

# GENERAL ESSAY 2020

## IS HUMANITY PROGRESSING?

Is society moving forward with every passing year or are we going back in regression? The trajectory of evolution of humanity is one of the most pertinent and interesting subjects in today's day and age. Society has undergone immense change in every aspect: technology, advancement of infrastructure, law reforms, human rights, capitalisation, political awakenings, globalisation and plenty of other issues.

We have evolved from times of the great depression, apartheid, world war I and II, holocaust where our people lived with indignity and oppression and were subject to slavery, genocide, acute poverty, diseases, starvation and everything there was to suffer. It was a time when only a minute fraction of society that was privileged lived a comfortable life. Mostly the upper class which constitutes aristocrats, businessmen, royalty. The majority in every nation lived through terrible circumstances. It was a time when today was a far-fetched dream!

Yet here we are in 2019 with the world at our feet. Freedom of speech and expression, right to education, the most technically advanced systems to serve mankind, democracy in majority of the world, connectivity, modernisation, gender equality, healthcare provisions and what not! However, on the contrary, we are still very far from the finish line.

We educate our children and yet have them serve us a cup of tea. We conduct campaigns like beti bachao, beti padhao and yet continue to kill the girl child. We grant aid and make laws for protection of women and yet they are victims of sexual and domestic abuse. The irony of the progress in society is uncanny!

Development in the public and corporate sector are huge! And housing giant MNCs in our country, generating employment to many but this is also creates a divide amongst different strata's of society leading to economic concentration and disparity where the rich get richer and poor get poorer.

A recent study by Harvard suggests that life expectancy has increased by a huge margin due to facilitation in health care which has made a headway towards diagnosis, prevention and mitigation of life threatening diseases. Yet at the same time, medical industry has become a money making machine and lost the true essence of the value of life where the prime focus is not the wellbeing of people but the monetary returns they bring resulting in medical rackets and scams.

We have made provisions in every sphere by giving quotas to the marginalised sections and oppressed castes. However, the discrimination on basis of caste, colour, creed still continues in every remote area in the nation. Despite growth in literacy rates, people lack awareness and societal taboos persist even today.

Technological elevation has certainly made life much easier. Artificial intelligence, bio technology, aviation, automobiles, electronic devices, internet and much more have brought everything to our disposal creating complacency.

Dependency on technology and search engines like google have restricted our capacity to use our own mind, handicapping ourselves and affecting coming generations. All of this progression comes at a huge price. The downside of this advancement is pollution, depletion of resources, climate change, sedentary lifestyle which has contributed to serious health issues. It has isolated people socially more than connecting them. Social media has created insecurity and depression within all of us, majorly hampering human relationships even though on the face of it, it connects us all.

Cybercrime is another issue that cannot be overlooked. Also without us realising, we are under constant technological surveillance and the essence of privacy is entirely lost from our lives.

Each one of these advancements is endangering human lives and the future of the planet without us realising. So how exactly are we moving forward?

The human race is evolving by the minute but becoming extremely detached in the process, losing the true essence of humanity. We have lost compassion and kindness for one another in the rat race of competing and advancing. The purpose of serving humanity and reason for creating of social structures has been forgotten, losing all value.

Instead of being the victims of this self-created systems, let's be the change we need to see by taking one step at a time to cross the bridge. Humanity needs to be inculcated within each one of us like planting a seed of love and selflessness which will grow with time. To break the monopoly and manipulation of the powerful leaders, we need to foster capable people to lead us to the right path.

We will only progress when all the development provides enough for those in need and not benefit from exploiting and dividing humanity! Terrorism and xenophobia are prevalent everywhere possible on planet earth. We have fought communism, monarchy, colonisation and gained freedom but here we are again at the mercy of dictatorship and hegemony in the name of democracy. True humanity is a thing of the past.

“A great human revolution in just a single individual will help us achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and, further, can even enable a change in the destiny of all humankind.” - Daisaku Ikeda