

Commitment to ideals, not idols, is the need of the hour.

The Nuremberg trials were conducted to hold the people responsible for atrocities committed during Nazi Germany. Generals, soldiers were asked to answer "Why did you do it?". Some answered that they were following orders. Some replied with "Hail Hitler". While some simply did not know any better. The trials raised very valid questions and became important for future psychological studies.

Were the soldiers blinded by their loyalty to the leader? Did they follow any principles? Why didn't their "conscience" stop them from carrying out heinous crimes? In this essay we attempt to answer some of these questions and analyse the importance of ideals over idols.

With the birth of nation states it was found that Democracy as a state philosophy was best suited. It espouses ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice. Such ideals help.

in creating an equitable society, ensuring rights for all individuals.

A case in point has been the American society. It has historically valued diversity, merit, individualism and freedom of speech for all.

It was considered perfect in terms of how a democratic nation must be. However a recent analysis showcases a differing trend. The society is witnessed to be cleaved. People are coming to idolise leaders rather than the values that they cherished previously.

Disregard for ideals has led to social atrocities, rise of white supremacy movements and police brutality against blacks. When an entire society idolises humans, they tended to be blinded. It restricts their cognitive abilities, makes them biased.

Only the statements of idols are considered as gospel truth. With no fact checking and rise of shameless. India has also witnessed rise of violence due to "fake news." spread by certain influential people. If ideals of patience, truth, honesty are followed

by a society, such crimes, violence would not be witnessed.

While disregard for democratic ideals can be witnessed widely in 21st century, disregard for economic ideals is revealed in subtle ways. For nations to prosper, it must follow principles of sustainable development, jobled growth, financial propriety etc. Such a commitment to economic ideals results in improvement of lives of all citizens, increase in economic growth.

It prevents poverty, concentration of wealth in hands of few. But it has been noticed that due to cult personalities, governments have opted for populist ideals rather than sound economic principles. Such a kind is widely noticed in southern states with leaders like Jayalitha. Tamil Nadu has witnessed slow growth and not developing upto its potential.

unquestioning loyalty to idols leads to lack of accountability, blind folded faith. It promotes a herd mentality which becomes harmful in certain situations. The instances of crony capitalism, nepotism clearly

point towards why we must adhere to ideals and not idols.

On the same lines all religions, cultures espouse positive ideas of love, helpfulness. The Veda states that "world is one family" and we are all brothers and sisters. As time went by, various preachers, saints, leaders of religion started espousing ideas and spreading them far and wide.

Due to this there was witnessed a shift in loyalty towards religious leaders rather than religious teachings. This is harmful as it radicalises followers with bad teachings. Personal ideas of leaders are projected on people. It reduces the rational thinking capacity of individuals and makes them a staunch supporter.

A manifestation of this is seen in the Indian society where a noble ideal of "cow protection" has turned to vicious "cow vigilantism". Similarly Islam espouses protection of its religion due to historical injustices. But certain radical idols of the religion have twisted it to fit their agenda.

It has taken root in society as can be seen in rise of ISIS, lone wolf attacks, crimes against shi's in middle east. The peaceful ideals of Islam have unfortunately been lost in the mayhem.

Even in the field of International relations, there is always an effort to promote peace. Good relations with neighbouring countries, following international rules such as UN Human rights, UNCLOS. It leads to avoidance of war, stability, steady trade and positive movement of people.

Despite the well laid out International order, it has always been witnessed that idols rather than ideals have been followed. Leaders such as Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi enjoyed wide spread popularity in their nations. This made them arbitrary in their approach to running the country.

It could be seen as wide spread poverty, hunger, brutal justice dispensing mechanism, those who spoke against the tyranny were forcefully silenced. This happened because the society chose to follow idols rather than develop ideals.

Like nations around the world.

follow certain ideals, so do humans in every day life. As the constitution in article 51(A) states, citizens must develop scientific temper, uphold sound reasoning. These ideals become all the more important in a parochial, backward society.

They help us to judge between right and wrong, live a healthy, happy life.

But not following the ideals have certain serious negative consequences, such as promoting dogma, fearing the unknown.

It has led people to believe in pseudo-science. Many areas of India, idolise tantriks, babas who claim to possess divine power.

Evils such as child sacrifice, animal sacrifice are conducted. Such atrocities are allowed by people due to faith in unscientific means. Lack of knowledge, science, analytics can truly hamper sound decision making.

Following ideals such as compassion, empathy, love etc enrich an individual's lives. as opposed to blind faith in idols.

Promotion of ideals in all fields becomes necessary because human rationality can be "banded" in many.

ways. And in such a situation set ideals can lead the way. A contemporary reality helps us understand the importance of set ideals.

India and Pakistan have mostly suffered unstable relations since independence. To ensure peace between both nations ideals such as - No first use policy, equitable Indus water sharing were fixed. It was assumed these ideals will ensure stability in the region.

But certain recent events have deviated from these ideals. Rhetorics from both sides of the border are fuelled by strong leaders. This has led to escalation of situation, death of soldiers, marred trade etc.

In cases like these it becomes doubtful important to adhere to ideals and not allow powerful leaders to flame situations while the above argument clearly display why commitment to ideals and not idols is the need of the hour. It raises a pertinent question as to how can such a scenario be achieved.

Ideals are as strong as institutions, institutions are as strong as leaders and

leaders are as strong as the support of people behind them. This makes it critical for citizens, individuals of society to be empowered. Education, spread of positive ideas etc. to all levels and depths of nations is the actual need of the hour.

Come to think of it, if the soldiers, Generals of Nazi Germany were ethical, honest and empathetic. It would have triggered them to differentiate between right and wrong. If they followed ideals of "humanism" instead of "propaganda" spread by ~~the~~ their idol; the world would be free of the horrors and unmentionable atrocities committed during the period.

Data is the oil of 21st century: the raw material that modern civilisations are incessantly built on.

Sophia chuckled and stated with an emphatic smile "One day robots will take over the world". There was an eerie silence followed by this. The experts, data scientist became slightly uncomfortable. Sophia is the world's ~~on~~ first humanoid robot. She is built on artificial intelligence which works on an agglomeration of vast data. With every interaction she adds data to her memory and analyses it. Why did her statement raise alarm bell? Did she state something we must worry about? Was it an indication that perhaps data systems can be misused? This essay attempts to analyse the importance of data in the 21st century.

Data as modern day fuel

→ In the 18th century, Industrial revolution had taken full steam. It had been fuelled by the easy availability of cotton in nations around the world. Similarly, extraction of oil

in the gulf region changed its fortunes forever. It helped power machines, cars, created energy etc.

While cotton and ~~fuel~~ oil fuelled previous centuries, similarly data is considered gold of 21st century. It is defined as the aggregation of facts, information, statistics etc. On its own it is not very useful, but on analysis becomes very crucial. Use of data in various different fields will help us in understanding its underlying importance.

Social sectors across the world are looking for improving ways to reach the marginalised, poor and discriminated. Democratic nations have the aim to achieve equity, social justice and build social capital. This is supported by proper collection and use of data. Data can enhance policy making. It can help decipher trends.

Proper analysis of data provides a clear picture of presence of SC/ST / muslims / women in society. Further analysis of those that are in dire need of affirmative help. Data helps to make targetted policies. For example.

Increasing rates of crime against women has led governments to come up with innovative options. Poor sex ratio points administration to change approach such as "BADLAV = Beti Dhan Laxmi, Vijay Laxmi".

Without the availability of population data, there would be no clarity of population distribution. India would miss out on the opportunity to utilise its "Demographic Dividend".

Data becomes very useful in the field of economics as it can be studied, analysed. It can be used to create development models. It helps predict future possibilities through regression and extrapolation. In developing nations such as India, Budgets are highly dependant on monsoon and oil prices.

A sure shot way to predict the two or make a rational Budget policy is by analysing rain fall data and predicting monsoon pattern. It can help decide if farmers must be provided financial incentives or productivity enhancing tools.

Post globalisation, sectoral data has also thrown light on how lopsided sectoral investments lead to slow growth.

Data usage helps to balance growth. It can lead to proper job creation, providing skill to those in need. Data on black money helps us understand situation of economy better. It can be used to find ways to increase state revenue.

Similarly usage of data is greatly being used in politics. Political parties collect data to target their politics. They predict voter behaviour by analysis. The availability of state of voter turnout give us an idea of faith of people in democracy.

In the absence of such data, it becomes easy to misguide people.

Further opaqueness leads to centralisation of powers and keeps citizens in dark. A wider use of data is witnessed in the business field where it has formed the basis for development of various technologies.

New inventions such as artificial intelligence, Internet of things, neural networks are built on basis of data use. Operating systems and applications

such as Siri in iPhone use available data to interact. Such technologies make human life easier. Positive data use promotes greater advancement in science. Home assistants such as "Alexa" have revolutionised the way that homes function in 21st century.

Not just this, data in the form of transactions is stored in the blockchain form to generate cryptocurrency. If it is widely used, it could make central banks obsolete! While business groups find a productive way to use data, it is equally important in law and order.

Police agencies and enforcement authorities use databases of criminals and repeat offenders. It helps create deterrence and makes them proactive.

The criminal tracking network (CTNS) is based on vast data collected and connects police stations all across India.

Apart from this it will also help in solving complex crimes through use of furries etc. From the above discussions we ~~see~~ understand now data is the raw material of modern civilisation.

But as historically oil and cotton have caused upheavals, same potentials

are present in data management.

Data as a cause of discord.

We have witnessed that the greed for oil has led countries to invade oil-rich nations in the gulf and start civil strife. Similarly in the early centuries demand for cotton had led countries to colonise other nations.

Similar trends can be witnessed with respect to data as well. This has been occurring by increasing misuse of data in the form of surveillance, data leaks, data theft etc. In USA, a whistleblower informed that government misuses data by creating micro surveillance on its citizens.

It is harmful as it is against the privacy of individual. Shows that states can be tyrannical. Can lead to discrimination and arbitrary actions against citizens. Similarly US Presidential elections witnessed the Cambridge Analytica scam.

Where it was found that data was collected from voters. which was then used to target them with advertisement.

to influence voter behaviour. Such activities are unethical as it limits free choice of individual. Gives advantage to some candidates over others.

The collection of mass data in nations and companies have raised various other ethical concerns. If critical data such as state secrets, nuclear secrets fall into wrong hands, it could lead to widespread destruction. Or companies may utilise data to earn profits by unethical trading or deciphering actions, creating constant state of surveillance.

In India, these concerns were widely faced when information leaks were detected through the Adhaar database. Also leak of SBI data created frenzy as it compromised financial security of millions.

Data like any other resource holds the potential to create discord between nations. Provisions for safety such as data localisation have discouraged companies from investing in India. Nations are vying to lay hands on data of other countries to increase competitiveness.

Easy availability of personal data and increased networking has given

use to new types of crimes such as cyber bullying, pornography, blackmailing, cyber stalking etc.

[Data as an asset and not a liability]

- Considering the above given realities of data use in the world, it becomes imperative to ~~use~~ generate guidelines.

Data use must be highly ethical. Only certified agencies, individuals must be allowed to deal in data mining, analysis etc. Alongwith this focus and promotion of digital literacy of citizens on data is critical.

On ~~the~~ conclusion it would be befitting to remember that proper positive data usage can make Sophia the humanoid an asset while sinister intension can create her a "monster". Hence we must choose wisely.