



# Value Orientation in Higher Education: Problems and Prospects from Sustainable Development Perspectives

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## ABSTRACT

The field of value education is as broad as human life itself. In India during *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* period values were taught to the child along with formal education in *Gurukuls*, where *Guru* or Priest teaches the students at their *Ashrams* through different methods and prepares them to face the life. In modern days *Gurukuls* were replaced by the formal schools and colleges which are providing the formal education. Not only schools and colleges but family, society, mass media and other means of communications also affects the learning of child and act as an instrument for incorporating essential values in child. Values can be transferred in students through hidden or unplanned method but curriculum plays an important role for providing value based education. In view of the above, an attempt has been made in this paper to find out appropriate methods and approaches for value orientation in higher education through Value Based Education (VBE). Accordingly, it has been also tried to study the role of teachers in promoting VBE to the students for sustainable development. It has been observed that providing value based education to our children in higher educational institutions can help us to overcome the problem of deteriorating moral values in our youth. Collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, society and media can bring the youth on right track to live a disciplined life. So far as social progress is concerned value-based education is an unavoidable reality.

**Keywords:** Value orientation, VBE, higher education, sustainable development

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*"What we are today is the result of what we valued yesterday.....What we will be tomorrow will be the result of what we value today..."*

— Swami Vivekananda

Institutions of higher education have a major role to play in preparing the younger generation for promising future. Apart from imparting quality education, they need to instil ethical, moral and social values amongst the student fraternity. Values are the auto-regulators of human behaviour. One's vision remains restricted to oneself only without value education. It is the value education which develops the competence of recognising the universality of human aims and aspirations. Values give a person his individuality and character. It acts

as a guiding force and tells us what we should and should not do. The moral worth of a society is reflected in the values it cherishes, the ideals it pursues and its sincerity in upholding them. Spirituality is the art and science of divine remembrance. Spiritual values provide ethical foundation to lead a meaningful life. Value education is the pathway to global paradise. Again to achieve sustainable development value education is essential as the ideals and values that form a basis of sustainability include equity among generations, gender

equity, tolerance, poverty alleviation, environmental preservation and restoration, social justice, human rights, cultural diversity, international understanding and peace among others. Therefore, it is necessary that students should also be educated in spiritual values.

In this day and age, newspapers are teeming with alarming news akin to “Mother killed her children”, “Girl Gang-raped”, “women killed for Dowry” and so on, exposing the mindset of the society (Kaur, Sukhjeet. and Saini, S.K. 2006). The youth of today seem to have lost all decent social, *moral and ethical values*. There is a mad pursuit for accumulating wealth and power and acquiring superior status in society even at the cost of humanity in us. We have entered in a century full of crisis-particularly crisis in character, credibility, competency and value based competency. There should be equilibrium between knowledge and skills that science and machinery bring with the values and insights of ethics. The loss of moral and ethical values among students is leading to conflicts in the globe. The moral and ethical values that make us honest individuals can be inculcated only by value-based education. Knowledge Based Education can only be transferred to our younger generations but Value Based Education (VBE) can transform them (Raju Narayana Swamy, 2010). It is more awakening and informing. For life-oriented education, we need to create a special environment in institutions to transform our students. There is an urgent need to revamp the entire educational system to make value education an integral and important component of education. The need of the hour is to inculcate values like quest for peace, adherence to truth and right conduct, tolerance, love for all living beings, respect for the motherland and the glory of our culture and tradition in youngsters to deal with the value crisis which our society is witnessing ( The education policy document by UGC).

In view of the above, an attempt has been made in this paper (1) to study the role of teachers in promoting VBE to the students for sustainable development and (2) to find out appropriate methods and approaches for value orientation in higher education through Value Based Education (VBE). It is expected that the findings of the study will throw light on the suitable methods

and approaches to be used for imparting Value-based Education. Further, the findings of the study may also focus on the challenging role of the teachers in promoting VBE as they are considered instrumental in developing the right kind of values in our youth which is crucial for the smooth functioning and sustainable development of society.

### **Database and Methodology**

The study has been conducted based on thematic review of works as well as primary data. The first section of the study is based on thematic review of relevant literatures which were collected from journals, books, pertinent websites etc. On the contrary, the second section of the study has been conducted based entirely on the primary data which was collected by survey of 100 faculties. The list of faculties located at the Institutions of Higher Education at Shillong, Meghalaya has been collected at the first stage while selecting the respondents for primary data. In the next stage 100 faculties were selected from this list by employing the method of simple random sampling. Personal interview with the help of pre-structured questionnaire has been conducted to collect the relevant information from the sample respondents.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Section I**

Values stand as Light House giving directions to all who want to reach the right place. Values are the guiding principles of life, which facilitate the all round development of a person. Inculcation of desirable values in pupils is felt essential for meeting the crisis of character. Values are bricks which are used to build the strong wall of character (Vandana Mundase, 2014). Values bring quality and meaning to life. They make us realize that *WHAT WE ARE* is more important than *WHAT WE HAVE*. Values can come from within and also from training. Values from within mainly include love, kindness, compassion, mercy, sympathy and understanding. Values to be practiced include punctuality, discipline, obedience, behaviour, conduct, character and personality.

In simple terms, value-based education (VBE) means part of the education which imparts certain essential moral, ethical, cultural, social, spiritual values in children necessary for their all round development and prepares them as a complete man. It builds the character, and is necessary for the development of personality of an individual. It includes physical health, mental health, etiquettes and social behaviour, civic rights and duties, etc. Every one of us is well aware about the importance of these values in our lives, yet we are unable to inculcate them in our children, resulting in a number of behavioural and developmental problems.

“If we are really sincere in our approach to develop VBE, the time has come to practically use the scientifically validated techniques of our great Vedic tradition.” We see in society today that talking about values and teaching them in curriculum have not been able to create an ideal citizen or an ideal society. Education has to be based on universal values, values that keep the whole cosmos progressive and evolving in a smooth manner in spite of great diversities. We have to be conscious of developing and evolving consciousness to imbibe these universal values in their conscious awareness of the individual (Sharma, 2010).

Spirituality is the “art and science of divine remembrance.” i.e., doing everything in the remembrance of God so that anything we do has a thought of divinity attached to it. This motivates us to keep the highest goals in all aspects of living and prevents us at all times from doing anything wrong. Spirituality is a process of collective human search for higher intrinsic values, an inner dialectical process constantly goading man for higher and fuller views of truth, beauty and goodness (Daniel and Daniel, 2012). Therefore it is necessary that our students are educated in spiritual values. There are several challenges of value based spiritual education. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### Religion vs. Spirituality

- ❖ First and foremost challenge in imparting spiritual education is that even educated and intelligent people often confuse religion with spirituality.
- ❖ Spirituality is no way related to religion, and in fact spirituality begins where religion ends.

- ❖ Spirituality aims at integrating the entire humanity under the umbrella of universal brotherhood, irrespective of one’s religious background, beliefs, caste, creed, sex, language, race, country, etc.
- ❖ Religions have caused several wars and resulted in division of mankind. Religions survive on the weapons of fear and temptation, whereas spirituality thrives on love alone. Thus there cannot be any resistance from any corner against implementing a spiritual education programme.

### The five levels of education

Information should not be confused with knowledge, knowledge should not be confused with wisdom, wisdom should not be confused with intuition, and intuition should not be confused with revelation. Information, knowledge, wisdom, intuition, and revelation are the five levels of education. Unfortunately in today’s schools only the lowest of these five levels is taught. The higher levels seem to have no meaning, and they are not even referred to.

### The notion that spirituality is for the old and weak

Many have the wrong notion that spirituality is meant for the old and for the mentally, physically and financially disadvantaged lot. Ancient wisdom says any spiritual practice must start from the conception stage and we have the stories of *Abhimanyu* and *Prahlada* from the *puranas*. Success in any spiritual practice requires strong will-power coupled with unalloyed devotion and obedience to the Spiritual guide and it is truly meant for the strong only.

### Is Spirituality commercialised?

- ❖ It is unfortunate that in a country like India with her glorious past, there have been innumerable numbers of yogic organisations which have made a good amount of money by cheating and exploiting the public in the guise of the so called spirituality.
- ❖ The need of the hour is to have non-religious, non-profit making spiritual organisations whose only aim should be to attain the spiritual welfare of its people and not only money-making.

- ❖ Wherever and whenever wealth, power and fame accumulate, there can only be an inflated ego, fear, insecurity, distrust, let alone spirituality.

### Essentiality of Value Education

Value education is the national priority because of our growing destructive attitudes. Nowadays, divided families are facing the problem of imparting value education due to unavailability of time and changed lifestyles. Value education helps in developing Character, Good conduct, Moral Integrity, Self-discipline, Compassion, Love for all living beings, Responsibility, etc. and many other positive qualities in the students. And above all, it makes them feel better about themselves. Their academic performance goes up and they are able to spend more time on learning.

Without value education we cannot recognise the universality of human aspirations. A growing consensus holds that value education can help to reduce human-right violations and contribute to building a peaceful society. It is also for promotion of understanding and increased tolerance. Value education teaches the common language of humanity. Value education will help minimise corruption in almost all fields of life. Values provide a moral foundation for successful living. Education without values makes man a cleverer devil (C.S. Lewis). Educational institutions should give more importance to value based education rather than preparing the students to get more marks in examinations. Value based education is an unavoidable reality.

India is one of the fastest growing economies today. Its dominance in the services sector has been acknowledged world over. While this scenario seems to be heartening, there are several concerns related to education, which seems to have gone unaddressed. We seem to be passing through a crisis of values in our social and political life which gives special urges to this question of values of education. It is a commonly accepted fact that crime, violence, cruelty, indifference to human values, greed and spite have spread to all aspects of our life, including the education sector. Sensitivity to the beauty of art, literature, nature and life in general is on the decline. Lacks of social cohesion and national disintegration

have become patently manifest and our democratic social order is under severe stress. Social tension, unrest, prejudices and complexes transmitted through the social environment vitiate the quality of life. The primary function of education is no longer the building of character or the promotion of moral order, but the emphasis has shifted to the promotion of skills, technical knowhow and technology for material progress.

### Role of Teachers in imparting Value Education

It goes without saying that of all people concerned with students' education and character building, the teachers' role is the most important (Khan, 2013).

A teacher is and can be the pivot of the educational system. It is said that:

- ❖ An excellent teacher inspires
- ❖ A good teacher explains
- ❖ An average teacher teaches &
- ❖ A bad teacher complains!

Imparting values to students is the responsibility of parents to some extent. But teachers and educational institutions also play a significant role as students spend more time in the campus than in their home. It is in these institutions where students learn how to behave in the society. It is in the schools and colleges that a good value system can be nurtured among the students.

The most important agent for building the character of the student is a teacher. Swami Vivekananda says, "Character is nothing but a bundle of habits formed through repeated acts. It comes through 'Sanskaras' or past impressions". Character building can change the nation. As strong foundation is required for a strong building similarly a strong character is required for nation-building.

Ordinary Teachers can bring about extraordinary transformation in the society. A teacher should practice what he/she preaches. Teachers are role-models for the students. Their actions convey more than their words. Students learn values from what the teachers are rather than from what they say. Teachers make a maximum impact on the personality of students in their formative years. Students imbibe virtues and vices knowingly and

unknowingly from these role models. Teachers must have a healthy attitude and should possess rich values. Teaching is all about attitude-positive/negative towards one's job of imparting quality education. Teachers should act as a friend, philosopher and guide. Teachers are not only a source of information but are also mentors and guardians. A decade back or so, the role of a teacher was limited to being a source of information. But today, the role of teachers has increased manifold. Teachers have immense potential to bring about a drastic change in the society by demonstrating essential values of head and heart.

Teachers should give creative inspiration and guidance to our youth. Character building and instilling values, which start at home, have to be continued relentlessly in our higher education system as students spend most of their formative years in the institutes of higher education. In this respect, the roles of modern teachers are very challenging. Teachers are primarily responsible for building up new generations with deep love for the nation and humanity. So, our nation needs a regiment of qualified and dedicated teachers with adequate potentiality for developing new generations with strong values and wisdom. The teaching community is required to generate power inherent in the student population. Teaching is also about inspiring students. They should set good examples of conduct and behaviour which students may imbibe. Teachers can impart values in students by giving them instructions through discussion, experimentation and lectures, and also by the following ways:

- ❖ Fostering nationalistic feeling among the students by celebrating national and religious festivals
- ❖ Give equal importance to all students irrespective of their caste, creed, sex and money.
- ❖ Eradicating illiteracy and ensuring uniform education.
- ❖ Ensuring social equality and justice.
- ❖ Developing the qualities of character and strong leadership.
- ❖ Emphasizing on the unity of all religions, harmony among communities and development of national integration.

- ❖ Organise cultural and recreational programmes for developing values like team spirit, sharing, spirit of cooperation, patience, courtesy, etc.
- ❖ Under mentoring system a teacher can take charge of 30 to 40 students and can maintain a case-study register to closely observe the students and note down the positive and negative traits of their personality.
- ❖ Teachers should also tell the students to maintain a spiritual diary in which they will surrender themselves to God and take an oath to follow the path shown by him.
- ❖ "Quote of the Day" should be displayed in the notice boards in the institutions.
- ❖ Teachers should give importance to cooperative learning
- ❖ Skits and role-plays propagating moral values can be performed by students under the guidance of teachers.
- ❖ Teachers must tell the students to go to the library—the treasure house of knowledge. Classics available in the library are morally rich and inspiring.
- ❖ Teachers must explain the students the importance of meditation & yoga practices for realization or attainment of oneness with God.
- ❖ Imparting knowledge of foreign languages to make them know different cultures.
- ❖ Organizing games, excursions, visits to places of historical importance. Club activities like nature club, literary club, wildlife prevention club, social service camps, blood donation, etc.
- ❖ Suicidal tendencies in students should be curbed. They must be prepared by the teacher to face the challenges of life fearlessly and with courage.

## Section II

Notwithstanding the existing aspects of values and ethics education developed over a period of time and practiced at various educational levels in different countries, there are no detailed analyses of what constitutes value education. Values education is implicit rather than explicit in several contexts. The educational

institutions, through dedicated and loyal teachers, have an important role to play in helping children to understand the world they live in and preparing them for adult life and work. There is general acceptance that education must provide the thrust for nurturing values. It is, however, not clear how this is to be achieved in institutions. Some institutions or schools prefer to keep values as a separate subject while others consider values to be integrated with regular school activities. The focus also varies. While some emphasise on *yoga*, meditation and education about religions, others focus on democratic and national values. Views also differ on the objectives of value education and how it should be delivered.

Based on the survey of 100 faculties, it has been reported by cent per cent of the respondents that teachers play a major role in inculcating values among the students. A teaching method comprises the principles and methods used for instruction to be implemented by teachers to achieve the desired learning by students. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the nature of the learner. It is important that teachers learn to use a variety of teaching methodologies in order to cater to the range of learning needs and requirements that are present within most class environments. However, as per the survey data, 72% of the respondents perceive that teaching methods can be formal, informal and non-formal as well. Similarly, 12% of the respondents are in view that values can only be incorporated through informal ways. Remaining 4% of the respondents perceive that both informal and non-formal methods of teaching are fundamental in imparting values among youngsters.

The second important issue relating to value education is whether value education should introduce and form part of the teaching in all disciplines and subjects. However, the survey data shows that there is a difference of opinion among the faculties. 90% of the respondents perceive that value education should infuse and form part of the teaching in all disciplines and subjects. They opined that value education should not be treated as a separate subject or separate curriculum/timetable or extra period but it can be implemented on the existing curriculum or activities. On the contrary, 10% of the

respondents are in favour of separate subject on value education in the curriculum itself.

It is earnestly hoped that academic institutions interested in imparting value based spiritual education work in collaboration with a non-profit, purely spiritual organisation for training their teachers who in turn will train their students.

There is difference between literacy and education. Values education can take place at home and as well as in schools, colleges, universities, jails and voluntary youth organisations. There are two main approaches to values education, some see it as inculcating or transmitting a set of values which often come from societal or religious rules or cultural ethics while others see it as a type of Socratic dialogue where people are gradually brought to their own realisation of what is good behaviours for themselves and their community. In the survey data however, 88% of the respondents perceive that there should be a centre for value education in all the institutions of higher learning with the sole objective of imbibing human values. Similarly, 84% of the respondents also emphasize the need for introduction of value education in the curriculum of primary to university education.

Implementation of value education is an important aspect. 98% of the respondents perceive that it can be implemented by organising various co-curricular activities like health and cleanliness programmes, celebration of national festivals, various cultural programmes etc. which may help in creating the social, moral and secular values among the students. 88% of the respondents also consider that co-curricular activities can help the students to gain the self confidence, getting rid of their shyness and also to identify their potential ability and skill. However, 2% of the respondents perceive that co-curricular activities can help the students to gain self confidence only.

Majority of the respondents (98%) have opined that group projects and teamwork are necessary for cultivating values like cooperation, friendliness, unity, courage, loyalty, discipline etc. 82% of the respondents consider that specific TV programmes viz., cartoon, educational and devotional shows can enrich the values

among the students. However, there is difference of opinion too. The remaining 18% of the respondents consider these programmes cannot help the students in strengthening their values rather it is a sheer wastage of time. A significant number (92%) of respondents consider value education can impart the knowledge of universal culture and skills for social cooperation.

Today, we have lost respect for our age old values and traditions. Corruption has seeped into every aspect of life. 78% of respondents perceive that inculcating values through various curricular and co-curricular activities can help to reduce corruption in almost all areas of life. On the contrary, the remaining 22% believe that various co-curricular activities may hamper in completion of syllabus in time. It is quite clear that most of the teachers (98%) realize the importance of value education and they emphasize that this process should be continued. Since students spend a considerable part of their formative period in schools and colleges, teachers have an added responsibility of instilling them the virtues like punctuality, discipline, punctuality, truthfulness, respect of elders and teachers through formal and informal contacts with the students.

The respondents ticked off more than one option when asked about the appropriate approaches for value education. 52% opted for role playing approach followed by story-telling (22%). Accordingly, 14% opted for storytelling and role playing, whereas the remaining 12% consider a combination of lecture, imparting religious ethos and lessons on morality, role playing, story-telling and also use of books and supplementary reading material could be the most appropriate approaches. All the respondents (100%) were unanimous in their response that students detected with severe problems in morality and character should be referred to educational psychologist for counselling rather than inflicting corporal punishment on them. Again 99% of the respondents are of the opinion that guest lectures on great personalities, talk on moral themes, quotation for today etc. may help to a considerable extent in the promotion of values among students.

All the respondents agreed that programmes like blood donation, visit to hospitals, mercy homes, orphanages etc. which are of voluntary in nature have immense

importance in imbibing values among students. Cent per cent of the respondents perceive that inculcation values like quest for peace, selfless activities, adherence to truth and right conduct in younger generation are the needs of the hour for sustainable development. As far as training of the teachers for imparting values among their students is concerned, 92% of the teachers emphasized the need for teachers' training programmes. Out of 92% of the respondents who are in favour of teachers training programme, 60% are in favour of giving twenty-one days (21) training, 26 % are in favour of three months only 6% feel it should be of 7 days duration.

Finally, all the respondents support the idea of adopting value education as they consider character as the crown and glory of life.

## CONCLUSION

An analysis of the points discussed above we can come to the conclusion that providing value based education to our children in higher educational institutions can help us to overcome the problem of deteriorating moral values in our youth. Collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, society and media can bring the youth on right track to live a disciplined life. Value-based education is an unavoidable reality for social progress. Teachers play an important role in the nation building by building the character of the students. There is a need for reawakening of the entire teaching community as they are instrumental in improving and enlightened the younger generation which is utterly confused and disorientated about moral and social values in life. Swami Vivekananda's words should not be forgotten by the teachers- "Arise, Awake and Stop not till the goal is achieved".

Let us accept this challenge with a spirit of dedication and national service to develop morally and socially well equipped younger generation.

The field of value education is as broad as human life itself. In India during *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* period values were taught to the child along with formal education in *Gurukuls*, where *Guru* or Priest teaches the students at their *Ashrams* through different methods and prepares them to face the life. In modern days *Gurukuls*

were replaced by the formal schools and colleges which are providing the formal education to children. Not only schools and colleges but family, society, mass media and other means of communications also affects the learning of child and act as an instrument for incorporating essential values in child. Values can be transferred in students through hidden or unplanned method but curriculum plays an important role for providing value based education. In class room teacher can use biographies, debates, discussions, stories, essays, article writing, news paper reading, to make the students aware about importance of values. The present education scenario demands such a value based education which strengthens solidarity among people of different religious and cultural backgrounds to help them to live together with peace and harmony.

Students can be engaged in practical situations similar to the original life incidences, which will be helpful in development of essential life skills. This approach gives them a chance to apply the concepts and experiences they have already learned. Certain social activities such as maintaining school campus or classroom, social forestry, organising environmental awareness or health and sanitation, literacy programmes in community can make the difference. Students must be promoted to organise and participate in the programmes such as drama, street plays, cultural fests etc which is message based which can be beneficial in developing values in child. The teachers should have a capacity to impart meaningful knowledge for developing responsible and dedicated young man and woman, who respect the values enshrined in our constitution.

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