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Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in Vikas Sharma's I.A.S. Today, Sana and Love and Ego

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Abstract: Professor Vikas Sharma's novels are replete with the treasure of Indian Knowledge System. His novels- I.A.S. Today, Sana, and Love and Ego are such novels that have been written exploring 'Indian Knowledge System'. I.A.S. Today is the novel in which the novelist has juxtaposed the lives of Indian Administrative Service officers connecting their lives with classical, spiritual and mythological concepts. It has focused on Indian philosophical ideas such as Dharma (Righteous duty), Karma (Action), and Moksha (Liberation). There are a number of illustrations, instances and descriptions of the Mahabharata, Upanishads, and the Ramayana reflected in this novel. The direct inspiring thoughts and ideas of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita have been explored in a very artistic manner. His next novel Sana has examined the erosion of the foundations of ethics in Gen Z. showing the facts and evidences of the modern youths' downfall. The present generation has been aloof from the morality and has sunk to the ground of materialism. The thirst and hunger of materialistic pleasures have made the modern generation detached from the knowledge of spirituality and Indian philosophy. Sana has a portrayal of moral struggle between Indian traditions and materialistic progress. Vikas Sharma's Love and Ego have also the same things. It has described the tension of modern generation that is running after Love and Sex ignoring the spiritual values. There is a tension between contemporary modernism and the relevance of enduring cultural values and traditional ethics, we find in this novel; Love and Ego. This research paper intends to exhibit those things that are related with Indian Knowledge System (IKS) expressed in the selected novels of Professor Vikas Sharma.

Keywords: Liberation, redemption, emancipation, spirituality, pleasure, materialism etc.



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Introduction

Professor Vikas Sharma (the English professor, poet and novelist at Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut) has wonderfully evolved Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in his I.A.S. Today (2021), Sana (2023), and Love and Ego (2024). All these three novels are so interesting covering all the important themes associated with human life. Through these novels, Professor Vikas Sharma has revealed those things that are responsible for human beings' moral and spiritual downfall. The novelist has raised those important issues that are concerned with the devastation and emancipation of the mankind. I.A.S. Today (2021), Sana (2023), and Love and Ego (2024) are those novels that have been written in Corona period and published in post corona pandemic. Through these novels, Vikas Sharma has drawn our attention towards the significance of Indian ancient spiritual and moral values that strengthened the power of human mind, soul and body. The remarkable thing is that Vikas Sharma has very artistically infused the knowledge of ancient Indian scriptures with the current knowledge of computer science, technology and admiration. I.A.S. Today has focused on the world of greed against that of detachment. Through this novel, the novelist has told us a story of Romesh, a Gandhian, and his wife Trishala Vasu whose marriage ceremony took place in their training period. Romesh, being a follower of Gandhi's thoughts and ideas want to uproot crimes from the society. Sana is the novel in which the novelist has attempted to develop positive thinking among readers so that they may feel free from the life of greediness and materialistic things. Through the character of Sana, the female protagonist, the novelist has portrayed the character of such a woman who can do anything for her so-called materialistic progress. Sana has been shown going deep and deeper in the immoral world. Through his novel, Love and Ego, Vikas Sharma has tried to teach us the philosophy of Gita, the most precious document of Indian Knowledge System. The novelist has thrown a light upon the importance of non-violence and world civilization, as well as need to restrain our pride.

Objectives: The main objective of this research paper is to introduce the selected novels of Professor Vikas Sharma, the living legend that are replete with the treasure of Indian Knowledge System (IKS). In order to draw the modern Gen Z towards the hidden treasure house of the precious knowledge of Indian religious and spiritual scriptures is also an objective of this paper. The novelist has made his best to draw our present generation towards the spirituality from the ditch of so-called progress of materialism, hence, this is also an objective.

Research Methodology

In preparing this research paper, analytical and descriptive research methodology has been used. Text based study has been done. The review of literature has been consulted and the relevant research papers by the other authors on these three selected novels have been studied. The research gap has been sought and it has been bridged by the adapted research.

Expected Outcomes: The expected outcomes are many such as the readers would be able to know about the contribution of Vikas Sharma as a novelist, they would be facilitated with the current literary scenario; especially the genre of fiction reflecting the treasures of Indian Knowledge System., and the readers would be able to enhance their knowledge pertaining to the Indian ancient scriptures replete with the precious and authentic knowledge of Indian culture, civilization and spirituality. These three novels encompass various facets of Indian Knowledge System (IKS); therefore, the readers of present and forthcoming generation would be aware with the elaborated issues raised in these novels.

Main Body of the Paper: The concept of Indian Knowledge System comprises the study of Indian traditional knowledge system. It is widely known fact that India has been a pioneering country to have spread knowledge across the world. The authors of the western countries have taken study material from the ancient literature of India. Its impact can also be seen in the literature of Arab countries. It is said:

India has the longest epic in the world, Mahabharata, and equally popular Ramayana. India has also one of the largest collections of folk tales in the world. Most of the famous folk tales all over the, including Aesop's Fables and the Arabian Knights, are considered to have been inspired by Panchatantra and other story collections of India. In order to connect with the local populace who were basically uneducated, they resorted to the use of common tropes, proverbs, and dialects to establish a connection with the common people. In addition, Raja Rao's Kanthapura is an example of how 'sthal purana' is used as a device to connect with the masses using a narrative technique that can be related to the ordinary rural people. (Godavardhi-)

Hence, it is the fact that Indian ancient literature has influenced the world literature, so NEP-2020 has provided us a splendid platform to understand the significance and scope of Indian Knowledge System (IKS). The above mentioned Godavardhi's statement is matched with the statement of Dr. Subha

Tiwari who writes

“‘Indian Knowledge System’ has influenced and shaped English literature immensely and deeply. Since the time, English speaking world came in touch with India and Indians, it has absorbed systems, patterns, and ideas of India in multiple ways. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Thomas Sterns Eliot, Romain Rolland, Davis Basham, E.M. Foster, W.B. Yeats and a number of other stalwarts have been deeply influenced by Sanatan Indian ideas.” (Tiwari)

In the ancient history it has been made clear that India is the land of Gurus, Saints, and great spiritual preachers. In all the ages; Satyuga, Treta, Dwapara and Kaliyuga India has been the prime land of centers for education. The ancient universities like Nalanda University, Taxila University, Vikramshila University, Ballabhi University, Raurkela University and Udanpuri University were the famous universities to give education to the entire world. These universities used to teach science, yoga, Arithmetics, Statistics, Philosophy and literature etc. The students from all corners of the world would turn up here to avail desirable education. On account of this remarkable boon, India was considered to be the Vishwaguru. Due to passage of time the unfortunate incidents took place when the foreign invaders started attacking over India, looted the wealth of all kinds, settled themselves here to mingle themselves within the inhabitants of the original people already residing here for time immemorial. Due to the frequent attacks over the country the well-established universities were dashed to the ground. The entire literature and the precious books of all streams were either burnt out or were loaded to the other countries by the invaders. Vedas, Upanishads, Smiritiyans, Shastras, Mahabharata, and Ramayana were the major sources and the root of Indian Knowledge system that have been any how preserved. India has witnessed a number of education policies imposed by the foreign rulers. For example, the present education system is based on the education policies framed by the British rulers so it has several demerits. In the present perspectives, New Education Policy 2020 (NEP) has been launched in which much preference has been given to the Indian Knowledge System. Under this concept, the knowledge replete in above mentioned epics, has been propagated in the Indian universities’ syllabi. Professor Vikas Sharma has connected the religious books with his narratives. In I.A.S. Today, he has described the narrative of two friends; Romesh and Tinny. Due to some reasons and lack of moral lessons, he joined a gang. Romesh feels wonder why Tinny needed this all to join the gang of looters and killers. Romesh’s father is very attentive towards the looking after of his son, so he suggests him the reading of the Ramayana so that he can learn the moral values from the character of Rama, the devoted son of Dasrath who had spent fourteen years in exile for obeying his father’s order.

Let us see what the novelist writes

“One evening he was sitting idle at home and his father asked him to study The Ramayana so as to follow the character of Lord Rama. While studying the interpretation of this sublime epic, he analyzed the characters of major characters and then got stuck while reading the return of Lord Rama, Sita, and Laxman to Ayodhya after an exile of fourteen years. “(I.A.S. Today- 45)

In this way, Professor Vikas Sharma has shown two aspects of the contemporary Indian society revealing the two types of the collegiate students; Tinny whose fostering has been done carelessly and Romesh whose father is quite alert and vigilant on his son's fostering. Romesh's father believes that it is the study of The Ramyana that can make his son, Romesh a worthy man worth for living and doing something good in society. This thing makes us clear that merely university education cannot make us worthy citizen. For being a worthy citizen, it is necessary to turn towards the books of ethics and religion.

In his novel, Sana, Professor Vikas Sharma has beautifully connected the Indian Knowledge System with his narrative revealing the worldly problems of the people. In the opening paragraph of the first chapter, the novelist his shown how the Gods were worried about the problems of human beings. He writes:

“Being free from routine creative jobs, Lord Shiva planned to enjoy for a few days along with other Gods and requested Muni Narada to inform Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, Allah, Christ, Zeus, Guru Govind Singh, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Kubera, Maa Durga, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira etc. to meet Him next day in his hall to have first-hand knowledge of the problems of human beings, and animals alike. “(Sana-3)

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In this way, the novelist has tried to tell us that in this materialistic world, there are a number of the problems, we, the human beings are compelled to face them all. Even lord Shiva and other Gods are worried about the burning problems of human beings and animals. In this novel, the novelist has revealed systematic problems and their solutions. Muni Narada informed all the Gods about it:

“Muni Narada informed all the Gods concerned about the agenda of meeting and then came to earth and informed the old, the sick, the poor, the crippled people and animals on internet that a (daily) meeting will be held under the supervision of Lord Shiva and His supporting Gods to pay attention to problems of worldly creatures. People and animals must wait for their turn according to alphabetical order to avoid inconvenience to the speaker as well as the listener. No harsh arguments are permitted in any case and disobedience to divine Gods is a punishable crime. “(Sana-3)

Here, the novelist has told us about many things necessary to the life of human beings; discipline, systematic working, management of time, endurance, keen observation of issues and so on. The novelist has tried to convey the message that under the grace of almighty, the human beings should perform their duties accordingly. Professor Vikas Sharma, the novelist has expressed his ethical purpose on the Uthaoni of Kavya, Sana’s mother when Pandit Swami Parmanand awakens the people against the life of illusions and tries to convince them of the reality of death, “There is nothing permanent in nature. The universe is a fluid ...this globe is transparent law and not mass of facts. Accept human culture as the predominance of idea The process of evaluation and birth will ever continue. Everything appears permanent in appearance but its secret has got to be analyzed. Yet things change... “(Sana-170-71)

Swami Parmanand explains his thoughts and ideas about the world and human life. He defines the reality of the birth and death saying that the incidents of birth and death take place due to a certain process that is the circle. He raises several questions regarding the human life like, “Why to feel surprised when an action is contradicted by the new action. The new action is commonly hated by old generation and the latter some time doubt it. Unfortunately, most of the people sacrifice virtuous things for short-lived pleasures.” (Singh-171)

Focusing on the psychological problems of the people, Vikas Sharma in his novel, Love and Ego writes that most of the human beings feel afraid about their future so they come in the grip of the astrologers. The novelist writes:

“Generally, the people of the world are eager to know about their future and hence approach the astrologer of their acquaintance and faith as if there are many divine blessings in store for them. But it is not healthy to know about the future, which may not be as grand as expected. Ironically, it may be the worst period of life that one doesn’t expect. “(Love and Ego-7)

Through this depiction, the novelist has thrown the light upon the peoples' inclination with the superstitions that cause many harms. Vikas Sharma wants to warn the people not to fall in to the grip of astrologers because to know about the future is not good. It is indeed harmful. In this very novel; Love and Ego, the novelist has presented a remarkable and thought-provoking conversation between Lord Chitrugupta and the demon king Ravana. Here Ravana makes his excuse on the issue of abducting Sita Mata:

“Feel so sad for my ego though I showed no lechery towards Sita. My brothers, except Vibhishan, helped me and I am defamed throughout the Hindu world for my pride. I don't know when this punishment imposed upon me will come to an end. Had my younger brother, Vibhishan, helped me, the history would have been written differently. But alas! I was supposed to be a sinner and hence put in hell despite my scholarship. Regrets only, O Lord!” (Love and Ego- 138)

Through the above regretful words of Ravana, Professor Vikas Sharma has raised the burning issue of The Ramayana in which the Demon King Ravana has been treated as the sinner because he has abducted Sita, the pious wife of Lord Rama. Since the time immemorial, Ravana has been burning on the Dashara festival. A great pomp and ceremony are organized to defame and insult him. On the literary platforms, very rare debates have been called over this issue to investigate the reality of the prevailed notions. However, plenty of critics have advocated the fact that Ravana's character was praiseworthy. He was the true devotee of Lord Shiva having tremendous knowledge of all the spheres of learning. He is regarded as a brilliant Pandit even though these all the things related with his valour and wisdom are confined up to the books of literature only. In the practical and behavioural life of human beings, Ravana is frequently cursed and defamed. Professor Vikas Sharma, through this novel opens the curtain for the healthy and academic debate on the issues of Ravana, his characteristic merits and demerits, his valour and wisdom and the causes why she abducted Sita Mata. The novelist has revealed the words of Lord Chitrugupta on the regret of Ravana. Lord Chitrugupta says to Ravana, “Go on regretting for a few centuries. In my fourth hearing, there will be good news for you.” (Love and Ego-139)

Professor Vikas Sharma has presented Lord Chitrugupta as a worthy judge who listens to all his pleaders; mythical characters as well as the realistic characters. He has interwoven the narratives connecting mythology with the modern world of science and technology. He has shown lord Chitrugupta operating internet, emails and the other scientific devices being used in the present time of Gen Z.

By such descriptions, Vikas Sharma has opened the gateway of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) for the collegiate and university students. Undoubtedly, for the researchers of English literature, Vikas Sharma's novels are the best source of study material. His novels are the solid bridge between the theological knowledge and the present generation. On the matter of Zen-Sky and Phu-tin, Lord Chitrugupta has declared precious suggestions to the mankind as follows:

- “* History often repeats itself.
- * No one is immortal.
- * Change is the law of Nature.
- * Queens and Kings are not free from Divine justice.
- * Redemption is always possible.
- * Divine justice manages the world.
- * Don't regard yourself to be the creator or preserver of the world.
- * Knowledge is incomplete without wisdom and prudence.
- * Wisdom and prudence are to be supplemented with charity and love for mankind.
- * Always remember you can be forgiven by God for minor limitations. His mercy is Infinite. “(Love and Ego-144)

Revealing the above remarkable words of Lord Chitrugupta, Vikas Sharma has revealed his own philosophy. As being a man of literature having the D.Litt. degree on R.W. Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, the great American Transcendentalists, Professor Vikas Sharma is not confined up to the receiver of highest degrees in literature only, he is a true devotee of literature; always keeps himself busy in writing, editing, proof-reading and academic discourses. Indeed, he fulfills all the virtues of a man of literature as about the literature it is said that literature is not meant for reading, it is for living. In his practical life, Professor Sharma lives literature. He is harboring unthinkable knowledge of the various fields including arts, science, technology, and management as well. As a human being, he is a transparent person, a brilliant scholar, mentor, orator, researcher, traveler, writer, poet and also a rebellion against the system; of politics and educational institutions. Actually, the Characters like Lord Chitrugupta and his all the pleaders are imaginative. In reality, Vikas Sharma is himself as a client in multiple forms and he himself is the voice of Lord Chitrugupta. This thing proves the fact that Vikas Sharma has an encyclopedic range of knowledge like Sir Francis Bacon.

Conclusion

Through the above quotes of lord Chitrugupta, the novelist has suggested many ideas for the human beings to improve their lives worth for living. He has suggested plenty of precious ideas of the Indian theology, philosophy and literature not only in all these three selected novels but also in all his novels, interviews, speeches and debates. His novels are informative in sense and sensibility. If we talk of his style and diction, it is to be said that he uses simple and lucid language; the language of conversation. He remains far away from the use of difficult and ambiguous words and sentences. His words are simple, easy to understand and sentences are straightforward and meaningful. The sense of humour is also found in his technique. His characterization is superb. His characters are both; mythical and realistic. When he uses the realistic characters, he writes age of the character in bracket. Such quality is not found neither in the novels of home nor in that of abroad.

Through the selected novels; I.A.S. Today, Sana and Love and Ego, he has profoundly focused on the Indian Knowledge System that is supposed to be the storehouse of the knowledge of all the fields. When we go through the Indian literature, we find that Indian literature is replete with enormous knowledge. The regretting fact is that the Indian treasure house of knowledge has been hidden and delinked from the common readers. It has not been expectedly prescribed for the university syllabi that is why students and researchers are compelled to be remain untouched with it. The novels of Vikas Sharma are the best tools to dig out that hidden treasury and undoubtedly the present Gen Z and the forthcoming generations would be able to have such knowledge of Indian Gurus, Saints and the great men of all the spheres of the literary pursuits.

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