Value Based Education: The Need of the Hour

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Abstract

This paper talks about the importance which is being given to the concept of value education along with the academic and professional education to the students so they can empathise with the society to which they are going to belong and contribute to the growth and development of the world in a big way. All the major countries of the world like United States, Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, France and to certain extent India and many more have evidence to suggest introduction of value based education which has helped the students tremendously in the last few years. Values are basically attributes which help to analyse what is right and what is not and if we are able to inculcate these attributes in today's children and youth we will be a position to build a better society for our children and the human race as whole.

Keywords: Values, morals, schools, value based education, youth, children

Introduction

Today the most important factor which contributes to becoming a complete human being is not the degrees we collect on our way to becoming sort after professionals with the highest packages the corporate can offer us but the values that we carry with us to our schools, our colleges and our diverse work places and most importantly in our everyday relationships where the emotional quotient is more important than the intelligence quotient in our lives which is surrounded by people across all levels which attribute to our personal and our professional lives.

“When we actively engage with values we start to understand their implications for making choices about our attitudes and responses. A Values-based approach encourages reflective and aspirational attributes and attitudes. These can be nurtured to help people discover the very best of themselves, which enables them to be good citizens and prepare them for the life of work” International Value based Education Trust.

Our traditional society has undergone a tremendous transformation in the last one century or so and the outcomes of this developed society has left behind the values that we used to follow in our Gurukula system where not only science and maths were taught to the students but also moral values like ethics, the practice of honesty, integrity, respect for each other, dignity of labour and every individual and hard work was inculcated in the students.

Many children do not know the difference between right and wrong. It is this imbalance that has led to many of the world’s problems today (Alderman). The mind of a child is like a blank paper and he will imbibe whatever you write on it because the child will learn and inculcate the things which will be taught to him. The role of a mother and a teacher becomes extremely important.
in the context of imparting values to the children because they interaction with the children is maximum. Once the basic values are inculcated in the children than the rest of the life is a lifelong learning process for the individual.

Today when you open the newspaper in the morning or switch on the television to listen to the news the news items which are most prominent are the once relating to robberies, rapes, shooting, road rage cases, murders and so on. In this kind of the external scenario the development of the character of the child and subsequently his personality and his behaviour is very difficult to control as the environment around the child is very volatile. If we teach values at home and in school it automatically becomes the part of the psyche of the person and as such it helps us in shaping the society in which we live today.

Our children, our youth shape the society that we live in and it is very important for them to imbibe the values that has been holding our world together through the ages. Education is not about churning out students who can rote learn a ten page perfect answer to a question but it is about the respect a child must have for an elderly person, respect he must have for his teachers and classmates and the appreciation he must have for nature and the environment in which he is living and the environment which nurtures and nourishes him from birth to death. The values that include, behaviour which help in shaping the personality of the child and subsequently help our society because our children form the society which we live in today as well advocated “It will also help people to become a useful member of the society and develop an appreciation of their culture heritage and live more satisfying lives (Bequist, 1992; Bloom, et al., 1981)

Now if our education system starts inculcating the values in our children and youth while they are perusing their education than the twelve years of school education and the next five to eight years of the vocational or professional education give us about fifteen years of time where we can teach our children what is the importance of values in our life which includes our personal and professional lives. The focus being right and wrong if taught to children and is a very important of education system would help in passing on the attributes to the children. The values education has to become a part of the academic curriculum at the school and the college levels with lot of workshop and live projects being done by the students on a regular basis. According to the National Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education (1985), the crises of values in our society is passing through demands more explicit and deliberate efforts towards value development.

Over the past two decades, colleges and institutions have devoted energy and resources to a wide range of educational programmes and initiatives designed to promote character values and behaviours in their students (Dalton and Crosby, 2010).The effort and the persistence with which we work for the education system in our society to become value based would definitely help us to build a better society.

Today’s society needs the system of value-based education to steer our children and our youth in the right direction because that is the need of our society today and this is felt not only in the Indian society but also all over the world. A fundamental challenge to education in this century, which calls for concerted actions, is to teach human values and social skills most necessary for learners to be a ‘complete person (UNESCO Report 2000)
Values

Values as per technical definition are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is desirable or undesirable behaviour. Values have major influence on a person’s behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in helping us to decide what is right and what is not. According to John Dewey (1948),” to values means to prize, to esteem, to appraise, to estimate. It means the act of cherishing something, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgment upon the nature and amounts to the of values as compared with something else. Values are defined as enduring beliefs, specific modes of conduct or end states of existence along with continuum of importance and are relatively resistant to change (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987, 1989; Rokeach, 1973)

It is important for the basic values to be a part of the personality of the children at the nascent stage of their lives. “The value concept is able to unify the apparently diverse interests of all the sciences concerned with human behaviour.” [Rokeach, 1973] A psychologist wrote these words that proclaim the centrality of the value concept. Sociologists [e.g., Williams, 1968] and anthropologists [e.g., Kluckhohn, 1951] have echoed similar opinions. These theorists view values as the criteria people use to evaluate actions, people, and events and relationships in life. If parents and teachers are able to provide the moral values and the right beliefs to the children than the society would be in a better position to find a way to progress.

Val Hall (1994:21) defines values as "the ideals that give significance to our lives that are reflected through the priorities that we choose, and that we act on consistently and repeatedly. Hill 2004:63) provides a slightly different emphasis. "Values are the priorities individuals and societies attach to certain beliefs, experiences, and objects, in deciding how they shall live and what they shall treasure." So it to be inculcated at a very early stage in the life cycle of a child.

Values relate to our purpose in life and should be used as guiding principles to make our lives easier and more fulfilled as defined “Values are defined broadly as “the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable’ (Halstead and Taylor, 2000). Values will vary from person to person as they depend on personal judgment, upbringing, culture and traditions. Our values are of extreme importance as they steer and shape most of the things around us: relationships, behaviour, choices and personal identity are all affected by a person’s values.

There are various factors which shape human conduct, which include social relations, friend circle, family environment, culture, etc (Vink, 2012, Triandis & Suh, 2002). In the view of sociologists, norms, values, customs and social interactions greatly influence human conduct (Blumer, 2004). One of the most important aspects of human personality, which persuade human action, is morality. The moral development of children begins from their family. When children socialize with their family members, they learn moral values and ethics (Reed, Turiel and Brown, 1996). They develop strong sense of fairness and take rational decision making and practice the same in their daily routine lives. Values are useful indicators of an individual's decisions and actions (Rokeach, 1973) which helps them in better decision in their personal and professional lives.

The other factors, which affect their ethical grooming, include socio-economic condition, family issues, cognitive factors (Caravita, Giardino, Lenzi, Salvaterra and
Antonietti, 2012; Puka, 1994). Kreps & Gonzales (2010) say that those children who are maltreated are not groomed morally and often take wrong decisions in life. Sharma (2013) reported that there is a lack of moral grooming among children these days due to family issues and moral degradation. The role of parents in this regard is important (Berkowitz and Grych, 1998). Social institutions equally contribute for the moral development of children. One of the most important social institution, which is considered as the basis of moral grooming of child’s personality is school. Its role is highlighted by several researchers (Weissbourdet al, 2013; Corbett, 2011).

What is Value Based System of Education?

Value education is that form of Education that stresses the acquiring of living values by learners. It inculcates universal and ethical values such as compassion, courage, honesty, tolerance and truthfulness (Aggarwal, 1992). Values-based Education is an approach to teaching that works with values. It creates a strong learning environment that enhances academic attainment, and develops students’ social and relationship skills that last throughout their lives and helps them in becoming better people. In the words of Gawande (2002), when human values are inculcated through curriculum to transcend to cognitive, affective and psychomotor level for conducive development of individual, society, national and international understanding, it is called value education.

The Indian National Educational Policy (NPE), 1986 declares: "the growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values”. Also on the same lines is the National Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education (1985) declaration which says “the crisis of values our society is passing through "demands more explicit and deliberate educational efforts towards value development".

The first term of reference for the National Commission on Teachers (1983) was "to lay down clear objectives for the teaching profession with reference to the search for excellence, breadth of vision and cultivation of values". The Working Group to review teachers training programmes in the light of the need for value orientation (WG) set up by the Government of India in 1983 recommended for the inclusion of a value education component in the teacher education programme besides spelling out details of curriculum, methodology and teachers role.

The five approaches to value education stated by Superka, Ahrens, & Hedstrom (1976) are very important in this regard. They said that there were five basic approaches to values education including inculcation, moral development, analysis, values clarification, and action learning. This approach perceives values as socially or culturally accepted standards or rules of behaviour. The emphasis in this approach is on the student identifying with and accepting the standards or norms of his or her society. Students have to “incorporate” these values into their own value system. In order to help the process of inculcation methods such as modelling, reinforcement, games, simulations, role playing are used in studying.

The Learning to Be pillar, first used as the title of the 1972 Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on the Development of Education, chaired by Edgar Faure, refers to the role of education in developing all the dimensions of the complete person: "The physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of
the individual into complete man, is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education’ (Delors, 1996, p. 156)

At the fifth session of the UNESCO Advisory Committee on Education for Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance, held in Paris in March 2000, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, emphasized the need for innovative approaches to an integrated concept of education, which would enable UNESCO to revitalize its educational mission and constitutional mandate, so as to respond more effectively to the demands of the twenty first century. The Committee therefore resolved that what was needed for a culture of peace was an "integrated, comprehensive education covering human rights, democracy, international understanding, tolerance, non-violence, multiculturalism, and all other values conveyed through the school curriculum... communicating such values as equality, harmony, solidarity ...at every level in the value based education system, in which values connected to the culture of peace are to be found."

In Australia a number of studies have been conducted that show the positive effects of values education on school relationships, ambience, student well being and improved academic diligence. Living Values Education is acknowledged as being one of the inspirational force behind these studies. (Lovat et al., 2009, p. 18) Professor Terry Lovat and his colleagues at Newcastle University in Australia have been monitoring and researching the effects of the Australian Governments’ Values Education Initiative. The University published its final report for the Australian Government which looks at the evidence concerning the impact of introducing and developing Values Education in Schools (Lovat, 2009)

A positive culture based on trust has been clearly correlated with student engagement and achievement, staff commitment and satisfaction, and community involvement (Bryk and Schneider, 2002). Schools need to develop strong cultures, based on shared values across their communities. By developing a sense of responsibility and concern for the individual and for the ‘common good’ (Lovat, 1999; Hill, 2004; Duigan, 2005; Begley, 2004) schools can connect learning to a global context, and by doing so, reinforce the importance of interrelationships, interdependence and the connectedness of all things.

The Conference of European Ministers of Education (MINEDUROPE, 1988) in 1988, gave the basis for creating a more lively perception of values, thinking and behaviour that follow from recognition of the humanistic, cultural and international dimensions of education. Educators were encouraged to realise this emphasising on value-based education.

“The degeneration in the present day life, the demoralization of public and private life and the utter disregard for values, are all traceable to the fact that moral, religious and spiritual education has not been given due place in the educational system.” (Rena, Ravinder 2006) “Unfortunately, education is becoming more or less materialistic and the value traditions are being slowly given up.” (Erwin, 1991)

Carr (2006, 2007, 2008, and 2010) has argued persistently that values and effective teaching are inextricably interwoven and that, in that sense, values education goes to the heart of the role of the teacher and effective learning for the student. He focuses especially on the issue of relationships and the moral mentoring of the teacher as being central to teaching as an inherently relational profession. There is more than a hint of John Dewey (1916, 1929) and R.S. Peters (1981) in such postulations and, furthermore, recent empirical studies have
provided confirming evidence of them. Studies that provide both fortified conceptual proffering and empirical verification of the inherent interconnections between values education and holistic student wellbeing, including academic enhancement, are growing in number and scope (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008; Lovat, 2011; Lovat et al., 2010a, 2011a, 2011b).

The above considerations comprise the conceptual foundations for the ‘Values School’ experimental work at West Kidlington School, UK, reported by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSted, 2007) to have had positive impact on all educational measures, including academic achievement. Hawkes, former head teacher of West Kidlington School has illustrated the ways in which a values-based approach to education and learning provides an ethos in which students develop positive characteristics in their social interactions and engagement with their school work (Hawkes, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010).

Farrer (2000, 2010) served as a reviewer and external evaluator of the experimental work at West Kidlington. She reported emotional stability of students as a principal benefit of the values-based approach to education, as well as clear improvements in student behaviour.

Australia is leading in the area of research leading to the implementation of values education at the school level as seen in the Melbourne Declaration “Education equips young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this [global] era with confidence. As well as knowledge and skills, a school's legacy to young people should include national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participation in Australia's civic life [students need to develop] personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, respect and empathy for others [which help them] establish and maintain healthy and satisfying lives. Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008).

Much of the evidence referred to above has also been captured in the research and practice of the projects emanating from the Australian Values Education Program. The program was federally funded, beginning with a pilot study in 2003, followed by the development of a National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools ['National Framework'] (DEST, 2005) that identified the developing research links between values education and good practice pedagogy and proposed a set of guidelines based on these links. The program then issued in a range of research and practice projects from 2005 to 2010, the most crucial of which were the two stages of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project ['Good Practice Schools'] (DEST, 2006; DEEWR, 2008), the Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience ['Testing and Measuring'] (Lovat et al., 2009) and the Values in Action Schools Project (DEEWR, 2010). “Values in Action Schools Project (VASP) has once again confirmed my strong belief that values education, both explicit and implicit, must underpin all we do in our schools” (Teacher reflection, post-project survey)

National Policy for Education in India says “Education has to continued to evolve, diversify and extend its coverage since the dawn of history. Every country develops its own system of education to express and promote its unique socio cultural identity and also to meet the challenge of time.

Sathya Sai Organization, Ramakrishna Mission, Ananda Sangha, Art of Living, Brahma Kumaris, The Chinmayananda Mission and many others are actively
involved in promoting value education in their schools or in the form of informal or formal classes. Gandhiji said that “Formation of character should have priority over the alphabet” and Swami Vivekananda said that teaching of religion must be part and parcel of education which, according to him was essential to teach values.

The National policy for Education in 1986 on Value Education says “Recognizing the urgent need for value education the National Policy on Education (1986), in its Chapter VIII observed that,

- 8.4 The growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values.
- 8.5 In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism.
- 8.6 Apart from this combative role, value education has a profound positive content, based on our heritage, national and universal goals and perceptions. It should lay primary emphasis on this aspect.

Conclusion:- There is lot of requirement from all quarters to implement the value based education system at the grass root level in our schools and colleges so that it gets inculcated into the very psyche of the child about what is the acceptable behaviours what is not. Many countries are realising the need and have started to get the work done but still there is still so much more which needs to be completed in this regard. So we can see that value education is the need of the hour and it needs to be inculcated in our children at the onset and along with their academic education in view of the prevailing conditions and circumstances in the world. Now how to inculcate is another very important and critical question. All the eminent educationist have expressed their views regarding the importance of value education for our society. We have long journey ahead of us to actually bring the values based education system up to the required level of acceptance in our holistic educational development institutes and the implementation especially in India is going to require lot of effort but since the need for value based education is being felt by most eminent people and in many countries all over the world we can hope to see lot of work being done in this direction.

References

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