



# The Vedic concept of work ethic and its relevance to 21st century competencies

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The Vedas and Hindu Susastra teach humanity to live in a superior way through a good work ethic. Work ethic is a very important basic value instilled in the Vedas. Work ethic will lead humanity to prosperity. Work ethic is a basic skill in the Vedas that can be developed according to the needs of the times. **Method:** This article is the result of text research, which examines the content and meaning of the text, as well as its structure and discourse. The data was obtained through a literature study. The qualitative data in the form of texts have been examined through philological work, although it is not as rigorous as philological studies in general. **Finding:** This article is the result of text research and finds its context or spirit in the 21st century which has different characteristics from previous centuries. The 21st century, characterised by the development of science and technology, has changed many things in human life, including the type and way of working. However, the work ethic taught in the Vedas such as being diligent, persistent, creative, strong and good at managing finances is the basic capital in life. **Conclusion:** In the 21st century, the need for skills such as communication, creativity and innovation, collaboration and critical thinking actually find a link to the spirit and values taught in the past. Hindus strongly emphasise logic and critical thinking skills as the spirit of the 21st century. Therefore, the Vedic spirit should find a good place and encourage humans to live more excellently in this century

**KEYWORDS:** 21st century; literature; Hindu; *Vedas*; work ethic.

## 1. Introduction

Hindu texts are replete with teachings on human life, from simple matters to ultimate enlightenment. The science of life dominates in many Hindu texts. Even if we analyse, the teachings on rituals are minimal in the Vedic Chess. Because the Vedas are energy, flowing life energy, vitality and enthusiasm for human kindness, not just teaching rituals and divinity. How to live, work and hold principles and do dharma in accordance with position is a central teaching in the sacred literature. The Vedas teach to live well and achieve the highest goal, as the following mandate from the R̥gveda.

*mā średhata somīno dakṣatā mahe  
kṛṇudhvaṃ rāya ātuje  
taraṇir ij jayati kṣeti puṣyati*

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*na devāsaḥ kavatnave*

(Ṛgveda VII.32.9)

'O noble-minded ones, do not go astray. Be diligent and determined to achieve high goals. Work diligently to acquire wealth. One who is energetic (very diligent) succeeds, lives happily and enjoys prosperity. The gods never help the lazy.'

Do not go astray, persevere with determination to achieve the highest goals. Going astray here is not related to the current common understanding such as related to ideology, beliefs, but rather living in a way that is not good / does not support progress such as living extravagantly, gambling, corruption and so on that are not supportive in progress. The Word of God is even very clear in asking mankind to go astray, not to think wrong. Perseverance, high determination is needed, including to acquire wealth. God even guarantees that people who are passionate, diligent in life will succeed and enjoy prosperity. The Vedas mandate that whatever one does should be done with zeal and earnestness.

God, the Gods do not help lazy people. Laziness, procrastination, reluctance, sluggishness is not spirituality. It is not the nature of God, it is not the nature of the Gods. Vigour is one of the traits of the Gods, just as Agni is always vigorous. Lazy is not a trait favoured by the Gods, so lazy people do not get the grace of God. Even in spiritual attainment, earnestness and zeal are the keys to success. So people who are lazy, people who doubt, this world is not theirs let alone the next world. So lazy people are far from divinity, not from spirituality, far from the Gods. Chanakya Nitisastra also emphasises the importance of striving hard to avoid poverty.

*udyoge nāsti dāridryam*

*japato nāsti pātakam*

*maune ca kalaho nāsti*

*nāsti jāgarato bhayam*

(Canakya Niti Sastra III.11)

There is no problem of poverty for one who is diligent in endeavour. There is no problem of penury for one who is diligent in chanting the holy names of the Lord. There can be no quarrel for one who performs mauna asceticism (speechlessness while contemplating the majesty of God) nor will there be any danger for one who is always vigilant.

Chanakya emphasised that people who strive hard will not experience the problem of poverty. The root of poverty is actually laziness. Laziness is the enemy of everyone. Laziness has sacrificed many things in human life. Laziness often intersects with the word resignation, which is synonymous with leaving everything to God. This attitude is wrong and a denial of the word of God. Every human being is obliged to strive hard, be enthusiastic, not be lazy and whatever the result, how big, this is where our spirituality is tested by being able to accept the results of our work, big or small. So it's not lazy and inert, not doing any effort, living lightly and claiming to leave life to God. Even blaming God for failure. This is very far from spirituality. Because the achievement of prosperity, wealth is one of the interesting achievements in human birth as emphasised by the following Canakya Nitisastra.

*dharmārtha kāma mokṣeṣu*

*yasyaiko'pi na vidyate*

*janma janmāni martyeṣu*

*maraṇaṁ tasya kevalam*

(Canakya Niti Sastra III.20)

Dharma/truth, artha/wealth, kama/satisfaction of desire, and moksa/liberation, if even one of these four cannot be achieved, birth after birth in this material world is only to die.

Without attainment, life becomes an exercise in futility. Not even appreciating the life that is given to us, dharma, artha, kama, moksa are the wealth that humans must achieve, especially in Kaliyuga, artha is a condition for life. Artha is the human achievement after Dharma. Dharma is the first and main foundation of life. Dharma must be held and any subsequent attainment must be based on Dharma. Artha and kama must also be based on

Dharma, so that humans will live in prosperity, prosperity and liberation is very possible to achieve. Living lazily, leisurely, without hard work and living at the mercy of others or even considering others obliged to help is a crime in this world. The evil of wasting the human body, the evil of missing out on the fulfilment of opportunities and denying the Vedic injunction, God's command to be zealous in life and enterprising in endeavour. Humans are taught to live energetically and be happy with their own achievements.

The Vedas mandate how mankind should live their lives by thinking and acting correctly and having a spirit of work, diligent effort and not deviating from the path of truth. The teachings of the Vedic literature are full of work ethic and high values in life. This value applies throughout time and is taught to the wider community as a value of life. Even the values of work ethic and spirit are an integral part of teaching in the world's oldest university in the history of Hindu civilisation. The 21st century has very different characteristics from the previous era. Marked by the advancement of science and the rapid birth of new technology, it has changed the face of the world, the mindset and even the work patterns of the world community. This raises the question of whether the work ethic taught by the Vedas finds relevance in the 21st century? The results of this research show that the values and beliefs taught since ancient times still find their breath, and can even become new energy in this era. The Vedic teachings can even be a universal value that can be embraced and applied by humanity to keep finding light and happiness in this nano-technological age.

## 2. Methods

This article is the result of text research, which examines the content and meaning of the text, as well as its structure and discourse. The data was obtained through a literature study. The qualitative data in the form of texts have been examined through philological work, although it is not as rigorous as philological studies in general. Based on the philological analysis, the texts used are those that have been published and have undergone text criticism, as well as unpublished texts or manuscripts. Furthermore, efforts were made to compare several manuscripts in order to find more complete and valid data. All data, both text and information, were tested by checking the reliability, i.e. how the strength of the data can describe the authenticity and real simplicity of each information. In addition, checking in the validity is also used, which relates to the activities in reading the text to the research situation, place and time. Finally, cross-checking between the text and supporting data was done.

Data was analysed using Content Analysis. Data presentation is done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories. Data interpretation is when researchers begin to dimly capture the red thread that is getting clearer and clearer, so that researchers with the treasury of data obtained dare to provide an explanation of the theme. Meanwhile, conceptualisation is giving names or labels and abstracting. The interpretation method is used to explain the subject of this research. To understand the mantras and slokas from the Vedic Library, the Vedic Interpretation method developed by Sri Aurobindo was used (Purani, 1963).

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1 *The concept of work ethic in the Vedas*

Work ethic is a necessary value and belief that remains relevant throughout the ages. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, ethos is a distinctive view of life of a social group. Meanwhile, work ethic is the spirit of work that becomes the spirit or belief of a person or group of people. Work ethic is the spirit that characterises a person or group of

people working, based on ethical beliefs and manifested in the concrete behaviour of the world of work (Ginting, 2016).

The Vedic scriptures strongly emphasise a high work ethic and hard work. Even God will not help a lazy person. All the strength that man needs is actually within. It just takes effort to awaken the power, conquer laziness and other negative traits and demonstrate a high work ethic in life. The Vedas The Sacred Word The Practical Guide to Life elaborates Hard work and not being lazy are obligations and virtues that should be done. The Supreme Lord has mercy only on those who are hardworking and have perseverance, not those who are lazy, easy-going and take things for granted. People who like to work hard and have perseverance will achieve success. This is very relevant to the development of the modern world. Anyone who works hard, studies hard, is disciplined and has the quality of Úraddhà will be successful in all aspects of life. Similarly, people who are tireless and do not give up quickly will gain wealth physically and mentally. The Supreme Lord always helps people who like to work hard.

*kurvan eveha karmāṇi śataṁ samāḥ.  
evaṁ tvayi nānyatheto asti na karma lipyate nare* (Yajurveda XL. 2)

'One should like to live in this world doing hard labour for a hundred years. There is no other way for one's salvation. An act that is selfless and impartial distances the doer from entanglements.'

There is no other way to achieve salvation except by hard work. Life should be lived with joy and hard work even for a hundred years. Whatever field of work, whatever path of life one chooses; being a farmer, businessman, entrepreneur, politician, military, police, bureaucrat, lawyer, journalist, all cannot be achieved without hard work. Politicians and statesmen cannot prosper without hard work and dedicating their lives to their chosen field of work. All achievements and successes in the field of work must be done with hard work and smart work.

Hard work does not mean no time for family, for rest, for social activities, for spiritual activities, but rather devoting all your power and ability to work, full of earnestness, diligence. Not just working while waiting for a salary or waiting for luck. Just being seen to be working without producing tangible results from earnest labour, even by negatively seeking to achieve success, position and standing by slandering others, spreading gossip and slander. These methods are not right. The goal is good, the means must be good. This will be a blessing for all. All must work with the same system and rhythm, only then will personal and community or country success be realised.

*yaḥ śramāt tapaso jātaḥ.....(Atharvaveda X. 7. 36)*

'The Supreme Lord God Almighty is realised by perseverance and penance'

*... mā no nidrā īśata mota jalpih,...( Rgveda VIII. 48. 14)*

'May we not be overpowered (seduced) by sleep or favourite-talking (talkative/negative arguing)'

*svayaṁ vājin tanvaṁ kalpayasva  
svayaṁ yajasva svayaṁ juṣasva*

*māhima te-anyena na samnaśe* (Yajurveda XXIII.15)

'O valiant mankind, make your bodies strong and establish yourselves. Perform the offerings yourself. Live the religious life. No one can achieve glory like you' (Titib, 1996).

This mantra implies that man should have strength in body and mind. man should not be dependent on others. "O valiant mankind, make your bodies strong and establish yourselves," this implies that man should bring out (realise) all the potential and power within. Man is divine, all power lies within, as the famous Svami Vivekananda said:

"Carry out the offerings yourself. Live the religious life." Man should be able to perform offerings and religious ceremonies by his own strength, with his own ability, not relying on the kindness or mercy of others. Moreover, being given perfect limbs and faculties, but not using them well, denies the glory of life. Offerings to ancestors, gods and humanity should be made by oneself. Similarly, religious life must be carried out by oneself. Being given a complete and healthy body but not daring to work hard to achieve success is a failure in life. Such a person should not deserve the mercy of others. Everyone must awaken all the potential within himself, perform the chess ashrama properly so that every stage of life can be lived well and perfectly.

*tejo'si tejo mayi dhehi, vīryam asi vīryam mayi dhehi,  
balaṃ asi balaṃ mayi dhehojo 'syejo mayi dhehi,  
manyur asi manyur mayi dhehi, saho'si saho mayi dhehi*

'You have a fiery spirit, grant us a fiery spirit; You have strength, grant us strength; You have ability, grant us ability; You have energy, grant us energy; You have fighting spirit, grant us fighting spirit; You have might, grant us might'

A good mind and a fiery spirit are the assets that must be possessed by humans. For life is the field of dharma (the true battlefield). Everyone must have a warrior spirit to uphold virtue in life. The first asset is a good and noble mind. If this capital is not possessed then failure will lurk in every move. Another enemy in the form of ugliness will enter into the self, into life to destroy life itself-from within. Therefore, a good mind is a very important asset. Many people fail not because of a lack of potential, but because of a weak mind. A good mind gives rise to health, from health the spirit of combat and 'might' must be revived. Because living as a loser is forbidden by the holy book. Young people must live with this spirit. If proving material success is not possible, how is it possible to prove success in the spiritual world? Even the spiritual path is not an easy path. Even ascetics are not weak people, but specially qualified people, such as being able to meditate for at least eight hours a day, strictly controlling sensual impulses and other necessary powers. The spiritual world is not for the weak-minded, but rather for those with strength.

### *3.2 Laziness and gambling at the root of poverty*

Laziness and improper lifestyle are the roots of poverty. There is a false assumption that God has arranged everything, we don't need to work hard, just believe and ask, when the time comes God will provide. Complacency is very different from laziness. Many people are actually lazy, but do not want to admit that they are lazy, but instead claim to surrender to God's power. There are also people who want to work, even earn a high income but do not have a house to live in. This is because when they get money from their hard work that is helped by their families, all they think about is momentary pleasures, going to cafes to get

the thrill of plus service, gambling and wasting money without being a blessing. People like this will also suffer. In fact, many crimes such as robbery, bank robbery, pawnshop robbery, theft, are committed to fulfil these lowly desires.

Therefore, any saint always encourages his people to discard laziness and live a righteous lifestyle, a blessed lifestyle. The money one has should be utilised properly, earned properly and used wisely. With this, there will be no suffering in life. It is not the amount of money that is the measure, but one's intelligence to use it, in the right way and wisely. The Gods favour and help people who work hard.

*iccanti devāḥ sunvantamna svapnāya sprhayanti.  
yanti pramādam atandrāḥ* (Atharvaveda XX. 18. 3)

'The gods favour people who work hard. The gods dislike people who are easy-going and lazy. Those who are always vigilant attain great happiness'

*... na ṛte śrāntasya sakhyāya devāḥ....*( Ṛgveda IV. 33. 11)

'The gods help one who is not exhausted by hard labour'  
God Almighty never helps a lazy person

*..., nāsuṣver āpir na sakhā na jāmiḥ....*( Ṛgveda IV. 25. 6)

'The Supreme Lord, Sang Hyang Widhi, is not the friend, relative or kinsman of the lazy'

*mā no agne amataye māvīratāyai rīradhah.  
māgotāyai sahasasputra mā nideapa dvesāmsi-ā kṛdhi.* (Ṛgveda III. 16. 5)

'O Supreme Lord, may you not subject us to ignorance, cowardice, poverty, and humiliation. May you keep our opponents at bay'

*sthiro bhava viḍvaṅgāsūr bhava vājyarvan.  
pṛthur bhava suṣadas tvamagneḥ purīṣavāhaṇaḥ* (Yajurveda XI. 44)

'O enterprising mankind, be persistent and possess strong parts. Be skilful and energetic in your work. Expand your fame far and wide and always remain happy. You are endowed with abilities like the Hyang Agni'.

God wants people to be energetic, to have strong body parts in order to prosper in life. On the contrary, laziness and ease are unblessed attitudes. Therefore, enthusiasm, optimism and hard work are very important in life. The Gods favour those who are willing to work hard and be energetic in life, and are not willing to be friends with those who are lazy, consumed by sleep and idle talk.

*iccānti devāḥ sunvantamna svapnāya sprhayanti,  
yanti pramādam atandrāḥ* (Ṛgveda VIII. 2. 18)

'The devatās want people to offer drinks (i.e. perform the offering ceremony): The devatās do not like (to see their devotees who) sleep (lazily). They, who do not sleep (the devatā), chastise those who are anxious (restless)' (Titib, 1996).

Whatever humans want to achieve must be done with hard work and sincerity in order to achieve it. To achieve glory, prosperity, achievement or ideals must be done with hard work. Thus the process of achieving something is its own joy and satisfaction. If someone wants to be rich but by instant means such as corruption, cheating, robbing banks, or other improper means, the wealth may be enjoyed for a moment, but the process is certainly not enjoyed as a beautiful process. This is because the act is fraught with negative risks associated with personal honour being tainted when the act is discovered, loss of good name and feelings of guilt arising from within. To achieve salvation in a spiritual context also requires hard work. Like ascetics, monks they work hard to achieve enlightenment. They seem very calm, but behind that, there is a commendable effort. Svami Vivekananda taught a working spirituality, a dynamic spirituality, not a static, silent spirituality. For such spirituality is like a dangerous poison. Doing nothing for the sake of the word spirituality is deception. Spirituality must also be achieved with hard work and spirituality. Again, doing nothing, using no strength, being inert for the sake of the word spirituality is sheer deception. It is a deception of human existence and duty. It is a poison that must be rejected in life.

The 'great teaching' mandate of Atharvaveda XX. 18. 3 is very clear to the human rule. 'The gods favour people who work hard. The gods do not favour those who are easy-going and lazy,' even spirituality cannot be achieved by being easy-going and lazy. Worldly fortune, whatever form it takes-including spiritual goals-must be achieved with hard work. Even the gods dislike lazy people. Time wasted in vain such as excessive sleeping, watching, doing nothing, hanging out is certainly not favoured by the Gods. The Gods are not friends to those who are lazy. Lazy nature must be discarded when humans want progress in any field. Industrious people are very close to the Gods, very close to success. Affirmed again in Ågveda IV. 25. 6 'The Supreme Lord, is not the friend, relative or kinsman of a lazy person.' Even God is 'unwilling' to be a relative of a lazy person. How can laziness wrapped up in spiritual propositions be true if God alone is not a relative to the lazy and unwilling to work hard. Indeed, surrendering to God and laziness are very similar and even in some ways can be very difficult to separate. Poverty, misfortune due to low work ethic cannot be brought into the spiritual proposition of not being ambitious with wealth and money. Poverty, failure is failure, spirituality is spirituality which also has to be achieved with hard work. Even yogis who live only for spirituality are not lazy and easy-going. They have to struggle against extreme weather and perform rigorous austerities tirelessly. Everything should be pursued with perseverance, like the following mantra.

*kṛtaṁ me dakṣiṇe haste jayo me savya āhitaḥ.  
gojid bhūyāsam asvajid dhanamjayo hiraṇyajit. (Atharvaveda VII.50.8)*

'Diligence may be in the right hand and glory in the left. May we get cows, horses, wealth and gold'

Success is achieved with perseverance. Likened to diligence in the right hand, there will be glory in the left hand. We cannot get diligence in the left hand without diligence in the right hand. With both (diligence and glory), wealth will be obtained. Cows, horses, wealth and gold will be obtained. Cows are symbols of prosperity, producing milk and offspring, horses are symbols of glory, wealth. Similarly, gold since the Purana era is still a symbol of wealth. Everything will even be conquered by perseverance.

*aśmanvatī rīyate saṁ rabhadhvam uttiṣṭhata pra taratā sakhāyaḥ.*

*atrā jahāma ye asan aśevāḥśivān vayam uttaremabhi vajan. (R̥gveda X. 53. 8)*

'O companions, the world of sin and sorrow is passing by like a river, the flow of which is blocked by great boulders. Persevere, rise up and cross over, leaving behind followers without virtue. Cross over the river of life to attain prosperity and well-being.'

The mantra above implies that the world is indeed full of obstacles and hurdles, nothing is achieved without obstacles, easily and pleasantly. The river is blocked by boulders, but the water patiently finds a way to flow. Its power keeps it flowing past the boulders. In fact, the obstruction of the boulders actually increases its power. Look at the flow of water after being blocked by a rock, it becomes even more swift and dangerous. This power of water should be used in life. The more it is blocked, the faster it flows. Even to make hydroelectricity, it is deliberately collected and made a barrier so that the power of the falling water is powerful to be used for power generation.

"...Persevere, rise and cross over, leaving behind followers who are not virtuous. Cross the river of life for the attainment of prosperity and welfare' Diligence, vigour and rising up with great strength must be exercised to cross this life. In order not to demoralise and have a negative effect, the Vedic scriptures clearly and unequivocally say to leave the unvirtuous, the lazy and the negative. Because our magnetic forces will clash and can weaken our own strength. Like military science, the military must assemble fellow soldiers, march with certain rules and even compactly make certain formations in war. A group of positive people is like a huge military force. Do not allow lazy people who can disturb and become a virus of weakness for others. Diligence, hard work or laziness is a life choice, not a destiny given by life. We are justified in abandoning those who choose to be lazy, easy-going, negative, jealous of the success of others, speaking ill of others. Even the Vedic scriptures themselves recommend that people who are good, hard-working and diligent abandon those who are not virtuous and lazy.

*sa ratnaṁ martyo vasu viśvam tokam uta tmanā.  
accā gaccati-astṛtaḥ (R̥gveda I. 41. 6)*

'The tireless man acquires jewels, all kinds of wealth and children and grandchildren through his diligence'

*kṛṣan it phāla āśitam kṛṇoti yan adhvānam apa vṛṅkte caritraiḥ.  
vadan brahmāvadato vanīyānpr̥ṇan āpir apr̥ṇantam abhi śyāt. (R̥gveda X. 117. 7)*

'A ploughshares producing grain. A man who walks on foot crosses the road. A learned man who chants Vedic mantras is superior to one who remains silent. A generous person is superior to one who does not help his friend'

The three mantras above are clearly aimed at a better, more honourable human life and achieving prosperity. Ṛ̥gveda VII. 32.9 calls out: "O noble-minded ones, do not go astray. Be diligent and determined to attain high goals." Work diligently to acquire wealth. One who is zealous (very determined) succeeds, lives happily and enjoys prosperity..." do not go astray. Do not think wrongly. God is speaking for all mankind to follow, it takes diligence and hard work to achieve high goals. People who are energetic, diligent will live happily and enjoy prosperity. There is no prohibition in the scriptures to achieve prosperity, either worldly or spiritual prosperity. In fact, it is highly encouraged. Hard work means unleashing all the potential within to live a noble life in the world, honouring and strengthening human



potential. Spirituality never kills a person's potential, but rather must be strengthened and used for good. Laziness is a close friend of misfortune.

".... A learned man who chants Vedic mantras is superior to one who remains silent. A generous person is superior to one who does not help his friend.' One who chants Vedic mantras is superior to one who remains silent without doing anything, one who is generous is superior to one who does not help his friend. It is better to chant Vedic mantras than to spend time in idleness. Generous people are superior to those who are unable (unwilling) to help a friend in distress. Vedic law; a friend should help his friend in distress. A friend is not a friend if he does not help a friend in distress. A generous person is always superior to one who does nothing because he is overwhelmed by nothingness and has nothing with which to help. The Vedas also emphasise that mankind should have dexterity in both hands (Surpi, 2019).

*ayam me hasto bhagavān, ayam me bhagavattarah.... (Rgveda X. 60. 12)*

'May my right hand be lucky and my other left hand be luckier'

Dexterity in both hands, expertise, skill, skill is the capital for life. Both hands are created to work, to serve. May my right hand be lucky, the skilful right hand brings luck, and the left hand is luckier, so that luck is in both hands. Everyone must hone their skills, the expertise of their hands, whatever field of work they do. Hands are the epitome of skill, the beginning of prosperity. In short, hands are the epitome of productivity, creativity and innovation (Surpi, 2019).

It is mandated that after acquiring prosperity through hard work, perseverance and best competence, one should abandon despicable traits and habits such as playing gambling and other acts that drain one's finances for mere pleasure and bring ruin.

*akṣair mā dīvyah kṛṣim it kṛṣasvavitte ramasva bahu manyanmānah,  
tatra gāvaḥ kitava tatra jādātanme vi caṣṭe savitāyam aryaḥ (Rgveda X.34. 13)*

'Do not play dice, cultivate your fields; Be happy with that wealth, be proud of it. O gambler, tend your cattle and remember your wife, so says the noble Lord Savita'.

The Vedas explicitly state that apart from laziness, one of the causes of poverty is indulgence in gambling. Many people spend their money in vain at gambling tables, cafes, bars and nightlife. It is not uncommon for economic collapse to occur due to gambling and nightlife. The false pleasure caused by the habit of gambling and not being able to stop this habit has made many parties bankrupt and even fall into poverty. Cases of gambling are as old as this civilisation. Gambling already existed during the Mahabharata era. In fact, Yudistira the Dharma King also had to suffer with all his brothers and people because he was unable to resist gambling on the basis of 'the rules of chivalry'. Everyone knows gambling can lead to destruction and suffering, but not many are able to kick the habit for a better life.

Only a strong person can control the urge to gamble. Weakness is the reason why gambling continues to exist in various guises and disguises. Most gambling is disguised as entertainment. A number of publications mention that the lower class, earning less than 2 dollars per day to earning 200 dollars per day many spend their money in the gambling arena. So actually gambling does not only belong to the upper class who have bathed in money. However, even low-income people often spend their money in the name of fun and gambling. According to a number of studies, the highest consumption for the poor in

Indonesia is cigarettes. The 2020 Indonesian Tobacco Atlas reports that the poorer the community, the higher the cigarette consumption. This is evident from the highest male cigarette consumption in the bottom quintile with a percentage of 82%. Thus, cigarettes affect the poverty rate because they are not a staple food, but the consumption rate is high. This is because spending on cigarettes disrupts people's real income. Cigarette prices contributed 11.38% to the poverty factor in rural areas and 12.22% in urban areas. Almizi, & Hermawati, I. (2018) confirmed that cigarette consumption in Indonesia is the second largest contributor to the poverty line after rice. Cigarettes not only have an impact on health but also the economy. Expenditure on cigarette consumption always takes precedence at the expense of other needs (Suryawati, et al., 2012). Thus poverty is not always due to employment opportunities or income but also one's perspective and lifestyle.

### *3.3 Relevance of Hindu work ethic to 21st century competencies*

The 21st century has different characteristics from before, characterised by advances in knowledge and technology. Therefore, many work systems have changed. For this reason, new competencies are needed to be able to take part in this century. Global competition requires everyone to master the new competencies needed. Workers in this global century are required to have a variety of new skills that focus on innovation. Stuart (1999) states that workers must master a number of different skills in the form of basic skills, technical skills, organizational skills and company-specific skills. All of these work competencies must be framed with the ability known as the 4 c's, namely communication, collaborative, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation.

Laar, et al (2017) emphasise that the 21st century is characterised by human-initiated innovation, making human capital in the workforce decisive. In a rapidly changing knowledge economy, 21st century digital skills drive the competitiveness and innovation capacity of organisations. 21st century skills are broader than digital skills, with a much broader list of enumerated skills. Also, in contrast to digital skills, 21st century skills are not necessarily supported by ICT. Furthermore, seven core skills of technical, information management, communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving were identified. Five contextual skills were also identified, namely ethical awareness, cultural awareness, flexibility, self-direction, and lifelong learning. Groves (2015) states that 21st century skills are complex, interconnected and interdependent. They are also an absolute requirement for teaching in higher education and at various levels.

Work ethic in the Vedas is a basic value taught in the Vedas so that every human being is able to live and empower all his abilities. This work ethic continues to be taught every era, both in formal and informal education environments (Surpi & Purwadi, 2021). These basic skills are strictly taught in the Vedas to build a resilient mental attitude in living life. Furthermore, the competencies needed to face the 21st century will become easier. Even the skills of using logic and critical thinking are basic knowledge in understanding Hindu philosophy and become the main science (Surpi & Yogisvari, 2021).

This Vedic value of hard work, creativity and gambling and not being wasteful with right living actually correlates directly with prosperity. Poverty levels continue to occur with laziness, lack of creativity, lack of perseverance and an unbalanced lifestyle with large expenditures that do not have a direct impact on improving welfare, for example by smoking and gambling.

## 4. Conclusion

Work ethic in the Vedas is the value of life taught by God Almighty for humans to achieve success in life. The work ethic in the Vedas includes hard work, perseverance, never giving up, creativity and innovation as well as other technical skills. The Vedas explicitly and implicitly emphasise that abilities and skills can be in the form of technical skills and thinking skills. Technical skills in the form of the ability to do or create something through the limbs and thinking skills in the form of encouragement and awareness to do something, in the form of work enthusiasm and the ability to think and work together. This work ethic is relevant to the competencies required to live and work in the 21st century. Very important 21st century skills are communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. All of these required skills are actually a manifestation of the work ethic taught by the Vedas since ancient times. Thus, humanity is required to excel in every era by thinking highly.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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