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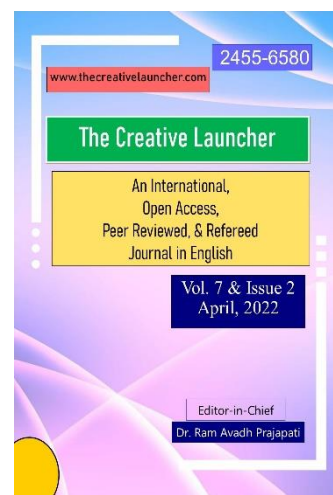
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Deterioration of Values in Secondary Education and Indian Perspective

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Abstract

The article aims to analyse the underlying principle of 'values', and their inculcation in secondary education. It reviews critically the looming crisis of 'values' in education, and its ensuing impact on the intellectual and social development of a child. Value-based education is very imperative in the social and cultural orientation of an individual. For many decades Indian education system has been ensuring the proper instillation of 'values' in a child, which is reflected in his culturally rich existence in society. However, there has also been a gradual

decline in ‘values’, particularly in education, and consequently, society is facing an advancing deterioration in cultural. The article also endeavours to elucidate various causes for the degradation of values, and how it can be mitigated so as to justify the impartation of education. Changing trends in modern lifestyle, accessibility of information, redefinition of cultural practices, modification of socio-political norms, and mercenary approach to education are affecting the core principles of education in India. Teacher-student relationship also has undergone a drastic change. The article also tries to highlight some of the palliatives to restore values in education, which has been further promulgated by National Education Policies time and again. Using the qualitative method, various research articles and resources have been studied and analysed to put forth the generalisations about the crisis in ‘values’ in secondary education. Furthermore, in the light of National Education Policy 2020, some of the core beliefs and vision to alleviate this crisis of values in education have also been suggested.

Keywords: Educational Values, Degradation in Education, NEP, Value-based Education

C S Lewis makes it quite apt a phenomenon in modern Indian society when he says, “Education without values as useful as it is, seems rather to make a man more clever devil” (1). If we consider the present status of value-based education system, and the response of the present generation towards this, it can be clearly observed that concept of “values” has been distorted to a greater extent. It manifests a very subtle situation of modified definition of social life in twenty first century. The dictionary meaning of “value” is a quality of being essential and worthy; however, if it is taken in the context of human behaviour, it points out towards having certain ideals of living. If we consider possessing ‘values’ in the relation of moral development, it refers to a multifarious and unceasing process, which leads an individual to comprehend the true meaning of their existence and their collaborated association with their fellow beings. Moreover, it also means the execution of one’s discretion, which is characterised by the logical choice. One who possesses ‘values’ does everything for the right reason. According to Aristotle, when ‘value’ is taken in the context of ‘ethos’ or ‘ethics’, it is considering oneself in a human way, and possessing a discrete way of living so as to garner happiness. ‘Values’ form a virtuous ambience around a person only when they integrate certain moral standards into everything they do so as to feel that they consciously govern their own life, and motivate other people to bask in the sunshine of moral codes of life. James Maddock rightly sums up the meaning and contextual significance of values in the following lines:

Valuing is now recognised as a process which begins at birth and continues through all stages of developments. Further moral development is understood to be closely related to other aspects of developments—cognitive, social, and emotional. Therefore, values are involved in any educational enterprise, and the schools—public as well as private—have a role to play in the moral development of children and youth (2).

The projection of these values in society, to greater extent, relies upon their acquisition in the educational institutions, which are considered the primary sanctuaries where the ‘values’

are imparted to the students, which they carry in the society. The consolidation of the educational system safeguards the due instillation of 'values' in the students. Although home is considered the first place where certain 'values' are instilled in a child, yet the school provides a seemingly identical society, which provides him a proper atmosphere to exercise these values. However, the projection and exercise of this value-based education in present scenario seems more a delusion, and idealistic pursuance than a practised reality, particularly in senior secondary system. A child acquires some values at the primary level in the homely atmosphere, and for an initial stage, exercises these values in his life comfortably; however, as he matures into an individual and is exposed to a complex social set-up, he is expected to deal with life's complexities in an exclusively different way. He is exposed to an entirely distinct world with various distractions, and becomes vulnerable to all sorts of temptations. He finds himself completely surrounded by myriad fascinations, false aspirations, fancy aims, and a complicate world of competition. Changing life situation, and resourcefulness with an easy access to technological advancements make him less dependent on others, and in this way, he tends to possess virtually no concern either for himself or for society.

The values the youth seem to possess and reflect through their demeanor assert that they are more prone to aggressive approach to dealing with life's circumstances. They are becoming more haughty, snobbish, violent, and seem to lack the due respect for social structure. The situation has got so much aggravated that even the teenagers are showing the characteristics of cold-blooded murderers or rapists, and are becoming so apathetic as to burn someone's face with acid, simply out of some grudge. The increasing cases of such criminal activities committed frequently by the youth assert that educational system lacks the important element of instilling desired values in the present-day youth. The purpose of education for them has confined merely to scoring good marks so as to get some lucrative job. They are satisfied with content knowledge, and not concerned with nurturing of 'values' for their moral well-being. The status of morality among them is deplorable. Since they are losing faith in both educational system and teachers, they are rather getting obsessed with their individuality. They are influenced by modernity, and care nothing for their supposed social responsibility. In such scenario certain questions need to be reflected, some arguments need to be pondered over:

Has freedom of choice and equal opportunity to all produced good political leaders, professionals, business men, workforce, of character? Don't we see that modern education, bereft of spiritual orientation, has given rise to corruption, greed, inefficiencies? . . . Don't we see that 'work is no longer worship'; even organizations now exist for profit to stakeholders, not to solve the problems or serve the genuine needs of society! Thus VBE [Value Based education] is must (3).

One of the reasons for this obsession with their self is their undergoing a transition both physically and emotionally at their schooling phase. As they grow in age, they become more conscious of their body and its requirements, and pay more attention to their satisfaction. Repression or rejection in this regard evokes protest. Hitting puberty and ensuing hormonal change also affect their emotional equilibrium. Coping with aggression, zest, passions, premature infatuation towards opposite sex, and impulsiveness goes out of their control.

Internet and multimedia also contribute to this change significantly and negatively. Telecast of sensual advertisements and seemingly easy access to pornographic contents and literature both in print and digital form affect their emotional development. They are scarcely able to refrain themselves from the various distractions of the changing world, and involve in social vices like liquor and drug addiction, sex abuse and other juvenile crimes. Pre-mature pregnancies, and consequent abortions are other evil consequences among school going girls.

With the onset of globalization and modernization in education system, there has also been a professionalism in the relationship of the teachers and students. The respect of the teachers among students has diminished to a greater extent. The modern generation has come very far from the time when a very strong emotional bond was the hallmark of teacher-student relationship. The days have gone when a teacher used to be a guide, a friend, an anchor, and a source of inspiration for the students, who in turn, used to approach to their teachers for sharing their agonies and sorrows. However, at present, the gap between them has been broadening irrevocably.

If we find the reasons for this change, one thing surfaces that today's students have unlimited exposure and access to information making them equipped with the knowledge beforehand, which happens to jeopardise their supposed dependence on and rapport with the teacher. The other reason of this gap between a teacher and the taught is that a teacher also skips sometimes what the students want to learn. Sometimes a teacher even does not want to update his knowledge and come down to the level of the students, and fails to satisfy the inquisitive mind of the students. This makes the students depend less on him. Consequently, the supposed trust of the students in their teacher is lost, which makes them respond to the teacher negatively. The sacredness and dignity of their relationship gets affected beyond repair. This also affects the instillation of values in the students by their teachers, and value-based education does not take place. Moreover, mercenary approach leads a teacher to foster rather a professional attitude, which prevents him from becoming a role-model for his students. He even, at times, indulges in the incidents like leaking an exam paper. A few other incidents of corporal punishment and sexual and emotional harassment of girl-students also cause the students foster a prejudiced approach against their teachers. Even their consuming tobacco and liquor degrades them before the students. The teachers themselves do not reflect 'values' through their conduct, and fail to impart value education to their students.

The way schools, particularly public schools, are run poses a threat to the impartation of value-based education. Most of them function in the form of autonomous bodies, and lay down the sets of rules and regulation of their own. Their select philosophy is to earn money or to turn their black money into white. Their criterion of registering the students clearly manifests the values they are going to impart to the students. The financial position and the literacy of the child's parents are preferred to his calibre and talent. Monetary perspective is so important for them that affordability prevails over temperament. As a result of which, the classes are so overcrowded that inculcating high 'values' in the children becomes secondary. The mercenary approach motivates the school authorities to hoard miscellaneous fees with one or other pretext

throughout the academic session. Providing comfortable ambience and luxurious facilities to the students becomes imperative for them. The meaning and aim of providing education become confined for them. Pampering the students, and catering to their material needs are more important for them, rather than instillation of values in them. They focus on making the children feel that they belong to affluent families, and as such are above all the rules, let alone the moral codes of conduct. The children are so encouraged in this respect that if any employee happens to object to their unwholesome behaviour, they do not feel scrupulous to chide him/her. In this reference Stephen Hawking is very contextual when he says, “Most sets of values would give rise to universes that, although they might be very beautiful, would contain no one to wonder at that beauty” (4). The cumulative impact of the above-mentioned factors, the exercise of ‘values’ in the youth, their ensuing behaviour in society show clearly that the educational system, social fabric and familial circumstances too contribute to the deterioration of values in the present generation. The existence of social and familial life with contentment in plenty, life skills such as companionship, sense of belonging, dealing with life’s ordeals with courage, have become the things of past.

The parenting is also to be blamed to certain extent. Swayed by the filial attachment, the parents tend to accept everything their children do. Inadvertently, they neglect their expected liability to develop proper temperament and attitude in their children. Previously, parents and grandparents toiled for the inculcation of ‘values’ in the children through the glorious stories of the sages and national heroes of the past. The sense of pride in nation and her culture was properly instilled in them. However, at present, because of not giving time to their children, parents’ only concern is to get their wards admitted in some reputed school. The divide is also widened by the ideological differences between them when it comes to cope with life’s situation.

Keeping this state of affairs, the role of education becomes very imperative. Value-based education provides a process of modifying human personality in all its multi-dimensional perspectives — ethical, cultural, rational, emotional, and pedagogic. If it fails to inculcate these ‘values’ its relevance is not conceivable; however, it is no denying the fact that the present education system and social set-up have misplaced priorities. The present education system is devoid of ‘values’ currently. T. D. Jakes’ statement in this reference is very much relevant when he says, “There are no college courses to build up self-esteem in high school or elementary school. If you don’t get those values at an early age, nurtured in your home, you don’t get them” (5).

The looming question is how this dire situation can be controlled. The answer lies in the severity of the question itself as instillation of ‘values’ can be accomplished by introducing some reforms in the education system itself. Focus has been shifted on value-based education in past many years. The National Education Policy of 1986 asserted that growing apprehension of the eradication of ‘values’ and inching distrust in society propelled the policy makers for redefinition of curriculum so as to make education a powerful tool for the impartation of values in the present generation. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT) of 2000 also said that educational institutions ought to re-establish and preserve ubiquitous

values for the unity and assimilation of the common people. HRD Minister Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal is very contextual in the asserting need of instillation of values, which has been the focus of NEP 2020. He says:

This New Education Policy is based on essential and important life skills. It recognises, identifies, and fosters the unique capabilities of each student, from a young age and teachers them ethics and human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, the spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice. The Policy also teaches them the art of communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience — all things are essential for their holistic development (6).

The impartation of ‘values’ in the children is the essential offshoot of value-based education, which constructs character, regulates decision making quality, and leads them to enjoy happy relationship in society. All the great politicians, sports people, entrepreneurs and great men of letters share common attributes. They all are conscious of their cultural beliefs, cultivate high values, and lead their life by following certain principles. In this respect, it is very important that school curriculum should contain certain elements that ensure the proper instillation of values in the children. Acquisition-rich and conducive environment for learning and communication among fellow beings is very important pre-requisite for the restructuring of capacity for ethical and value discretion, and this is the real purpose of value-based education. Development and inculcation of values is not an immediate transformation of a person’s personality; rather, it is accomplished through consistent and planned endeavours.

The school of psychoanalysis lays emphasis on parent-child relationship for moral development. Sigmund Freud suggests that moral development is a process of identification. At young age a child starts identifying himself with parents, and incorporates adult norms, which help him develop his moral being. Moral and psychological precepts help the school system in restructuring an emancipated and powerful character. A fully developed, sound, and sincere human being is a person of values. These values are not simply common exhortations and guidelines, they are elemental parts of his relationship with himself, with other people and surroundings. Media-served aggression elicits intrusive behaviour, whereas restrained and austere behaviour guides the youth to the paths of progress both morally and culturally. The role of teachers and parents is of prime importance as they are the first and foremost role-models for the children. The purpose of education must be to teach a person the meaning of life, absolve his emotions, and clarify his vision. It ought to encourage virtues to elevate the ethical, elemental, spiritual standard. If a person fails in managing the complexities of his life, the main causes are preconceptions, and subjectivity, which should be tamed by being conscious of the premises of spirituality promulgated by great philosophers and scriptures. Laying considerable emphasis on the indispensable role of a teacher in the life of a person has been beautifully described in these Upanishadic slokas:

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्

समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् (मुण्डक उपनिषद्)

(Tadvijnanartham sa gurumevabhiyacchet samitpanih shrotriyam brahmanishtham)

The same idea is found in the Gita also:

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः (भ.गी.४/३४)

(Tadviddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya upadekshyanti te jnanam jnaninah tattvadarshinah) (7).

The inferred meaning of the slokas is that a qualified teacher is the source of attainment of divine knowledge; however, it can be attained through prostration, inquisitiveness, and service to him. A true teacher trains his disciples to flourish and live happily and profitably in this material world. His role is extremely important in moulding the future of the children, and he is an ideal to the children in many ways. Great teachers like Parshuram, Bhishma, Drona et al. greatly influenced their disciples by preaching what they themselves exercised in their lives. In that way a teacher is the storehouse of 'values', who can satiate the requirements of his students, and teaching is not merely a profession; it is a noble attitude. A teacher is an indispensable source of knowledge, a motivator, a mentor, a surrogate mother, all in one frame. Confucius also summarised the principles of teaching in three terms: *Ren* (act of absolute affection), *Yi* (moral integrity), and *Li* (courtesies in both personal and professional life). According to him an individual who possesses love, strong morals, impeccable behaviour in personal and professional life, is worthy of the acclaim of a teacher. Considering all the attributes a teacher's role is instilling values in the students and guiding them towards the path of becoming a human being who can lead a life of principles and qualitative attributes. The foundation of a better values-imparting education system rests on the shoulders of a teacher.

To sum up this should be deduced that 'value' instillation and orientation is very essential to every stage of nurturing in formal education, and in communication between human beings and social entities. In this way 'values' are inseparable from progressive life of an individual. Education is a very important requirement for the holistic development of an individual, and its aim, content, and methodology are considered in the reference of its value-based impartation. Therefore, educational institutions should not be simply restricted to the impartation of knowledge; rather, they ought to be considered the abodes where consciousness is truly awakened, soul is purged, and commitment, discipline and devotion are incorporated and fostered. The teachers, parents and the all the social entities need to realise their liabilities and responsibilities towards the students' educational and moral well-being. Value-based education and upbringing need to be targeted primarily so as to justify the concept of impartation of education.

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