

Philosophical essay discussion- 4




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Philosophical essay-

► Important Points to remember-

1. Easier than normal essay as many dimensions can be included.
2. Anecdotal Introduction or poem etc.
3. **Linking paragraph** with various question statements.
4. Main body with various dimensions (MR. SPEECHLIT)
5. Pre conclusion having solutions or best way.
6. Conclusion with poem or anecdotal ending.
7. Flow and coherence (connecting words within lines and within paragraphs)
8. Chronology of examples.



Reality is ultimately a
selective act of perception
and interpretation.

Introduction-

It was year 1991, a political rally was being addressed by India's Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nādu. No one could have ever imagined the tragedy unfolded with the assassination of him. The perpetrator in the event was a 16 year old girl, Nalini. This turns out to be an apt instance of how reality is a selective act of perception and interpretation, where security establishment perceived Nalini as an innocent teenager without any resources to pull out an assassination like this. This also highlights that reality as it may sound may not be as simple as it seems.

Linking paragraph- Moving forward, in this essay, firstly we are going to understand more about Reality, and why is it important to find the reality or truth. Subsequently, we will analyse why reality is a selective act of perception and interpretation and various problems associated with this subjective interpretation. Finally, we will ponder upon few of the solutions to counter these problems.

Reality: a basic understanding-

Throughout our History, we can notice a constant question, that was asked by many philosophers- What is Reality? Right from Buddha to Mahavira, to the times of Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, each time different version of reality was propounded.

According to Greek philosophers, “What cannot be negated is reality”, and one must keep on negating until truth is achieved. For instance, how the Earth centric view of world was challenged and later discarded with the replacement of Heliocentric theory.

In simple words, reality can be construed as things that can be felt, seen, smell, hear or taste by our five sensory organs. But is it true or is it complete version of reality?

Reality is different from different perspectives. A half filled glass can considered to be either half empty or half filled and it depends on one's life experiences, one's upbringing, culture, society, religion, literature, Age, gender, Race, time, space and so on. But before moving further, firstly, let us understand Why is it necessary to find reality or truth.

Perhaps, there are various reasons as to why it is necessary. To count them out, firstly, Finding reality helps one to dispel Myths. For instance, 1962 Indo-China war dispelled the myth of China being a friendly country and also broke the notion of “Hindi Cheeni Bhai Bhai”.

Secondly, Finding reality helps one in finding solutions to persistent problems. It can be highlighted by the fact that how genome sequencing of covid-19 strains is being done, in order to find solution to any new variations.

Thirdly, It helps in surpassing the fear of unknown. To illustrate, how scientific community is engaged in finding reality of Monkey pox and avert this fear from the minds of common citizen.

Fourthly, it helps us in preparing for future challenges, which can be better understood from a Chinese philosophy that Knowing the strengths and weakness of an enemy might get you a win but not knowing oneself will definitely lead to a defeat.

And lastly, Finding reality leads to societal improvement and evolution and discovery of higher level truth, which can be corroborated by the fact that How Archimedes found the truth of Buoyancy based on his experiences in a bath tub. Now let us understand why reality is subjective act of perception and interpretation.

Reality: a selective act of perception and interpretation-

As was discussed earlier, reality is subjective and is perceived and interpreted differently based on gender, age, culture, country and so on.

To illustrate, in the case of cultural differences, vegetarianism may be considered as a superior reality for many, but at the same time non vegetarianism cannot be declined or neglected.

Similarly, accepting LGBTQIA+ is also very subjective. In the same society like in the case of USA, many people support it as they are influenced by the notion of individualism, but at the same time some orthodox churches totally declines it and considers it to be against the word of god i.e The Holy Bible.

Likewise, Gender also plays an important role in interpreting reality i.e Patriarchy or domestic violence, which is a positive aspect for a man that increases his dominance over wife and status among his peer group but for women, it is equally demeaning and detrimental.

Also, analysing Indian national movement lets us understand that how reality was different for different sections and how their methods to achieve independence differed- i.e moderates, extremists, Swarajists, revolutionary terrorists, communists, Gandhians. Not just here but this subjective reality can also be seen in case of political ideology.

The political left, right and centre and their approaches and followers are shaped by their leaders, their ideological fathers (i.e Marx), their mode of development for society (i.e socialism or capitalism) and especially their self interest.

In addition to this, one's education and awareness also plays an important role in shaping beliefs. This can be corroborated by the fact that climate change is seen as a hoax by many including few world leaders and businessmen, while other countries are equally sensitive to the issue.

These examples highlight how reality is ultimately a selective act of perception and interpretation. Even movies play a very important role to bring out reality and shape people's perception. For instance, city dwellers usually consider that the caste system is not a reality and it has now ended completely but the remarkable presentation in the movie Article 15 presents a different story of Dalit oppression, violence and exploitation.

Also, reality changes with time. For example, the Khajuraho temple sculptures consist of erotic nude images, which showcase acceptance of it in that era, but now even the Digambar Jain sadhus or Naga sadhus of Shaivism cult are being beaten up by mobs. This showcases how acceptance of nudity as a reality has changed with time.

Even, in terms of understanding poverty, this perception of reality being subjective is visible. For the poor, poverty is actually the reason of the unequal system itself, while according to the rich, poverty is the reason of the subculture of the poor itself. This is the exact case of the debate between blame the poor view versus blame the system view.

Reality is also perceived and interpreted **based on narrative** that is built by Governments or press of any country. The case in point is the Indo-Pak war of 1965, where Pakistani people by the help of western media are made to believe that, the war was decisively won by them, although it was clearly India who outpowered Pakistan.

Apart from narrative, research also plays an important role in perceiving reality. The example of various theories of Indus valley civilization and its decline, is a testimony to this fact. However, this subjective interpretation can have a negative impact and can lead to various problems and issues.

Subjective reality: a problematic issue-

It is actually an issue as lack of maturity and tolerance among citizenry can lead to issues of communalism, Polarisation and riots. Case in point is the recent controversy surrounding Nupur sharma, where her comments were perceived as negative to minority community and violence erupted in many places.

Similarly, Mahabharata and the illusion of floor at Indraprastha led to massive battle between the family members itself, leading to so much of bloodshed.

Moreover, because of different ways of socialisation and sensitisation, many Indians face racism and marginalisation, be it Dalits or be it northeast Indians being mocked as chini, corona and was also not given accommodation during trying times.

Likewise, distorted reality or the other version of perceived reality can even bring democracy to a threat and can lead to anarchy. This can be proved by January 2021 capitol hill attack in USA, Where Donald Trump's version of reality of vote rigging led to anarchist activities.

Also, in judicial arena, judicial creativity and interpretation has the tendency to pass various judgements that are not conducive to the modesty of women, like in one of the judgements by MP high court, it was not considered to be sexual assault, if there is no skin to skin contact. This has tendency to tarnish the image of judiciary and can lose trust of citizenry.

Even, In the case of border perceptions as witnessed on LAC at china border, there is a different perception of border based on various versions of history and treaties. But this subjective interpretation of reality led to border skirmishes at Galwan valley in June 2020, which led to 20 Indian ITBP personnel giving the sacrifice if highest order. Although, there are solutions which can be embraced to make sure a peaceful and just society is achieved.

Solutions to a peaceful and just society:

It needs to be understood first that reality is always subjective and it should be accepted as a fact. **Jainism Anekantavada and Nayawada philosophy**, if followed can bring peace at all levels, which opines that reality is subjective and we must not be very extreme in our view points rather try to understand the reality from different point of views.

Similarly, value based education at school level can bring the environment of tolerance and maturity. This may help in shedding extremism and learning things from different perspectives. This maturity can be seen in various contexts, where India and China, focuses on “differences must not be allowed to become disputes” and accommodation of mutual concerns or also the amicable resolution of **India-Bangladesh land border issue**.

Likewise, following Indian ethos of acceptance can bring a positive change. If we just follow the fact that **ellora caves have 3 religions** simultaneously being thriving, being worshipped. Then it is duty of citizenry to emulate it to prevent the problems that may surface due to issue of subjectivity of reality.

Moreover, we must follow **Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy** to respect individuality irrespective of caste, religion, political ideology, nationality and this will bring peace ion society as well as world and **“Human first or Humanism”** should be our Mantra. Maturity in this aspect is also very much required and the correlation with following poem highlights the same.

How many slams in an old screen door?

Depends on how loud you shut it,

How many slices in a bread?

Depends on how thin you cut it,

How much love inside a friend?

Depends on how much you give em.

Similarly, How much are we able to avert problems posed due to different interpretations of reality?

Depends on how an individual, family, society, nation and international community **embraces MATURITY.**

Thus, it is required that at all levels this realisation comes and an environment of tolerance and acceptance is cherished and -

“ understanding that the reality is not absolutely real is true maturity”



Thankyou