

Resuscitating Indian Ailing System: A Modern Man's Commitment

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Abstract

Moral values and graciousness, in the past, were prominent in most teenagers. Majority of the youths then learnt respect, courtesy, consideration, decency, propriety, honesty and righteousness from a young age, and had enough self-discipline to hold to these values. However, these moral values and self-discipline are slowly diminishing over the years, as most of the younger generation are gradually disregarding these ethics. The listed values have slowly faded away, as they mean little to these adolescents, as moral values and self-discipline are on the verge of disappearing. Slowly and gradually, all political and executive powers have gone into the hands of incompetent and corrupt individuals and groups.

The objective of the present paper is to discuss the present situation that prevails in the country, highlights the pathetic condition of men and women, examine the corrupt practices of politicians and bureaucrats. The paper closes with an invitation to the modern man to wake up to build a strong nation.

Keywords: Ethics, morals, politics, younger generation, governance

In the 21st century men and women are living an unhappy and a miserable life without any hope as they witness massive corruption, demonic greed, despotic hunger for power, mis-governance, policy paralysis, nepotism, criminalization of politics, daily rape stories, crimes/atrocities against women, monumental disparities of incomes, abundance of malnourished poor people and children, discord between religious groups, caste clashes, regional difference, and so on and so forth. They strongly believe that their lives will not change even though there is a change of governments over a period of time. They vehemently argues that the administrators, the policymakers, the people's representatives are doing nothing to create confidence by providing multiple opportunities. At the time of elections, the power mongers woo the voters, make umpteen promises that 'if they come into power, they will make their (*here 'their' refers to 'the lives of politicians' and not 'the public'*) lives better' but ignore those promises once they come to power and ask the youth to earn money themselves instead of depending on the governments. They have lost confidence because the politicians after coming into power exploit the national wealth, mint money, run

educational institutions and hospitals to degrade their value, bulge their bank accounts in Swiss bank, spend lakhs of rupees on birthday celebrations, crores of rupees on marriages, wander in luxurious cars bought from foreign countries, own thousands of acres of land, and live in posh houses. As a result, ethical and moral values such as compassion, humbleness, generosity, justice, tolerance, honesty, loyalty, respect, self-esteem, etc. are slowly diminishing among the modern men and are indulging in immoral, illegal, and unethical practices.

In modern times, there is a hue and cry about the depletion of morals and ethical values all India. The term morality can be used to 'some codes of conduct' forwarded by a society or culture or a nation. Ethics is a branch of philosophy which seeks to address the concepts of right and wrong. Every society has its specific moral values and definite ethics which have been formed for its own good, for its development, and for its own betterment.

Moral and ethical behaviour of a person is not written in any constitution of the world. It is an invisible cultural heritage and a legacy of the past. The deterioration of these invaluable ideas takes place because of various reasons of modernity. In so called civilized democratic society, as one proudly calls it, moral lapses occur not just people are unaware of them but because they do not follow them. Intentionally, they begin to violate the moral behaviour and ethical conduct. Everyone is preacher of morality but when it comes to practice they stand at distance. There is a wide gulf between what one says and what one practices. Tongue and heart are supposed to be complementary with each other but unfortunately they are contradictory to each other. It is the sad situation that is spread like a wild fire across the world in general and across the country in particular.

The term 'ethics' and 'good governance' have received wide attention in the contemporary discourse. Good governance is a product of the quality of decisions and actions of public leaders and officials that enhances the trust of the people and its leadership. Public interest and welfare of people is assumed to be the necessary condition of good governance which expresses itself through such attributes as efficiency, accountability, transparency, participation, rule of law, justice and elimination of corruption. Unethical behaviour and corrupt practices on the part of public officials in India and other developing countries are so wide spread that it is difficult to locate a single department which is free from the social evil. It goes much beyond and includes the abuse of public trust, misuse of authority and sacrifice of public interest for private gain. All these lead to unnecessary delay in decision making i.e. *paralysis of policies*. The need of the hour is infusing ethical sense, religious values in the minds of the public officials and politicians those who are steering administration of the nation.

Democracy is probably the most cherished ideal of our founding fathers. Unfortunately, the word politics has acquired a different significance in India and it is because of this that there is so much confusion at present time. Rulers are expected to observe high ethical values as ethics and politics are inseparable. The first generation of the leaders of the independent India are men with great morality and ethics and commitment towards the people. The ethical and moral legacy of our freedom fighters was inherited as they demonstrated a high degree of probity and honesty in public life. Leaders like, Gandhi,

Nehru, and Patel not only preached morality in public life but also practiced it. Gandhi believed that politics without morality is a thing to be avoided. However, in recent times there is a general feeling that the Indian political system is functioning under great strain. The concerns are being expressed over the general decline of values in public life. Recent trends in politics created an impression that the capacity of our democratic system is increasingly going down in ensuring probity in public life. Such a situation is not good for the future of the democracy and it needs to be arrested immediately.

The politicians and the bureaucrats resort to any means of unethical tendencies to reach their end. Trust of the public in our polity has taken a severe beating as systematic corruption continues to cast its long shadow over the entire political spectrum. Corruption has spread like a cancer in our entire system, condemning lofty ideals of our erstwhile leaders to a nadir. Public accountability and integrity of our political class and bureaucracy have sunk to abysmal lows. People in India should lament that many of our leaders are “a heap of broken images” as T.S. Eliot bemoans on the lack of the moral values in his classic, *The Waste Land*. This is not to out rightly condemning the entire political class or bureaucracy, as there are still a great many number of fine men and women of unquestionable integrity and unwavering commitment towering over the horizon. But the fact reminds that we are having a major crisis and it is paramount that we accept the hard truth rather than trying to brazen it out.

The motto of previous generations seemed to be ‘simple living, high thinking.’ Now a days the motto is ‘high living, no thinking’. In order to gratify their selfish desires, they stoop down to any extent. *The Bhagavad-Geeta* has defined ‘karma yoga’ as ‘the performing of the deeds without being attached to the result.’ The commitment shown by previous generations is totally missing. According to Vivekananda, every duty is holy and ‘devotion to duty is the highest form of worship of god.’ This statement explains the respect and honour of labour. It is considered as one of the highest forms of worship.

A nation can only prosper when its leaders and citizens are kind, just and cooperative to each other. Sadly, these qualities are missing from the life of today’s political rulers. One must do everything, one can alter the minds of the rulers towards the path of glory and commitment. Then, only, the nation becomes a better place to live in and also makes a progressive step instead of taking a retrogressive step.

Good words or talks cannot be a testimony to one’s character. One’s actions can only prove the real worth of an individual. One must practice what one preaches, because indulgence in hollow and boastful talks leads one to nowhere. Actions alone can put a man on the path to progress and success. Good words ought to be coupled with good deeds and there should be harmony in our conduct, behaviour and practice. Chanukya says “a man is great by deeds, not by birth.”¹ This is the great representation of Gita’s saying ‘Karmanye wadhikaraste’ which means ‘work to your best to reach the heights.’ Deeds, in a broad sense, ‘make the mortal being immortal’ set virtues for generations to aspire and emulate and provide a meaning for our very existence. As Philip James Bailey, an English poet who is most famous as the author of *Festus*, pens “We live in deeds, not in years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial.”²

Indian democracy has evolved a great deal since independence. Political landscape of our nation has also changed beyond recognition. In the recent past, the people witnessed phenomenal movements against corruption led by the likes of Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal. Some of the activists of the movement went as far as outright condemning of our constitution and democratic system. But it is the strength of our democracy that they were able to organize such a large scale agitations against the governments which should be unthinkable in an autocracy. Even in this troubled times, this very fact gives us a lot of confidence in our political system. But one has to accept that our democracy has its own inherent flaws. But then no system is flawless and the past experiences across the globe show us that a liberal democratic system is the best system with some reasonable restrictions.

Study of good literature, inculcating simplicity of life, maintaining the balance of mind, rendering selfless service to the society, imparting a true secular and democratic spirit will enhance the basic ethos of morality. Man without morals makes a little difference between him and an animal from which he is said to have evolved. Without these golden values, man will enter not a world of glorious bloom but in an inglorious doom.

The Indian heritage is remarkable for its lessons in love, peace tolerance, ethics and morals which are sadly missing from today's generation. Good words or talks cannot be a testimony to one's character. One's actions can only prove the real worth of an individual. We must practice what we preach, because indulgence in hollow and boastful talks leads one to nowhere. Actions alone can put a man on the path to progress and success. As said earlier, Good words ought to be coupled with good deeds and there should be harmony in our conduct, behaviour and practice.

The country needs young men and women of ethical quality, moral integrity and commitment to resuscitate our ailing system. Today, India and Indians are recognized as a benign responsible power whose ascendancy as a global elite is welcomed by most in the comity of nations. This has more to do with vibrant liberal democratic system than anything else. As India continues its rise as a leader of global commons, it is imperative that our leadership has the desired quality to discharge our growing responsibilities and to safeguard our core interests. Hopefully, our time tested democratic system will ones again churn out great leaders as it did with Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Vajpayee and many more. Future of democracy is safe in India. But the quality of democracy one can sustain will have a major impact in determining India' course to fulfill her destiny as the world warms up to India's new standing as a great power. Hence, the country needs such youth with good ideals, values, and morals to guide and lead the nation and the public to the right path.

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