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The Dismal Observance of Sanatan Values

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Abstract:

In the midst of the unprecedented humanitarian crises caused by Covid-19, the mankind has witnessed an array of crisis like economic crisis, education crisis, job crisis, family crisis, food crisis, value crisis, sensitivity crisis, leadership crisis, and many more. The present study delves you into value crisis as it plays a pivotal role in the maintenance and sustenance of human life. The study hypothesizes that Sanatan values have absolutely nosedived in the recent waves of Corona country wide. *The Sanatan value is a prescriptive cum proscriptive belief system that transcends all frontiers of religion, nationality, culture, and race and is purely universal as it pertains to all for their intellectual, physical, and emotional wellbeing.* Assessing the ground realities, the study made first a pilot study of the status quo of Sanatan values in our social settings. Subsequently, the study collected required data by using three important data gathering tools to ascertain the facts emanating from the pilot study. Analyzing the collected data, the study reveals several striking facts about prevailing human values which are of grave concern for the mankind at large. More precisely, the study conducted a perception survey of 24 Sanatan values with special reference to value crisis in which 150 respondents (50 intellectuals of Delhi-NCR, 50 relatives of the deceased, and 50 Covid survivors) were selected to share their ordeals (painful experiences). The study also tried to understand what kind of perceptions the respondents have formed about the people and society during and post Covid. Finally, the study forwards five suggestive measures to overcome the value crises under discussion.

Keywords: Value Crisis, Corona, Sanatan values

A Walk in the Past

It was January 30, when India reported its first case of Corona in Kerala's Thrissur district in the form of a student who had returned home for a vacation from China's Wuhan University (Perappadan, 2020). Unlike many developing and developed countries, where calls to protective gear were ignored, India stood up firm before the deadly virus would have devoured thousands of lives silently. The monstrous Corona sneaked into India to unleash multidimensional havoc on a critical note as the country was already engulfed in the outrageous flames of NRC (National Register of Citizens) protest and the ensuing communal riots in the national capital Delhi. With little time to introspect and retrospect over the national issues, the countrymen were slipped into the most nefarious crisis mode which can be broadly seen in two parts or waves as follows:

In the first wave, India managed the pandemic quite efficiently by clamping the longest and harshest lockdowns. Bearing the pangs of four consecutive lockdowns laced with dogmatic foresight and clamped without well-crafted strategies, the vulnerable populace (migrant workers) of India were wailing everywhere over their perilous conditions cropped up by Corona.

Deprived of food and bereft of any hope, they questioned the country after the first lockdown, "should we fight starvation or Corona". Despite the government's periodic assurance and sporadic support of food and shelter, they felt themselves in the lurch and sensed that their death is imminent of starvation if not of Corona. The situation remained worsening. Seeing no help from any quarter, they trusted their feet more than helping hands of the government or NGOs and left for their homes on foot. This was one of the greatest feats shown by commoners in the history of mankind as courting death, injuries, and so much sufferings, the migrants travelled the distance of thousand kilometers to reach their homes. Pertinently, the feat of a 15 year old girl, Jyoti from Bihar is worth mentioning here who cycled for 7 days covering the distance of 1200 Km from Delhi to Darbhanga with her injured father riding pillion (The Indian Express, May 24, 2020). But the irony is such a feat that is equal to the world's longest cycle race went unheeded and remained confined to newsrooms and newspapers only. Anyhow, not all were lucky enough like Jyoti to reach their destinations. Many died in road accidents; many died of hunger; and some died of fatigue.

How can we forget the ill-fated day of 8th May 2020 when 16 migrants for not being caught and punished by police took railway track to reach their destinations. But luck was not on their side as they were run over by a speeding train after 36 kilometers' tiring walk. Apart from several appalling casualties in which more than 500 migrants lost their lives in road accidents, the people in power proved no less in inflicting physical and mental injuries to commoners for flouting half-baked Covid protocols. The migrants were made hop and crawl in the scorching heat for taking roads to their homes. Despite the categorical guidelines of the government, the people went in relaxed mode quitting the habit of using face masks and physical distancing.

Here, I can say that the second wave in India did not come rather was invited by us. If the first wave witnessed issues of crippling health care systems, education management, and other humanitarian crises related to migrants; the second wave witnessed not only the unprecedented deaths but also the unprecedented death of human values. Corona was no more a matter of debate in terms of whether it spread or was spread. But what corona has germinated on sociocultural front is definitely a matter of debate for us. We shall hardly forget, how our values substantially crumbled and the commoners were left in a myriad of humanitarian issues.

With the announcement of the first lockdown on 24th March, 2020, the black marketeers came in their elements causing huge shortage of masks, sanitizers, food items, medicines, etc. and selling them at exorbitant prices. The worse came to the worst in the second wave when the land of great sages and seers that always echoed the welfare shloka like

(सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु। मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग्भवेत्॥)

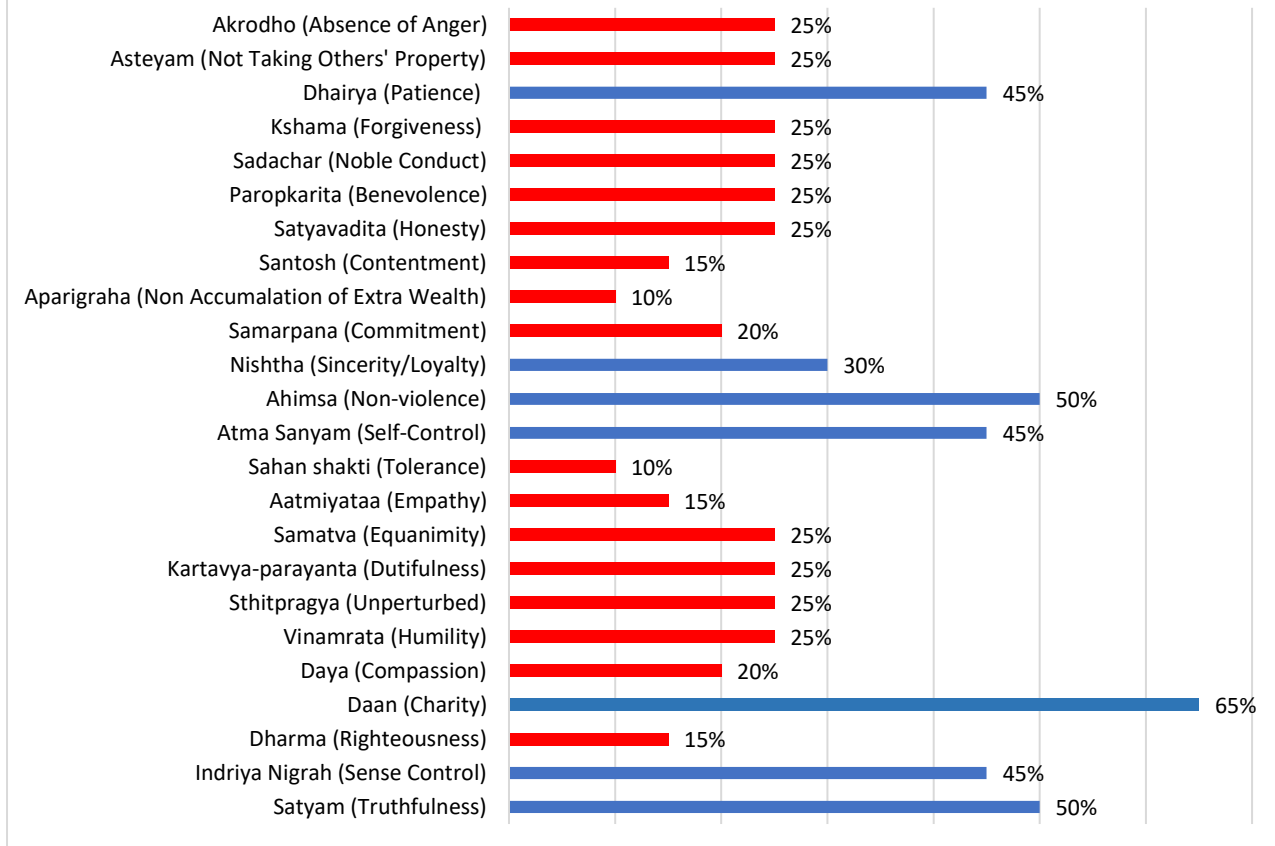
May all be at peace; May no one suffer from illness, May all see opulence; May no one suffer.

was witnessing strangulations of vital codes of ethics, morality, and Sanatan values. With black-marketing of oxygen, oximeter, medicines, vaccines, oxygen-beds, ambulance-service, the commoners also questioned skewed data of death toll, and incomplete last rites of the deceased.

Most grievously, our values went deep down the drain when we learnt about several cases of rape and molestation of female Covid patients and female attendants in many hospitals. But they went unheeded in the commotion of Corona. *How can we call it a Corona pandemic? For me, it is a sinister pandemic because the corona-caused deaths could have been halved had we not lost our values and civic sense.* Why to blame any government or any administration? A government or an administration is not a separate or distinct entity. It comprises each one of us. Hence, we all ought to take onus for a government being corrupt or honest. One of the main causes of today's humanitarian crisis is we have learnt to live with compromised values. And, this is the statement of the problem for the present discussion as part of which a perception study was carried out to explore the degree of observance of 24 human values which were found to be in peril during the pandemic.

Value, often synonymous with human value, is a multidimensional socio-cultural construct that expects a human to be humane to live a happy and harmonious life. Despite stratified social structure with two broad linguistic compositions: *Indo-Aryan* and *Dravidian*, a true Indian is expected to practice the stated 24 human values as they are analogous to India's national identity on socio-cultural front. Although, these values and ethics evolved from time immemorial and remained idiosyncratic to Sanatan Bharat, the modern India under the influence of alien culture has reported a sharp decline in the observance of the stated values as shown in the bar chart below:

Sanatan Values



There are two noteworthy facts surfacing in the above bar chart. First, according to the respondents, out of 24 human values and civic ethics, 17 values are being observed up to 25% only (as shown in red). Second, only 7 values are observed in the range of 30% to 65%. The most notable fact in the bar chart is not even a single value is observed up to 100%. This finding is very disturbing as it can be deemed as the death of our core values like *akrodho*, *asteyam*, *Kshama*, *sadachar*, *paropkarita*, *satyavadita*, *santosh*, *aparigraha*, *samarpana*, *sahan shakti*, *aatmiyataa*, *samatva*, *kartavya-parayanta*, *sthitipragya*, *vinamrata*, *daya*, and *dharma*.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OVERCOME VALUE CRISIS

From remedial perspectives, the study forwards seven suggestive measures for the restoration and inculcation of Sanatan- universal values in us.

1. There should be periodic audits of human values at workplaces to ensure the observance of Sanatan values.
2. The modern education should result into producing value holders rather than mere degree holders. For this, values must be talked if not taught.
3. Prioritize moral education in parallel with mainstream education and students should be conferred any academic degrees only after exhibiting desired ethical values in their personality.
4. For stable internalization, values must be instilled from the age of 5 to 25.
5. Follow the value of *aparigrah* above the rest and shun all the paradoxical stances to get rid of our current dystopian society.
6. The valued people need to be acknowledged for the dissemination of values.
7. The country needs to roll out value-based rewarding competitions at all levels which could help us live with desirable values in our social settings.

Summarizing the value crisis, it is imperative to stress firstly over the fact that the prime objective of education. is not being served today because our purpose of education is **सा विद्या या विमुक्तये** meaning *a true education is one that liberates us from physical, mental, and social sufferings*. Today's education, on the contrary, multiplies our sufferings because it keeps acquisition of information and survival skills in the centerstage. Practicing Sanatan values is more important to live a harmonious life than hoarding an array of academic qualifications. Thus, a great paradigm shift is not only imperative but also inevitable. We need to bring Sanatan value to the fore because it is universal value that connects humans, societies, and civilizations across the globe and is also analogous to India's national identity and unity on socio-cultural front. Secondly, the need has arisen to transform a human into a better species of human endowed with Sanatan universal values. In doing so, we need to form an array of learning consortiums at both micro and macro levels of society and involve all the stakeholders especially teachers, parents, students, different regulatory bodies, and valued policy makers from judiciary, legislative, executive, and media on one platform and find ways of humanizing our countrymen with Sanatan or universal values for a new dawn of Sanatan Bharat.

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