



HUMANISM AND MODERN INDIAN THOUGHT

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ABSTRACT

The word humanism has been freely applied to a variety of beliefs, methods, and philosophies that place central emphasis on what it means to be human. Frequently, the term is used with reference to a system of education and mode of inquiry that developed in northern Italy during the 14th century and later spread through Europe and England. Alternately known as "Renaissance humanism," this program was so broadly and profoundly influential that it is one of the chief reasons why the Renaissance is viewed as a distinct historical period.

KEYWORDS :**ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE TERM HUMANISM**

Humanism begins with the premise that our bodies and minds are the tools with which we must engage this world and our existence. As Humanist philosopher and hymnist Ken Patton put it: "Without any say in the matter, we are born, and without vote or rebuttal, we die." These two facts are the givens of human experience. The question is, then, how will we respond to this situation?

We can consider thoughtfully what might constitute a good life, a life worth living even in the face of certain death, and then try such an approach, always leaving room for the fruits of both reason and experience to correct our course. All religious experience, traditions, and institutions are necessarily human experience, traditions, and institutions. Some religions answer that question by supposing that our lives are simply preparation for other, future states of existence, so that what constitutes living well now is whatever will pay off in the greatest happiness in the hereafter. Again, Humanism is concerned not with whether there is another world, but with how much time and energy we invest in preparing for it. A few of us have had uncanny personal experiences that incline us to think there may be something more beyond this life. But if we primarily focus on what makes a good life here and now, we are called on to do our best to do what is right in this world.

Humanism very intentionally accepts the reality of death as part of what makes the task of learning to be human urgent and compelling. Knowing that we are mortal and that our time is limited suggests that, to figure out how to live well, we must start now. In this respect, Humanism is a demanding spiritual path. It teaches that we are accountable, individually and collectively, for what we make of ourselves and our world.

Functions of philosophy have been varied for various people. Whether it seeks to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of man, or investigates into the character and status of values or suggests a way of life, philosophy remains an essentially human pursuit. Humanism is a world-view of any philosopher who is inclined to see man as the centre and the goal of his philosophy. It is an outlook which recognises the valuer dignity of man and asserts the centrality of human being. As it is stated by Dr. S. Radha krishnan, "In recognising the central importance of man in the scheme of things - and emphasizing his freedom and individuality, and creative power - his role in shaping and moulding his environment with a view of making a better and happier world, humanism preached the gospel of activism, full of hope and promise for the future of mankind - a philosophy likely, not only of his own destiny, but as one who is also destined to play an effective part in the larger field of human welfare and progress."

Genesis and growth of humanism

The word 'humanism' is derived from the Latin word 'humanus' which means 'human being'. It means a system of thought concerned with 'human affairs in general. Its tradition is as old as

Greek philosophy and the Sophists and Epicureans of Greece were perhaps the first among the humanists in history. Protagoras, Greek philosopher of the fifth century B.C, is considered as one of the earliest humanists of the West, if not the father of humanism.

INTRODUCTION

The present paper is an attempt to explore the importance of human values in the global society. Human society may not significantly sustain without human values. Hence, it is necessary to talk on the subject and bring about awareness of human values into the modern society.

The impact of human activities on the earth in various ways is placing a significant amount of stress. For instance, the climate change due to global warming. There seems to be a significant link between the remedial measures and various solutions to climate change and the practice of human values.

If any ethics are primarily to help a person to live a just and righteous life with him/her and in relation to others, ethics too is similarly oriented towards a righteous life. The personal and social life of every individual is permeated by a great sense of righteousness, a value system can only be either an item in the "thought-museum" of cultural artefacts or a fantasy.

In order to fulfil this, goal humanity is to be considered as the highest value in the global human society. For, the test for humanity is to achieve unity among the living and non-living creatures of the world. Such human unity can be driven home only by recognizing human values such as truth, kindness, benevolence, peace, love, dignity, respect, forgiveness, etc. of course, these values must be strictly determined and must not be treated as mere obligations. Hence, the most important task for philosophy students is to develop foundations and principles of a global human society and to formulate a global consciousness and a humanistic worldview. Our action must increasingly be based on an acknowledgment of global and universally accepted values. Because, it is the human values which are to be treated as the keys to solving the global problems.

The academic humanities trace their origins to the Renaissance. on Renaissance humanism, which challenges long-held ideas about the humanities' historical origins and meanings. This essay surveys both bodies of work, asking what recent scholarship on Renaissance humanism can offer our current understanding of the humanities, their purposes and functions, and their future.

A 'DO' AND A 'DON'T' FROM A HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE

Do bear in mind that in the 2001 Census, 14.92% of the Kent population described themselves as having 'no religion'. That is eight times as many as the combined total of those describing themselves as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh.. In particular, they need to be helped to recognise that people who have no

religion can and do have positive values and ideals and beliefs about ultimate questions.

Morality

Humanists believe that moral values are independent of religious belief. They believe that there are shared human values which are common to all the great world religions and to those with no religious belief.. They are built into our need as human beings for happy and harmonious lives lived with others in a human community. The most fundamental of these shared values is the Golden Rule, 'Treat other people as you would like to be treated by them.' At the heart of moral education, therefore, humanists would emphasise the importance of encouraging children to imagine themselves in other people's position, to identify and empathise with others. Children need to be helped to imagine what it is like to be bullied or excluded, to be hurt or deceived, to be the victim of racial oppression or war or extreme poverty. Stories and human testimonies would play a central role in a humanist approach to moral education.

. They also stress the importance of human rights and the values of respect, tolerance, and the acceptance of diversity.

Humanism does not mean that only human interests count. It can embrace a concern for the welfare of non-human animals. Animals too can suffer, and if human suffering is bad then so too is the suffering of non-human animals.

SOMETRICKY WORDS

'Religion'

Is humanism a religion? Some humanists have used the word.. Not all religions include belief in a god – Buddhism is an example. Most humanists, however, potentially misleading departure from the common use of the word.. Humanism is best thought of as a 'world view' which 'reflects on ultimate questions'. Humanists strongly welcome the inclusive character of modern religious education and its acknowledgement of secular philosophies and beliefs.

'Faith'

Is humanism a faith? Again, most humanists would be apply the word to their own beliefs. Traditionally the word has carried contrast between 'faith' and 'reason', and humanists would want to see their beliefs as being based on reason rather than on a 'leap of faith'. Many humanists are keen to participate in what is described as 'inter-faith dialogue', but they would prefer the more inclusive phrase 'faiths and beliefs'.

'Materialism'

The word 'materialism' is confusingly ambiguous in a way which mirrors the ambiguity of 'spirituality'. They believe that everything which exists must in some sense be part of the physical world, including human consciousness and thoughts and emotions.. To attack humanists for their 'materialism', with the implication that this makes their view of life shallow.

'Spirituality'

This is another word of which humanists tend to be suspicious, when it carries connotations of something which is the monopoly of organised religions.. However, the 'spiritual development' of pupils, understood in a broad sense, is something which humanists take very seriously. The school curriculum is required to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and young people and this forms part. Linking spiritual development with the other three items in the list implies a recognition that education should be of the whole person.. Spiritual development should draw on pupils' sensitivity to moral values, their understanding of their society and their responsibilities as future citizens -. Spiritual development could perhaps be seen as the cultivation of those aspects of life. Nurturing pupils' sense of central to a humanist approach to spiritual development.

CONCLUSION

Human value is a theory about "what things in the world are good, desirable, and important". Modern society has been undergoing significant crises for last few decades. Indeed, human values are now withering very fast for which we humans are most responsible.

The age-old simplicity and close ties between family and clan and village co-operation are withering fast. The growth of different modern political parties among the people and the total involvement of the masses in party politics is a contributory factor to such development. The modern people now think that their traditional socio-moral value is being threatened by the process of modernity. Therefore, their traditional social and moral system and identity are needed to be preserved by striking a balance between the traditional social and moral standards and the modern values. Value based education should be emphasized ranging from school to university level of education. They tend to reject everything traditional, their culture, their religion, their God, their morality, their values, their education, politics, etc., sometimes they regard their culture as inferior to the alternative models. Human values play a very leading role in society. Human values take precedence over social values. Human value is the conception of mankind in general. It is true that the individual is the chief concern, but as long as individuals exist in society, it may be firmly said that the modern society will never outgrow its existence. Today with the technological advancement, communication has tremendously improved, therefore anything that we say, do or even think will have a direct bearing upon a larger group of people. Today, newspapers inform us of so many crimes: robbery, murder, genocide, injustice, and political and economic corruption. These do not pass by the millions of avid readers without creating at least some sort of influence upon their lives. Films and audio-visuals have been the greatest influence. Thus, one can finally arrive at a conclusion that the moral behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals affects the society at large. Consequently, human values play a vital role both for the integrity and longevity of any human society (L. B. Mawrie, 2005). Human value is generally known to be a moral standard of human behaviour. Social and moral values are essential elements of the collective lives of present modern human society may not be able to continue to sustain. Therefore, human values should be preserved and protected. Looking at today's human society, one can see that it is deeply engrossed in materialism. Human values are beginning to lose their importance. The craze of materialism has been quite detrimental to the traditional social and moral system. The spirit of personal freedom has brought about the degradation in the moral life of the human community. Loss of moral integrity has always been responsible for the destruction of civilization in the past. There should be a general awareness being created by socio-cultural groups concerning the value of traditional customs and heritage. Today, many researches and publications should be done on several aspects of the society which help to perpetuate the human values of the human community in the postmodern era. Human values may be treated as keys to the solution of the global problems.

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