



THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN VALUES IN INDIAN MATERIALISM

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ABSTRACT

Value is the guiding principles of human life, which is conducive to one's psycho-physical and social health. Value helps one to achieve his goal of life. It leads to self-development and self-perfection. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksa are considered as value in India. Highest good is constituted by Harmonious cultivation of these four. Indian materialism (Cārvāka) admits mundane pleasure as the supreme end of life disregarding spiritual values. They hold that Artha, Kāma and dharma are means to the supreme value pleasure. But the crudest form of Cārvāka admits only Kāma as highest good and artha is means to Kāma.

Keyword: Value, mundane pleasure, highest good, nāstika, artha, Kāma, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

Value is indispensable part of all Indian philosophical thought. In India Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksa are considered as values. Artha is essential life value, which include money, wealth, property, prosperity, power, profit, authority name and fame etc. It has great importance inhuman life. Success and progress of life mostly depend on it. It is a powerful means to build a moral and spiritual culture in man. It is not the supreme end of life. It should be treat as means to certain other higher values. Kāma or sex is the natural tendency of all human beings. It does not imply only desire for sex but it stands for both sexual and sensual pleasure. Dharma is meant living according to some principle which kept society in balanced. *It* is the higher principle, which binds everything together. It is essential conditions for regulating the conduct of human life in the proper direction. It is the principle of good living and a code of discipline. *Moksa* is the highest state of self-realization of the self. It is the states free from all sorts of sorrows and sufferings. Moksa is spiritual enlightenment and highest end of human being.

So, dharma, artha, Kāma and moksa are represented by virtues or moral value, bio-economic value, hedonistic or bio-psychological value and religious value respectively. In modern times values are classified under several heads. The modern classification of values includes hedonic or pleasure values, organic or health values, recreational values, aesthetic values, economic values, personal values, social values, intellectual values, moral values, spiritual values etc. These modern classes of values may be grouped under the four broad traditional classes of values.

- a) **Dharma:** i) Religious values ii) Moral values iii) Ethical values iv) Personal values v) Social values
- b) **Artha:** i) Economical Values
- c) **Kāma:** i) Organic or wealth values ii) Aesthetic values iii) Recreational value iv) Hedonic or pleasurable values
- c) **Moksa:** i) Spiritual values

Cārvākais one of the most important nāstika schools of Indian philosophy. They admit hedonistic view of life. Cārvāka rejects dharma and moksa as value. For them Kāma or pleasure is

only the end of life. Cārvākas preached materialism and this is one of the most ancient materialistic accounts of India. Now –a- days materialism become a challenging issue. Maximum of people admit materialism disregarding spirituality and morality. It creates problem to run society smoothly. Human values are decrease day by day.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study is mainly based on the following objectives

- 1) To highlight the concept of human values found in Indian materialism(Cārvāka).
- 2) To find out the Cārvākas concept of good life.
- 3) To know whether present form of materialism is total reflection of Cārvākas materialism.

METHODOLOGY:

In this study descriptive and analytical methods are employed. Study mainly based on secondary data and data are collected from magazines, journals, books, etc.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT:

In India there are nine philosophical schools –Cārvāka, Buddha, Jaina, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. Among them Cārvāka, Buddha and Jaina do not believe in the authority of veda. So, they are nāstika and rests are called āstika because they believe in the authority of veda. The philosophy of Cārvāka is materialistic. They reject moral and spiritual account of life. Cārvāka rejects dharma and mokṣa as values of life. Mokṣa or self-realization, according to Cārvāka is meaningless. Cārvāka recognizes the reality of those objects only which are perceived. They deny the reality of any non-material substance, viz. God, soul, heaven, hell, merit and demerit because they are all beyond the range of perception. God’s existence can’t be perceived. So, there is no God as the creator of the world. The four material elements earth, water, fire and air is the material cause of the world. They hold that heaven is not different from the experiences of pleasure and that hell is nothing but the experiences of pain. So, mundane pleasure is heaven and pain is hell.

The Cārvāka denies pre-existence of soul or self before the birth of the present body. The four *bhūtas* or atoms of primary element viz. Earth, water, fire and air is the only realities. Mind or consciousness is the production of these four elements. Consciousness is a new quality of the body and it produced by the particular proportion of earth, water, fire and air which are totally material

elements. There is no consciousness in them. Consciousness does not inherent in these particles of mater. But when these four elements come in to group together consciousness becomes manifested therein. None of betel leaf, lime and areca nut is originally red. But when chewed together they come to acquire a reddish colour. Similarly, though these four material particles do not possess life or consciousness, yet when these particles come to be arranged into a specific form in particular proportion, life and consciousness come in to appear. Hence, consciousness is a quality of the body and soul is nothing but the body endued with consciousness. Soul is not permanent it destroyed with the destruction of body. So, there is no question of moksa or self-realization. Self-realization is meaningless.

Cārvāka reject “*dharma*” as the end of life. Dharma or rightness consists in conduciveness to sensual pleasure. Wrongness consists in conduciveness to bodily pain. An action is right which gives pleasure over pain and which gives excess of pain over pleasure, is wrong. Virtue consists in the enjoyment of sensual pleasure. The *dharma* or duty of human beings is to acquire more pleasures instead of pain in their lifetime. To pursue pleasure is the only duty or *dharma* of a man. Prayer and offering are the hope of men who are weak, without will power to do anything. Religious ceremonies, prayers and offerings are vain or illusive. So, it is needless to believe in any supernatural powers. Mundane existence is only real. Mundane pleasures are the end of life and working for acquirement of these pleasures is *dharma* or duty to a man.

Rejecting the importance of *dharma* and *moksa* in human life Cārvāka accepts Artha and Kāmaas the values by which one can make his life pleasurable. Cārvāka holds that pleasure is only the end which produced by the intercourse of different sense organs with their particular objects. They admit not only the sensual pleasure as value but hold that sexual Pleasure is also true and good. Both sexual and sensual pleasures are the supreme values of human life. The only reasonable end of man is enjoyment of all sorts of pleasure in present life. The maximum of sensual pleasure with the minimum of pain is the highest good. There is no extra mundane happiness or good in this beautiful world. Pleasure (Kāma) and riches (*artha*) are the summum bonum. But they advocate that artha or wealth is the means to Kāma. For them artha ought to be acquired for the sake of pleasure. Pleasure is an intrinsic and higher value whether Artha or wealth an instrumental value. Without Artha or wealth one cannot satisfy their material and physical needs. When health goes, it takes away pleasure with it. Pleasure (Kāma), wealth and health constitute the human good.

Cārvāka ask to enjoy all sorts of pleasures – sensual as well as sexual as much as possible in this life discarding pains and miseries. Though life is full of sorrows and sufferings the amount of pleasure in this world is higher than that of pain. The pleasure, which is mixed with pain, is higher than which is not mixed with pain. So, Cārvāka said a man should do that which gives him pleasure in end. According to them there is no need to restraining from sexual appetite. Cārvāka preached- “ Eat Drink and be Merry, for, to-morrow we may die. Pleasure is the highest good of human life. The only good of life is the human life. The only good of life is the individual’s own pleasure. So, Cārvāka asks to enjoy pleasures of the present moment disregarding the past and future. Hence, the Cārvāka regards earthly pleasure as the highest end of human life.

There are two forms of Cārvāka philosophy- gross (*dhurta*) and refined (*Susiksita*). Gross Cārvāka do not recognized qualitative difference in pleasure. All pleasures are same in quality. But the refined (*Susiksita*) Cārvāka make the distinction between higher and lower values. The cultured (*Susiksita*) Cārvāka mentions three ends of human activities, namely, virtue (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (Kāma). They said that only pleasure is not intrinsic good. It constituted by harmonious cultivation of virtue (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (Kāma). Human pleasure extremely differs from beastly pleasure. The pleasure of a pig can’t be same as the pleasure of human being. So, only pleasure can’t be the highest one if it is not acquired by righteous way. Refined (*Susiksita*) Cārvāka treats *dharma* and *artha* as means to the supreme value, the pleasure. They recognized the importance of self-control (*brahmacarya*) and spiritual discipline (*dharma*) in the acquirement of enjoyment of pleasure. Human enjoyment without spiritual and moral discipline is beastly enjoyment. Sensual pleasure is transitory and it can’t be lasting forever. Intellectual pleasure alone is lasting. Refined Cārvāka rejects gross sensual pleasure as the supreme end of life rather they recognized intellectual pleasure as the supreme value.

CONCLUSION:

It is very clear that value notion of Cārvāka (materialism) is hedonistic. Sexual and sensual pleasures are the highest end of life. Mundane peace and prosperity are the value. The main motto of Cārvāka is Eat, Drink and be Merry, tomorrow we may die. The present life is the only life. To them, mundane pleasure is supreme value. Good or pleasurable life is that which is guided by moral and spiritual virtues.

Now-a- days maximum numbers of people of the world become the extreme followers of the Cārvāka. Because they also believe in material peace and prosperity like the Cārvāka do. Today

material value and sensual pleasures become the primary objective of life. People are busy in the acquirement of physical entertainment disregarding moral and spiritual urges. Man is putting greater importance on physical strength, material prosperities and gratification of the self. Though Cārvāka preached materialism, later Cārvākas admit moral and spiritual discipline to acquirement of supreme value pleasure. So, it can't be assume that present form of materialism is total reflection of Cārvāka materialism. It is extreme more that of Cārvāka.

Value implies some activities or actions and thinking which help man for his better life. Value remains in the cultivation of such activities and thinking. Non-violence, non-stealing, truthfulness, good conduct, love and compassion, purity of mind, righteousness, forgiveness, control of passion, tolerance, human felling to the distressed and disabled person, honesty in every sphere of life, observance of one's own *dharma* (duty) are moral and religious values. These good ideals or values are the primordial factors for the balance and healthy human society. So, values have great importance in the progress of human society as well as in the development of morality and spirituality in man.

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