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EDITORIAL

SATYAMEVA JAYATE VS. PROPAGATING LIES

We are entering the seventy-fifth year of India's independence. **Satyameva Jayate** – the only words on the state emblem – was meant to be the beacon not only for Government but for our people as the only surviving ancient civilisation became a nation. It encapsulates the essence of the entire *Bharatiya* traditions.

However, with each passing day, not only in India, not only in Governments or businesses, it is increasingly harder to find what is true. Take the example of the Government proclaiming in Parliament that there were no deaths due to lack of oxygen in the second wave¹. At one level it may be 'true' but reality backed up by evidence tells a different tale.

Truth is harder to sight. This is so because it is surrounded, if not eclipsed, by half-truth, post-truth, selective truth, lies as truth, packaged truth, paid research truth, legitimised / justified truth, cognitive bias, counter-factual views as news, promising something without expected minimum due care, fake news, possible views, misrepresenting, misleading propaganda, false equivalence and more. It is everywhere – from billboards to institutions, from school textbooks to television.

This Editorial is dedicated to where we see such propagation of lies and how and why we should call its bluff. We all are surrounded by lies (from subtle to blatant), perhaps we have sensed it too, but not noticed it very clearly. Yet, nothing is more important today than extracting 'the true' and setting it apart from that which is untrue. The ability to do this and its consistent application will be the true celebration of Bharat, its nationhood and its civilisational heritage.

Take the example of cigarettes. It took 50 years for them to be declared as bad for health in America (one billion people smoke today and governments count on revenues from cigarette sales²). On the other hand, marijuana is incapable of causing deaths³ but is illegal, cigarette smoking annually kills 50 lakh people and yet cigarettes are legal and can be purchased anywhere. In fact, a study says that alcohol is 100 times more lethal than marijuana!

In the area of medicine, according to doctors, for insulin-resistant people giving insulin actually kills. The number of diabetics is increasing like nobody's business⁴, but the real cause and therefore the way to cure it, is shoved under the carpet. The real cause is not sugar alone but secretion of insulin due to eating and eating too often. Eating is today a global pandemic for industrialised countries. We are likely to die from excess food rather than starvation as was the case a few hundred years ago. While all this is going on, a private medical association recommends, approves products from anti-bacterial paints (for protection from viral transmissions) to LED bulbs (that kill 85% germs), to Pepsico's Tropicana Fruit Juice (the first medical association to endorse food) when it has high fructose corn syrup that leads to fatty liver and inflammation (NAFLD)!

Let's look at the **Media** (of course not all media, but enough above the acceptable threshold and in the mainstream). It has remained at the forefront of propagating lies. **If media were a virus, it would have numerous variants popping their heads out at the opportune time.** One variant is the 'outrage' variant and the second can be called the 'silent' variant. They both **selectively** create outrage or complete silence when reporting, depending on the circumstances favourable to their agenda. Other variants, and they are global, are: fear, hate, blame, anxiety, negativity, victimhood, sensationalism, rhetoric... for which immunity gained by spotting the truth is the only way to not succumb. **Many suffer from diarrhoea of words but constipation of thoughts⁵.**

What about the web? If you search Ayurveda on Wikipedia, the second sentence (the authorship of which

1 <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/no-deaths-due-to-lack-of-oxygen-were-specifically-reported-by-states-uts-during-second-wave-govt-told-parliament-11626801416761.html>

2 28% + up to 21% cess, but is fairly low compared to many countries. Approximately Rs. 53,750 crores is the revenue collection

3 <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/can-marijuana-kill-you#More-concerns-with-more-availability>

4 In a ten-year period between 2007 and 2017, diabetics increased from 40.9 m to 72.9 m in India. Globally, 171 m people in 2000; likely to reach 366 m as per WHO

5 Adapted from what Dr. A. Velumani wrote recently on social media

is attributed to the same private medical association) calls it the practice of quacks – whereas Sushrut is the father of surgery, having done at least eight types of surgery from plastic surgery to dental surgery to treating fractures and removing stones, full 3,500 years ago! As you can imagine, this has been put up with a purpose, whereas if you look at the Encyclopaedia Britannica, it simply gives facts and not selected negative opinions.

It's there in professions, too. People give '**possible views**' (we never knew that the possibility of something can become a professional view for there are infinite possibilities and they cannot fit the law just because they are possible). Many of these are outrageously over the top. Here is one: schools selling notebooks to students could 'possibly' be treated as service requiring registration under GST.

One actress put out videos stating how firecrackers during Diwali made her run out of breath due to her asthma; and later she celebrated her wedding with a lavish fireworks show. Look at the advertising around us, which often sells what you don't need and even can't afford by exploiting fears and insecurities. Or for that matter see who are called our heroes? They are not just actors and entertainers, but rather soldiers, scientists, entrepreneurs, sports persons and many others. The Punjab CM recently tweeted that three goals were scored by Punjab players at the Olympics hockey competition and made it sound as if Punjab alone got the goals. Whereas, in a team sport, players (from six different states in this case) got the ball to a player who then scored a goal.

The top court pushed back a plea for President's Rule in Bengal due to the killing of innocents in post-poll violence by 15 days but took *suo motu* cognizance of the death of a judge in Jharkhand. Courts often take *suo motu* cognizance, but defer cognized facts for another day. Some say it's because the common man is expendable. Who doesn't remember the Rs. 1 fine on a top lawyer for criminal contempt of the Supreme Court for 'scandalising the court' on Twitter. He had the wisdom to know what behaviour is expected and the ability to pay a reasonable fine. But these selective approaches to the truth continue

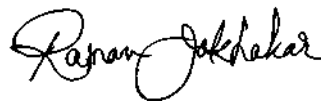
even from the keepers of the law!

Reservation, a national menace today, was meant to be continued for ten years (1951-61). It is now a mega tool of inducement for votes, appeasement and killing meritocracy. In fact, it is an outright promotion of benefits based on caste (birth-based) rather than class (economic need). This has made people covet and convert to get benefits. This is legitimising the unjust. This is a race, not to the top, but to the bottom.

Each Independence Day let's increase our ability to extract 'the true' and set it apart from lies with courage and sharpness. As professionals, this is what we are trained for and are expected to deliver. Unfortunately, it cannot be defined by laws and depends on context many a time. At a mundane level truth is evidenced by a measurable reality (existence of something or occurrence of something), often it is what is beneficial and not just convenient (punish the wealthy for non-serious offences with a fine rather than imprisonment for they give taxes and generate jobs which can be used for the welfare of many rather than killing their business), sometimes it is worthy of one's role (Federer was asked for a pass at the Australian Open by a security guard in 2019) and so on. Times are such where the false is promoted as true and so one must prefer and promote the truth. In the words of a famous author: सत्य को भी प्रचार चाहिए, अन्यथा वह मिथ्या मान लिया जाता है - हरिशंकर परसाई

Sometimes high-ranking people and institutions sacrifice truth for something else like peace, etc. Martin Luther wrote '**Peace if possible, truth at all costs.**' Because when truth is lost, all else that remains will be detrimental and ephemeral. In the words of Carl Sagan: **If it can be destroyed by the Truth, it deserves to be destroyed by the Truth.**

Happy 75th Independence Day! Jai Hind!



Raman Jokhakar
Editor

When truth is not free, freedom is not true
— Jacques Prevert

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