṃkhya, all the mental and material objects of this phenomenal world are made up of an admixture or rather a combination in different proportions of three classes of ultimate reals, which are

technically called as *guṇas*. All the objects of the world are found to possess three characters capable of producing pleasure, pain and delusion, which are known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* respectively.

The first of the three *guṇas* is called *sattva*. Etymologically, the term *sattva* is derived from the word *sat*, which means real or existent. Generally, consciousness is granted such existence and therefore *sattva* is said to be potential consciousness. Another meaning of the word *sat* is perfection and thus, it is said that goodness and happiness are produced from the *sattvaguna*. The Sāṃkhya philosophers hold that among the three *guṇas*, *sattva* is *laghuh* (buoyant, active) and *prakāśakam* (illuminating or enlightening).

The second *guṇa*, i.e. *rajas* is described as the source of all activity. The term *rajas* is derived from the root *rañj*, which means to colour, to be attached or to moved. Hence, its function is to move things and overcome resistance. The Sāṃkhya philosophers describe it as both *upaśtambhaka* (exciting) and *cala* (mobile).

The third *guṇa* is known as *tamas*, which means darkness. *Tamas* is used to signify that power of nature which restraints, obstructs and envelops the other two *guṇas*. *Tamas* is opposed to *sattva* in being heavy (*guru*) and in obstructing the manifestation of objects (*varaṇaka*). It also resists the *rajas*, since it restrains the motion of things. *Tamas* hinders the power of manifestation in the mind, the intellect and thereby produces ignorance and bewilderment (*moha*). Restraining and binding are its nature. It is the cause of mass, weight and inertia.

Though these *guṇas* are essentially distinct in their nature, they can never be separated from each other. They support one another and intermingle with one another. Moreover, though the three *guṇas* are mutually opposed, they can operate to achieve a common purpose.

Sāṃkhya theory of Creation:

Prakṛti is the fundamental substance out of which the world evolves. Before creation, there is an equal balance of the three *guṇas*. When this equilibrium is destroyed by the presence of *puruṣa*, there arises an equal aggregation of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* at different moments. Being disturbed and dislocated from its state of equipoise, *prakṛti* undergoes transformation and creates *mahat* or *buddhi*. *Mahat* or the cosmic intellect is the first product of the evolution. From *mahat* or *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* appears. The *guṇas* take three different courses of development from *ahamkāra* and accordingly the latter is known as *vaikārika* or *sāttvika*, *taijasa* or *rājasa* and *bhūtādi* or *tāmasa*. As the transformation continues, the *manas* (mind), the *pañcājñānendriyas* (the five organs of knowledge) and the *pañcakarmendriyas* (the five organs of action) come forth from *sāttvika-ahamkāra*; and the five *tanmātras* (subtle elements) viz., *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha* are emerged from *tāmasa-ahamkāra*. The *rājasa* aspect stands midway and plays its part in both. From the five *tanmātras* come out the five gross elements, viz., *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *tejas*, *āpa* and *pṛthivī*.

The thirteen evolutes of *prakṛti*, viz., *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, *manas*, the five organs of sense and the five organs of action constitute the *linga* or instrument. The *linga*, when taken together with the five *tanmātras* is characterized as the *lingaśarīra* or subtle body. And the subtle body when supported by the five gross elements

is known as gross body, which is finally destroyed. Thus, the gross body is the receptacle of the subtle body.

With the manifestation of the sense particular (*mahābhūtas*), the process of cosmic evolution comes to rest. The Sāṃkhya concept of evolution indicates the gradual development of different categories of existence and not mere changes of qualities or new combinations of the objects of the same order. The whole course of evolution of Sāṃkhya purely exists in the chain of causation from the cosmic substance (*prakṛti*) to the gross elements.

Epistemology:

The Sāṃkhya accepts three means of valid knowledge or *pramāṇa*, viz. *pratyakṣa* or *dṛcma* (perception), *anumāna* (inference) and *śabda* or *āptavacana* (testimony). By these three all other means of valid knowledge too established, as they are included in the above three. Perception is the ascertainment of each respective object by the senses. Inference is preceded by knowledge of the middle term (*liṅga*) and major term (*liṅgi*) and it is declared to be three kinds. Verbal testimony is the statement of trustworthy persons and the scriptures.

Liberation:

The Sāṃkhya system has started with an analysis of three kinds of misery or *duḥkhatraya*, which generally destroy the pleasures of life. These are namely *ādhyātmika* (intra-organic), *ādhydaivika* (caused by external influences) and *ādhibhautika* (caused by supernatural agencies). All these evils of life cannot be removed forever either by science or by religious practices and other known means. The knowledge of science and performance of religious practices may remove pain for a short period but they cannot lead to the final annihilation of sufferings and pains. Thus, the Sāṃkhya says that the three kinds of pain can be removed by the direct knowledge of *vyakta*, *avyakta* and *jñā*.

The Sāṃkhya holds that the *puruṣa* experiences misery due to its conjunction with *prakṛti*. The cause of conjunction of these two distinct and separate principles is *avidyā* or *aviveka*. According to the Sāṃkhya, bondage and liberation are merely phenomenal. Bondage and liberation refer to the conjunction and the disjunction of the *puruṣa* resulting from non-discrimination and discrimination.

According to the Sāṃkhya, the non-discrimination can be removed through the knowledge. But the knowledge is not merely an intellectual understanding of the truth. It must be a direct knowledge or clear realization of the real nature of *puruṣa*.

Implications of Sāṃkhya Principles in Education:

The Sāṃkhya philosophy, with its keen metaphysical, epistemological and axiological thoughts, offers several implications for education. Integrating the Sāṃkhya principles into educational practices can lead to a balanced and holistic approach to learning, personal development and self-realization. Some implications of Sāṃkhya philosophy for education sector are as follows:

- The Sāṃkhya philosophers hold that the human being is a combination of multiple aspects, including the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions. Education can be designed to address all these aspects, fostering physical health, emotional intelligence, intellectual growth, and spiritual development. A holistic approach to education helps students become well-rounded individuals capable of dealing with life's challenges with wisdom and compassion.
- The Sāṃkhya recognizes the distinction between *puruṣa*, the eternal consciousness and *prakṛti*, the ever-changing material world. This understanding can lead to self-awareness and mindfulness, allowing students to recognize their true nature beyond the fluctuations of the mind and external circumstances. Incorporating practices like meditation and self-reflection in education can help students to develop a deeper understanding of their inner selves and emotions.
- The Sāṃkhya system emphasizes *prakṛti* as the creative force behind the material world. Education can introduce in students a deep respect and reverence for nature, leading to environmental consciousness and sustainable living practices.
- The Sāṃkhya philosophers highlight the distinctions between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* with its ethical implications. Education can emphasize the importance of ethical behaviour, compassion, and non-attachment to material possessions, encouraging students to live a life of integrity and moral values.
- The *guṇa* theory of Sāṃkhya can significantly influence the mind and behavior of the educators. Understanding the three *guṇas* and their impact can help the students to create a supportive and conducive learning environment. Student can focus on cultivating *sattvaguna*, the quality of purity and harmony, which promotes clarity on thinking, calmness, positive attitude and self-discipline. Encouraging students to develop a Sattvic state of mind can lead to improved focus, emotional stability and better decision-making. *Rajas* represents the qualities of activity, passion and restlessness, through which students are likely to be energetic and enthusiastic about various activities and subjects. *Rajas* can lead to a competitive spirit, encouraging students to excel and achieve success in academics and extracurricular pursuits. On the other hand, *tamas* represents qualities of inertia, lethargy and darkness. When students exhibit tamasic tendencies, they may display the following behaviours like, lack of motivation, procrastination, difficulty focusing, resistance to change and low self-esteem.
- The Sāṃkhya philosophers hold that knowledge acquired through valid means of knowledge, *i.e. pramāṇa*. Teachers can promote inquiry-based learning and critical thinking, encouraging students to question, analyze and seek knowledge through direct perception, logical inference and reliable testimony. Such approaches of teachings enhance the problem-solving and analytical skills of the students.
- According to the Sāṃkhya philosophy, knowledge is the means to attain the salvation from the cycle of birth and death. Teachers can inspire students to seek the knowledge not just for the utilitarian approach but also for their personal growth and self-realization, aligning with the Sāṃkhya's pursuit of liberation.

In this way, the Sāṃkhya system offers a profound framework for shaping an education system that fosters both academic excellence and inner transformation. By integrating the Sāṃkhya principles into pedagogy, educators can create a more holistic and transformative educational experience that nurtures the intellectual, emotional and spiritual development of students, enabling them to become well-rounded individuals capable of leading meaningful and purposeful lives.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Sāṃkhya principles offer a framework for creating a more balanced, holistic, and meaningful educational experience. The emphasis of Sāṃkhya on inner and outer development supports a holistic educational approach that addresses the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs of the students. Understanding the *guṇas* can help educators tailor instruction to individual students' learning styles and needs. The focus of Sāṃkhya on discrimination and self-awareness can contribute to values education, promoting ethical behavior and responsible citizenship. Again, the epistemological view of Sāṃkhya emphasizes the importance of perception, inference, and testimony, which are essential for developing critical thinking skills. The Sāṃkhya theory of evolution promotes an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things, fostering interdisciplinary learning. Thus, it can be said that the teachings of Sāṃkhya philosophy have so much relevance to modern education system.

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Cultural Paradigms in Modern Ethics: Bridging Traditional Wisdom and Contemporary Challenges

Ruksar Sultana

Abstract

Ethical discussions have evolved dramatically over the years, shaped by the cultural norms that govern our sense of right and wrong. This paper explores the ongoing relationship between traditional values and the modern world's ethical challenges, showing that age-old moral principles remain significant even today. By examining how historical wisdom intersects with contemporary issues, we can see the lasting influence of past moral values on our current ethical thinking. The paper explores various ethical theories deeply rooted in cultural traditions, demonstrating how these frameworks have guided moral choices over time. Additionally, it examines the impact of globalization on ethical values. As the world becomes more interconnected, thanks to cultural exchanges and technological advancements, new ethical challenges emerge. The increase in global connectivity has brought together diverse moral viewpoints, sometimes resulting in unity and other times in conflict. These changes call for a more comprehensive approach to ethics, one that respects cultural diversity while promoting universal principles. By analysing different cultural perspectives, this paper proposes a model that integrates traditional ethical values with the needs of the modern world. This model aims to bridge the gap between historical moral philosophies and today's ethical dilemmas, offering a balanced view that values both tradition and progress. It highlights the importance of ethical flexibility in a rapidly changing world, advocating for a framework that honours cultural heritage while addressing current ethical concerns. Ultimately, this study adds to the broader ethical discourse by emphasizing the need to combine enduring moral wisdom with modern ethical demands, ensuring that our ethical reasoning remains culturally informed and relevant in today's world.

Keywords: cultural ethics, ethical pluralism, globalization and ethics, traditional wisdom, ethical governance

Introduction:

Ethics has always been closely tied to our cultural traditions and historical backgrounds, shaping the moral guidelines we follow. Throughout history, different societies have developed their own ethical codes based on religious beliefs, philosophical ideas, and the needs of their communities. These codes have provided

moral direction, ensuring harmony and justice within their unique cultural settings. However, as our world becomes more connected through globalization, technological advancements, and increased cultural interactions, new ethical challenges have emerged that require us to rethink our traditional moral views. In today's world, ethical dilemmas are more complex because of the merging of various moral frameworks and the challenges posed by scientific and technological progress. Issues like artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and digital privacy bring up new ethical questions that traditional approaches might not fully address. Meanwhile, globalization has led to the exchange of moral values, sometimes causing ethical conflicts or the blending of cultural identities. These changes call for a re-evaluation of our ethical principles to ensure they remain relevant while preserving cultural integrity. This paper explores how traditional ethical paradigms can help address modern ethical concerns by bridging the gap between historical moral wisdom and contemporary ethical discussions (MacIntyre, 2002). By examining different cultural traditions and their moral philosophies, this study aims to propose an ethical framework that respects the core values of these traditions while adapting to the needs of today's world. In doing so, it advocates for a balanced approach that maintains ethical continuity while embracing necessary changes.

Traditional Ethical Paradigms:

Cultural traditions have long provided ethical frameworks that guide behaviour, shaping societal values and moral decision-making across civilizations. These ethical systems, deeply embedded in historical and philosophical contexts, continue to influence contemporary ethical reasoning. For instance, Confucian ethics emphasize harmony, filial piety, and moral responsibility, fostering a sense of duty toward family and society (Confucius, 2000). Similarly, Indian philosophy, particularly in the form of Dharma, underscores duty, righteousness, and the pursuit of moral order, guiding ethical conduct in both personal and societal spheres (Sharma, 2000). Western ethics, shaped by Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian moral principles, prioritize justice, virtue, and individual rights. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Kant have contributed significantly to moral thought, emphasizing reason, moral duty, and the pursuit of the good life (Aristotle, 1999). Indigenous ethical perspectives, on the other hand, focus on communal welfare, interconnectedness, and environmental stewardship, reinforcing the ethical responsibility to maintain harmony between human societies and the natural world (Kimmerer, 2013). These paradigms have historically shaped ethical norms and continue to influence modern moral reasoning. As globalization and technological advancements present new ethical challenges, understanding and integrating these diverse ethical traditions can provide a more comprehensive approach to addressing contemporary moral dilemmas while preserving cultural integrity.

The Evolution of Ethical Thought:

In recent times, modern ethical theories like deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics have emerged as reactions to traditional moral teachings, shaping today's ethical discussions. For example, Kantian deontology focuses on duty-based morality, asserting that our actions should be guided by universal principles rather than

their consequences (Kant, 1998). On the other hand, utilitarianism, proposed by Bentham and Mill, emphasizes the greatest good for the greatest number, prioritizing the outcomes of our actions (Mill, 2001). Virtue ethics, which traces back to Aristotle, shifts the focus from rules to character development, stressing the importance of cultivating virtues like courage, wisdom, and justice for leading an ethical life (Hursthouse, 1999). These Western ethical theories have had a significant impact on contemporary ethical conversations, influencing areas such as bioethics, business ethics, and political philosophy. However, they often overlook the richness and complexity of non-Western ethical traditions, which offer alternative approaches to moral reasoning and decision-making. Ethical frameworks from Confucianism, Buddhism, African communal ethics, and Indigenous traditions provide valuable insights into relational ethics, collective responsibility, and harmony with nature (Wiredu, 1996). By incorporating these diverse moral philosophies into modern ethical discussions, we can achieve a more inclusive and holistic understanding of ethics, fostering a balanced approach that respects cultural diversity while addressing the ethical challenges of today.

Cultural Pluralism and Ethical Relativism:

With the growing interconnectedness of cultures, ethical relativism has become more significant, asserting that moral values are influenced by cultural contexts and aren't universally applicable. According to (Harman, 1996), Moral statements reflect the values of specific cultures or communities, rather than representing universal truths. This perspective challenges the idea of absolute moral principles, emphasizing that ethical standards vary among societies. Cultural relativism encourages respect for diversity, promoting tolerance and understanding of different moral frameworks. However, it also raises concerns about moral accountability, especially in cases of human rights violations where cultural justifications may clash with globally accepted ethical norms (Rachels, 2003). The tension between universal ethical principles and cultural specificity is a key challenge in global ethical discussions. Universalists advocate for fundamental moral principles that apply across cultures, while relativists argue that imposing external ethical standards can ignore important historical and social contexts (Appiah, 2006). Addressing this dilemma requires a nuanced approach that balances respect for cultural traditions with the need to uphold ethical consistency in addressing global moral issues.

Globalization and Ethical Transformations:

Globalization has brought different ethical norms together by encouraging cross-cultural exchanges and shared moral understandings. However, it has also heightened conflicts between traditional values and modern moral expectations, as societies navigate the tension between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to evolving ethical standards. For example, debates on gender roles, bioethics, and corporate ethics illustrate the struggle to reconcile deeply rooted traditions with contemporary human rights and ethical principles (Singer, 2011). These tensions are particularly evident in discussions about gender equality, reproductive rights, and business practices, where historical norms may clash with global ethical frameworks. Additionally, the rapid expansion of digital ethics, artificial intelligence, and data privacy concerns introduces new layers of complexity

to global ethical discourse. As technological advancements reshape our interactions, issues such as algorithmic bias, surveillance ethics, and digital autonomy challenge traditional moral frameworks, requiring adaptive ethical approaches to navigate the changing landscape in a globalized world. In view of (Floridi, 2013), modern ethics must recognize that responsibility is often shared among multiple individuals and systems, particularly in a globally connected world where actions have widespread impact.

Ethical Challenges and Relevance in the Contemporary World:

In today's world, we're facing significant ethical challenges, including climate change, economic inequality, and the implications of technological advancements. Traditional ethical systems often stress the importance of sustainability, social responsibility, and communal well-being. However, modern industrial societies frequently find it challenging to apply these principles effectively (Gardiner, 2011). The tension between long-standing ethical values and contemporary economic and technological priorities highlights the need for a balanced approach to global moral dilemmas. For instance, Buddhist environmental ethics advocate for living in harmony with nature, focusing on interdependence and the responsible use of natural resources (Keown, 2005). (Keown, 2005), explains that Buddhist ideas such as respecting life, being aware of our actions, and seeing how everything is connected help build a strong ethical approach to environmental care. Yet, modern industries, driven by economic competition and market demands, often prioritize profit over ecological balance, leading to environmental degradation and resource depletion (Klein, 2014). Similarly, traditional African ethics emphasize communal wealth-sharing and social solidarity, advocating for collective responsibility in economic systems. This stands in contrast to the increasing individualism and wealth disparities seen in global capitalism, highlighting the ongoing tension between traditional values and modern economic structures (Gyekye, 1996).

As the world becomes more interconnected and fast-paced, we are faced with ethical challenges that are increasingly complex. Issues like environmental degradation, economic inequality, and the rise of advanced technologies demand new ways of thinking about right and wrong. This article explores how traditional ethical frameworks, such as Ubuntu from Africa, Dharma from Indian philosophy, and Confucian ideas from East Asia, can offer valuable guidance in addressing these modern concerns. These traditions emphasize compassion, social responsibility, and harmony within communities. While rooted in the past, they still hold relevance today. The article argues that rather than discarding traditional values, we should integrate them with modern ethical thinking to create more inclusive and balanced solutions to contemporary problems. By encouraging cross-cultural dialogue and mutual respect, this approach helps to build a shared understanding of global ethics. It also highlights the importance of ethical education, policymaking, and leadership that are both grounded in cultural wisdom and open to innovation. Ultimately, the article calls for an ethical mindset that is flexible, respectful of diversity, and responsive to the changing needs of our world. It shows that tradition and progress can work together to shape a more just and sustainable future.

Bridging Traditional Wisdom and Modern Ethical Challenges:

To effectively address today's complex ethical dilemmas, it's essential to blend traditional and contemporary ethical ideas. Traditional moral philosophies offer valuable insights that can enhance modern ethical reasoning, resulting in a more comprehensive approach to global challenges. For example, the African concept of Ubuntu emphasizes interconnectedness, compassion, and communal well-being, offering an alternative to the individualistic ethics often seen in modern societies (Ramose, 1999). By focusing on collective responsibility and mutual care, Ubuntu provides a model for ethical decision-making that promotes social cohesion and inclusivity. Similarly, Confucian principles of social harmony and ethical leadership can help resolve conflicts in international relations by emphasizing diplomacy, respect, and moral duty in governance (Ames, 2011). According to (Ames, 2011), in Confucian ethics, moral guidance comes from the roles people hold in society, such as being a parent or a teacher, rather than from universal rules that apply equally to everyone. By combining this traditional wisdom with contemporary ethical frameworks, we can navigate the complex moral issues of our interconnected world more effectively. Creating a global ethical framework that integrates these diverse traditions with modern ethical thinking can lead to sustainable, culturally inclusive, and morally sound solutions to current dilemmas (Nussbaum, 2006).

The Role of Education in Ethical Development:

Education is key to bridging different ethical perspectives by deepening our understanding of various moral traditions and contemporary ethical challenges. When educational curricula incorporate a broad range of cultural ethics, students can develop a richer perspective on moral reasoning. This equips them to navigate complex ethical dilemmas in a globalized world. Exposure to diverse ethical traditions enhances intercultural understanding, fostering respect for different moral viewpoints and promoting a sense of shared ethical responsibility. Ethical education programs should integrate both classical ethical theories—such as deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics—and emerging issues related to technology, environmental sustainability, and social justice. By combining traditional wisdom with modern ethical discourse, these programs can provide students with the critical thinking skills necessary for ethical decision-making in today's society (Noddings, 2002). A well-rounded ethical education not only engages students with moral philosophy but also emphasizes the practical application of ethical principles in real-world scenarios.

Policy Implications and Ethical Governance:

Governments and institutions play a vital role in creating ethical policies that honour cultural traditions while ensuring fundamental human rights. Ethical governance involves balancing the preservation of cultural heritage with the adoption of progressive moral values, ensuring that policies reflect both historical wisdom and modern ethical standards. Traditional values can provide guidance in decision-making, but it's crucial to prevent the reinforcement of oppressive or exclusionary practices that conflict with universal human rights principles (Sen, 2009). As highlighted in (Sen, 2009), the priority of policymaking should be to tackle evident injustices

rather than aiming for an unattainable ideal of a perfectly just society. To achieve this balance, ethical governance frameworks should include diverse cultural perspectives in policy-making, promoting inclusivity and social cohesion. International cooperation is essential in establishing ethical standards that accommodate different moral viewpoints while promoting justice, equity, and human dignity. Collaborative efforts between nations, institutions, and ethical scholars can help develop policies that respect cultural diversity while ensuring fairness, human rights, and sustainable progress in our interconnected world (Rawls, 1999).

Conclusion:

Cultural paradigms are fundamental in shaping ethical thought and practice, influencing our moral values, decision-making, and societal norms. Traditional wisdom from religious, philosophical, and indigenous ethical traditions provides valuable insights into moral reasoning and community-oriented ethics. However, modern ethical challenges such as technological advancements, environmental crises, and global inequalities require an adaptable approach that incorporates both historical perspectives and emerging moral concerns. To address these challenges, we need to create an inclusive ethical framework that integrates traditional moral philosophies with contemporary ethical thinking. This approach ensures that ethical reasoning remains relevant and applicable across diverse cultural and societal contexts. By promoting intercultural dialogue, societies can enhance mutual understanding and allow various ethical traditions to contribute meaningfully to global moral discourse. Ethical education is also essential in this integration. By equipping individuals with the critical thinking skills needed to navigate complex moral dilemmas, ethical education fosters respect for cultural diversity while reinforcing universal ethical principles. A comprehensive and sustainable ethical framework for the future must balance tradition with innovation. This ensures that ethical discussions evolve to meet new challenges while maintaining the foundational moral values that have guided societies for centuries (Taylor, 1992).

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Morality of Being Versus Morality of Doing: A Critical Survey of Moral Beliefs and Ideas in Classical Indian Thought

Deepalee Rout

Abstract

In order to understand the trend of morality in India, we need to analyze the idea of morality (used synonymously and interchangeably with ethics and ethical) and moral beliefs associated with different Indian Philosophical thought. There are many scholars of philosophy who have posited that there is an absence of discussion about morality as such in the Indian thought. However, our analysis of the systems will show us that ethics was always there, in fact, it is discussed widely as a way to attain the perfection, mokṣa. Another general notion which is prevalent due to western influence is that morality is out and out social. This view shall be falsified with our discourse. In Indian Philosophical thought, we shall find the presence of individual ethics along with social ethics. Some systems emphasize more on the former and some on the later. Nevertheless, the idea behind this is that society is formed by individuals inter-related with their fellow beings and surroundings. The orientation of each and every individual forms the picture of the society. This paper focuses on depicting the essence of Classical Indian ethical thought i.e. it is the amalgamation of both Individual Ethics and Social Ethics by analyzing the stream of moral beliefs and ideas present within the systems, thus, by the discourse, it will be reflecting upon the presence of ethics in Indian Philosophy.

Keywords: morality, ethics, Indian tradition, philosophy, conduct, values

Introduction:

Classical Indian philosophy is a great collection of rigorous discussions of various topics ranging in epistemology, logic and metaphysics. However, the status of ethics in Indian Philosophy has always been a debatable topic. Many scholars have the opinion that there has been no definite and distinct discussion on ethics, politics and aesthetics as such by different systems. As B. K. Matilal writes in his book *Moral Dilemmas in the Mahabharata*:

Professional philosophers of India over the last two thousand years have been consistently concerned with the problems of logic and epistemology, metaphysics and soteriology, and

sometimes they have made very important contributions to the global heritage of philosophy. But, except some cursory comments and some insightful observations, the professional philosophers of India have very seldom discussed what we call “moral philosophy” today. It is true that the Dharmasāstra texts were there to supplement the Hindu discussion of ethics; classification of virtues and vices, and enumeration of duties related to the social status of the individual. But morality was never discussed as such in these texts. (Matilal, 1989)

Similar point has been made by P. T. Raju. He writes: “There is a general lack of interest in ethical problems as such in Indian philosophy” (Raju, 1949). To add up with these opinions, Deutsch also makes a critical remark regarding this:

The criticism is often raised against Indian philosophy in general... that it turns its back on all theoretical and practical considerations of morality and, if not unethical, is at least a-ethical in character. If by “ethics” one means a rigorous, independent inquiry into problems of, and questions concerning, the meaning of value, the justification of judgements, and the analysis of moral concepts and concrete existential modes of behaviour, then this criticism is justified... (Deutsch, 1969)

However, these arguments are claimed to be false by scholars like Maitra (1956), Hiriyana (1975), Mahadevan (1967). They have argued that Indian Philosophy is essentially a philosophy of values and a philosophical inquiry into it leads to the apprehension of those values. It centers on the four *puruṣārthas*, namely, *dharma*, *artha*, *Kāma* and *mokṣa*. All of these refer to various kinds of value. *Artha* and *Kāma* are identified of having instrumental and psychological values, *dharma* implicates moral values and *mokṣa* is of spiritual value. *Mokṣa* or liberation has been given the highest importance by most of the Indian philosophical system and has been greatly discussed in various Indian philosophical texts. But this does not imply that other *puruṣārthas* are neglected. Man attains liberation after dealing with the experience of his worldly existence. He has to live first of all before he can live spiritually. His life in the world requires wealth and pleasure, though these do not have an intrinsic value, for bare minimum survival.

Man is distinct from other living beings in the sense that they are not only conscious but also has the special attribute to be self-conscious. Having this unique characteristic, he timely introspects himself and his nature- what he ‘is’ and what he ‘ought to’ become. Within this worldly existence, he tries to demarcate this difference between him and other living beings, between the animal demands of human life and the demands of his higher faculties. This transition from ‘is’ to ‘ought’ is the path of liberation and this is possible by developing a sense of morality that would strengthen the capacity of self-awareness which will help human being to understand the difference and recognize the path to *mokṣa*. Hence, *dharma* or morality, though not given the paramount position, forms the pedestal in the attainment of the spiritual consummation.

Morality in Indian thought as an institution of life is of scriptural or divine origin. The first primeval concept of morality, the cosmic principle – ‘*ṛta*’ is seen in the vedic literature. It can be said to be the foundation of morality in a sense that as everything in this universe follows an order, so does a human being belonging to this universe must adopt that order to maintain harmony or else it will lead to disintegration. Later, the concept of ‘*dharma*’ too is recognized of equal importance in contributing to the origin of the sense of morality in Indian tradition. This also implicates that morality is not necessarily attached with society. The individual has the choice to either adopt an order as the universe does or to move away from it.

In the West, the idea of morality is associated with society. For them, there can be no question of morality without a reference made towards society. It takes into account the judgments of other persons as the action of one initiate the effects on other beings. Hence, morality has to be out and out social. But this is not the case in Indian Philosophy. It is not the society that makes an individual but the vice-versa. It cannot be denied that an individual has certain relation to the society but it is equally true of the relation he has with himself. S. K. Maitra identifies this presence of both social and individual ethics in Indian thought. While social ethics is concerned with the questions of morality in relation to others, individual ethics refers to the questions with respect to the relation with oneself.

According to Maitra (1963), the word ‘*dharma*’ has two senses. One reflects onto the virtues or religious merit and the second reflects onto the duties of an individual; both the senses are of equal moral value. Let us make an analysis into the Indian tradition in both these senses.

- a) The *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* : The *Vedas* are generally considered as the manual of various rituals. Performing these rituals as prescribed pleases gods and goddesses; hence, such activities are termed good. Any activity that displeases gods is considered a sin. Activities considered good and sin are listed in the *Vedas* in a set of injunctions and prohibitions. Performing actions accordingly is considered moral and any deviation from it is immoral. This is an external and ritualistic view of morality and seems to have nothing to do with an individual’s inner state while performing any of those actions. However, this does not implicate that the notion of internal morality is absent in it. As mentioned earlier, the *Vedas* mention about the moral cosmic order – the *ṛta* as the foundation to Indian conception of morality. There is an order in the universe, so we ought to have order amongst ourselves too. But if we see, this can be interpreted as to follow the duties assigned to oneself according to the nature inhibited in the individual. As water flows according to its nature, similarly an individual ought to perform as per his nature. That is what can be called Truth, staying true to one’s own nature and the duties associated. Besides this many other virtues and duties have been noted in *Vedas* like *tapas*, *dana*, *satya*, *ahimsā*, *asteya*, *brahmacārya*, *śraddhā*, etc. While some of them have social implications, others pertain to individual morality. In *Upaniṣads*, the concept of morality is more internal than in the *Vedas*. Focusing on the attainment of *Jñāna*, an

individual needs to develop oneself to become fit for it. It is only possible by inculcating virtues that will help to remove *avidyā* and lead to dawn of *Jñāna*. Due importance has also been given to social virtues; however, emphasis has been given more on the former. It includes virtues like *yajñā*, *adhyāyana*, self-control, compassion, etc., along with the virtues enlisted in the *Vedas*.

- b) The **Dharmasutras**, the **Dharmaśāstras** and the **Epics**: While on one side we can find that the Dharmasutras and Dharmaśāstras have given an elaboration of Vedic rituals, on the other side we would also find the explanations on various virtues and duties of a human with respect to himself and the society. These virtues and duties are divided into three *dharma*s – *Sādhārana*, *Varna* and *Āśrama* *dharma*. The ten *Sādhārana dharma* as enumerated by Manu is a mixture of social and individual morality. While *ksamā*, *asteya*, *satya* relate more to social virtues, others like *dhṛti*, *dama*, *sauca*, *indriyānigraha*, *dhi*, *vidyā*, *akrodha* emphasize on individual virtues. These duties are general and are to be performed by every individual irrespective of any distinctions. The *Varnāśrama dharma* refers to the duties and obligations of an individual towards society with respect to class and the stage of life. This division too possesses a principle that one should follow only that vocation for which he is inherently capable, thus resulting in the dignity of labour. This shows that there is no conflict between individual and social ethics rather they go together. In the Epics, more emphasis has been given to social good and progress (*lokasthiti*, *lokasamgraha*, *lokakalyāṇa*, etc.) through the development of individual's virtues (*swadharma*). There is an inclusion of *karma-yoga* as a path to liberation.
- c) **The Orthodox Systems**: Six philosophical systems developed on the basis of their acceptance of the *Vedas* as their authority. The crude moral beliefs and ideas in the later were systematized in the former. The *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* system attaches importance to *sāttvika* actions which consists of kindness, detachment, freedom from hatred, etc. and considers it to be moral and leads to liberation, whereas the *rājasika* and *tāmasika* actions are considered immoral. Though it accepts the *Vedic* authority, it denies of the rituals which incur violence. The *yama* and *niyama* of *astāṅga-yoga* holds ethical significance. While *yama* consisting of *ahimsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacārya* and *aparigraha*, by large relates to social morality, *niyama* consisting of *sauca*, *santosa*, *tapas*, *svadhyāya* and *iśvara-pranidhāna* can be recognized as individual morality. Hence it can be seen that both morality of being and morality of doing have been given the necessary part in the path leading to *mokṣa*. The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* attaches importance to the observation of *Sādhārana* and *Varnāśrama* *dharma* for ethical considerations. It encourages actions free from three *doṣas* – *icchā*, *dvesa* and *moha* as the actions attach with them binds. The *Mīmāṃsakas* have given morality an utmost priority in their system. They attach ethical importance to the observation of the Vedic injunctions, rituals and prohibitions. The actions are unconditional in nature

and are to be performed for their own sake. *Samkara Vedānta* prescribes those duties that act as means to the attainment of knowledge. These are essentially related to self-discipline like self-restraint, renunciation, patience, concentration, etc. It also focuses on social good which is based on his metaphysical view that 'All is *Brahman*', hence I treat others as my own not making any sort of distinctions. In *Rāmānuja Vedānta*, ethics seems to take a significant position and an essential means for the attainment of *mokṣa*. For *Rāmānuja*, God is the paradigm of moral virtues and man's duty is to imitate His qualities with *bhakti* in his practical life. Influence of the *Bhagavad Gītā* can be seen in his conception of morality. It can be said that morality is conceived here in a religious sense.

- d) The Heterodox Systems:** Though three systems developed delineating from the Vedic authority, Buddhism and Jainism have some essential moral beliefs and ideas similar to that of orthodox systems, like the *pañcasīla* and the *pañca- mahāvratā*. Along with these moral views, Buddhism proposed the *astāngika-mārga* and *brahmavihāra* which emphasizes both on individual purity along with social good. However, both the systems have criticized the performance of Vedic rituals and the *varna-āśrama* division of the society characterizing it to be immoral, unjust and least ethical. The *Cārvākas* are purely hedonistic view that what is pleasurable is desirable and hence pleasure as the aim of life by any means. Wealth and pleasure are important for practical life but it has never affected the spiritual spirit to become the *summum bonum* of human life.

The conception of morality in Indian thought, thus from the critical analysis made, can be said to be integral, humanistic and based on human nature. While it is true that explicit moral theorizing in the Western academic sense is less prominent, the Indian tradition offers a rich and sophisticated moral vision rooted in both metaphysical and existential concerns. It has given importance to both personal and social values. It has maintained a parallelistic relation between the individual and the society. The charge that Indian philosophy does not have enough space for ethics does not stand acceptable.

Conclusion:

We can see from our analysis that though not as the highest goal of human life, ethics has been given a suitable position. Both the morality of doing and morality of being have been part of Indian conception. The distinction between the morality of being and the morality of doing does not indicate a fragmented view. Instead, it indicates an integrated ethical outlook that connects inner intentions with outward actions. Traditions like Yoga, Vedānta, Buddhism, and Jainism, as well as in the foundational texts- the Vedas and Upaniṣads, emphasize that moral living is essential for attaining *mokṣa*. It is true that the Indian mind has always focused on the attainment of individual liberation rising above any sort of conflicts including the moral ones. The goal of moral life, as mentioned earlier, is perfection – a transition from 'is' to 'ought'. Even in schools dominated with ritual or metaphysical inquiry, ethics remains central. It is reflected in various key concepts like *ṛta*, *dharma*, *svadharma*, *pañca-sīla*, etc.

Individuals with the help of society realizes this end of his life. Indian philosophy does not rigidly separate the self from society, nor ethics from metaphysics. It can be observed that there is a continuum where personal virtue and social responsibility support and enhance one another in the pursuit of the highest good. Hence to criticize Indian philosophy as individualistic and not recognizing the moral stance within it is not tenable. Given this, the notion that Indian philosophy is ethically indifferent or “a-ethical”, too, does not hold up under serious scrutiny.

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The Buddhist Influence on the Indian Knowledge System: A Legacy of Wisdom and Rational Thought

Dipak Kumar Sarma

Abstract

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is a rich and multifaceted intellectual tradition that integrates philosophy, science, ethics, and holistic well-being. The IKS has significantly contributed to global intellectual traditions, with advancements in linguistics; e.g., Panini's grammar, mathematics -the decimal system, zero, and algebra, medicine-Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas, and logical reasoning-Nyaya and Mimamsa (Chakrabarti, 2016). Buddhist and Jain philosophical insights, along with contributions from various traditions in regional languages, further enriched India's intellectual heritage. Additionally, IKS promotes sustainability through ecological wisdom, ethical governance, and community-centric practices, which remain relevant in addressing contemporary challenges. The Buddhist tradition, as an integral part of IKS, has significantly contributed to epistemology, logic, education, medicine, and social ethics. Rooted in rational inquiry and empirical observation, Buddhist thought emphasizes critical thinking, ethical living, and the pursuit of wisdom, aligning with the broader framework of IKS (Gethin, 1998). Buddhism's contributions to IKS are evident in its monastic educational institutions like Nalanda, Vikramashila, and Takshashila, which promoted interdisciplinary learning in fields such as logic, medicine, linguistics, and metaphysics. Buddhist scholars like Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, and Dharmakirti advanced Indian philosophy and logic through concepts like Madhyamaka -the Middle Way and Pramana-valid sources of knowledge (Arnold, 2010; Dunne, 2004). The Buddhist approach to knowledge, emphasizing debate (Shastrartha) and reasoned discourse, deeply influenced Indian and global intellectual traditions. Furthermore, Buddhist medical treatises contributed to Ayurveda, while Buddhist ethics emphasized non-violence, sustainability, and compassionate governance (Zysk, 1991). The integration of Buddhist principles into IKS highlights its relevance in contemporary discussions on peace, education, and sustainable living. This study explores the symbiotic relationship between IKS and Buddhism, illustrating its enduring impact on knowledge, society, and global thought.

Keywords: Buddhism, Indian knowledge tradition, epistemology, sustainability, global thought

1. Introduction:

India's intellectual and philosophical landscape has been deeply enriched by Buddhism, which emerged as a reformist movement in the 6th century BCE. Gautama Buddha's teachings emphasized rationality, empirical observation, and ethical living, offering a distinct departure from ritualistic traditions (Gethin, 1998). Buddhism's influence extended beyond religious doctrine, permeating fields such as linguistics, logic, medicine, and governance. The Indian knowledge system, characterized by its diversity and depth, has been profoundly shaped by Buddhist contributions, fostering a legacy of critical thinking and scientific inquiry (Hirakawa, 1990).

1.1 Background and Context:

The Indian knowledge system is a vast and multifaceted tradition that has evolved over thousands of years, encompassing philosophy, science, arts, and culture. The system is deeply integrated with spirituality, where knowledge is seen as a means to transcend the ego and achieve liberation (*moksha*). Ancient Indian scholars contributed significantly to fields like mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and architecture (Chakrabarti, 2016). This knowledge was transmitted through the Guru-Shishya tradition and various prominent learning centers like Nalanda. Today, the Indian knowledge System continues to influence contemporary fields such as holistic health, sustainability, and mental well-being.

Buddhism had a profound impact on various knowledge systems in India. It reshaped Indian philosophy by introducing concepts like *Anatta* (non-self) and *Anicca* (impermanence), challenging the Vedic and Upanishadic views of a permanent self (Rahula, 1978). Buddhist scholars contributed to the development of logic, epistemology, and reasoning, especially through the study of perception and knowledge (Dunne, 2004). Buddhism also influenced Indian science, particularly in areas like astronomy and cosmology, by promoting empirical observation and logical analysis (Kalupahana, 1987). Additionally, Buddhist ideas contributed to social equality by rejecting the caste system, and its monastic centers became hubs of education and intellectual inquiry (Schopen, 1997). Lastly, Buddhism influenced Indian art, culture, and architecture, creating a rich cultural legacy that spread across Asia.

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

Based on the above observations, the following objectives are framed for this study:

- To analyze the contributions of Buddhist teachings to Indian science, culture, economy, polity and art.
- To understand the evolution of the Buddhist tapestry in the context of Indian knowledge systems.

1.3 Methodology:

This study employs a qualitative research methodology based on secondary sources combining historical analysis, textual interpretation, and comparative philosophy. Secondary sources involve scholarly commentaries, research articles, and books on Buddhist philosophy and its impact on Indian knowledge traditions. A comparative approach is used to analyze Buddhist contributions in relation to

other Indian philosophical schools, while an interdisciplinary framework integrates perspectives from history, philosophy, and politics.

2. Historical Overview of Buddhism in India:

Buddhism, founded by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) in the 6th century BCE, originated in India as a response to the limitations of the Vedic tradition. It emphasizes the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path as the framework for overcoming suffering (Rahula, 1978). Buddhism gained popularity due to its ethical teachings, rejecting rigid social hierarchies, and focusing on personal spiritual experience. Emperor Aśoka's patronage spread Buddhism across India and beyond (Thapar, 2002). Over time, Buddhism developed into two broad traditions: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. Hīnayāna comprised several early schools of Buddhism such as Sarvāstivāda, Mahāsāṃghika, and Dharmaguptaka. Theravāda, though often mistakenly equated with Hīnayāna, is in fact the only surviving Hīnayāna school, and is preserved mainly in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia (Gombrich, 2006). Theravāda emphasizes individual enlightenment through meditation, moral discipline, and wisdom, following the teachings of the Pāli Canon. Mahāyāna Buddhism, on the other hand, focuses on the path of the Bodhisattva, where practitioners seek enlightenment not only for themselves but also for the benefit of all beings. It is common in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Tibet (Hirakawa, 1990). Although it declined in India by the 12th century CE, its teachings continued to influence Indian culture and spread throughout Asia. Buddhism's legacy endures in modern India, particularly through movements led by figures like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Omvedt, 2003).

The intersection of Buddhist philosophy with traditional Indian thought systems: Buddhism, emerging in the 6th century BCE, both critiques and builds upon traditional Indian philosophies like the Vedic and Upanishadic systems. While the Vedic and Upanishadic traditions emphasize the concept of a permanent self (*Atman*) and seek liberation (*moksha*) through realizing unity with *Brahman*. In place of metaphysical unity, Buddhism emphasizes the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*) through the eradication of desire and attachment, culminating in *nirvana*—a state of liberation from the cycle of rebirth. Both traditions share an emphasis on meditation and ethical conduct, but Buddhism rejects the elaborate Vedic rituals, focusing instead on practices that purify the mind and cultivate awareness, such as mindfulness (*śati*) and insight meditation (*vipassana*). While the Vedic system relies on external rituals performed by priests, Buddhism stresses internal transformation. The intersection of these philosophies highlights a significant shift in spiritual practice, with Buddhism offering a practical, experiential path to liberation distinct from the more metaphysical and ritualistic approaches of the Vedic and Upanishadic traditions.

3. Evidence of the Buddhist Tapestry in the Indian Knowledge System:

3.1 Epistemology and Logic: The Buddhist school of logic, especially through Dignāga's "Hetuvidyā" and Dharmakīrti's refinement of logical reasoning, provided a foundational framework for Indian epistemology. Their contributions influenced the Nyāya school and later philosophical developments.

3.2 Medical Knowledge: Medical Knowledge: Buddhist texts like the '*Bower Manuscript*', the '*Vinaya Piṭaka*', and the '*Sutta Piṭaka*' provide evidence of early medical knowledge, including surgical procedures, herbal medicine, Ayurveda practices and monastic healthcare (Zysk, 1991).

3.3 Education and Learning Centers: The establishment of monastic universities such as Nālandā, Takṣaśilā, and Vikramaśilā fostered advanced learning in philosophy, linguistics, astronomy, and medicine, attracting scholars from across Asia.

3.4 Political and Social Thought: Aśoka's edicts, inscribed on pillars and rock surfaces, illustrate the integration of Buddhist ethical teachings in governance, promoting tolerance, non-violence, and welfare policies (Thapar, 2002).

3.5 Art, Literature, and Culture: Buddhist contributions in literature, such as the Jātakas and Avadānas, enriched Indian storytelling traditions. The architectural marvels of Sanchi, Ajanta, and Ellora stand as testaments to Buddhist artistic and cultural expressions.

3.6 Environmental Ethics: Buddhist philosophy, emphasizing interconnectedness and non-harm (ahimsā), influenced sustainable agricultural practices and conservation ethics in ancient India.

Buddhist Contributions to Epistemology and Logic: Buddhist epistemology offers a rational approach to knowledge acquisition, emphasizing direct experience (pratyakṣa) and inferential reasoning (anumāna) (Dunne, 2004). Thinkers like Nāgārjuna, Dignāga, and Dharmakīrti developed sophisticated theories of perception, cognition, and argumentation. The Buddhist school of logic, particularly through Dignāga's "Hetuvidyā" (science of reasons), revolutionized Indian philosophical discourse and influenced later schools of thought, including Nyāya and Vedānta.

4. Key Contributions of Buddhist Epistemology:

4.1 Two Modes of Knowledge (Pramāṇa):

- **Perception (Pratyakṣa):** Buddhism emphasizes direct experience as the primary mode of acquiring knowledge. Dharmakīrti refined this concept, distinguishing between valid and illusory perceptions.
- **Inference (Anumāna):** Logical inference is a critical tool in Buddhist philosophy. Dignāga developed a systematic method of inferential reasoning, influencing the Nyāya school and later Indian epistemological thought.

4.2 Theory of Apoha (Exclusion):

- Buddhist logicians like Dignāga and Dharmakīrti introduced the theory of apoha, arguing that conceptual knowledge arises not through inherent characteristics but by differentiating objects from what they are not (Arnold, 2010). This radical departure from essentialist thinking influenced linguistic and cognitive theories in Indian philosophy.

4.3 Rejection of Eternalism and Nihilism:

- Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka philosophy employs dialectical reasoning to deconstruct extreme views, advocating for the Middle Way. His logical approach critically examines the nature of existence, causality, and selfhood.

4.4 Development of Hetuvidyā (Science of Logic):

- The Buddhist school of logic, also known as Hetuvidyā, formulated rigorous criteria for valid reasoning. This tradition played a crucial role in advancing Indian logic and influenced later scholars in both Hindu and Jain traditions.

4.5 Skepticism and Empirical Inquiry:

- Buddhist epistemology encourages a skeptical yet empirical approach to knowledge. The Kalama Sutta, for instance, advises individuals to rely on personal experience, reason, and the testimony of the wise rather than blind faith.

5. The Impact on Indian polity and diplomacy:

India's approach to international relations, foreign policy, and global peace initiatives in the 20th century was significantly influenced by Buddhist philosophy, particularly the emphasis on peace, non-violence, and mutual respect. A key manifestation of this influence was the Panchsheel Principles, introduced in 1954, which became the foundation of India's foreign policy during the Cold War and beyond (Omvedt, 2003). These principles—sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality, and peaceful coexistence—promoted diplomatic engagement based on mutual respect and dialogue. Panchsheel played a pivotal role in guiding India's leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), enabling India to maintain strategic neutrality while advocating for decolonization, global peace, and cooperation among developing nations. The principles also shaped India's relations with neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, reinforcing a policy of non-interference and mutual cooperation. Additionally, Panchsheel influenced India's active participation in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, where it championed peaceful conflict resolution, nuclear disarmament, and global cooperation. However, India's experience with China—especially after the 1962 Sino-Indian War—exposed the limitations of an idealistic approach, prompting a shift toward a more pragmatic and strategic foreign policy while still upholding Panchsheel's core values. In contemporary geopolitics, India continues to integrate these principles through its "Neighbourhood First" policy, Act East initiative, and multilateral engagements, striking a balance between diplomacy, national security, and economic interests.

6. Conclusion:

The Buddhist tradition has left an indelible mark on the Indian knowledge system, enriching it with rational inquiry, ethical considerations, and interdisciplinary scholarship. Its emphasis on logic, empirical observation, and social ethics continues to inspire modern intellectual and philosophical discourses (Arnold, 2010). Recognizing Buddhism's contributions is essential for appreciating the depth of India's intellectual heritage

and its enduring relevance in contemporary knowledge systems. The role of Buddhist monasteries in preserving and transmitting knowledge is unprecedented. The Buddhist Dialectics also influenced Indian Logic. There are ethical and moral dimension of Buddhist teachings as well. The Concept of Ahimsa (non-violence) and its impact on Indian ethics and Indian Society is self-explanatory. The Buddhist monasteries have always been an institution of learning and centre of inspiration for posterity. There are ample areas of opportunity for research into Buddhist contributions to Indian knowledge, especially in interdisciplinary studies.

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Existential Alienation and the Absurdity of Life: A Philosophical Understanding of Saadat Hasan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh*

Sabiha Nahid

Abstract

The renowned South Asian writer, best known for his short stories, Saadat Hasan Manto often dealt with themes of Partition, its impact on the human psychology, the injustice meted out by the society and its darker aspects. He was as bold as well as a controversial literary figure who often challenged social norms and exposed the hypocritical face of the elite. The horrors of the Partition were his core themes, which were left behind by him as a thought-provoking literary legacy that still continues to shape contemporary South Asian writing. The short story "Toba Tek Singh", taken for the current research powerfully explores the existential questions of alienation, the absurdity of border demarcations, and the human predicament in a fragmented world governed by illogical politics. Through the character of Bishan Singh, the mentally deranged protagonist, caught between India and Pakistan during the post-Partition prisoner/inmates exchange, Manto evaluates the arbitrary nature of marking national boundaries and the existential crises imposed upon the common people. This paper attempts to evaluate "Toba Tek Singh" through the lens of Existentialist Philosophy developed by Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, in order to analyse the themes of absurdity and alienation and how individuals search for meaning/purpose of life in a meaningless world. The story would be examined as a critique of dehumanization that seeks to underscore the existential expense of political and ideological demarcations.

Keywords: partition, existentialism, alienation, absurdity, meaninglessness, identity crisis

Introduction:

The philosophical movement of Existentialism had emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Europe, having its roots in Germany and Denmark. It is a response to the crisis of meaning and the disintegration of traditional metaphysical structures in Western thought. Existentialism incepted basically and powerfully in the works of Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche and gradually claimed a prominent space in the literary thoughts of Jean- Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger and Albert Camus.

The concept of ‘leap of faith’ introduced by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche’s declaration of the “Death of God” are strong implications of the collapse of absolute values that paved the way for ethics based on personal will and self-determination. In the 20th century, Existentialism found perfect materialization as a structured philosophical discourse with Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1927). The core ideas of Existentialism being-alienation, absurdity, freedom, and authenticity-were further developed by Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* (1943), where he questions the human existence in a state of radical freedom and condemns to create their own essence through choices and actions arising in their individual will.

The most path-breaking seminal work of Existentialist philosophy is, undoubtedly, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) by Albert Camus, where the notion of absurd is articulated by utilizing the myth of Sisyphus to signify the fact that human beings persist in a meaningless world without recourse to divine or universal order. Following the Second World War, the movement’s themes of alienation, anxiety and freedom were further reinforced, giving definite shape by the major historical events. From being a philosophical movement, it found its way through literature, drama, psychology and political theory that influenced the intellectual figures like Franz Kafka, Simone de Beauvoir and Samuel Beckett. As a profound literary framework, it is used to analyze human existence and the search for meaning of life in an uncertain world.

Existentialism is marked by disillusionment with traditional values and supports the constant search for individual freedom by providing fertile ground for the survival of the discourse.

Objectives:

1. To analyse “Toba Tek Singh” through the framework of Existential philosophy to understand its core tenets.
2. To explore the existential crisis and absurdity of Partition.
3. To investigate the psychological dislocation caused by political turmoil.
4. To locate the position of “Toba Tek Singh” as a universal existentialist narrative.

Hypothesis:

The current study hypothesizes that Saadat Hasan Manto’s short story “Toba Tek Singh” is not just a Partition narrative; it is an existentialist text reflecting the absurdity of human existence and the alienation caused by arbitrary socio-political constructs and the individual’s search for meaning in an irrational world. By examining the story through the framework of Existential philosophy and its core tenets, this research would attempt to argue that the fate of the protagonist is representative of a form of existential resistance.

Methodology:

For the current study, the primary source i.e. the short story is read using multiple core tenets of Existential philosophy.

Advent of Existentialism in India:

Indian philosophers and scholars were introduced to this deeply thought-provoking intellectual discourse

during the British Colonial rule when the existential ideas found a discussion platform in the renowned universities like Jawaharlal Nehru University and Banaras Hindu University. The core themes began to be resonated in Indian literature, particularly in modernist and post-modernist writings. A good number of Indian writers, poets and playwrights explored the existentialist ideas in their works like *Jejuri* (1976) by Arun Kolatkar, *Adhe Adhure* (1969) by Mohan Rakesh, the works of Saadat Hasan Manto and Krishna Sobti.

Saadat Hasan Manto's literary contributions are an outstanding reflection of strong existentialist thoughts, especially when he deals with alienation, absurdity, freedom and the search for meaning in a haphazard world. For the current study, two of his major works are taken- *Toba Tek Singh* and *Thanda Gosht* because these works are the nurturing ground for concepts of alienation, absurdity and search for the meaning of life.

Toba Tek Singh (1955) is a poignant Partition short story set against the backdrop of the Partition of India in 1947. It is basically a satire that questions the absurd concept of division and its sever-lasting impact on the marginalized Indians that also included the mentally retarded, whose perspective is used as the narrative. It is about the mutual decisions of the governments of India and Pakistan after a few years of partition, to exchange the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim inmates of lunatic asylums of both the nations, like the prisoners and the civilians. Bishan Singh, the protagonist is one among the inmates of the asylum of Lahore, who repeatedly utters the same in coherent phrase, "Upar di gur gur di annexe di bay dhyana di mung di daal of Toba Tek Singh". His madness fails to detach him from the memories of his homeland and he continues his obsession in knowing where Toba Tek Singh, his homeland, actually belongs to- India or Pakistan.

The confused and chaotic mind of the inmates are unable to comprehend the reality of Partition, thus reflecting the absurdity of random geopolitical divisions. According to Jaitra Bharati, the inmates are examples of "intense identity crisis, alienation and extreme existential angst" that signifies the inherent absurdity that lies within human existence (Bharati, 2019). Bishan Singh's unstable mind has but one stable question regarding the location of his homeland, which implies how he struggles with his identity and belonging in a divided land. The persistent existential crisis of individuals uprooted from their origins is highlighted here.

The setting of the mental asylum is deliberately utilized to juxtapose the social construction of the idea of 'insanity' with their rational social and political decisions. Manto raises the question regarding the presence of madness in the external world; suggesting that the society lying outside the walls of the lunatic asylum is the symbol of real madness.

"Where is Toba Tek Singh?" reflects the intense identity crisis of Bishan Singh who is unable to understand the geopolitical changes that caused his displacement. He continues to seek meaning in a chaotic world ruled by selfishness. The confusion of the inmates about the Partition are expressed, "Two or three years after Partition, it suddenly struck the governments of India and Pakistan that, just as they had exchanged ordinary prisoners, they should also exchange the lunatics". This arbitrary decision to relocate the inmates of the asylum is one absurd aspect of Partition which eventually nurtures existential crisis. According to Martin Heidegger,

“Anxiety is there. It is only sleeping” (Heidegger, 1927), reflecting Bishan Singh’s existential anxiety.

“One Sikh inmate declared that he didn’t want to live in India or Pakistan. Instead, he wanted to reside in a place called ‘Tila Singh’s Land’” (Manto, 1997, p.30). His subconscious mind rejects both the nations. It underscores the existentialist theme of alienation. Conformation to socially materialized identity is straightforwardly rejected here.

However, the ultimate existential moment is presented in the story when Bishan Singh finally breathes his last moments in neither nation, but in a No-Man’s Land, “When the guards lifted him, they found him dead. On one side, behind barbed wires, was India. On the other side, behind more barbed wires, was Pakistan. In between, on a piece of land, that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh” (Manto, 1997). This represents the idea that loss of identity, displacement and man-made borders are all absurd concepts. The death of Bishan Singh in a No-Man’s Land is equivalent to Albert Camus’s idea as expounded in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, “there is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide” (Camus, 1942).

Toba Tek Singh exemplifies a highly intellectual existentialist narrative that portrays characters struggling hard to understand the absurd reality of a fragmented world. Partition is a poignant event devoid of any meaning, still causing individuals to be displaced and uprooted, losing identity and creating an existential void.

This political allegory based on the Partition is deeply embedded with existential philosophy. It is an established fact that the Partition of India and Pakistan had resulted in mass displacements and communal violence. Transcending beyond the actual historical events, the short story focusses on existential questions of alienation and absurdity. Albert Camus’s concept of the absurd brings out the truth that the universe actually lacks substantial meaning and the individuals are left without knowing why they exist, or the purpose of life. This thought provoking idea is echoed by Bishan’s predicament when living in the asylum for many years, he was abruptly transferred to India. He is just one example of the entire population who had to face displacement owing to the Partition. The Partition was a very absurd and arbitrary decision of the rulers; the actually affected were the innocent common people of both the nations. The question of identity crises is best manifested in the context of the Partition.

Conclusion:

Albert Camus was of the view that a person can be called an “absurd hero” when he/she grapples the meaninglessness of life, yet continues the resistance and survives anyhow. Despite being a lunatic, Bishan continues his defense against the system and raises perpetual queries regarding his existence. The politically mandated labels of either being “Indian” or “Pakistani” were rightly rejected by the chaotic mind of Singh. When he was being tried by the governments to be obliterated, he struggles hard not to move out till he breathes his last. This was his adamant yet stable decision.

His alienation from the socially constructed idea of identity emerges when he encounters that all the social constructions are fake and deprived of all sorts of authentication. Existing in a severely liminal space,

Bishan is distanced from the category of belonging. His insanity renders human fit in the social space, but the cause of his insanity was never considered to be examined. Moreover, his death is also symbolic of the existential tenet of the acceptance of the fact that all human conditions in this world are simply absurd. Till his death he refused to be a part of the arbitrary and meaningless government decisions. One can readily argue that Bishan's death is just physical-he achieved freedom after that.

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Environmental Justice or Injustice? Analyzing the Man-Elephant conflict through the lens of Environmental Philosophy

Nizwm Basumatary & Samikshya Gohain

Abstract

The human-elephant conflict serves as a compelling case study in environmental justice, illustrating the complex interplay of human and animal rights, ecological integrity, and ethical considerations. This research employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining qualitative analysis of philosophical frameworks with policy review and stakeholder interviews to explore effective mitigation strategies. Rooted in habitat loss and cultural perceptions, this conflict reveals the urgent need for comprehensive mitigation strategies that are informed by environmental philosophical theoretical perspectives. By systematically analyzing existing conservation practices and integrating perspectives from environmental ethics, this study aims to identify actionable pathways for sustainable coexistence. By adopting an inclusive approach that integrates the needs of local communities with the intrinsic rights of elephants, sustainable solutions can emerge that promote coexistence. This analysis highlights the importance of collaborative policy-making and community engagement in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by this conflict. The research contributes by providing a rigorous, evidence-based framework that guides policymakers and conservationists toward ethically grounded and culturally sensitive solutions. Through interdisciplinary research and the exploration of innovative conservation practices, we can work towards an equitable resolution that respect the rights of both humans and elephants, ultimately contributing ethical stewardship and the legacy of shared ecosystems. This study's findings aim to fill the existing gap by offering a clear methodological pathway to incorporate philosophical insights into practical conflict mitigation, ensuring that future strategies are both ethically sound and socially acceptable.

Keywords: environmental justice, man–elephant conflict, coexistence, ethical stewardship, mitigation strategies

1. Introduction:

Environmental justice is an important framework that seeks to ensure equitable treatment and meaningful participation of all individuals in environmental decision-making processes, especially the marginalized communities disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation. It not only involves the fair distribution

of environmental benefits and burdens, but also considers the ethical implications of our interactions with the natural world (Schlosberg, 2007). In this context, the humane elephant conflict presents a poignant case study that highlights the complex relationship between human interests, wildlife conservation, and ethical considerations related to animal rights.

Despite the growing body of research on human-wildlife conflicts, there remains a significant gap in understanding how philosophical frameworks can be systematically integrated into conflict mitigation strategies to promote justice and ethical coexistence. The man-elephant conflict arises primarily from habitat encroachment and resource competition, leading to conflicts that jeopardize both human safety and the elephant. Elephants, as key species, play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, yet their presence in agricultural landscapes can threaten the livelihoods of local communities. This conflict underscores the broader philosophical questions, including justice, rights, and coexistence, to consider how we value both human and non-human lives in our pursuit of sustainability.

This study aims to fill this gap by critically analyzing how different environmental philosophical perspectives can inform practical and ethically grounded conflict mitigation strategies. This dynamic study not only raises ethical concerns regarding the treatment and rights of animals but also highlights the necessity for effective mitigation strategies grounded in environmental philosophy. Such strategies advocate for the integration of anthropocentric and ecocentric perspectives, urging us to recognize that the well-being of humans and elephants is interconnected. By fostering a deep understanding of this relationship, we can develop comprehensive solutions that address the needs of both communities and wildlife. The contribution of this research lies in providing a nuanced philosophical framework that guides policymakers and conservationists toward ethically responsible and culturally sensitive conflict resolution approaches. This analysis aims to explore the intersection of human rights and animal welfare within the framework of environmental justice, shedding light on effective mitigation strategies that promote coexistence and ethical stewardship of our shared ecosystems.

2. Understanding Environmental Justice:

Environmental justice is intrinsically tied to conflicts that arise from unequal exposure to environmental hazards and disparities in decision-making power. Environmental justice emerged as a recognized social movement in the 1980s, driven by grassroots organizations advocating for equitable environmental policies and practices. This movement gained momentum in response to numerous instances where marginalized communities, particularly those of low-income and minority backgrounds, faced disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards. As defined (Bullard 1990), environmental justice seeks to address “the inequitable distribution of environmental risks, benefits, and decision-making power.” The historical roots of this movement can be traced to events such as the 1982 protests against a hazardous waste landfill in Warren County, North Carolina, which galvanized public awareness and activism surrounding environmental racism (Pellow & Brulle, 2005).

In the realm of environmental ethics, two dominant paradigms often emerge: anthropocentrism and

ecocentrism. Anthropocentrism posits that human beings are the central concern of moral consideration, advocating for environmental policies that primarily serve human interests. This perspective often emphasizes economic growth and the exploitation of natural resources for human benefit (Martinez-Alier, 2002). Conversely, ecocentrism challenges this view by asserting that all living beings and ecosystems possess intrinsic value, advocating for policies that prioritize ecological balance and the welfare of non-human entities (Naess, 1973). As Taylor (1986) states, “the ecocentric perspective integrates human well-being with the health of the natural world, thus promoting a holistic view of justice.”

Furthermore, the role of marginalized communities in environmental discourses is critical. Often at the forefront of environmental justice activism, these communities bring to light the intersectionality of social, economic, and environmental challenges. Their lived experiences reveal how environment-related inequities exacerbate existing socio-economic vulnerabilities (Agyeman et al., 2003). By engaging these voices, the environmental justice movement fosters inclusive dialogues, ensuring that policies reflect the needs and perspectives of those most affected by environmental policies. Importantly, as Schlosberg (2007) emphasizes, justice in environmental contexts “is not only about fair distribution but also about recognition and participation.”

3. The Man-Elephant Conflict: An Overview:

The man-elephant conflict refers to the increasing occurrences of negative interactions between humans and elephants, primarily attributed to habitat loss and agricultural expansion. As cities and farms encroach on natural habitats, elephants are driven into closer proximity to human settlements, leading to dangerous encounters and crop destruction. Approximately 90% of Asian elephants live outside protected areas, which makes them vulnerable to these conflicts (Fernando et al., 2015). Habitat fragmentation caused by urbanization and agricultural practices severely limits their natural migratory paths, pushing elephants into direct competition with humans for land and resources. Recent statistics from India indicate that over 400 elephants have been killed in conflict-related incidents in the past year alone, with many deaths resulting from retaliatory killings by farmers and local communities (Wildlife Protection Society of India, 2022).

Statistical data highlight the gravity of this conflict. In India, it is estimated that around 300 people are killed annually due to elephant encounters, along with a significant number of elephants that fall victim to retaliatory killings or poaching in response to human-elephant interactions (Dutta et al., 2017). Furthermore, crop damages caused by elephants have increased by approximately 25% over the last five years in states like Assam and Karnataka, severely impacting local farmers' livelihoods (Indian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 2023). Additionally, the economic impact on local communities can be profound; crop losses from elephant raids can devastate farmers' livelihoods, leading to increased tensions and further violence (Naughton-Treves, 1997). This cycle of conflict not only endangers both species but also exacerbates the socio-economic plight of communities that rely heavily on agriculture for survival.

Cultural perceptions of elephants vary widely, influencing local responses to the conflict. In many

societies, elephants hold religious and cultural significance, representing strength and wisdom. For instance, in parts of India, elephants are revered in religious ceremonies, creating a dichotomy between respect and fear (Sukumar, 2003). However, in areas where elephants are viewed primarily as pests, local attitudes can shift swiftly towards hostility, leading to violence and increased calls for culling measures (Madden, 2004). This duality underlines the need for a nuanced approach to conflict resolution, recognizing both the cultural significance of elephants and the legitimate concerns of affected communities.

Wildlife Protection Society of India. (2022). Annual report on human-elephant conflict and casualties. Retrieved from <https://wpsi.org/annual-report-2022>

Indian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. (2023). State of wildlife in India: Conflict and conservation statistics. Government of India.

<https://moef.gov.in/reports/wildlife-statistics-2023>

Overall, the man-elephant conflict encapsulates the complex interplay between wildlife conservation, human livelihoods, and cultural perceptions. Effective management strategies must consider these elements to foster coexistence and ensure the survival of both elephants and the communities that share their habitat. As India continues to urbanize rapidly, integrating scientific research with community participation will be crucial for sustainable solutions.

4. Case Studies of Man-Elephant Conflict:

One prominent example of the man-elephant conflict can be observed in Assam, a region in northeastern India renowned for its rich biodiversity. The state is home to a significant population of Asian elephants, which often venture into agricultural land, leading to instances of crop destruction. According to a study, “over 120 elephants and approximately 70 human fatalities were reported between 2002 and 2012 due to these conflicts” (Baskaran et al., 2016). This data highlights the severity of the conflict in Assam, reflecting not only ecological consequences but also deepening socioeconomic vulnerabilities among local communities. The close proximity of human settlements to wildlife corridors facilitates these encounters, causing heightened tensions and economic losses for local farmers. Such spatial overlaps underscore the importance of landscape-level planning in conflict mitigation, emphasizing that habitat connectivity must be balanced with human land use.

To escalate this conflict, various communities in Assam have embarked on adaptive strategies. For instance, farmers have begun implementing barriers using electric fencing and trenches to protect their crops from elephant incursions. In addition to this, some villages have adopted community-based conservation initiatives, fostering better understanding and cooperation between humans and elephants. These strategies demonstrate a shift towards participatory conservation, which is crucial because top-down policies often fail to address local needs and perceptions that influence conflict outcomes. The implementation of early warning systems—like community alert groups equipped with mobile technology—has also emerged as a beneficial strategy to manage potential conflicts effectively (Mahanta & Choudhury, 2020). However, the success of these systems

depends heavily on community engagement and technological accessibility, which vary across regions, thus necessitating tailored approaches for different communities.

Hence, these case studies illustrate that effective community responses and adaptive strategies are essential in addressing the challenges posed by man-elephant conflicts. Analyzing these initiatives reveals that integrating local knowledge with scientific approaches can enhance conflict mitigation, fostering resilient coexistence models. By fostering coexistence through understanding and sustainable practices, it is possible to achieve harmonious relationships between humans and elephants. However, the success of these systems depends heavily on community engagement and technological accessibility, which vary across regions, thus necessitating tailored approaches for different communities.

5. Moral Considerations in the Man-Elephant Conflict:

The moral dimensions of studies surrounding the conflict between humans and elephants involve multiple layers of ethical consideration, particularly regarding sentience, animal rights, conservation ethics, and ecosystem interdependence. Understanding these moral implications is essential to fostering effective and compassionate resolutions. Applying ethical theories such as utilitarianism and deontology can provide a structured approach to these moral considerations, helping to evaluate the outcomes and inherent rights involved in conservation efforts and human-wildlife interactions.

5.1. Sentience and Animal Rights:

One of the fundamental moral considerations in this discourse is the recognition of sentience in elephants and other wildlife. Sentience refers to the capacity to experience feelings and emotions, which is increasingly acknowledged in various animal species, including elephants. Notably, researchers mention that “elephants exhibit complex emotional behaviors, such as mourning, empathy, and social bonding” (Mason et al., 2013). From a utilitarian perspective, recognizing the capacity for suffering in elephants obligates humans to minimize harm and ensure their well-being, thus aligning conservation efforts with the greatest good for all sentient beings. This recognition of sentience raises profound ethical questions regarding the treatment of wildlife. Being the most sentient animal, elephants have the intrinsic rights to life and freedom. The idea that “non-human animals possess rights derived from their capable experience of suffering” calls for a reevaluation of conservation strategies (Regan, 2004). Deontological ethics would argue that elephants possess inherent rights that must be respected regardless of the consequences, emphasizing the moral duty to treat animals as ends in themselves. Advocates for animal rights argue that conservation efforts should prioritize ethical considerations, ensuring that the interests of elephants are equitably weighed in decision-making processes.

5.2. Ethics of Wildlife Conservation vs. Human Livelihoods:

The ethical dilemmas between wildlife conservation and human livelihoods often create tensions in affected communities. Many local populations depend on agriculture and land use to sustain themselves. Yet, the presence of elephants can be detrimental to their crops, leading to financial losses and increased human-

wildlife conflicts. Utilitarian ethics would examine whether the overall benefits of conservation outweigh the suffering caused to local communities, advocating for solutions that maximize well-being for both humans and elephants. In this context, ethical debates emerge around prioritizing conservation goals versus mitigating human suffering. Scholars note that “balancing the needs of wildlife with those of impoverished communities is ethically imperative for sustainable conservation” (Dickman, 2010). Ethical frameworks advocating for sustainable development emphasize that solutions must be equitable, recognizing the rights of communities while also addressing the urgency of wildlife preservation. Principles of justice and fairness, rooted in theories like John Rawls’ theory of justice, suggest that conservation policies should aim to distribute benefits and burdens equitably among all stakeholders. Conservation strategies that include community participation and benefit-sharing are increasingly viewed as ethical necessities that can reconcile the needs of both humans and elephants.

5.3. Philosophical Implications of Ecosystem Interdependence:

The philosophical notion of ecosystem interdependence suggests that all living beings coexist within a web of relationships that sustains life. This interconnectedness highlights that the survival of elephants and human populations is intrinsically linked to the health of ecosystems. From an eco-centric ethical perspective, the intrinsic value of all species and ecosystems emphasizes the moral obligation to preserve biodiversity for its own sake, beyond utilitarian benefits. As such, ethical considerations surrounding conservation must account for the fact that “neglecting the needs of one species can reverberate through the ecosystem, ultimately affecting human health and livelihoods” (Carpenter et al., 1998). Acknowledging this interdependence challenges us to adopt a more holistic ethical framework, where the well-being of biodiversity and human communities is not seen in opposition but rather as part of a unified concern. This aligns with deep ecology principles, which advocate for a fundamental shift in human attitudes towards nature, recognizing the intrinsic rights of all living beings and ecosystems.

6. Integrated Conflict Mitigation Strategies Aligned with Environmental Philosophical Perspectives on Human-Elephant Conflict:

Understanding human-elephant conflict requires a nuanced exploration of various philosophical frameworks, including anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and rights-based approaches. Each perspective offers unique insights and solutions to balance human needs with wildlife conservation. A comprehensive analysis of these approaches reveals that integrating multiple ethical perspectives can foster more comprehensive and adaptable mitigation strategies. By analyzing these approaches, we can better address the complexities of coexistence and develop strategies that uphold the rights and welfare of both humans and elephants.

6.1. Anthropocentric Perspectives on Human-Elephant Conflict:

The anthropocentric approach prioritises human interests, often placing the needs of people above the needs of other species. Advocates of this approach argue that economic growth and agricultural development are crucial for social progress. In regions such as Assam, where elephants encroach on agricultural land, the

immediate need for food security and economic stability often overrides conservation efforts. As (Baskaran et al. 2016) note, this conflict often revolves around the need for human safety and agricultural viability, which may come at the expense of wildlife conservation. However, this approach risks fostering a short-term view that neglects the potential long-term ecological costs of species loss. This perspective emphasizes pragmatic solutions that address human priorities but may risk ecological integrity if not balanced properly. Critics of this anthropocentric approach argue that focusing only on human needs may compromise the long-term health of the ecosystem, which may ultimately also threaten human well-being.

Given this approach, conflict mitigation strategies should prioritise increasing agricultural production and ensuring food security for local populations, while simultaneously minimising encounters with elephants. An effective approach involves providing financial incentives or compensation for crop damage caused by elephants, which can help reduce resentment towards these animals (Dutta et al., 2017). Furthermore, educating farmers about non-lethal methods – such as growing crops that are less attractive to elephants or adopting distracting feeding techniques – is in line with human-centric ideals and supports coexistence, ultimately protecting human livelihoods while promoting a more harmonious relationship with wildlife (Madden, 2004). Implementing these strategies also requires ongoing community engagement to ensure they are culturally acceptable and practically sustainable. This pragmatic approach underscores the importance of balancing immediate human needs with conservation efforts.

6.2. Ecocentric Perspectives on Human-Elephant Interaction:

Ecocentrism is distinct from anthropocentrism, as it emphasises that all living beings and ecosystems have intrinsic value, suggesting that elephants and other species have value beyond their utility to humans. This approach advocates a holistic conservation approach, emphasising the interconnectedness of ecosystem health. Elephants, known for their significant contribution to biodiversity, play essential roles in their habitats, and their removal could cause significant ecological disruption. As highlighted by Lindsay et al. (2014), the ecological roles played by elephants can have a considerable positive impact on their environment, underlining the importance of their conservation.

Addressing human-elephant conflict from an ecocentrism perspective requires efforts focused on biodiversity conservation. This could include the establishment of wildlife corridors and habitat restoration initiatives, allowing elephants to safely traverse landscapes while minimising encounters with human settlements. Hedges et al. (2015) emphasize that such strategies can significantly reduce conflict. These measures also serve to reinforce the moral obligation to preserve natural ecosystems for their own sake, not solely for their utility to humans. Furthermore, community-driven conservation efforts empower local populations by involving them in the management of natural resources, which not only aids ecological health but also fosters a sense of connection between communities and their environment. This perspective underscores the moral obligation to value nature intrinsically, beyond utilitarian benefits. According to Shankaran et al. (2020), these initiatives can

change the way communities view elephants, transforming their identity from nuisance to essential ecological allies. This shift in perception can be supported through educational programs that highlight the ecological importance of elephants and promote stewardship.

6.3. Rights-Based Approaches to Human-Elephant Relationships:

The rights-based approach provides a new philosophical framework that examines the rights of both humans and elephants, leading to discussions of whether non-human animals should be granted the same rights as humans, including the fundamental right to exist and thrive in their natural environments. Advocates of this approach argue that, given their sentience, elephants should receive protection from harm and exploitation, and that their rights should be integrated into policies and practices that affect their populations. As Nussbaum (2006) has noted, legally recognizing animal rights can serve as an effective means to address human-elephant conflicts, creating a resolution framework that respects the dignity of all sentient beings.

This approach emphasizes that recognizing the moral and legal rights of elephants can serve as a foundation for developing more ethically consistent conservation policies. This approach shifts focus from utilitarian calculations to the inherent moral value of animals, advocating for legal protections grounded in respect for their intrinsic worth. However, implementing this approach presents challenges, particularly in poor communities that depend on the land for their economic survival. Achieving a balance between human rights and elephant rights requires thoughtful engagement and dialogue among various stakeholders. The rights-based approach advocates conflict mitigation strategies that involve establishing legal protections, acknowledging elephants' rights to existence in their natural habitats. Regulatory measures that impose penalties for poaching and other forms of exploitation can enhance their security, encouraging community members to adopt coexistence strategies (Nussbaum, 2006). In addition, promoting discussion within the local population about the ethical treatment of elephants can develop a culture of empathy and respect, as well as address the rights of both humans and animals in the creation of policies (Schlosberg, 2007). Embedding these rights into legal frameworks helps ensure that conservation efforts are not solely utilitarian but grounded in justice and moral respect for all beings. This multifaceted approach combines legal measures with ethical dialogue to promote sustainable coexistence.

In conclusion, examining anthropocentric, ecocentric, and rights-based approaches to human-elephant conflict, it becomes clear that a multifaceted strategy is essential for effective resolution. Prioritizing human needs while recognizing the intrinsic value of elephants and their ecosystems can lead to sustainable coexistence. Integrating the strengths of these perspectives through a pluralistic framework offers a more resilient and ethically consistent approach to conflict mitigation. Reducing overlap and emphasizing the complementarity of these perspectives enhances the clarity and strength of the overall framework. Lastly, combining ethical considerations and community engagement ensures that both human welfare and wildlife conservation are equally valued, fostering harmonious relationships in shared landscapes.

7. Conclusion:

The exploration of the man-elephant conflict through the lenses of environmental justice and philosophical frameworks reveals the intricate interplay between human interests, ecological integrity, and the intrinsic rights of animals. This conflict, rooted in habitat loss and cultural perceptions, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive conflict mitigation strategies that embrace various theoretical perspectives—anthropocentric, ecocentric, and rights-based. A clear understanding of these perspectives can guide policymakers toward designing multi-layered strategies that address both immediate human needs and long-term ecological sustainability. By recognizing that the well-being of both humans and elephants is interconnected, we gain a clearer understanding of how to foster coexistence.

A balanced approach to environmental justice is essential, one that considers not only the livelihood and safety of human communities but also the moral imperative to protect the rights of non-human entities. The plight of elephants, as sentient beings with intrinsic value, necessitates a framework that respects their right to thrive in their natural habitats. In practice, this calls for integrating legal protections for elephants into national conservation policies, ensuring their rights are upheld alongside human development goals. Simultaneously, it is crucial to acknowledge the vulnerabilities faced by local populations whose livelihoods are impacted by the presence of elephants. Policies must aim to enhance community resilience while promoting conservation efforts that reflect the needs and voices of both stakeholder groups. Effective policy implementation requires participatory governance models that empower local communities and incorporate indigenous knowledge into conflict mitigation efforts. Future research should focus on developing innovative, context-specific solutions that integrate community knowledge and scientific insights to address the multifaceted challenges of human-elephant conflict. Emphasis should be placed on collaborative approaches that engage local populations, foster stewardship, and adapt conservation strategies to accommodate evolving socio-economic dynamics. Furthermore, interdisciplinary studies exploring cultural perceptions of wildlife can provide deeper insights into shaping policies that resonate with communities. These insights can inform adaptive management frameworks that are flexible, culturally sensitive, and capable of responding to changing environmental and social conditions.

In the realm of policy, it is imperative to create frameworks that include participatory processes, ensuring that the values and concerns of all stakeholders are considered. This entails establishing mechanisms for ongoing dialogue, conflict resolution, and shared decision-making among governments, conservationists, and local communities. By fostering dialogue between policymakers, conservationists, and local communities, we can enhance understanding, build trust, and implement effective strategies that honor both human and animal rights. Ultimately, achieving a just and sustainable coexistence requires an ongoing commitment to adapt our approaches as we learn from the shared experiences of humans and elephants, cultivating a future where both can thrive. Such adaptive policies should be rooted in continuous monitoring, evaluation, and community feedback to ensure they remain effective and equitable over time.

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Non-Violence and Environment: Gandhi's Ecological Idea for a Sustainable Future

Rishika Patgiri & Tejasha Kalita

Abstract

The care for environment of Mahatma Gandhi can be seen in his philosophy of non-violence. His philosophy focuses on an ethical behaviour towards the environment. This article will highlight environmental concern of Gandhi that will focus on his philosophy of non-violence, simple living, and self-sufficiency as core ideas governing human actions towards the environment. Gandhi stated that real happiness comes when human being instead of destroying the nature for selfish motives, lives peacefully with the environment by adopting a simple life. Gandhi's philosophy is based on the principle of Ahimsa or non-violence which should be applied to all the creatures of the world. He mentioned that harm to the environment would result in harm to human being. This relation highlights the ethical duty of human being to protect the environment for future generations. Gandhi's philosophy of Sarvodaya which is betterment of all reflects betterment of all the creatures of the world. Therefore, it can be useful in addressing environmental crisis by focusing on the welfare of every being. This article will also highlight Gandhi's implementation of his environmental ideas which is reflected in his idea of self-reliance, critique of industrialization, cottage industries and eco-friendly agricultural habits. His adoption of khadi products is not only an economic friendly idea but is also helpful in preserving the environment. By relating Gandhi's philosophy in the context of ecological crisis, this paper will deal with the practical application of his philosophy to address environmental issues. His philosophy is reflected in various environmental movements that deals with ethical practices that result in a healthy human-nature relationship.

Keywords: Gandhi, environment, non-violence, sarvodaya, swadeshi

Introduction:

Gandhi's idea of non-violence, simplicity, self-reliance, sarvodaya and unification of human being with the nature form the backbone of his concern for the environment. His ideas are useful for the welfare of not only for the entire human society but also for the benefit of the entire environment. Environment refers to our surroundings. It includes living and non-living, natural and man-made components. Environmental issue is the

burning issue in current times. Global warming, ozone layer depletion, climate change are some of the results of environmental damage. This has a drastic effect on human health as well as the entire environment. Environmental issues occur due to pollution, over population, technology and exploitation of resources. Although there was less environmental concern in Gandhi's time but he was concerned with environmental issues that the world is facing now. His famous argument "The earth has enough for human need but not for human greed" points to the fact that he was very much concerned about the environment. The basic foundation of his philosophy is non-violence which is applicable not only to human being but to the entire environment. Gandhi was not an environmentalist as he did not lead any environmental movement, nor did he write any book related to it. But he was concerned about the environment which can be perceived in his philosophy. Gandhi considered industries as the main source of pollution that hampers the environment (Tiwari, 2019). Industries, although have a great impact on human life in terms of technology, services that make human life easier but it is also considered as the main source of pollution that creates environmental degradation. It releases harmful pollutants into the air that are dangerous to human health (Manisalidis et al., 2020). It can be seen that excessive exploitation of resources in the name of development leads to serious environmental degradation. Therefore, Gandhi was not in support of industrialization. Although, industrialisation hampers human labour but environmental degradation also results from it and thus, Gandhi's unwillingness to accept industrialisation can also be helpful in addressing environmental degradation.

Critique of Industrialisation:

Industrialisation refers to the process of moving into industrial based economy from agriculturally based economy. With the increase of industries, it requires raw materials on a large scale that leads to massive deforestation. Although industrialisation contributes to the development such as economic growth, urbanisation, encourages technological advancements and improves standard of living but it has a negative impact on environment. Human being is exploiting the resources unethically for the sake of development which can be clearly seen in deforestation, pollution, water disputes in current times (S, 2012). If a development does not respect nature, then it also threatens human survival. Human being can be regarded as nature's child because like parents, nature fulfils human needs. But at the same time human being stands outside the nature and destroys it for fulfilling his greed. The deterioration of nature also affects human being. The degradation of the environment is the result of human activities (Ekiugbo & Isanbor, 2012). The dangers of industrialization, machinery, modern civilization, urbanization was already visualised by Mahatma Gandhi much before these issues actually took place. He dealt with these issues mostly in Hind Swaraj (Tiwari, 2019). Throughout his life, he was a critique of industrialization and modern civilization after visualizing the danger inherent in the industrial revolution in the west. He was against industrialization as he visualised that it would lead to massive harm to the environment which the world is facing now. Gandhi was influenced by Ruskin's view against Victorian Industrialization through his book "Unto This Last" where he was influenced by the importance of manual labour. Industrialization

has a huge effect on human and environment. It has made a portion of people rich by destroying the natural resources of the earth. Gandhi stated that it has made people run after wealth and worldly pleasures. He regarded machines to be a representation of sin. Industrialization has given rise to multiplicity of wants. The resources are limited but the human wants are unlimited that creates violence of human towards the environment. It also gives rise to inequality, oppositions and scarcity for the rest of the population. Gandhi believed that before Industrialization, the human wants were limited that has little effect on nature. Gandhi was not totally against industries but he was against industrialization that makes man superior to nature. He considers industrialization as a tool of mass destruction, the torture to innocent living creatures. He believes that industrialization reduces morality of human being. The raw materials are exploited from the smaller countries and the stronger countries try to compete with one another to reach the position of industrially powerful. This leads to more and more exploitation of resources. It also creates a huge gap between capital and labour class. It also gives rise to issue of unemployment of labour. Gandhi believed that the excessive industrialization leads to destruction of human spirit that transforms the status of man into machine. It degrades the morality of human being. The harmful effects that industrialization creates in the environment are air pollution, water pollution and soil pollution that destroys life and reduce life expectancy (Blokhin, Boyle, & Logan, 2021). To address these issues, sustainable practices such as reforestation, self-sufficiency, cottage industries, organic farming can be taken into consideration which is already found in Gandhi's philosophy. Gandhi believed that industrialization gives importance to material wealth and consumerism that has a negative impact on society. He argued that running after material objects results in endless greed where individuals fall prey to endless wants and unnecessary consumption. This leads to excessive destruction of resources. Thus, consumerism is an important element of industrialisation that contributes to the environmental degradation.

Consumerism:

Consumerism is a state of increasing the consumption of goods and services by the people. It is economically beneficial but has an adverse effect on nature because the resources are limited but human wants are unlimited. It leads to exploitation of the nature. The attitude of human being towards the environment is exploiting in nature. Construction of dams for beneficial to human being creates greenhouse effects as it releases large amounts of carbon from the killing of trees around dams. It leads to global climate change. It also creates loss of habitat of different species and resettlement of human being (Sara & Ovi, 2016). It can be seen that in the process of consumerism, the worth of human being depends on how much they possess instead of who they are. This leads to an end of the ethical values such as modesty, sympathy and satisfaction. Instead of having satisfaction, human being desires for more that creates a feeling of separation of human being from others. Thus, it can be seen that it not only creates social inequality but also creates a feeling among human being that man is the superior being than all other creatures of the world and therefore, it forgets to bother the well-being of other creatures. In this regard, Gandhi, although admires rationalism but considered it as a "hidden

monster” when it considers itself to be Supreme Being (Gandhi, 1926). The consideration of human being as omnipotence is a way to possess the material world. It would give illegitimate power to man to exploit the nature. Gandhi did not accept the sacrifice of animals even in the name of religion. Thus, by considering human being as a Supreme Being themselves, it would not regret to use violence over other beings which can be seen as a challenge to environmental justice. Thus, this challenge can be addressed with the help of non-violence which can be seen in Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence.

Gandhi’s Philosophy of Non-violence and Environmental Justice:

Gandhi was of the view that harming the environment is *himsā*. Not to harm any living being is *ahimsa*. Non-violence or *ahimsa* is the basic foundation of Gandhi’s philosophy. His philosophy is applicable not only to a particular area but can be applied to every aspect. Non-violence generally means debarred from harming others at any situation. It is a method of solving an issue peacefully without any forceful attempt. It refers to non-killing or non-injury. Jainism has a great influence on Gandhi’s non-violence. Like Jainism, Gandhi also considers everything as a living entity. He advised people to respect every life form. But Gandhi’s idea of non-violence is much more general definition of it. Non-violence, according to Gandhi is absence of violence in thought, word and actions. He regarded it as a way of life. The term non-violence means “love” (Lal, 1978). He accepts love for humanity. He believed in Advaita or non-dual reality (Reddy & Chinnaiah, 2023). It shows that human and environment is one. Therefore, non-violence should be applicable to the entire environment. Gandhi’s non-violence can be helpful to control environmental issues as after adopting this idea, the carbon footprints is believed to be reduced which is produced in wars and missile production (Tiwari, 2019). Gandhi gives importance to preservation of natural resources by human being. Thus, man has to be non-violent towards the nature. His principle of non-violence is very necessary in current time to have a balanced nature as consumerism is increasing at higher rate and produces tremendous amount of waste to the environment. Excessive consumerism results in extinction of resources and also pollutes air, water and soil (Nayeck, 2018). Arne Ness considers preservation of environment as non-violent in nature. He propounded his idea of Deep ecology from non-violence (Weber, 1999). Gandhi believes that non-violence is the highest duty that helps to attain the highest law which is truth. When Gandhi was in search of truth he found non-violence. Non-violence is the means and truth is the end. He regarded these two principles as the two sides of the same coin. He considered Truth as God. Truth is the ultimate goal of human being that can be attained through non-violence (Lal, 1978). It is a principle which cannot be practiced by coward. The strong and brave can practice this principle. He considered it as a tool to control human greed. Thus, it can be helpful in controlling the unnecessary destruction of the nature by controlling the excessive human wants. It can also be useful to improve human-nature relation. Gandhi said that violence can be perceived in economic, industrial and political system and thus, he desired to bring a change through trusteeship. It is a philosophy where the rich people keep with themselves what is necessary for them and donate their remaining to the poor (Lal, 1978). He mentioned that owning property is

also a kind of violence and he believed that everyone has the right on everything. By adopting this method, the desire for excessive owning can be reduced which can be helpful in mitigating exploitation of resources. Another principle of Gandhi is Satyagraha. It is the technique or tool of non-violence which is holding fast to truth. It is a principle that maintains extreme love for truth. It is a technique that tries to bring positive changes by sticking to the path of truth. It is the truth force, soul force or love force (Lal, 1978). It is a non-violent method which is adopted against any injustice and *himsā*. It develops a feeling of love and oneness among all. It also involves participation by the masses. Therefore, in order to preserve the environment, people should come forward and join hands to have a sustainable nature. It can be perceived that it influences many environmental movements such as Chipko movement, Narmada Bachao Andolon, etc. The main aim of Chipko movement is to take forward Gandhi's idea of forming new society where there is no exploitation of man as well as nature, and to raise voice against the barrier to human survival. The Cauvery River issue, deforestation, Ganga water issue, Narmada Bachao Movement, etc. are some of the environmental issues that requires resolution to solve these issues. Most of it adopted Gandhi's philosophy to solve these issues (Reddy & Chinnaiah, 2023). Gandhi's non-violence is environmentally friendly and more effective than violence. Gandhian successful solution to other issues might also have influenced these environmental movements. Gandhi considered satyagraha as a weapon of non-violence to solve any issue. Environmental issues also come under the issues that can be reduced through Gandhi's technique. He suggested coming to negotiation to come to a solution to any issue. He experimented to use non-violence to resolve issues and succeed in it. The main elements of non-violence are peace and harmony. These elements of non-violence are the tool of Sarvodaya. It is a principle which deals with the betterment of all. This principle can be applicable when it involves truth, non-violence and co-operation. It includes love for all and well-being of all. It also involves self-sacrifice. It highlights the unity and oneness of all (Lal, 1978). Sarvodaya means well-being of all that includes not only human being but the entire environment. The pre-Socratic philosophers considered nature as the primary stuff of the universe. Thales considered water as the primary substance of the world. On the other hand, Anaximenes considered air to be the source of all creatures. The western philosopher Spinoza considered nature as God. Thus, it can be perceived that nature is considered as the Supreme creature of the universe. Therefore, it is the responsibility of human being to protect the nature and respect it instead of exploiting it. But it should be noted that prevention of complete exploitation of resources by human being is hard to follow. In certain circumstances extractions of resource for the survival of human being is absolutely necessary (Shiva, 2014). Again, increase of poverty can also be seen as one of the effects of strict cut down on destruction of resources. The economic development of a nation also depends on use of resources. Thus, certain form of violence to resources by human being is bound to take place in order to live. Gandhi also accepted that it is difficult to control *himsā* completely under certain conditions such as killing an animal for self-protection, destroying plants for food, destroying mosquitoes that create germs, etc. and the like causes. Gandhi's meaning of violence is harming others out of anger, selfishness, and jealousy. Absence of

such causes in hurting others is not considered as violence by Gandhi (Lal, 1978). Therefore, by considering Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence it can be stated that use of resources is necessary for human survival but unnecessary destruction of resources for selfish purpose should be reduced to deal with environmental degradation.

Conclusion:

Gandhi's environmental concern came into being much before the environmental movements took place. His teachings "The earth has enough for human need but not for human greed" points to the fact that he was very much concerned about environmental crisis. He hinted towards issues such as consumerism, violence, industrialization, modern civilization, and so on. In India, environmental movements can be seen to have inspired by Gandhi's teachings of non-violence, satyagraha, Sarvodaya. The non-violent attitude towards environment by human being not only improves human-nature relation but also helps in controlling environmental problems. His philosophy of satyagraha served as a weapon to resolve conflict which can be useful in controlling man-nature conflict. Although, he did not lead any environmental movements but his teachings can be seen to have applied to reduce various environmental problems. He visualised that industrialization would not only hamper employment of labour but it would also lead to massive environmental destruction such as pollution, ozone layer depletion, climate change, etc. He was not in support of modern civilization that runs to satisfy human greed which leads to massive exploitation of resources. His predictions to future environmental crisis can be perceived in the current times. Thus, his solution to environmental degradation that can be found in his philosophy can be seen to be work as prevention of the issue rather than cure which is more effective in the long run. Gandhi's idea can be realised with a determination and moral principle. The basic necessity in adopting it is a change in thinking of human and the step towards a sustainable future. The path towards a green future can be found in Gandhi's idea of non-violence. But at the same time, Gandhi's philosophy cannot be used in every aspect without critically examined. His ideas can be utilised based on the time and the situations. The complete industrialisation cannot be overlooked as it is necessary for economic development, productivity, technological upliftment and standard of living. Again, a large section of capitalist considered Gandhi's idea of Sarvodaya as "utopian" land of dreams which is difficult to achieve in reality. With the fundamental rights of people, Sarvodaya is hard to apply in current times. But with these critical standpoints, it is to be taken into consideration that Gandhi accepted a middle path to attain the goal. Gandhi himself stated that certain form of violence by human being is considerable but excessive destruction of resources is untenable. By analysing his concept of industrialisation, it can be stated that industrialisation can be acceptable to that extent where village handicrafts based on human labour can go hand in hand with machines and have less impact on environment. Although, critics have mentioned Sarvodaya as a utopian concept but adopting this concept voluntarily ensure harmonious existence of man and nature. Thus, it can be said that reinterpreting Gandhi's idea with moderate considerations can be useful towards building a green future.

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The Philosophy of Deep Ecology: Embracing the Rights of Nature

Manashi Bora

Abstract

Deep Ecology is an environmental philosophy that challenges human-centered views of nature, emphasizing the intrinsic value of all life forms and ecosystems. It advocates for the protection of nature's rights, including legal recognition for ecosystems like rivers and forests. Introduced by Arne Naess in 1973, it calls for a deep spiritual connection to the natural world and a radical shift in how humanity interacts with nature. Deep Ecology offers practical solutions for global environmental issues like climate change and biodiversity loss, influencing legal frameworks such as Ecuador's constitutional reforms and New Zealand's recognition of the Whanganui River's legal personhood. The philosophy supports sustainable practices such as rewilding, permaculture, and sustainable agriculture. It urges individuals, communities, and policymakers to work together for a more sustainable, just, and ecologically balanced world, providing a pathway to address environmental crises and promote environmental justice.

Keywords: deep ecology, nature, Arne Naess, ecocentric, environment

Introduction:

The philosophy of deep ecology is an environmental movement that goes beyond just focusing on human-centered solutions to environmental issues. It emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings, regardless of their usefulness to humans. Rooted in the belief that nature is not simply a resource for human exploitation, deep ecology advocates for a deep, spiritual connection with the natural world and promotes the idea that every part of the ecosystem has a right to exist and thrive.

At the core of deep ecology is the "rights of nature," advocating for legal rights for animals, plants, rivers, and ecosystems to protect them from harm. Unlike traditional environmentalism, which often prioritizes human benefit, deep ecology calls for a shift in how we view our relationship with Earth. It challenges the separation between humans and nature, promoting the idea that we are part of a larger interconnected web of life. By embracing eco-centric ethics, deep ecology aims for a more sustainable, harmonious world, encouraging

a rethinking of values to safeguard the planet from industrialization, climate change, and over-consumption, fostering balanced coexistence.

Deep ecology, introduced by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in 1973, offers a deeper environmental philosophy than traditional, utilitarian approaches. While conventional environmentalism often views nature in terms of its benefits to humans, such as resources, recreation, or ecosystem services, Naess argued this perspective was insufficient to protect the environment from industrialization and ecological degradation. Deep ecology stresses the intrinsic value of all life and the interconnectedness of ecosystems, asserting that nature has worth independent of human needs. Unlike traditional approaches, deep ecology challenges us to reconsider our ethics, priorities, and behaviors, advocating for a more holistic and respectful relationship with the natural world. According to Arne Naess, “The deep ecological movement is primarily concerned with the flourishing of non-human life, as well as human life, but it is concerned with the right of all living beings to live, flourish, and realize their full potential” (Naess, 1973).

Naess proposed viewing nature as a living system with inherent value, not just a resource. Deep ecology rejects anthropocentrism, advocating for an ecocentric worldview where humans are part of an interconnected web of life. It calls for an ethical transformation, recognizing all living beings’ right to exist and thrive.

Deep Ecology is an ethical philosophy that asserts all living beings, from plants to ecosystems, have intrinsic rights to exist, regardless of human utility. This perspective challenges traditional environmentalism, which often prioritizes nature for human benefit, instead advocating for nature’s protection for its own sake. It influences legal and environmental activism, promoting laws recognizing nature’s rights and encouraging sustainable practices like rewilding, conservation, and eco-friendly urban planning. Deep Ecology calls for systemic changes to address the climate crisis, urging a shift in resource consumption and energy use, while emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life and advocating for environmental justice.

Objectives:

There are certain aims or objectives behind preparing this paper. They are as follows:

1. The first objective is to explore deep ecology’s ethics, emphasizing intrinsic rights of all life and ecosystems.
2. The second objective is to analyze deep ecology’s impact on environmental activism, focusing on conservation, sustainability, and nature protection.
3. The third objective is to assess deep ecology’s role in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and promoting sustainability and justice.

Methodology:

This research paper explores deep ecology from both a philosophical and ethical perspective, using an analytical methodology. The topic is first discussed descriptively, followed by a philosophical analysis that is qualitative and normative in nature. Philosophical research demands clarity, consistency, and rigour, as well as

a critical examination of assumptions and methods. The study begins by questioning accepted beliefs, applying this approach to the concept of deep ecology and its environmental implications. The research primarily reviews existing works in the philosophy of deep ecology, including foundational works by philosophers like Arne Naess. This work will be reviewed to understand the ethical principles and theoretical framework of deep ecology. This methodology also draws secondary sources such as journals, articles, books, and internet resources. While not all aspects of deep ecology are covered due to space limitations, the paper aims to provide a focused and justified discussion of deep ecology's key ideas and its environmental concerns. The study concludes with a general observation and evaluation of the topic. The paper specifically addresses the issue of deep ecology and its attitude towards preserving the rights of nature.

Discussion:

At the core of deep ecology is the concept of biospherical egalitarianism, which asserts that all forms of life—humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems—have the right to live and thrive. This view rejects the hierarchical model that places humans above all other living beings and instead promotes an egalitarian worldview where all life forms are equal members of a larger ecological community. This shift in perspective calls for a fundamental transformation in how we interact with the natural world and in how we view our role within it.

Deep ecology emphasizes the intrinsic value of nature, asserting that it holds worth beyond human utility. It highlights the interconnectedness of all life, where the health of ecosystems relies on the well-being of every species. This philosophy promotes biocentric equality, where all life forms have an equal right to exist. It rejects anthropocentrism, advocating for an ecocentric view that sees humans as part of a larger ecosystem. Deep ecology also encourages reducing human impact by living more sustainably, with less reliance on industrialization and overconsumption. Finally, it calls for self-realization, urging individuals to recognize their deep connection with nature and embrace a more compassionate and holistic worldview.

Practical Applications of Deep Ecology:

Deep ecology's principles have been actively applied in various environmental initiatives. Rewilding, such as the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone or the restoration of the Scottish Highlands, seeks to restore ecosystems to their natural state by reintroducing native species and recovering ecological balance. Sustainable agriculture and permaculture align with deep ecology by promoting farming practices that work with nature, focusing on biodiversity, minimal waste, and long-term sustainability. The philosophy also advocates for minimalism, encouraging individuals to reduce overconsumption, simplify their lifestyles, and find fulfillment in non-material pursuits, thus reducing ecological impact. Additionally, deep ecology has inspired ecospiritual movements that emphasize a spiritual connection to the Earth, encouraging a shift away from consumerism toward a more harmonious relationship with nature. This convergence of deep ecology with environmental activism encourages a collective commitment to protecting ecosystems and recognizing the sacredness of the Earth, much like many indigenous cultures that prioritize living in balance with nature.

The Core Principles of Deep Ecology:

Deep ecology is grounded in several key principles that challenge conventional views of nature. It asserts the intrinsic value of nature, believing ecosystems, species, and organisms have worth independent of their utility to humans. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life, where every organism, from microbes to mammals, plays a vital role in maintaining ecological balance. The concept of bio spherical egalitarianism promotes equal rights for all living beings, human and non-human alike, rejecting hierarchical views that place humans above other forms of life. Deep ecology opposes anthropocentrism, advocating for an ecocentric perspective where humans are seen as one species among many, all equally important to the Earth's ecosystems. Finally, it calls for self-realization, encouraging individuals to deepen their connection to nature, transcending self-centered behavior, and fostering a more compassionate, ethical approach to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Bill Devall, environmental sociologist, on deep ecology, maintains that, "Deep ecology proposes a radical shift in how humans relate to the Earth. Instead of focusing on human-centered solutions to environmental problems, it calls for the inherent value of all living beings and ecosystems to be recognized and respected, independent of their usefulness to humanity" (Devall, 1988).

The Rights of Nature: A Radical Shift in Thinking:

The concept of the rights of nature is a revolutionary aspect of deep ecology, challenging traditional legal frameworks that treat nature as property to be exploited by humans. Instead, it advocates for granting legal recognition to ecosystems, species, and natural entities, allowing them to exist and thrive independently of human benefit. This idea has been gaining ground globally, with Ecuador's 2008 constitutional reforms recognizing the rights of nature, enabling legal actions to protect ecosystems. Similarly, in 2017, the Whanganui River in New Zealand was granted legal personhood, following efforts by the Māori people to have the river recognized as a sacred being. These examples highlight a growing movement to protect nature through legal reforms that challenge destructive environmental practices and promote sustainability. "The Whanganui River is a living entity, a person in its own right... We now recognize the river as a rights holder" (Whanganui River, New Zealand, 2017).

The ethical implications of recognizing nature's rights raise profound questions about humanity's role in ecosystems of Earth. It calls for a shift in perspective, seeing nature as deserving of respect and protection for its own sake, not just for human use. This shift can lead to a more sustainable and ethical approach to environmental management, protecting marginalized communities and ecosystems from exploitation. The concept also challenges the profit-driven economic systems that prioritize growth over environmental health.

Deep ecology offers a framework for addressing climate change, advocating for a rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, reduced consumption, and a localized, equitable economy. It calls for policy changes to protect biodiversity, support sustainable land use, and recognize the rights of non-human species. By adopting an ecocentric perspective, deep ecology provides a road map for transforming human behavior

and creating a sustainable, harmonious world that values the intrinsic worth of all life. It encourages action to address interconnected ecological crises and ensures the protection of the planet for future generations. The Constitution of Ecuador (2008) regarding the rights of nature, “Nature, or Pachamama, where life is reproduced and exists, has the right to exist, persist, and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions, and evolutionary processes” (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, Article 71).

Deep Ecology in Action: The Path Forward:

While the philosophy of deep ecology may initially seem abstract or theoretical, its core principles are already being applied in meaningful ways across the globe. Deep ecology is not simply an academic concept, but a dynamic and practical framework that offers tangible solutions for environmental protection and social justice. It provides a philosophical foundation for rethinking our relationship with the Earth, challenging the human-centered worldview that has dominated environmental policy and behavior for centuries. By recognizing the inherent worth of nature and the interconnectedness of all living beings, deep ecology serves as a powerful tool for creating a more sustainable and equitable future. Foster Brown, ecological activist opined that, “The rights of nature are the very rights of all life on earth. A radical re-thinking is required, where ecosystems are no longer viewed merely as human resources, but as entities deserving of protection and respect” (Brown, 2017).

However, fully realizing the potential of deep ecology, especially in the context of the rights of nature, requires continued effort. While progress is being made, much more needs to be done to dismantle the dominant narrative of human supremacy over nature, which has led to widespread ecological destruction. Achieving lasting change demands legal, political, and social reforms that prioritize environmental preservation, respect for biodiversity, and the recognition of nature’s intrinsic value. These shifts will require collective action from governments, corporations, and local communities, as well as a fundamental reimagining of our relationship with the natural world.

On an individual level, deep ecology encourages people to deepen their connection with nature, advocating for sustainable, mindful lifestyles that reduce our ecological footprint. This might involve everyday actions like reducing waste, conserving resources, supporting policies that protect ecosystems, or engaging in movements that promote the recognition of nature’s rights. At the community and policy level, it calls for creating systems that respect nature’s intrinsic value and prioritize the well-being of all living beings, not just humans.

The philosophy of deep ecology, with its emphasis on the rights of nature, directly challenges the prevailing worldview that has driven environmental degradation for generations. It shifts our perspective, emphasizing the rights of all life forms to exist and thrive. This shift fosters a more ethical, responsible, and sustainable relationship with the Earth, one that aligns with the need for environmental justice. As we face the growing environmental crises of the 21st century, the principles of deep ecology offer not only a philosophical

perspective but also a clear call to action. This call is a guide for a more harmonious future, where humanity and the Earth can coexist and flourish together, respecting the inherent value of all life on the planet.

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Hegelian “Master–Slave Dialectic” and Fanon’s Adaptation: A Theoretical Study of the Colonial Context of Africa and Its Present Relevance

Abdul Mubid Islam

Abstract

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s ‘master-slave dialectic’ becomes a significant area of research as it provides a vantage point to assess violence in its variegated manifestations. The dialectic becomes all the more significant for its basic premise that mutual recognition and self-consciousness emerge from a violent conflict. It therefore becomes imperative to bring in Hegel to answer a central question of the colonial project, namely, the binary of master-slave relationship and the resulting violence which proves detrimental to the interest of both. Hegel saw the ‘state’ as the organizing principle which, through the “institutional civilizing of the ‘situated’ human beings and the protection of the higher values from disruptive disorder, made the creation of culture and philosophy possible in the modern age” (Kelly, 1976, p. 4)). The paper will try to reformulate the philosophical and ideological contours of the colonial enterprise by placing Fanon’s assessment of the difference in Anglophone/francophone experience. It gives credibility to such an assessment as Fanon zeros down upon the standards of binaries used by the colonial masters in forging a prejudicial narrative of differentiation. Hegel describes the encountering of two consciousnesses—that of the master and the slave (or lord and bondsman in his vocabulary)—as profoundly ambiguous which consists of a double meaning. On the one hand, each consciousness sees in the other as simply another object—of identifiable size and appearance that has to be ascertained. On the other hand, each also sees the other a rival consciousness—an experience that allows one to see itself as an Object—perceived, understood, and judged by the other consciousness. As Sartre puts it in *Being and Nothingness*, the world ceases to be centered on the human subject (or the self); it flows away to a new different center, and the self becomes something existing at its periphery.

Keywords : anglophone, francophone, master–slave relationship, binaries

Introduction:

The state of 'Objectification' according to Hegel works primarily through enslavement whereby the loser is subjected to work laboriously for the winner (Hegel, 1977). This political form of 'instrumental objectification' of turning a human being into a mere tool operates precisely under the guise of colonialism (Hegel, 1977). There might be other forms of objectification that Hegel does not discuss, chief among which is 'masochistic objectification' where the pain of the loser becomes the pleasure of the winner.¹ The other form might be 'sexual objectification' where the objects are turned into objects of desire or sexual gratification.² One outcome of this submission of the loser is 'rape' which is a quintessential example of sexual violence.

Discussion:

The state of enslavement that Hegel describes in his book *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1949), is one in which the master is supremely a person and the slave is only a thing. In other words, the slave is subservient to the demands of the master. He is in fact a 'no-body'. To describe in symbolic terms, one has to respect, admire, and praise the other while the other gives no recognition or respect in return. This lack of mutual recognition in the colonial period is largely based on European/Western concepts like 'Civilization' and 'Enlightenment' which demarcated the line of distinction between the 'savage' and the 'civilized'. Mention may be made of A.O. Lovejoy's book *The Great Chain of Being* (1990) as one of a kind pertaining to the context of reference.

It is however intriguing that the master-slave dichotomy is based upon a dialectical relationship. Although the master is powerful enough to express his demands and then experience satisfaction on its consequent fulfillment, it is the slave—the 'in-human brute'—who gains a concrete output of his labour. Secondly, the master claims respect and recognition from one whom he never allowed any status or recognition. Therefore, if a postcolonial or say, anti-colonial stance is adopted, one witnesses that the real power belongs to the slave and that the master in spite of being powerful and strong, is in fact, a mere 'parasite'. This situation is inherently unstable. And it is due to this basic idiocy at the bottom of society that we are compelled to witness through history wars, revolutions, and political turmoil.

Furthermore, if the key activity of the male slave is labour, the key activity of the female slave is her sexual abuse. Labour generates a consciousness in the male slave of an active, powerful person while the female slave is likely to be precisely the opposite. It is her master who acts on her. Colonial history is replete with instances of extreme sexual violence such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade where the wives of the slaves were used by the 'White' traders (erstwhile the masters) both for their sexual satisfaction and to beget them more slaves. The sexual abuse of the female slave reinforces her basic difference from the master. However, if Freud's theory of the *pleasure principle* (italics mine) is taken into account, and since any human life must reveal both pleasure and satisfaction only as a contrast to other experiences, the female slave is likely to find pleasure and satisfaction in being an 'Object'—or in other words, in pleasing her master. It is this condition of

human life that has been evoked by Frantz Fanon in his monumental book *Black Skin, White Masks* where the desire to mate or unite with the 'White body' (and therefore the Other) is sought through the psychological cloak of "lactification".

The focus of Fanon's critique is on the role of race and violence. Hegel's line of thought gets new fabrication in Fanon's critique of the Western imperial project of colonialism. Fanon pays particular interest to the specific relevance of the master-slave dialectic for colonial societies. He attempts to demonstrate in *BSWM* why Hegel's dialectic is still relevant to the colonial context in addressing the problem of mutual recognition in the light of violence and racism. For Fanon, violence complicates and adds urgency, to the need for recognition. Hegel's master-slave dialectic underscores his primary attempt at conceptualizing and describing the process of recognition on the way to mutual recognition. In other words, Hegel's dialectic is set on a *one-to-one correspondence* model (emphasis mine). It describes a specific form of human relations in which domination has a central role to play. Fanon, on the other hand, revamping the Hegelian legacy, adjusts the dialectic with a focus on the role of race and violence.

The Hegelian dialectic takes the form of an analysis of the working of self-consciousness and demonstrates how the self can only become conscious of itself by the presence of, and recognition of an Other. However, this process of self-consciousness takes place at the expense of the Other in which the Self negates or annihilates the Other in order to come to terms with its own being. The Hegelian 'Self' or the Cartesian 'Cogito' is bound to capitalize its existence at the cost of the Other as 'an- Other'. In other words, to quote Sartre, the master is always a "being-for-self" while the latter is always a "being-for-other".

Fanon comes very close to Hegel when he advocates a similar condition in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the black man (or to be more gender-neutral, the black body) wants the "objectifying confrontation with otherness" (Fanon, 1986, p. 72); the "Otherness" here, basically referring to the White master or the White body. Fanon reinterprets Hegel in the colonial context in terms of race, namely, the relationship between the white settler and the black man. He begins exactly where Hegel has left off stating that 'man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man' (Fanon, 1986, p. 14). The basic difference between Hegel and Fanon is further accentuated when Fanon suggests that the extent of imposition of one's existence on the Other becomes the measure of humanity. Fanon thus problematizes the concept of humanity at large by leaving it open for contradiction.

According to Fanon, humanity is inextricably intertwined with the Other, even though it seems that the Hegelian humanity can come about in the consumption of the Other due to the desire or need for recognition. This desire is expressed in an 'open conflict between the Black and White' in the colonial context in that the White settler regards the native (who is black) as a slave because he does not measure up to the so-called "standards of Whiteness". In doing so, the white settler asserts himself as the master. Mutual recognition is never the idea behind Fanon's version of the master-slave dialectic. While some form of reciprocity can be

seen in Hegel, Fanon points to a major departure in the colonial context—the White master looks at the Black slave with contempt and mockery and does not seek recognition from the slave. He (the master) only wants the slave to perform labour for him. Unlike the Hegelian slave, the Black slave in Fanon finds no “liberation” in his work. He never regards the White master as an object because he never turns his own negativity into positive attributes. On the contrary, the Black slave wants to be ‘like’ the White master and he is fixated with becoming a subject. This ‘master-fixation’ sets him apart from the Hegelian slave because he always considers the subjectivity of the master and never his own. This results in a paradoxical situation: the Black slave wants to be recognized as a subject, but the master never grants him such recognition because in his estimation, the Black slave is not human but an animal. Whereas the Hegelian slave attains subjectivity without striving for it on intentional grounds; the Black slave pursues subjectivity but fails to achieve it.

Among the many strategies employed by African writers, one is that of negation of western discourses. The discourse of Negritude, for instance, which is again a very controversial discourse having affiliation to Francophone experience, has served as an assertion of African identity that is voiced in overt opposition to dominant western discourses and totalizing narratives. The polemics verging on this discourse of negritude, postulated to gain an idea of pan-African identity, is bolstered furthermore when the dichotomy of the colonial policy adopted by the French and the British becomes visible. It is significant to assess the patterns of political developments of both the French and the British being the two most powerful and influential of imperial powers to have near to equal share of colonies as evinced from the great Scramble for Africa in 1885. The French pattern of political development of their colonies was based upon the assumption that a unique race of the ‘French Africans’ could be created. The basic concept was of “assimilation” of the population, or the elite class at least, into the social, cultural, ethical, religious and economic framework of France. On this basis, a superbly educated and cultural group of intellectual and political leaders emerged in each of the French colonies which came to be known as ‘overseas territory’ later. It was this unique francophone experience of “assimilation” that came to be critiqued later by the emerging group of intellectuals with the likes of Aimé Césaire and the Senegalese poet-President Léopold Senghor in their theorizing of a unique African brotherhood—‘Negritude’.

It was Aimé Fernand David Césaire who in March, 1935, published a passionate tract against the French colonial policy of assimilation, in which he first coined the term ‘negritude’. In his famous *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972), he vociferously asserts that, “Europe despised everything about Africa, and in France people spoke of a civilized world and a barbarian world. The barbarian world was Africa, and the civilized world was Europe. Therefore, the best thing one could do with an African was to assimilate him: the ideal was to turn him into a Frenchman with black skin” (Césaire, 2000, p. 88). This statement clearly pinpoints the politics of formulating worlds along binaries. Léopold Senghor’s poetry in fact transcends the hierarchies in embodying Africa in the figure of a woman. For an Indian reader, this idolizing is not a shocking concern as India has been valorized in the form of a woman by political activists like Bhagat Singh and intellectual scholars

and poets like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Rabindranath Tagore. However, given the paradigm of African male literary tradition, Senghor is in fact the first writer to conceive Africa basically as a mother. His famous poem “Femme Noire” drafted in 1945 illustrates the potential of the writer to think out-of-the-ordinary:

Naked woman, black woman
Clothed with your colour which is life, with your form which is beauty!
In your shadow I have grown up; the gentleness of your hands was laid over my eyes.
And now, high up on the sun-baked pass, at the heart of summer,
At the heart of noon, I come upon you, my Promised Land.
And your beauty strikes me to the heart like the flash of an eagle.

(Senghor, 1977, p. 44)

Seen along the lens of gender differentiation, the poem is basically about the ‘discovery’ of the treasure of Africa which binds all Africans with its pristine nakedness so much emblematic of nature. The beauty of the ‘black naked body’ gives an assurance, a confirmation and a hope for a promising future where Africa would be seen as a unique black hub.

Fanon’s hypothetical assessment of the White man’s dilemma in terms of conceiving the generic differences of the polarities of self and the other is basically sexual in character. In recognizing the other, Fanon believes, the white self which is always *Negrophobic* (emphasis/italics mine) suffers from a psychological impotence which is an existential dread of co-habiting a space with all likeliness of facing complete erasure. That is to say, the white self undergoes an extraordinary neurotic ambiguity in ascertaining the conditions of an amorphous existence, thereby enmeshed in emptiness and depression. In this connection, it must be stated that unlike Wole Soyinka or Mahatma Gandhi, Fanon quite on the contrary, believed in violence which according to him will ensure the rightful place for the ‘Other’ (erstwhile the colonized natives). The conflict potential in such a relationship comes to light in the form of violence through resistance and rebellion. According to Fanon, conflict is crucial if one is to be transformed from being an object to being a subject, thus paving the way into self-consciousness. It is here that one can find a clear rupture in the ideological trajectory adopted by Hegel and Fanon. He obliquely states that “self-consciousness accepts the risk of its life, and consequently it threatens the Other in his physical being” (Fanon, 1986, p. 218). Therefore, the pursuit of subjectivity by the Black slave threatens the master of his life.

Fanon considers action to be superior to reaction when he says, “... man’s behaviour is not only reactional. And there is always resentment in reaction” (Fanon, 1986, p. 222). Here, he seems to echo Friedrich Nietzsche in observing that freedom is to be found in practice. This again reiterates the point that action must follow on the conceptualization of values that are worth pursuing. Fanon’s understanding of violence and the resultant identity as an expression of the psyche cannot be ignored in spite of his affiliation to the Francophone experience. The reason for appropriating Fanon is due to the psychological aspect that he brings to bear upon

his theoretical works. Seen from the lens of ethno-psychiatric approach, Fanon attributes specific mentalities to cultural spheres and “engages in the a priori identification of individuals to the cultures to which they purportedly belong, thereby assigning them a preconceived identity” (Cherki, 2006, pp. 209–210). David Lloyd’s analysis of the colonial body as a significant source of violence becomes an interesting parallel read to Fanon as Lloyd talks about the slippery ground in the transitional phase of postcolonial culture and the trepidation of obviously falling into the vortex of anthropological mode of culture-specific summation when it comes to an assertion of identity.

Conclusion:

To sum up, Hegel’s master-slave dialectic finds an interesting twist in Fanon’s version of the same where he gives more importance on the ‘attainment of subject-hood’ through violence. Fanon is still an interesting read because of the troubling persistence of violence in the post-colony.

End Notes:

1. This kind of ‘pleasure’ can be equated to Barthes’ formulation of ‘jouissance’ (orgasmic bliss/ecstasy) in his proposed venture of laying bare the principles of the meaning making process of the ‘Writerly Text’.
2. One can draw in the reference of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade where the White masters used the bodies of the Black women not just for sexual gratification but also with the intent of procuring man-power in the form of the illegitimate offspring. This condition is highlighted in numerous slave narratives.

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Swami Vivekananda's Perspectives on Positive Education and Ideal Womanhood: A Philosophical Analysis

Gauranga Das

Abstract

This article aims to determine the meaning of education, positive education, woman education, educational philosophy and ideal womanhood in the light of Swami Vivekananda. According to him, "Education is manifestation of perfection already in men." His educational philosophy, Vedānta philosophy, and Upanishadic philosophy were all based on Indian nationalism. The modern educational system did not appeal to him. A man who receives positive education is better equipped to face life's challenges. Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of positive education does not imply that a large amount of information is forcibly ingrained in contemporary society. Instead, he underlined that education is what builds character, intelligence, and mental capacity; it also gives people self-assurance and self-reliance. The most effective way to help people develop these traits is through education. In addition to having his own educational ideals, Vivekananda created a solid set of principles to help him reach his objectives. According to him, women should be justly independent in order to be considered ideal women. We cannot live well in our society if womanhood does not exist. This essay aims to investigate how our society defines ideal womanhood. What would happen if there were no such thing as proper or just womanhood in our lives? Why is Vivekananda's theory of education still relevant today? What does the term "positive education" mean? Why is positive education necessary? How can the secret to success in life be found in positive education? How can our society be at peace with the ideal womanhood? How might ideal womanhood be a prerequisite for women's empowerment? Why and how men already possess perfection? Why do humans have the capacity for divinity or perfection?

Keywords: meaning of education, positive education, ideal womanhood, women's education, empowerment, Bhagavān = nature = God = Allah = human being (potentially)

1. Introduction:

Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda profoundly articulates the ontological significance of ideal womanhood and positive education as foundational pillars for societal regeneration. "The manifestation of perfection that is

already in men” is how he characterizes education (Vivekananda, 1996). His opposition to the modern educational system stemmed from his belief that it reduces people to nothing more than slaves. He discussed the importance of positive education in fostering human conviction and self-realization. We can only be lifted from darkness to light by education, including genuine and positive education. We learn from positive education that we should have complete faith in ourselves and work towards our greatest life ambition. We can say that self-confidence leads to self-realization, according to Vivekananda. According to Vivekananda himself, “the secret of greatness is faith in God and faith in ourselves” (Vivekananda, 2007). According to Vivekananda, unless women’s status is improved, there is no chance for the world to be a better place (Vivekananda, 2007). In this case, we could say that a woman must be empowered in order to think for herself about her social and domestic role. He believed that unless the status of women was improved, India would never regain its lost honor and pride (Vivekananda, 2007). World peace can be brought about by ideal womanhood. In our society, ideal womanhood is achieved through positive education.

Let us now explore the meaning of human divinity, ideal womanhood, and positive education. Prior to that, we must briefly understand Vivekananda’s views on education, women’s education, and educational philosophy.

2. Vivekananda’s Perspectives on Education and Women Education:

2.1. Education:

Education is that which liberates, according to Swami Vivekananda (Sa Vidyā Ya Vimuktaye). It frees one from unconstructive inclinations and unawareness of their true “Self.” According to Indian tradition, “Vidyā” (knowledge or learning) is the opposite of “Avidyā” (ignorance or lack of knowledge), and in order for it to be complete, it must lead to “Ātma-Vidyā” (knowledge of the Self). Pursuing both worldly and spiritual knowledge is emphasized in the “Yajur Veda” (Yajur Veda, XL.14) as means of attaining immortality and leading a holistic life.

Thus, education is not an end in and of itself; rather, it is a tool to help one become more self-aware and realize the ultimate Oneness of life, which has been rationally explained by the Vedic seers and powerful figures such as Sri Ramakrishna (1836–1886), Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950), and others in more recent times. Education is the manifestation of perfection already in men. Education was not only collection of information, but also something more meaningful. Education should be man making, life giving and character building (Vivekananda, 2007). Education was an assimilation of noble ideas.

2.2. Women Education:

Swami Vivekananda’s concept of women education was revolutionary for his time, aiming for national regeneration through empowered women. He believed that the progress of a nation was directly linked to the condition of its women, famously stating, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing” (Vivekananda, 2007). Swami

Vivekananda believed that women's education was essential to the revitalization of the country since it would enable them to address their own issues (Islam, 2018). Among his core concepts were:

Holistic Character Building: Education for women, like for men, should be “man-making, life-giving, and character-building” (Vivekananda, 2007). It should foster strength of mind, intellect, and the ability to “stand on one's feet”. He stressed the importance of developing moral values, integrity, and fearlessness.

Strength and Fearlessness: In order to create women as fearless as the Rani of Jhansi, he promoted an education that would foster bravery and the spirit of self-defense.

Chastity and Dignity: He emphasized the value of upholding the traditional Indian values of chastity and purity as a basis for strong character, even as he promoted contemporary knowledge.

Practical and Spiritual Curriculum: The curriculum should include not only religion, literature, and science, but also practical subjects like housekeeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene, and even self-defense. He also emphasized spiritual practices like japa, worship, and meditation, alongside learning self-defense techniques.

Practical Skills: Empowerment and Self-Reliance: Education would enable women to be economically independent and contribute to the nation's growth. He believed that women, once educated, would understand their own needs and bring about necessary reforms. Vivekananda insisted that women must be educated so they could “solve their own problems in their own way”. He vehemently opposed external interference in women's matters, asserting, “Our right of interference is limited entirely to giving education. Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them”.

Mother Tongue as Medium: He advocated for education to be imparted in the mother tongue, especially for widespread literacy among the masses.

Equality, Dignity and Opportunity: Vivekananda strongly believed that there should be no discrimination between sexes, recognizing that a nation cannot progress “on one wing” (Vivekananda, 2007). He urged for equal opportunities for women to develop their full potential. Vivekananda championed the idea that women are equal to men in all respects and possess the capacity for the highest spiritual understanding. He challenged the notion of women's inferiority, stating, “It is completely untrue to consider women as lesser than males. Women are experiencing a disadvantage primarily due to a deficiency in education” (Vivekananda, 2007). He believed that true progress required recognizing women as individuals, not just in their roles as wives or mothers.

The well-known Indian philosopher and spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda was a fervent supporter of women's education. He asserts that women's empowerment, independence, and spiritual development depend on education. There is a statement, which says- “If a man is educated, an individual is educated, and if a woman is educated, a family is educated.” Manu says, “Where women are respected, there Gods delight and where they are not, there all work and effort come to naught” (Manusmṛiti). However, there are a lot of differences between men and women in India. By enforcing strict and inflexible rules, the men have reduced the women to nothing more than production machines and denied them their fundamental rights. “All nations”,

Swamiji said, “have attained greatness by paying proper respect to woman. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will it be in future.” - Swami Vivekananda.

3. Vivekananda’s Educational Philosophy:

The educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda emphasizes the development of each person’s physical, mental, and spiritual faculties in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. Swami Vivekananda was not an educational philosopher, such as John Dewey (1859–1952), Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), or Pestalozzi (1746–1827), but his theories are profoundly philosophical. The complete man—not just the flesh-and-blood outward man that most educationists talk about, but also the flesh-and-spirit inner man that extends into the limitless realm beyond space and time—is being developed. The foundation of Swami Vivekananda’s beliefs, in contrast to the great educator John Amos Comenius (1592–1670), is found in the true character of man, which he defined as fundamentally divine, rather than in religious and theoretical doctrine and dogmas. It appeared that Vivekananda concurred with Froebel. He added that the development of the human mind mirrors the evolution of nature and that education should support a person’s life’s harmonious progression. Like Froebel, he once more emphasized how humans can develop holistically and live peaceful, harmonious lives. Swamiji says, “We want to become harmonious beings, with the psychical, spiritual, intellectual, and working (active) sides of our nature equally developed. Nation’s individuals typify one of these sides or types and cannot understand more than that one... The idea is really that we should become many sided.” Rabindranath Tagore, who lived from 7th May 1861 to 7th August 1941, endorsed Vivekananda’s educational philosophy when he stated that, “The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existences.” (Tagore, 1917)

4. Philosophical Reference of Bhagavān:

Many Indian spiritual and philosophical traditions, including Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, have a strong philosophical connection to Bhagavān. Although the specific details differ, the phrase always refers to a being of utmost importance, possessing superior attributes and acting as a center for spiritual knowledge and awe. Below is a summary of its philosophical aspects:

4.1. Etymological and Core Meaning:

The word “Bhagavān” comes from the Sanskrit root “Bhaga,” which means “fortune,” “wealth,” “opulence,” “glory,” “splendor,” “power,” “wisdom,” and “renunciation”. For the noun form Bhagavān, the suffix “-van” (or “-vat”) signifies “possessor.”

Thus, “Bhagavān” literally means “one who possesses all these opulences in full”. This is a comprehensive and full expression of spiritual, ethical, and existential perfection rather than just material ownership.

4.2. In Hinduism: The Personal God and Absolute Truth:

The Almighty Self (Para Brahman with Qualities): In various Hindu philosophical traditions, especially Vaishnavism, “Bhagvān” refers to the Absolute Truth (Brahman), also known as the Supreme Being, in its

active, relational, and personal form. This sets it apart from Nirguṇa Brahman, the attribute-less, impersonal Absolute. Saṁguṇa Brahman, or Brahman having divine qualities, is Bhagavān.

Shat Aīśvarya's Six Opulences: In philosophy, the full and simultaneous ownership of six distinct, limitless opulences is frequently used to define Bhagavān:

Aīśvarya (Lordship/Sovereignty): Total authority and control over everything.

Vīrya (Strength/Potency): Limitless ability to create, maintain, and destroy the universe.

Yāśas (Fame/Glory): Global fame, respect, and veneration in every field.

Śrī (Beauty/Wealth): Magnificent grace, beauty, and universal wealth.

Jñāna (Knowledge): Omniscience is the total and flawless knowledge of the past, present, and future.

Vairāgya (Renunciation/Detachment): Complete apathy and detachment from the material world, although actively participating in its production and upkeep.

Object of Bhakti (Devotion): Bhagavān is the ultimate object of devotion, love, and worship in the many Bhakti (devotional) traditions. The underlying philosophical idea here is that devotion to Bhagavān can lead to liberation (mokṣa), or eternal communion, and transcend the cycle of birth and death (saṁsāra).

Transcendence and Immanence: Philosophers understand Bhagavān to be both immanent (residing inside and pervading all beings and occurrences) and transcendent (being outside the material cosmos, unaffected by its constraints). Both a personal relationship with the divine and an understanding of the divine as the essential reality of all creation are made possible by this dual nature.

Līlā (Divine Play): The phrase "līlā," which means "divine play," is frequently used to describe the activities and appearances of Bhagavān, such as through Avatārs like Krishna or Rama. According to this philosophical theory, God acts out of intrinsic joy and a desire to interact with creation, preserve dharma, and lead beings toward spiritual realization rather than out of necessity or karma.

4.3. In Buddhism: The Blessed One and Enlightened Teacher:

"Bhagavā" or "Bhagavān": "Bhagavā" or "Bhagavān" is a major epithet for Gautama Buddha in Buddhist literature written in Pāli and Sanskrit. In this context, it can be generally translated as "the Lord," "the Blessed One," "the Fortunate One," or "the Exalted One."

Overcoming Defilements: Buddhism's philosophical relevance stems from the Buddha's total victory over all mental defilements, or kleśas, including delusion, hatred, and greed. He is "fortunate" because he has achieved Nirvāna, or freedom from pain, and bodhi, or perfect enlightenment.

The Buddha, in his role as Bhagavān, is the embodiment of flawless wisdom (prajñā) and unending compassion (karuṇā). He is regarded as the ultimate teacher who revealed the way to freedom for all sentient creatures, highlighting the full potential of human consciousness, rather than as a creator god.

4.4. In Jainism: The Tirthankaras and Omniscient Beings:

For Tirthankaras: "Bhagvān" In Jainism, the Tirthankaras (such as Mahavira and Rishabhanatha) are

referred to as “Bhagvān.” These beings are fully free from karmic bonds and have achieved omniscience (kevalajnāna).

4.5. Ultimate Purity and Liberation:

Here, the philosophical significance highlights the Tirthankara’s supreme self-control and purity as well as their function as the best role models and mentors for those pursuing freedom from the cycle of reincarnation. They are “fortunate” because they have revealed the way to ultimate self-realization and vanquished all of their inner adversaries, including karma and passions.

5. Why and How Perfection is Already in Men:

In Hinduism, Bhagavān, also known as Ishvara, is ideal. In Islam, Āllah is flawless. In Christianity, God is flawless. Because some people believe that humans are the offspring of nature, humans can strive for perfection.

BHAGAVĀN = NATURE = GOD = ĀLLAH = HUMAN BEING (potentially)

Bh = Bhū (bhū means earth ‘soil’ or ‘mṛttikā’ or ‘kṣīti’)

G = Gagan (gagan means sky ‘ambar’ or ‘byom’)

V = Vāyu (vāyu means air ‘bātās’ or ‘marut’)

Ā = Ālo (ālo means Heat or light ‘āgun’ or ‘teja’)

N = Neer (neer means water ‘pāni’ or ‘ap’).

These five components are essential to both nature and humanity. Since Indian philosophy views these five components as panchamahābhūta, we can say that Nature = God = Bhagavān = Āllah = Human being (potentially).

Why are we not flawless or divine like the Sun, Earth, Air, Sky, and Water if we are the offspring of Ishvar, Bhagavān, or Nature? Nature includes all of these components. These elements of nature function continuously, equitably, and cooperatively. As a result, we can claim to be a part of nature. In a similar vein, humans possess divinity within themselves.

6. Meaning of Positive Education:

Even though Swami Vivekananda did not coin the contemporary term “Positive Education,” his educational philosophy is fundamentally “positive” in both its goals and approaches. His entire strategy is designed to maximize each person’s potential and promote his or her overall wellbeing. The emphasis on personal motivation and individual strengths in positive psychology is the foundation of the expanding field of positive education. Good education in contrast to traditional school approaches, where teachers attempt to modify their content to fit the mythical “average” student and use a single teaching and testing style to guide the class as a whole through the material, teachers use strategies that put the welfare of individual students first. The application of positive psychology in the field of education, or positive education, may offer a fresh approach to effective teaching. The future of college education and positive schooling appears bright. According to Swami Vivekananda, the education that young boys and girls receive is extremely detrimental. He thinks they

do not gain confidence or self-respect from these educations, According to Swami Vivekananda only positive education should be given to children. Positive education may be inspiring education, which can be helpful for bringing success in human life. Swami Vivekananda told, if young boys and girls are encouraged and are not unnecessarily criticized all the time, they are bound to improve in time. A man is prepared for life's challenges and social service through positive education. He has underlined that education fosters mental capacity and intelligence as well as patience, self-assurance, and independence in people. Swami Vivekananda believed that the only way to succeed in life was to work steadily and with patience.

6.1 Why Do We Need Positive Education?

Since education broadens one's knowledge and provides opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds, it is the secret to success. It is beneficial to visualize dreams and focus our attention on specific objectives. The only way to instill courage, bravery, and endurance in people is through positive education. It also instills cardinal virtue and eliminates fear from human existence. Students can develop conviction, self-reliance, moral character, and self-esteem through positive education. This means that students may believe that they are nearly finished and only need to work a little bit to succeed in life. They can also position themselves as the cornerstone of the country's and society's future. We are aware that every well-educated citizen of a country can contribute significantly to its development in a number of ways. The uneducated and less educated may contribute to the advancement of human society in the short term, but if we wish to see, long-term or sustainable progress in a variety of areas, including political, social, and economic, we must disseminate and instill positive education in the minds of the students.

6.2 How Can Positive Education be the Key to Success in Life?

When we think and speak, we should only use positive language. Using phrases like those that "I can," "I am able," "it is possible," "it can be done" and so on, can inspire and fortitude in people to strive for success in life. Only positive emotions like joy, strength, and achievement should be permitted to enter our consciousness. Negative thoughts should be ignored and disregarded. Refuse to think such thoughts by replacing them with positive, constructive ones. Whenever a negative thought arises, it should be immediately replaced with a positive one. Use language in our conversation that evokes emotions and conjures up visions of success, joy, and strength. Before beginning any plan or action, we should clearly envision its successful conclusion. We will be astounded by the outcomes if we visualize with faith and focus. Every day, we ought to read at least one page from an inspirational book. We want to surround ourselves with positive thinkers. Take a swim, go for a walk, or do something else physical. This practice contributes to the development of a more optimistic outlook on life.

7. Meaning of Ideal Womanhood:

Ideal womanhood, ideal woman are labels or terms used to describe ideas about idealized female characteristics. For a woman to be ideal, she must be completely free from oppression, depression, repression,

inequality, disadvantage, ignorance, and others' dependence. Swami Vivekananda cautioned that discriminating against one sex is totally unjust because the soul, or atman, is not sexed; it is not casted, sexed, or imperfect. He suggested not thinking that there are men and women, but only that there are human beings and it is impossible to get back India's lost pride and honor unless they try to better the condition of women. According to Vivekananda, men and women are like a bird's two wings, and a bird cannot fly on just one wing. Therefore, he argues that there is no chance for global welfare unless women's status is improved. There will be ideal womanhood in our society, if women may take decision independently about their domestic, political and financial matters as well.

7.1 Examples of Perfect Womanhood:

The ideal of perfect womanhood differs among countries, eras of history, and personal viewpoints. However, we may examine examples from a variety of industries who exemplified many of the values and attributes that are widely acknowledged to be important for a woman's success and positive influence on society. It is crucial to note at the outset that "perfection" is a vague and possibly unachievable ideal. These examples come from people who had extraordinary traits that are highly regarded and made a substantial contribution to their communities or society.

These are a few instances that are frequently used to illustrate what "perfect womanhood" is all about. (understanding perfection as an ideal to strive for, rather than a fixed state):

Sitā was the ideal Hindu or Indian woman. As "the personification of chastity, charity, cleverness, and wisdom," Odysseus's wife Penelope is portrayed in the Odyssey as the perfect woman in ancient Greek culture. Queen Victoria was the quintessential Victorian woman. The "woman of noble character" is described in the Old Testament book of Proverbs as having both trade and household management skills.

8. Why Do We Need Perfect Womanhood?

Sitā is a representation of India, the idealized India, according to Swami Vivekananda. Because Sitā is unique and the character was only ever portrayed once, Swami Vivekananda promised that even if all of the world literature from the past and the future is completely exhausted, there will never be another Sitā. Swami Vivekananda felt there might have been several Ramas, perhaps, but never more than one Sitā. He told, "The ideal womanhood of India is motherhood— that marvelous, unselfish, all suffering, ever-forgiving mother." He realized that India's decline began the moment it began to disregard its women. Vivekananda felt, in India, there are two great evils – trampling on the women, and grinding through the poor through caste restrictions.

One will turn into a fox if we do not let him become a lion. Women are powerful, but they are now more evil because men oppress them; they are the fox, but once they are freed, they will transform into the lion. Women are just as brave as men are. Women have faith. Become independent and achieve everything, but do not lose that quality! Every girl in India should strive to be like Sāvitri, whose tremendous love snatched back her husband's soul, from Yama, and whose love was unbeatable by death.

Perfect womanhood is the only thing that can strengthen a country. No progress would occur until women are truly empowered in our society, as only women are able to provide adequate care for the children and other family members, even though men also serve the family. An educated and capable mother can produce a child with strong moral qualities and character. In the future, this child might be the bearer or builder of the nation and society. Without educated, moral, self-assured, and sensitive citizens, no nation could be considered proper, ideal, and independent from all sides. No nation can achieve full-fledged development unless getting perfection of womanhood in society because one child's life may be all round developed by the particular mother's nursing.

9. Conclusion:

In conclusion, Swami Vivekananda foresaw that humanity would face a crisis. There are many conflicts between customs, etiquette, and values in the air. The current trend is to show disrespect for everything that is outdated. It is evident from the examination of Vivekananda's educational philosophy—particularly positive education—that only positive education can lead to the improvement of the masses. Swami Vivekananda's educational concept is a powerful example of what is now referred to as “positive education.” It emphasizes the development of each person's inherent goodness and power, character development, holistic growth, and equipping people with the means to live satisfying lives that benefit both themselves and society. Education must come first for the advantage of all people, despite of their caste, creed, or religion. A good education makes a man flawless. Without receiving a good education, no one can identify “he or she.” Since every essential component of nature functions impartially, a person who understands that they are a son or daughter of nature has knowledge of the entire world and has never done anything that would be detrimental to society. As if air were blowing and enveloping us without any self-interest.

According to Vivekananda, women's education is essential to their empowerment because it makes them strong, moral, and competent people who can make important contributions to their families, communities, and country. According to Vivekananda, women's education can enable them to reach their full potential, contribute to the advancement of the country, and live strong, independent, and dignified lives. Women should not only be viewed as members of society, but also as ideal human beings. If not, issues pertaining to ideal womanhood will remain unresolved. One woman resembles the natural world. If we take care of and preserve nature, it will respond favorably to us, allowing us to live in harmony. Similarly, we can have a beautiful society, if we treat women as valuable and ideal human beings and give them good conditions to grow up in.

In the end, a philosophical examination of Vivekananda's viewpoints indicates a mutually reinforcing relationship between ideal womanhood and constructive education. Women who receive an education grounded in his ideals are more prepared to transcend social constraints, recognize their innate divinity, and make significant contributions to the advancement of humanity. His lessons are a compelling reminder that real progress is made when people of both genders are encouraged to realize their full potential in order to build a society in which

men and women can thrive in an atmosphere of compassion, strength, and wisdom. Vivekananda's ageless wisdom provides not just historical context but also a dynamic and practical philosophy for building a genuinely good and egalitarian future as we traverse the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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Historicity and Ahistoricity in Understanding: A Hermeneutical Exploration

Mosaref Hossain

Abstract

This research paper embarks on an engaging exploration of how interpretation procedures are intricately woven into historical contexts, while also opening the door to the possibility of an ahistorical approach. The captivating field of hermeneutics, the scientific art of interpretation is influenced by a rich tapestry of paths, rules, and methodologies. It is essential to appreciate the profound impact that tradition, culture, and history have on our understanding. In this paper, I will delve into the various techniques and procedures that guide our interpretations, highlighting the dynamic interplay between culture, tradition, and history and their resonance with our personal and collective experiences. This paper aims to uncover whether we can genuinely interpret or understand something without embracing a historical perspective. To enrich this journey, I will draw upon the insights of esteemed thinkers such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer, inviting you to join me in this intriguing investigation.

Keywords : historicity, ahistoricity, prejudice, Dasein, fusion of horizons

Introduction:

History serves as a vital foundation for understanding any era and plays an important role in the interpretation of texts. Various interpretive methods are shaped by a range of factors, including tradition, culture, the historical context of a work, the author's environment, contemporary literature, and the author's other writings. By delving into an author's life and their body of work, we can gain valuable insights into their literary journey and the historical influences that shaped their writing. This exploration not only highlights the evolution of individual authors but also helps us assess the relevance of their contributions within the larger context of their contemporaries and the literary landscape of their time. Embracing these insights makes our experience with literature even more enriching and enjoyable!

This paper seeks to evaluate whether the historical method is more suitable than an ahistorical approach to understanding. In this context, I have explored the hermeneutical perspectives of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer to assess which method provides a more accurate understanding.

Ahistoricity in Interpretation:

Schleiermacher began writing during a time when the ideas of the Enlightenment had significant influence. The advancement of science was flourishing in the eighteenth century, leading many aspects of human life, especially theology, law, and historical studies to seek scientific proof. As a modern thinker, Schleiermacher aimed to heal the growing divide between the mind and the world, attempting to address the conflict between science and religion. This conflict split society into two groups: educated individuals who embraced scientific knowledge and viewed religion as irrational, and traditional religious believers who struggled to find scientific support for their faith. Schleiermacher recognized that the rift between science and religion stemmed from a limited understanding of human knowledge. He warned that if society continued to obsess over certainty, it could lead to cultural wars between secular and religious fundamentalists, both of whom believe their perspectives hold a monopoly on truth.

Schleiermacher formulates the universal human conditions for understanding that formed the ground of all knowledge disciplines for avoiding the clash between science and religion. He realized that one needs a general hermeneutic, a common theory of understanding for the existing rules of interpretation specific to theology, law, and historical studies. Schleiermacher, ‘father of modern theology’ first declared himself the founder of modern hermeneutics, basically known as universal hermeneutics. In this concern he declares, ‘Hermeneutics as the art of understanding does not yet exist in a general manner, there are instead only several forms of specific hermeneutics’ (Schmidt, 2016, p. 10).

Schleiermacher’s approach to universal hermeneutics emphasizes three key components necessary for proper understanding: the hermeneutical circle, grammatical interpretation, and psychological interpretation. His concept of grammatical interpretation focuses on the grammatical structure of a statement, which helps to clarify the grammatical meaning of a sentence. His framework for universal hermeneutics highlights three essential components that are crucial for achieving a comprehensive understanding of texts: the hermeneutical circle, grammatical interpretation, and psychological interpretation. The hermeneutical circle refers to the interdependence between the parts and the whole of a text; understanding individual sections requires an awareness of the overall context, while grasping the whole is informed by the details within it. This circular relationship underscores the complexity of interpretation, emphasizing that comprehension is an iterative process.

Grammatical interpretation, as articulated by Schleiermacher, examines the structural and syntactical elements of a statement. By analyzing grammar, including aspects such as sentence structure, word choice, and punctuation, interpreters can uncover the inherent meaning conveyed by the author. This focus on grammar not only aids in clarifying ambiguities but also enriches the reader’s understanding of the text’s intended message.

Lastly, psychological interpretation involves delving into the mindset and motivations of the author. This aspect recognizes that understanding a text is not solely about the words on the page; it also requires insight into the author's background, beliefs, and emotional context. By considering these psychological factors, interpreters can gain a deeper appreciation of how personal experiences and societal influences shape the creation and meaning of a text.

Historicity and Interpretation:

Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics emphasizes the distinction between explanation (*Erklären*) and understanding (*Verstehen*). He argues that studying human life requires an interpretative approach, rather than the causal methods used in natural sciences. While natural science seeks to explain phenomena through objective laws, the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) focus on understanding human expressions, experiences, and historical contexts.

History is a vital component of Dilthey's framework, as he views human life as inherently historical. Consequently, understanding cannot be separated from historical consciousness; it is not a detached or objective process but rather a contextually situated act. He challenges the positivist belief that historical events can be examined in the same way as natural phenomena. Instead, he asserts that history should be interpreted through the subjective experiences of the individuals who lived through it.

For Dilthey, lived experience (*Erlebnis*) is central to human understanding. Unlike general experience (*Erfahrung*), which refers to accumulated knowledge, lived experience is immediate and personal, forming the foundation of interpretation. Understanding occurs through the reconstruction of another's lived experience, allowing the interpreter to grasp meanings beyond mere external observation. Dilthey initially attempted to solve the problem of hermeneutics, which constituted the 'historical consciousness', by recurring to the Romanticist concern with 'lived experience' (Bleicher, 2017, p. 2). This aligns with his argument that meaning in human sciences emerges from the interconnectedness of experiences within the stream of consciousness. Dilthey's method advances Schleiermacher's hermeneutics by providing a systematic foundation for interpreting human expressions, such as texts, art, and historical events. He maintains that the interpreter must consider the author's historical context, cultural background, and inner life, emphasizing that human understanding is dynamic and evolving. Ultimately, Dilthey establishes that the procedures of understanding in human sciences must be historically grounded, empathetically engaged, and fundamentally distinct from the explanatory models of natural science.

Martin Heidegger, primarily a phenomenologist, also holds a fundamental position in hermeneutics. His concept of *Dasein* (being-there) is central to his hermeneutical philosophy, particularly in *Being and Time*. He identifies three essential characteristics of *Dasein*: *Befindlichkeit* (state of mind), *Verstehen* (understanding), and *Verfallen* (fallenness), which correspond to past, future, and present respectively.

To grasp Heidegger's notion of understanding, one must first understand *Dasein*. Unlike traditional

metaphysics, which focuses on static entities, Heidegger's phenomenological ontology emphasizes being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*). Understanding, therefore, is not a detached cognitive act, but an integral part of Dasein's practical engagement with the world. Heidegger distances himself from Cartesian epistemology, which separates subject and object, and instead asserts that understanding emerges through lived experience (*Erlebnis*). Knowledge, in this view, is not derived from abstract contemplation but from active participation in existence.

A crucial aspect of Heidegger's hermeneutics is the thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) of Dasein, which means that human existence is always situated within a historical and cultural framework. Understanding is conditioned by prior experiences, traditions, and social contexts, making it inherently situated rather than neutral. Furthermore, Dasein is fundamentally being-towards-the-future (*Sein-zum-Tode*), meaning that understanding is not merely about comprehending the past or present but is a forward-projecting activity. This temporal nature of understanding shapes the horizon within which meaning emerges.

One of Heidegger's most significant contributions to hermeneutics is the fore-structure (*Vorstruktur*) of interpretation, which consists of three interconnected elements:

1. Fore-Having (*Vorhabe*): The background context that Dasein possesses before explicit interpretation. This includes prior knowledge, traditions, and familiarity with the world, guiding expectations rather than approaching understanding as a blank slate.
2. Fore-Sight (*Vorsicht*): The perspective from which interpretation occurs. Every act of understanding is influenced by a particular stance, determining which aspects of an object or situation are emphasized.
3. Fore-Conception (*Vorgriff*): The implicit preconceptions and conceptual frameworks that shape interpretation. These presuppositions structure how phenomena are categorized and related to one another.

These elements demonstrate that understanding is never purely objective or detached but is always mediated by prior assumptions. However, Heidegger does not view these as obstacles to truth but as the necessary conditions for meaningful interpretation. His hermeneutical approach, therefore, redefines understanding as an existential and historically situated process rather than a methodological or purely cognitive act.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, challenges the Enlightenment's objectivist approach to understanding and introduces philosophical hermeneutics grounded in historical consciousness. He argues that understanding is not a purely cognitive act but a historically and dialogically conditioned process. According to Gadamer, all interpretation is shaped by the cultural and temporal context in which it occurs. This idea extends Heidegger's concept of Dasein (being-in-the-world), emphasizing that human existence is inherently historical. Gadamer asserts that historical consciousness is not merely a background for interpretation but a fundamental element of the interpretive process. Rejecting the Enlightenment's notion of historical objectivity, he posits that understanding is always mediated by tradition.

A key concept in Gadamer's hermeneutics is effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), which refers to the enduring influence of historical events, texts, and traditions on understanding. He maintains that we cannot

separate ourselves from the historical conditions that shape our perspectives; instead, we must acknowledge our embeddedness within history. Historical consciousness is a mode of self-knowledge' (Gadamer, 2013, p. 228). Unlike historicism, which seeks to reconstruct the past on its own terms, Gadamer asserts that the past is always interpreted through contemporary concerns and presuppositions.

One of his most debated ideas is the rehabilitation of prejudice (*Vorurteil*). While Enlightenment thought sought to eliminate prejudices in favor of rational objectivity, Gadamer argues that prejudices are not inherently negative but are essential preconditions for understanding. He distinguishes between 'true' and 'false' prejudices, emphasizing them rather than discarding them, the task of hermeneutics is to critically examine them in an ongoing dialogue. Prejudgements, shaped by history, tradition, and culture, serve as necessary starting points for interpretation. Far from being obstacles, they provide the initial framework through which meaning is constructed.

For Gadamer, tradition is not a static entity but a dynamic and evolving process that continually interacts with the present. Understanding is not about reconstructing an author's original intent in isolation but about engaging with tradition in a way that allows both the interpreter and the text to shape meaning. This perspective aligns with his critique of historical positivism, which assumes that meaning exists independently of interpretation.

One of Gadamer's most influential concepts is the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*). He defines a horizon as the interpretive framework shaped by an individual's historical and cultural position. Since every interpreter operates within a particular horizon, understanding emerges when different horizons engage in mutual transformation. Gadamer rejects the idea that one can adopt a past perspective entirely; instead, interpretation requires merging the interpreter's horizon with that of the text, tradition, or historical subject. This process results not in an objective, fixed meaning but in a richer understanding through dialogue.

Language, for Gadamer, plays a central role in shaping reality and understanding. Building on Heidegger's idea that 'language is the house of being,' he asserts that meaning is mediated through linguistic structures. Language facilitates the fusion of horizons by enabling dialogue, where different perspectives interact. True understanding is not about dominance but arises when conversation produces new insights beyond the expectations of either participant. Thus, Gadamer's hermeneutics presents interpretation as an open-ended, historically situated, and dialogical process.

Conclusion:

Understanding is a key factor in gaining knowledge, and for that, we need a method or procedure for understanding. Schleiermacher's theory of understanding, known as the ahistorical method, is primarily focused on the text itself. This method examines both the grammatical aspects of a text and the psychological aspects of the author. By utilizing the hermeneutical circle, a reader can reconstruct the text for better comprehension.

In contrast, the theories advanced by Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer significantly enhance our understanding through the historical method. This approach places emphasis on the historicity, linguistic context,

and inherent biases of the author, enabling a profound reconstruction of the main themes within any discourse. Ultimately, it is clear that the historical approach to understanding offers a more effective framework for achieving proper understanding. Dilthey says about the value of history by stating ‘We don’t do history; we are history’ (Zimmermann, 2015, p. 51).

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A Critical Analysis of Human Values in Chārvāka Philosophy

Sujit Kumar Sarkar

Abstract

In this paper, I have tried to critically explore the human values embedded in Chārvāka philosophy. With its foundations in materialism and scepticism, the Chārvāka school of thought challenges conventional Indian ethical and spiritual frameworks while providing a distinctive viewpoint on human values. Chārvāka places pleasure, empirical reasoning, and material well-being as the highest goals of life, in contrast to other philosophical systems that place more emphasis on dharma (moral duty), karma (moral causality), and moksha (liberation). In contrast to religious texts or inferential reasoning, it rejects metaphysical ideas and promotes practical ethics based on sensory experience (pratyaksha). Chārvāka's ethical position contests the idea that virtue and self-sacrifice are inherently linked, contending that moral decisions should be based on personal happiness and well-being. This focus on hedonism, however, does not inherently support careless excess; rather, it encourages a balanced attitude to pleasure, acknowledging that long-term well-being depends on making logical decisions. The study offers a critical analysis of Chārvāka's ethical framework, highlighting both its strengths and limitations in shaping a pragmatic and human-centred approach to morality. However, its radical critique of religious and moral dogma and its rationalist and human-centric approach to values remain significant in contemporary debates on secular ethics, free thought, and the role of reason in human life. Although the philosophy faced decline due to institutional neglect and criticism from religious traditions, its fundamental ideas are still relevant in contemporary discourses on materialism, scepticism, and individual freedom. It also looks at how Chārvāka's rejection of human values contributed to its philosophical downfall.

Keywords: hedonism, materialism, human values, virtue

1. Introduction:

The Chārvāka philosophy flourished in ancient India as a strong counterpoint to the religious and spiritual philosophies that dominated the Indian intellectual landscape. Rooted in materialism and rationalism, it emphasized enjoyment, usefulness, and empirical knowledge, thereby offering a distinctive perspective on human values. Chārvāka maintained that the ultimate aims of life are sensory experience and personal well-

being, in contrast to spiritual traditions that promote self-denial and transcendence.

It prioritized materialism and the pursuit of sensory pleasure over the ideas of an eternal soul, karma, reincarnation, and liberation (*moksha*). Its forthright stance on the nature of human life and the world drew attention, as did its extreme divergence from the prevalent religious traditions, especially the Vedic, Upaniṣadic, and Buddhist philosophies.

However, despite its early attraction, the Chārvāka philosophy gradually declined over time. One of the main causes of this decline was its denial of fundamental human values, including ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility. Other ancient Indian schools of thought, such as Vedānta, Buddhism, and Jainism, emphasized the cultivation of virtue, spiritual development, and a sense of interconnectedness. In contrast, Chārvāka's exclusive focus on materialism and individual pleasure left it ill-equipped to address the moral and social demands of society. This article examines how Chārvāka's materialistic viewpoint failed to provide a comprehensive framework for human flourishing and how its rejection of human values contributed to its eventual decline.

2. Chārvāka Materialism and Sensory Experience:

The Chārvāka school of thought, also known as Lokāyata, is an ancient Indian atheistic and materialistic philosophy. This philosophy is based on the idea that everything can be explained through sensory perception and that only material reality exists. It rejects metaphysical concepts such as the afterlife, karma, and *moksha*, emphasizing factual evidence and direct perception (*pratyaksha*) as the only valid source of knowledge. According to Chārvāka thinkers: "Perception is the only authority; earth, water, fire, and air are the only elements; enjoyment is the only end of human existence; mind is only a product of matter" (Sharma, 1987, p. 41).

There is no life after death, no reincarnation, no eternal soul, and no supreme force governing the universe. Consequently, Chārvāka claimed that pleasure derived from sensory experiences constitutes the ultimate purpose of human life.

According to Chārvāka, the only trustworthy source of knowledge is direct sensory perception (*pratyaksha*). Only what can be directly perceived and experienced is considered true. Anything that cannot be verified through the senses—such as gods, souls, or an afterlife—is rejected as speculation. In this way, Chārvāka promoted an atheistic worldview and encouraged individuals to live in the present and seek pleasure through sensory experiences.

3. Chārvāka Ethics and Rejection of Spirituality:

The Chārvāka denial of spiritual liberation and the afterlife had a profound influence on its ethical outlook. Since Chārvāka philosophers believed that there were no consequences beyond this life, they argued that moral responsibility was not rooted in divine or metaphysical principles.

Traditional moral frameworks based on religious authority were rejected. Instead, Chārvāka encouraged actions that enhanced personal satisfaction and pleasure. According to Chārvāka, moral codes in texts such as

the Vedas and the *Dharmashāstras* were often used by priests and rulers as tools of social control.

Because Chārvāka rejected both *karma* and *moksha*, it did not recognize the need to follow moral codes based on spiritual beliefs. Consequently, Chārvāka thought has often been associated with moral relativism. Actions were evaluated based on their ability to produce immediate sensory enjoyment, and the pursuit of pleasure became the central ethical goal. The phrase: “Eat, drink, and be merry” is often associated with the Chārvāka outlook because of its emphasis on worldly enjoyment rather than ascetic or spiritual ideals (Sharma, 1987, p. 46).

4. Chārvāka Hedonism and Moral Relativism:

Hedonism—the doctrine that pleasure is the highest good—is frequently linked with Chārvāka philosophy. This perspective encourages individuals to pursue pleasure and avoid pain, often with little regard for long-term consequences.

Since Chārvāka philosophy rejects heaven, hell, and karmic justice, actions are judged primarily by their immediate outcomes. The famous verse attributed to the Chārvāka tradition expresses this attitude: “While life is yours, live joyously; None can escape death’s searching eye; When once this frame of ours they burn, how shall it e’er again return?” (Acharya, 1882, p. 2)

This hedonistic outlook had significant ethical implications. Without a foundation in universal moral principles or obligations, human actions were often justified purely on the basis of personal satisfaction.

5. Rejection of Spiritual Growth and Virtue:

Another major criticism of Chārvāka philosophy is its rejection of spiritual growth and moral development. Because Chārvāka denied the existence of an eternal soul (*ātman*) and an afterlife, it rejected the idea that life has a higher spiritual purpose.

In contrast, many Indian philosophical traditions emphasize spiritual development through practices such as meditation, self-discipline, and ethical living. Philosophies like Vedānta, Buddhism, and Jainism stress virtues such as compassion, non-violence, and wisdom as essential elements of human flourishing.

Chārvāka, however, viewed virtue as a social construct rather than a universal truth. Moral values were regarded as conventions created by society, often to benefit the ruling classes.

6. Deficiency of Social Responsibility:

The materialistic and individualistic orientation of Chārvāka philosophy also led to criticism regarding its limited sense of social responsibility. Because personal pleasure was regarded as the highest good, less emphasis was placed on duties toward others.

In Indian culture, where cooperation, social harmony, and moral duty (*dharma*) are highly valued, this perspective appeared problematic. Nevertheless, Chārvāka did acknowledge the practical importance of social cooperation. Human beings depend on one another for survival; therefore, cooperation is necessary not because it is morally sacred but because it is practically beneficial.

7. The Decline of the Chārvāka Philosophical System:

The decline of Chārvāka philosophy can be attributed partly to the emergence of competing philosophical traditions that provided more comprehensive ethical and spiritual frameworks. Vedānta emphasized the realization of the self (*ātman*) and liberation (*moksha*), while Buddhism offered a systematic approach to suffering through the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

These traditions addressed the moral and spiritual concerns of individuals more effectively than the purely materialistic outlook of Chārvāka philosophy.

8. Social and Cultural Shifts:

As Indian culture evolved, values such as compassion, selflessness, and non-violence became increasingly significant. Religious movements such as the Bhakti tradition and the ethical teachings of Buddhism and Jainism further reinforced these values. Consequently, the Chārvāka emphasis on personal pleasure appeared increasingly incompatible with prevailing social and cultural ideals.

9. Conclusion:

The Chārvāka philosophy offers a distinctive perspective on human values through its emphasis on pleasure, rationality, and material well-being. By rejecting metaphysical ideas such as karma, *moksha*, and divine morality, it attempted to establish a practical ethical framework based on empirical experience and individual happiness.

However, other Indian philosophical traditions criticized Chārvāka for relying excessively on sensory experience while neglecting moral and spiritual dimensions of human life. Factors such as the loss of original texts, strong opposition from religious traditions, and the lack of institutional support contributed to the gradual disappearance of the Chārvāka school. It may therefore be argued that: “The main cause, therefore, should be sought in the Chārvāka’s denial of all human values which make life worth living. Life without values is animal life, not human life” (Sharma, 1987, p. 46).

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The Role of Buddhist Ethics in Solving the Environmental Problems

Nitul Hazarika

Abstract

Buddhist ethics plays a significant role in addressing environmental problems by promoting a deep-rooted philosophy of interconnectedness, compassion towards all living beings, and the concept of non-violence (ahimsa), encouraging individuals to live in harmony with nature and minimizing harm to the environment through mindful consumption and responsible actions, thereby providing a strong ethical foundation for sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. The word 'environment' is actively being used because it needs attention more than anything else. The rush to protect environment is the minimum move one can do for oneself. Many ways of protecting the environment are discussed but until and unless people don't realize themselves to be an integral part of the environment nothing will work. Buddhism is a religion that has long recognized the interconnectedness of all things, including human and the natural world. The paper aims to build a framework for understanding the possibilities of Buddhism in order to protect the environment. As such, Buddhism has a lot to offer in terms of promoting environmental awareness and sustainability. The paper explores the ways in which Buddhist teachings and practices can be applied to environmental issues. For example, the practice of mindfulness can help us develop a deeper awareness of the natural world and our impact on it. Buddhist concepts such as non-attachment and non-harming can help cultivate a more sustainable relationship with the environment. The study concludes by offering a foundation to develop a new way for protecting the environment with inner self involvement. Buddhist path of moral action, mindfulness and meditation, and wisdom, the figure of the bodhisattva, who is dedicated to working to lessen the suffering of all sentient beings, serves as a model of sustaining a commitment to working toward what may seem like an impossible lofty goal. The study demonstrates the potential for Buddhism to play a role in fostering environmental awareness and sustainability examining the ways in which Buddhist teachings and practices can be applied to environmental challenges.

Keywords: Buddhism, environment, sustainability, nonviolence, possibilities, challenges, awareness, meaningful actions

Introduction:

The environmental problems faced by our earth today are unusual and unprecedented in nature. Unavoidable challenges of the environment like air depletion, air pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation and degradation of forests etc. has made our earth fall into the trap of existential crisis. However, over exploitation of natural resources has caused us to question our relation with limited natural resources. On one hand, humans connect themselves with the environment through the habitat provided by natural resources. On the other hand, humans have become the destruction of their own homes. With such realization, an urgent need to protect the environment has been discussed and decided by people around the world. However, until and unless people don't recognize themselves as an integral part of the environment nothing will work. It is a must to analyze our attitude towards the environment in an ethical manner (Sharma, 2007).

Environmental ethics is essential for protecting the environment, species, and resources. It promotes sustainable practices and encourages people to become more aware of the impact of their actions on the environment. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living things and the need to respect them (Gowans, 2014).

Buddhism, Man and Society:

Man is born into society, brought up in society and he continues to live in society until his death. An ascetic, too, leaves behind all his encumbrances of household life and departs to forest, carries with him the experience he acquired when he was living in society. Man being a social animal, he acquires his human nature or humane qualities from living in society and maintains relations through communication with the other members who constitute society. There is no society without humans and no humans without society. This interdependence of society and man is persisting not only for the sake of mutual survival but also for the fulfillment of higher ideals related to both man and society. Society existed long before we are born into it and it will continue to exist even long after we are dead and gone.

The inter-relationship of man and society is accepted in Buddhism. Hence social ethics in Buddhism is for the welfare of both man and society. The five precepts (Pancasila), the four sublime abodes (cattari Brahmavihara), the four ways of showing favour (cattari samgahavatthuni) and the ten wholesome deeds (Dasakusala) often discussed in the canonical texts vindicate Buddhism's social concern taking the individual as an integral part of it (Pruthi et al., 2011). Therefore, Buddhist ethics becomes meaningful only in the context of society.

Buddhism allows us to think, analyse and recognize the environment as an integral part of one's life. Such a way of thinking would be helpful in combating climate change. This paper tries to analyse Buddhist insights and will be able to aid in this effort. It is possible to argue that the environmental crisis is also a crisis of human soul (Thathong, 2012).

Environment and Buddhism:

The term 'environment' refers to a broader domain encompassing all aspect of biology, physiology, ecology and society that have an impact on human health and wellbeing, either directly or indirectly (Sharma,

2007). Today, when the environment is seen degraded or destroyed, humanity faces the consequences of difficulties. Environment is a complex of so many things (light, temperature, soil, water, etc.) which surround an organism. Any external force, substance or condition, which surrounds and affects the life of an organism in any way, becomes a factor of its environment. These factors have been variously called as environmental factors, ecological factors or simply factors and may be living as well as non-living. The sum of all these living and non-living factors makes the environment of an organism.

Buddhist ethics plays a significant role in addressing environmental problems by promoting compassion for all living beings, emphasizing the interconnectedness of nature, advocating for mindful consumption, and encouraging a simple lifestyle that minimizes harm to the environment through practices like “Right Livelihood” (Gowans, 2014; Siderits, 2017).

Aims and Objectives of the Research:

In present day situation, the ethical teaching of Buddhism is still relevant. The main and objective of the study are –

1. To analyze the ethical teachings of Buddha Philosophy.
2. To explain about the ethical aspects of Buddhism.
3. To understand different aspects of environmental ethics.
4. To study the role of Buddha’s ethics in environmental activism.

Methodology:

The present study entitled “The Role of Buddhist Ethics in Solving the Environmental Problems” adopts a qualitative research design based on textual analysis and critical interpretation. It follows a descriptive analytical research design. The descriptive approach is employed to present the conceptual background, historical development, and theoretical perspectives related to the Buddhist ethics and environmental concerns. The analytical approach is applied to critically examine interpretations and differing viewpoints found in the selected texts. The study relies on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include original texts and literary works relevant to Buddhist ethical and environmental thought. Secondary sources consist of published books, peer-reviewed journal articles, edited volumes and authenticated academic websites. The collected materials are examined through thematic analysis, which involves identifying key themes, concepts, and patterns across texts. In addition, contextual interpretation is applied to situate these texts within their social and historical contexts.

Significance of the Study:

Buddha was primarily an ethical teacher and a social reformer than a theoretical philosopher. Because according to him, human existence is full of misery and pain. So, our immediate duty is to get rid of this misery and pain. This research is trying to examine the role of Buddhist ethics in solving the environmental problems. Buddha’s ethical teaching is more emphasized on morality and through this how to society can overcome from

obstacles and sufferings of life. Buddha's ethical teachings gives us some ways to practice in practical life that people can reach the ultimate goal 'Nirvana' (Bloom, 1972).

Key aspects of Buddhist Ethics related to Environmentalism:

Compassion for all beings: A central Buddhist teaching, extending compassion to all living creatures, including plants and animals, naturally leads to a desire to protect nature and its inhabitants (Bloom, 1972).

Interconnectedness of life: Buddhism teaches that all things are interconnectedness and interdependent, meaning harm to the environment ultimately harms ourselves (Siderits, 2017).

Non-violence: The principle of non- violence extends to not harming nature encouraging practices like vegetarianism and avoiding unnecessary destruction (Gowans, 2014).

Right Livelihood: One of the eight-fold path principles, encouraging individuals to choose occupations that minimize harm to the environment and promote sustainability (Pruthi et al., 2011).

Mindful consumption: Buddhist teachings promote awareness of one's actions and consumption patterns, encouraging moderation and reducing waste (Thathong, 2012).

Respect of nature: Buddhism views nature as sacred and worthy of reverence, encouraging people to live in harmony with the natural world (Bloom, 1972).

How Buddhist Ethics can be Applied to Environmental Issues:

Supporting conservation effects: By practicing compassion and recognizing the value of all life, Buddhists can actively participate in efforts to protect endangered species and natural habitats (Thathong, 2012).

Promoting sustainable practices: Living simply, reducing consumption, and choosing eco-friendly options are encouraged to minimize environmental impact (Sharma, 2007).

Educating communities: Buddhists teachings can be used to raise awareness about environmental issues and inspire people to take action to protect the planet (Gowans, 2014).

Engaging in environmental activism: Buddhist communities can actively participate in environmental campaigns and advocate for policies that promote sustainability (Trone, 2018).

Buddhist Ethics in Solving the Environmental Problems:

Environment and its sustainability can only be done when people have basic knowledge about nature. The eco system, biodiversity, the ecology and the atmosphere are subjective which must be taught to students so that they can learn and contribute to Mother Earth. Environmental education assists students in creating a personal spiritual connection with the environment, which increases their desire and willingness to take environmental action (Thathong, 2012). Buddha's emphasis on the peaceful co-existence of people and nature, for instance, shows that he is aware of how interdependent all living things are with their surroundings (Pruthi et al., 2011).

Buddhism is recognized in its teachings as one of the top religions for putting forth concepts related to

sustainability and environmental protection. These ideas can be found in Buddhist teachings as well as in its ritualistic structure and modes of daily practice (Siderits, 2017). Buddhist philosophical concepts regarding environmental preservation and sustainable development are crucial for both theory and practice.

Buddhist teachings encourage a sense of collective responsibility and emphasize the importance of working towards the common good. Therefore, Buddhism can be a valuable resource for individuals and communities who are looking to take action to protect the environment and create a more sustainable future (Trone, 2018). Ultimately, the teachings of Buddhism can help individuals cultivate a greater sense of awareness, compassion, and responsibility towards the environment, and inspire them to take meaningful action to address the environmental challenges we face today.

Conclusion:

Buddhist teachings emphasize the interdependence and interconnectedness of all living beings, including humans and the natural world. Therefore, the well-being of the natural environment is crucial for the well-being of all living beings.

Buddhist ethics offer a valuable framework for addressing environmental concerns by fostering a deep-rooted understanding of interconnectedness, compassion, and responsibility towards the natural world, providing a strong ethical foundation for sustainable practices and environmental activism.

In conclusion, Buddha offers a comprehensive and practical approach to ethics and morality, guiding practitioners to cultivate ethical conduct, mental discipline and wisdom through the Five precepts, the Eight-fold Path and the Bodhisattva Ideal. Buddhist ethics and morality are theoretical concepts and practical guidelines that can be applied in daily life, inspiring practitioners to live more compassionate responsible and engaged lives. Buddhist philosophy, ethics and morality principles can provide valuable insights and guidance for living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

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Gender Discrimination: A Social Construct or a Natural Divide? A Philosophical Assessment

Saumik Saha

Abstract

Despite the foundational intent of ‘human rights’ to guarantee equal opportunities for all individuals, their complete realization in society continues to be an ongoing challenge. In this context, gender inequality has emerged as one of the most important social problems. This unequal treatment and discrimination between women and men in today’s society undermines the concept of human rights and social justice. So, this paper explores an important philosophical question: Is gender inequality really natural, that means, it is based on inherent differences between the sexes, or is it a social construction that has been formed over time? The focal aim of this paper is to analyse the root causes of gender inequality, which identifies two types of ideologies prevalent in society: conservative and liberal. The conservative perspective suggests that the physical differences between women and men dictate their distinct social roles. On the other hand, the liberal view argues that gender inequality is not a natural reality, but rather a social and cultural construct that has been entrenched by patriarchal systems over time. The primary objective of this paper is to explore the existing notions of gender inequality in society and to analyze how these notions foster a persistent discriminatory mindset between men and women. In addition, it also discusses the consequences of gender inequality, such as negative attitudes towards women, discrimination in social and family structures, and inequality in the workplace etc.

Keywords: sex, gender, inequality, human rights, social injustice

Introduction:

‘Human rights’ is meant to ensure equal rights for everyone. It is inevitable to say that the full implementation of these rights in human society has still remained elusive. Among the multiple manifestations of discrimination observed from different perspectives around these ‘human rights’ throughout the world in the present era, the issue of gender discrimination is one of the most widespread and important issues. In the current context, it has become a matter of considerable concern on the track to true equality in all human societies and cultures. From a moral point of view, gender discrimination is reprehensible, unjust, and inappropriate because it harms people

belonging to a particular gender (women), depriving them of equal rights in this human society. It can be seen that the lack of gender equality is lucidly reflected in the various discriminatory activities prevalent in society at different times. As a consequence, there arose a question - how is it possible to get rid of the gender-discriminatory consciousness of women in this social system? Moreover, is it possible to ensure justice regarding equal rights for every human being in society? - This could be a philosophical question. In this context, this may be a way to resolve the real crisis of justice that could be understood only by analyzing the root causes of various social practices that stigmatize gender discrimination in our society.

The primary objective of this paper is to understand the root causes of gender discrimination in society and to evaluate them critically. It explores how these causes contribute to the persistent gender-conservative ideas within society, particularly against women. Additionally, the paper examines the effects of gender discrimination on attitudes, behaviors, customs, and more. This paper extends beyond theoretical analysis; its significance lies in its capacity to inspire social change. By examining inequality from a philosophical perspective, it seeks to raise awareness and challenge traditional gender roles that restrict individual potential. Additionally, it offers a conceptual framework that supports the development of policies and programs aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender.

Moral and social issues in Gender Discrimination:

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment of individuals based on sex, often manifested as a social imbalance in which one gender is favored or marginalized over the other. 'An act, practice, or attitude is sexist when it creates unjustified differences between the sexes or exploits irrelevant differences between the sexes' (McInerney & Rainbolt, 1994). It affects various aspects of life, including education, employment, political participation, and personal relationships. Gender inequality has been deeply embedded in social norms, with rigid expectations about what specific behaviors, roles, and aspirations are considered appropriate for different genders since ancient times to the present times. In this context, a well-known quote by Gloria Steinem is relevant, which is 'We've begun to raise daughters more like sons... but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters' (Steinem, 2004). She delivered this line during her speech at the 3rd Annual Women and Power Conference in September 2004. Steinem's statement is often referenced in discussions about International Women's Day, emphasizing that true equality is achieved when boys and girls are raised in the same manner. Historically, we have seen that women are relegated to household responsibilities and denied equal access to education and employment opportunities, which reinforces the cycle of poverty and dependency in several cultures. On the other hand, men are pressured to conform to traditional ideas of masculinity, even discouraging emotional expression or involvement in caring roles. Indeed, history tells us that in every society, one group (men) has always enjoyed privileges, while another group (women) has always remained deprived and neglected. Such discrimination is more clearly observed in various aspects of modern human society; in this case, the verbal or cognitive abilities of women are considered to be much lower than those of men. In this

context, a notable quote by Mahatma Gandhi is, 'Man can never be a woman's equal in the spirit of selfless service with which nature has endowed her' (Gandhi, 1941, p. 208). As a result, the people of the society think that women's subjects will be psychology, culinary arts, etc., and men's subjects will be engineering, technology, medicine, etc. Women are more decorative and caring; men are not. Consequently, individuals typically express their gender identity through societal cues such as mannerisms, walking, speech, and sitting postures. If a person disregards the societal discrimination between men and women, they are often met with laughter or ridicule, and in many cases, they are even seen as an outcast from society. Therefore, it is clear that in terms of gender judgment, such a narrow attitude towards women has always existed among men and women, not only in the present but also since ancient times. Although women had considerable prestige in India during the Vedic period, they were neglected in many cases; their mention is observed in various sources, starting from the Manusamhita to the Rigveda. 'Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards' (Manusmriti, 3.56). This highlights the existence of gender discrimination as a real issue in human society, where the pursuit of gender justice remains relevant.

In the contemporary global context, gender inequality is not merely a theoretical debate but a lived reality reflected in alarming statistics. Despite the existence of several international human rights frameworks, gender inequality persists across various domains. For example, currently, women, highlighting a significant gap in decision-making power, hold only 26% of parliamentary seats worldwide. Additionally, economic inequality presents a barrier for women, with approximately 10% of women and girls globally living in extreme poverty. Even more alarming is the rise in gender-based violence. According to various reports, a partner or family member kills at least one woman or girl every 10 minutes, and conflict-related sexual violence has increased by 50% since 2022. Overall, these statistics demonstrate that the philosophical devaluation of women in the modern era has had a profound and devastating impact on their lives and dignity.

In this way, gender discrimination can be seen in many areas of society. In general, for example, society tends to place greater importance on the opinions of men than on those of women during discussions. As a result, gender-discriminatory practices have emerged as a significant issue across various areas of human society, and these problems cannot be easily overlooked. But, in that case, the question arises, what is the main source or cause of such gender discrimination within society? Is it because of natural biological differences between men and women, or is it solely due to social and cultural differences? - This question is highly controversial. In this context, two different groups of opinions can be mentioned in human society, namely, the conservative view where this system is supported and the liberal view where gender discrimination is called unfair and inappropriate.

Conservatives' Views on Gender Discrimination:

Conservatives often support gender inequality, viewing it as natural and inherent. As a result, they may not see discriminatory attitudes, customs, or behaviours as wrong or inappropriate. They recognize and accept

the physical differences between men and women; due to these physical distinctions, men and women cannot have equal roles and positions in society. For example, due to the physical differences acquired at birth, men's bodies are strong and hard, while women's bodies are relatively weak and soft. Women can get pregnant, but men cannot. Women menstruate; men do not. Men are relatively less powerful than women in terms of physical strength and ability. Based on all these essential and important differences, Conservatives believe that the lifestyles of women and men should not be the same in society. Accordingly, in this perspective, housework and child-rearing are typically assigned to women, while business and commerce are usually assigned to men. Girls are more suited for psychology than mathematics, while English or Bengali literature should not be confused with philosophy. This is because girls tend to have stronger verbal abilities, whereas boys excel in spatial and abstract thinking skills. Because of this difference in physical and mental strength, conservative people think that women should accept the subordination of men. Of course, by 'accepting the subordination of men', the old-fashioned people do not mean that women will be oppressed or tortured by men. Women will have the same status or respect as men in society, but their social role will be different. As a result, conservative people think that due to such genuine physical differences, the duties and responsibilities of men and women in society have been determined and it is only in this discriminatory system that it is possible to achieve the well-being of both women and men.

Indeed, according to the Conservatives, the natural biological differences between men and women are considered the logical basis for identifying their different social positions and roles. Since discrimination between men and women is often viewed as a natural consequence of biological differences; therefore, this division is frequently assumed to be a natural part of society. However, such a division of men and women is completely fabricated and artificial; such a division is observed only because Sex is understood in conjunction with Gender. In reality, there is a significant difference between sex and gender concepts. Understanding the difference between sex and gender is essential for understanding how social norms, roles, and expectations based on these distinctions contribute to the unequal treatment of individuals. Sex is a natural thing and is completely biological because it is determined through the genitals and certain activities. Gender, on the other hand, is socially and culturally constructed and man-made, as it is a feminine characteristic, a masculine characteristic, and reflects certain behaviours, roles, and responsibilities within a particular society. Again, Sex is constant or unchangeable. It remains the same anywhere in the world or at any time. Conversely, gender is changeable; it evolves over time and location. These changes can be observed in culture and also within the family (Bhasin, 2014).

Disregarding the differences between these two beliefs leads to conservative ideas fostering discrimination in human society, which is highly influential. In fact, in the current situation, since the concepts of Sex and Gender are used interchangeably in most cases, they represent distinct aspects of human identity as well as have a profound impact on gender discrimination. In this context, a quote from the famous feminist speaker

Ann Oakley is very significant; she stated: ‘‘Gender’’ is a matter of culture, it refers to the social classification of men and women into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. That people are male or female can usually be judged by referring to biological evidence. That they are masculine or feminine cannot be judged in the same way: the criteria are cultural, differing with time and place. The constancy of sex must be admitted, but so also must the variability of gender’ (Oakley, 1985, p. 16). That is to say, Gender does not have any biological or physical basis; it is a social and cultural construct that categorizes individuals into two groups, ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. The criteria for which are social and cultural, change with time and place. On the other hand, whether a person is male or female is usually judged based on biological evidence and is unchangeable in all cases. As a result, there is no internal link between Sex and Gender. Although it (Gender) is created, it is an artificial thing that can never have any connection with nature. Therefore, due to these natural differences between Sex and Gender, feminists have raised questions about the connection between biological differences between women and men and social and political roles. They have denied the relevance of social structures to biological differences between women and men in society.

Liberalisms’ View on Gender Discrimination:

The socially and culturally sanctioned environment is at the root of gender inequality between men and women growing up in the same society. This is known as the liberal view. The main proponent of this perspective in the context of gender inequality is the famous English philosopher John Stuart Mill. His statement on this matter is unequivocal and cutting to the chase, leaving no room for misunderstanding. He said, ‘The principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement’ (Mill, 1869/1988, p. 1). It also flourished in the liberal philosophical thinking of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jeremy Bentham. Liberals were especially influenced by their ideas. In discussing the differences in rights between men and women, liberals reference an ancient moral and political principle: ‘‘Equal treatment of equals is just treatment.’’ In this context, the term ‘‘equal’’ refers to two individuals or groups that have no significant differences. As a result, liberals do not acknowledge any significant differences between women and men. They believe that in every society, children are raised in different environments based on gender; accordingly, they develop their gender roles and gradually experience gender discrimination. For example, on their birthdays, boys are given toys like cars, planes, and guns, while girls are given dolls, cooking utensils, and cosmetics. Girls are often given new clothes and told, ‘‘How beautiful you look!’’ Boys are given formal attire like jeans and told, ‘‘You look strong like a warrior.’’ It is through these various socialization processes that individuals adopt the discriminatory ideas and expectations of society regarding women and men. In this context, Peter Singer argues that the root of such socialization likely stems from the simple social system of primitive times, where the roles of women and men were distinct. It was essential for the mother to stay indoors for a long time to care for their children, while men were tasked with hunting for food. Consequently, in the current social system, nurturing tendencies are

often attributed to women, while competitive and aggressive attitudes are associated with men. Thus, gender discrimination manifests gradually in every aspect of human society, which may not actually be discrimination but rather differences in roles dictated by gender. In this context, the renowned African feminist activist and writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stated: ‘Culture does not make people. People make culture. If it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we must make it our culture’ (Adichie, 2014, p. 15).

Thus, liberals’ central claim is that there is no intrinsic difference between men and women; rather, what is regarded as an inherent difference in any culture is entirely artificial and the result of socialization. However, liberals also believe that women are physically capable of bearing children, while men are not, or that women are not as skilled in-service work as men, etc. Although, they believe that women and men are physically different due to these characteristics, there is no naturally relevant difference between them in the context of gender discrimination in society. According to their opinion, just as it would be right to ignore these characteristics and give women and men equal rights and treat them equally, it would be morally wrong and politically criminal to adopt any discriminatory attitude, customs and behavior between men and women in human society. So, it can be said that gender discrimination can never be desirable in an ideal society.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, gender inequality is a significant and persistent issue in human society. It is not solely a result of biological differences; rather, it is an artificial construct shaped by societal and cultural influences. These factors create distinct expectations and roles for men and women, restricting their lifestyle choices and limiting their opportunities. In particular, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards women have become ingrained in traditional societal constructs. On one hand, these practices are rooted in customs and culture, while on the other hand, they have contributed to the devaluation and oppression of women within society. However, it is clear that the root cause of gender inequality is not only limited to biological differences; it is a social construction, which is constantly created and established by culture, law, governance and social norms. So, many feminists advocate for the previously mentioned liberalism views regarding gender inequality with greater logic, information, and persuasive language.

In the present era, efforts to eliminate gender inequality continue from various societal perspectives, yet achieving this through a single social change remains challenging. This requires strong social awareness and restructuring of cultural norms, laws and education systems, so that all people, regardless of gender, are given equal rights and opportunities. If this gender-based discrimination is eliminated, every society will become more developed, just and humane, where the differences between men and women will be limited only to physical characteristics, but their roles, rights and status in society will be equal. However, this is a long-term process, and it is necessary to bring about changes not only in social or cultural perspectives but also in legal, political and economic systems. In the modern era, when ‘human rights’ and ‘socialism’ have become important issues, gender-based discrimination is also a difficult social problem that is seeking a solution. Therefore, to

deal with gender discrimination, we must first understand that the biological differences between men and women in nature are not the main reason for gender-based division or discrimination in human society. The socially constructed idea of gender, which is fluid and can change over time, is influencing our lives. Addressing gender inequality requires more than just philosophical discussions; we need to implement specific and effective strategies. First and foremost, education should be used as a tool to break free from gender-based stereotypes. Educational institutions must not only focus on academic excellence but also prioritize gender-sensitive programs that encourage students to evaluate individuals based on their humanity rather than their biological sex. By incorporating feminist and human rights perspectives into the conventional curriculum, we can cultivate a new generation committed to upholding the dignity of women without undermining their legal and social standing. Additionally, several other measures are essential to combat this inequality and establish a safe and equitable society. For instance, to eliminate economic disparities, both the government and private organizations must ensure gender neutrality in all aspects of recruitment and promotion. Families, too, need to move away from rigid gender-based expectations and adopt programs that focus on raising and educating their children properly. Most importantly, the legal framework must be strengthened to enforce strict penalties for gender-based violence. By raising awareness and implementing these corrective measures, we can work towards eliminating discrimination against women and creating a more just and equitable world.

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The Syncretic Traditions of Assamese Muslims: A Philosophical Discourse

Ashima Ahmed Saikia & Priti Salila Rajkhowa

Abstract

The Assamese Muslims, a distinct ethno-religious group within Assam, India, represent a unique synthesis of Islamic and Assamese cultures. Unlike Muslims in other parts of India, Assamese Muslims trace their origins to various sources, including Mughal-era soldiers, Sufi saints, and intermarriages with indigenous Assamese communities. This historical amalgamation has created a community deeply rooted in Assamese linguistic, cultural, and social traditions, while maintaining their Islamic faith and practices. Over time, they have developed a culture that blends religion, music, language, and social customs. This research paper looks at how this mixing of cultures, known as syncretism, has shaped their identity. Many Assamese Muslims practice Islam in a way that reflects their deep connection to Assamese culture. They use the Assamese language in prayers, religious discussions, and daily life, making it an important part of their identity. Their traditions include folk music, poetry, and storytelling, which often carry both Islamic and Assamese influences. Local customs, dress styles, and food habits also show this unique blend, creating a distinct Assamese Muslim way of life. This paper also discusses how this harmonious blend of traditions faces challenges today. Some people want to follow a stricter form of Islam, while others believe in keeping the unique Assamese Muslim identity. These differences raise important questions about culture, religion, and belonging. By studying the history and philosophy of Assamese Muslim traditions, this paper aims to show how different cultures can exist together peacefully.

Keywords: Assamese Muslims, cultural identity, syncretism, ethics

Introduction:

Syncretism is the process by which different religious, cultural, or philosophical traditions blend to form a new, unified system. It allows societies to develop a shared identity by incorporating elements from various traditions. Philosophers and scholars have explored syncretism from different perspectives. James Frazer (1890) described it as the natural evolution of belief systems through interaction and adaptation. Fernando Ortiz (1940) introduced the term “transculturation,” highlighting how syncretism is not just a simple fusion but a

complex process of cultural exchange (Ortiz, 1995). In religious studies, Leopold Senghor (1964) viewed syncretism as a way to achieve harmony between spiritual traditions, rather than a loss of identity (Senghor, 1964).

In Assam, syncretism has shaped the identity of Assamese Muslims, who have combined Islamic faith with local Assamese traditions. The influence of Sufi saints like Ajan Pir played a key role in this, introducing zikir and zari—devotional Islamic songs composed in Assamese. This reflects the impact of Sufi philosophy, which emphasizes love, tolerance, and universal brotherhood (Schimmel, 1975). Assamese Muslims have also shared cultural elements with the broader Assamese society, including language, festivals, dress, and social customs. The Bhakti movement, which promoted religious harmony, further reinforced this blending of traditions (Bhattacharjee, 2010). However, this syncretic identity faces challenges today. Some believe that Assamese Muslims should adopt a more orthodox Islamic identity, while others argue that syncretism is an essential part of their historical and philosophical existence (Ahmed, 2018). This paper explores the philosophical and historical foundations of syncretism among Assamese Muslims.

Literature Review:

The following literature review examines the historical, cultural, and contemporary aspects of syncretism among Assamese Muslims, highlighting key scholarly contributions to the topic.

Baruah (2019) explores the role of syncretism in shaping the identity of Assamese Muslims, highlighting the blend of Islamic traditions with indigenous Assamese cultural elements. The study emphasizes the influence of Sufism in fostering a composite religious ethos.

Ahmed (2017) examines the historical factors that contributed to the integration of Assamese Muslims, particularly the impact of Mughal policies, Ahom patronage, and indigenous adaptation. The study also discusses the contributions of preachers like Ajan Fakir in shaping a unique Assamese Muslim culture.

Saikia (2020) investigates the influence of Sufi traditions in Assam, emphasizing their role in bridging Hindu-Muslim relations. The study details how Sufi practices, folk music, and spiritual teachings have been embedded in Assamese Muslim religious life.

Hussain (2021) analyzes contemporary challenges, such as rising religious orthodoxy and socio-political tensions, that threaten the continuity of syncretic traditions among Assamese Muslims. The study highlights the role of globalization and digital media in shaping younger generations' religious perceptions.

Choudhury (2018) explores the role of community leaders, scholars, and cultural organizations in sustaining syncretic traditions. The research underscores the significance of local festivals, folk practices, and interfaith dialogue in maintaining communal harmony.

Objectives:

This study aims to explore the historical, cultural, and contemporary dimensions of syncretism in shaping the identity of Assamese Muslims.

1. To analyze how syncretism has shaped the identity of Assamese Muslims.
2. To examine the historical factors that have influenced their cultural and religious integration.
3. To assess the impact of modern challenges on the continuation of syncretic traditions.

Methodology:

This study employs a qualitative research approach, relying on historical analysis, literature review, and philosophical discourse analysis. Data sources include historical texts, ethnographic studies, and scholarly interpretations of Assamese Muslim traditions.

Discussion:

The history of Assamese Muslims is distinct due to their strong syncretic traditions, in which Islamic beliefs and Assamese culture have mingled over centuries. Unlike other places where Islam was spread by invasion, Assam received it mostly through trade, migration, and Sufi influence. The peaceful marriage of Islamic and Assamese traditions has moulded the identity of Assamese Muslims, distinguishing them from other Muslim groups in India.

Islam spread to Assam in the 13th and 14th centuries through commerce, Sufi saints, and warriors. Early Muslim presence in Assam may be traced back to Arab and Persian traders who visited the Brahmaputra Valley for commerce and cultural interaction (Ahmed, 2016). The Turko-Afghan invasions, such as Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji's expedition in 1206, did not result in lasting Islamic dominance. (Baruah, 2005). The Ahom monarchs welcomed talented artisans, scribes, and soldiers into their kingdom (Hussain, 1993). The influence of Sufi saints, who peacefully spread Islam by adapting it to local customs and languages. These exchanges set the groundwork for a unique Assamese Muslim identity in which Islamic ideas mixed with Assamese customs instead of substituting themselves.

One of the most prominent personalities in Assamese Muslim syncretism was Ajan Pir (Shah Milan, 17th century), a Sufi saint thought to have originated in Baghdad or Bengal. His teachings have influenced Assamese Muslim culture. He introduced zikir and zari, Islamic devotional songs written in Assamese, making Islamic spirituality available to Assamese Muslims (Saikia, 2004). His teachings emphasized love, peace, and devotion to God, which are consistent with both Sufi philosophy and the bhakti movement. He adapted Islamic rituals to the indigenous Assamese milieu, promoting language and cultural integration. (Deka 2019). Ajan Pir's contributions demonstrate how Assamese Islam developed in harmony with local culture, rather than in isolation from it. The impact of local customs, language, and folk traditions on Assamese Muslim identity.

Over the ages, Assamese Muslims have embraced numerous local practices, resulting in a distinct identity that reflects both their Islamic and Assamese background. Some major cultural characteristics are-

Language: Assamese Muslims have always utilized Assamese as their major language, including religious rites, rather than Persian or Urdu (Haque, 2017).

Holidays: Many Assamese Muslims celebrate traditional Islamic holidays such as Eid and Muharram,

as well as the most prominent Assamese festival, Bihu (Choudhury, 2011).

Dress: Assamese Muslim women often wear mekhela sador, comparable to Assamese Hindu ladies, rather than the Islamic clothing observed in other regions of India (Gogoi, 2020).

Assamese Muslims have historically balanced Islamic teachings with Assamese cultural practices, creating a unique syncretic identity. John Hick (1989) argues that religious pluralism allows communities to integrate diverse spiritual traditions without compromising core beliefs. Assamese Muslims, for instance, practice Islamic monotheism while incorporating Assamese language and customs into their religious life. The Bhakti movement (15th–17th century), which emphasized devotion and unity beyond religious boundaries, deeply influenced Assamese culture, including its Muslim population (Sharma, 2002). Assamese Muslims have historically celebrated Bihu alongside Islamic festivals, showing their adaptation to Assamese cultural rhythms (Choudhury, 2011). These examples illustrate how religious pluralism has shaped Assamese Muslim identity, allowing Islamic beliefs to coexist with indigenous traditions without conflict.

The ethical dimension of syncretism lies in the balance between religious obligations and cultural participation. Philosophers like Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) emphasize that ethics is deeply rooted in traditions and evolves as societies change. Assamese Muslims navigate their identity through ethical coexistence, balancing Islamic moral values with Assamese customs, ensuring that religious principles align with social harmony. MacIntyre's perspective suggests that Assamese Muslims maintain ethical integrity by adapting their traditions in a way that preserves their religious values while embracing Assamese culture.

The Fluid and Evolving Nature of Assamese Muslim identity is not static; it evolves over time based on historical, cultural, and social influences. The philosophical concept of “becoming” (Heidegger, 1927) applies to Assamese Muslim identity, which has changed across generations. Martin Heidegger (1927) argues that identity is not fixed but is a process of continuous transformation. Assamese Muslims, for instance, have developed their own linguistic and cultural expressions of Islam, making their identity fluid rather than rigid (Ahmed, 2018). Stuart Hall (1990) describes cultural identity as a “positioning” rather than an essence, meaning Assamese Muslims are neither fully orthodox Muslims nor entirely Assamese in the traditional sense—their identity is a hybrid of both. Assamese Muslim identity has undergone shifts in response to political changes, migration, and social modernization, yet it retains its core syncretic character (Baruah, 1999). The metaphysical aspect of Assamese Muslim identity highlights its adaptability, showing that religious and cultural identities are not fixed categories but evolving realities.

A major philosophical debate among Assamese Muslims today is whether to preserve syncretic traditions or adopt more orthodox Islamic practices. Charles Taylor (1994) argues that modernity often creates identity crises, where communities struggle between holding onto traditions and adapting to global religious movements. In Assam, some groups advocate for maintaining the syncretic Assamese Muslim identity, while others push for a more Arabic-centered Islamic practice, influenced by global Islamic movements (Hussain, 2018). The rise of

Wahhabism and Salafism in some parts of Assam has led to debates about cultural purity vs. religious authenticity, challenging the traditionally inclusive Assamese Muslim identity (Ahmed, 2016). However, postcolonial thinkers like Homi Bhabha (1994) argue that hybrid identities are a strength, not a weakness. Bhabha's concept of "cultural hybridity" supports the idea that Assamese Muslim syncretism is not a dilution of faith but an adaptation that enhances cultural richness.

This ongoing debate shows how Assamese Muslims negotiate between past and present, between inherited traditions and modern religious movements, shaping their identity in a rapidly changing world. The syncretic traditions of Assamese Muslims face multiple challenges in the modern era, influenced by global religious movements, political identity struggles, debates on cultural preservation, and the effects of globalization and social media. Religious conservatism has grown among Assamese Muslims due to the spread of global Islamic movements such as Wahhabism, Salafism, and the Tablighi Jamaat. These movements promote a more scriptural and puritanical interpretation of Islam, which contrasts with the historically syncretic Assamese Muslim identity.

The Assamese Muslim identity is increasingly shaped by political and social factors, particularly in relation to identity politics, migration debates, and representation in governance. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) have intensified identity-based politics in Assam, with Assamese Muslims seeking recognition as indigenous inhabitants (Chakrabarty, 2020). This has created divisions within the community, as some emphasize their Assamese linguistic and cultural heritage, while others assert their Islamic identity more strongly (Baruah, 2019). Political parties have used Assamese Muslims as a vote bank, sometimes deepening the divide between cultural Assamese Muslims and Bengali-speaking Muslims, further complicating the syncretic identity (Haque, 2021). Some Assamese Muslims fear marginalization in the larger national discourse, leading to a stronger assertion of religious identity over cultural syncretism (Sharma, 2016). Thus, political and social dynamics are reshaping Assamese Muslim identity, sometimes reducing syncretism in favor of more rigid identity markers.

Globalization and digital communication have introduced new religious influences and transformed community interactions. Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become spaces where religious scholars and influencers promote both syncretic and orthodox Islamic viewpoints (Rahman, 2022). Young Assamese Muslims now have greater access to global Islamic content, leading some to adopt stricter religious interpretations and reject Assamese cultural elements (Islam, 2020). However, online platforms have also allowed Assamese Muslim cultural activists to document and revive traditional practices, such as digital archives of zikir and zari performances (Baruah, 2022).

Conclusion:

The research has demonstrated that Assamese Muslim identity is not monolithic but fluid, shaped by historical interactions, cultural exchanges, and religious philosophies, such as-Influence of Sufism and Bhakti

traditions: These movements emphasized love, devotion, and tolerance, influencing Assamese Muslim religious and cultural practices. Assamese Muslims have assimilated Assamese language, music, and customs, making their identity distinct from other South Asian Muslim communities. At the same time the rise of global Islamic reformist movements has led to tensions between traditional syncretic practices and stricter religious interpretations. Assamese Muslims struggle with identity politics, particularly in debates over indigeneity, religious representation, and cultural autonomy. Overall, syncretism has provided a framework for coexistence, but it also faces significant internal and external pressures that may reshape its future. The study of Assamese Muslim syncretism offers deeper philosophical insights into tolerance, pluralism, and the coexistence of multiple identities. Philosophers like John Hick (1989) and Amartya Sen (2006) have argued that pluralism strengthens societies rather than weakens them. Assamese Muslim syncretism exemplifies this philosophy, showing that faith can coexist with regional traditions. Aristotle's virtue ethics suggests that identity is a balance between preservation and adaptation (MacIntyre, 1981). Assamese Muslim syncretism follows this pattern, as the community adapts to social change while maintaining its core values. From a philosophical perspective, Assamese Muslim syncretism provides a living example of how cultural fusion can create a balanced, inclusive identity, offering valuable lessons on coexistence and adaptability in diverse societies.

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Applying Stoic Leadership in the Work Environment : Insights from Case Studies

Prarthana Chaliha

Abstract

Leadership is an active and vigorous process that brings consistency and direction in the framework of an organization. Stoicism philosophy which exhibits the qualities of resilience, self-control, virtue and rationality can be considered as great assistance in today's dynamic and rivalrous world. The study examines how Stoic Leadership principles- self-control, virtue ethics and emotional resilience can enhance leadership effectiveness in modern organization. The study centralizes on multiple case studies examining world leaders who typify Stoic leadership such as Warren Buffet, Satya Nandella, Angela Merkel, Jeff Bezos. By citing these examples, the study attempts to identify the attributes require to deal with the external ambiguities of working environment. The findings of the study thus suggest that Stoic Leadership offers a practical and ethical approach to modern work culture and insights how leaders can spread mental resilience, integrity and emotional intelligence to enrich sustainable work practices.

Keywords: stoic leadership, emotional resilience, virtue ethics, leadership effectiveness, emotional intelligence

Introduction:

With the complex challenges of modern organizations that require adaptability, moral clarity, and a forward-thinking approach needs proper strategic planning, emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. In this context medieval philosophy like Stoicism ensures timeless acuity with the essential qualities of strong and effective leadership. Stoicism entails discipline in the way in which events are responded to and interacted with based on an understanding of the physics of how the world works (Tuffley, 2011). Instead of emphasizing on the construction of an idealized societal frame, Stoicism draws its attention on self-improvement through adherence to four cardinal merits:

1. **Practical Wisdom** – It helps to steer the complex situations through rational analysis and conscious decision making.
2. **Self Restraint** – The practice of self-restraint and moderation in all aspects of life.

3. **Justice**—Advocating fairness and moral accountability in interactions with others.

4. **Courage**—Displaying flexibility and probability during the phase of difficulty.

Thus, these four foundational virtues can also be considered the psychological elements of leadership. Alike Stoicism, leadership emphasizes personal growth, but should not be based upon self-centered notion. Stoicism advocates for humane treatment, emphasizing the shared dignity and core human rights of all individuals. Stoicism is a practical philosophy that teaches us to live a virtuous life by cultivating self-awareness, discipline, and rationality. It also encourages us to align ourselves with nature. It emphasizes the importance of understanding what lies within our control and what does not, empowering us to navigate life's challenges with a resilient peace of mind and emotional composure (Kien, 2024). Therefore, stoicism is important in the modern time, as it can influence the sense of support in a changing world where events change so often (Elona Limaj, 2024). This perspective enables leaders to maintain composure during crises, making clear-headed decisions without being overwhelmed by external events. By practicing emotional discipline, leaders can foster a stable work environment, even amidst uncertainty (Sascha Ahrweiler, Bayer AG, Wuppertal, Germany). Central to Stoic philosophy is the pursuit of virtue and moral excellence. Leaders who embody these principles prioritize honesty, fairness, and the common good over personal gain. This commitment to ethical geste builds belief within the association and with external stakeholders, laying the foundation for sustainable success (Bowden, H, 2012). The Stoic practice of acknowledging the impermanence of external circumstances encourages leaders to remain flexible and open to change. By embracing uncertainty and viewing challenges as opportunities for growth, leaders can guide their organizations through transitions effectively, fostering innovation and resilience (Chrystie Watson, Peter Case, Josephine Pryce). By applying Stoic principles, leaders can cultivate resilience, ethical decision making and adaptability in an increasingly complex business landscape.

Review of Literature:

Hirsch et al. (2023) discuss the application of Stoic philosophy in leadership, emphasizing character traits and the concept of negative capability. Robertson (2022) explores how ancient Stoic teachings, particularly those of Marcus Aurelius, can be applied to modern leadership to cultivate resilience and wisdom. Brown, et al. examines the relationship between Stoic principles and emotional intelligence within leadership contexts, highlighting practical applications for leaders. Watson, et al (2025) outline how Stoic principles can inform contemporary leadership practices aimed at addressing sustainability challenges. Caballero (2023) discusses how Stoic teachings can help leaders develop self-awareness, self-regulation, and perseverance to manage stress effectively. Hammerton (2017) discusses how Stoic philosophy can help leaders overcome obstacles and focus on what truly matters, enhancing leadership effectiveness. Kiên et.al (2024) discusses how the stoicism school of philosophy deals with mental health and provide valuable recommendations to enhance student's mental health on the grounds of stoicism. Brown et al (2023) narrates the association of stoicism and emotional intelligence of the students who have registered in a leadership course. While, Muhammadi et al

(2023) focuses on the connection between Stoicism and Resilience among Indian grown-ups. Banik (2023) explores the ways how Stoicism principles can be applied to life and difficulties of living. Harsh (2023) tries to find out the stoic tenets and how they relate to the judicial system. Waston, Chrystie (2020) discuss the implications of Stoic philosophy into workplace environment and its effect on wisdom, emotions and the common good of work-life.

History of Stoicism:

Around 300 BCE Zeno of Cyprus, an affluent trader, encounter a radical shift in fortune when his ship was crashed near Athens. With the tremendous loss and searching for the path, Cyprus roamed into a bookshop, where he perused with the writings of Socrates. And thus he started his engagement with philosophy which eventually turns out to the development of theories of separate era of philosophy known as-Stoicism. Virtue, tolerance, and self-control, being the constituents of the school has got the ability to impact the lives of people across the world. Thus, with the gospels of living in the present moment, cultivating inner peace, and evaluating values and actions, the Stoic leaders places a great emphasis on one's primary virtues. This ancient school of thought has given rise to the principles of natural law, which is a set of ethical and moral codes that hold that all humans are equally part of a greater whole. This shared understanding of humanity serves as the universal basis to practice justice, ensure fairness, and promote compassion, empathy and respect for all living things (Ravishankar).

Research Methodology:

By incorporating multiple case studies of international icons such as Warren Buffet, Satya Nadella, Angela Merkel, and Jeff Bezos, in regard to the adoption of Stoic leadership, a descriptive research design has been used. Secondary data has been collected from research papers, statistical databases, and publications. The study concentrates on distinguishing the key Stoic attributes that helps to foster leadership style in challenging era of modern organization. By synthesizing these cases, the study focuses on the different traits of Stoicism and its applicability into different settings of work environment.

The leaders selected for this study—Warren Buffett, Satya Nadella, Angela Merkel, and Jeff Bezos—were chosen due to their global influence, long-term leadership impact, and publicly documented decision-making styles that closely align with core Stoic principles such as rationality, self-discipline, ethical judgment, and resilience. Each leader represents a distinct domain—finance, technology, governance, and entrepreneurship—allowing the study to examine the applicability of Stoic leadership across diverse organizational and cultural contexts. Their sustained success in navigating uncertainty, crisis and transformation makes them particularly suitable for illustrating the practical relevance of Stoicism in modern leadership.

Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges certain limitations inherent in the case study approach. The reliance on secondary data and well-known public figures may introduces election bias, as leadership narratives are often shaped by media portrayal and retrospective interpretation. Additionally, the qualitative

nature of the analysis limits the generalizability of findings across all organizational settings. The study focuses primarily on successful leadership outcomes, which may overlook instances where Stoic principles were insufficient or challenged. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating empirical data, comparative studies with lesser-known leaders, or mixed-method approaches to further validate the effectiveness of Stoic leadership across varied contexts.

Discussion:

As the study attempts to identify the influence of Stoicism into modern work culture the literature review highlights the Stoic principles such as emotional stability, ethical guidance and ability to channelize uncertainty. The research methodology based on secondary data attempts to analyze Warren Buffet, Satya Nadella, Angela Merkel and Jeff Bezos's leadership styles as carrying forward the ancient philosophy of stoic principles.

The following case studies illustrate how these iconic idols embrace the Stoic essence in their leadership:

Case study 1: With long term visionary and rationality Warren Buffet known as 'Oracle of Omaha' the most leading business leaders epitomize the principles of Stoicism leadership styles. He amplifies self-discipline, wisdom and ethical integrity into the ingredients of his leadership style which resonates the stoic values. Buffet was born in the year of 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska, having business acumen from his childhood. He has done his graduation from Benjamin Graham at Columbia. Warren centralized his principles on value principles by buying under valued stocks, long term holdings, and strong management teams. Under his leadership, Berkshire Hath away evolved from a struggling textile firm into a global conglomerate, out performing the S&P 500 with investments in companies like Coca-Cola, American Express, Apple, and Geico. His leadership is marked by decentralization, frugality, and humility, fostering trust among stakeholders. Warren inclination towards philanthropy lead to 99% of his fortune through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and co-founded the Giving Pledge to encourage charitable giving. Frugality, Humility, fostering trust among stakeholders were guided on his path to leadership. Buffet's legacy resembles the emphasize on patience, continuous learning, integrity with ethical shape in leadership.

Case study 2: Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft demonstrates the Stoic leaders concentrating on self-awareness, ethical leadership, resilience and balanced decision making. Nadella has transmuted the stiff and competing traditions of Microsoft into one centered collaboration, empathy and innovation. During the period of pandemic of COVID -19, Nadella gave thought to the ideals of wisdom and resilience by adopting growth mindset, ethical decision making and adaptability. He adopted the learning-oriented approach, with the innovations in AI and cloud computing. Nadella ploughed the domain where workers can take the threat of uncertainty without the fear of failure. This uplift not only the self-esteem but also contributed corporate responsibility through ethical leadership and commitment to justice and the greater good. Under his guidance Microsoft wing its financial way and extension to sustainability. Thus, with stoic leadership commitment, Nadella has raised the bar for ethical and effective corporate governance, which lift modern business practices.

Case study 3: Angela Merkel, a retired German legislator depicted the stoic tenets of rationality, resilience and

emotional restraints. Angela Merkel renowned for her pragmatic nature and commitment to duty positioned her as one of the effective leaders of the modern era. With the slogan of “Wir Schaffen das” (We can do this), she has upheld refugee crisis of 2015 despite of the brutal opposition. Merkel maintained composed and focused manner to control the adversity of political customs, reflecting the Stoic principles. Likewise, during Eurozone crisis, Merkel display resilience and discipline by accelerating financial responsibility. She has also adopted the calculated decision-making approach based on facts rather than on dramatic rhetoric approach. In her tenure as Chancellor, she has navigated her leadership technique with rationality, preserverance and ethical surrounding. Merkel’s steady, reasoned leadership proved invaluable in navigating global challenges, from economic downturns to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Case study 4: Jeff Bezos, Executive Chairman of Amazon, personify transformational leadership through his imaginative, innovative and customer orientation application. It can be appreciated how Jeff Bezos has remolded Amazon from online book store into world’s largest e-commerce site through his quest for experimentation. He spins his leadership into folds of determination, simplification, motivation, facilitation, preparation, innovation and mobilization. His strategic decisions, such as the creation of small, autonomous teams within Amazon, foster agility and efficiency while maintaining a competitive environment that drives employees to achieve excellence. His disposition towards expansion, foresightedness of market directions plays a very crucial role in Amazon’s predominance. Bezos believe on the concept of employee empowerment focusing on ‘infinite learning’ of both employees and of his own. He concentrates the power of success from challenging the traditional norms, inspiring others and thriving for constant reinvention. Thus, even after listed in the “richest man in modern history” Jeff Bezos continues to prioritize discipline, resilience, adaptability and continuous learning. He refuses the planning of ‘B’ as it defocuses plan “A”, reflecting the traits of clarity and stability.

Findings of the study:

The findings of this study reveal that Stoic leadership principles—self-discipline, resilience, ethical decision-making, and rationality—are vital in navigating modern challenges. The case studies of Warren Buffett, Satya Nadella, Angela Merkel, and Jeff Bezos illustrate how these principles shape leadership effectiveness and long-term success. Buffett’s leadership reflects patience, integrity, and a focus on long-term value, emphasizing financial prudence and ethical decision-making. His commitment to self-restraint and rational analysis aligns with Stoic ideals, fostering sustainable business practices. Similarly, Nadella transformed Microsoft’s rigid culture by embracing empathy, continuous learning, and adaptability, demonstrating that a Stoic approach to leadership prioritizes emotional intelligence and ethical responsibility. His ability to navigate uncertainty with a growth mindset highlights the Stoic emphasis on resilience and self-awareness. Merkel’s leadership during crises, including the Euro zone and refugee crises, embodies Stoic rationality, perseverance, and composure under pressure. Her pragmatic decision-making, rooted in facts rather than rhetoric, showcases a commitment to justice and responsibility. Meanwhile, Bezos’s relentless pursuit of innovation and long-term vision reflects

Stoic adaptability and self-mastery, as he continuously challenges traditional norms and focuses on disciplined execution. Across all case studies, these leaders exhibit a deep understanding of what is within their control, maintaining emotional restraint and prioritizing logical reasoning over impulsive reactions. Their leadership styles not only ensure stability and trust within their organizations but also highlight how Stoic values—wisdom, justice, courage, and self-discipline—are fundamental to ethical and effective leadership. Ultimately, the study confirms that Stoic leadership fosters resilience, strategic clarity, and ethical governance, making it a valuable framework for managing uncertainty in today’s complex business environment. By integrating Stoic principles, leaders can cultivate sustainable success, inspire trust, and navigate challenges with wisdom and integrity, reinforcing the timeless relevance of Stoicism in leadership.

To further strengthen the analysis, the study draws attention to specific instances from the leaders’ experiences that reflect the application of Stoic principles in practice. Warren Buffett’s disciplined investment strategy during market downturns, particularly his decision to remain rational and avoid panic selling during the 2008 financial crisis, exemplifies the Stoic dichotomy of control and emotional restraint. Satya Nadella’s response to internal cultural rigidity at Microsoft—most notably his emphasis on a growth mindset and empathetic leadership—demonstrates Stoic self-awareness and ethical responsibility in transforming organizational behavior. Angela Merkel’s composed leadership during the 2015 refugee crisis and the Eurozone financial crisis reflects Stoic rationality and courage, as she prioritized evidence-based decision-making over political rhetoric despite intense public scrutiny. Similarly, Jeff Bezos’s long-term orientation and willingness to tolerate short-term criticism while investing heavily in innovation and customer-centric strategies illustrate Stoic resilience, patience, and commitment to purposeful action. These concrete examples reinforce the argument that Stoic philosophy is not merely theoretical but actively shapes leadership conduct, decision-making, and organizational outcomes in real-world contexts.

The insights presented in this study offer practical implications for scholars, practitioners, and readers interested in leadership development and Stoicism. For leaders and managers, the findings highlight that effective leadership does not solely depend on authority or technical expertise but on cultivating inner discipline, ethical clarity, and emotional resilience. Stoic practices such as focusing on controllable factors, responding thoughtfully rather than reactively, and grounding decisions in virtue can enhance leadership effectiveness across organizational levels. For scholars and students of Stoicism, the study demonstrates how ancient philosophical principles remain relevant when translated into everyday leadership behaviors, bridging theory and practice. Overall, the article encourages readers to view Stoicism not as emotional detachment, but as a pragmatic framework for conscious leadership, capable of fostering sustainable performance, trust, and well-being in contemporary work environments.

Conclusion:

The recognition and acceptance of a leader in any set up depends upon their inherent qualities and actions that foster growth and progression. With clear vision, integrity, social skill and decisiveness a leader can overcome the rigorous situations of the work environment. With the advent of AI tools and era of cloud computing, complying with the ancient philosophy of Stoicism into the work culture is a challenging task. However, fostering the principles of wisdom, courage, justice, temperance, ethical decision making of Stoicism serves an everlasting guide in maintaining inner stability. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership effectiveness by demonstrating how Stoic philosophy serves as a practical, ethical, and resilient framework for contemporary leadership. Through an integrative case study approach, the article illustrates those Stoic principles—particularly self-discipline, rational decision-making, emotional regulation, and commitment to virtue—are not merely abstract ideals but actionable leadership tools in complex organizational environments. The leadership practices of Warren Buffett, Satya Nadella, Angela Merkel, and Jeff Bezos reveal how the Stoic dichotomy of control, moral clarity, and resilience enhance strategic judgment, crisis management, and long-term organizational sustainability. The findings reaffirm that Stoicism's practical applications enable leaders to maintain composure amid uncertainty, foster trust through ethical conduct, and cultivate emotionally intelligent workplaces. In an era marked by rapid technological change, global disruptions, and heightened performance pressures, Stoic leadership emerges as a timeless yet adaptable approach that balances effectiveness with humanity. By embedding Stoic values into leadership practice, organizations can promote stability, integrity, and sustainable growth, thereby reinforcing the enduring relevance of Stoicism as a guide for effective leadership in the modern work environment.

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Gītā's Ethics and Its Applicability

Jutika Devi

Abstract

The purpose of Indian Ethics is the spiritual growth of all men. During the present time, the scientific and technological development has reached the top, but the moral and spiritual values are gradually declining day by day. Though people have enriched themselves with regard to economic state, intelligence and technological advancement, still all are morally lagging behind, and spiritually up to mark. At this crucial time of development, it is expected that, it is Gītā's philosophy which is out and out ethical, can really serve the purpose of moral upgradation. Indian Ethics is thus holistic in its approach. As an aspect of Indian Ethics, the Gītā's ethics teaches the way of harmonization among an individual's desires, emotions with his actions which ultimately lead to a harmonious life on the earth alongside self-realization and freedom. The Gītā's ethics is discussed mainly in the concepts like, Svabhāva, Svadharma and Nishkamakarma. This paper shall be discussing all the ethical concepts of Gītā and the interlinkedness among them. However, the concept of nishkamakarma constitutes the central point of the Gītā's ethics and this paper will be concentrating on the theoretical as well as the practical applicability of it.

Keywords: nishkamakarma, svabhāva, svadharma

Introduction:

The *Gītā* is considered as a devotional book of the Hindus, which actually constitutes a part of the Bhishma Parva of the Hindu epic *Mahābhārata*. Though it belongs to the great epic, yet it can be and is in fact treated as an independent work. The *Gītā* is famous as an ethical treatise having pragmatic value. The situation in which the *Gītā* is said to be delivered points out that its vital purpose is to solve the existential problems of life and to resolve the right way of conduct in the moment of crises. No one can thus deny the importance of its workable ethico-religious principles and their significance in motivating its readers to accommodate an ethically sophisticated and a religiously vigorous way of life. The *Gītā* is known as a yogaśāstra. The setting of the *Gītā* in a battlefield has been interpreted as an allegory for the ethical and moral struggles of the human life (Radhakrishnan, 1993).

The *Gītā* starts with Arjuna's despondency regarding to fight or not to fight against his loved ones. This is the moral confusion which was not only faced by Arjuna himself, yet faced by every individual in any step of his life. So Kṛṣṇa's message to Arjuna can be considered as the message to all. Arjuna's dilemma was not regarding the war, but about fighting against his closed ones. Being a prince, he was never against the war, but when the attachment came as a barrier, he was confused. To remove his confusion, Kṛṣṇa was suggesting him to act instead of renunciation of act. "Neither by abstention from work a man attains freedom from action; nor by mere renunciation does he attain his perfection" (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.4, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). The *Gītā* says that only duty can give solution to any confusion. "For no one can survive even for a moment without doing work; everyone is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature" (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.5, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). Now what to act or what to decide and which action one should follow? The *Gītā* says that one has no option but to act, according to his nature. Performance with accordance to his nature means the performance of *svadharma*. The *Gītā* founds to be talking about two kinds of *dharma*s i.e. *Varnadharma* and *Svadharma*. *Varnadharma* can be understood as the dharma which is given to someone according to his aptitude and ability and *Svadharma* is explained as the dharma prescribed by one's *svabhāva*. The *Gītā* believes that both *varnadharma* and *svadharma* helps one to decide his action in his life (Date, 1971).

Svadharma can be understood in the *Gītā* as the dharma which is prescribed by one's *svabhāva*. *Svabhāva* here means the nature which is ordered by the proportion of the *gunas* in the make-up of equipment. This *svabhāva* determines what kind of action one should perform. Arjuna by nature was a fighter, so his *svabhāva* determines his action as to fight only. As he was not listening to his *svabhāva*, he was confused about his right action and failed to perform *svadharma*. "Further having regard for thine own duty, thou shouldst not falter, for there exists no greater good for a *Kshatriya* than a war commanded by duty" (Bhagavad Gītā, 2.31, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). The *Gītā* mention that one may not be aware of his *svabhāva* and accordingly what action he has to follow. But it is known to everyone in what *varna* he is belonging. In that situation, the *varnadharma* helps one to know his *svabhāva* and helps him to decide what action he should perform. Being a *kshatriya*, the *Svabhāva* of Arjuna was to fight. So, in this manner, Arjuna's *varnadharma* helps him to become aware of his *svabhāva* and also helps him to perform his *svadharma*. The *varnadharma* helps one to decide his *svadharma* and by performing *varnadharma*, one is actually performing his *svadharma* (Date, 1971).

The *Gītā* was very much particular regarding to perform one's *svadharma* than to perform *paradharma*. *Paradharma* here means to perform the duty of the other *varna*. In the *Gītā*, every *varna* is made up of with some particular duties and everyone is expected to perform his duty according to his *varna*. The *Gītā* believed that a man is born to a particular *varna* as the duties of that *varna* suits him "Better is one's own duty though imperfectly carried out than the duty of another carried out perfectly. One does not incur sin when one does the

duty ordained by one's own nature (*svabhāva*)” (Bhagavad Gītā, 18.47, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). The *Gītā* believes that if one performs his *svadharma*, then it will be better for him. The *Gītā* asks everyone to perform his *svadharma* though sometimes it may find to be not good and satisfactory. Moreover, it is believed that, the performance of one's own *dharma* can rescue him from all kinds of sins (Radhakrishnan, 1993). It means one's *svadharma* though not satisfactory sometimes, yet should not be the excuse of non-performance of it.

The *Gītā* understands the *svadharma* as the way for the realization of Supreme Self and *Lokasangraha*. In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to contest against his closed ones as it is his *Kshatriya* dharma to indulge in war. Again, for the preservation of societal norm, one is expected to perform his allotted duties (Date, 1971). Otherwise, smooth running of the society is tough to be maintained. The society is made up of different types of individual beings having different abilities and capacities. As the existence of human body depends in the co-ordination of its different body organs, so also the social progress on the harmony works of its classes of people. The entire individual as well as social system will be disturbed if any of these classes fail to co-operate.

So, the *Gītā* suggests that, one should perform his duty or action according to his *svadharma* which is preceded by *svabhāva*. However, the problem with action is that an action by dint of being action is assumed to bind man. For every action, there has to be earning of the consequences of action and thus, one will have to continue on this earth. At the same time, the *Gītā* says that one cannot stay without action: “For no one can remain even for a moment without doing work; everyone is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature” (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.5, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). Again, “Do thou thy allotted work, for action is better than inaction; even the maintenance of thy physical life cannot be affected without action” (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.8, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). As actions cannot be avoided, the *Gītā* concentrates on the way of performance of action. On the one hand, the *Gītā* asks for resignation of desire for fruit of action and on the other, resignation of action to God.

Regarding the type of action that is to be performed, the *Gītā* prescribes the assigned duties: “Therefore, without attachments, perform always the work that has to be done, for man attains to the highest by doing work without attachment” (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.19, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). However, the additional reason adduced for performance of action by Kṛṣṇa brings forth another important feature. The *Gītā* gives more importance to activities than mere inaction (Date, 1971). “For, if ever I did not engage in work unwearied, O Pārtha (Arjuna), men in every way follow my path. If should cease to work, these worlds would fall in ruin and I should be the creator of disordered life and destroy these people” (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.23–24, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). The verse stresses once more on the activity performed with right mental attitude which finally leads one to God. The *Gītā* affirms that even God performs as without it the world will cease to be. In the language of V.H. Date, “the masses always initiate their superior in their behaviour, in their moral values, in

their actions, in all the branches of their activities. It is the general tendency to measure of perfection always by watching the standard of life of their ideal. So, it is found in the *Gītā* that it is the belief of Kṛṣṇa that if He did not continue to work without any intention, men would also follow His path and indulge themselves into inactivity and so into an unproductive existence” (Date, 1971).

If disinterestedness, relinquishing desire for fruit of an action is the means to be rescued from suffering, then discipline is the way to attain relinquishment: “What they call renunciation, that know to be disciplined activity, O Pāṇḍava (Arjuna), for no one becomes a yogin who has not renounced his (selfish) purpose”. Relinquishment, in the *Gītā* means to give away the desire for fruits of one’s action. One is attached to the results because of his senses. Therefore, he is suggested in the *Gītā* to cease all material sense gratification or renounce all kinds of sense gratificatory activities. This kind of attitude to perform action can be developed only through the disciplinary manner. The *Gītā* declares that the self-control and detachment are indeed pre requisite for relinquishment in all respects. Detachment is impossible unless and until the individual has trained himself to renounce all personal desires and this training is understood in the *Gītā* as disciplinary activities... (Bhagavad Gītā, 6.2, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993).

This detachment to the consequence of action develops through the resignation of actions to God. In this regard, we find the *Gītā* saying: “Resigning all thy works to Me, with thy consciousness fixed in the Self, being free from desire and egotism, fight, delivered from ever” (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.30, as cited in Radhakrishnan, 1993). Radhakrishnan understands this resignation as surrender of the action to the Supreme (Radhakrishnan, 1993). According to him, the *Gītā* is expecting one to work by self-surrendering to the Supreme who presides over cosmic existence and activity. Resignation of action is taken as a commitment of selfless service to the Supreme. In resigning the action, one is performing the action in the remembrance of the Supreme. Vivekananda combines disinterestedness in individual enjoyment of fruit of action with performance of action for greater good which for him is nothing else but service to God only (Madhurananda, 2009): “There are some people who work for work’s sake, they work by thinking of good will coming out of it. He believes that unselfishness is not merely moral figures of speech. It forms our highest ideal, because in it lies such a manifestation of Divine power. So, one has to accept the presence of the Ultimate Reality and has to surrender every action to Him.” To Vivekananda, then, non-attachment is neither disinterestedness nor purposelessness. It denotes only the absence of self and motive in actions. It does not imply physical renunciation; it calls for constant engagement with the world. In the pursuit of *nishkama karma*, emotions and passions are not undermined or given up but energised and activated. Vivekananda wishes for a joyous and full life. There is an active civil society implicit in the optimistic vision that Vivekananda outlines. It can be interpreted that, disinterested action is another name of surrendering action to the Supreme. In actuality, all our actions are determined by the Ultimate Reality, but it is our assumed affinity to the body and mind that makes us believe that “I am the doer”. One can resign his action only by realizing the fact that, he is not the real doer of his action. So, the *Gītā* understands resigning or

surrendering to be giving up the assumed identity with the body and forming the real identity with the Supreme Self (Radhakrishnan, 1993). Resignation in the *Gītā* does not imply the abandonment of action, rather it means the surrender of action having been realized that he is not the actual doer of that action. In other words, one has to depart from his ego to be united with the Supreme. Such resignation is asked by the *Gītā* as it considers God Himself as the originator of action.

It is pertinent to mention here that *Gītā*'s ethical teaching has never been lost its value and relevance at any time. Its central principle of *nishkamakarma* illustrates an ethical orientation grounded in duty, sincerity, and inner detachment. This ideal is reflected in modern contexts such as the dedication of healthcare professionals and social workers who serve society despite of personal risks and limited recognition, particularly evident during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the *Gītā*'s concept of *Lokasaṅgraha* finds relevance in ethical leadership and social responsibility today such as leaders who prioritize public welfare, sustainable development, and social justice, embody this principle by acting not merely for personal or institutional gain but for the collective good. Moreover, in professional spheres also such as education, governance, finance, the spirit of karmayoga can be seen in those who perform their duties with integrity, discipline, and a commitment to social harmony. These examples show that the ethical teaching articulated by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the *Gītā* through the ethical concepts like *nishkamakarma*, *lokasaṅgraha* transcends its historical context and continues to offer a moral framework for moral as well as responsible action and the promotion of both individual and collective well-being in the modern world.

However, some limitations being found in practice of these ethical principles of *Gītā*. Questions may arise regarding the possibility of *nishkamakarma* as the idea seems almost paradoxical. Human life revolves around outcomes such as rewards, praise, success, security, and emotional satisfaction. If results shape motivation, can a person truly work without attachment to the fruits of work? According to *Gita*, *nishkamakarma* is not the absence of goals, rather it is freedom from slavery to results. Complete *nishkamakarma* is rare, but not impossible. However, it becomes more possible through self-awareness, detaching ego from outcome, focusing on effort rather than reward.

Human suffering often comes from the anxiety of success, failure, rewards, and recognition. The *Gītā* finds out its causes is nothing but the desire attached to the fruits of action. So, *Gītā* is found to be suggesting to focus on the quality of action or effort instead of the outcome so that one becomes calm, efficient, and free from stress. *Gītā* believes that outcomes are influenced by many factors beyond human control, but effort and intention lie within one's hands. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's advises Arjuna to dedicate himself fully to righteous action, while leaving the results in the hands of the divine or the natural order. This mindset allows a person to work with complete dedication, without being mentally burdened by the fear of failure or the intoxication of success. Though the *Gītā* unfolds on a battlefield, its message reaches far beyond the realm of war. It speaks to the inner struggle every human faces such as the clash between doubt and duty, emotion and reason, weakness and

strength that defines the journey of life. Thus, *Gītā*'s ethical teachings being extended carrying a unique contribution to global ethical discussions. This philosophy is timeless and universally relevant.

Surendranath Dasgupta says that, "The *Gītā* is neither the practical guidebook of moral efforts nor a philosophical treatise discussing the origin of immortal tendencies and tracing them to certain metaphysical principles as their source; but starting from the ordinary frailties of attachments and desires, it shows how one can lead a normal life of duties and responsibilities and yet be in peace and contentment in a state of equanimity and in communion with God" (Dasgupta, 1975).

Conclusion:

This paper seeks to elucidate the ethical vision of the *Gītā* and its contemporary relevance by emphasizing the individual's cultivation of detachment in the performance of action. The *Gītā* provides deep yet approachable framework for balancing individual purpose with universal welfare. It presents an ethical paradigm consisted of the interrelated principles of *svabhāva*, *svadharma*, and *niṣkāmakarma* which redefines ethics as an inwardly grounded practice, where right action is being led by self-understanding and is sustained by detachment from outcomes. Such a perspective transforms action into a means of both inner purification and social responsibility. By practising equanimity and selfless engagement, the individual not only advances towards spiritual fulfillment but also contributes to the preservation of collective harmony, i.e., *Lokasaṅgraha*. Thus, the *Gītā* ultimately affirms that, the path to peaceful and harmonious society lies in the disciplined alignment of inner consciousness with outward action.

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The Need of Implementing Environmental Ethics in the Present Society

Madhumita Das

Abstract

Environmental ethics is one of the most important modern environmental conservation and sustainable development tools that involves in the early history of human civilizations. Environmental ethics is a global issue due to its involvement in the developmental discussion. The people of underdeveloped and developed countries are not aware of its importance. To lead a sustainable development, it is important to carry out the duties and responsibilities of environmental ethics. Environmental ethics is being described as a moral standard that reflects a person's commitment and responsibility to the surrounding environment. In essence, it refers to human societies living in harmony with the natural world on which they depend for survival and well-being. It teaches us to be healthy and friendly to the global environment and development. This study emphasizes mainly on the need of implementing environmental ethics in the present society and its protection against damage.

Keywords: environmental ethics, sustainable development, ecological consciousness, environmental awareness, human–nature relationship

Introduction:

The word “environment” is described as extremely broad. The word “environ” originates from the French word “encircle,” which implies to create surroundings. Determining the surroundings is a difficult task. “Environment” is defined as the state of being surrounded, the situation under which anything develops; the result of all the factors that affect and shape a person's life or character. As the word environment is related to surroundings, it is clear that this idea has a relation to the object it refers to. People for their livelihood live and engage in economic activity but at the cost of environmental degradation which plays an important role in human existence. The term environment is a productive system, offering the fundamental supports needed to develop for all forms of life. When it comes to the European Union, Einstein once described the environment as “everything that is not us.” In actuality, nature and culture are constantly included when discussing the environment. While nature can be viewed as peaceful and beautiful, man, who had to battle it to survive, finds it frightening.

The deep study of the environment with all its components is none other the relationship that we all humans share with the surrounding nature. In this paper, I would say that by studying Environmental Ethics we deeply establish a link, a relationship with the nature and our care for the environment becomes quite stronger. Thus, we should try to do something good for the environment and stop the exploitation of the environment.

The environmental crises depends on how we think and act. The injury of the ecological crisis is so clear that it is a must to preserve and safe the surrounding environment. To adjust the relationship between humans and nature is one of the most important issues we all should face and deal today. The degradation of ecological systems has led human beings to realize that to solve the problems of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances, we cannot only just rely on economic and judicial methods. After adopting an appropriate view towards nature and by establishing a new ethical relationship between human beings and nature one will be able to love and respect nature automatically, and deal with the problems of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances. From this standpoint, environmental ethics and its approaches play a vital role to run our life smoothly and can make a balance between man and other beings in the surrounding environment. Both sustainability and environmental issues play a significant role in human life, by understanding the significance of environmental ethics both humans and the environment are benefited. At its point, environmental ethics can be described as the philosophical study which examines the ethical relationship of humans and the surrounding environment. The philosophy also examines the moral relationship humans have with Earth, animals, and plants. To what extent, does humans have an ethical responsibility to take care of the environment? Such questions are raised by the environmentalists and other experts.

In the year 1970's, the study of environmental ethics has become an official discipline. During this period, environmentalists sought to understand how technology, commercial industries, and the growing global population had — and would continue to have — an impact on the environment we live (Rolston, 2003; Attfield, 1983). Individuals have continued to work toward understanding how these human-related factors will have a long-term impact on the environment, non-renewable resources, climate change, rising sea levels, loss of biodiversity, and other issues.

The study of environmental ethics analyses the moral obligations humans have to Earth; human values also play a significant role. If one does not give any value on the environment, they will not likely get involved with movements such as conservation and preservation of the earth (Arumugam, 2008). Environmental ethics can be implemented and understood only when an effort is made by the people to understand and care the matters of water and air pollution or the destruction of ecosystem.

Meaning of Environmental Ethics:

From the Greek adjective '*ethica*' the word "Ethics" is derived which comes from the substantive '*ethos*', meaning customs. The other meaning of ethics is 'Set of moral principle', and it teaches us that, what is right and what is wrong. All of us know that ethics is beliefs, attitudes or norms that form the basis of customs.

Not only in India but all over the world, there is a growing concern for ethical norms in all spheres of human activities. Environmental ethics are also referred to as our responsibilities towards environment and living beings. A new sub-discipline of Practical Philosophy is environmental ethics dealing with the ethical problems that surrounds environmental protection (Rolston, 2003). It is the scientific looking of various issues related to the rights of individuals on the environment. It is the study of moral relationship that human beings hold with the environment. It is basically dealt with do's and don'ts of human beings towards the environment. One should hold ethical standards in environment which are necessarily a long-term conservation and maintenance of nature and its resources. A mango tree bears mango fruit to propagate its kind. Man plucks the fruit and eats it. But we should do justice to the tree. After eating the flesh of the fruit, don't throw away the seed. Sow it in a safe place and nurse it to grow into tree. This is environmental ethics. It aims at providing ethical justification and moral motivation for the causes of global environmental protection. Practically it is found that environmental ethics rejects the materialistic, hedonistic and consumerist attitude of modern capitalism, and orders for a 'green lifestyle' that is balanced with nature (Attfield, 2015). With the help of a reciprocal and holistic attitude, environmental ethics emphasizes upon the development of a sustainable ecology and society where all aspects and parts of nature are preserved, protected and do coexist in a balanced state.

Importance of Environmental Ethics:

A healthy environment ensures quality in the lives of humans which underscores the need for preserving the environment at all costs. Even when human benefits are not taken into account, one should draw attention in environmental quality, protection and its preservation. Importance of environmental needs are felt as they shape the quality of human life. The different environmental problems like depletion of resources, changing weather patterns and deforestation has a great impact on future generations compared to the present. Therefore, humans have an ethical obligation to prevent such from occurring. Many of the environmental problems can be solved by environmental ethics and which saves the world. Environmental ethics makes us aware of the indiscriminate human activities. The human beings inculcate moral values towards the nature and through environmental ethics, one learns to respect the various forms of life (Rolston, 2003). Environmental ethics deals with the issue of responsible personal conduct with respect to natural landscape, resources, species, and non-human organism. It is found that with respect to persons, there is a direct concern of moral philosophy as such. It simply tries to answer the questions of how humans should relate to their environment, how we should use the Earth's resources and how we should treat other species (Attfield, 1983). The need and importance of environmental ethics in the present-day society is indispensable. In so far as we are living in a balanced state with the nature, so apart from viable environment we cannot aspect a human life to exist in this eco- centric universe. Thus, from the point of view of environmental ethics, ecological consciousness leads to the welfare of all being in our environment and nature.

Approaches of Environmental Ethics:

In the broader context it is found that the approaches of environmental ethics, takes into consideration of relationships between human beings and nature as a whole. Governments, states and international organizations have started to propose solutions to environmental problems as they become perceived and evoke awareness from the 1970's onwards. The implementation of protective environmental policies has been begun to be implemented. These developments which inform the cognition of environmental problematic have been differentiated among themselves. The magnitude and urgency of contemporary environmental problems; collectively known as the environmental crisis form the mandate for environmental ethics, a re-examination of the human attitudes and values towards nature. In this respect, three approaches can be taken to environmental ethics i.e. Anthropocentrism, Bio-centrism and Eco-centrism.

An 'Anthropocentrism' is the belief that humans are the most important entity on the planet and other beings are only valuable to the extent that they serve humans. Anthropocentrism regards human as separate from and superior to nature and holds that human life has intrinsic value of nature.

'Bio-centrism' is the ethical perspective that all living things deserve equal moral consideration. There is a duty towards all forms of life. As Albert Schweitzer (1923) wrote that 'The essence of goodness is to maintain and cherish life, and the essence of evil is to destroy and damage life. All living being have the will to live, and all living beings with the will to live are sacred, interrelated and equal value. It is, thus, an ethical perspective for us to respect, protect and help all life forms.'

An 'Eco-centrism' is that moral or ethical philosophy that values the eco system as a whole over humanity or individual living things. This eco-centric theory extends our moral concern to items that are non-human indeed to things that are not even animals, such as plants, forests etc. Eco-centric ethical approach comprises various movements such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, social ecology, eco-fascism. Aldo Leopold from the U.S., Hans Jonas from Germany and deep ecology approach has been effective in the emergence of eco-centric ethical approach. Deep ecology states that the natural world is a subtle balance of complex interrelationships in which the existence of organism is dependent on the existence of others within ecosystems. A growing spirit is found in ecological consciousness that speak of tolerance, interdependence etc. It also shows path to a sustainable future.

Objective:

The present study encompasses the following objectives:

1. To study the necessity of maintaining the ethical relationship between humans and the nature;
2. To find out the prevailed condition of morality and motivation for the cause of global environmental protection and ethical justification;
3. To suggest measures to prevent the massive violation of environmental ethics.

Methodology:

Descriptive research method is followed in this study. The study is based on secondary data collected from newspapers, souvenirs, journals, ancient records, and numerous publications.

Discussion:

For the sake of human welfare on Earth, the focus of this study emphasizes philosophical questions regarding various facets of environmental development and conservation. Here are a few pertinent topics that could be covered:

Man-nature Relation:

Man-nature relation forms the basis for any philosophy of life. Both from historical and evolutionary stand point, there exist three different patterns of human attitudes in relation to man and nature. 1. “Among the prehistoric and primitive tribes an attitude of Man under nature was prevalent. The primitive man regarded himself to be a part of nature, dependent on nature for his survival, lived like a slave of nature, subservient to the domineering forces of nature, survived at the mercy of hidden and immutable laws of nature, accompanied by a general inability to transform nature with the simple and rudimentary tools and technology available to him. 2. From its previous stage an attitude of Man over nature evolved gradually. Although with a rapid growth in man’s knowledge of science and technology, he conceived nature as something to be conquered and exploited for its benefit. He forced nature to work for himself and exploited it to an unprecedented extent to fulfil his ever-expanding desires and needs. As a result of man’s mastery over nature, he no longer regards himself as a slave of nature, rather a master of nature. 3. An attitude of Man with nature has evolved as a reaction to the result of the exploitation of nature in its previous stage whereby, man found himself to be an integral part of nature, that is, a member of both the animate and inanimate things of the ecological system including water, air and earth. On this planet, human beings becomes aware of the fact that they are not living alone but with a host of animals, plants and inanimate objects on earth. Thus, any irresponsible damage done to the biotic community led to disastrous consequences on the survival of human existence” (Satyanarayana, 2010).

Impact of technology on the environment:

In the history of humanity, technology played an important and active role in the development of man’s domination over nature. Science and technology in the west have grown out of the Christian attitude toward man’s relation to nature. Modern technology is an important source of environmental problems. It equipped man with an enormous power to control and exploit nature ruthlessly to satisfy his greed. Environmental deterioration due to the effects of technology can be found mainly in the form of – pollution, depletion of natural resources and over population. Industrial and mechanical waste emissions are the most obvious sources of environmental contamination. Man, assaults nature and pollutes the environment through the use of pesticides and internal combustion engines. Technology contributed much to an increased consumption of resources like food materials, minerals and fossil fuels, which are rapidly being depleted. Finally, technology has contributed

to the recent population explosion through increased food production and longevity of human life and a reduced infant mortality rate. The unlimited population growth may lead to increased resource depletion and pollution (Baruah, 2008).

Environmental ethics and Climate change:

The world community has produced some significant tools to protect the environment, and the topic of the global environment has been explored. Because of its direct effects on the environment and development, climate change is actually one of the major worldwide problems.

Environmental Ethics and Good Governance:

One of the main institutions of a democratic society that addresses environmental issues and sustainable development is good governance. Participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and compliant with the law nature are only a few of its components. It might be referred to as green governance. The way in which these components are applied in society determines how a government develops. For present and for the future, there is a demand of the society. For the benefit of society, there is direct relationship between environmental ethics and effective governance.

Concept of Environmental Awareness:

As you know Environment is all that surrounds any organism from physical and non-material components that affect organism. When God created the environment, all its abiotic and biotic components were made balanced. But the anthropogenic activities are certainly responsible for imbalance of these factors. Environmental awareness is about the awareness regarding natural environment. Environmental awareness has become an important issue at the national and international levels for protecting Plants and Trees, Water Conservation, Controlling Environmental Pollution, changes mentality of people, protect animals, enhance traditional knowledge, solid waste management and to minimize the impacts of disasters. Environmental awareness has been a requirement of life, and it must be enhanced for all, especially younger generations. Environmental awareness is the understanding of people towards environmental components. Environmental awareness is all about the thinking towards air, water, soil, flora and fauna. The procedure of attaining environmental awareness is not an easy job, but it requires urgency, determination and serenity to achieve the required results. To achieve the environmental awareness, the need is to connect the efforts of individual to Government and vice versa. Environmental awareness is about consciousness about the natural environment. Environmental awareness is about ecologically thinking or ecological consciousness. We should think Globally, and Act Locally.

Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development:

The idea of Environmental ethics is intimately related to 'environmental justice' contextually which partly looks into the equal distribution of resources among people. The approach of Environmental ethics becomes important within the context and implications of sustainable development due to its vision on intergenerational responsibility and justice. Stated by Environmental ethics that a sustainable development is

required which would be the outcome of science and ethics. It can be stated that without ethics, science has no value for us, for our future generation. Science or scientific development should be encoded with sound ethical code of conduct so that sustainable development is maintained without degrading our nature. There is a close connection of sustainable development to the carrying capacity of an ecosystem. Thus, the developments should prevent our life support systems like air, water, land and forests from further damage. It should also conserve and nurture the biological diversity, gene pool and other resources for long term food security. Between sustainable development and ethical approaches to environment, a relationship is basically founded on the concept of sustainability which binds conceptual areas of values, morality and human rights. Clearly, what relates these conceptual areas in sustainability concept is the idea of sustaining natural environment for the next generations and the acceptance of responsibility for the next generations as a moral attempt. In the heart of the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, there is an interrelation between ethical approaches to environment and sustainable development. Although taken into consideration as a technical concept based on carrying capacity, the social dimension of sustainability has been built upon adaptation and balancing of individual expectations and social demands which includes concepts such as human dignity, autonomy and justice. In fact, this statement clearly puts the emphasis on the relationship of social dimension in sustainability with human rights which are at the very core of moral and legal common context of compromise.

From the stand point of environmentalist, sustainable development aims at economic developments without sacrificing the principle of use of environmental values and natural resources and by taking into account of the rights and benefits of current and next generations. In Stockholm Conference, sustainable development has firstly been introduced as a concept in Brundtland Report in 1987. According to the report, sustainable development is compensating today's necessities without sacrificing next generations opportunity to meet their own necessities. With its assumption that nature and environmental resources are limited and thus growth is also limited, sustainable development reflects a protective understanding towards environment. Integrating economic and social development with environmental ethics is important in terms of environmental policies. Thus, by playing an important role, environmental ethics influences the growth of ideas and opinions and also represent something new in global governance for the benefit of humans and the rest of the living world. By taking into account the environmental ethics, it is very easy for all to carry out their duties and responsibilities properly which may lead to sustainable development for a peaceful and happy environment for our future generations on this planet.

Environmental ethics entails towards the environment that humans have a moral responsibility. For life and sustainable development, it seeks an appropriate respect. With the help of a reciprocal and holistic attitude, environmental ethics emphasizes upon the development of a sustainable ecology and society where all comprehensive aspects and parts of nature are preserved, protected and do coexist with harmony. Therefore, the human society should take the moral responsibility of protecting the environment so as to maximize the welfare of both the present and future generations.

Human Rights and the Environmental Ethics:

An intimate relation between Human rights and the environment are intrinsically intertwined: a safe, clean, healthy environment is essential in the enjoyment of human rights; but our human rights are violated by polluted, hazardous and otherwise unhealthy environments. Environmental rights mean any proclamation of a human right to environmental conditions of a specified quality. Human rights are not abstract, remote, irrelevant concepts; they are rather measurable, prominent and functional aspects of society and its ecology. Constitutional rights are incorporated to a healthy environment by more than 100 countries. People and the planet suffer from reduced health and well-being only when the environmental rights are violated. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on 28 July 2022, that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment.

Religious Teachings about the Environment:

World religious and individual spiritual traditions can provide a framework for changing our attitudes. World religions teach us that the land, rivers, mountains, minerals, oceans are held in trust for God, but can be wisely used for the general welfare of humanity. Our religions tell us that we should consider ourselves only as trustees of the universe, and as trustees we are authorized by God to use natural resources, but we have no divine power over nature and the elements. From the perspective of many religions, the abuse and exploitation of nature for immediate gain is unjust and unethical. All religions and cultures have something to offer to conservation and environment protection. To form a code for environmentally sustainable development, several exhortations can be brought forth from each religion. No religion says that we have the right to destroy our habitat, and no religion sanctions environmental destruction. But on the other penalties are mentioned for those who harm the environment. This is amply demonstrated in the codes of all the religions. A brief review of teachings about respect of nature and conservation of natural resources as given by Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. Spiritual motivation is provided by each religion for environmental action in number of its programme. “Go Green” has become ritual across the world.

Conclusion:

In the present-day society, the importance of environmental ethics is indispensable. In today’s culture, the value of environmental ethics cannot be overstated. All the branches of ethics, including environmental ethics aims to value human life appropriately. For preserving the ecosystems, the complete environmental ethic requires the best naturalistic and humanistic justifications. We might be able to solve 90% of our problems or more if the human being takes proper attention about how ethical issues which are applied to all situations, including the environment. In running our lives efficiently and creating a balance between humans and other creatures in our environment, environmental ethics and its methods can be beneficial. To safeguard against cruelty to all creature’s ecological consciousness takes necessary step. In order to live in a happy atmosphere with the nature, a safe and sustainable temperament is involved. Our environment gets polluted due to lack of ecological consciousness. So far, we are living in a balanced state with nature, we cannot think of a human life

in this eco-centric universe apart from viable environment. To live in an environment workable for us, we have to comprehend the distinction between ecological balance and ecological imbalance. Thus, environmental ethics implicates a state of ecological consciousness which leads to the welfare of all in our environment.

As it is said –

“*Sarve Sukhinahsantusarvesantuniramayah*

Sarve bhadranipashyantu ma kasciddukkhabhagabhavet”

May all be happy. May all be free from disease. May all realise what is good. May none be subject to misery.

The philosophical concept of Utilitarianism also maintains that a balance of pleasure and pain should be taken equally into account. In this context, the Utilitarianism of J.S. Mill and Bentham prescribe the happiness for all, they stated that “Greatest happiness of the greatest number”. Along with the other forms of life human beings are a part of the food chain which is closely associated with each other together form our environment.

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Radha–Krishna Cult in Meitei Religion

Premabati Sharma

Abstract

Syncretism is the blending of different cultural or religious beliefs, practices or tradition into a new form. People use syncretism to navigate and adapt to new situations, but because various groups may perceive and respond to the process differently, it can also lead to conflict. In case of the *Meitei* religion also the process of synthesis was not of any unilinear dimension. We could see the elements of incorporation, amalgamation, absorption or conversion — all to be prevalent in the *Meitei* religio-cultural realm. Initially on the adoption of Vaishnavism indigenous gods of the *Meiteis* were transformed into the Vaishnava deities. This stage was followed by willful absorption of many deities from the Vaishnava pantheon. Today, Vaishnavism and the traditional beliefs of the *Meiteis* are largely interwoven in Meitei religious life. The notions that are derived from both traditions are applied to the worship of all the deities. Over the periods of Hindu influence, it is noticed that a unique *Meitei* philosophy is originated (following the periods of transition and transformation). Vaishnavism is internalized to such an extent that rooting it out completely from the community mind set is next to impossible a task. The fact that the Vaishnavism practiced in the *Meitei* homeland is in no way an identical clone of Bengal Vaishnavism is another significant element of the Manipur instance. It has established its own guidelines. In Manipur, a peculiar *Meitei* Vaishnavism that combines the new faith with practices from the past might be observed.

Keywords: Meitei, Radha-Krishna, Vaishnavism, bhakti, Hinduism, religion, syncretism

Background of the Study:

Manipur (also called the city or the land of gems) is a premier state in north-east India. The state is inhabited by several communities of people living both in the hills and the plains. The state has a multicultural composition. The *Meiteis* along with the Nagas and Kukis and a few other tribes are the dwellers of it. The *Meiteis* presently constitute a considerable portion of the entire inhabitants in the state Manipur. Their representations in the Assam and Tripura states are also equally significant. Not only they do exercise their claims upon a distinct religious identity both before and after the Hinduization of their state religion, but also treat themselves as owners of a distinct cultural and linguistic heritage. The *Meiteis* believe that an important

aspect of the cultural and the spiritual customs that they are following now has come down to them through a long ancestry. In their myths and legends, or the rites and rituals, the primitive form of the tradition is still prominently visible. But apart from its indigenous primitive character this religion is noticed to have accommodated within it different elements of the beliefs and practices of the Vaishnavite Hinduism too. The *Meitei* religious identity, at present, is seen to be an amalgamation of the indigenous belief systems with the Vaishnavite cults. The *Meitei* pantheon has number of ruling deities of the household (*Imung Lai*), of the outside spheres (*Lamhang Lai*) and the forestry (*Umang Lai*) who are regularly worshipped along with several other Hindu gods and goddesses. The belief in the reality of a Supreme Being named *Taibang Mapu Sidaba*, who is considered to be a formless divinity, is significant among the *Meiteis*. Myriads of his manifestations are described in the different oral narratives and the few preserved written documents or the *Puyas*. The two important progenies of him are God *Sanamahi* (household deity) and God *Pakhangba* (ancestral deity). While both of them are equally important deities for the *Meiteis* yet in terms of his ‘pervasive influence’ the claim of *Sanamahi* has been proved to be much stronger than the other deity (Laisram 2009, p. 101). As a creator of the world and the mankind (The Sakok Lamlen Ahanba Puya) and as a protecting deity of every household *Sanamahi* gained centrality in the cultural and the religious life of the *Meiteis*. Due to the reason the Pre-Hindu *Meitei* religion is considered as *Sanamahism* (Laisram, 2009, pp. 100–101). *Sanamahi* worship as a practicing cult of the community has had a long history which in all likelihood could go back to the days of its origin. During the reign of Khagemba (1597-1652) the formal deification of *Sanamahi* took place at first in the state though the practice of worshipping the deity is regarded to be an age-old one. Apart from being worshipped primarily as a household deity, *Sanamahi* is worshipped as a state or royal god (*Lainingthou Sanamahi*), as a Sun-God and as a God of destruction (*Sanamahi Apoiba*) as well.

The arrival of Brahmanic Vaishnavism in the state marked the beginning of the *Meitei*’s next phase of religious development. The reign of King Bhagyachandra (1749–1798) marked the turning point of the new variety’s religion. Pamheiba (1709-1748) was the initial ruler who was converted into Vaishnavite Hinduism in 1717 by Guru Gopal Das, also known as Shanti Das. Following his initiation Pamheiba adopted a Hindu name Garib Niwaz and attempted to forcibly convert the Manipuris into Vaishnava Hindus. Due to the influence of the Brahmins, the King issued an order to burn to ashes all versions of the ancient Holy Scriptures (*Puya*) and books that belonged to the local priests (*Maichous*) and the general population. This incident is still referred to as “*Puya Meithaba*” in Manipur history. In the process the *Meiteis* rendered a great loss of their early cultural and the religious history. *Puyas* was not your typical book. In actuality, they documented the precepts of the *Meitei* ancestors. Written largely by *Maichous* (priests), they also include historical narratives, regal records, events, social organizational setup, ritual knowledge, and religious festivals and activities.

As visible from the historical records, during the period of Bhagyachandra there was a change in the entire religious scenario of the state. As of the marked difference in the attitude of the latter King the state

religion took a turn toward willful absorption of Vaishnavism as a cult leaving aside the earlier fanatic mode of conversion. While Garib Niwaz embraced Hinduism and attempted to extend it by force and terror Bhagyachandra attempted to propagate the cult in a peaceful manner. The *Meiteis* were brought under the purview of Hinduism more through persuasion which came to have a long-lasting impact on the lives of the Manipuri Hindus. As a result of Manipur's conversion to Hinduism, the *Meitei* community began to speak for the state's majority. People of the *Meitei* community who refused to adopt Hinduism like the Lois preferred to stay away from the main land and got confined to the hilly region along with the other non-*Meitei* hill tribes. The two communities – the *Meitei* Hindus of the plain and the Lois of the Hills still bear a common ancestry (Hodson, 2010), worship similar deities (*Imung Lai*, *Umung Lai* and *Lamhang Lai*), share similar folks and legends, observe similar festivals like that of *Lai Haraoba* indicating their uniform cultural past.

The Rise of Radha-Krishna Cult:

The *Meitei/Meetei/Manipuri* is the largest ethnic community in Manipur. Hindu deities, Radha and Krishna, are the focal points of the Radha-Krishna cult, a religious movement. Followers of this sect hold that Radha and Krishna's holy love represents the highest level of spiritual connection and devotion. In order to achieve spiritual enlightenment and emancipation, the religion places a strong emphasis on the importance of unselfish love, devotion, and surrender to Radha and Krishna. Although adherents can be found all throughout the world, it is mainly practiced in India. The bhakti movement, a devotional branch of Hinduism that originated in medieval India, is frequently linked to the Radha-Krishna cult. Manipur can be divided into the hills and valleys and is the traditional home of the *Meitei* community. The history of kingly rule as well as the evolution of religious and ethnic changes is covered in *Cheitharol Kumbaba* of Manipur royal chronicle. It is filled with stories and traditions about how Radha-Krishna bhakti was subjugated or merged with *Meiteis* old *Sanamahi*. R.K. Jhalajit claims that King Charairongba was impacted by the Nimbarka School of Vaishnavism, which revered Shri Krishna as the supreme deity and regarded him as an incarnation of Vishnu (Jhaljit, 1965, pp. 116). Building a Krishna temple at Brahmapur Guru *Aribam Leikai*, Imphal, in 1707 CE, King *Charairongba* dedicated it to Shri Krishna as a devotee of Lord Krishna and to spread his beliefs. G.P Singh states that one of King Charairongba's most significant contributions to Manipuri culture was the construction of the Krishna temple. Hinduism acquired momentum during the reign of King *Charairongba*, owing to the spread of Vaishnavite teachings. The *Meitei* people of Manipur worship both Radha and Krishna together, rather than just Krishna (Singh, 2012, pp. 34-35).

K.B. Singh claims that the creation and growth of Radha-Krishna bhakti is the outcome of the "cross fertilization of the two religious forces- Vaishnavism and *Sanamahism*." The third quarter of the 18th century saw the introduction of Chaitanya Vaishnavism from Bengal into Manipur, which led to the worship of Krishna as Govinda becoming central to *Meitei* tradition (Singh, 1963, pp. 66-72). In a *Meitei* household, the eldest person usually has a wooden box with a little picture of Krishna or Shri Govinda, a mirror, a comb, pieces of

Chandan, a rosary made of tulsi beads, and chhapa to represent tilak. Following the death of King *Charairongba*, his son Garibniwaz assumed the throne and, at the direction of Shanti Das, began an offensive against the ancient *Meitei* faith. His fanatical religious doctrine is based on forcing its unwilling people to convert to the new religion. The *Meitei* people's socio cultural and religious systems saw significant transformation as a result of his initiatives. In the 18th century, Radha Krishna bhakti and Chaitanya Vaishnavism were prevalent throughout the Manipur valleys. During this time, Manipur was ruled by King Bhagyachandra. According to N. Joykumar Singh, the two most significant occasions that took place during Bhagyachandra's rule were the installation of the Govindaji image and the taming of the insane elephant in Assam in 1776 CE.

Rajarsi Bhagyachandra came to the throne in 1759, and his reign was characterized by the Burmese struggle with Manipur and his declaration of faith in Krishna as a source of protection and remedies to his troubles. Bhagyachandra escaped to the king of Ahom's court in 1762 when the Burmese invaded Manipur (Assam). It was common knowledge that Bhagyachandra was a devoted, pious, and skillful king. The true king of Manipur was endowed with magical abilities, therefore the king of Ahom, while taking refuge, received a letter from Bhagyachandra's uncle alerting him to the fact that the person seeking asylum was not Bhagyachandra. This message alarmed the Ahom monarch, who set up a challenge for Bhagyachandra wherein he had to trap and tame a wild elephant without any weapons. Bhagyachandra was worried and prayed to Lord Krishna, who then showed up in his dream and told him to enter the arena with the japa beads and garland to win. In addition, the tradition goes, Krishna made him swear that upon his return to his kingdom, he would erect a statue of Govinda composed of jackfruit trees. He even gave King Bhagyachandra access to his Rasleela. The wild elephant bowed before Bhagyachandra the following day after he followed Krishna's advice from his dream. The story goes that Krishna, like a mahout, sat on the elephant's head. On observing this, the Ahom king extended an offer to help Bhagyachandra reclaim his land. As was promised, Sapam Lakshman sculpted four exquisite statues from the jackfruit tree on the Kaina hill slopes, and Bhagyachandra gave his soldiers the task of finding it. Though exquisite, the initial sculpture of Sri Govindaji did not resemble the image of Krishna that Bhagyachandra had in his dream.

Thus, three more were cut till Govindaji, or Krishna, was finally formed. In 1776, it was installed on a day with a full moon. The king even went so far as to establish Govindam, the state religion, which is the worship of Radha Krishna. Bhagyachandra also promised to fulfill his royal duties as Lord Govind's servant and dedicated his throne to Lord Krishna. By formally handing up the crown to Krishna, *Meiteis* dominion was restored, and a spiritual bond with Vaishnavism was made. The love between Radha and Krishna is the central theme of the *Meitei* Ras Leela dance, which is a full manifestation of their devotion to Radha Krishna. Rasleela's connection to Sankirtana was a major component in the *Meiteis*' embrace of the Krishna faith. There was no goddess representing the lord's consort, Radha, even though the statue of Lord Govind acted as Krishna during Ras Leela. When Bhagyachandra engaged his daughter, prince Bimbavati, to Govindaji, or Krishna, the

need was satisfied. In folklore, the princess spent her whole life at Krishna-Bhakti. All was overcome by her devotion to Krishna. Princess Bimbavati gained disrepute in the past as “Sija Lairiobi,” or the princess who belonged to the lord. In the end, a golden goddess in the likeness of Radha was produced. In general, there is a syncretistic relationship between the Vaishnava and *Meitei* indigenous traditions.

It can be ascertained that the kind of Vaishnavism followed in Manipur was in no way confined to any single doctrinal structure or sect. On the contrary, the arrival of multiple types of Vaishnavite schools has enriched the *Meitei* religio-cultural world-view in a considerable manner. Although at times conflicts among the sects were not scarce yet in the long run they kept on influencing each other. The peaceful co-existence and assimilation of the various sects could take place during King Bhagyachandra’s time because of the empathic attitude of the emperor. The King contributed to the formation of many innovative ideas that facilitated cultural transformation. Fresh forms of creative arts were developed in his time. Hence, the ancient *Meitei* religion and culture adapted itself with the new facets of Hinduism. Following this process of Hinduization several *Meitei* gods and goddesses, rituals and festivals, myths and legends, the cultural history, genealogy etc. were re-conceptualized and reinterpreted.

The influence of Vaishnavism can be seen in the sphere of Manipuri art, dance, and music, which often revolves around the stories and teachings of Lord Vishnu and his avatars. However, it is significant to noting that the *Meitei* community has also preserved its pre-Hindu beliefs and practices. These changes are reflected in the modification of the socio-cultural norms and practices like marriage, in food-habits, dress, writing of scripts, in the art forms, in the forms of worship and so on. The worship of traditional ancestral deities continues to be an integral part of their religious customs. The *Meitei* community has successfully integrated Vaishnavite practice into their daily lives while retaining their distinctive cultural identity and traditional beliefs. Hinduism brought about remarkable changes in the socio-cultural life of the *Meiteis*. Both internal and external changes have been noticed to take place in the social strata, cultural gamut and the religious spheres.

Vaishnavism had a significant impact on *Meitei* society; it is important to note that it coexisted with the pre-existing indigenous beliefs and practices. Today, *Meitei* society retains a unique blend of indigenous and Vaishnavite traditions, forming a distinct religious and cultural identity. It can be stated thus that after the entry of Vaishnavism into *Meitei* community life, it gradually became a dominant force in shaping the culture, religion, and social fabric of the *Meitei* people. Vaishnavism brought about significant changes in *Meitei* society, leading to the adoption of Hindu practices, the introduction of Sanskrit as a sacred language, and the establishment of temples and rituals associated with Vaishnavism. Vaishnavism also influenced the *Meitei* worldview, with concepts such as karma, rebirth, and moksha becoming integral parts of their belief system. This resulted in a shift from the indigenous *Meitei* religion towards a syncretic blend of Hindu and *Meitei* beliefs. The introduction of Vaishnavism had a profound impact on *Meitei* social structure, as it led to the emergence of a hierarchical caste

system that mirrored the Hindu caste system. This resulted in social stratification and divisions based on birth and occupation.

The majority of the Meiteis becomes Hindus in their external outlook with traditional values, beliefs and customs in the core of their lives. They become occasional devotees of Hindu gods and goddesses while worshipping traditional deities inside their homes every single day. The worship Krishna, Radha, Durga, Shiva etc., when their occasions like Holi, Durga Puja, Shivaratri and Rathayatra comes but they are always in connection with traditional deities like Sanamahi, Leimarel Sidabi, Apokpa and Umang Lais etc. throughout the year of their lives. Thus, in this Vaishnavite period, after following a spiral path, Meiteis become Hindus in their external outlook with core elements of traditional religion inside them.

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Influence of Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy on Āyurveda

Simi Borgohain & Sony Das

Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the impact of Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy on Āyurveda. The Upaniṣads, which is one of the Vedic texts, is where philosophy first emerged. The development of both Āyurveda and Indian philosophy was guided by the same maxim, which is to completely get rid of suffering. As such, we discover that Indian philosophy and Āyurveda are closely intertwined. Sāṃkhya Philosophy's primary focus is on how comprehensive knowledge will help the Purusha to achieve liberation. Sāṃkhya philosophy and Āyurveda both agree that the fundamental elements of evolution are the same. Again, Āyurveda is equal to yoga philosophy in terms of reducing pain, thus they explained Aṣṭāṅgayoga in terms of being free from suffering. Therefore, the study of the impact of Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy on Āyurveda has been conducted for this paper. Historical, descriptive, and analytical methods have been used for conducting the study.

Keywords: Āyurveda, evolution, Sāṃkhya Philosophy, suffering, Yoga Philosophy

Introduction:

Indian philosophy and Āyurveda both are related to each other because both have developed with the same aphorism – Dukha-nivritti (free from suffering). Indian philosophy is deeply spiritual and consistently stresses the importance of realizing truth through practical experience (Hiriyana, 1993; Sharma, 1960). Annihilation of the three kinds of pains- Ādhyātmika dukkha which is physical and mental suffering produced by natural and intra-organic causes, Adhibhautika dukkha, which is physical and mental suffering produced by natural and extra-organic causes, and Ādhidaivika dukkha, which is physical and mental suffering which are produced by super-natural and extra-organic causes, and the realization of supreme happiness is the end (Sharma, 1960). On the other hand, as per Johns Hopkins, “Āyurveda is a natural system of medicine that originated in India more than 3000 years ago. The term Āyurveda is derived from the Sanskrit words Āyur which means life and Veda means science or knowledge. Thus, Āyurveda translates to knowledge of life. Āyurveda is based on the idea that disease is due to an imbalance or stress in a person's consciousness (Charaka, 2006; Sushruta, 2004). It encourages certain lifestyle interventions and natural therapies to regain a

balance between the body, mind, spirit, and the environment” (Lakeesha & Heidi, 2022). Āyurveda is profoundly associated with the mystery of life. The flow of life and the stream of intelligence are intimately linked by their origins: in this sense, Āyurveda or ‘knowledge of life’, harks back to the very first manifestation of cosmic existence.

The Vedas make it simple to find the roots of Indian philosophy. It evolved as an independent system, largely untouched by external influences. The schools of Indian Philosophy are broadly classified into two categories, namely, Āstika (Orthodox) and Nāstika (Heterodox). Āstika school is known as Ṣaḍ-darśana, which belongs to the six philosophical systems, namely, Mimamsa, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, and Vaiśeṣika (Chatterjee & Datta, 2008). These are regarded as Orthodox because they accept the authority of the Vedas. The other schools of Indian philosophy, are known as the Nāstika schools of Indian philosophy, namely, Carvaka, Bauddha, and Jaina. They are called Nāstika because they reject the authority of the Vedas. Most of the schools of Indian Philosophy try to explain suffering and how we can get relief from this suffering. Like Indian Philosophy, Āyurveda also tries to explain suffering and different kinds of disease which leads to suffering. Āyurveda not only explained suffering but also, gave different suggestions to free from suffering. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to know about the Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy and its influences on Āyurveda.

Objectives of the Study:

The primary aim of this paper is to examine Āyurveda in the context of Samkhya and Yoga Philosophy, which attempts to focus following details:

1. To understand Āyurveda’s view about the world and sufferings.
2. To understand the Sāṃkhya and Yoga’s view about the world and sufferings.
3. To know about the Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy and its influences on Āyurveda.

Method of the Study:

The method of the present study is historical, descriptive, and analytical in nature which is based on primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include books, journals, and data gathered from research institutes’ internet materials. In this study, secondary data are mostly used.

Discussion:

All knowledge originates in philosophy. It is regarded as the origin of all sciences. The Vedas provide a clear path to the roots of Indian philosophy (Sharma, 1960). The earliest existing works of Indian literature are the Vedas. The Vedas contain numerous philosophical ideas and viewpoints. Indian philosophy has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on the necessity for the practical realisation of truth. Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy are the two important Āstika schools of Indian Philosophy which contain various philosophical ideas and it has impacts on Āyurveda. The purpose of Āyurveda is to promote health and prolong life (Mishra, 2012). It is a way of life that has developed through experiential, intellectual, and spiritual illumination that is based on an

understanding of Creation. The various philosophical theories utilized in Āyurveda have a significant impact on an individual's overall health, including their physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy have a greater influence on Āyurveda. The Sāṃkhya system was founded by the great sage Kapila. The Sāṃkhya seeks an understanding of truth for the practical reason of putting an end to all sorrows and sufferings (Hiriyanna, 1993). On the other hand, Patanjali, a great Indian sage, gave the world a priceless gift in the form of his Yoga Philosophy, which is a guide for anybody seeking spiritual awakening. It is a huge help to individuals who want to understand that the spirit exists as a separate principle that is unconstrained by the boundaries of the physical world, the senses, and the mind. The value of Yoga as an important method of realizing the spiritual truths of Indian Philosophy has been recognized by almost all the schools of Indian Philosophy and Āyurveda. The Sāṃkhya system and Yoga are closely related. The Sāṃkhya epistemology is largely accepted by Yoga, and the three *Pramanas* namely; perception, inference, and testimony are also recognized by both Yoga Philosophy and Āyurveda (Chatterjee & Datta, 2008). The 25 principles of Sāṃkhya, which comprise its metaphysics, are largely accepted by Yoga. The practice of yoga is a sure way to achieve *Viveka-jnana*, or discerning knowledge, which is seen in the Sāṃkhya as the necessary prerequisite for liberation. Like Yoga Philosophy, Āyurveda also discussed the 25 principles of Sāṃkhya Philosophy (Archana et al., 2013).

Āyurveda has accepted the creation theory of Sāṃkhya Philosophy, which is also accepted by Yoga Philosophy. Sāṃkhya's theory of creation is known as the *Prakriti Parinamavada*; which is the form of *Satkaryavada* (Sharma, 1960). *Satkaryavada* admits that the effect exists in the material cause even before it is produced (Chatterjee & Datta, 2008). *Parinamavada* is one of the forms of *Satkaryavada*; which means when an effect is produced, there is a real transformation of the cause into the effect.

Sat is created from Sat, according to both Āyurveda and Sāṃkhya Philosophy. *Jwara* is said to only manifest from *Jwara Nidan* in Āyurveda as well (Charaka, 2006). In a similar manner, just the specific *Nidan* of each disease causes its manifestation. Sāṃkhya proposes 25 guiding principles for the construction of the cosmos. *Prakriti* (unmanifest) and *Purusha* (primordial cosmic soul) are the two main principles. *Prakriti* serves as the fundamental source from which all other elements arise. However, by itself, it cannot produce anything. Creation becomes possible only when *Prakriti* unites with *Purusha*, the 25th principle. *Purusha* is neither *Prakriti* (the producer) nor *Vikriti* (the product or evolute); he is *Nirguna* (devoid of qualities), *Nishkriya* (inactive), and the embodiment of *Shuddha Chaitanya* (pure consciousness). All *Gunas* (qualities) and *Kriyas* (actions) belong to *Prakriti*, not to *Purusha*. Out of these 25 principles, the 23 evolutions of *Prakriti* are categorized as follows – The first product of the evolution is called *Mahat*, and the great along with the intellect, ego, and mind is the cause of the entire creation. *Mahat* can refute the *Purusha* consciousness because it is composed of limited stuff. The second outcome of evolution is *Ahamkara*. *Ahamkara*, the individualization principle, is produced by *Mahat*. Its purpose is to produce self-essence. *Ahamkara* creates the concept of the mind. *Purusha* mistakenly

sees himself as this ego and the cause of the actions. According to which of the three gunas predominates, ahamkara is said to be of three different types. It is called Vaikarika or Sattvika when the element of sattva predominates in it; Taijasa or Rajasa when that of rajas predominates; Bhutadi or Tamasa when tamas predominates (Chatterjee & Datta, 2008). From the first arise the eleven organs, namely, Jnanendriyas, Karmendriyas and mind. The five organs of perception are known as Jnanendriyas, which are the functions of sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound (Sharma, 1960). The five organs of action are Karmendriyas, which are the functions of speech, prehension, movement, excretion, and reproduction. From the third, i.e., Tamasa Ahamkara is derived the five subtle elements i.e., Tanmatras or 'things-in-themselves'. These are the essences of sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound. From the essence of sound arises the element of ether or Akash together with the quality of sound. The element of air, along with the qualities of sound and touch, emerges from the essence of touch combined with the essence of sound. The element of fire, along with the qualities of sound, touch, and colour, emerges from the essence of colour combined with the essence of sound, touch, and colour. From the essence of taste combined with those of sound, touch, and colour arises the element of water. Lastly, the element of earth, along with the qualities of sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell, emerges from the essence of smell combined with the essence of sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell (Sharma, 1960). The second quality, Rajasa interact with both the first and the third, providing the energy necessary for transforming sattva and tamas into respective products. Manas, also known as the mind, is the only sense that is predominately Sattvika, or manifesting, and as such, it derives from Sattvika Ahamkara. Both activity and knowledge require the manas or mind's cooperation. This is the organ inside the body that stimulates the other senses so they can reach their intended goal. Therefore, according to Sāṃkhya Philosophy, evolution is the play of these 24 principles together with the Purusha. Like Sāṃkhya, Āyurveda says that the origin of the elements of the world is caused by Vyapadeshastu Bhuysa nyaya, which is 1/8 of each of the other 4 tanmatras and 1/2 of a specific tanmatra. By this combination that particular element is developed. Like Sāṃkhya, Āyurveda, and Yoga Philosophy also accepts the process of evolution. But the only difference between Sāṃkhya and Āyurveda is that Āyurveda accepts sense organs or Indriyas as Bhautikas or Products of Panchabhutas, not Ahamkaras as explained by Sāṃkhya. This distinction primarily relates to the treatment angle. Three types of dukkha, i.e., Adhibhautika, Adhidaivika, and Adhyatmika as explained by Sāṃkhya are also explained in Āyurveda along with their treatment (Waghmare & Mhaskar, 2014). All of Āyurveda is described in order to treat the illnesses that fall under these three categories of illness.

Again, Āyurveda has accepted the Astanga Yoga of Yoga Philosophy. Yoga promotes mastery over the body, the senses, and the mind. Both the body and the mind are distracted by physical attachment and passion. They must be vanquished. Yoga offers us the eightfold path of discipline which is known as Astanga Yoga to help us get over them (Das et al., 2018). Āyurveda uses the Yama and Niyama from Astanga Yoga since its goal is to sustain health. All time forms of Yama are elaborated upon by Āyurveda in Astanga Yoga. Yama

means abstention and it includes the five vows, namely, ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, and aparigraha. Āyurveda explained the importance of ahimsa, i.e., speaking truth maintains physical as well as mental health. Āyurveda also discussed brahmacharya and aparigraha. Āyurveda explained that brahmacharya is regarded as one of the most superior pathways to all pathways to maintain both physical and mental health. Thus, Āyurveda accepts both the Yama and all Niyama. A sort of Niyama called Shaucha was accepted by Āyurveda, and it was employed in Dincharya as Snan vidhi and Dantdhavan vidhi. Snan vidhi serves as both an appetizer and a means of maintaining bodily cleanliness. In order for your chikitsa to be successful, you need both the Paricharak and the Shaucha guna, as explained in the Chatuspad. So, by adhering to Yama and Niyama, we can preserve Swasthya avastha and aid in the purification of the body and soul. Again, Āyurveda has accepted the Pranayama of Astanga Yoga. Patients with conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung illness, and asthma can preserve their health by engaging in Pranayama (Das et al, 2018). The control of Vat dosh can be achieved in this way, and Asana Yoga also aids in Vat dosh control. Several asanas are outlined in Āyurvedic treatment and then utilized to treat physical and mental illnesses. Pratyahara is also explained by Āyurveda. Pratyahara means taking benefits Indriya by not making use of them.

Thus, a lot of similarities are found in Āyurveda with Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy. The aim of Āyurveda and both Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy is to reduce pain and therefore they give different suggestions to free from suffering.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we have seen that Āyurveda was influenced by Indian Philosophy. Āyurveda has accepted the theories of creation and the products which are evolved in the world, which was explained by Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Like Āyurveda, Yoga Philosophy also accepts the Sāṃkhya theory of creation. Sāṃkhya Philosophy says that the elements of the world originate from particular tanmatra like from Sabda tanmatra Akasha elements develop etc. The origin of the elements of the world, according to Āyurveda, is caused by Vyapadeshastu Bhuysa nyaya, which is 1/8 of each of the other 4 tanmatras and 1/2 of a specific tanmatra. By this combination that particular element is developed. In that sense, Āyurveda was influenced by Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Again, Āyurveda was also influenced by Yoga Philosophy. Āyurveda accepts and explained the Astanga Yoga of Yoga Philosophy to reduce disease and free from suffering. Therefore, Āyurveda explained Astanga Yoga and the different forms of Yama to remove pain.

At the last, it is clear that Āyurveda was mostly influenced by both Sāṃkhya and Yoga Philosophy and they accept the different principles and theories of Samkhya and Yoga Philosophy to reduce disease and free from suffering. When we compare Āyurveda with Sāṃkhya Philosophy, then we can clearly understand the evolution process of the world.

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Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Women Empowerment: A Social Philosophical Analysis

Sangeeta Devi

Abstract

The term 'Feminism' refers to the establishment of uniform rights and opportunities to woman along with man. The philosophy of feminism is an attempt to analyse various topics of feminism through the application of philosophical methods. In India, womanhood was celebrated and they had an illustrious and renowned position during the Vedic age. It describes women as longing for the everlasting and undying knowledge. In Indian tradition, women are regarded as Shakti. She is an epitome of endless and infinite powers and energy. But, during the post – Vedic era, women began to lose their dignity. Swami Vivekananda was a spiritual leader and a social reformer. He forwarded the ancient Indian teachings of Vedanta to the West. The present paper is an attempt to sketch an outline of Swami Vivekananda's thoughts and ideals of womanhood. He considered woman as the guardian of the spiritual heritage of India. He believed that woman should be honored and valued for the prosperity upliftment of a society. This article is a humble effort to get glimpse of Swamiji's views on womanhood.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, womanhood, spirituality, emancipation, education, women empowerment

Introduction:

In simple language, Philosophy refers to the criticism of life and experiences. When we discuss the various aspects of human life and experiences in light of philosophical standpoint, it can be considered as social philosophy. The social thoughts in India emerged as an outcome of critical reasoning of our ancient seers. They used to reflect upon experience and learning. According to early Indian literature, womanhood was celebrated and they enjoyed a respectable position. For the *Vedas*, nature is *Aditi*, she is the mother of Gods and men. But, unfortunately, the devaluation of women began in the post *Vedic* era.

Swami Vivekananda was a great philosopher, a thinker, social reformer, spiritual leader, and a *Karma yogi*. Through his works, views and speeches Swami Vivekananda gave remarkable contributions towards Women Empowerment. He believed that, for the complete development of a country, the progress of women

is highly required. Women should be treated as uniform to man by ensuring equal opportunities for their growth and self - establishment. His explanation for the importance of upliftment of women is based on logic. He stated- ‘Atma - the soul has no sex, no caste and no imperfection’ (Vivekananda, 1953a).

Swami Vivekananda believed that to fly, a bird requires both the wings. Likewise, both man and women have equal importance for the maximum development of a society. For the attainment of divine union in a nation, women empowerment is the first and foremost step. It would make the world more just and fairer. Swamiji thought women can do their activities much better than man. Any nation can achieve greatness by worshiping women and giving honour to their dignity.

Swami Vivekananda’s notion of Women Empowerment:

The Vedanta philosophy thought no one is born superior to another. Being the pioneer of Neo - Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda stated that ‘We should not think that we are men and women, but only that we are human being, born to cherish and to help one another’ (Vivekananda, 1953b).

Swamiji’s philosophy of feminism is briefly discussed below-

➤ **Ideal of motherhood:**

Swami Vivekananda noticed that the Indian tradition personified women as divine mother. Swami Vivekananda was very happy about the ideal of motherhood expressed in Indian tradition and social system. He believed that one does not become mother by bearing a child. Motherhood is a behaviour. It is a constituent of qualities like empathy, selfless love, care which can be found in men and women both. He also considered Sarada Devi as his ‘holy mother’. She was the wife of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. She considered the world as one single home and she had ubiquitous maternal love beyond all the boundaries and barriers. Thus, Swami Vivekananda thought that one can become a mother through fostering the qualities of motherhood in her or his character. A mother should receive highest respect and everyone in the family inferior to her.

➤ **Western ideal of womanhood:**

Swamiji found many faults with the Western ideal of womanhood as there is an absence psychological and spiritual powers in them. They lacked inner solidarity between men and women in the west. The western families are oriented to wife but the Indian families are ruled by mothers.

➤ **Emancipation of Women:**

Freedom is the first and foremost requirement for inner and outer improvement of a society. Perfect freedom includes physical, mental as well as social privilege. It is one of the major concerns in contemporary society. Women should be able to stand on their own feet for the holistic development of a nation. He started a revolution to enhance the status of Indian women in different arena of national life. Freedom and liberty should enable women to gain confidence to do innovative activities for the development of self. To him, perfect freedom symbolizes perfect womanhood.

➤ **Education:**

We must keep a woman free from the oppression of men to help her grow. Swami Vivekananda thought that we can build self – confidence among the Indian women by illuminating her with right education. Education can enable the women to encounter challenges of their personal and social lives. Education of women was also not prohibited in Ancient India. They should be the master of their work and education should build leadership and qualities among them as well as strengthen their character. He felt the urgent need of a new system of education for women through which the qualities of self – sustenance, self – esteem, dedication, self – resistance could grow among them. Swamiji was also in favour of providing vocational training to the girl child along with spiritual education.

➤ **Gender Equality:**

Gender equality is the first condition for the development of a nation. Indian tradition treated women as *Shakti* – a source of infinite power and strength. There is no distinction between male and female in terms of soul and all are identical by birth. Since the nature of human soul is uniform, there should be no classification based on caste, creed, race etc.

➤ **Marriage:**

Swami Vivekananda believed that marriage makes a person to feel complete. People find their significant other through marriage. Swamiji thought that people should marry someone only once in their lifetime. One's divinity gets affected if one marries more than one time. As he supported monogamy for both men and women, he was against widow marriage as well. He criticized the tradition of child marriage.

➤ **Character building:**

Swami Vivekananda holds the view that Sita, Savitri and Damayanti should be the supreme paragon for character building of women. He was very optimistic about Indian concept of womanhood. A mother should be given highest admiration in a home. She is a guardian, solicitous, altruistic, selfless and compassionate. She is an object of veneration. A women should be jovial in her married life, otherwise she should opt for dissolution from her partner rather than being obligatory to stay together, Furthermore, he talked about Sanyasini who devote her life for the well – being of humanism. Swamiji thought it is the best gesture a person can display.

➤ **Social Services:**

Swami Vivekananda focused on developing greater attributes in women's character to enable her for social services. Firstly, she should be self – sacrificing. She must possess an inner urge to do philanthropic activities. To attain this goal, women should have an undying spirit, courage, passion and tolerance. In this way, they construct a better and progressive society. Swamiji also provide training facility for women to realize his vision. The trained women used to participate in educational and health camp, agriculture, livestock farming etc. Through various missions such as NRDP, RDP women were taught to raise their children in light of the teachings of Vedanta and Yoga.

Thus, Vivekananda, for the first time speak out about as a representative of the women members of Indian society. He focused on education as a means of physical and spiritual liberation of woman. He also focused on the application of Neo-Vedantic philosophy in his philosophy of feminism. For the spiritual realization of our nation, both men and women need education and freedom to remove the obstacles faced in day - to - day life. In 1916, he constructed Sarada Mandir for women.

Conclusion:

Swami Vivekananda's thoughts are still pertinent in the 21st century. His ideologies are still followed by many countries around the world. Swamiji believed, since the soul has no sex and caste, there should not be any prejudice on the basis of these. His point of view regarding child marriage was also very daring. Swamiji was against child marriage. One should attain physical and cognitive maturity to get married. At present, child marriage is banned in most of the nations.

Swamiji's concept of emancipation of women making progress in most of the countries. Women should be emancipated and personified as Brahman. In this day and age, each and every nation is focusing on deliverance of women for attaining perfect growth and enlargement of the society. According to Swamiji, the world is developing a bright outlook towards the philosophy of feminism. He stated that any society can obtain perfect ampleness by utilizing the capacities and potentialities of women (Vivekananda, 1957).

Swami Vivekananda also spoke out about education of girl child. He said, 'if you don't allow one to become a lion, he will become a fox. Women are a power, only now it is eviler because man oppresses women; she is the fox, but is no longer oppressed, she will be the lion' (Vivekananda, 1957). Education can make a women bold, self-dependent and self-confident. In present scenario as well, educating the girl child is a major concern of the society.

Furthermore, the ideal of eastern and western women depicts that women are treated as wife in the west. But, in the Eastern countries female are admired as mother. The Indian ideal of women focuses on inner upliftment and shows piousness more than the Western women.

Besides, Swamiji gave utmost importance on electrifying the character of Indian women. Sita should be the ideal of Indian women and each woman should abide by her footprints. Character is the most valuable property of a woman. In modern days also, Indian people worship Sita as an epitome of purity and grace.

Regarding marriage, Swamiji thought both husband and wife should be loyal and faithful to each other for a successful and happy marriage. Even in the present times, loyalty is highly required for a blissful and joyous married life.

The Indian women are highly gentle, calm and forgiving according to Swami Vivekananda. She is the expression of holiness. A man can attain spiritual bliss, which is the greatest virtue of life only with the help of a women. Thus, we can conclude that Vivekananda's philosophy of feminism was ahead of time and it is extremely relevant with reference to the present-day scenario.

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Espousing Religious Philosophy: A Potential Method for Combating New-Generation Social Ills in Post-COVID Society

Kabyashree Boruah

Abstract

The evolution of human civilization is primarily due to the pursuit of solutions to difficulties. Human curiosity and the brain's capacity for cognition have allowed people to survive under challenging circumstances. Human resilience and adaptability have been demonstrated for a considerable amount of time, dating back to the Homo sapiens phase. However, we frequently overlooked the preservation of knowledge. Otherwise, human evolution would not be feasible. We can only predict future issues based on past information. All people on the planet now have to deal with a different kind of issue due to the COVID-19 epidemic. In addition to being fatal, this disease's peculiar way of spreading among people (through touch) creates some very challenging circumstances. People were compelled to live alone. The new normal of daily existence was quarantine. Technological advancements reach unprecedented heights in these circumstances. It has certain drawbacks despite being an advantage in such a lethal circumstance. We all know that men are sociable creatures by nature. However, some of the problems caused by technology's attempts to replace people can be found in our religious worldview; this paper will address these issues.

Keywords: human civilization, resistance, problems, COVID-19, pandemic, religious philosophy

Introduction:

The day was 31 Dec, 1999.

I was at the bus stop.

See, the bus has arrived.

“2000s”

I read the name.

Seats were packed.

Z, Alpha, Beta; my companion.

Hoped to meet peace, love, and happiness.

The new bus had some musty odour.

Incurable, intolerable, unbearable!

Human nature's insatiable desire for novelty, adoption, and resilience has propelled humanity from the caves to the AI-dominated "developed world" of the twenty-first century. Even though different nations have developed differently, awareness—or perhaps we should say, the idea of technological advancements among people—leads us to postmodern society, where we are attempting to rationalise our new ideas over our old ones and renew our old perspectives on everything. While we are undoubtedly celebrating our own ideas and views, we are also experiencing and experimenting with these activities, which might occasionally result in a social catastrophe.

A few decades ago, the main objectives of every nation were to solve social problems, improve the welfare of its citizens, and promote its economy. However, a realisation completely altered the situation. In 2019, a disease has compelled people all around the world to stay indoors or in a room. In actuality, however, nothing can halt the human brain from growing. Additionally, it is accurate to say that "scarcity is the root of discovery." Thus, the most innovative digital revolution occurred at this time. When people went back to the previous life, the world had changed, and they were not the "old people" anymore. Everyone became a "new person" by experiencing digital benefits.

Life has evolved. The order of importance has shifted. Economic and societal problems have evolved. As globalisation and easy access to internet facilities bring the entire world to our room and mobile, the most frightening aspect of these issues is that they are cosmopolitan in nature. I like to refer to this as "bringing the trash from the ocean to home." This is because people are more drawn to problems, immorality, and unethical things than to adhering to mainstream morality*. So, it has led us to combat new-generation social ills. By the term new generation social ills, I mean those problems which were less visible or little visible before the COVID-19 period.

Objective:

From the Silent Generation to millennials, everyone was looking forward to the new millennium, wishing for fresh perspectives, ideas, and worldviews that could lessen the terrible fatigue of the past century. The entire civilization had been tainted by two world wars and a protracted cold war. The government has been forced to focus on core issues most of the time due to a number of factors, including the emergence of numerous political and apolitical social movements, the pressure from the international community, the territorial threat posed by the Indo-Pak and Indo-China wars, the struggle to adopt a mixed model of economy, and the effort to instill a new political structure among the general populace. However, a new lens was created to examine the societal issues following the dissolution of the former USSR, the adoption of the LPG model, and post-modernization. This is also a reality that the new millennium had brought some new problems. A few of them can be mentioned, such as poverty, degradation of women's position, HIV and AIDS, unemployment,

communalism, corruption etc. However, the post-COVID age has brought forth a number of new generation issues that require introduction, analysis, and resolution. This is the article's primary objective.

Methodology:

This research paper is conceptual, analytical and interpretative in nature. For the most part, the explanatory method has been used. As primary data, we have gone through some surveys and books; articles and newspaper analyses are used as secondary data.

New Generation Social Ills – Cause and Consequences:

Now let's have a look at the issues that the post-COVID period has brought —

1. Post-truth society (Dominic, 2021) : According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, the term post-truth relates to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than one based on facts. The widespread use of social media platforms has increased in the post-COVID period like never before. Now it is very common to spread all forms of news and incidents within minutes across the world like a wildfire. But due to unawareness, people tend to believe whatever they have seen. Most of the time, the real truth is hidden, which can lead to serious issues. So, emotions become the prime factor in making decisions about anything while the use of reason takes the back seat. So, people's opinions and support can be manipulated so easily. Sometimes people tend to support criminals due to such manipulation.

2. Consumerism (Lage et al., 2022) **and the lipstick effect** (Hayes, 2024) **on the economy** : Consumerism is the prime goal of capitalism, where it creates the belief that the core goal of human life is to consume more and more goods. Basically, it helps the big businessmen and industrialists with the continuity of their business. To some extent, it can be justified in developed countries, as the economic conditions of people in such countries are much better than those in developing and underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, the breakdown of the economy in most of the economies in the world in the post-pandemic period led to an assumption that sales of luxurious items would be decreased. But there is a twist and a most astonishing fact: people still buy fewer luxury items like lipstick even though they can't afford the most luxurious items because it makes them feel good and less depressed. Considering external material goods as the source of happiness while ignoring the internal issue of mind and psyche is really scary nowadays.

3. Sharenting (Gatto et al., 2024): This phrase was coined in 2010 to describe a common practice among parents in which they share or publicise significant volumes of potentially sensitive information about their children on various digital platforms. There are several factors that contributed to the Sharenting culture, including the fact that it was used as a source of money. They also want validation from others. Some of them sought to flaunt their lifestyle. This may promote cybercrime because people on digital platforms do not know who is viewing their stuff. It may assist criminals in studying their lifestyle, which could lead to organised crime. Another negative aspect of sharing is that it can cause major mental health difficulties in children's minds, as well as body dysmorphia.

4. Virginity shaming (Rawhani, 2024): The 21st century is undoubtedly upon us. With consent, men and women enjoy the same sexual freedom. At the same time, youths are under peer pressure to lose their virginity as quickly as possible, or else they will be the odd one out. Most interestingly, the reverse concept of “body count” has gained popularity, in which a person’s body count is determined by the number of partners with whom they have slept. It is truly awful where we all should focus on the potentialities of humans for the purpose of humanity, but our young generation’s attention is dominated by sexual pleasures and shifting partners, which can lead to a gloomy moment in their lives because it may lead to an increased rate of HIV and STD.

5. Lack of accountability and moral responsibility of social media influencers (Lajnef, 2023): The need for an ideal and to worship or follow them is an undeniable feature of adolescent youngsters. There is no wrong in it. But the question is what kind of idols we are providing them to get inspired. Millennials had picked their ideals from movie stars, singers, players, scientists, military persons, political leaders, etc. Before the millennials, people tended to idealise the freedom fighters. But now the scenario has changed, as most of Generation Z and ALFA idealise those who are popular on social media platforms. Some of these so-called popular people get millions of views by doing anything. Due to their lot of subscribers and followers, their behaviour and opinion impact the present generation’s psyche, as they are still young. But the sad truth is most of these influencers are money-minded people and never follow the ‘interrelation between means and ends’ in terms of earning money. It has the potential to drive this generation into a darker phase in which morality and social responsibility become meaningless concerns. Ranveer Allahavadia, a social media influencer who podcasts on spirituality, politics, knowledge systems, and other topics, recently appeared as a judge on a show and made a nasty comment about human relations.

6. Rising rates of violence and suicide: The rising number of young people committing suicide has now turned into a new pandemic. Parents’ constant criticism of their kids for not being able to compete with others, their overindulgence in spoiling, which weakens the kids’ ability to handle difficult circumstances, the pressures of the workplace and career, and the existential crises brought on by social media are the main causes of the unhealthy mentalities that lead to suicide. On the other side, the need for a new industrialised economy has resulted in a lonely generation. People are moving to new cities, places, or nations due to economic factors (the desire for better chances and jobs). Connecting with families became an uncommon occurrence. People tend to have one or two children due to work pressures or state laws. These children often have less time with their parents. On the other side, due to security concerns and an increase in crime, parents prefer that their children remain at home at all times. They are even given sophisticated technology devices such as iPads, laptops, and desktops. Many children are glued to indoor entertainment, such as gaming on these devices. These games can be really deadly at times. Sometimes these games are so hazardous that they cause children to become more anxious and violent. Some television shows and films can contribute to the normalisation of violence, inspiring youth to commit crime and violence. I have only outlined a handful of the current generation’s social issues.

Botox culture, get ready with me culture, sexualisation of women and children, normalised immoral activity, and infidelity are examples of post-COVID social evils that have proliferated due to the internet boom.

Remedy:

Identifying a problem is not a huge deal; finding a solution is! People may have some new-generation cures to address social issues of the current generation. However, as a devoted student of Indian philosophy and culture, I would love to return to our ancient origins in order to solve these difficulties. We can instill in our generation some fundamental belief systems of all religions that have shaped Indian philosophy, which can be mentioned as -

1. Philosophy of Vidura from the Mahabharata: One of the Mahabharata's noble figures is Vidura. He was Dhritarashtra and Pandu's brother. Due to his blindness, he had to explain every aspect of the Kurukshetra conflict to Dhritarashtra. Vidura assumes the position of a counsellor in this instance. His advice is morally sound. He clearly distinguishes between the minds of the wise and the ignorant. The fundamental difference between the two is that one has vices while the other does not. Vices like avarice, desire, rage, conceit, jealousy, and an unreasonable fixation on being the smart one should not exist in people. Parents and social media influencers nowadays need to learn that advising and counselling others can only be beneficial at that point.

2. Sthitpragya: Philosophy from the Gita: Sthit means steady and firm; Pragya means wise or learned. In the words of Krishna, a Sthitpragya is a person "one whose mind remains undisturbed amidst misery, who does not crave for happiness or pleasure and who is free from attachment, fear and anger is called a sage, a man of steady wisdom". Control over senses, steady intelligence, non-attachment & knowledge of self are the core characteristics of Sthitpragya. By internalising concepts like Sthitpragya, one can reduce the pressure of life and anxiety, which are core causes of mental health issues.

3. Philosophy of Ends and Means: 'Ends and means are interrelated' is the central tenet of Gandhi's social philosophy. It basically means that one must pursue the road of moral and ethical correctness (means) in order to reach a favourable conclusion (goal). To live a stress-free and contented existence, people in the current generation must acquire such concepts.

4. Anekantavada: Anekantavada is a concept of Jaina philosophy that states- 'Reality has multiple facets'. So, we all have to acknowledge the complexities of reality and truth. It may encourage people to respect the perspectives of others. Society will be more accepting, and ideally there will be less room for violence.

5. Minimalist Philosophy of Islam: Islam's minimalist concept promotes a straightforward, meaningful existence by eschewing superfluous possessions and concentrating on what really counts. The teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah form the foundation of this worldview. Living a minimalist lifestyle has several advantages, including lowering stress and anxiety, improving financial security, and having a beneficial environmental impact.

Conclusion:

Regardless of the philosophy presented above, we must also understand the four noble truths of Buddhism and the five vows of Jainism. Another crucial concern, however, is now approaching: how can we impart, acquire, instill, and internalise such fundamental life philosophies? The majority of individuals, both young and elderly, are caught up in a never-ending cycle of dopamine-craving (reels culture) because there are so many distractions around us these days. We, all humans as a part of community and society, parents as the early guides of their children, and the state system as an ensurer of good governance – we all can take some initiatives to cure such problems. Some suggestions can be mentioned as -

1. Instead of providing their children a digital device, parents aim to instill religious thought as well as ethical and moral principles through storytelling.
2. From basic school to university, a paper on the Indian knowledge system and philosophy should be required.
3. Mechanisms for recognising the works and individuals who adhere to moral and ethical standards should be established by the state, society, and community.

We will all strike a balance between the ancient and the new knowledge in the hopes of a new morning when people will break free from the unhealthy attachment to bad habits of the post-COVID era and use their best potentialities to make our planet a peaceful, habitable place.

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কঠোপনিষদত ব্ৰহ্মজিজ্ঞাসাঃ যম-নচিকেতা সংবাদত প্ৰেয় আৰু শ্ৰেয়ৰ বাৰ্তাৰে-

অঞ্জনা চলিহা

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

ভাৰতীয় দাৰ্শনিক চিন্তাধাৰাত কঠোপনিষদৰ যম-নচিকেতা সংলাপক এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অধ্যায় হিচাপে বিবেচনা কৰিব পৰা যায়। কঠোপনিষদত যজমান বাজস্বৰসে সৰ্বস্ব দান দিব লগা যজ্ঞ কৰিছে। নিজৰ অধিকাৰৰ সম্পদবোৰ দান দি থাকোঁতে পুতেক নচিকেতাক কাক দিব বুলি নচিকেতাই সোধাত খঙতে যমক দিব বুলি কয়। ফলত নচিকেতা গৈ যমৰাজ্য পায়গৈ। যমে জীৱন্ত অতিথিজনক তিনিটা বৰ ল'বলৈ কয়। নচিকেতাই বিচৰা তৃতীয় বৰৰ কথা শুনি যম বিপাঙত পৰি তেওঁক তাৰ বাহিৰে অন্য ধন-সম্পত্তি সকলো দিব খোজে। কিন্তু নচিকেতাই পাৰ্থিৱ সম্ভোগ বা প্ৰেয়ক তুচ্ছ কৰি অপাৰ্থিৱ অমৰত্বৰ জ্ঞান বা শ্ৰেয়হে বিচাৰি থাকে। তেওঁক জানিবলৈ লাগে মৃত্যুৰ বহস্যহে। যমে নচিকেতাক প্ৰেয় নিবিচাৰি শ্ৰেয় বিচৰাৰ বাবে প্ৰশংসা কৰে। যমে নচিকেতাক অশ্বাস্বত আৰু শ্বাস্বতৰ পাৰ্থক্য বুজাই আত্মাৰ অমৰত্বৰ কথাৰে মৃত্যুৰ বহস্যৰ জ্ঞান দিয়ে- যি কঠিন পথৰ কথা — “ক্ষুব্ধস্যাধাৰা নিশিতা দূৰত্যায়া দুৰ্গং পথস্তৎ কবয়ো বদন্তি।” অতি কঠিন এই পথ তীক্ষ্ণ ক্ষুব্ধাৰ বুলি অবিৰত চেষ্টাত জাগ্ৰত হৈ থাকিবলৈ উপদেশ দিয়ে। এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনৰ জৰিয়তে যম আৰু নচিকেতাৰ মাজত হোৱা আলোচনাৰ মাধ্যমেৰে শ্ৰেয়-প্ৰেয়ৰ ধাৰণা আৰু বৰ্তমান পৰিস্থিতিত ইয়াৰ প্ৰাসংগিকতা দেখুৱাবলৈ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে।

বীজ শব্দ : মৃত্যু বহস্য, যম- নচিকেতা, আত্মাৰ অমৰত্ব, প্ৰেয় আৰু শ্ৰেয়ৰ শিক্ষা, বিদ্যা- অবিদ্যা, আত্মজ্ঞান

অৱতৰণিকাঃ

প্ৰধান উপনিষদ কেইখনৰ ভিতৰতে কঠোপনিষদ প্ৰসিদ্ধ। পাশ্চাত্য পণ্ডিতে এই উপনিষদক “One of the perfect specimens of the mystic philosophy and poetry of the ancient Hindus” বুলি কৈছে (Mehta, 1970, p. 50)। এই উপনিষদখনে বিশ্বব্যাপ্ত প্ৰসিদ্ধি লাভ কৰাৰ মূল কাৰণ হৈছে মানুহে সদায় জানিবলৈ বিচাৰি থকা অজ্ঞেয় “মৃত্যু”ৰ বিষয়টো ইয়াৰ প্ৰধান প্ৰতিপাদ্য।

মুখ্য বিষয়ৰ আলোচনাঃ

যজুৰবেদৰ তৈত্তিৰীয়া সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ অন্তৰ্গত কঠোপনিষদ আৰম্ভ হৈছে এটা অতি মনোগ্ৰাহী গল্পেৰে। বাজস্বৰস (অন্য নাম গৌতম তথা ঔদালকী আৰুণী) নামৰ এজন ব্ৰাহ্মণে তেওঁৰ গৃহস্থাশ্ৰমৰ মঙ্গল কামনাৰে এটা যজ্ঞৰ আয়োজন কৰিছিল। সেই

যজ্ঞত নিজৰ সৰ্বস্ব দান দিব লাগে। ব্ৰাহ্মণজনৰ পুত্ৰ নচিকেতাই মন কৰিলে যে পিতাকে তেওঁৰ গৰু দান কৰিছে, কিন্তু নিশকতীয়া বুঢ়ী, বাজী-গাইকিজনীহে দানৰ বাবে সাজু কৰিছে। এনে কৃপণালিৰে দান কৰিলে পিতাকৰ যজ্ঞ কৰ্ম সফল নহ'ব বুলি তেওঁৰ ভাৱ হ'ল। আৰু সৰ্বস্ব দান দিব লাগে যেতিয়া নিজ পুত্ৰ ৰূপ সম্পত্তিকো দিব লাগিব। সেয়ে নচিকেতাই পিতাকক সোধে, “পিতা, মোক কোন দেৱতাক দান দিবা?” পিতাকে উত্তৰ নিদিয়াত আকৌ সোধে, “কাক দিবা মোক?” বাৰে বাৰে এইদৰে সুধি থকাত খং আৰু বিৰক্তিৰে বাজত্ৰসে ক'লে, “তোক যমক দিম।” পিতাকৰ কথা শুনি দান সাৰ্থক কৰিবলৈ তেওঁ যমৰ ওচৰলৈ যাবলৈ সাজু হ'ল আৰু পিতাকক ক'লে, “মোৰ আগতো বহুত মানুহ যমৰ ঘৰলৈ গৈছে, মোৰ পিচতো বহুত যাব। শস্য পকে, সৰে আৰু সময়ত আকৌ গজে। মানুহৰো একেই কথা।”

নচিকেতা গৈ যমৰ নিবাস পালেগৈ। কিন্তু তাত তেতিয়া যম নাছিল। যম-নগৰী, সংযমনীৰ যম নিবাসলৈ যোৱা জীৱন্ত অতিথিজে গৃহস্থৰ পৰা পাব লগা পানী টুপীও খাবলৈ পোৱা নাছিল। তিনিদিনৰ পিচত যমৰাজ আহি পাওঁতে অনুচৰবৰ্গই তেওঁক জনায় যে এজন তৰুণ অতিথি তেওঁৰ অপেক্ষাত আছে। অতিথিক আপ্যায়ন কৰিব লাগে। যমৰাজে লৰালৰিকে নচিকেতাৰ কাষলৈ আহে আৰু কয়, “তুমি মোৰ ঘৰত তিনি দিন অভুক্ত হৈ আছা, মই খণী হ'লো। এতিয়া তুমি তিনিটা বৰ মোৰ পৰা লোৱা।” নচিকেতাই প্ৰথম বৰ খোজে, “মই এই প্ৰেতলোকলৈ অহাৰ বাবে যেন পিতাৰ লগত মোৰ সম্পৰ্ক ছিল নহয়, তেওঁৰ লগত মোৰ পিতাপুত্ৰৰ সম্বন্ধ আগৰ দৰেই থাকে যেন। যমৰাজাই “তথাস্তু” বুলিলে আৰু কয় যে “তুমি যমৰাজ্যৰ পৰা উলটি যাব পাৰিবা আৰু প্ৰেতৰাজ্যৰ পৰা যোৱাৰ পিচতো তোমাৰ পিতাই তোমাক পুত্ৰ বুলি আদৰি ল'ব, তোমাৰ ওপৰত তেওঁৰ একো ক্ৰোধ নাথাকে” (Mehta, 1970, p. 50)।

নচিকেতাই দ্বিতীয় বৰটো খোজে, “হে ধৰ্মৰাজ স্বৰ্গকামনা কৰা যজমান সকলে যি অগ্নিবিদ্যাৰ সহায়ত স্বৰ্গলাভ কৰে মই সেই বিষয়ে জানিব খোজোঁ। দ্বিতীয় বৰ মোক সেইটো দিয়ক।” যমৰাজাই “সেয়ে হওক” বুলি অগ্নিযজ্ঞ আৰু আনুষংগিক সকলো কথা নচিকেতাক অৱগত কৰিলে। নচিকেতাক যমে দিয়া জ্ঞানখিনি সম্পূৰ্ণ দোহাৰি শুনোৱাত ধৰ্মৰাজ সন্তুষ্ট হয় আৰু তেওঁক এটা পুৰস্কাৰ দিয়ে এইবুলি কৈ, “এতিয়াৰ পৰা এই অগ্নি তোমাৰ নামেৰে পৰিচিত হ'ব “নচিকেতা অগ্নি” নামেৰে। এইবাৰ নচিকেতাক যমে তৃতীয় বৰ প্ৰাৰ্থিবলৈ কয়। নচিকেতাই কয় তৃতীয় বৰত মোক জ্ঞান লাগে মৃত্যুৰ ৰহস্যৰ। মৃত্যুৰ পিছত আচলতে কি হয়, জীৱ তেতিয়া আত্মৰূপে কেনেকৈ থাকে নে মৃত্যুত সকলো শেষ হৈ যায়? মৃত্যুৰ ৰহস্যৰ বাহিৰে অন্য বৰ খুজিবলৈ যমে নচিকেতাক অনুৰোধ কৰে। কিন্তু নচিকেতাক অন্য একো নালাগে।

মানুহে “মানুহ” ৰূপে নিজকে পোৱাৰ পৰাই চিন্তা কৰিবলৈ শিকিছে আৰু সেই অনাদি কালৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি এতিয়াৰ বিজ্ঞানৰ জয়যাত্ৰাৰ দিনলৈকে “মৃত্যু” হৈ আছে মানৱৰ বাবে এক ৰহস্য মাথো। মৃত্যুক জয় কৰিব নোৱাৰি মানুহে তেওঁৰ পাৰ্থিৱ অস্তিত্বক দীঘলীয়া কৰিবলৈকে চাইছে। যেনে তেনে প্ৰকাৰে মৃত্যুৰ আগমন পিছুৱাই দিছে। কিয়নো যেতিয়া কোনো জনৰ কাষলৈ মৃত্যু আহি পায়হি তেতিয়া তেওঁতকৈ অসহায় আৰু কোন থাকিব?

মৃত্যু হৈছে এনে এক মুহূৰ্ত যাৰ কথা তাৰ আগমুহূৰ্তলৈকে গম নাপায়। সেয়ে “মৃত্যুভয়” মানুহৰ অনবৰতে থাকে, এই কথাৰ যোগদৰ্শনে কৈছে “অভিনিৱেশ” বুলি। যোগদৰ্শনে এই অভিনিৱেশ বা জীৱনৰ প্ৰতি আসক্তি (মৃত্যুৰ অনিবাৰ্যতাৰ বাবেই আমাৰ জীৱনলৈ একান্ত আসক্তি) বা মৃত্যুভয়ক যোগ-সমাধি আহৰণৰ প্ৰতিবন্ধক বুলিছে আৰু অবিদ্যা, অস্মিতা, ৰাগ, দ্বেষৰ লগতে শ্ৰেণীভুক্ত কৰি পঞ্চক্লেশত অভিনিৱেশকো ঠাই দিছে, যোগ আহৰণত বাধা প্ৰদান কৰা অন্যতম অন্তৰায় বুলি।

মানৱজীৱনত আমালৈ আহিবলগীয়া বা আমাৰ প্ৰাপ্যবিলাকৰ ভিতৰত অতিকৈ নিশ্চিত হৈছে “মৃত্যু” আৰু সেই মৃত্যুৰ

আগমন হৈছে একেবাৰে অনিশ্চিত। কোন সময়ত, কালৈ, কেনেকৈ আহিব সেই সম্পৰ্কে ভৱিষ্যবাণী কৰিব নোৱাৰি। আৰু মৃত্যুৰ দাবী হৈছে এনে যে মৃতকজন যাব লাগিব সম্পূৰ্ণ খালী হাতেৰে, তেওঁৰ সৰ্বস্ব এৰি যাব লাগিব। আধুনিক ক্ৰমোন্নত চিকিৎসা পদ্ধতিৰে মৃত্যুক যিমানৈ পিছুৱাই নাথাকে কিয় এদিন এটা মুহূৰ্তত মৃত্যুক আদৰণি জনাবলৈ আমি বাধ্য হ'ব লাগিব। সেয়েহে মৃত্যুভয় বা অভিনিৱেশে আমাৰ লোভ, লালসা আদিকো নিয়ন্ত্ৰণত ৰাখে। সেয়েহে সেই অনিয়ন্ত্ৰিত, দুৰ্ঘৰ মৃত্যুৰ বহস্য জানিবলৈ বিচাৰিছিল উদ্দালক আৰুণীৰ পুত্ৰ নচিকেতাই। জানিবলৈ বিচাৰিছিল মৃত্যুৰ অধিপতি যম ৰজাৰ পৰা।

যমে কৈছিল, “মৃত্যুৰ বহস্য অতি সূক্ষ্ম, দুৰ্বোধ্য, তুমি অন্য বৰ বিচাৰা।” কিন্তু মৃত্যুৰ গোপন বহস্য নাজানে বাবেই মানৱৰ জীৱনৰ আনন্দবোৰ সদায় দুখ মিশ্ৰিত। সেয়েহে নচিকেতাই সেই জ্ঞানকেহে বিচাৰিছে, তেওঁক অন্য একো নালাগে। যমে কৈছিল তেওঁ অন্য ভোগ্য বস্তু যি বিচাৰে সেই সকলোবোৰ প্ৰচুৰ পৰিমাণে দিব। সেই ভঙ্গুৰ, নশ্বৰবোৰৰ প্ৰলোভন প্ৰত্যাখ্যান কৰি “তৃতীয়টো বৰত নচিকেতাই বিচাৰিছে মৃত্যু অৱস্থাৰ বহস্যৰ সন্তোদ-আত্মাৰ অমৰত্ব মানে কি?” “অমৰত্ব” এই কথা সত্য নে? নে মৃত্যুত একোৱেই নাথাকে। কি থাকে মৃত্যুৰ পিছত- অস্তিত্ব নে অনস্তিত্ব? মৃত্যু হওঁতে বাক জীৱই গম পায়নে? এইবোৰ নচিকেতাৰ প্ৰশ্ন।

যমে উত্তৰ দিবলৈ টান পায় অন্য বৰ দিব খোজে। নচিকেতাই কৈছিল, তেওঁৰ সেইটো প্ৰশ্নৰ উত্তৰ মৃত্যুৰ অধিপতি যমে নিদিলে কোনে দিব পাৰিব? যমক তেওঁ কৈছিল, যিবোৰ ভোগ্য সামগ্ৰী দি যমে তেওঁৰ প্ৰশ্নটো এৰাব খুজিছে সেই সকলোবোৰ অশাস্ত্বত। “ন বিভেন তপনীয় মনুষ্যাঃ”- বিভৱ দ্বাৰা মানুহ কেতিয়াও সুখী হব নোৱাৰে। “হে যমৰাজ তোমাৰ প্ৰতি সদায় ভীতিগ্ৰস্ত হৈ থাকিবলগা মানৱ এইবিলাকেৰে সুখী হ'ব কেনেকৈ?”

নিৰুপায় যমে তৃতীয়টো বৰত সত্যকামীজনে বিচৰা শিক্ষা দান কৰিবলৈ বাধ্য হয়। কঠ উপনিষদত যমৰাজ হৈছে শিক্ষক বা গুৰু আৰু নচিকেতা হৈছে ছাত্ৰ বা শিষ্য। উপনিষদখনৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ মঙ্গলাচৰণত গুৰু-শিষ্যৰ সম্পৰ্কৰ এটি অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ প্ৰাৰ্থনা আছে-

“অউম্ সহ নাববতু,

সহ নৌ ভুনক্তু,

সহ বীৰ্য্যং কৰবাবহৈ।

তেজস্বি নাৱবধীতমস্তুঃ মা বিদ্বিষাবহৈ।।

অউম্ শান্তিঃ শান্তিঃ শান্তিঃ।”

এই প্ৰাৰ্থনাটিত কৈছে,

ব্ৰহ্মই আমাৰ দুয়োকে ৰক্ষা কৰে যেন। দুয়োকে জ্ঞান প্ৰদান কৰে যেনঙ্গ আমি দুয়ো যেন জ্ঞান আহৰণ কৰা বীৰ্যৰ অধিকাৰী হওঁঙ্গ অধ্যয়নে আমাৰ দুয়োতে সত্য প্ৰকাশ কৰাওক। আমি যেন পৰস্পৰৰ প্ৰতি একো বিদ্বেষ নাৰাখো।”- গুৰু-শিষ্য দুয়ো একেলগে এই আবৃত্তিৰে জ্ঞান- অৰ্জনৰ বাবে প্ৰয়োজনীয় বীৰ্য্য তথা বিদ্বেষশূণ্যতা প্ৰাৰ্থনা কৰি অধ্যয়নৰ দ্বাৰা সত্য প্ৰাপ্তিৰে আলোকিত হ'বলৈ বিচাৰিছে।

যমে সত্যকামী নচিকেতাক শিক্ষাদান আৰম্ভ কৰিছে “প্ৰেয়” আৰু “শ্ৰেয় ৰ কথাবে। সংসাৰত প্ৰেয় আৰু শ্ৰেয় দুইটাই থাকে। শ্ৰেয়ক বিচৰাজন জ্ঞানী আৰু প্ৰেয়ক বিচৰাজনে পৰমার্থ কেতিয়াও নাপায়। ঐন্দ্ৰিয় সুখপ্ৰদ বা তৃপ্তিদায়কবোৰ হ'ল প্ৰেয় আৰু কল্যাণ-প্ৰদ হ'ল শ্ৰেয়। নচিকেতাই যিহেতুকে প্ৰেয়ৰ প্ৰলোভনত বান্ধ নাখাই শ্ৰেয়কে বিচাৰি থাকিল, সেয়ে তেওঁ সেই

পৰমার্থ জ্ঞান পাবৰ যোগ্য।

যমে কৈ গৈছে, প্ৰেয় আৰু শ্ৰেয়ৰ পথ হৈছে ক্ৰমে অবিদ্যা আৰু বিদ্যাৰ পথ। অবিদ্যাৰ পথ এৰি নচিকেতাই বিদ্যাৰ পথকে ধৰিছে। সত্য সদায় লুকাই থাকে আৰু অবিদ্যা আশ্ৰয়ী অজ্ঞানীৰ ওচৰত ব্যক্ত নহয়। অবিদ্যাত থকা জনে ঐহিকতাকে সৰ্বস্ব বুলি ভাবে। তেনেজন বাৰম্বাৰ যমৰজাৰ কবললৈ যায়। “তুমি সেই প্ৰীতিপদ সম্পদৰ বান্ধৰ পৰা নিৰ্মোহ বিবেচনাৰে-বিদ্যাৰে যুক্ত হৈ থাকিব পাৰিছা। তুমি ধন্য নচিকেতা, অবিদ্যা এৰি বিদ্যাৰ, প্ৰেয় এৰি শ্ৰেয়ৰ পথ ধৰিছা। তুমি এই বহস্য জ্ঞান লোৱাৰ যোগ্য ছাত্ৰ। প্ৰীতিপদ সম্পদৰ প্ৰত্যাখ্যানৰে তোমাৰ অন্তৰেদ্ৰিয় এতিয়া আত্মজ্ঞান পাবলৈ সাজু আছে। তোমাৰ দৰে শিষ্য পোৱাও ভাগ্যৰ কথা।”

শ্ৰেয় বা নিঃশ্ৰেয়স প্ৰাপ্তি হৈছে আত্মাৰ বোধ। আত্মাৰ কথা জানিবলৈ বহুতে সুবিধাই নাপায়, বহুতে শুনিও একো বুজিব নোৱাৰে। আত্মাতত্ত্বৰ বিষয়ে কোৱা যোগ্য বক্তা পাবলৈ টান। “যথার্থ জ্ঞান নথকাজনৰ পৰা আত্মাতত্ত্ব জানিবলৈ বিচাৰিলে লাভ নহয়, হানি বিস্তৰ। সূক্ষ্মতকৈ সূক্ষ্ম আত্মা যিহেতু অকথনীয় সেয়ে ইয়াৰ ধাৰণা তৰ্ক বা যুক্তিয়ে দিব নোৱাৰে। কেৱল জ্ঞানী আচাৰ্যৰ লগত হোৱা অন্তৰৰ সংযোগত হে আত্মজ্ঞান সম্ভব। অজ্ঞানী গুৰুৰ পথ নিৰ্দেশনাত খোজ দিয়া কথা হ’ব “অক্ষেনৈব নিয়মানা যথাক্ষাঃ”- অক্ষই অক্ষক বাট দেখুওৱাৰ দৰে মুখামি। তেনেজন বাৰে বাৰে মোৰ কবললৈ আহি থাকে, পুনৰ মৃত্যুৰ শিকলিত ঘূৰি থাকে।”

“পাৰ্থিৱ ধন-সম্পত্তি অশাস্ত, অস্থায়ী, অশাস্তৰ দ্বাৰা শাস্ত প্ৰাপ্তি সম্ভৱ নহয়। অনিত্যৰ দ্বাৰা নিত্যক নাপায়। কিন্তু মই যি নচিকেতা অগ্নি প্ৰজ্বলন কৰিছোঁ তাৰে, অনিত্যৰ নিত্য প্ৰাপ্তি সম্ভৱ হৈ উঠিব। “নচিকেতা চিৰদিনলৈ থাকিব।” (কঠ উপনিষদ ১-২-১০)।

যমে দিয়া শিক্ষা হৈছে শ্ৰেয়ৰ পথেৰে গৈ মানৱে অমৰত্ব পাব। তেনেজন যমৰ কবলত নপৰে। যমে নচিকেতাক কোৱা কথাত কঠ উপনিষদত আমি ভগৱদগীতাৰে বহুখিনি পূৰ্বাভাস পোওঁ। যমে কৈছিল জন্ম-মৃত্যু আত্মাৰ নাই। নশ্বৰ শৰীৰ বা প্ৰাণ আদিয়ে মানৱ সত্তা নহয়, তেওঁৰ আছে অবিনশ্বৰ সাৰসত্তা। এই সাৰসত্তা হৈছে ব্ৰহ্ম, যি মৃত্যুহীন গোপন সত্তা অনাদি কালৰ পৰা অনন্তকাললৈ বিৰাজ কৰে।

জ্ঞান আহৰণৰ আমাৰ সাধাৰণ মাধ্যম বোৰৰ যোগেদি আত্মাক নাপায়। যমে কৈছে,

“নায়মাত্মা প্ৰবচনে লভ্যো ন মেধয়া ন বহুনা শ্ৰুতেন।

যমেবৈষ বৃনতে তেন লভ্যন্তসৈষ আত্মা

বিবৃণুতে তনুংস্বাম।” (কঠ উপনিষদ ১-২-২৩)

আত্মা যিহেতুকে “মহতো মহিয়ান তথা “অনোৰেনিয়ান”- বিৰাটতকৈও বিৰাট আৰু অনুতকৈও সৰু অৰ্থাৎ বিৰোধী গুণ যুক্ত- বহি থাকোঁতেই দূৰলৈ গৈ থাকে, শুই থাকোঁতে সকলো স্থানলৈ যায়-“আসীনো দূৰং ব্ৰজতি শয়নো যাতি সৰ্বতঃ।”-তেনে আত্মাক আমাৰ জ্ঞান আহৰণৰ সাধাৰণ মাধ্যমবোৰৰ পৰা জনা নাযায়। অধ্যয়ন, মেধা বা বহু শাস্ত্ৰৰ শ্ৰৱণৰ দ্বাৰাও জানিব নোৱাৰি। আত্মা বা ব্ৰহ্মই নিজে বৰণ কৰা কৃপাধন্য জনেহে আত্মাৰ জ্ঞান পাব পাৰে। তেনেজনৰ জ্ঞানত আত্মা নিজে ব্যক্ত হয়। আকৌ কৈছে যে যিজন সূক্ষ্মবুদ্ধিসম্পন্ন তেওঁহে কেৱল অন্তঃপ্ৰজ্ঞাৰে (by intuition) আত্মাৰ সন্ধান পাব পাৰে।

“এষ সৰ্বেষু ভূতেশু গুঢ়োহাত্মা ন প্ৰকাশতে।

দৃশ্যতে ত্ৰপ্তয়া বুদ্ধ্যা সূক্ষ্ময়া সূক্ষ্মতদৰ্শিভিঃ ॥ (কঠ উপনিষদ ১-৩-১২)

শ্ৰেয়ৰ পথলোৱাজনে ব্ৰহ্মৰ কৃপাধন্য হৈ ব্ৰহ্মক জানিব পাৰে আৰু তেনেজনে যমৰ শাসনৰ বাহিৰত বা পুনৰ-মৃত্যুৰ শৃংখলৰ বাহিৰত থাকিব পাৰে।

আত্মজ্ঞানৰ শিক্ষাদান দি যমে কৈছে-

“উক্তিষ্ঠত জাগ্ৰত প্ৰাপ্য বৰান নিবোধত

ক্ষুব্ধস্য ধাৰা নিশিতা দূৰতয়া

দূৰ্গং পথস্তৎ কবয়ো বদন্তি।। (কঠ উপনিষদ- ১-৩-১৪)

তোমাৰ বৰপ্ৰাপ্ত হৈ উঠা, জাগা, বুজি উঠা। অতি কঠিন এই পথ তীক্ষ্ণ ক্ষুব্ধাৰ। জ্ঞানী পণ্ডিতেও তত্ৰ পাব নোৱাৰা কঠিন।” এই বিদ্যাৰ পথ ল’লেই শ্ৰেয়ক পাবা যমৰ ভীতিগ্ৰস্ততাৰ পৰা মুক্ত হ’বা। মন, বুদ্ধি ইন্দ্ৰিয়ৰ অতীত হৈ থাকে অব্যক্ত আৰু অব্যক্তৰ অতীত সেই “পুৰুষক” জানিলেই অমৰত্ব প্ৰাপ্তি ঘটে। “অব্যক্তাত্ম পৰঃ পুৰুষো ব্যাপকোহলিঙ্গ এবচ। যং জ্ঞাত্বা মুচ্যতে জন্তুৰ মৃতত্বঞ্চ গচ্ছতি।।” (২-৩-৮)

ব্ৰহ্মই সেই পুৰুষ যাৰ কথা কৈছে-

“ভয়াদস্যগ্নিস্তপতি ভয়াত্তপতি সূৰ্যঃ।

ভয়াদিন্দ্ৰশ বায়ুশ্চ মৃত্যুৰ্ধাবতি পঞ্চমঃ।।” (কঠ-উপনিষদ ২-৩-৩)

যম নচিকেতা সন্মাদৰ যমৰ বাৰ্তাৰ থকা সেই অব্যক্তৰ অতীত পৰম পুৰুষ জনাৰ কথাই যাৰ ভয়ত অগ্নি, সূৰ্য, ইন্দ্ৰ, চন্দ্ৰ, বায়ু আদি দেৱতাসকল নিজ নিজ কামত বত থাকে, মৃত্যু যাৰ ভয়ত পলায় সেই ব্ৰহ্মই পৰমাত্মা তথা ভগৱান ৰূপে গীতা, ভাগৱতৰ মাজেদি আহি শংকৰদেৱৰ কীৰ্তনত স্থিতি লোৱা দেখিবলৈ পাওঁ-

গুৰুজনে কালভুজঙ্গ অৰ্থাৎ যমৰজাৰ ভয়ত যোগীসকলেও যাক সেৱা কৰে সেইজনৰ প্ৰসঙ্গ আনি কৈছে-

“মহা বলৱন্ত কাল ভুজঙ্গক ভয়।

যাক সেৱা কৰন্তু সদায় যোগীচয়।।

পলায় জগতৰ মৃত্যু যি প্ৰভুক ডৰে।

যাক ভয়ে চন্দ্ৰ সূৰ্য পৰন সঞ্চাৰে।।

হেন জগন্নাথ অনাথৰ ইষ্টদেৱ।

হৰি বিনে আৰৱ তাৰতা নাই কেৱ।।”

(গজেন্দ্ৰোপাখ্যান কীৰ্তন ৫০৩)

সামৰণিঃ

কঠোপনিষদৰ এই যম-নচিকেতা সংবাদ বৰ্তমান ভোগবাদী সমাজৰ বাবে প্ৰাসংগিক কাৰণ ই মানুহক সাময়িক পাৰ্থিৱ সুখৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে শ্ৰেয়ৰ পথ গ্ৰহণ কৰি আত্মোপলব্ধিৰ জৰিয়তে নৈতিক তথা আধ্যাত্মিক উৎকৰ্ষ সাধন কৰিবলৈ অনুপ্ৰেৰণা প্ৰদান কৰে। ওপৰোক্ত অধ্যয়নৰ জৰিয়তে মানুহে জীৱনৰ এক চিৰন্তন সত্যক উপলব্ধি কৰিব পাৰিব। প্ৰেয় আৰু শ্ৰেয়ৰ জ্ঞান লাভ কৰি জীৱনৰ ক্ষণিকীয়া সুখ-ভোগ, আনন্দ-বিলাস যে তুচ্ছ আৰু পৰম কল্যাণৰ পথ যে স্থায়ী সেই সম্পৰ্কে উপলব্ধি কৰিব পাৰিব। নচিকেতাই যিহেতু শ্ৰেয়ৰ পথ গ্ৰহণ কৰি জীৱনৰ চিৰন্তন সত্য উদঘাটনেৰে এক আদৰ্শ দাঙি ধৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছে, গতিকে বৰ্তমান প্ৰজন্ময়েও নচিকেতাৰ আদৰ্শক অনুসৰণ কৰি জীৱনৰ প্ৰকৃত সত্যক উপলব্ধি কৰিব পাৰিব।

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নাৰীৰ ৰজোনিবৃত্তি আৰু যোগ সাধনা

মেঘালী বৰা

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

নাৰী মহীয়সী, গৰীয়সী, মমতাময়ী, চলনাময়ী, বিভিন্ন অভিধাৰে প্ৰোজ্জ্বল। নাৰীয়ে যুগে যুগে সবল, সহনশীল আৰু সৃষ্টিশীল ৰূপে সমাজত বিশেষ স্থান অধিকাৰ কৰি আহিছে। ইতিহাসৰ পাতত বহু মহীয়সী নাৰীৰ ভিন্ন অৱদান সোণোৱালী আখৰেৰে আজিও উজ্জ্বলি আছে। সাম্প্ৰতিক যুগৰ নাৰীয়ে শিক্ষা, অৰ্থনীতি, ৰাজনীতি, বিজ্ঞান আদি সমাজৰ প্ৰতিটো ক্ষেত্ৰত সক্ৰিয়ভাৱে অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰি নিজা পৰিচয় গঢ়ি তুলিছে। তথাপিও ব্যক্তিগত অথবা সামাজিক ক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰীৰ প্ৰতি বৈষম্য আৰু প্ৰত্যাহান এতিয়াও অব্যাহত আছে, যিবোৰ সমস্যা সমাধানৰ বাবে সজাগতা আৰু সমন্বিত প্ৰচেষ্টা অতি প্ৰয়োজনীয়। অনেক নাৰীৰ মুখত শুনা যায় যে সময় নাই। পুৰুষতান্ত্ৰিক সমাজ ব্যৱস্থাত দেখা যায় যে বিভিন্ন মহিলাই কেৱল ঘৰখন, ল'ৰা-ছোৱালী, আত্মীয়-স্বজন আদিৰ কথা ভাবোঁতে নিজৰ স্বাস্থ্যৰ কথা পাহৰি যায়। বহুতো নাৰীয়ে একেবাৰে নভবা কথা এটা হৈছে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত দেখা দিয়া সমস্যাবিলাক, যাৰ ফলত নাৰীগৰাকী বিভিন্ন সময়ত ভাগি পৰা দেখা যায়। সেই সময়ত ল'ৰলগীয়া যত্নৰ কথা তেওঁলোকে নিজেই অনুভৱ নকৰে। ৰজোনিবৃত্তি এটা প্ৰাকৃতিক নিয়ম বুলি সেই সময়ত মহিলাসকলে বিশেষ যত্ন নলয়। ফলত বয়সৰ লগে লগে বিভিন্ন সমস্যাৰ সৃষ্টি হয়। এইক্ষেত্ৰত যোগ সাধনাই হৈছে একমাত্ৰ উপায় যি সকলো ধৰণৰ দৈহিক বিসংগতিসমূহ দূৰ কৰি নাৰীগৰাকীক সুস্থ কৰি ৰাখে। নাৰীগৰাকী সুস্থ হ'লেহে ঘৰ এখন সুস্থ হৈ থাকিব। ৰজোনিবৃত্তি এটা প্ৰাকৃতিক নিয়ম বুলি আমি হাত সাবতি বহি নাথাকি যোগৰ জৰিয়তে সাময়িক সকাহ পাব পাৰি। অসহনীয় যন্ত্ৰণা লাঘৱ কৰিব পাৰি। আজিৰ যান্ত্ৰিক জীৱনে আমাক বিভিন্ন সময়ত যন্ত্ৰণাকাতৰ কৰি তোলে। উদ্ভিগ্ন, উৎকণ্ঠাৰ পৰা হাত সাৰিবলৈ যোগ সাধনাই একমাত্ৰ উপায় বুলি যোগশাস্ত্ৰই কয় আৰু এই কথা বৰ্তমান সময়ত চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানেও স্বীকাৰ কৰে। ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত দেখা দিয়া লক্ষণসমূহ যোগ সাধনাৰ জৰিয়তে কিদৰে নিৰ্মূল কৰিব পাৰি তাকেই এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনৰ জৰিয়তে যথাসম্ভৱ বিশ্লেষণৰ যোগেদি দাঙি ধৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে।

বীজ শব্দ : নাৰী, নাৰীৰ স্বাস্থ্য, যোগ, ৰজোনিবৃত্তি

অৱতৰণিকাঃ

নাৰী হৈছে সৃষ্টিৰ আদি মূল। নাৰী হৈছে এক চালিকাশক্তি, যি শক্তিৰ অনুপস্থিতিত সকলো শূন্য হৈ পৰে। দেশৰ সৰ্বাংগীন বিকাশত পুৰুষৰ সমানে নাৰীৰ ভূমিকা আছে। নাৰী শব্দৰ মাজত নিহিত হৈ আছে নাৰীৰ মমতা, সাহস আৰু ত্যাগ। নাৰী মহীয়সী, গৰীয়সী, বহুসময়ী বিভিন্ন উপমাৰে অলংকৃত যদিও কিছু কিছু ক্ষেত্ৰত উপেক্ষিত আৰু অৱহেলিত হোৱা দেখা

যায়। অনেক নাৰীৰ মুখত শুনা যায় যে সময় নাই, নিজৰ বাবে অলপো সময় নাই। যিগৰাকী নাৰীৰ বাবে ঘৰ এখন স্বৰ্গ হৈ পৰে, যিগৰাকী নাৰীৰ বাবে ঘৰখনৰ আন সদস্যসকলৰ জীৱন নমনীয় হৈ পৰে, সেই নাৰীগৰাকীৰ একান্ত নিজৰ বুলিবলৈ সময় নাই কিয়? নাৰীসকলে এই প্ৰশ্নৰ উত্তৰ বিচাৰি উলিয়াব লাগিব। সুসজ্জিত স্বৰ্গ স্বৰূপ ঘৰখনি আটোমটোকাৰিকৈ ৰাখিবৰ বাবে, পৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যসকলৰ কল্যাণৰ বাবে নাৰী হ'ব লাগিব কিছু পৰিমাণে স্বাৰ্থপৰ যি স্বাৰ্থই আপোনাক স্বামী, পুত্ৰ, কন্যাৰ সেৱা কৰাৰ সুযোগ দিয়ে দীৰ্ঘকাললৈ তেনে স্বাৰ্থপৰতাই আপোনাৰ বাঞ্ছিত হোৱা উচিত। চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানৰ মতে স্বাস্থ্য চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত দেখা যায় যে প্ৰাকৃতিকভাৱেই নাৰী আৰু পুৰুষৰ মাজত বৈষম্য আছে। পুৰুষৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত যিবোৰ সমস্যা ৮০ বছৰ বয়সৰপৰা আহিবলৈ ধৰে মহিলাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত সেই সমস্যাবোৰ ৪০ বছৰৰ পৰাই আহে, যেনে - আঁঠুৰ বিষ, কঁকালৰ বিষ, ভৰিৰ বিষ আদি। ঋতুস্ৰাৱৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ পৰাই বহু নাৰী বিভিন্ন সমস্যাৰ সন্মুখীন হ'বলগীয়াত পৰে অলস্ৱাৰ, অতিস্ৱাৰ, অনিয়মীয়া ঋতুস্ৰাৱ আদিয়ে নাৰীৰ স্বাভাৱিক আনন্দময় জীৱনৰ গতিশীলতাত কিছু পৰিমাণে বাধাৰ সৃষ্টি কৰে। তদুপৰি বয়স বঢ়াৰ লগে লগে জৰায়ুৰ বিভিন্ন ৰোগ, ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ আগৰ পিছৰ অস্বাভাৱিকতা আদিয়ে নাৰীৰ কৰ্ম জীৱনৰ আনন্দ হ্ৰাস কৰাৰ সম্ভাৱনা বাঢ়ি যায়। এনেক্ষেত্ৰত নাৰীসকলে ৰাতিপুৱাৰ পৰা ৰাতি শোৱালৈকে যিখিনি সময় কৰ্মব্যস্ত হৈ থাকে তাৰ পৰা এঘণ্টা সময় কৰ্তন কৰি যোগাসন, প্ৰাণায়াম আৰু ধ্যান কৰিব লাগে। নিয়মিত যোগাসনৰ অভ্যাস গঢ়ি তুলিলে মহিলাসকলৰ বাহ্যিক সৌন্দৰ্য বৰ্দ্ধা কৰাৰ লগতে শৰীৰৰ জটিল যন্ত্ৰসমূহ যেনে- ডিম্বাশয়, জৰায়ু আদিক ঠিক ঠাইত ৰাখি সেইবোৰ সুস্থ আৰু কাৰ্যক্ষম কৰি ৰাখিব পাৰে। নাৰীৰ জীৱনকালত দেখা দিয়া ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ বিষয়ে এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনিত আলোচনা কৰিবলৈ বিচৰা হৈছে।

উদ্দেশ্যঃ

যোগৰ মাহাত্ম্য সৰ্বত্ৰ প্ৰমাণিত হোৱাৰ ফলস্বৰূপে ২০১৪ চনৰ ১১ ডিচেম্বৰ তাৰিখে ৰাষ্ট্ৰসংঘত গৃহীত এক প্ৰস্তাৱযোগে প্ৰতি বছৰৰ ২১ জুন তাৰিখটো “আন্তৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় যোগ দিৱস” হিচাপে পালন কৰাৰ আনুষ্ঠানিক সিদ্ধান্ত গ্ৰহণ কৰা হয়। চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত পৃথিৱীখন যিমানদূৰ আগুৱাই গ'লেও যোগ সাধনাক কোনেও নুই কৰিব নোৱাৰে। গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনিৰ মূল লক্ষ্য যোগে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ আগৰ আৰু পিছৰ সময়ত বহু মহিলাই অনুভৱ কৰা শাৰীৰিক আৰু মানসিক লক্ষণসমূহ পৰিচালনা কৰাত সহায় কৰিব পাৰে। ইয়াৰ উপৰিও ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পিছৰ দীৰ্ঘম্যাদী শাৰীৰিক আৰু মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য উন্নত কৰিব পাৰে। এটা কথা সঠিক যে যোগাসনে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পিছত শৰীৰে হেৰুওৱা হৰম'ন ঘূৰাই আনিব নোৱাৰে। কিন্তু শৰীৰটোক আন বিসংগতিৰ পৰা আঁতৰাই ৰাখিব পাৰে।

এই পত্ৰখনিৰ মূল উদ্দেশ্য হ'ল-

- ১। ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ কাৰণ সম্পৰ্কে জনা
- ২। ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পৰ্যায়ৰ ভাগ
- ৩। ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত দেখা দিয়া লক্ষণসমূহ চিনাক্তকৰণ
- ৪। নাৰীৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱনযাত্ৰাত যোগাসনক অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰা।

তথ্য সংগ্ৰহৰ উৎসঃ

এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনৰ বাবে বিভিন্ন কিতাপ, প্ৰবন্ধ আৰু ইণ্টাৰনেটৰ পৰা সমলসমূহ আহৰণ কৰা হৈছে।

নাৰীৰ ৰজোনিবৃত্তিঃ

প্ৰকৃতিয়ে নাৰীক সন্তান জন্ম দিব পৰা এক অনুপম শক্তি উপহাৰ দিছে। নাৰীৰ জীৱনকালত দুটা পৰিৱৰ্তন অতি উল্লেখনীয়। প্ৰথমতে এজনী ছোৱালীৰ তেৰ বছৰমান বয়সৰ পৰা শৰীৰত কিছুমান পৰিৱৰ্তনে দেখা দিয়ে। এই সময়ছোৱাত ছোৱালীজনীৰ প্ৰথম মাহেকীয়া বা ঋতুস্ৰাৱ হয়। দ্বিতীয়তে প্ৰায় ৪০/৪৫ বছৰ বয়সত চিৰদিনলৈ ঋতুস্ৰাৱ বন্ধ হৈ যায়, যাক ৰজোনিবৃত্তি আৰু ইংৰাজীত মেনপজ বুলি কোৱা হয়। ৰজোনিবৃত্তি এগৰাকী নাৰীৰ জীৱনৰ এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অধ্যায়। প্ৰতিগৰাকী নাৰীৰ জীৱনলৈ ৰজোনিবৃত্তি আহিবই। ই কোনো ৰোগ নহয়। ই এক স্বাভাৱিক অৱস্থা। এগৰাকী নাৰীৰ ঋতুস্ৰাৱ প্ৰাকৃতিকভাৱে সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে বন্ধ হৈ এবছৰ পাৰ হোৱাৰ পিছত যদিহে পুনৰ ঋতুস্ৰাৱ নহয়, তেতিয়া নাৰীগৰাকীৰ ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হোৱা বুলি কোৱা হয়। ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হোৱা নাৰীৰ দেহত এষ্ট্ৰোজেন আৰু প্ৰজেষ্টেৰণ হৰম'ন কমি যায়। সাধাৰণতে ৪০/৫০ বছৰ বয়সৰ ভিতৰত মহিলাসকলৰ ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হয়। অৱশ্যে কিছুমান জনগোষ্ঠীৰ মহিলাৰ বহুত কম বয়সতে হোৱা দেখা যায়। বহুত নাৰীৰ ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ দুবছৰমান আগৰে পৰা ঋতুস্ৰাৱ অনিয়মীয়া হ'বলৈ আৰম্ভ কৰে। এই সময়ছোৱাক Climacteric বুলি কোৱা হয়। এই সময়ছোৱাত মহিলাসকলৰ মন অস্থিৰ হয়। সৰু সৰু কথাতে মন বেয়া লাগে। কামৰ প্ৰতি মনোযোগ কমি আহে। গতিকে ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হৈছে এক প্ৰাকৃতিক, জৈৱিক আৰু শাৰীৰিক প্ৰক্ৰিয়া যিয়ে মহিলাৰ প্ৰজননৰ বছৰ শেষ হোৱাৰ সংকেত দিয়ে। এই সময়ছোৱাত মহিলাসকলৰ শৰীৰটো বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ শাৰীৰিক সমস্যাক কেন্দ্ৰ কৰি অধিক সংবেদনশীল কৰি তোলে। নাৰীসকলৰ এই সময়ত মধুমেহ, উচ্চ ৰক্তচাপ, হৃদৰোগৰ সমস্যা, পাচন সমস্যা আদি ৰোগত আক্ৰান্ত হোৱাৰ সম্ভাৱনা অধিক হৈ পৰে। এই সন্দৰ্ভত নাৰীসকলৰ মাজত সজাগতা বৃদ্ধি কৰাৰ লগতে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ছোৱাত শাৰীৰিক আৰু মানসিক সুস্থতাৰ বিষয়ে অৱগত কৰিবলৈ প্ৰতিবছৰে ২০২১ চনৰ পৰা ১৮ অক্টোবৰ দিনটো “বিশ্ব মেনপজ দিৱস” হিচাপে পালন কৰা হয়।

নাৰীৰ ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পৰ্যায় আৰু লক্ষণসমূহঃ

ৰজোনিবৃত্তিক তিনিটা পৰ্যায়ত ভাগ কৰা হয়-

(১) **ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ আগৰ পৰ্যায়ঃ** এই সময়ছোৱাত ঋতুস্ৰাৱ অনিয়মীয়া হয় যদিও সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে বন্ধ নহয়। এই পৰ্যায়টো ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ ২/৩ বছৰৰ আগৰ পৰাই আৰম্ভ হয়। এই সময়ছোৱাত নাৰীসকলৰ মানসিক পৰিৱৰ্তন, টোপনিৰ অসুবিধা, মাজে মাজে অত্যাধিক গৰম উঠা, কামনাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তন হয়। ইষ্ট্ৰজেন আৰু প্ৰজেষ্টেৰণ হৰম'ন কমি যোৱাৰ ফলত বিভিন্ন লক্ষণে দেখা দিয়ে। চিন্তা, উদ্বিগ্নতা বাঢ়িলে অতিস্ৰাৱ হয়। ঋতুস্ৰাৱ সম্পূৰ্ণৰূপে বন্ধ নোহোৱালৈকে এই লক্ষণসমূহ চলি থাকে।

(২) **ৰজোনিবৃত্তিঃ** প্ৰাকৃতিকভাৱেই ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হয়। কিছুমান নাৰীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত আশা কৰাতকৈ আগতে ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হ'ব পাৰে। ইমান দিনে চলি অহা প্ৰক্ৰিয়া এটা নাইকিয়া হ'লে মানসিক তথা শাৰীৰিক পৰিৱৰ্তনে দেখা দিয়ে। মহিলাগৰাকীৰ প্ৰজনন বছৰৰ অন্ত পৰে। এই সময়ত নাৰীসকল খিংখিঙীয়া হয়, মনলৈ হতাশা আহে, বহু সময়ত অকলশৰীয়া অনুভৱ কৰে, উদ্বেগ তথা উদ্বিগ্নতা হ্ৰাস পায়, ইষ্ট্ৰজেন কমি যোৱাৰ ফলত যৌন সম্পৰ্কৰ সময়ত যৌনি শুকান, খজুৱতি আৰু অস্বস্তিবোধ আৰম্ভ হয়। এই সময়ত নাৰীৰ স্মৃতিশক্তি হ্ৰাস আৰু সাধাৰণ কথাতে মনোনিবেশ কৰাত অসুবিধা হয়। কেতিয়াবা বহুত নাৰীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কোনো ধৰণৰ সংকেত নিদিয়াকৈ ৰজোনিবৃত্তি হয়। তেতিয়া কিন্তু মাহেকীয়া হোৱাৰ সময়ছোৱাত পেটৰ বিষকে ধৰি দৈহিক আৰু মানসিক বিসংগতিয়ে দেখা দিয়ে।

(৩) **ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পিছৰ পৰ্যায়ঃ** ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পিছৰ পৰ্যায়ত মহিলাৰ ডিম্বাশয়ত ইষ্ট্ৰজেন আৰু প্ৰজেষ্টেৰণৰ সংশ্লেষণ বন্ধ হয়।

ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ লগে লগে এই পৰ্যায় আৰম্ভ হয় আৰু গোটেই জীৱনৰ বাবে ঋতুস্ৰাৱ বন্ধ হৈ পৰে। হৰম'নৰ মাত্ৰা সলনি হ'লে শৰীৰৰ ওজন বৃদ্ধি হয়, কাম কৰাৰ মানসিকতা হ্ৰাস পায়, মনলৈ এলাহৰ ভাৱ আহে, পেশী আৰু গাঁঠিৰ বিষ হয়। এনে সময়ত বহু নাৰীৰ ছাল শুকান, খজুৱতি আৰু পাতল হোৱা দেখা যায়, শাৰীৰিক ভাৱে অসুস্থ অনুভৱ কৰে। অৱশ্যে সকলো নাৰীৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত এই ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ প্ৰতিক্ৰিয়াসমূহে আমনি নকৰিবও পাৰে, কোনো নাৰীয়ে একো অনুভৱ নকৰাকৈ চিৰকাললৈ ৰজোনিবৃত্তি বা ঋতুবন্ধ হয়। বহু মহিলাই আকৌ শাৰীৰিক অসুস্থতাৰ বাবে জটিল অসুখ হৈছে বুলি চিকিৎসকৰ কাষ চাপে। ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ পৰ্যায়ৰ লক্ষণসমূহ সময়ৰ লগে লগে বয়স বাঢ়ি আহিলে কমি যায়, ই কোনো ৰোগৰ লক্ষণ নহয়। 'কিন্তু ৰজোনিবৃত্তি বয়সত অনিয়মিত ভাৱে কম-বেছি পৰিমাণে ঋতুস্ৰাৱ হয়, সপ্তাহে মাহেকৈ ঋতুস্ৰাৱ হয় লগতে শ্বেতস্ৰাৱো হয়, তেতিয়া জৰায়ুত ফাইব্ৰোমা জাতীয় টিউমাৰ আনকি কেঞ্চাৰো হ'ব পাৰে (দত্ত ২০০০)। তেনে অৱস্থাৰ পৰা হাত সাৰিবলৈ ছোৱালী অৱস্থাৰ পৰা নিয়মিত ভাৱে যোগ সাধনাৰ অভ্যাস গঢ়ি তুলিব লাগে। বিভিন্ন গৱেষণাৰ পৰা দেখা গৈছে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত মানসিক আৰু শাৰীৰিক ভাৱে নিজক সুস্থ ৰাখিবলৈ নাৰীসকলে যোগাসনক লক্ষ্য কৰি লৈছে। যোগ চৰ্চাৰ বাবে অভিজ্ঞ গুৰুৰ প্ৰয়োজন। যদি কেৱল কিতাপ চাই বা পঢ়ি বা টি. ভি. আৰু মোবাইল চাই যোগ চৰ্চা কৰে ই মুঠেই হিতকাৰী নহয়। নাৰীসকলে অভিজ্ঞ লোকৰ পৰা জানি বুজি লৈ যোগ চৰ্চা কৰিব লাগে। যোগ চৰ্চাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কেইটামান মন কৰিবলগীয়া কথা হ'ল —

- ১। মুকলি বিশুদ্ধ বায়ু সেৱন কৰি যোগাসন কৰিব লাগে।
- ২। গাত লিপিট খাই থকা কাপোৰৰ পৰিবৰ্তে ঢিলা কাপোৰ পিন্ধিলে ভাল।
- ৩। আসনসমূহ লাহে লাহে কৰিব লাগে।
- ৪। ঋতুস্ৰাৱৰ সময়ত যোগাসন কৰিব নালাগে।
- ৫। খোৱাৰ ৩/৪ ঘণ্টাৰ পাছতহে আসন কৰিব লাগে।
- ৬। শ্বাস-প্ৰশ্বাস নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰি ভক্তি সহকাৰে যোগ চৰ্চা কৰিব লাগে।

ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ বাবে যোগাসনঃ

যোগাসন হৈছে এক মাধ্যম যাৰ জৰিয়তে নাৰীসকলে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত দেখা দিয়া বিভিন্ন প্ৰতিক্ৰিয়া নাইকিয়া কৰিব পাৰে। যোগ সাধনা মানে কেৱল শাৰীৰিক ব্যায়াম নহয়, ই এক সম্পূৰ্ণ জীৱনশৈলী। ইয়াত প্ৰধানকৈ আসন, প্ৰাণায়াম আৰু ধ্যান অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত হৈ থাকে (Saraswati, 2002)। যোগ হৈছে ভাৰতীয় প্ৰাচীন জ্ঞান পদ্ধতিৰ এক গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অংশ, যিয়ে দেহ মন-আত্মাৰ সমন্বয় সাধন কৰে (Iyengar, 2005)।

নাৰীৰ বাবে অপৰিহাৰ্য আসনসমূহৰ ভিতৰত উল্লেখযোগ্য কেইটামান আসন হ'ল-ব্ৰজাসন, পদ্মাসন, পখিলাআসন, জানুসিৰাসন, পশ্চিমোত্তাসন, পৰনমুক্তাসন, ধনুৰাসন, শলভাসন, শৱাসন, ভুজংগাসন, হলাসন, উষ্টাসন, সৰ্বাংগাসন, পদহস্তাসন, চক্ৰাসন, উৎকটাসন, শীৰ্ষাসন। ইয়াৰ আটাইবোৰ আসন একেলগে কৰাটো সম্ভৱপৰ নহয় বা বাধ্যতামূলক নহয়। কিন্তু সুবিধা অনুসৰি প্ৰতিটো আসন কৰিলে আমাৰ দেহৰ বিভিন্ন অংগৰ ৰোগ আৰোগ্য হয়। প্ৰতিটো আসনৰ ফল বেলেগ। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে ঋতুস্ৰাৱৰ আৰম্ভণিৰ পৰাই পখিলাআসন কৰিলে, ঋতুজনিত সমস্যাৰ পৰা মুক্ত হৈ থাকিব পাৰি। ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত মহিলাসকলে গেছৰ সমস্যাত ভোগে, পৰনমুক্তাসনে গেছৰ সমস্যা লাঘৱ কৰে। দৈনন্দিন জীৱনযাত্ৰাত এই আসন অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰি ল'ব লাগে। কঁকালৰ বিষৰ বাবে শলভাসন, আঁঠুৰ বিষৰ বাবে উৎকটাসন, ভৰিৰ বিষৰ বাবে উত্তানপদাসন, ব্ৰজাসন আৰু পদ্মাসন, আহাৰ

খোৱাৰ পাছত কৰিব পৰা একমাত্ৰ আসনটোৱেই হৈছে ব্ৰজাসন। বস্তিপ্রদেশৰ স্নায়ু সবল কৰি ৰাখিবৰ বাবে উত্তম আসন ভদ্রাসন আৰু পখিলাৰ আসন। ছোৱালী অৱস্থাৰ পৰা এই আসনৰ অভ্যাস কৰিলে সন্তান জন্মৰ সময়ত বিশেষ অসুবিধা নাপায়। শৰাসনে দেহৰ ক্লান্তি দূৰ কৰি নতুন শক্তি দেহত প্ৰদান কৰে। সৰ্বাংগসন হৈছে সৰ্ব অংগৰ আসন। নাৰীসকলে এই আসনৰ অভ্যাস কৰিলে সকলো অংগক ৰোগ ব্যাধিৰ পৰা আঁতৰ কৰি ৰাখিব পাৰে। শৰীৰৰ বিশেষ দুৰ্বলতা নাথাকিলে শীৰ্ষাসন কৰিলে স্মৃতি শক্তি ভাল হৈ থাকে। অৱশ্যে হৃদৰোগ, উচ্চ ৰক্তচাপ আদি ৰোগত ভোগাসকলৰ বাবে এই আসন নিষিদ্ধ। অভিজ্ঞ যোগ প্ৰশিক্ষকৰ দ্বাৰা শিকি আসন কৰাটো বাঞ্ছনীয়। অতি যন্ত্ৰণাকাতৰ মূৰৰ বিষ বা মূৰৰ কামোৰণি এই আসনে দূৰ কৰে।

বাৰটা আসনেৰে সমৃদ্ধ সূৰ্য্য নমস্কাৰ এক বিস্ময়কৰ আসন। এই বাৰটা আসন অতি শ্ৰদ্ধা আৰু যত্ন সহকাৰে কৰিলে সৰ্বদেহৰ মংগল সাধন হয়। দেহৰ ৰোগ ব্যাধি নোহোৱা হয়।

ৰজোনিবৃত্তি কেতিয়াবা থাইৰয়ড গ্ৰন্থিৰ বাবেও হ'ব পাৰে। উদ্বেগ, খং, মানসিক চাপ, হ্ৰাস আৰু একাগ্ৰতা বৃদ্ধিত, শক্তি বৃদ্ধি কৰে আৰু আত্মবিশ্বাস জগাই তোলাত সহায় কৰা উপযোগী বন্ধ হ'ল-

- (১) জালন্ধৰ বন্ধ
- (২) উদ্ভীয়ান বন্ধ
- (৩) মূলবন্ধ

শক্তিচালনী মুদ্ৰা, মহামুদ্ৰা, মূলবন্ধ মুদ্ৰা এই তিনিটা আসন আয়ত্ত কৰিব পাৰিলে নাৰীসকলে বহু ব্যক্তিগত সমস্যাৰ পৰা হাত সাৰিব পাৰিব বুলি যোগশাস্ত্ৰই কয়।

যোগশাস্ত্ৰৰ মতে আমি আসনত যিমান সুফল পাব তাতকৈ অধিক সুফল প্ৰাণায়ামৰ জৰিয়তে পাব। প্ৰাণায়ামৰ বাবে যথেষ্ট সময়ৰ প্ৰয়োজন। কপালভাতি, অনুলম বিলোম, ভক্তিকা, ভ্ৰামৰী, ওম্কাৰ জপ নিয়মীয়াকৈ কৰিব পাৰিলে ভাল। প্ৰতিদিনে ২০ মিনিটকৈ কৰিব পাৰিলে সুফল পোৱা যায়। জটিল ৰোগৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত কপালভাতি, অনুলম-বিলোম আদি এঘণ্টা মানকৈ কৰিব লাগে।

প্ৰাণায়ামত মুদ্ৰাৰ বিশেষ ভূমিকা আছে। ধ্যান মুদ্ৰা, বায়ু মুদ্ৰা, আকাশ মুদ্ৰা, পৃথিৱী মুদ্ৰা আদিৰ বিষয়ে জানি লৈ নাৰীসকলে ইয়াৰ সুফল লাভ কৰিব পাৰে। কৰ্মস্থলীত বা গৃহ কৰ্মত থাকোঁতেও পাঁচ মিনিট ৰাহি কৰি মুদ্ৰাৰ অৱলম্বন কৰি যথেষ্ট সকাহ পাব পাৰি।

ধ্যান এক মহৌষধ। ই জীৱনী শক্তি প্ৰদান কৰে। ই মানুহক তেজস্বী কৰি তোলে, উদ্বেগমুক্ত কৰি শান্ত সুস্থিৰ অৱস্থালৈ নিয়ে। ই এক প্ৰকাৰৰ নীৰৱ প্ৰাৰ্থনা। দিনটোৰ শেষত ক্লান্তি নাশ কৰিবৰ বাবে নাৰীসকলে আবেলি বা সন্ধিয়া ধ্যান কৰিব লাগে। ৰোগৰ যন্ত্ৰণা হ্ৰাস কৰি নিৰোগী কৰি তোলাৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ধ্যানৰ ভূমিকা অসীম।

যোগাসনে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সময়ত দেখা দিয়া প্ৰতিক্ৰিয়া সমূহৰ প্ৰতিকাৰ ৰূপে দেখা দিয়ে-

১। **লক্ষণৰ উপশমঃ** যোগাসনে ৰজোনিবৃত্তিৰ সাধাৰণ লক্ষণবোৰ, যেনে হাত-ভৰি, মুখমণ্ডল গৰম গৰম লগা, মূৰ ঘূৰণি, অলপতে ভাগৰ লগা, মূৰ কামোৰণি, অনিদ্ৰা, হতাশ, অলপতে খং উঠা, শৰীৰৰ অ'ত য'ত বিষ, য'তে ত'তেই খোচা বিন্ধা কৰা, মনৰ অসংযত অৱস্থা আৰু চিন্তা কৰিবলৈ সহায় কৰে। নিৰ্দিষ্ট আসন আৰু শ্বাস-প্ৰশ্বাসৰ অনুশীলনে শৰীৰৰ তাপমাত্ৰা নিয়ন্ত্ৰণ কৰিব পাৰে আৰু শিথিলতা প্ৰদান কৰে।

২। হৰম'নৰ সমতাঃ যোগে মানসিক চাপ কমাই হৰম'নৰ সমতা বজাই ৰাখিবলৈ সহায় কৰিব পাৰে। নিয়মিত অনুশীলনে মনৰ স্থিতিশীলতা আৰু ঋতুস্ফাৰৰ সৈতে জড়িত মানসিক লক্ষণবোৰ কমাবলৈ সহায় কৰে।

৩। শাৰীৰিক স্বাস্থ্যঃ যোগে নমনীয়তা, শক্তি আৰু সন্তুলন উন্নত কৰিব পাৰে, যি মহিলাৰ বয়সৰ সৈতে অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ। ই ওজন পৰিচালনা, অস্থিৰোগ আৰু কাৰ্ডিঅভাস্কুলাৰ স্বাস্থ্য উন্নত কৰাতো সহায় কৰে।

৪। মন আৰু শৰীৰৰ সংযোগঃ যোগে মন আৰু আত্ম-জ্ঞানক উৎসাহিত কৰে, যিয়ে মহিলাক এই পৰিৱৰ্তনশীল পৰ্যায়ত নিজৰ শৰীৰ আৰু অনুভূতিবোৰৰ সৈতে সংযোগ স্থাপন কৰিবলৈ সহায় কৰে। সজীৱতা আৰু ধনাত্মক মনোভাবৰ বাবে যোগাসনক অতি গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ৰূপে ধৰা হৈছে।

৫। সমাজৰ সমৰ্থনঃ যোগাসনৰ নিয়মীয়া পাঠদানৰ অংশগ্ৰহণে মহিলাসকলৰ মাজত একতাৰ অনুভৱ আৰু সমৰ্থন প্ৰদান কৰে, যিয়ে একে ধৰণৰ সমস্যাৰ সন্মুখীন হোৱা মহিলাৰ মাজত অভিজ্ঞতা আৰু পৰস্পৰ সমৰ্থন প্ৰদান কৰে।

৬। সামগ্ৰিক পদ্ধতিঃ যোগাসনে সামগ্ৰিক পদ্ধতি প্ৰচাৰ কৰে, যিয়ে শাৰীৰিক, মানসিক আৰু অনুভৱৰ সবলতা একত্ৰিত কৰে, যিয়ে বিশেষকৈ মেনোপজৰ হ'ৰম'নেল পৰিৱৰ্তনসমূহৰ সময়ত লাভজনক ৰূপে বিবেচিত হৈছে।

নাৰী পৰম ধৈৰ্যশীলা বুলি যুগে যুগে পৰম বন্দিত হৈ আহিছে। নিয়মিতভাৱে যোগ চৰ্চা কৰিলে নাৰীসকলে দৈনন্দিন কাম-কাজ সুচাৰুৰূপে চলাই নিবলৈ সক্ষম হোৱাৰ লগতে এখন সুন্দৰ সমাজ গঢ়িবলৈ দুগুণ উৎসাহী হ'ব। যোগ, প্ৰাণায়াম আৰু ধ্যান নাৰীসকলে নিয়মিতভাৱে কৰিলে ৰজেনিবৃত্তিত দেখা দিয়া লক্ষণসমূহ লাঘৱ কৰি এটা সুন্দৰ জীৱন উদ্‌যাপন কৰিব পাৰিব।

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স্বপ্না বৰা

সংক্ষিপ্তসাৰ

মানৱতাবাদ হৈছে এক মানৱকেন্দ্ৰিক দৰ্শন, যাৰ দ্বাৰা মানুহৰ বিষয়ে জানিবলৈ, বুজিবলৈ, সূক্ষ্মভাৱে অধ্যয়ন কৰিবলৈ আৰু একান্ত হ'বলৈ সুযোগ লাভ কৰে। ই হৈছে এক গভীৰ আৰু বিশাল অৰ্থ বহনকাৰী শব্দ। মানুহৰ কল্যাণৰ হকে উন্নত চিন্তা-চৰ্চা কৰাই হৈছে মানৱতাবাদৰ মূল বিশেষত্ব। ই প্ৰত্যেক মনুষ্যৰ লগত সংপৃক্ত হৈ থাকে আৰু প্ৰয়োজন অনুসৰি বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্ৰত বিভিন্ন মাধ্যমেৰে বহিঃ প্ৰকাশ ঘটে। ব্যক্তিভেদে মানৱীয় গুণ ভিন্ ভিন্। কিছুমান ব্যক্তিৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত মানৱীয় গুণসমূহ ইমানেই প্ৰবলৰূপত থাকে যে, ই স্বকীয় স্বাৰ্থতকৈ সামূহিক বিকাশৰ প্ৰতিহে চিন্তা কৰে। বিভিন্ন কাৰ্য পন্থাৰে সমগ্ৰ জীৱন মানৱৰ হকেই উৎসৰ্গা কৰে। ফলস্বৰূপে ব্যক্তি একোজন হৈ পৰে সমাজ তথা বিশ্ব মানৱ। ভূপেন হাজৰিকাও আছিল তেনে এক বিশেষ তথা বহুগুণৰ অধিকাৰী পুৰুষ। তেওঁ একেধাৰে গায়ক, গীতিকাৰ, সুৰকাৰ, নাট্যকাৰ, প্ৰবন্ধকাৰ, কবি, সাহিত্যিক, ৰাজনৈতিক চিন্তক, পণ্ডিত, সমাজ হিতৈষী, জন্মভূমিৰ একান্ত সেৱক আৰু অনেক প্ৰতিভা সমৃদ্ধ ব্যক্তি। ঐশ্বৰিক আশীৰ্বাদেই হওঁক, বংশানুক্ৰমিক গুণেই হওঁক বা স্বকীয় বৌদ্ধিক বিচক্ষণতাই হওঁক, তেওঁৰ দ্বাৰা সৃষ্ট অমৰ গীতাৱলীয়ে সৰ্বমানৱৰ হৃদয় স্পৰ্শ কৰিছিল। কণ্ঠই আছিল তেওঁৰ পৰিচয়, যি কণ্ঠেৰে অহৰহ নিগৰাইছিল অমৃতৰ ধাৰা। সেয়েহে, তেওঁ পৰিচিত সুধাকণ্ঠৰূপে। সাংস্কৃতিক জগতখনৰ এক উজ্জ্বল নক্ষত্ৰ হাজৰিকাৰ অৰ্থগভীৰ শব্দসমূহে বাস্তৱ সত্যক প্ৰতিফলিত কৰে। তেওঁৰ গীতসমূহে নৈতিকতা, নিয়মানুৱৰ্তিতা, কৰ্তব্য পৰায়ণতা, সত্যতা তথা মানৱ জীৱনৰ বাস্তৱিক জ্ঞানৰ সন্বেদ দিয়ে। বিভিন্ন পৰিৱেশ-পৰিস্থিতি আৰু সময় সাপেক্ষ সৃষ্টিৰাজি তথা গীতসমূহ প্ৰত্যেকৰ বাবে আছিল দাপোণ সদৃশ। এই অসাধাৰণ গুণ সমূহৰ বাবে তেওঁ চিৰকাল বিশ্ববন্দিত। মানৱতাবাদ তেওঁৰ হৃদয়ৰ আহ্বান। তেওঁ আছিল জনতাৰ শিল্পী, গণশিল্পী, মাটিৰ মানুহ। তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠৰ প্ৰতিটো শব্দই, শক্তি-সাহস-উৰ্বৰতা-প্ৰাচুৰ্যতা আৰু নিভাঁজ অনুভূতিৰ সন্বেদ দিয়ে। মানুহৰ হকে চিন্তা কৰি ভালপোৱা, জন্মভূমিৰ অক্লান্ত প্ৰেমিক, হাজৰিকা দেৱৰ গানসমূহে সোঁৱৰাই দিয়ে তেওঁৰ অসাধাৰণ ব্যক্তিত্ব। তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠৰ এটোপাল অমৃত সৰ্বসাধাৰণৰ বাবে হৈ পৰে জীয়াই থকাৰ প্ৰেৰণা-সাহস আৰু আশাৰ স্থল। মানৱতাবাদীসকলে সপোন দেখে সমাজৰ সৰ্বসাধাৰণ জনতাক লৈ। তেওঁলোকে প্ৰাপ্যৰ অধিকাৰ, সাব্যস্ত কৰাৰ বাবে যুঁজিবলৈ, মানুহে মানুহক ভাল পাবলৈ আৰু মানৱীয় মূল্যৰ প্ৰতি সন্মান জনাবলৈ, সমাজ সংস্কাৰক ৰূপে শক্তি, সাহস আৰু জ্ঞান প্ৰদান কৰে। এনে সপোনৰেই দ্ৰষ্টা আছিল ভূপেন হাজৰিকা। সেয়েহে, তেওঁৰ অনেক গীতত মানৱতাবাদে ঠাই পাইছিল আৰু সৰ্বমানৱক মানৱতাবোধৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা শিকাইছিল। তেওঁৰ গীত সমূহ, সৰ্বকালৰ, সৰ্বমানৱৰ বাবে অতীৰ গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ আৰু অনুকৰণীয়। গতিকে, এনে এজন ব্যক্তিৰ মননশীল চিন্তনৰ মাজেৰে সৃষ্টি হোৱা অনেক

গীতৰ মাজৰ পৰা কেইটিমান গীতত মানৱতাবাদ কেনেদৰে প্ৰতিফলিত হৈছে, সেইয়া এই গৱেষণা পত্ৰখনিৰ যোগেদি যথাসম্ভৱ বিশ্লেষণেৰে ডাঙি ধৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হ'ব।

বীজ শব্দ : মানৱতাবাদ, সুধাকণ্ঠ, গীত, নৈতিক প্ৰমূল্যবোধ, দায়িত্ব আৰু কৰ্তব্যবোধ

অৱতৰণিকা:

মানৱতাবাদ হৈছে এক দাৰ্শনিক চেতনা আৰু নৈতিক আচৰণ, যিয়ে মানুহৰ মূল্য আৰু সক্ৰিয় সহযোগিতাৰ ওপৰত ব্যক্তিগত আৰু সামূহিকভাৱে গুৰুত্ব প্ৰদান কৰে। ই সংকীৰ্ণ বিচাৰ ধাৰাৰ পৰিৱৰ্তে পৰিধি বিহীন, বহুল আৰু উন্নত মানৰ চিন্তা-চৰ্চাৰে সৰ্বমানৱৰ কল্যাণ কামনা কৰে। সাধাৰণ অন্ধবিশ্বাস আৰু অহেতুক বিষয় পৰিহাৰ কৰি সমালোচনাত্মক চিন্তা, যুক্তিবাদ, প্ৰমাণ আৰু অভিজ্ঞতাক সমৰ্থন কৰে। আভিধানিক অৰ্থ হিচাপে 'মানৱতাবাদ' শব্দই ঈশ্বৰৰ তুলনাত মানৱ সম্পৰ্কে উচ্চধাৰণা কৰা সাহিত্যৰ মতবাদ বিশেষ (humanism); প্ৰয়োগবাদ (দৰ্শন) আদি বুজায় (বৰুৱা, ২০০৭), য'ত মানৱীয় স্বাৰ্থ, মূল্যবোধ আৰু মৰ্যাদাৰ গুৰুত্ব প্ৰমুখ হৈ পৰে। সুধাকণ্ঠ ভূপেন হাজৰিকাবোৰো মন-মগজুৰ কোনোবা কোণত হয়ত এই মানৱতাবাদৰ বীজ সুপ্ত হৈ আছিল আৰু তেওঁ সেইবোৰ, শব্দৰ মাজেৰে সুন্দৰভাৱে সজাই-পৰাই নিজ কণ্ঠেৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰিছিল।

সমাজত যুগে যুগে দেখা দিয়া শ্ৰেণীবৈষম্য তথা কিছুমান সুবিধাবাদী লোকৰ প্ৰৰোচনাই সমাজ উত্তৰণ আৰু মানৱীয় চিন্তাধাৰাত প্ৰাচীৰ স্বৰূপ হৈ থিয় দি থকা কথা হাজৰিকাদেৱে পলে পলে অনুভৱ কৰিছিল। ভাৰতবৰ্ষৰ উত্তৰ-পূৱ প্ৰান্তত অৱস্থিত বাৰেবৰণীয়া জাতি-জনগোষ্ঠীৰে সমৃদ্ধ এই ৰূপহী অসমভূমিৰ জনগণ যাতে দণ্ড-অহংকাৰত মত্ত নহৈ একতাৰ জৰীৰে সংলগ্ন হৈ থাকে তাৰ বাবে তেওঁ আশা ব্যক্ত কৰিছিল গীতৰ মাধ্যমেৰে। উদাত্ত কণ্ঠেৰে মানৱতাৰ গান গাই আই বসুমতীৰ সন্তানসকলক স্বকীয় চিন্তাধাৰা উন্নত কৰাৰ হকে, কৰ্মোদ্যমী হৈ নিজৰ ভৱিষ্যত তলৰ মাটি ৰক্ষা কৰাৰ লক্ষ্যৰে বিভিন্ন গানেৰে আহ্বান জনাইছিল এনেদৰে--

“মানুহে মানুহৰ বাবে
যদিহে অকনো নাভাৱে
অকনি সহানুভূতিৰে ভাৱিব কোনেনো কোৱা,
সমনীয়া ...।”

আকৌ গাইছিল -- “আমি অসমীয়া নহওঁ দুখীয়া

বুলি সান্ত্বনা লভিলে নহ'ব ...।” আদি

অনেক ধৰণৰ জনসচেতনমূলক গীত ৰচনা কৰি জনসাধাৰণক উদ্বুদ্ধ কৰিছিল।

উদ্দেশ্য আৰু গুৰুত্ব:

- ◆ মানৱতাবাদৰ ধাৰণা আৰু প্ৰকাৰ সন্দৰ্ভত আলোচনা কৰা।
- ◆ গীতসমূহৰ মাজেৰে ভিন্ন মানৱতাবাদ সন্দৰ্ভত আলোচনা কৰা।
- ◆ ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতত ভাতৃত্ববোধ, নৈতিকতা, উদাৰতা, কৰ্তব্যবোধ আদি জ্ঞানৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰা।
- ◆ ভিন্নজনৰ দৃষ্টিৰে ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ ব্যক্তিত্ব অধ্যয়ন কৰা।

♦ মানৱীয় গুণ, নৈতিক প্ৰমূল্যবোধ, সামাজিক ন্যায়, কৰ্মবাদ আৰু মানৱকল্যাণ, অলৌকিকতাবাদ পৰিহাৰ, ধৰ্মনিৰপেক্ষতা আদি সকলো গুণ বা লক্ষণ এই মানৱতাবাদৰ লগত সংপৃক্ত হৈ থাকে যাৰ বাবে ইয়াক অধ্যয়ন কৰাৰ যথেষ্ট গুৰুত্ব আছে।

অধ্যয়নৰ পদ্ধতিঃ

আলোচ্য বিষয়সমূহ অধ্যয়নৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত বৰ্ণনাত্মক আৰু বিশ্লেষণাত্মক পদ্ধতি অৱলম্বন কৰা হৈছে।

মুখ্য বিষয়ৰ আলোচনাঃ

সুধাকণ্ঠ ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতসমূহত মানৱতাবাদী দৰ্শন অতি সুন্দৰভাৱে ব্যক্ত হোৱা দেখা যায়। স্বকীয় স্বাৰ্থ তুচ্ছ কৰি আজীৱন স্বদেশ আৰু স্বজাতিৰ হকে যুঁজ-বাগৰ কৰি আত্মতৃপ্ত লভা ব্যক্তিসকলৰ ভিতৰত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাও অন্যতম। তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠেৰে ধ্বনিত হোৱা প্ৰতিটো শব্দই এক গুঢ় অৰ্থ প্ৰকাশ কৰে। সেয়েহে, মানৱতাবাদ বুলিলে প্ৰকৃততে কেনে ধাৰণা কৰিব পাৰি সেই বিষয়ে প্ৰথমে আলোচনা কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰা হৈছে।

মানৱতাবাদৰ ধাৰণা আৰু প্ৰকাৰঃ

মানৱতাবাদ শব্দটোৰ উৎপত্তি লেটিন শব্দ ‘হিউমেনিটাচ’ৰ পৰা হৈছে। ইয়াৰ অৰ্থ হৈছে, অন্তৰ্নিহিত ব্যক্তিবাদ আৰু মানৱীয় আত্মাৰ নিখুঁত সন্ধানৰ ইংগিত দিওঁতা, য’ত মানুহৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত সম্ভাৱনাৰ দ্বাৰা এক বিষয়মুখী চিন্তা আৰু আশাব্যঞ্জক ভাৱনাৰ উদয় হয় (Varma, 1979)। মানৱতাবাদে বিশ্ব বন্ধুত্ব স্থাপনৰ বাবে আগবাঢ়ে। সমগ্ৰ বিশ্বখনেই যেন আপোন, ‘বসুধৈৱ কুটুম্বকম্’ (বাধাকৃষ্ণণ, ১৯৯২) এই নীতিৰে সংপৃক্ত হৈ থাকে মানৱতাবাদ। (<https://humanists.international>) মতে, মানৱতাবাদীসকলে বিশ্বৰ বিষয়ে যুক্তি আৰু বিজ্ঞানৰ ওপৰত স্বকীয় বুজাবুজিৰ ভেটি স্থাপন কৰে। তেওঁলোকে অতিপ্ৰাকৃতিক ঐশ্বৰিক বিশ্বাসক প্ৰত্যাখ্যান কৰে। তেওঁলোকৰ মতে, নৈতিকতা বা প্ৰমূল্যবোধ, ঈশ্বৰ প্ৰদত্তৰ পৰিবৰ্তে মানৱ অভিজ্ঞতা আৰু যুক্তি তথ্যৰ পৰাহে উদ্ভৱ হয়। যিজন প্ৰকৃত মানৱীয় গুণযুক্ত ব্যক্তি, তেওঁৰহে, ব্যক্তিজীৱন, পৰিবেশ আৰু জগতখনক অধ্যয়ন কৰি সুস্থ আৰু নিকাভাৱে গঢ় দিয়াৰ ক্ষমতা থাকে।

মানৱতাবাদী সকলে সকলো ধৰণৰ বৰ্ণবাদ আৰু পক্ষপাতিত্বক স্থান নিদিয়ৈ, ধৰ্ম আৰু বিশ্বাসৰ স্বাধীনতাৰ অধিকাৰকে ধৰি সকলোৰে মানৱ অধিকাৰক সন্মান আৰু ৰক্ষা কৰাৰ বাবে গুৰুত্ব দিয়ে। তেওঁলোকে, ইজনে সিজনৰ প্ৰতি, প্ৰাকৃতিক জগতখনৰ প্ৰতি বিশ্বাস, সন্মান আৰু যত্ন লোৱাৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তা স্বীকাৰ কৰে। মানৱতাৰ জয়গান গোৱা ব্যক্তিসকলে বাস্তৱতাক বিশ্বাস কৰে।

মানৱতাবাদৰ প্ৰকাৰ বুলি ক’বলৈ যাওঁতে দেখা যায় যে, ব্যক্তিভেদে মানৱীয় দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীৰ পাৰ্থক্য আছে। প্ৰত্যেক ব্যক্তিৰ বিভিন্ন শিতানত বা বিষয়ৰ ওপৰত বিশেষ দৃষ্টি নিহিত হৈ থাকে আৰু মানৱীয় গুণসমূহৰ জৰিয়তে তাৰ বিচাৰ কৰে। ফলস্বৰূপে, বিভিন্ন প্ৰকাৰৰ মানৱতাবাদ দেখা পোৱা যায়, সেইয়া যেনে- ধৰ্মনিৰপেক্ষ মানৱতাবাদ, ধৰ্মীয় মানৱতাবাদ, বিভিন্ন ধৰণৰ শিক্ষা - নৈতিকতা, আধ্যাত্মিক জ্ঞান, বিজ্ঞান আৰু প্ৰযুক্তিবিদ্যা, কলা আৰু সাহিত্য আদিৰ জৰিয়তে প্ৰকাশিত কল্যাণমূলক কৰ্মৰাজিও মানৱতাৰেই অংশ স্বৰূপ।

মুঠৰ ওপৰত মানৱতাবাদ হৈছে এক বৈচিত্ৰ্যময় আৰু বিৱৰ্তনশীল দৰ্শন যিয়ে আধুনিক চিন্তা আৰু সংস্কৃতি গঢ় দিয়াত উল্লেখযোগ্য ভূমিকা পালন কৰিছে। মানৱতাবাদে, যুক্তি, মমতা আৰু মানৱ কল্যাণৰ প্ৰতি দায়বদ্ধ হৈ বিশ্বক বুজিবলৈ, জানিবলৈ আৰু নৈতিক জীৱন-যাপনৰ বাবে এক প্ৰেমময় ভেটি নিৰ্ণয় কৰে।

ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতৰ বিষয়বস্তু আৰু মানৱতাবাদঃ

সুধাকণ্ঠৰ গীতসমূহক বিষয়বস্তু ভিত্তিত বিভিন্ন শ্ৰেণীত অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰিব পাৰি যাৰ দ্বাৰা তেওঁৰ সাৰ্বজনীন মানৱতাবাদী দৰ্শন ফুটি উঠে। সেইয়া ক্ৰমে -- সামাজিক সংস্কাৰমূলক, দেশপ্ৰেমমূলক, প্ৰকৃতি আৰু সৌন্দৰ্য্যমূলক, মানৱতাবাদ আৰু সাৰ্বজনীনতাবাদ আদি।

সামাজিক সংস্কাৰমুখী চিন্তাধাৰা হৈছে মানৱীয় গুণসমূহৰ ভিতৰত এক উৎকৃষ্ট গুণ। সমাজ একোখন সংস্কাৰ কৰিবলৈ যাওঁতে ব্যক্তি এজনে বিভিন্ন কাৰ্যপন্থা অৱলম্বন কৰিব লগা হয়। কোনো এক বিশেষ বিষয় হৈ পৰে সমাজ একত্ৰীকৰণৰ প্ৰধান মাধ্যম। ঠিক তেনেদৰে হাজৰিকাদেৱেও গানক এক শক্তিশালী মাধ্যম হিচাপে বাচি লৈছিল, য'ত প্ৰকাশ কৰিব পাৰে আবেগ-অনুভূতি, হৰ্ষ-বেদনা, দয়া-মৰম, আক্ষেপ-অভিযোগ, প্ৰাপ্তি-অপ্ৰাপ্তি আৰু অনেক অনুভৱ। তেওঁ জানিছিল যে, গান হৈছে এনে এক সন্মোহনী বাণ যাৰদ্বাৰা মানুহৰ কাষ চাপিবলৈ আৰু মানুহক ওচৰ চপাই আনিবলৈ তৈয়াৰ কৰিব পাৰে এক উপযুক্ত আৰু সৰল মাৰ্গ। হাজৰিকাৰ গীতসমূহে প্ৰায়ে জাতিগত বৈষম্য, অস্পৃশ্যতা, দৰিদ্ৰতা আৰু শোষণৰ দৰে সামাজিক কলুষতা দূৰ কৰাৰ প্ৰযত্ন কৰিছিল। গানৰ মাধ্যমেৰে তেওঁ সমতা, ন্যায় আৰু একত্ৰীকৰণৰ মহামন্ত্ৰ পাঠ কৰিছিল। জাতি-বৰ্ণ-ধৰ্ম-নিৰ্বিশেষে তেওঁ সকলোৰে প্ৰতি গীত ৰচনা কৰি এক ধৰ্মনিৰপেক্ষ মানৱতাবাদৰ ভেটি নিৰ্মাণ কৰিছিল। তেওঁৰ গীতৰ লক্ষ্য আৰু উদ্দেশ্য আছিল অতি মহান আৰু উচ্চমানৰ। তেওঁ এখন সৰল সমাজ গঢ়াৰ কামনা কৰিছিল। ৰুগ্ন, ভগ্ন সমাজ তেওঁৰ কাম্য নাছিল (কলিতা, জালান আৰু পৰাশৰ, ২০০৭)। তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠই আজুৰি আনিছিল সেই বিশেষণ 'সুধাকণ্ঠ' শব্দ, যাৰ কণ্ঠেৰে নিগৰিত হৈছিল প্ৰেমময় সুধা, যি আছিল সাধাৰণ জনতাৰ বাবে শক্তি-সাহস-আশা আৰু প্ৰাচুৰ্য্যৰ মহান উৎস। এনে এক বিশ্ব মানৱৰ অসাধাৰণ ব্যক্তিত্বই অহৰহ ভাৱে জনগণৰ হকে গীত সৃষ্টি কৰিছিল, যি হাজাৰ হাজাৰ শ্ৰোতাৰ মন মগজুক স্পৰ্শ কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল।

ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতত শ্ৰীমদ্ভগৱদ্গীতাৰ যি মানৱকেন্দ্ৰিক দৰ্শন তাৰ প্ৰভাৱ সুস্পষ্ট ৰূপে দেখা যায়। গীতাৰ বিভিন্ন অধ্যায় (যোগ) ত যেনেদৰে মনুষ্যৰ প্ৰকৃত জ্ঞান, আদৰ্শ, আধ্যাত্মিক-তথা নৈতিক জ্ঞান, কৰ্তব্য-অকৰ্তব্য আদিৰ বাস্তৱিক জ্ঞানৰ জৰিয়তে বিশ্বজনীন মানৱতাবাদৰ বাণী প্ৰদান কৰিছে, ঠিক এই সকলো ধৰণৰ জ্ঞান হাজৰিকাৰ গানত প্ৰতিফলিত হোৱা দেখা যায়। গীতাত ভগৱান শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণই যেনেদৰে অৰ্জুনৰ সন্মুখত প্ৰকৃত যুদ্ধা (সৈনিক) ৰ কৰ্তব্যৰ কথা ডাঙি ধৰি দায়িত্ব আৰু কৰ্তব্যৰ প্ৰতি উদ্বুদ্ধ কৰিছিল, তেনেদৰে সুধাকণ্ঠই ও গীতৰ মাজেৰে জনতাৰ অন্তৰত সুপ্ত হৈ থকা প্ৰকৃত যুদ্ধাৰ সত্তাক জাগ্ৰত কৰিছিল। তেওঁ আশা কৰিছিল আৰু বিশ্বাস ৰাখিছিল যে, যি শৈলীৰে গীতসমূহ ৰচনা কৰা হৈছে সেইয়া যেন সৈনিকৰ বাবে এক শক্তি মন্ত্ৰ হয় আৰু এখন সুস্থ নিকা সমাজ গঢ়াত সহায়ক হয়। তেওঁ লিখিছিল--

“...মোৰ কলাশৈলীতে মূৰ্ত হওঁক
এক মধুৰ বৈশিষ্ট্যৰ মান।
এই গানত জাগক জনৈক সংগ্ৰামী
সৈনিকৰ মহাপ্ৰাণ...
বহু আস্থাহীনতাৰ বিপৰীতে
এক গভীৰ আস্থাৰ গান।”

তেওঁৰ গানৰ লক্ষ্য ভেদা-ভেদ সৃষ্টিৰ বাবে নহয়। তেওঁ সমসাময়িক সংঘাটক মৰিমূৰ কৰিবলৈ সকলোকে এক কণ্ঠত

সমবেত হোৱাৰ আশাহে ব্যক্ত কৰিছিল। শান্তিকামী লক্ষ্যৰে তেওঁ গীত ৰচনা কৰিছিল। তিনিওকালৰ বাবে এই দেশ, এই জাতি যেন উজ্বলি থাকে, বাধা-নিষেধ শেষ কৰি আগুৱাই যায়, সেইয়াই তেওঁৰ মানৱৰ প্ৰতি সবল আহ্বান। তেওঁ জনগণক হিংসা-হত্যা-আসুৰিক আদি অমানৱীয় প্ৰবৃত্তি সমূহ নিৰ্মূল কৰিবৰ বাবে ওলাই আহিবলৈ মুক্ত কণ্ঠেৰে আহ্বান জনাইছে। দেশৰ ধৰণীস্বৰূপ সন্তানসকলে যদি ভোকত আৰ্তনাদ কৰে তেন্তে ইতিহাসে কৈ যোৱা এইখন দেশ ৰামৰ ৰাজ্য হৈ নাথকিব। সেয়েহে তেওঁ জনতাৰ সংগ্ৰামী মনটোক জাগ্ৰত কৰিবলৈ চেষ্টা কৰি কৈছিল, “... সংগ্ৰাম নাম হেনো এটি জীৱনৰে...”। সত্য-সুন্দৰ আৰু শান্তি স্থাপনৰ বাবে জীৱন উৎসৰ্গা কৰিবলৈ কুণ্ঠাবোধ নকৰা জনেই সঁচা মানৱতাৰ উৎকৃষ্ট নিদৰ্শন দাঙি ধৰিব পাৰে।

এই সংসাৰত মানুহ হৈ জন্মগ্ৰহণ কৰিলেই মানুহ বুলি সংজ্ঞায়িত কৰিব নোৱাৰি। মানুহ আৰু অমানুহৰ স্বৰূপ নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰে ব্যক্তিৰ গুণ আৰু কৰ্মৰ দ্বাৰা। এই কথা হাজৰিকাই যেন অন্তৰেৰে অনুধাৱন কৰিছিল, সেয়েহে তেওঁ সকলোকে ঋণাত্মক চিন্তা পৰিহাৰ কৰি কৰ্মোদ্যমী হ’বলৈ আহ্বান জনাইছিল। মানৱ জীৱনত কৰ্মৰ গুৰুত্ব, অধিকাৰ, আৰু কৰ্মই যে মানৱৰ মহান ধৰ্ম, গীতাৰ এই মহৎ বাণী হাজৰিকাই অনুসৰণ কৰিছিল। গান্ধীজীয়েও শ্ৰীমদ্ভগৱদগীতাৰ দৰ্শন অনুধাৱন কৰি কৈছিল ‘অহিংসাই পৰম ধৰ্ম, কৰ্মই হৈছে সকলো ধৰ্মৰ সাৰ স্বৰূপ’।

“কৰ্মণ্যেবাধিকাৰন্তে...” (শৰ্মা, ১৯৯৫, পৃ.১৩০)।

গীতাত, শ্ৰীকৃষ্ণই কৈছিল, যিজন শ্ৰেষ্ঠ, সিজনে সজ কৰ্ম কৰি সমাজত আদৰ্শ প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰে, সেই আদৰ্শক পৰৱৰ্তী সময়ৰ লোক সকলে অনুসৰণ কৰিবলৈ ধৰে। সেয়েহে, মনুষ্যৰূপে এনে কৰ্ম কৰিব লাগে, যি যুগ-যুগলৈ প্ৰৱাহিত হৈ থাকে।

“যদ্ যদাচৰতি শ্ৰেষ্ঠস্তত্তদেৱেতৰোজনঃ।

স যদ্ প্ৰমানং কুৰুতে লোকস্তদনুৱৰতৰ্তে।।”

(শৰ্মা, ১৯৯৫, পৃ.১৭৮)

এই শ্ৰেষ্ঠ বাণীসমূহ সাৰোগত কৰি সেয়েহে হাজৰিকাই লিখিছিল— “কৰ্মই আমাৰ ধৰ্ম” এই মহান গীতটি। স্বাৰ্থপৰতাক ধ্বংস কৰিবলৈ সাহসেৰে আগবাঢ়ি যাবৰ বাবে জনগণৰ প্ৰতি আকুটি কৰিছে।

সৰ্বমানৱৰ হিত কামনা কৰা ব্যক্তি সকল যেন এক পৰিভ্ৰমী পক্ষী। যি এঠাইৰ পৰা অন্যঠাইলৈ নতুনত্ব আৰু ৰঙৰ সুবাস বিচাৰি উৰি ফুৰে। নিজকে যাযাবৰী আখ্যা দি হাজৰিকাই সমগ্ৰ দেশ-বিদেশৰ ছবি হৃদয়ত সঞ্চিত কৰিছিল। ক’ৰবাত যদি সুখৰ ছবিয়ে মন আনন্দিত কৰিছে, আন ক’ৰবাত দুখৰ ছবিয়ে মন দহিছে। কেতিয়াবা পৰেই আপোন হৈ ধৰা দিছে আকৌ কেতিয়াবা আপোন জনো যেন অচিনাকী হৈ পৰিছে। এই ভেদা-ভেদ, উচ্চ-নীচ, ধনী-দুখীয়া, সমাজৰ যি বৈপৰীত্য ছবি সেইয়া তেওঁ মৰ্মে মৰ্মে উপলব্ধি কৰি লিখিছিল—

“মই এটি যাযাবৰ ...

ৰঙৰ খনি য’তেই দেখিছোঁ

ভগাই দিয়াৰ মন।

... মই দেখিছোঁ অনেক

গগনচুম্বী অটালিকাৰ শাৰী

তাৰ ছাঁতেই দেখিছোঁ কতনা

গৃহহীন নৰ নাৰী।

... বহু দেশে দেশে গৃহদাহ দেখি
চিন্তিত হওঁ বৰ
মনৰ মানুহ বহুতেই দেখোঁ
ঘৰতে হৈছে পৰ।।”

সেয়েহে, হয়ত তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠই পুনৰ সাৰ পাই উঠিছিল এনেদৰে--

“মানুহে মানুহৰ বাবে
যদিহে অকনো নেভাৰে
অকণি সহনুভূতিৰে
ভাবিব কোনেনো কোৱা, সমনীয়া

গীতটিৰ যোগেদি, মানৱীয় গুণ সমূহক উপস্থাপন কৰিছে। প্ৰমূল্যবোধ, কৰ্তব্যপৰায়ণতা, অনুভূতিশীলতা, মানুহ আৰু
অমানুহ (মানৱ-দানৱ) ৰ ভেদ, উদাৰতা আদি সকলো যে মানৱীয় গুণ তাক আহৰণ কৰাৰ বাবে যত্নপৰ হোৱা উচিত তাকে ব্যক্ত
কৰিছে।

তেওঁ আকৌ গাইছে -

... দুৰ্বল মানুহে যদি, জীৱনৰ কোবাল নদী
পাৰ হয় তোমাৰে সাহত, তুমি হেৰুৱাবানো কি
মানুহ যদিহে নহয় মানুহ
দানৱ কাহানিও নহয় মানুহ
যদি দানৱ কাহানিবা হয় মানুহ
লাজ পাব কোনেনো কোৱা...।”

তেওঁৰ গীতৰ মাজেৰে সঁচা মানৱ ধৰ্মক প্ৰতিষ্ঠা কৰাৰ প্ৰয়াস কৰিছে। দুৰ্বলীক, আৰ্তজনক, নিঃকিনজনক সহায় কৰাটো হৈছে
এক মানৱীয়তাৰ লক্ষণ। সাধাৰণতে, দুৰ্বল বুলি ক'লে শাৰীৰিক, মানসিক দুৰ্বলতাকে বুজোৱা হয়। কিন্তু, সুধাকণ্ঠই যেন সমাজত
সঘনে দেখা পোৱা দুৰ্বলীৰ ওপৰত সবলীৰ অত্যাচাৰ-শোষণ, উৎপীড়ন, বৰ্ণ বৈষম্যতা আদিহে প্ৰকাশ কৰিব বিচাৰিছে, যিবোৰ
মানৱীয় গুণৰ তালিকাত সন্নিবিষ্ট নহয়। সৃষ্টিশীলতা হৈছে হাজৰিকাৰ মানৱতাবাদী দৰ্শন। তেওঁৰ গানেৰে প্ৰত্যেক জনতাৰ
অন্তৰত সুপ্ত হৈ থকা মানৱতাবোধক জাগ্ৰত কৰাৰ চেষ্টা কৰিছিল। শোষক আৰু শোষিতৰ প্ৰতি হৃদয়ত প্ৰচণ্ড হতাশা আৰু
ক্ষোভ জাগ্ৰত হৈ কণ্ঠেৰে নিগৰাইছিল--

“ভাঙ
শিল ভাঙ
ভাঙ ভাঙ ভাঙ শিল ভাঙোতা
তোৰ ঘাম ভৰা নঙঠা পিঠি
তপত ৰ'দত যায় ফাটি।”

আকৌ গাইছে—

... হৰিজন, পাহাৰী, হিন্দু-মুছলিমৰ
বড়ো, কোঁচ, চুতীয়া, কছাৰী, আহোমৰ
অন্তৰ ভেদি মৌ বোৰাম
ভেদাভেদৰ প্ৰাচীৰ ভাঙি
সাম্যৰ সৰগ ৰচিম।”

এনেদৰে তেওঁ সময়য় সৃষ্টি কৰিব পৰাকৈ গীত ৰচিছিল। (কুমাৰ, ২০০৯)

এলেছা, শ্ৰম বিমুক্ততা, আত্মগৰ্বি লোকক তেওঁ কঠোৰ শব্দৰ দ্বাৰা ধনাত্মক অৰ্থেৰে আঘাট কৰিছে। জাতি-প্ৰেম যেন তেওঁৰ দেহৰ ৰঞ্জে ৰঞ্জে প্ৰৱাহিত এক বোৱতি সুঁতি। অসমীয়া জনগণ বুলি তেওঁ বিভিন্ন জাতি-জনগোষ্ঠী, বিভিন্ন কৃষ্টি-সংস্কৃতিৰে সমৃদ্ধ এখন শইচ-সোণোৱালী পথাৰ ৰূপেৰে কল্পনা কৰিছে, যাৰ ৰক্ষণা-বেক্ষণৰ দায়িত্ব আমাৰ প্ৰতিজন অসমীয়াৰ বাবে অতি মহত্বপূৰ্ণ। জাতিক ভাল পাবলৈ হ’লে, দেশক ভাল পাবলৈ হ’লে, দেশ বা জাতিৰ সুৰক্ষা আৰু উন্নতিৰ হকে আহোপুৰুষাৰ্থ কৰ্ম-চেতনা জাগ্ৰত কৰিব লাগিব। নহ’লে তাৰ বিপৰীত পৰিণাম অতি ভয়ংকৰ হ’ব পাৰে বুলি তেওঁ অসমীয়া জাতীয় জীৱনক উদ্বুদ্ধ কৰা এই গীত ৰচনা কৰিছিল —

“আমি অসমীয়া নহওঁ দুখীয়া
বুলি সান্ত্বনা লভিলে নহ’ব,
আজিৰ অসমীয়াই নিজক নিচিনিলে
অসম ৰসাতলে যাব...।
নানা জাতি-উপজাতি
ৰহনীয়া কৃষ্টি,
আকোৱালি লৈ হৈছিল সৃষ্টি
এই মোৰ অসম দেশ,
বিভেদ পৰিহৰি
নিজ হাতে শ্ৰম কৰি
দেশক নগঢ়িলে
এই দেশ হ’ব নিঃশেষ, ...

একতা থাকিলেহে বল থাকে এই আপ্ত বাক্যশাৰীৰ অৰ্থ/মূল্য তেওঁ অনুভৱ কৰিছিল। সেয়েহে, পূৰ্বৰ কবি-সাহিত্যিক, সন্ত-মহন্ত, বনুৱা-বনুৱা আদি সকলো অসমীয়াই গঢ়ি থৈ যোৱা অসমভূমিখনক ৰক্ষা কৰিবলৈ পৰৱৰ্তী প্ৰজন্মৰ লোকসকলৰ প্ৰতি সহৃদয়তাৰে আহ্বান জনাইছিল।

“নানা ৰহনীয়া বাৰে বৰণীয়া
কৃষ্টিৰ নাই শেষ
এই মোৰ অসম দেশ।

এই মোৰ অসম দেশ।

নানা সুৰে নানা গীতৰে

মধুৰ সমাবেশ

এই মোৰ অসম দেশ।...

সত্ৰীয়া অংকীয়া ভাওনা নামঘোষা ...

আদি মহাপুৰুষীয়া সৃষ্টিসমূহ, মানৱজীৱন আধাৰিত গীতসমূহ, টোকাৰী গীতসমূহ, অঞ্চল বিশেষৰ গীত-নাম আদিৰে ভৰপূৰ কৃষ্টি-সংস্কৃতিৰ ভঁৰাল যেন ৰক্ষা কৰাৰ দায়িত্ব সকলোৰে আছে, তেনে এক মানৱীয় নৈতিক কৰ্তব্য আৰু দায়িত্ববোধৰ জ্ঞান গীতৰ মাজেৰে প্ৰতিফলিত কৰিছে।

‘সময়ানুৰূপতা’, তেওঁৰ গানৰ অন্য এক বিশেষত্ব। সময়ৰ জ্ঞান প্ৰত্যেক মনুষ্যৰ এক প্ৰয়োজনীয় গুণ। সেয়েহে তেওঁ মানুহক সজাগতা, সচেতনতা আৰু সময়ৰ মূল্য বুজিবৰ বাবে গীতৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰিছিল—

“... এটি এটি ক্ষণ যেন মুকুতাৰে ধন

এনেয়ে হেৰুৱালে নাহে উভতি।

এটি এটি ক্ষণ যেন এটি এটি পণ

এনেয়ে হেৰুৱালে নাহে উভতি।”

সুধাকণ্ঠ হাজৰিকা যেন জন্ম লগৰে পৰাই ভিন্ন জীৱন দৰ্শনৰ সৈতে পৰিচিত। আপোন মাটিৰ গোন্ধে তেওঁক আজীৱন আকুল কৰি ৰাখিছিল। সেয়েহে, হয়ত তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠৰ সুধাই আপোন মাটিৰ উপৰি বিদেশৰ মাটিতো জনপ্ৰিয়তা অৰ্জন কৰিবলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল। এই সন্দৰ্ভত তেওঁৰ নিজা ভাষা এনেধৰণৰ—“মোৰ গীতত, মোৰ সুৰত, মোৰ কণ্ঠত অসমৰ মাটিৰ সুবাস আছে। অসমৰ মাটিৰ সুৰৰ ভেটিতেই সজাগ মোৰ কণ্ঠত বিশ্ববিজয়ী গীতৰ পজা” (কলিতা, জালান আৰু পৰাশৰ, ২০০৯, পৃ.১৬)।

ভিন্নজনৰ দৃষ্টিত ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ মানৱতাবাদঃ

হাজৰিকাৰ গীতৰ মাজেৰে তেওঁৰ চিন্তা-ভাৱনাৰ মান নিৰূপণৰ লগতে মানৱীয় প্ৰেমৰ বতৰাও প্ৰকাশ হয়, তাৰ উমান তেওঁৰ গুণমুগ্ধসকলৰ স্বকীয় অনুভৱেৰে সিক্ত অভিব্যক্তিবোৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰে। সকলোৰে মাজত ঐক্য-সম্প্ৰীতিৰ সাকোঁ তৈয়াৰ কৰাৰ মানসেৰে কেৱল গীতকেই শক্তিশালী মন্ত্ৰ ৰূপে মানি লৈছিল।

অসমীয়াত এযাৰ উক্তি আছে “যি মূলা বাঢ়ে তাৰ দুপাততে চিন” ঠিক এইযাৰ কথাৰ যেন আক্ষৰিক প্ৰতিফলন ঘটিছিল এই মানৱতাবাদী, বহুমুখী প্ৰতিভাসম্পন্ন শিল্পীগৰাকীৰ কাৰ্য্য-কৌশলত। গুণীয়েহে গুণীৰ মান বুজি পায় আৰু চিনি পায় বোলা কথাষাৰৰ যুক্তি, প্ৰমাণ মাত্ৰ পাঁচবছৰ বয়সত (ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ) তেওঁৰ কণ্ঠই আশীষ ল’বলৈ সক্ষম হৈছিল সেই বিশেষ ব্যক্তিগৰাকীৰ পৰা এনেদৰে—

“ছাত্ৰ সকলৰ সভাত এটি অতি কমবয়সীয়া ল’ৰাই (শিশু বুলিলেই হয়) হাৰ্মনিয়ামৰ সহায়ত সুন্দৰকৈ এটি গান গাইছিল। মই মুগ্ধ হৈ আসনৰ পৰা উঠি সভাতে উঠি ল’ৰাটিৰ গালত এটি চুমা খালোঁগৈ। তাহানি কলিকতাত ‘মাষ্টাৰ মদন’ বোলা তেনেকুৱা গান গোৱা ল’ৰা এটিৰ গান শুনিছিলোঁ। আজি অসমীয়া ‘মাষ্টাৰ মদনক’ দেখি বৰ সন্তোষ হ’লোঁ।” আজিৰ মাষ্টাৰ মদনেই হৈছে ভাৰতৰ সুধাকণ্ঠ ভূপেন হাজৰিকা। এইদৰে কোৱা সেই বিশেষ ব্যক্তিজন আছিল ৰসৰাজ লক্ষ্মীনাথ বেজবৰুৱা (কুমাৰ, ২০০৯, পৃ.২১)।

ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গানৰ বিশেষত্বৰ প্ৰতি লক্ষ্য কৰি অসমৰ ভূতপূৰ্ব মুখ্যমন্ত্ৰী শৰৎচন্দ্ৰ সিংহই কৈছিল “মানুহৰ হৃদয়ৰ ওচৰ চাপিবলৈ ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতেই আটাইতকৈ চুটি বাট” (কুমাৰ, ২০০৯, পৃ. ২৩)। ইয়াতেই হাজৰিকাৰ মানৱতাদৰ্শন প্ৰতিফলিত হয়। তেওঁৰ গীত আৰু শিল্পীসত্তা যে অনেককৈ পৃথক সেই সন্দৰ্ভত প্ৰবন্ধকাৰ দেৱ দাসে কৈছিল— “তেওঁ যেনেকৈ মানুহৰ গীত গায়, সেইদৰে মানুহক আত্মীয় কৰি ল’বলৈও আগবাঢ়ি আহে মানুহৰ মাজলৈ”, (কুমাৰ, ২০০৯, পৃ. ৭৭)। প্ৰবন্ধকাৰ, নিৰোদ কুমাৰ ভাৱাৰৰ মতে “অসমৰ বিশ্ববিশ্ৰুত শিল্পী ভূপেন হাজৰিকাই চাহ-মজদুৰ সমাজক অসমীয়া বুলি পৰিচয় কৰাবৰ উদ্দেশ্যে আৰু সম্প্ৰীতিৰ বান্ধ কটকটীয়া কৰিবলৈ চাহ-মজদুৰসকলৰ হকে ভাষণ দিয়ে, গান ৰচিলে, লগতে নতুন প্ৰেৰণা পালে” (কুমাৰ, ২০০৯, পৃ. ৭১)। প্ৰবন্ধকাৰ পুণ্য শইকীয়াই ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ গীতৰ মাজেৰে বৈচিত্ৰময় দৃষ্টিভংগী আৰু মানৱ দৰ্শনৰ পূৰ্ণ ছবি এনেদৰে অনুধাৱন কৰি লিখিছিল “হাজৰিকাদেৱৰ সুৰৰ জগতখন ব্যাপক আৰু বিচিত্ৰ। লুইত, গঙ্গা, পদ্মা, ভল্লা, মিচিচিপি, সকলোৰে মোহনা হ’ল ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ হৃদয়। তেওঁৰ গানত আৰ্ত্তজনৰ কৰুণ উচুপনি, দৰিদ্ৰ কৃষকৰ বুকুৰ বেদনা, অট’ৰিক্সা চালকৰ ৰোমাণ্টিক দিবাস্বপ্ন, শ্ৰম আৰু ঘামেৰে সিক্ত মানুহৰ সংগ্ৰামী চেতনা, সৰ্বহাৰাৰ ত্ৰুন্ধ প্ৰত্যাহ্বান, নতুন পুৰুষৰ প্ৰতি সুগভীৰ আস্থা, জাতীয়তাবাদৰ সফল জিজ্ঞাসা, হীনমন্য অসমীয়া মানুহৰ প্ৰতি ইতিবাচক ভৎসনা আৰু সৰ্বোপৰি ব্যক্তিগত জীৱনৰ পোৱা নোপোৱাৰ বেদনাৰ এক সৰ্বাত্মক সংমিশ্ৰণ ঘটিছে” (কুমাৰ, ২০০৯, পৃ. ৬৯)।

ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ জীৱন আৰু দৰ্শন, এই গ্ৰন্থত উল্লেখ কৰা মতে, “ভূপেন হাজৰিকাৰ মানৱপ্ৰেম দেশ-কালৰ সীমাৰ গণ্ডিত আৱদ্ধ নহয়। দেশ-কালৰ সীমা অতিক্ৰমি তেওঁ মানৱতাবোধ বিশ্বজনীন হৈ উঠিছে, য’ত জাতি-বৰ্ণ-ধৰ্ম, দেশ-কাল একাকাৰ হৈ গৈছে। এখনেই মুকলি আকাশৰ তলত বাস কৰা বাসিন্দা হিচাপে, এখন পৃথিৱীৰেই অধিবাসী হিচাপে বিশ্বৰ সকলো মানুহেই মানুহৰ আপোন। সেই মানুহৰেই মহামিলন হাজৰিকাই কামনা কৰিছে। ইয়েই তেওঁৰ মানৱতাবাদী দৰ্শন” (নাথ, ২০০১, পৃ. ১১)।

সামৰণিঃ

হাজৰিকাৰ গীতৰ মাজেৰে আভ্যন্তৰীণ ভাৱে এক মানৱতাৰ বীজ অংকুৰিত হৈছিল, যিয়ে সাৰ্বজনীন ভাতৃত্ববোধ, প্ৰেম, মমতা আৰু সৰ্বমানৱৰ অন্তৰ্নিহিত মৰ্যাদাৰ ওপৰত গুৰুত্ব আৰোপ কৰিছিল। দেশপ্ৰেম যেন তেওঁৰ আজন্ম অনুভৱ আৰু আত্মিক আবেদন। তেওঁৰ দ্বাৰা সৃষ্ট বিভিন্ন গীত-মাতৰ মাজেৰে স্বদেশ আৰু স্বজাতিৰ প্ৰতি থকা নিঃস্বার্থ প্ৰেম স্পষ্ট হৈ পৰিছিল। এই দেশৰ চহকী সংস্কৃতি, ঐতিহ্য আৰু প্ৰকৃতিৰ মোহনীয় ৰূপৰ বৰ্ণনা গানৰ মাধ্যমেৰে প্ৰকাশ কৰি সেই সমূহৰ ৰক্ষণা-বেক্ষণৰ গুৰুত্ব ব্যক্ত কৰিছিল। হাজৰিকাদেৱৰ চিন্তা-চেতনা, আৰু দৃষ্টিভংগীয়ে আঞ্চলিক সীমা অতিক্ৰম কৰি বিশ্বলৈ প্ৰসাৰিত হৈছিল আৰু সাৰ্বজনীনতাবাদৰ বাৰ্তা কঢ়িয়াই লৈ ফুৰিছিল, যিয়ে সকলো মানুহৰ মাজত শান্তি, ঐক্য আৰু সদৃশতাৰ পোষকতা কৰিছিল। কিন্তু, আশ্চৰ্য্যকৰ কথা যে, এই মানৱদৰ্শী, মানৱ হিতৈষী, গণ শিল্পীগৰাকীৰ জীৱন পৰিক্ৰমা বৰ সৰল নাছিল। নানা বিপদ-আপদ, বাধা-বিঘিনিৰে পূৰ্ণ এক সংগ্ৰামী জীৱন অতিবাহিত কৰিও মানুহৰ কল্যাণৰ হকেই আজীৱন গীত ৰচি, সুৰ বিলাই গ’ল আৰু সাঁচা মানৱতাৰ বীজ চিৰকাললৈ চতিয়াই গ’ল।

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Anjana Chaliha**, Ph.D.
Former Principal & Head, Department of Philosophy, Jagannath Barooah College, Assam, India.
2. **Purushottama Bilimoria**, Ph.D., Research Fellow and Teaching Professor.
University of Melbourne & University of San Francisco. Editor-in-Chief (Senior) *Sophia Journal of Philosophy and Traditions* (Springer)
3. **Anil Chandra Borah**, Ph.D.
Senior Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Centre, Jorhat, Assam, India.
4. **Ananya Barua**, Ph.D.
Professor, Hindu College, University of Delhi, India.
5. **Deepanjali Baruah**, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of English, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam, India.
6. **Mausumi Bhattacharjya**, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Gauhati University, Assam, India.
7. **Kasturi Bharadwaj**, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Jagat Taran Girls' Degree College, University of Allahabad, India.
8. **Shubhra Jyoti Das**, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Visva-Bharati, West Bengal, India.
9. **K. Nirupama Singha**, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Karimganj College, Assam, India.
10. **Champak Deka**, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam, India.
11. **Ruksar Sultana**
Department of Philosophy, Turku Hansda Lapsa Hemram Mahavidyalay, Birbhum, West Bengal, India.
12. **Deepalee Rout**
Head, Department of Logic and Philosophy, Kandarpur College, Cuttack, Odisha, India.
13. **Dipak Kumar Sarma**, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Political Science, C.K.B. College, Assam, India.
14. **Sabiha Nahid**
Research Scholar, Department of English, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Assam, India.
15. **Nizwm Basumatary & Samikshya Gohain**, Ph.D.
Research Scholar & Assistant Professor, Cotton University, Assam, India.

16. **Rishika Patgiri & Tejasha Kalita, Ph.D.**
Research Scholar & Assistant Professor, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Assam, India.
17. **Manashi Bora, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Nowgong Girls' College, Assam, India.
18. **Abdul Mubid Islam, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Department of English, SwahidPeoli Phukan College, Assam, India.
19. **Gauranga Das, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Kalimpong College, West Bengal, India.
20. **Mosaref Hossain**
Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Philosophy and the Life-World, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India.
21. **Sujit Kumar Sarkar**
Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Raiganj University, West Bengal, India.
22. **Nitul Hazarika**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Purbanchal College, Silapathar, Assam, India.
23. **Saumik Saha**
Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy and the Life-World, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India.
24. **Ashima Ahmed Saikia & Priti Salila Rajkhowa, Ph.D.**
Research Scholar & Assistant Professor, Surya Kumar Bhuyan School of Social Sciences, KKHSOU, Assam, India.
25. **Prarthana Chaliha, Ph.D.**
Faculty Associate, Sibsagar University, Assam, India.
26. **Jutika Devi, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Madhab Choudhury College, Assam, India.
27. **Madhumita Das, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Pub-Bongsor College, Assam, India.
28. **Premabati Sharma, Ph.D.**
Former Ph.D. Scholar, Assam University, Silchar, India.
29. **Simi Borgohain & Sony Das**
Assistant Professors, Department of Philosophy, Nalbari College, Assam, India.
30. **Sangeeta Devi**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam, India.
31. **Kabyashree Boruah**
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam, India.

32. **Anjana Chaliha, Ph.D.**
Former Principal & Head, Department of Philosophy, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam, India.
33. **Meghali Borah**
Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Jorhat Law College, Assam, India.
34. **Swapna Borah, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam, India.

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