

## Wielding Various Indian Logos with Ancient Ethical Implication: A Study of their Values and Contemporary Efficacy

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### Abstract

The practice of using logos for any government and non-government institution is not only something that fulfills the brand identity and a propagandist motive in parity with the growing trend of the recent time; rather, the simplification of logos in the form of merely market reality is totally unjustified in that every logo has a massive ancient scriptural value which promotes the ethical mission and long-term vision along with its very history of origin as well. Significantly, every logo comprises two poignant components—a figurative image, often referred to as a sign and an excerpt from ancient didactic text written in Sanskrit. Historically, the genesis of most of these iconography ranges from the primeval rulers and their specific symbolic icon but surprisingly even in modern time, their importance and applicability have remained the same in different sector. At a time when the aggressive onslaught of Western liberal education has tolled the death knell of values and ethics of social life in recent time, such age-old texts still tirelessly continue to instill the doctrine of positive values and constructive moral principles. Additionally, the symbols and icons in the logos too bear a strong message of profound rectitude from royal grandeur to ecological harmony of life permeating an unflinching aura of virtuous ethos. The paper will explore the socio-ethical dimension of those maxim-like inscriptions within the body of a number of logos and bring to limelight what otherwise go unobserved and overlooked under the overwhelming image surrounding them and containing them. Whereas in contemporary time logos have been commodified and marketized just as a policy of sales and advertisement or promotion, the real thrust of them lies in the deeper root of human philanthropy that these antic texts have been promulgating.

**Keyword:** Brand identity, Logos, Iconography, Rectitude, Inscriptions, Ecological harmony, Philanthropy

## **Introduction**

Indian knowledge system since ancient time had expressed itself in a multiple ways, other than the formal text-book repository, in such a manner that has drawn widespread accolade not only from India but also from the entire globe. Whereas the Western modes of upholding values and ethics are too supercilious and materially driven, ancient India has established itself as one of the iconic role model in the sense that the quest for contentment and true happiness has always been the utmost priority of Indian social life. Historical heritage and the deep-rooted cultural stronghold for any nation are paramount to its wholesome development in all scales possible. A land of diversity and mystery, India offers ways of salvage in a uniquely peculiar fashion by assuaging the plagued recess of the deep hearts of humanity. But unfortunately in recent time many often it is oversimplified and overlooked as an agency that has lost its aura due to the unthinkable growth of science and technology which is supposed to supersede these finer values of life and promote instead a hedonistic worldview where values tend to take the backseat. Even when some doubt in the efficacy of this Indian ways and perceptions, recorded in different forms by the sages and monks of the Indian soil, none can ever doubt their validity and necessity ever in life. Interestingly, if the changing time has complicated the lifestyle and needs of humanity beyond any thinking capacity, these perennial traditions of imparting wisdom have also adapted to these growing tendencies by being suitable to the modern artifacts of democracy, education, law and justice, defense, media, civil service, finance, and many other service sectors. These artifacts and their brand identity are not only what they say or express visually but the greatest part of their worth is the psychological connection that they build to improvise with the human thoughts and thereby influence the very perception and reception about them.

## **Objective**

The present study intends to explore the pertinence of different logos which have become the trademark identity of some of the most important institutes and bodies –both governmental and non-governmental, beyond their peripheral appearance. Ancient Indian apothegms, used within the logos, do not only serve the purpose of decoration and embellished show-off;

rather, they contain a profound meaning with immense moral and psychological significance in harmony with the very mission and vision of that particular institute or body. These relic-like texts bear a deep impact upon the entire society and themselves are the undying transporter of well-being and philanthropism. Besides, the wonderful appeal of such logos, strengthened and solidified by images and symbols from nature, provokes a thinking mind with the ideas of harmony and togetherness between man and nature. This special relationship is also something that demands a strong critical inquiry to weigh their symmetry.

## Discussion

The concept of Dharma or law in ancient India was inspired by the Vedas which contained rules of conduct and rites and compiled in Dharma Sutras, were practiced in a number of branches of the Vedic schools. Their principal contents address the duties of people at various stages of life, the rights and duties of the kings and juridical matters. These were basis of Hindu Law. The earliest document throwing light on the theory of jurisprudence, which forms part of practical governance, is the Artha Sastra of Kautilya dating back to circa 300 B.C. The Mundaka Upanishad is an ancient Sanskrit Vedic text, embedded inside Atharva Veda. The Mundaka Upanishad is the source of the phrase 'Satyameva Jayate', which is the national motto of India. It appears in its national emblem with four lions. "Satyameva Jayate" is a phrase commonly seen on the National Emblem of India. Though the quote is confused many often as a part of the Lion Capital of Ashoka, the original statue indeed never had anything written on it. The actual source and context of the words lie in a poetic text of 64 verses, that consists of a dialogue between the Sage Angirasa and, a person named Saunaka who was seeking spiritual enlightenment.

satyameva jayate nāṅṛtaṃ

satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ

yenākramantyṛṣayo hyāptakāmā

yatra tat satyasyaa paramaṃ nidhānam

Translated in English, it means: "The truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through truth, the divine path is spread out by which the sages whose desires have been completely fulfilled reach the source of ultimate truth." Here remains the possibility of oversimplification that the

expression "Satyameva Jayate" is all about speaking the truth and following the truth only but the reality something much more nuanced and sophisticated. Another line in the Rig Veda says "Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti," which in English goes like this: "Truth is one, but the wise speak of it in many ways." So, when delved into the real context of the original poetic source, it becomes candid that the excerpt means an individual can live a happy life by being truthful to oneself and accepting one's reality. This assists a human being fulfill their desires and ultimately leads him or her to the source of ultimate truth, that is God, the absolute. The incorporation of this deeply significant saying "Satyameva Jayate" into the Indian National Emblem dates back to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who, while presiding over the Congress Session in 1918, declared that this phrase from the Mundaka Upanishad should be the slogan for the free nation of India. Later, in July 1947, Pandit Nehru introduced a resolution to adopt Ashoka's Lion Capital along with "Satyameva Jayate" as the emblem of India, and the resolution was accepted in December 1947. The freedom of the country therefore is not simply a political phenomenon that occurred in the critical juncture of Indian Nationalist Movement against the British rule. Rather, the very choice of the emblem and the ancient Sanskrit saying relates to the cultural freedom of the nation from the foreign English dominance. So the moment is marked by upholding the knowledge heritage of India running for posterity and the nation's uncompromising commitment to truth as a whole, be it spiritual or political or administrative.

The same precept of 'dharma' is equally predominant in the very quote used in the logo of the Supreme Court of India, which in the Mahabharata is reiterated as many as eleven times on different occasions to uphold the ethical values of impartial justice. The Sanskrit citation "Yato Dharmastato Jayah" as the central motto of the Supreme Court of India occurs when Arjuna was removing Yudhishtira's comatose disinclination in the Kurukshetra war by saying that "Victory is always on the side of Dharma, and where there is Shri Krishna there is victory". Exactly the same is heard from Gandhari exclaiming after the death of her sons in the battle of Kurukshetra. The excerpt is the defining characteristic of Indian judiciary system and its indiscriminate objectivity. In 1861, the Indian High Courts Act 1861 was enacted to create high courts for various provinces and abolish Supreme Courts at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay and also the sadar adalats in presidency towns in their respective regions. These new high courts had the distinction of being the highest courts for all cases till the creation of the Federal Court of India under the Government of India Act 1935. The Supreme Court of

India came into existence on 28 January 1950. It replaced both the Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which were then at the apex of the Indian court system. The emblem of the Supreme Court represents the Lion capital of Ashoka at Sarnath, with a topmost wheel featuring 32 spokes. There has been wide controversy recently over the use of the inscription as it replaced the iconic "Satyameva Jayate" which is generally inseparably associated with the emblem of Lion Wheel of Ashoka.

In a vastly diverse country like India with heterogeneous socio-cultural and ethno-political dimensions, the centrality of justice is paramount, especially because of its complex structuring and multi-layered stratifications. The practice of law itself is highly self-contradictory, even mutually exclusive at times. The repeated amendments in the constitution are indicative of a claim of the dynamism existing in the Indian nation state. In the maze of rational fallacy of verbal deliberation, particularly when there is a clash of interest and when both the sides of an issue demand righteousness, the problematic of justice reaches its climax. Further, the practice of law in its institutionalized ritual where a courtroom procedure becomes the microscopic version of public dissensions often fails to yield a justice to address all side with equal degree of satisfaction. But in spite of many challenges posed by several socio-religious equations, Indian legal system has succeeded in delivering the optimal justice and thereby the victory of the truth. Evolving into a modern structure, the country still remains rooted to its ancient philosophy and morals even in the face of great jeopardy of justice system. Therefore, the quote of Lord Krishna under discussion is like a gospel of law and justice which promotes veracity and neutrality at the earliest. The clarion call given by Lord Krishna to awaken Yudhisthira from his hibernation is metaphorically a champion call to the Indian consciousness where justice is all and absolute above any personal consideration and interest. Yashorit Bagchi observes in *Gyan and Vigyan*:

As Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa explained it, "The awareness and conviction that fire exists in wood is Gyana, Knowledge. However, to cook rice on that fire, eat the rice, and get nourishment from it is Vigyana." "Vigyana means Knowledge with a greater fullness. Some have heard of milk, some have seen milk, and some have drunk milk. He who has merely heard of it is 'ignorant'. He who has seen it is a Gyani but he who has drunk it is Vigyani, that is to say, has a fuller knowledge of it." In other words, where Gyan ends, that is the end of basic knowledge, and

Vigyan- the deeper knowledge of the subject begins. Hence, Science is nothing but an in-depth study and understanding of a subject.

Vidya, is classified into two broad categories, namely paravidya and aparavidya. Paravidya is the direct knowledge through experience and perception (often extra-sensory) achieved through sadhana— revealed knowledge. Aparavidya is the indirect or paroksha gyan achieved through secondary sources often through sensory mechanism. What we learn in schools and colleges are classified as aparavidya or paroksha gyan. Further, paroksha gyan has been termed as Vigyan and pratyasha gyan as Gyan in the Gyan-Vigyan Yoga in Gita. The second shloka in chapter VII of the *Bhagvad Gita* reads:

jñānam te'ham savijñānam idam vakṣyāmy-aśeṣataḥ |  
yajñātāvā neha bhūyo'nyajñātavyam avaśiṣyate ||

This literally means that, as Lord Krishna declares to Arjuna in full, after knowing the ultimate knowledge along with the differentiating insight (vigyana), nothing else remains to be known. This the highest form of knowledge indeed which paves the path clear for liberation from all sorts of troubles in life. The three Sanskrit words used in the logo of the UGC at present remind one of nearly one similar expression in shloka in *Vishnu Purana*. The full shloka goes:

“tat-karma yan-na bhandaaya saa vidhyaa yaa vimuktaye;  
aayaa saayaa param karma vidyaa-anyaa shilpa naipu Nam.

The word ‘Vimukte’ underscores the spiritual motive of all knowledge in its highest form, that is, bringing a sense of liberty or release from the material burdens of existence and mundane lowliness.

The logo and the motto line, Gyan-Vigyan Vimukte (Knowledge Liberates), convey the UGC’s philosophy and avowed objective of uplifting the nation’s destiny through quality education. Knowledge is like both light and sound. Like light, it enlightens and empowers the individual and society as a whole, enabling them to

overcome limitations imposed by nature. And like sound, which seeps in through the most impermeable of barriers, knowledge cannot be stopped or barred in any way. The chakra in the logo symbolises the Indian nation. Its twenty-four spokes represent the continuous and uninterrupted flow of education, which is truly a life-long process. The lines below the chakra portray an open book, the ultimate symbol of learning. The relevance of books has not diminished even in this paperless era of e-learning and online education. The lines are also symbolic of a pair of hands, because it is knowledge that supports and lifts the nation towards development and progress. (*An Emblem Symbolising The Future*)

## Conclusion

The few logos and the text within them that have been examined here clearly reiterate the synchronized link between the modern vision in all domains of institution and the ancient foundation of the country's knowledge. The inseverable tie between the contemporary thought and the past resources, especially the spiritual deep-rootedness, is something which is remarkable and what is striking is that even in the face of massive commercialization of knowledge and values, India has managed to be stuck to its deep earth. The sense of belongingness through the evocation of Holy Scripture in a language that is not colonial but indeed its own for posterity (Sanskrit) has added a sense of tributary gratitude to the country's current pursuit of leaning and wisdom. Logos are therefore not only emblematic of crafty designing skill of an artisan but a sign of true dedication to one's own grain. Logos are the bridge between the time lost and the time envisioned. They are witness to the inviolable continuum of Indian philosophy, knowledge-system and spiritual striving.

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