

# An Urge for Value Based Education in Current Communicative & Technical Scenario: An Overview

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*Abstract: The overall purpose of the any type of education is to enable a human being to live fulfilling life, in harmony with oneself and with family, society and nature. Hence, it becomes the responsibility of educators to enable the resolution of these issues, so that human society can achieve the cherished goal. In light of this, it becomes essential to find out what is of value, or what is really valuable to a human being? While technology is an important human endeavor, it is only a means to achieve what is considered valuable for human beings in an effective and efficient manner. It is thus not within the scope of technology to decide what is valuable to a human being. The subject that deals with 'what is of the value' or 'what is valuable to a human being' is called 'value education'. Values thus provide the basis for all our actions and there is an essential complementarity between values and skills which needs to be ensured in any education system.*

*Keywords: Human value, Self exploration, Value education, Moral values, professional ethics.*

## I. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The long history of mankind has seen a lot of progress. Science has enabled us to improve our understanding of the physical around us, while technology continues to offer conveniences in increasingly newer ways. The human beings are able to see the need for peaceful co-existence at the level of human society and recognize the need education as a 'fundamental need'. We have travelled a long way from the time of warring tribes and fear the natural elements. While we have made tremendous advancement and innovations, the question stills remains, Are we satisfied with the state of affairs today? One looking into this issue, it becomes evident that we are still faced with serious problems at various levels. At the human level, we can see that there continue to be issues individuals with respect to lack of clarity on life goals, contraindications and stress, while at the level of the human relationship in the family, we see problems in mutual understanding, increasing mistrust, insecurity and generation gap. Further, at the level of human relationship in society we see increasing communal conflict, exploitations and strife, terrorism and violence in various forms. The increasing corruption and other unethical practice in various professions is also causing serious concern. At the level of nature, we have increasing problems for environment degradation in various forms as well as resource depletion threatening the very survival of the human race activity carried out in the name of progress and in spite of all advancements of the science and technology. Where then lays the solution? What exactly is a miss? This is an important question intriguing the human mind today. (A Nagraj, 1998)

In the present context, our main stream education system has continued to become lopsided in favour of skills generation and information enrichment and the value dimensions has been languishing. This imbalance has been responsible for the above mentioned problems. Even though, the importance of value education is repeatedly highlighted at various platforms and also has been stressed by various commissions and expert committees on education, the effective methodologies and models for value education have yet to find a rightful place in our education system. As teachers and researchers in the area of education, we can able to experience very strongly, the need for bridging this gap and introducing appropriate inputs of value educations in the current the system. For several years it has been trying to develop own understanding and vision as well as performing several experiments in order to evolve suitable inputs in value educations which may be effectively integrated in the current curricula. This article is an outcome of that search in these directions. In formulating and experimenting with the methodology described in this context, it has been greatly facilitated by the fundamental work of Sh.A.Nagraj who has propounded the philosophy to understand the human reality vis-à-vis the rest of existence with the prime focus on discovering the inherent co-existence and harmony at all levels of existence. (A Nagraj, 1999)

## II. NEED FOR VALUE EDUCATION

Value education may seem a vague term to many of us even though we may be hearing about it frequently. While beginning this topic of value education, let us understand what we are talking about and what its need is,

particularly in the context of education. In this article we are going to clarify certain fundamental issues which are important to all of us in our life – issues which directly relate to our happiness, our welfare, our aspirations, goals and success in life. In a sense, value education deals with what is universally valuable to all of us, what is conducive to our individual and collective happiness and prosperity in a sustainable way. It enables us to be in harmony within ourselves, with other human beings and with rest of nature at large. Such an understanding will be vital for the successful conduct of our profession as well. (A Nagraj, 2002)

It has successfully experimented for years with the subject inputs designed on the basis of above mentioned research efforts primarily in two modes- in the form of a seven-day full time residential workshop, and in terms of a normal, one semester classroom interaction course with two lectures and two hours of practice sessions per week. In the form of seven-day workshops, this input has been experimented very extensively with all spectra of people in the society as well as with teachers and students in the institutional framework. The other mode also has been successfully experimented in several institutions. The experiments conducted at IIT, Hyderabad, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, NIT Raipur and Somaiya Vidhyavihar, Mumbai, etc. are worth mentioning. Recently, UP technical university has accepted the proposed course syllabus in the form of a compulsory audit course for all its professional institutions. Thanks to the Heads of these institutions for their kind support and help provided in these efforts. (A Nagraj, 2003)

It has noticed a tangible change in the thinking of students, in terms of their vision about happiness and prosperity, the clarity about life goals, improvement in human relationships, self –confidence, commitment to learning, feeling more responsible towards the profession, etc. The effects of self-exploration are found to be very rewarding. Teachers have benefited by acquiring a better ability to relate to students and evaluating the relevance of various academic inputs, in addition to benefiting in their own personal lives. Institutions have benefited from being able to have a holistic view of the education being imparted and infusing new energy in both teachers and students alike, in addition to effectively dealing with issues like student discipline, ragging, class absenteeism, etc. (A Nagraj, 2007)

The generally received feedback about Human Value based education:

***It is holistic and not fragmented-*** i.e. covers the entire expanse of human living: from self to society, nature and existence and covers all dimensions of human life: thought, behavior, work and realization.

***Addresses the 'self'***- Discusses the human being or the self and does not just focus on external realities. This proves to be self-empowering since each individual is able to make decisions and find out what is of value to them in their own right.

***Is closely associated to life and living-*** Establishes relevance in a person's life and does not just deal with information and skills. One can see the results of this understanding in human living in the form of behavior with people and work with nature.

***Methodology facilitates understanding and not just rote learning-*** The emphasis is on understanding in one's own right by focusing on reality and its experiential verification and not just on reproduction of information and rote learning.

It may be pointed out that this type of education may be presented in the form of a dialogue between the teacher and the students, wherein proposals are made and these are to be examined on the basis of reason and whether they are naturally acceptable, are true in reality and experimentally verifiable. Both students and teachers benefit from this joint dialogue, which starts in the classroom, but continues beyond it, as a dialogue within the student, for the rest of his/her life. (A N Tripathy, 2003)

### III. UNDERSTANDING VALUE EDUCATION

All of us consider something or the other to be valuable. We set our goals, our aims on this basis, and then set out to work towards achieving them. While the need for determining what is valuable to us may seem evident, let us investigate into this a little more to understand the need for value education in the current time. All human beings have aspirations. Value education is required to correctly identify our basic aspirations, understand the values that enable us to fulfill our basic aspirations, ensure the complementarity of values and skills, and to properly evaluate our beliefs. It also facilitates the development of appropriate technology and its right utilization for human welfare. (B L Bajpai, 2004)

This article is primarily intended to serve for the foundation on value education and the style of presentation is adopted to facilitate self-exploration among the students of present generation on the key proposals rather than packing up a lot of information. Frequent repetition is introduced intentionally to make the reader grasp the core concepts. It is the earnest hope that the material presented in this article will enable the introduction of this important issue input widely in the professional institutions, other colleges and universities which is the demand of time. This article is also expected to provide an interesting orientation material and food for thought to the general reader. (B P Banerjee, 2005)

Developing the right understanding about oneself and the rest of reality through self-exploration and realization of the inherent co-existence, harmony and self-regulation at various levels in existence is seen to be the real basis for imbibing universal human values and ethical human conduct. This is what will affect transformation towards a holistic worldview which happens to be the prime purpose of value education. This is what is really crucial to ensure ethical conduct of profession as well. The identification of values, based on right understanding, enables the formation of a vision for humanistic education, humane conduct and humanistic constitution that leads to a universal human order. This opens up a lot of scope for R&D to evolve holistic technologies and systems. Of course, it must be emphasized that this article only presents the material for a foundation and is aimed at providing the basic orientation for the change of ethos. Deeper self-study and practice will be necessary to carry this exploration further and consolidate one's understanding and realization. Some of the references provided at the end of the article will be helpful in this pursuit. This extensive self-study leads to the development of human consciousness which naturally results into inculcation of human values and its expression in human living. The reader is encouraged to do so. (Donella H. Meadows, 1972)

### ***Life in School and College***

Most of us started very early in school. Perhaps we were four or five years old- when we started with alphabets, then moved on slowly to sentences and then to speaking and writing a language. We were taught how to count, and before long subjects like History, Science, Geography and many others found their way into our classes and into our lives. Through these subjects, we have explored our world in certain ways and these have opened our eyes to many dimensions of our lives and of the world we live in. (E F Schumacher, 1973)

However, we find that somewhere in the process, we have started looking at all this learning to merely be an aid towards finding a job. This we can see, when we observe that excelling in competitive examinations has become the primary focus for most of us. Be it engineering or medical, CAT or GRE- the final goal- is getting through and making a career. Making a career, getting a job, thus seems to summarize the total purpose of all our education so far! Is this why we have been studying? Is this the purpose of all the education that one gets at school and college? What do we believe as our goal, our purpose of education we have had and the education that we will be going through spending more than 20 years in the process? (E G Seebauer, 2000)

### ***Life with Family and Friends***

At the same time, besides spending a lot of time in school, studying and preparing for examinations- we have been living a big part of our lives at our home in relationship with our family and our friends. This network of relationship- with our parents, our siblings and our friends is an important aspect of our lives and brings to us a lot of support and joy. Each one of us values the beauty and joy of growing up. The nurturing and love our parents have given us in our journey to becoming an adult are valuable to us. Indeed, there are very few people in this world who can claim that family and friends have not been important for them in their lives so far! But, many a time, these relationships turn unpleasant and we find us in conflict with the other person. At that point we become unsure and begin to blame, criticize the other and sometimes even ourselves. In the process both of us suffer. Have you suffered conflicts in your relationships with your family or friends? Sometimes, we are intrigued, baffled and even frustrated at the behavior of other human beings and even our own behavior with others. Many a time, we are at a loss to know how to handle these relationship issues properly and it ends up disturbing us. Some of us even at our relationships with family and friends as a burden and avoid them and our education today does little to help us identify and resolve these conflicts. At school or college- we get little guidance about relationships and how to properly live in them- since it is not a part of the syllabus. (M Govindarajan, 1996)

### ***Life all around Us***

The various incidents around the world unfold, and are captured everyday in the newspaper and on the T.V. From what is happening in far away countries to local incidents; the newspaper, and Radio and TV help bring the world to us in the comfort of our homes. From lifestyles programmes that tell us what people in different places are eating, what they are wearing and how they live their lives to programmes that bring forth the political and social issues in different regions of the world, to movies and informative documentaries; the media exposes us to another dimension of our lives that is not covered in the formal learning at the school. But is the purpose of all this programming- to merely inform us? What role do these different programmes play in your personal life? We see that the media unleashes upon us ideas of what is 'right', what is 'wrong', what is socially acceptable and what is not and it does so- by stating this, as

well as in a silent way through promotional advertisements and through celebrities. As individuals, we consume all of this and become more fragmented in our opinion and become consumers of the media and the products it has to offer. The media thus dramatically begins to influence our tastes, our opinions and in most cases our choices. We also live in the midst of a wide variety of animals and plants. And there is the soil we walk on, the water we daily use and of course the air we breathe. We may not pay attention to these things around us all the time but they nevertheless form an integral part of our lives, and we are related to, and dependant on them. We keep hearing of issues in the environment and words like pollution, deforestation, global warming etc. nowadays. How do we interpret these issues? What roles do see for us in helping to resolve these issues? (M K Gandhi, 1938)

**What this context is all about:** (Fukuoka, M.,1984)

- What is our own understanding of these matters?
- As individuals and young adults, how do we go about evaluating what is relevant for us?
- How do we feel about the local issues and the global problems that all of us are facing today?
- What about our life in the family and with our friends?
- Are we satisfied and happy in our relationships?
- How do we understand relationships?
- Is it even important to understand relationships?
- What are my goals?
- How do I understand what is important for me?
- How do I use my education?
- What am I going to do offer my education?
- What is success?
- What does it mean to be successful?
- Do I know what I really want?
- In whatever I have done so far, did I decide these things for myself, or was I merely acting under external influence?

We hardly have the opportunity to explore these questions and to develop clarity and competence in this direction in our present curricula. The new foundations in human values education can be introduced to facilitate us in this direction. This article is an attempt to integrate all the aspects of your life into a single whole and equip you with the capability to find answers to questions which are very important to you. We shall look into issues that shape our lives, our living. We shall look into what we want, and how we can be sure of it. We shall also see why we should be having this course in the first place and how it relates to life and profession.

This is an aid for self-exploration. It will guide you through a process of self discovery and enable you to have a more complete understanding of your own Self and of the world around you in a way that is verifiable and enriching. Moreover, as we go through student life and beyond, we find that managing our time and commitments, deciding our priorities and fulfilling them becomes a challenge. These things can also be a cause of tension in us. In addition, frequently we go through inner contradictions, confusions and dilemmas which we find difficult to resolve. At times, we feel lack of confidence about our own decisions and actions. We will explore into these aspects as well. We need to undergo Self-exploration because we want to find out what is valuable to us, and secondly we want to understand our relationship, our participation with the things around us.(P L Dhar, 1990)

Self-exploration is

- A process of dialogue between “what you are “and “what you really want to be”.
- A process of Self-evolution through self-investigation.
- A process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence.
- A process of recognizing one’s relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it.
- A process of knowing human conduct, human character and living accordingly.
- A process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence.
- A process of identifying our innateness and moving towards Self-organization and Self-expression.(Ivan Illich, 1974)

The content of self-exploration is exploring into two fundamental questions: what our basic aspiration is; and the program to fulfil this basic aspiration. Continuous happiness and prosperity are the basic human aspirations. This can be verified to be true by each one of us. Happiness may be defined as being in harmony/synergy in the situations that one live in. Prosperity is a feeling of having or producing more than required physical facilities. Lack of right understanding of happiness and prosperity has led us into a variety of problems at different levels of our living, be it at the level of individual, or family, or society or nature. Each one of us has been through a long process of studying having put in a lot of hard work and been through a rigorous process of evaluation to reach here. As we look forward to shaping our lives, it is crucial that we get a broader about ourselves, our needs and of the world. It is essential to know what is needed to ensure success, balance, and happiness in life and be responsible human beings and discover our full potential.(R R Gaur 2010)

As students/teachers would be carrying responsibilities towards the larger society as well. This requires that we be equipped with the ability to make decisions in our own right. The decisions we make now, the impressions we get, the perspective we develop, will all play a major role in our life ahead. Each one of us has a goal and purpose in life we want to achieve. This type of education will allow us to explore all relevant areas about ourselves so that we may correctly evaluate and decide them. It will also enable us to see our profession in correct prospective. This article is a set of proposals that each one of us needs to evaluate. (Subhas Palekar, 2000)

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The following key distinctions are useful to keep in mind.

**'Reading'** and **'Understanding'**: Just because we *read* something and *remember*, it does not mean that we *understand* it. 'Understanding' means to get to the *meaning* of the written word-*as intended by the author*-and be able to verify it in our living.

**Word & Meaning**: There are realities in existence. For example, you exist-that is a reality. You have a name. The name is a word that indicates or points to the reality that is you. Throughout this article, it will attempt to communicate to you the realities that need to be known. For this, we shall use words. Thus, the words are not that important, it is their meaning as intended that is important. Words are used to point to specific meaning in reality. These words have a 'precise' meaning and it pays special emphasis on their meaning. These 'meanings' are very important for us to understand- because through these meanings we are able to accurately identify and understand what exists in reality. It might also be possible that we are already familiar with some of the words used in this article and may already have a meaning associated with it. It is very important to re-associate the new meaning/ definitions to properly understand what is being conveyed in the present context. This is a very important point that needs to be kept in mind at all times. The words used in this article have a precise and specific meaning. Many of the words you read, like happiness, trust, relationship, nature, human, self, etc. are words you are already familiar with. You may hence have some interpretation/ meaning already associated with these words- which may not be the sense in which they have been used here. You need to further refer to the books and journals (list provided at the end of this article) to grasp the precise meaning. This is very important, since otherwise, the intended meaning will be lost- and you may end up providing your own interpretation!(Sussan George, 1976)

**Life is a Laboratory**: This is an aid to self discovery. The proposals that are put forward in this article can be verified by you as you go through your life. It is useful to keep the proposals in mind and explore them, and test their validity in all situations of one's life. This will greatly speed up the process of understanding for each one of us.

**Ongoing Process**: Unlike other lessons, these are not restricted to the classroom! That is to say, the process of analyzing, self- verification and mulling over the proposals takes places after the class as well, in our daily lives and even after these 'classes' have stopped. The session in the classroom should to enable a focused discussion on the same and benefit from the different viewpoints put forth by participants- with the objective of better understanding the topic of discussion.

#### V. CONCLUDATORY COMMENTS

This context is not about memorizing some information and reproducing it in the exams to get marks, but about understanding issues that are important to our lives! Whatever covering in this article is applicable to every human being- we are talking about our own lives, about living- so it is not 'some theory that you have to memorize'! You might have found that some statements and concepts have been repeated in the article- this is to bring them to your attention time and again. That content of this paper were not meant to be disruptive or to bring about in you a criticism for yourself or of

others around. It is not intended to give some directive prescriptions or do's and don'ts. It is merely asking you to explore and investigate within yourself- honestly, gently and perseveringly. The classroom lectures covering this type of education is a space for collective dialogue, where we shall explore a couple of things together. These are things you can self- verify. The process that will get started in you during this course will be useful for you not only during your current education program, but also in your life ahead. The success of this education would depend on how attentively you listen to what is being stated in the classroom and how sincerely and authentically you evaluate the same within yourself. So, this is not something you have to learn. This is something you have to start paying attention to and understand in your own right. As you understand, it comes in your living- and leads to your improvement as a person! Let us appreciate the need for such an input more in present time.

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