

Value Education: Need and Emergence in Indian Perspective

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Abstract

In our day, the education has come to be treated as a commodity and a value based investment for reaping professional and monetary benefits. It needs to be seen and interpreted in more humane and socially relevant terms. The education and its rewards are heard in these days in terms of placement and packages. The higher package earned by the professionals' mirrors the worth of degree earned by him. The education as a vehicle of moral and social upliftment is not commanding more than casual attention. Any stream of education not leading to gain full employment is not considered worthy of being adopted as a successful career. The question arises as to what kind of priorities has come to occupy the minds of the people in general. The self-assuring growth rate, the burgeoning rich middle class, the rise in number of affluent people and the rampant corruption afflicting society have come to co-exist. The menace of black market is fuelling the consumer market. Affluence and starvation were never so glaring. We have people indulging in wasteful activities in the face of those crying to meet their bare minimum needs. Though this shocking human behavior was never away from Indian mind-set, it is only now that it has become abhorrent and unbearable. The question arises as to how we explain the present circumstances which make a vulgar show of worst human activities in this direction. The things have come to such a pass that we need to pause and think why the youth of the country is responding in unison to the call to put an end to corruption. This shows that all is not lost yet. This paper is a study to explore the serious challenge which the education, sought to be imparted to the upcoming generations, must respond to and tackle the emerging issues in the run up to build a prosperous India having a strong moral fabric.

Keywords: Values, Education, Children, Teaching, Society

Introduction

Values are those principles or standards, which help to better the quality of life. Values codify the dos and don'ts of behaviour. Defining values, as for defining environmental education for sustainability, provides the opportunity for considerable debate. However, for present purposes the following definition will be adopted. Values are "... the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable". They form the basics of character formation and personality development. Values, as defined by Rokeach (1973) and Schwartz (1994) present the prevailing psychological understanding of this concept. Rokeach (1973, p. 5) provides the definition of values as "enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence." Schwartz (1994, p. 21) defined values as "desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity." Both definitions make an effort to present to us the content of values. The values that spring from within or the core of the heart, like love, compassion, sympathy, empathy, tolerance, etc. lay the foundation for the external practiced values like honesty, discipline, punctuality and loyalty. Most important to remember is that "values are priceless, while valuables are priced." In today's fast paced competitive world, man seems to have compromised on his values, integrity and character, in a bid to earn, use and possess more and more of material wealth. As a result, we see rampant corruption, unlawful activities, inhuman behaviour and immoral consumption, which is slowly breaking the very structure of our society, nation and the world. Therefore, there is an urgent need to re-introduce value based spiritual education dealing specifically with human values, to redesign the fabric of our educational system. A child's mind is like soft clay and can be molded to any desired shape. Thus, childhood is the right time and age to impart value education so that the right impressions formed in the child's mind will guide him throughout his life and such guided life will definitely be based on moral and just principles.

Values and Institutes of learning

School is the common platform for all children coming from various backgrounds. "At the school level values are taught directly and indirectly as a result of school history, background or religious affiliation. This will obviously influence the shape of the curriculum and the pedagogy at the classroom level", (Nobile & Hogan, 2014). In an interactive and learning environment of the school, where a child spends a maximum of eight hours of waking time, the human values can be easily evoked in him by making him 'experience' and 'live' the values. Teachers, in turn, present themselves as role models who are to be emulated. The basic approach to impart value education is 'love'. This is the most vital aspect to implement value education in three ways: the independent approach, the integrated approach, and the subtle approach. True, children learn more by observation, perception, experience and intuition, rather than by being told or taught about values, (Thiruvengadam, 2013). They assimilate the codes of behaviour from the direct environment at home and at

school, which eventually leads to the formation of character. Hence both parents and teachers, need to present themselves as role models, whom the children can look up to, for guidance.

Values education is a term used to name several things, and there is much academic controversy surrounding it. Some regard it as all aspects of the process by which teachers (and other adults) transmit values to pupils. Others see it as an activity that can take place in any organization during which people are assisted by others, who may be older, in a position of authority or are more experienced, to make explicit those values underlying their own behaviour, to assess the effectiveness of these values and associated behaviour for their own and others' long term well-being and to reflect on and acquire other values and behaviour which they recognize as being more effective for long term well-being of self and others. This means that values education can take place at home, as well as in schools, colleges, universities, offenders' institutions and voluntary youth organizations, (Thiruvengadam, 2013). 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. Others see it as a type of Socratic dialogue, where people are gradually brought to their own realization of what is good behaviour for themselves and their community. (Knežić et al., 2010). Value education also leads to success. It has values of hard work, how nobody is useless and loving studies. 'The research also identified ways through which values education can be nurtured in students into the various dimensions of quality teaching: intellectual depth, communicative competence, capacity for reflection, self-management and self-knowledge. This relationship between values education and quality teaching, somewhat like a double helix, refers to good practice of values education and also to bring quality teaching in practice' (Lovat & Toomey, 2007).

Education is the vehicle of knowledge, self-preservation and success. Education not only gives us a platform to succeed, but also the knowledge of social conduct, strength, character and self-respect. The greatest gift education gives us is the knowledge of unconditional love and a set of values. These values include the simple difference between right and wrong, a belief in God, the importance of hard work and self-respect. Education is a continuous learning experience, learning from people, learning from success and failures, learning from leaders and followers and then growing up to be the person we are meant to be.

Value based education is a three-fold development of any individual of any gender and age, but most importantly of a child. Education tries to develop three aspects: physique, mentality and character, (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007). Even though physique and mentality are important, they are menaces without the third because character is the greatest of these aspects. Education plays a huge role in precisely this area. Value based education is a tool which not only provides us a profession which we can pursue but also a purpose in life. The purpose of our life is undoubtedly to know oneself and be ourselves. We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. It is very aptly said 'Know thyself', as is also written in the portals of the antique world. And now it is being said that over the portal of the new world, 'Be thyself' ought to be written".

Education gives us this very knowledge, the most supreme knowledge of knowing oneself, which helps us to make our life better and purposeful. We are making our new generation, who are studying in various schools across India, engage in nothing but crude cramming. Text books are for reference and not for rote learning in the form of answers. One is dismayed at the state of affairs wherein every subject seems to have been reduced to just a utility subject, be it Economics, History, Sociology or Political Science. There are subjects that often have practical purposes in our lives, but have been rendered useless by the impractical approach adopted by the respective universities and schools in which we study. Having an opinion about every aspect of life and of the world makes a person complete, well rounded and knowledgeable and if we do not give this opportunity to the students who are on the verge of adulthood then we are robbing ourselves of ideas rich in enthusiasm and innocence.

It has been observed scientifically that we learn more effectively by listening and observing than plain cramming (Hérolde & Ginestié, 2012). The educational system needs to evaluate its priority and understand that learning should not be coordinated with cramming. We take pride that our educational system is far more advanced and progressive in terms of academic standards in comparison with the U.S.A. or U.K. But in terms of creativity, independent study and an objective approach towards a subject, we feel inadequate in experience.

The objective of education in a country like India, which has a glorious heritage and can boast of diversity in geography, culture, values and beliefs seen rarely in this wide world, should be to educate a student of the value system which is indispensable to live a successful life. There has been a lapse in our value system for which the educational institutes are responsible, that is why there are increased incidences of youth waywardness.

Conclusion

It has been said that ignorance is bliss. Then again, without education we never experience true bliss. It would be life of good deed if we pass on something substantial to the generation that is building itself. It would be a shame not to realize that the purpose of education is bliss and that ignorance is nothing but unpleasantness in the face of opportunities that the world has to offer to us. A balanced approach towards a student's academic career will enhance one's life and make him/her a better contributor to our society, country and to human civilization.

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