

# **Espousing Religious Philosophy: A Potential Method for Combating New-Generation Social Ills in Post-COVID Society**

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## **Abstract**

The evolution of human civilization is primarily due to the pursuit of solutions to difficulties. Human curiosity and the brain's capacity for cognition have allowed people to survive under challenging circumstances. Human resilience and adaptability have been demonstrated for a considerable amount of time, dating back to the Homo sapiens phase. However, we frequently overlooked the preservation of knowledge. Otherwise, human evolution would not be feasible. We can only predict future issues based on past information. All people on the planet now have to deal with a different kind of issue due to the COVID-19 epidemic. In addition to being fatal, this disease's peculiar way of spreading among people (through touch) creates some very challenging circumstances. People were compelled to live alone. The new normal of daily existence was quarantine. Technological advancements reach unprecedented heights in these circumstances. It has certain drawbacks despite being an advantage in such a lethal circumstance. We all know that men are sociable creatures by nature. However, some of the problems caused by technology's attempts to replace people can be found in our religious worldview; this paper will address these issues.

**Keywords:** human civilization, resistance, problems, COVID-19, pandemic, religious philosophy

## **Introduction:**

The day was 31 Dec, 1999.

I was at the bus stop.

See, the bus has arrived.

“2000s”

I read the name.

Seats were packed.

Z, Alpha, Beta; my companion.

Hoped to meet peace, love, and happiness.

The new bus had some musty odour.

Incurable, intolerable, unbearable!

Human nature's insatiable desire for novelty, adoption, and resilience has propelled humanity from the caves to the AI-dominated "developed world" of the twenty-first century. Even though different nations have developed differently, awareness—or perhaps we should say, the idea of technological advancements among people—leads us to postmodern society, where we are attempting to rationalise our new ideas over our old ones and renew our old perspectives on everything. While we are undoubtedly celebrating our own ideas and views, we are also experiencing and experimenting with these activities, which might occasionally result in a social catastrophe.

A few decades ago, the main objectives of every nation were to solve social problems, improve the welfare of its citizens, and promote its economy. However, a realisation completely altered the situation. In 2019, a disease has compelled people all around the world to stay indoors or in a room. In actuality, however, nothing can halt the human brain from growing. Additionally, it is accurate to say that "scarcity is the root of discovery." Thus, the most innovative digital revolution occurred at this time. When people went back to the previous life, the world had changed, and they were not the "old people" anymore. Everyone became a "new person" by experiencing digital benefits.

Life has evolved. The order of importance has shifted. Economic and societal problems have evolved. As globalisation and easy access to internet facilities bring the entire world to our room and mobile, the most frightening aspect of these issues is that they are cosmopolitan in nature. I like to refer to this as "bringing the trash from the ocean to home." This is because people are more drawn to problems, immorality, and unethical things than to adhering to mainstream morality\*. So, it has led us to combat new-generation social ills. By the term new generation social ills, I mean those problems which were less visible or little visible before the COVID-19 period.

### **Objective:**

From the Silent Generation to millennials, everyone was looking forward to the new millennium, wishing for fresh perspectives, ideas, and worldviews that could lessen the terrible fatigue of the past century. The entire civilization had been tainted by two world wars and a protracted cold war. The government has been forced to focus on core issues most of the time due to a number of factors, including the emergence of numerous political and apolitical social movements, the pressure from the international community, the territorial threat posed by the Indo-Pak and Indo-China wars, the struggle to adopt a mixed model of economy, and the effort to instill a new political structure among the general populace. However, a new lens was created to examine the societal issues following the dissolution of the former USSR, the adoption of the LPG model, and post-modernization. This is also a reality that the new millennium had brought some new problems. A few of them can be mentioned, such as poverty, degradation of women's position, HIV and AIDS, unemployment,

communalism, corruption etc. However, the post-COVID age has brought forth a number of new generation issues that require introduction, analysis, and resolution. This is the article's primary objective.

### **Methodology:**

This research paper is conceptual, analytical and interpretative in nature. For the most part, the explanatory method has been used. As primary data, we have gone through some surveys and books; articles and newspaper analyses are used as secondary data.

### **New Generation Social Ills – Cause and Consequences:**

Now let's have a look at the issues that the post-COVID period has brought —

**1. Post-truth society** (Dominic, 2021) : According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, the term post-truth relates to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than one based on facts. The widespread use of social media platforms has increased in the post-COVID period like never before. Now it is very common to spread all forms of news and incidents within minutes across the world like a wildfire. But due to unawareness, people tend to believe whatever they have seen. Most of the time, the real truth is hidden, which can lead to serious issues. So, emotions become the prime factor in making decisions about anything while the use of reason takes the back seat. So, people's opinions and support can be manipulated so easily. Sometimes people tend to support criminals due to such manipulation.

**2. Consumerism** (Lage et al., 2022) **and the lipstick effect** (Hayes, 2024) **on the economy** : Consumerism is the prime goal of capitalism, where it creates the belief that the core goal of human life is to consume more and more goods. Basically, it helps the big businessmen and industrialists with the continuity of their business. To some extent, it can be justified in developed countries, as the economic conditions of people in such countries are much better than those in developing and underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, the breakdown of the economy in most of the economies in the world in the post-pandemic period led to an assumption that sales of luxurious items would be decreased. But there is a twist and a most astonishing fact: people still buy fewer luxury items like lipstick even though they can't afford the most luxurious items because it makes them feel good and less depressed. Considering external material goods as the source of happiness while ignoring the internal issue of mind and psyche is really scary nowadays.

**3. Sharenting** (Gatto et al., 2024): This phrase was coined in 2010 to describe a common practice among parents in which they share or publicise significant volumes of potentially sensitive information about their children on various digital platforms. There are several factors that contributed to the Sharenting culture, including the fact that it was used as a source of money. They also want validation from others. Some of them sought to flaunt their lifestyle. This may promote cybercrime because people on digital platforms do not know who is viewing their stuff. It may assist criminals in studying their lifestyle, which could lead to organised crime. Another negative aspect of sharing is that it can cause major mental health difficulties in children's minds, as well as body dysmorphia.

**4. Virginity shaming** (Rawhani, 2024): The 21st century is undoubtedly upon us. With consent, men and women enjoy the same sexual freedom. At the same time, youths are under peer pressure to lose their virginity as quickly as possible, or else they will be the odd one out. Most interestingly, the reverse concept of “body count” has gained popularity, in which a person’s body count is determined by the number of partners with whom they have slept. It is truly awful where we all should focus on the potentialities of humans for the purpose of humanity, but our young generation’s attention is dominated by sexual pleasures and shifting partners, which can lead to a gloomy moment in their lives because it may lead to an increased rate of HIV and STD.

**5. Lack of accountability and moral responsibility of social media influencers** (Lajnef, 2023): The need for an ideal and to worship or follow them is an undeniable feature of adolescent youngsters. There is no wrong in it. But the question is what kind of idols we are providing them to get inspired. Millennials had picked their ideals from movie stars, singers, players, scientists, military persons, political leaders, etc. Before the millennials, people tended to idealise the freedom fighters. But now the scenario has changed, as most of Generation Z and ALFA idealise those who are popular on social media platforms. Some of these so-called popular people get millions of views by doing anything. Due to their lot of subscribers and followers, their behaviour and opinion impact the present generation’s psyche, as they are still young. But the sad truth is most of these influencers are money-minded people and never follow the ‘interrelation between means and ends’ in terms of earning money. It has the potential to drive this generation into a darker phase in which morality and social responsibility become meaningless concerns. Ranveer Allahavadia, a social media influencer who podcasts on spirituality, politics, knowledge systems, and other topics, recently appeared as a judge on a show and made a nasty comment about human relations.

**6. Rising rates of violence and suicide:** The rising number of young people committing suicide has now turned into a new pandemic. Parents’ constant criticism of their kids for not being able to compete with others, their overindulgence in spoiling, which weakens the kids’ ability to handle difficult circumstances, the pressures of the workplace and career, and the existential crises brought on by social media are the main causes of the unhealthy mentalities that lead to suicide. On the other side, the need for a new industrialised economy has resulted in a lonely generation. People are moving to new cities, places, or nations due to economic factors (the desire for better chances and jobs). Connecting with families became an uncommon occurrence. People tend to have one or two children due to work pressures or state laws. These children often have less time with their parents. On the other side, due to security concerns and an increase in crime, parents prefer that their children remain at home at all times. They are even given sophisticated technology devices such as iPads, laptops, and desktops. Many children are glued to indoor entertainment, such as gaming on these devices. These games can be really deadly at times. Sometimes these games are so hazardous that they cause children to become more anxious and violent. Some television shows and films can contribute to the normalisation of violence, inspiring youth to commit crime and violence. I have only outlined a handful of the current generation’s social issues.

Botox culture, get ready with me culture, sexualisation of women and children, normalised immoral activity, and infidelity are examples of post-COVID social evils that have proliferated due to the internet boom.

### **Remedy:**

Identifying a problem is not a huge deal; finding a solution is! People may have some new-generation cures to address social issues of the current generation. However, as a devoted student of Indian philosophy and culture, I would love to return to our ancient origins in order to solve these difficulties. We can instill in our generation some fundamental belief systems of all religions that have shaped Indian philosophy, which can be mentioned as -

**1. Philosophy of Vidura from the Mahabharata:** One of the Mahabharata's noble figures is Vidura. He was Dhritarashtra and Pandu's brother. Due to his blindness, he had to explain every aspect of the Kurukshetra conflict to Dhritarashtra. Vidura assumes the position of a counsellor in this instance. His advice is morally sound. He clearly distinguishes between the minds of the wise and the ignorant. The fundamental difference between the two is that one has vices while the other does not. Vices like avarice, desire, rage, conceit, jealousy, and an unreasonable fixation on being the smart one should not exist in people. Parents and social media influencers nowadays need to learn that advising and counselling others can only be beneficial at that point.

**2. Sthitpragya:** Philosophy from the Gita: Sthit means steady and firm; Pragya means wise or learned. In the words of Krishna, a Sthitpragya is a person "one whose mind remains undisturbed amidst misery, who does not crave for happiness or pleasure and who is free from attachment, fear and anger is called a sage, a man of steady wisdom". Control over senses, steady intelligence, non-attachment & knowledge of self are the core characteristics of Sthitpragya. By internalising concepts like Sthitpragya, one can reduce the pressure of life and anxiety, which are core causes of mental health issues.

**3. Philosophy of Ends and Means:** 'Ends and means are interrelated' is the central tenet of Gandhi's social philosophy. It basically means that one must pursue the road of moral and ethical correctness (means) in order to reach a favourable conclusion (goal). To live a stress-free and contented existence, people in the current generation must acquire such concepts.

**4. Anekantavada:** Anekantavada is a concept of Jaina philosophy that states- 'Reality has multiple facets'. So, we all have to acknowledge the complexities of reality and truth. It may encourage people to respect the perspectives of others. Society will be more accepting, and ideally there will be less room for violence.

**5. Minimalist Philosophy of Islam:** Islam's minimalist concept promotes a straightforward, meaningful existence by eschewing superfluous possessions and concentrating on what really counts. The teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah form the foundation of this worldview. Living a minimalist lifestyle has several advantages, including lowering stress and anxiety, improving financial security, and having a beneficial environmental impact.

## Conclusion:

Regardless of the philosophy presented above, we must also understand the four noble truths of Buddhism and the five vows of Jainism. Another crucial concern, however, is now approaching: how can we impart, acquire, instill, and internalise such fundamental life philosophies? The majority of individuals, both young and elderly, are caught up in a never-ending cycle of dopamine-craving (reels culture) because there are so many distractions around us these days. We, all humans as a part of community and society, parents as the early guides of their children, and the state system as an ensurer of good governance – we all can take some initiatives to cure such problems. Some suggestions can be mentioned as -

1. Instead of providing their children a digital device, parents aim to instill religious thought as well as ethical and moral principles through storytelling.
2. From basic school to university, a paper on the Indian knowledge system and philosophy should be required.
3. Mechanisms for recognising the works and individuals who adhere to moral and ethical standards should be established by the state, society, and community.

We will all strike a balance between the ancient and the new knowledge in the hopes of a new morning when people will break free from the unhealthy attachment to bad habits of the post-COVID era and use their best potentialities to make our planet a peaceful, habitable place.

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