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Post-truth is the age where facts are optional and narratives rule.

On the night of November 8, 2016 news spread all across the India that 500 and 1000 rupee notes were being demonetised. In a small village, a vegetable seller Mohan was about to close his shop when his friend Ram informed him that the government has banned these two notes. From tomorrow onwards these notes will be worthless. Mohan became anxious as he had saved all his money in these notes. He asked his friend, what should we do now. His friend told him that he had heard banks will replace only few notes per person and they might run ~~out~~ out of cash. The whole village was fearful after this news and people rushed to buy whatever they could even at increased prices. Mohan gave his money to a middleman who promised that he will exchange the notes for him but he

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disappeared the next day. The following morning bank manager addressed the worried villagers and informed them that the govt has given them few months to exchange or deposit money. He asked them not to worry and none will lose their savings. Mohan felt bad as he had believed rumours instead of knowing the facts and lost his hard-earned money. This shows us how post-truth influences people's actions and behaviour.

The term post-truth gained significance in 2016 when it was declared the word of the year by Oxford dictionary. It refers to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs rather than one based on facts. The post-truth era represents a significant challenge to democracy, justice and social harmony. In today's globalised world through digital technology false information spreads widely and rapidly reaching millions within seconds.

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The rise of globalisation has made the world more connected than ever. News, ideas and information travel across the world in a single click. However, this rapid flow of information made it easier for misinformation to spread. Social media platforms have become breeding ground for fake news. It allows anyone to post anything even without verification. Recently, during California wildfire misinformation was spread as old, mislabeled images of past disasters circulated on social media which caused unnecessary panic making the situation more difficult.

Also, generative AI has made the situation more difficult. AI tools can create deepfake videos, fake news, manipulated images. The challenge of distinguishing truth from falsehood has become more difficult leading to increase in misinformation and public trust. During the 2024 US elections there were serious concerns about the use

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of AI generated misinformation. ✓

The critical thinking of humans is seriously impacted in this post-truth era. The word of the year in 2024 was BRAIN ROT → ie, decline in people's ability to think deeply and critically. Now-a-days people watch 30 seconds or $\frac{1}{4}$ minute videos to form their opinion. This has reduced our concentration span. Now-a-days our youth is facing a new malice - POPCORN MIND. It is a cognitive state where mind rapidly shifts from one thought to another just like how popcorn kernels pop simultaneously. It is characterised by lack of structured thinking and a tendency to move swiftly between the tasks without much deliberation. We have started following a consumerist culture in which we actively seek and absorb large amounts of information even without verifying it.

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The decline in critical thinking is dangerous for democracy. A well-functioning democracy depends on informed citizens who can critically analyse the issues and can make rational decisions based on facts. Leaders who use fear, sensational claims gain more support. It leads to rise of populist leaders who manipulate the public in their own vested interests. Post-truth narratives often create US VS THEM divisions leading to hatred, communal violence, social unrest.

While post-truth culture is deeply ingrained in our society but still efforts can be made to deal with it. It is important for social media to act responsibly and take accountability. Also before believing or sharing any post people must less verify it. Instead of blindly consuming any information people should think critically about it. Government should also work to regulate misinformation.

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without compromising the ideals of free speech.

The values enshrined in our preamble can play an important role in combating misinformation. The ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity help us make informed and rational decisions. If Mohan had followed the principles of preamble and think critically that justice means ensuring fairness and no one's money will be taken unfairly. Liberty means freedom to think but he let fear cloud his judgement. Equality ensures equal rights for everyone to exchange their notes. Fraternity means brotherhood and unity and trust in democratic institutions, ^{but} instead he trusted the rumours. If he had belief in these ideals he could have avert such unnecessary panic.

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In this post-truth world ideology is replaced by propaganda, editorial by adation, fact by fiction, news by opinion, democracy by mobocracy, tolerance by aggression. We need to strengthen the basic foundations of liberal democracy. The institutions need to be strengthened to uphold the constitutional values. The tenets of liberal democracy should not be sacrificed.

- "LET US EMBRACE KNOWLEDGE, NOT BLIND BELIEF"
- "LET US SEE FACTS, NOT FABRICATIONS"
- "LET US DEMAND EVIDENCE NOT RHETORICS"
- "LET US RATIONALISE OUR THOUGHTS"
- "LET US THINK AND ACT CRITICALLY"
- "LET US STAND UNITED IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH."

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He who has a why to live can
bear almost any how.

There was a young prince
who was loved by everyone. He was
going to take over the throne soon.
The people of his kingdom were so
excited. But destiny had other plans
for him. Due to a promise made by
his father he was asked to leave
the kingdom and live in exile for
14 years. The prince didn't show
resistance and accepted his exile with
calmness. Life was difficult in forest.
He had no luxurious comforts and lived
in harsh conditions. He suffered the
greatest loss when his wife was taken
away by an enemy. But still he
didn't lose his calmness and patience.
He fought a great battle and emerged
victorious and saved his wife. His
strength came from his deep sense of
duty to uphold righteousness and fulfill
his responsibilities. When he finally returned
back to his kingdom, he was not just

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a prince but a symbol of ideal leadership and sacrifice. He was none other than Lord Rama. He proved to us : "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." He endured immense suffering because he had a strong reason to live.

good
~~A strong purpose transforms suffering into a meaningful journey. Purpose provides a sense of direction. It helps individuals in times of uncertainty. It helps them to endure pain as a necessary path towards growth.~~

Purpose is deeply connected to truth and wisdom also. Truth provides clarity, helping individuals understand their role in the world. In Gautam Buddha's search for truth gave his suffering meaning and ultimately led to enlightenment. When people have strong roots in truth it gives them the courage to face any challenge and move forward with confidence.

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Wisdom strengthens purpose by offering the right perspective. Wisdom is actually knowing through experience what is right and what is wrong. Wisdom is the bridge between truth and consciousness. Bhagavad Gita defines wisdom in terms of "prajna". It is beyond mere intellectual knowledge rather it encompasses our realised experience, empathy, compassion, profound understanding of world and human nature. When we attain wisdom we transcend from ego and become disciplined. Wisdom is — "Manasa Vache Karmne", i.e., our personality at all the three levels is integrated. It is a state where our thoughts, speech and actions coincide.

Wisdom is not
can attain .

Something which anyone few examples in /
There are very realised wisdom like
history who Nelson Mandela,
Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus Christ
Lord Buddha, Mahatma,
etc. Wisdom helped them to /

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Understand their duty and act without fear. The goal of Mahatma Gandhi was a free India but he knew that fighting with weapons will bring more suffering. So, he used the concept of Satyagraha and Swaraj. He was beaten, imprisoned, criticised but still he didn't change his path. His wisdom allowed him to see that suffering for a just cause was not a defeat but a step towards success. Nelson Mandela also showed us how wisdom made purpose stronger. He spent 27 years in prison fighting against racial discrimination but still he didn't hate his oppressors. He chose forgiveness and unity. His wisdom helped him endure suffering and turned it into a lesson for the entire world.

Creativity also plays a key role in fulfilling the purpose of life. When we face obstacles, creativity helps us to find solutions. Creativity is all about insightfulness which converts into action. Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita talks about Karma. He says that when you are

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उम्मीदवारों के
इस हाइड्रेट में
नहीं लिखना
चाहिए।
Candidates
must not
write on
this margin.

united with your work then your existence blooms. There is no dualism between you and your work. He further says "Yogah Karmasu Kaushlam"- ie, when we are in stage of yoga then we are calm in every situation. When we have a strong purpose then we are calm and know how to deal with it. Arjuna's story "Mahabharat" shows how creativity plays a role in fulfilling one's purpose. The saw his own relatives and teachers on the opposing side of battlefield and was filled with doubt. But Lord Krishna's wisdom and his creativity helped him to uphold his duty and fight for justice.

We also see in our daily life how a strong will makes people able to deal with any situation. Many people suffer from serious illness like cancer but their will to fight against it for their family and themselves gives them the strength. For instance, Hina Khan is battling with third stage breast cancer. She

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has to undergo a 15 hours surgery. But she doesn't panic and deals with it as she has a strong purpose in her life to shine again. She handles it with so much courage and patience as she wants to fulfill all her responsibilities towards her family. There are many women who are being suppressed by the society, family. They are not allowed to go out, educate themselves still they fight because they have a strong "why" in their life like Malala Yousafzai. But not everyone discovers their purpose easily. It often requires self-reflection to find purpose of the life.

The story of Lord Ram, the teachings of Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita shows us that how having a "why" in life makes sufferings bearable. It gives people the courage to move forward in their despite all the struggles and hardships. When people find their true purpose they can face any bad hardship with courage and resilience.

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- "LET US FIND WHY THAT LIVES US
STRENGTH * TO BEAR ANY HOW"
- "LET US ACT WITH COURAGE"
- "LET US WALK WITH PURPOSE"
- "LET US EMBRACE THE WISDOM"
- "LET US AWAKEN THE CREATIVITY"
- "LET US ENDURE WITH PATIENCE".

