ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

ASSESSING UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES IN ANCIENT SCRIPTURES

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra19452
DOI No: 10.36713/epra19452

ABSTRACT

Every stage of our lives relates to human values, promoting a smoother and better life. It makes a good citizen and aids in expressing a person's personality and character. Valued citizens create a tranquil society. However, the question of how values evolve and in what way the understanding of the significance of texts for the formation of human values is the aim of the article. Scripture has been said by several academics to boost people's positivity. The ancient texts, such as the Upanishad, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Patanjali Yoga Sutra correctly point out how values should be instilled. The wisdom found in the scriptures awakens humanity, teaches them the proper way to live, makes them honest, diligent, and brave, and eradicates religious intolerance, violence, and conflict from society. Ancient Scriptures have been the mainstream foundation of human values which procure better society and nation.

KEY WORDS: *Value, Character, Scripture, Society*

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, value education is crucial for the generation since it teaches them the correct way to go. Human value education encourages us to think critically and independently as well as to act with conviction, bravery, and responsibility [1]. In ancient India, human values were regarded as essential. This richly cultural nation, which is thought to have been created by God, is full of virtues and values. Value was even the basis for the battles in India. One of the battles fought at Dharmakshetram was the Kurukshetra War. Human society in antiquity lived by a set of fundamental principles. Our Rishis through their writings and sermons, the ancients—from Viswamitra to Swami Vivekananda and Sankaracharya to Sivananda—taught their followers human values and morals. Morals and human values can be found in the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Sukaraneeti, and Arthasastra of Chanakya. We observe that values are gradually vanishing from society. The ethical dilemma has been neglected in the current pervasive system and it has grown more competitive. Our current objective is to succeed in whatever way, regardless of whether doing so will hurt other people.

Our ancient texts can be helpful in this respect since a good education will clear their clouded thinking. It is rather pleasant to hear the topic of the scriptures with its lovely illustrations. The texts' meanings cannot be broken [2]. The primary goal of India's previous educational system was to instill moral values in children through the study of scripture; however, this system no longer exists. Therefore, it is essential to preserve the appearance of the ancient educational culture in the current educational system. Knowledge of several ancient texts, like the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishad, and Yoga Darshana, heightens our consciousness and teaches us what to do and what not to do as well as how to manage our superfluous thoughts. Engaging with the teachings of the scriptures, accompanied by their beautiful examples, is truly enjoyable. The interpretations of the scriptures are unwavering. In ancient India's educational framework, the primary objective was to enhance children's moral character through scripture, a focus that has unfortunately diminished in contemporary times. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate elements of ancient educational values into today's educational system. Familiarity with various ancient texts, such as the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, and Yoga Darshana, fosters our awareness and instructs us on what actions to take, which to avoid, and how to manage our unnecessary thought patterns.

Importance of Human Values in Upanishad

The Upanishad is an ancient scripture from India that originates from the Vedas. It is often referred to as Vedanta since it represents the concluding portion of the Vedas. The term Upanishad signifies sitting with a guru in reverence to gain insight into Atmavidya or Brahmavidya. It is also known as Gupta or Rahasya vidya. Although there are numerous Upanishads, only ten are considered the major ones: Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Tattiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, and Brihadaranyaka. The Upanishads guide us in choosing the correct path. We can comprehend the connection between the Upanishad and Values through the various slokas (aphorisms). The introductory prayer of the Katha Upanishad is:

Omsahanaavavatu, sahanaubhunaktu,
sahaveeryamkaravaavahai,
tejasvinaavadheetamastu, maavidvishaavahai ||2.3.19||

Both the teacher and the student are praying to God, asking him to keep us safe, provide for us, allow us to work together bravely, enlighten us, and never cause us to become hostile [3]. These ideas help people cleanse their minds, and this prayer shows us how a teacher and student should behave and a

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brighter future is made possible by a pure mentality. Society places a great deal of importance on the relationship between teachers and students, but we are witnessing a decline in this relationship every day, which is bad for society. Because of the rise in violence in society in the twenty-first century, the younger generation has become extremely avaricious, self-centered, and dishonest.

The phrase "**mā gṛdhaḥ kasya sviddhanam**‟**॥1.1.1॥**" from the Isha Upanishads means "don't be greedy with anyone's money. Additionally, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states that we ought to acquire the three virtues of self-control, generosity, and compassion. Beautifully, the Taittiriya-Upanishad taught that satyamvada: Dharmacharya, always speak the truth: adhere to the teachings of the scriptures, and practise dharma. These are incredibly significant ideas for our lives, and if we live by them, we will be able to get ahead of everyone else. Mātṛdevobhava, which means to serve your mother as your God, Pitṛdevobhava, which means to serve your father as your God, ācāryadevobhava, which means to serve your teacher as your God, and atithidevobhava, which means to serve your visitor as your God, are all referenced in the same Upanishad.

According to the Mundaka Upanishad, "satyamevajayatenānṛtaṃ" means that only truth prevails over falsehood. Only when we do things correctly do we succeed **॥3.1.6॥.**

"**uttiṣṭhatajāgrataprāpyavarānnibodhata, kṣurasya dhārā niśitāduratyayādurgaṁpathastatkavayo vadanti**."

That road is described by the wise as being difficult to navigate and as sharp as a razor's edge. **||Katha Upanishad1.3.14॥**[4, 5]. Every one of these Upanishad verses is extremely beneficial to our life and the next generation. Our society will greatly benefit if we can instill these attitudes in them.

Significance of Human Values in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita

The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita consists of 700 verses and is divided into 18 chapters. It is a component of the ancient Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata. The Gita is regarded by Hindus as the divine revelation. It occupies a significant position in the realms of Hinduism, philosophy, and literature. Throughout the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna provides answers to various inquiries posed by his friend Arjuna, alleviating his uncertainties. It is believed that all facets of human existence are encapsulated in the Gita, which is why it is an essential part of our lives**.** Since Krishna's answer to Arjuna's difficulty is all-encompassing and incorporates the behavioural (karma yoga), the emotional (bhakti yoga), and the intellectual (Gyan yoga) aspects of yoga, the Bhagavad Gita is the best philosophical synthesis of karma, bhakti, and Gyan Yoga. The Gita's significance in philosophy and religion is well acknowledged. It is regarded as a humanistic religion worldwide in addition to being a well-structured aspect of Indian life. Its significance is established by the philosophical perspective, but it also takes a moral value approach.

This sacred text outlines all the guidelines and prohibitions and illustrates the way we can transform our lives. In verse **||3:40||**, Lord Krishna advises Arjuna:

“indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānamucyate, etairvimohayatyeṣa jñānamāvṛtya dehinam”

Desire holds our mind, senses, and intellect captive, preventing our true knowledge from being unveiled, which makes it essential to restrain our desires.

In the verse **||2:47||** mention

“karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshukadachana, ma karmaphalaheturbhurmatesangostvakarmani”

Arjun! Although you have the right to work, you should never see the fruits of your labour. You should never act for the sake of getting something in return or yearn to do nothing. Work in this world, regardless of success or failure, and without self-centred attachments.

This verse provides a Karma Yogin with the following four rules:

1. He only cares about the action;
2. He doesn't care about the outcome.
3. He shouldn't be used as a tool to achieve a particular goal because doing so leads to bondage.
4. The aforementioned concepts shouldn't be interpreted as supporting inaction.

There are several meanings associated with the term Karma. Karmakanda adherents interpret it as sacrifices and rites. Duty according to one's caste or station in life is another meaning. Action is another meaning of karma. However, the term also refers to destiny, or the inclinations, impulses, traits, and habits—Vasanas—that dictate his subsequent birth and surroundings. However, karma refers to an action or carrying out one's obligation in this verse. Moral value in this context is that we have the right to work, not the outcome of our labour.

yogaucyate samatvaṁ**॥2.48॥**should cultivate mental equilibrium. The Lord gave us instructions to follow and enhance these qualities in chapter 16 (Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāg Yog) verses 1, 2, and 3. These include fearlessness, mental purity, rooted in spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, self-sacrifice, study of the sacred texts, penance, straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, restraint from finding fault, sympathy for all living things, lack of greed, humility, modesty, lack of fickleness, vigour, forbearance, fortitude, cleanliness both inside and out, lack of envy, and lack of arrogance [6]. Moral development is linked to all of these traits. Once more, Lord Krishna told Arjuna that to live in peace, we should develop virtues like self-control over material cravings, letting go of greed, and abstaining from ownership and conceit **||2.71||**. To help children become good human beings, we should gradually instill all of these moral values in them [7, 8].

According to the Bhagavad Gita, desire can lead to destruction, the following is an illustration of the progression from desire to destruction

krodhad bhavati sammohah
sammohat smrti-vibhramah
smrti-bhramsad buddhi-naso
buddhi-nasat pranasyati ||2.63||

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Ruminating on the things of the senses, attachment, desire, anger, delusion, memory loss, and reason is completely destructive. Anger breeds delusion, which leads to memory loss and intelligence destruction; he perishes as a result of the destruction of intelligence. Sri Krishna then goes on to explain the theory of man's fall from Godhood to sense entanglements. False perceptions and incorrect thinking are the root cause of all evils. A man develops an attachment to the objects of his thoughts when he thinks about their seductive qualities regularly. When the same ideas keep coming to him, they intensify into a strong desire to own and enjoy the objects of attachment.

The Bhagavad Gita discusses moral behaviour.

adyadācarati śrēṣṭhastattadēvētarō janaḥ.
sa yatpramāṇaṅ kurutē lōkastadanuvartatē‖3.21‖

A person who demonstrates virtue in his actions will always be emulated and serve as a role model for society. The Bhagavad Gita says about Moral Equality

vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śhuni chaiva śhva-pāke cha paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśhinaḥ
‖5.18‖

Everyone is treated equally by a scholar. An elephant, cow, and Brahmin are all treated equally by a true scholar in every manner. The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue on the battlefield of "Kurukshetra" between Lord Krishna and Pandava Prince Arjun. While carrying out his warrior's duties, Arjun was hesitating. His charioteer, Lord Krishna, then gave him instructions. The meaning of life, the self, the universe, and God were all explained by the Lord. The Bhagavad Gita's wise words and useful lessons aid in easing life's tensions and complications. The Bhagavad Gita aids in self-discovery and the realization of the real "I." There are numerous areas in which the Bhagavad Gita discusses moral principles. The Bhagavad Gita says about the morality of faithfulness

na hi jñānena sadṛiśhaṁ pavitramiha vidyate
tatsvayaṁ yogasansiddhaḥ kālenātmani vindati ‖4.38‖

Knowledge of the Self is the purifier that no other exists. After some time, the person who has achieved perfection through consistent Karma Yoga and meditation will discover the Self within himself. We learn about honesty, fearlessness, and other virtues from the Bhagavad Gita:

buddhir jñānam asammohaḥ kṣhamā satyaṁ damaḥ śhamaḥ
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavo ’bhāvo bhayaṁ chābhayameva cha
ahinsā samatā tuṣhṭis tapo dānaṁ yaśho ’yaśhaḥ
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ matta eva pṛithag-vidhāḥ
‖10.4.5‖

I alone am the creator of all living things' intelligence, knowledge, freedom from delusion and doubt, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the senses, control over the mind, happiness and distress, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, nonviolence, composure, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, and notoriety.

Yoga Darshan and Human Values

The ultimate aim of Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra is freedom or self-realization. This philosophy instills moral principles such as ahimsā, satya, dāna, tapa, śradhā, and others to teach us the lesson of love. It acts as a set of society rules. Yoga involves being pure in one's physical, mental, and emotional interactions with all other living things. Yoga's goal is to make the inner self visible. A priceless gift from the great Indian sage Patanjali, the yoga philosophy transformed the moral, ethical, and spiritual world of humanity. Philosophy is a practical necessity for understanding life in its entirety, including how to use it and how to learn about human ends like dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Despite beginning with a pessimistic outlook, Indian philosophy develops a hopeful and upbeat strategy for achieving one's life goals. The education received from Indian philosophical systems is frequently described using terms like knowledge, awakening, humility, modesty, etc. A priceless gift from the great Indian sage Patanjali, the yoga philosophy transformed the moral, ethical, and spiritual world of humanity. Philosophy is a practical necessity for understanding life in its entirety, including how to use it and how to learn about human ends like dharma, Artha, Kama, and moksha. Despite beginning with a pessimistic outlook, Indian philosophy develops a hopeful and upbeat strategy for achieving one's life goals. The education received from the Indian philosophical system. Although the Samkhya darshan and the darshan of yoga share many similarities, the Samkhya darshan is theoretical, while the yoga darshan is practical. This study aims to draw attention to the connection between moral development and yoga darshan. Since the mind has many functions, including thinking, feeling, and memorization, one of the primary goals of yoga darshan is to stop the mind's changes, or fluctuations. Our character is composed of these three elements. Therefore, our personalities will change if we improve mental stability and brightness, and is frequently described using terms like knowledge, awakening, humility, modesty, etc. Maharshi Patanjali states in the following verse that if everyone complies with darshan's instructions, mental purification is not impossible

maitrī karuṇā mudito-pekṣāṇāṁ-sukha-duḥkha puṇya-apuṇya-viṣayāṇāṁ bhāvanātaḥ citta-prasādanam ‖1:33‖

The mind becomes purified by practicing friendship over wellness, kindness over suffering, pleasure over virtuosity, and indifference over immorality. It is recommended to focus on one thing at a time to eliminate distractions and clear the mind. The mind must be calmed to allow for concentration. It must not have been altered. Potential causes of the changes include immorality, virtuosity, wellness, and kindness. It is the mind's propensity to be envious of others' well-being, arrogant of others' pain, amiable and fond of virtue, and hostile to immorality. The mind becomes agitated by these changes. Employing kindness over suffering, pleasure over virtuosity, friendliness over wellness, and indifference over immorality should be practiced to stop these changes. The Astanga yoga sage Patanjali offered the Yamas and Niyamas, a superb framework for the cultivation of values. The world we live in and how we interact with it are the Yamas' main concerns. Every decision and action we take, both on and off the yoga mat, originates from a more thoughtful, conscious, and "higher" place when we take these factors into account. This helps us become more genuine with both ourselves and other people.

1. Ahimsa (Non-Violence)

Avoiding bodily harm to others, ourselves, or the environment; refraining from thinking negatively about

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others or ourselves; and ensuring that our actions and methods are harmonious rather than harmful are all examples of ahimsa.

2. Satya (Truthfulness)
Satya is being truthful, but it goes beyond simply speaking the truth. The literal translation of the word "sat" is "true essence" or "unchangeable." Though they are interchangeable, our thoughts, feelings, and moods are what shape our reality. We practice establishing a small space in yoga to help us realize that we are more than our thoughts**.**

3. Asteya (Non-Stealing)
Like the other Yamas and Niyamas, asteya means "non-stealing," but it means much more than that. It originates from the Vritti (mental thoughts and fluctuations): "I don't have enough" or "I'm not good enough." It results from a lack of confidence in oneself. Since the word yoga means "to yoke," "unite," "connect," or simply "to become whole," we can get closer to feeling as though we already have enough and are enough within ourselves by engaging in all facets of yoga both on and off the mat.

4. Brahmacharya (moderation of the senses/right use of energy)
In our contemporary culture, brahmacharya—which is frequently translated as "celibacy"—is frequently viewed as irrelevant. The literal translation of Brahmacharya is "behaviour which leads to Brahman." According to Hinduism and yoga, Brahman is "the creator." Therefore, "right use of energy" is one way to describe Brahmacharya. It means focusing our energies on finding contentment and serenity within ourselves rather than chasing after wants outside of ourselves**.**

5. Aparigraha (non-greed)
Aparigraha means "non-attachment," "non-greed," and "non-possessiveness." We learn from this significant Yama to take only what we need, hold onto only what is useful to us at the time, and let go when the time is appropriate.

Bad karma is eliminated or its growth is slowed down by Yamas practice. By practicing the Yamas, we strengthen our awareness, will, and judgment, among other abilities, while also working toward a healthier, more holy, and more tranquil existence. It is difficult to engage in these practices, but by doing so We improve our relationships with other living things and fortify our character. The five yamas are universal great vows that are unrestricted by class, location, time, or sense of duty, according to Yoga philosophy.

Similar to yama, niyama promotes proper posture, which enables a man to carry out non-violent tasks in his daily life. The second discipline is called culture, or niyama. It includes cultivating the following virtues. (a) śausa, or cleansing the body and eating only pure food, and purifying the mind by fostering positive feelings and thoughts like friendliness, kindness, joy, etc. (b) Santosa, or the practice of letting things happen naturally without exerting excessive effort. (c) Tapas, or penance, which entails keeping auspicious vows and developing the habit of withstanding heat and cold. (d) The term "svādhyāya" describes the consistent practice of reading religious texts, novels, etc. (e) The state of meditation and devotion to God is called **iśvarapranidhāna. "Śaucasantoṣatapaḥ svādhyāyeswarapraṇidhānāni niyamaḥ**" is how the Yoga Sūtra mentions it. All of these positive behaviours aid in fostering the emotion of ahiṁsā

Yoga prescribes numerous rules for preserving vital energy, strengthening, and purifying the body and mind. It also lays out complex guidelines for keeping the body healthy and preparing it for focused thought. Yoga facilitates the development of a healthy body and mind, from which positive emotions and thoughts flow. Yoga automatically purges our minds of all forms of conflict, violence, and rage. Yoga fills our minds with harmony, peace, and joy, which leads to the development of moral qualities like kindness, love, compassion, and positive thinking.

CONCLUSIONS

Our society is heavily reliant on values. In general, values are passed down from one generation to the next. Therefore, each person must learn moral principles and impart them to the next generation. Many academics from other nations travelled to India in antiquity to expand their knowledge. This indicated that the ancient Indian scriptures possessed deep ethical values in their text never seen before. This is a result of the ancient educational system's emphasis on moral development and scripture instruction. In summary, it can be claimed that values are crucial to success and the realization of our humanity. Thus, teaching youth different sastras is essential to instilling values in them.

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