



---

**STUDIES OF SOCIO-ETHICAL VALUES IN VIKAS SHARMA'S SANA**

**Ms. Alka Sharma**, Associate Professor in English  
Govt. P.G. College For Women  
Panchkula, Chandigarh

**Abstract:**

*Sana*, a remarkable treatise on ethics, is one of the popular novels of Vikas Sharma and can be ranked with Thomas Hardy's *Jude The Obscure* and Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*. Here the conflict between positive psychology and negative psychology has been fully illustrated by the author. He condemns possessiveness, greed, pseudo-dignity, pride, lechery and snobbery as opposed to righteousness, fortitude and generosity. The author aptly realizes that society can be improved with education, culture centres and Yoga practices. He is true to life as there is a large number of people lost in the world of illusions. Like Matthew Arnold, he accepts that 95% people eat and sleep and don't know the meaning of ethical and dignified life. But people like Nirmal Vrat, Brij Vrat, Pt. Parmananda know how to enjoy life of contentment with ethics and universal moral values.

**Keywords:** Pseudo-dignity, Possessiveness, Circles, Illusions, Self-dignity, Independence, Circulation etc.

**Introduction :**

Most of the novels of Dr. Vikas Sharma are remarkable for various shades of realism and *Sana* is no exception. In this novel, he concentrates upon Indian Pharma Industries that earned huge profits during Covid-19 epidemic. At the same time, he condemns Indian social system of dowry. Secondly, he points out the demerits of Indian private engineering colleges for their indiscipline and lack of decent laboratories. Thirdly, he fails to understand the new engineering students who spend time in frivolities and fail to concentrate upon new ideas. Fourthly, he finds that most of the middle-class people – lower as well as upper, live in the world of imagination called illusion. Due to their false ego they fail to come out of their illusions, as created by themselves only. He traced the causes and effects of such illusions— lechery, lust for power, greed, violent nature, sense of possessiveness, passion for beautiful girls etc. that bring them in the net of illusions and due to lack of wisdom and prudence they survive in this darkness and ultimately die.

Like Matthew Arnold, Vikas Sharma aptly believes that nearly 95% people eat, drink and make merriment, 'chatter, love and hate and die' like waves that leave no imprint of their existence. (Rugby Chapel) Yet 2-3% people like Naveen, Nirmal Vrat, Varun, Silky, Sana and the industrialists of Faridabad wish to achieve the aim of life and produce a lot of goods for general welfare.

This novel *Sana* is remarkable for economic realism as few intelligent people like Naveen run the pharma industries. Basically, Naveen was just an Intermediate college teacher of chemistry

in Gurugram and often failed to buy new chemicals to make new experiments. It is note-worthy that he always attaches importance to new 'ideas' as only ideas are the basis of new production. First, the new idea strikes the mind of an intelligent person, then he analyzes it, finds out its details with the help of latest tools, develops it and then makes the experiments. It is not definite that his first experiment gives the desired result. But a hard-working fellow continues to make another experiment for successful results. There is no limit to his joy when he succeeds.

While working as Intermediate college lecturer Naveen fortunately talked with a perfume salesman and requested him to reveal the secret of compounds needed for production of perfumes. After getting some money the fellow shared the secret of the perfume productions and as a result success story of Naveen begins. First, he sold his perfumes in Gurugram and established a small unit on sixty-forty percentage basis. His trade flourished. Due to corruption in police department, extortion was a general feature of industrial world of Gurugram. Without much thought, a three B.H.K. apartment was bought in Faridabad giving up his college job.

### **Nucleus :**

As a lecturer Naveen Nishchal is an ideal fellow who married pretty hockey Captain Kavya for her beauty and needs no dowry. His simplicity is superb and his small lab is impressive. Both have positive approach to life and hence get the company of few friends like T.K. and Mr. Baranwal in Gurugram. As Kavya is very pretty, Naveen loves her from the depth of heart. During a short period, he earns a lot of money and the couple gets a pretty daughter Sana. They buy a bungalow for three corer rupees in Faridabad. The narrator probes in the immediate past of Sana who enjoyed a project tour to Bangalore with M.Sc. classmates and over stayed with her boyfriend Chandan – the son of a gangster. She is boldly warned against her lover by parents and she stops talking to Chandan.

Here the novel is remarkable for socio-ethical realism. Soon she feels impressed by the handsome Pandit Brij Vrat (M.A. History) and gets married with him due to his sound financial background. Brij Vrat is the only son of rich Pandit Nirmal Vrat, the fellow who had been the Diwan of Mandi Estate of Himachal Pradesh. Financial background of Pt. Nirmal Vrat unites Sana with Brij Vrat.

Sana and Brij Vrat enjoy a happy married life for ten years in three-room house in Faridabad but alas! Sana aspires for a child and feels lonely in the house. When Brij Vrat goes to Agra for a week to arrange the Mahamrityunjaya Yajna, Pt. Rewati Prasad, a friend of Brij Vrat, visits his house to play a game of chess. Somehow Sana feels sexual passion for the visitor and asks him– Why does he not talk to her? Why has he ignored her presence so far? Is she not beautiful and attractive?

She asks him –

‘Pandit ji, there is something superior to soul too. How can you, young as you are, forget and ignore the God of Love Cupid who shoots his arrows regularly? ... Vishwamitra had attraction for Menaka. Why do you forget the love stories of Urvashi? Try to remember the love story of King Dushyant and Shakuntala? (13)

All these questions excite Rewati Prasad and he kisses her. Finding iron hot, he strikes and they enjoy love making for a week. Rewati Prasad promises her a job of physics lecturer in local engineering college.

After a week sexually hungry Brij Vrat returns home with sweets and a nice silk saree for Sana. Wearing this saree makes her appear as a goddess and husband and wife make love. Breasts of Sana feel pain regularly as Rewati has almost squeezed them. As pain is unbearable, Brij Vrat takes her to lady doctor Sunanda and the latter feels shocked seeing red rashes on her breast. She asks – Is it physical harassment or out of love? Sana admits it is a just out of love. A cream is prescribed to remove the pain of breasts. As Sana complains of pain in abdomen, doctor checks her and declares that she is in family way. Of course, it was difficult for Sana to tolerate the jerks of broken and shattered roads of Faridabad.

That evening Brij Vrat shares the good news with his parents and complains of ditches on road. Same time Pt. Nirmal Vrat orders for Honda City car for their comfort. Naveen had also booked a car for Sana but then the couple is fully delighted with this new Hope.

As Sana aspires to join in the engineering college, her Papa Naveen suggests that she can restart two schools – One C.B.S.C. school and one I.B. International School as he bought them during Corona period. Sana and Brij Vrat feel overjoyed with the news and see the sites with Rewati Prasad. Unemployed Rewati is asked to take care of fee etc. as he can't handle accounts on computer. Since he can't speak in English, he is unfit for higher post. Then he feels hurt as his wife is not found up to the mark for teaching job. Here the author introduces emotional gap between Sana and Rewati Prasad as the former instructs him to regard her his boss and not mere Bhabhi ji.

In a personal interview I asked Prof. Vikas Sharma (27th January, 2023) –

Q.: How did you get the idea of writing this novel *Sana* dealing with life of chemical engineers?

Ans.: I read the news (YouTube 21th Dec. 2021) that Piyush Jain and four other members of his family (Kannauj, U.P.) prepared various perfumes. C.B.I. found two hundred crores cash money in their home and chemicals worth more than eighty-five crores. That gave me the idea to develop this theme.

Q.: What is your basic intention in this novel?

Ans.: I wish to assert that the modern Indian guys survive in the world of illusions, far away from hard realities of life. Every perfume gives temporary physical pleasure but 'new ideas' help develop new industries that produce essential commodities like cloth, cement, iron rods, leather shoes, auto-vehicles etc. and Indian traders can earn huge amount of money with their exports.

Q.: How does Silky survive in the world of illusions?

Ans. : Silky forgets the hard realities of her poor past while studying for B. Tech. Secondly, she remains a puppet in the hands of Naveen for nearly five years. Only after Katty joins her, she becomes conscious of her self-dignity. Now she accepts that she had survived in the world of illusions as she got only physical pleasures. Whenever Naveen asked her about her 'new ideas', she fails to suggest anything new. Similarly, Katty remains ignorant of her poor parents when enjoying the benefits of Naveen's Guest House. She easily feels flattered when Naveen proposes her the project of producing perfumes. How can anybody be progressive in life when one does not read

research journals in one's field and makes new experiments? After all Naveen used to makes new experiments like P.B. Shelley in his hostel room and once burnt all the books and bed.

Q.: What type of life is ideal for women?

Ans.: This is question of personal liking to a great extent. Kavya enjoys a life of luxury with all physical comforts in the bungalow and never thinks of any new hobby. But her daughter Sana develops her administrative skills and in spite of flirting with the Principals of C.B.S.C. school and International Baccalaureate School, looks after the school affairs, manages new games, debates and seminars. As a feminist she is conscious of her rights as well as duties. Her merits can't be ignored just because of her sexual lust. Then I am not painting any Savitri through her. She is very much the daughter of Naveen and possesses his genes – like father, like daughter.

Q.: What is your opinion about Brij Vrat?

Ans.: Well, he changes as soon as Sana gets the possession of two schools and one bungalow. This adds to his extra pleasure and Sana regards herself a boss. But Brij Vrat lacks many positive qualities as he is an easy-going fellow and impractical in life. He invites the tension of producing herbal tea, herbal coffee and herbal medicines without having any knowledge of production procedure and ways of marketing. Soon Naveen finds out the future of Brij Vrat's utopian project and advises him only for trading of herbal tea, coffee and cosmetics. As a result, the whole utopian scheme fails and goods are finally distributed as gifts to staff members of Naveen's factory and Sana's schools.

Q.: Do you regard *Sana* as a treatise on ethics?

Ans.: Yes. Of course. Here I have mentioned the importance of positive values such as devotion, faithfulness, integrity, sincerity, new thoughts, domestic harmony, personal freedom, dignity of a woman as a woman etc. After the death of Kavya, Naveen accepts poor and simple-hearted widow Apporva as he needs a companion in life. When he asks her to engage a beautician for daily service, she aptly tells him – Beauty lies in the eyes of beholder. She believes that faithfulness and integrity are superior to mere physical beauty that is nine days wonder.

Q.: What is the moral of this novel *Sana*?

Ans.: With this novel I heartily wish to make the best ideas prevail in society. Pt. Nirmal Vrat, Beena Vrat and Pandit ji from Rishikesh assert that life has got to be led on moral pattern so as to get contentment, bliss and real delight. One has got to peep into one's inner self. On the contrary modern guys are mad for material gains, parties with rock music, sexual adventures, frivolities and vanities. This is the reason that one finds crisis of faith in society. Here I would like to quote the suggestion of Pt. Nirmal Vrat to Brij Vrat –

‘Try your best to inculcate thinking power and creative skills in your students. Let them fight against negative ideas such as Regionalism, casteism, communalism,

orthodoxy and above all national prejudices. Create hopes in them so that they may become citizens of Free India. (182-183)  
Thanks Sir.

The first chapter of the novel *Sana* is the best example of socio-ethical criticism and a sublime piece of art. Charles Lamb invited all the Fools of Literature for a pleasant meeting in the essay *All Fools' Day* and in the end, he told reader that he (Lamb) is not a fool to do so. On the same pattern G.B. Shaw invited the spirits of all Bishops, Cardinals, Courtiers, King Dauphin for a meeting with Joan of Arc to convince them – How they were all responsible for her irrational punishment of being burnt alive. Joan aptly blamed them for injustice done to her and yet grand deeds were done for the liberty of France by her.

On the same pattern Vikas Sharma informs all the worldly people, dead or alive to appear before Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu etc. to get their problems solved on 25 Oct. 2021. Lord Chitragupta is appointed the anchor of this meeting and he justifies the punishments/rewards of the grand as well as common people who attend the meeting that day. The scene is in dramatic form and answers of Lord Chitragupta are morally satisfying for almost all the dignitaries and common people that attend the meeting.

In the beginning Francis Bacon feels sad for being regarded the 'meanest of mankind' (4) though he has written 58 essays, *The New Atlantis* and *The Advancement Of Learning* for the enlightenment of mankind. Lord Chitragupta satisfies him saying that as he was an opportunist, he is called the 'meanest' but his genius is accepted as Pope calls him 'the wisest and the brightest' (4) too. Three fat brothers are satisfied with the answer that they wished to be very healthy in their previous life and hence they are over-weight now. Charles Lamb laments for his non-fulfillment of love story with Ann Simmons, stammering and short height. But Lord Chitragupta satisfies him saying that it is no small thing to become the 'Prince of Essayists' as he is remembered even today for his lofty essays.

Mr. D, Mr. E, Mr. F, Mr. G, Mr. H, Mr. I, Mr. J and Mr. K are patients of several diseases as their life style is unhealthy – Each person has to suffer for his evil deeds in the next birth/births. Killers of Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Indira Gandhi are asked to wait for Redemption Day for purgation of their evil deeds. (6) Then Dhritarashtra appeared complaining of his blindness. Here Lord Chitragupta tells him the bitter truth that he suffered due to his sense of pride – Pride goes before a fall. (6) Mr. M died a tragic death due to fire and Lord Chitragupta asked him to wait in Purgatory for the second stage. Mr. N – a widow had the complaint that her husband, a physician drank a lot of wine and smoked too much and died an early death. Here Lord Chitragupta made her feel that some people are examples of 'tragic waste' as they suffer for the faults of others. Fate's blows can't be forgotten and ignored by anybody.

Mr. O, a Dalit lecturer, died early due to the wrong system followed by his surgeon in the operation of his gall bladder. Here Lord Chitragupta asked him to have patience – Let bygones be bygones. (7) He asked Ravana to forget his enmity against brother Vibhishan as 'Times have changed.'

Indira Gandhi pleaded innocent as she defended democracy and sacrificed herself for the national unity. Yet her two sons too died tragic death. She was advised to wait for Redemption in Purgatory.

But General Dyer was told – one has to suffer for one's evil deeds.

Hearing the personal agonies of Lucretius and Socrates, Lord Chitragupta repeated G.B. Shaw's theory that grand people sacrifice themselves for public welfare and calls it 'Impersonal evolution and personal tragedy.' (8)

Others like Z.A. Bhutto, Sabana, Mr. V and others complained of various communal tension that made them suffer terribly on earth. Lord Chitragupta asked them to have patience as there is 'no wisdom in keeping wounds green.' (9) The Asthma patients are pacified with the hope that research work is going on to cure various diseases and good results are awaited – No early death for minor diseases in future. Mr. Z and his friends were pacified that there will be a universal language, understood by all citizens of the world and territorial differences should hopefully disappear.

Here Vikas Sharma recollects the assassinations of Abraham Lincoln, M.K. Gandhi and Indira Gandhi and feels indebted to them for their grand deeds done for humanity at large. He refers to the patients of various diseases and asserts his hope for new medicines in the digital age of advanced studies and research and development. He consoles the patients with physical deformities that evils of previous life get punished in the next world and here he follows the system of poetic justice as given by Aristotle and followed by William Shakespeare.

Regarding the utility of positive psychology Martin E.P. Seligman points out its benefits for contemporary society facing dementia, neurosis, mental disorder, A.I.D.S., depression etc. –

'... we have discovered that there is a set of human strength that are the most likely buffers against mental illness, courage, optimism, interpersonal skills, work ethic, hope, honesty and perseverance. Much of the task of prevention will be to create a science of human strength whose mission will be to foster these virtues in young people. (5)

Seligman finds intimate relationship between positive psychology and human conduct to make normal people stronger than before. He adds:

At unfavourable times like strikes, communal riots, days of unemployment, period of sickness, natural disasters old age, poverty etc., quite a large number of people have negative thoughts and naturally feel dull and dormant. There is none to guide them to move forward and suggest the ways and means to make progress.

In 9th chapter of *Sana* the narrator describes the party hosted by Naveen and Kavya. The guests such as Sakal Sachdeva, Ram Kaushal, Pavitra, Abhasi, Bhav Bharat, Arun Vijay, Alka Vaibhav, Silky etc. enjoy a lot of drinks, non-vegetarian food and don't mind flirting with hired girl-dancers. Ethically conscious Kavya feels sad seeing all these immoral scenes in her garden and grudges about the irrational deeds. But Naveen roughly tells her:

'Either manage business at the top level or beg food on the road side. No middle way out for us at all. Better enjoy. If you feel

fed up, you may retire to your bed room.  
Party must go on as I too enjoy these  
parties. Nothing new here. (65)

Katty and Silky feel forced to enjoy sex with industrialists not known to them. As Silky has already taken part in few such modern parties, she is prepared to join them at the cost of personal modesty. Due to poverty, lack of economic means for B. Tech. studies, shortage of jobs in industrial world girls like her feel forced to compromise with the situation.

When she feels mentally upset, she thinks of her own trade – to produce chemical jewellery. But the question of establishing the factory, cost of production and marketing can't be managed by her alone. Katty too refuses to join her as she can't give up working for Naveen. When Naveen comes to know about her rising ambitions, he warns her about the bitter realities of new manufacturers – What'll happen if her projects fail? Who'll pay bank loans if she doesn't succeed?

Then she resigns her job and joins with Sakal Sachdev to produce batteries for mobile phones. Now she is sent to China to get training for production procedure. But the trainers often use Chinese words and secondly, she feels lonely here. Fu Fu exploits her innocence and enjoys sex with her almost with force. But the batteries she prepares, leak shortly and she is fired from job. Here

the novel is remarkable for socio-economic realism. The author asserts that Silky fails to learn the production procedure of batteries and hence fails in her mission. She stays in Shanghai half-heartedly and returns as an ignorant woman – No new ideas, no competence led to her agony and decay.

Her officer Tarun Bakliwal asks her to think of her marriage with his intelligent son Varun who works for U.S., Chemical industry situated in New York. Tarun and Varun are to be admired for their generosity, broad-mindedness, tolerance, wisdom and prudence. Since Tarun and Varun aspire for no dowry, she accepts their proposal and like Kavya, gets married without any pomp and show. Lecherous Naveen tells her secretly – Had she requested him, he would have arranged a nice reception on this day. But wise Silky feels detached with her past and doesn't invite even Katty for marriage ceremony. She hopes and plans a new married life in New York. While living with Varun, she feels the dignity of a woman. Better late than never.

Like Sigmund Freud, Vikas Sharma makes regular references to the dreams of his people so as to make them round characters, life-like in true sense. In 16th chapter Kavya sees a dream as she had seen a Hindi Film *Love In Tokyo*:

'In her dream she saw Naveen dancing with  
Silky all the time and ignored her totally.  
He kissed her passionately and slept with  
her in another room. She cried out of agony  
– What's this nonsense Naveen? How did  
you dare to forget me for Silky? Do you  
repent for getting married with me? No  
more. No more.' (109)

This confirms author's faith in telepathy as Naveen had physical relations with Silky but Kavya had never seen them making love. Kavya didn't share her dreams with Naveen and felt

'Perhaps it was an illusion.' (109)

In Shanghai Silky feels lonely and upset as most of the lectures on battery preparation are beyond her comprehension. She asks herself – Is it enough to stay in China for such a training? Why to go on producing chemicals for the industries of others? How long to work as a dull fellow anymore? –

'What is the difference between previous industrial life and present one? ... will her life fly like a smoke spray of perfume? Is she like a Lily that blooms for a day and then fade leaving like this?' (120)

In spite of his lust for money, sense of pride and strong feeling of self-dignity Brij Vrat proves to be a faithful husband, an ideal boss of the C.B.S.E. School and controls his passion for Shayli as the latter feels tempted to enjoy sex with him. When she advances towards him in bed, he badly rebukes her and instructs her to behave properly. Then he feels pity for the helpless children of the beach area in Mumbai and arranges provisions for their food.

But Shayli's ambitions rise high in life and it becomes clear when she finds herself as Padmavati in the dream, being loved and aspired by clever and highly ambitious Sultan Allauddin Khilji. The plan was made to arrest Raja Ratan Deep and then elope with Padmavati, the most beautiful and attractive Rajputani. The records of History confirms that she surrendered herself to Fire and accepted Johar rather than being insulted by the Sultan. In Shayli's dream Ratan Deep moves towards her. But Brij Vrat rebukes her at the nick of time. (126 -127) Here the novel is remarkable for psychological realism.

Vikas Sharma expresses his ethical purpose on the Uthani of Kavya when Pandit Swami Parmanand awakens the people against life of illusions and tries to convince them 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 evolution and birth will ever continue.

...  
Everything appears permanent in appearance but its secret has got to be analyzed. Yet things change ... ' (165)

Like R.W. Emerson, Swami ji defines that there are circles within circles and men follow the concept of social circle, political circle, family circle, worldly circle but not the real spiritual circle as he calls them illusions. Swami ji adds – 'Why to feel surprised when a 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 ... ' (166)

## Conclusion:

So, Vikas Sharma asserts the utility of silence and spiritual growth through Swami ji and inspires readers to understand the reality of numberless circles and realize the gap between illusion and truth. Let them realize 'the cause and effect of every universal fact.' (167)

As a supporter of ethics, he puts certain moral terms with spellings such as – self-dignity (45), acceptance (49), communication (51), survive (58), circulation (60), spelling (71), Ability (77), excessive (83), culture centre (100), independent (102), Buddhism (118), etc.

Pt. NirmaL Vrat illustrates ethical terms to son Brij Vrat and shows him the fifteen basic circles advising the son to think and analyze pride, lechery, dishonesty greed, false promises, possessiveness and sorrow on getting defeated in life (136) as these are all vices and symbols of negative psychology. If he wins against them, he will come a civilized and cultured man.

Thus, the novel is remarkable for socio -ethical realism and remains a healthy guide to readers like *As You Like It*, *Paradise Lost*, *Life of Milton*, *Great Expectations*, *Jude The Obscure*, *Animal Farm*, *Madam Bovary*, *A Passage to India* etc.

## WORKS CITED

Interview with Vikas Sharma, 27th Jan. 2023.

Sharma, Vikas *Sana* New Delhi : Diamond Books 2023.

Snyder, C.R. & Lopez *Positive Psychology The Scientific And Practical Explorations Of Human Strengths* London : Sage 2008.

Seligman, Martin E.P. in Snyder & Lopez *Positive Psychology The Scientific And Practical Explorations Of Human Strengths* London: Sage 2008.