



Value education and role of Educators

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Abstract

Education is necessarily a process of inculcating values to equip the learner lead a life – a kind of life that is satisfying to the individual in accordance with the cherished values and ideals of the society. Philosophers, spiritual leaders and educationists of our country, all in various ways, have emphasized the role of education for ‘character development’, ‘bringing out the latent potentialities and inherent qualities’ and developing an ‘integrated personality’ for the well-being of the individual and the society at large. Whatever term we may use, the importance of developing values has long been embedded in the age old traditions of India’s civilization and cultural heritage, spanning over the centuries. The diverse and rich cultural heritage that we are so fortunate to inherit in our country is in many ways symbolic of the foundation and wellspring of values from which we draw our values nourishment. Life of individuals and communities and that of our saints, sages and philosophers are examples of values like self-discipline, survival in the absence of material resources, simplicity, handling conflicts without violence, exploring simple but revolutionary ideas.

How can we prepare our future generations to cope with the challenges and fast changing realities of today and tomorrow? How can we develop citizens who can bring about the transformation of the culture of violence, intolerance and greed to one of peace, non-violence and respect for one another? These are not going to be achieved with the click of a finger. There is no ready-made solution waiting to be adopted. Values cannot be forced, even if conveyed with good intentions. No real integration or internalization of a value can be achieved unless the learner agrees with it. This Paper explores various approaches to value education from the point of view of an educator or a teacher.

Key Words: *Value Seeds, value facilitators, mentorship, community partnership, pedagogy*

Introduction: To become a teacher is more like becoming a gardener. One must know one’s plants, as well as the soil and climate, and on the basis of this knowledge, one’s “green thumb,” become an improvising, loving artist. Observing the unfolding of children in this way, we notice first that the process of entering earthly life occurs through progressive, developmental stages. Steiner explains that these begin before birth, continue throughout life, and constitute an interconnected whole, so that what happens earlier has a consequence later. He also emphasizes the importance of recognizing that they are not fixed. Children’s development today is not the same as it was five hundred, a thousand, or four thousand years ago. Again, it is necessary to be absolutely realistic and responsive to what is before one. And what is before is always an individual. In that individual, a whole world is revealed—“not just a human world, but also a divine spiritual world manifested on earth.” Each child represents a world and an aspect of the world; and is an opportunity for teachers to enrich their understanding with a new perspective. Every class is thus a kaleidoscope of perspectives—of evolving beings. Learning to work with these, a teacher becomes an artist, aware that what he or she does has significance for world evolution.

What are Values?

Values regulate and guide human behavior and action in our day to daily life. Values are embedded in every word we select and speak, what we wear, ways in which we interact, our perceptions and interpretation of others reactions in what we are say and so on. Values are formed on the basis of interests, choices, needs, desires and preferences. These comprise the nuclei of value formation. Values have a selective or directional quality. When preferences acquire certain

definiteness, intensity and stability, these become the criteria for judgment, choices, action and grounds for decision-making in behavior. Value thus is considered to be an enduring belief upon which human beings act by preferences.

Values involve the processes of thinking, knowing/understanding feelings and action. These involve feelings i.e. strong liking for something, feeling deeply about the things one values and so on. People's action often gives us clues as to what they value. If we try noticing what a person does in spare time when he or she is not being coaxed or threatened to do a particular activity, we may get some ideas about what he/she values.

Generally, value refers to the 'desirable'. It is difficult, however to define what is desirable, what kind of things/actions are good. What is desirable today may not be a desirable tomorrow and what is desirable here may not be desirable elsewhere. Desirable is when our actions promote the general good in terms of the norms and ideals of a particular society and in terms of the consequences of our practices and action.

Values Seeds: Values are like seeds that sprout, become saplings, grow into trees and spread their branches all around. Building up of values system starts with the individual, moves on to the family and community, reorienting systems, structures and institutions, spreading throughout the land and ultimately embracing the planet as a whole. Building values is an integral factor in the process of internalization of values because one can only give what one has within. Building values is somewhat similar to building a house, brick by brick. That is why Values Education is to be recognized as a fundamental need. Values based education for all members of society needs to be seen as a valuable investment.

The individual is the first building block of the values architecture; for integration to take place the child's need for security, dignity, identity and well-being has to be met. For a society to be at peace, its individual members need to be protected against violence, injustice, humiliation and discrimination. A child is not merely a physical entity but a holistic being. His/her physical, emotional, social and spiritual need has to be addressed to ensure harmonious development of all aspects of his/her personality.

The second factor in inculcating values is the family which plays a crucial role in fostering values in a child. A child growing in a conflict ridden home is unlikely to be peace oriented. Healthy relationships in a stable family create sound values. Home is the nursery for inculcating values.

The community to which a person belongs is the third block. The relationship between the individual and the community is intimate. It plays an important role in the identity formation of an individual, and determines the level of security the child enjoys. Values Education goes a long way to minimize the insecurity of communities and to promote a sense of belonging. The society is the fourth building block of values. The society is an extended family which is characterized by diversities of individuals, and the interests of families and communities. Every society also has certain shared characteristics that its members endorse, adopt and employ, which influence the collective decisions taken by it.

How values are acquired?

Development of values takes place during the process of socialization. Socialization always occurs in a context. Since sociocultural milieu is different for different societies, differences in cultures are reflected in the values

Values are learnt as we learn habits in the process of growing up. Learning of values takes place quite early in life by the word of mouth or simple commands from parents and other adults at home. In early years of life, prohibitions and parent identifications are the source of values. For example, an 18 months old child seizes the lid of a sugar bowl on the table followed by loud and frightening admonitions of 'No'. The child runs far to a corner of the room, closes his eyes and holds the lid in front of his face to protect himself. The mother retrieves the lid, scolds the child, the child throws tantrums. When the tantrum subsides, the child then looks at the offended mother looking for re-acceptance. At this stage, there are certain emotional states experienced by the child like impulse, fright, frustration, anger, each having a specific stimulus and terminating condition. The child does not comprehend the why of this behavior/act. He/she only experiences certain kind of emotions and feelings. The case of a little older three year old child, what it says about the role of parental identification assumes importance. On scolding by the father, to remain in bed till 7'o clock, the child obeys to be in bed till seven o'clock. She does as ordered but cannot help doing other things while in

the bed which distracts the father. So again, she gets scolding from the father. At this stage the external voice of authority is exerting pressure to obey. After a few repetitions of this kind of experience, the child learns that it is not right because father is saying 'to be quiet' and 'to be in bed' so she learns to be obedient on simple commands from the father.

In this process, children, quickly learn which behavior are approved and which ones are not, which are likely to bring rewards and which might lead to punishment. They attach notions of good or bad, right and wrong to different acts and behavior's. Reward and punishment, approval and disapproval act as positive or negative reinforces. The nature of association positive or negative and its frequency is thus important to form a value. When the end result leads to appreciation, positive association forms but when the end result gives rise to pain, suffering, destruction etc., negative associations are formed with a particular act, idea or behavior. The person tends to repeat the act or behavior which serves the desired end. When these are repeated under favorable conditions of reinforcement, they form into habits and get deeply ingrained as strong behavioral tendencies. Initially, there may not be any conceptualization but later such learning may be transferred from one particular situation to another. When students are made to judge themselves the worth of prioritized activity, situation or an idea by independent appraisal and reflection, the internalization of values takes place. Values are truly internalized, if there is a shift from fear of punishment, whether external or self-administered to an experience of value related obligation. There is a shift from 'must consciousness to ought consciousness's'. In 'must – consciousness, there is a sense of compulsion. But in ought consciousness there is the sense of obligation.

'Ought' is not the same as 'must'. The 'must' statements like 'I must be careful', 'I must obey traffic' regulations, I must not give way to anger reflect compulsions whereas statements like I ought to pick up litter around, 'I ought to take care of my parents', 'ought to respect my elders', Reflect the sense of obligation rather than fear or compulsion. The experience of "ought" while making a choice relates to one's self-image. Violation of some value is then considered as falling short of self-image.

Teacher and classroom practices: Teachers conduct the symphony of education. Success of the initiative for values development in students substantially depends on the vision, motivation, skills, attitudes, values and behavior of teachers themselves. It is for this reason that a teacher is compared to a gardener who plants seeds of knowledge and values in students, waters them with care and kindness. It is his/her attitudes, values and relationships that determine the nature of the classroom climate. This is particularly true in the Indian context where teachers have always been respected as the fountain heads of knowledge and wisdom. The importance of teacher is reflected in the common saying what I teach is what I know and what I educate what I am? The teacher's role in creating classroom climate is best reflected in the following:

GINNOT (1972), in his classic book, 'Teacher and Child' described the power a teacher has: "I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate; it's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated or a child humanized or de-humanized." (Pp.15-16)

The impact that a teacher can have on student is well illustrated in one of the memoirs of a student about his school days.

"My Math's teacher soon gave up any attempt to teach Math's. I never passed a single test. The teacher somehow knew I could work for the school magazine. I had to explore a lot before I could write a particular story assigned to me. I was extremely shy, withdrawn and uneasy. Here, my teacher made me believe that I could learn. The teacher accepted my limits. I could begin to accept my limitations without shame. I started trusting my teacher. When I could not see a future for myself, my teacher told me that the future was mine."

Many teachers like the above may be effective in promoting students qualities. They communicate high expectations, and provide steady listening and opportunities for accomplishment that reduce students' shame and distrust. Many teachers may also have the inclination and capacity to see the perspective of the students in their classroom. They acknowledge students' strengths and know how and when to provide success experiences to the students who need it. Teachers, however, differ in age, experience, social-cultural backgrounds, gender, marital status, subject specialization, wisdom, temperament and self-conception. The schools they work also differ and so do the groups of students they teach. Children also bring with them attitudes and value orientations from their families. All these differences may lead to different styles of relationships with students. Let us now go through teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students in the classroom. Some teachers are very rigid and strict and even a little noise and disturbance is enough to set them in an aggressive mode. They may hit anyone around who seems to be involved in mischief, mostly without inquiry. There are still others who just want to be reassured of themselves; they keep questioning students about other teachers and compare themselves with them. They wish to know what they are doing and how they teach among other things. Some teachers do not find themselves comfortable being close and personal to students. One such teacher says, "I would love to have a close interaction with students but I do not find it in me to do that. The moment children get personal, I avoid the situation. I become uncomfortable coping with it, although I know that it will be better for the students." Another teacher perceives her relationship to be more motherly than friendly. She says, "When I enter the class, I feel my students are like my children, and show them motherly affection. I do not know how far I am successful but I want them to behave properly and grasp everything." While another teacher says, "I do not want blind obedience. I can help them as a guide. I do not want students to be scared." Yet another teacher says, "I believe in authority with kindness. If a student says he was sick, I understand and allow him to complete the assignment the next day. But inside the class, students have to pay full attention. If I am strict with them, it is not done blindly but I convince them that it is good for them to be disciplined, and that they are not doing me a favor by being disciplined." The most important qualification of any teacher, therefore, is to be kind and loving.

It is important nevertheless that teachers become better role models and relate with their students in pleasant and meaningful ways. They need to handle student's disruptive behavior as well as promote desirable behavior, values and virtues. Directing and regulating the student's behavior and acts in the classroom is a challenge. They have the choice over how they respond to a student's behavior. There are multiple ways of handling student's behavior, which would vary with the nature and intensity of the behavior in question. Some general principles, strategies and skills, however, for handling disrupting behavior, as well as, promoting desirable behavior conducive for values, are discussed here. Much of the student's behavior in the classroom is perceived as undesirable – it disturbs discipline, order and peace. Some of these behaviors may be natural and age-typical, and will change as students become more mature. For example, students in the early grades are impulsive and motor-oriented and teachers understand that this type of activity needs to be properly recognized and channelized. However, teachers find it difficult to deal with common behavior's like shouting, name calling, pushing, complaining, making fun of others, fighting, disregarding rules and loud talking which come in the way of maintaining peace and discipline in class.

One of the important ways of maintaining discipline in classroom is to provide clarity about rules and expectations so that students become conscious about following the rules. Indirect reminders for adhering to the rules can also be put up on the board or by way of posters like "we shall listen to one another, we shall seek permission before speaking, we shall let others learn," etc. Students can themselves be involved in framing the rules. This will enable them to take the responsibility of observing the rules. Overall, it is best to state the expectations and rules positively. Using non-verbal ways or signals is another gentle way of redirecting behavior. Body movements, sounds and gestures like rising from a seat and emphatically clearing one's throat are helpful in gaining the attention of the class. Walking towards a student and removing the object which creates distraction can also be used to avoid nagging or constantly naming students. A teacher can also reduce classroom distraction by restructuring and modifying the situation, a change of seats, grouping of students and modifying assignments etc. Warning can also be used but not too frequently as it will lose its value.

Overall, it is important to use flexibility to know the differences in the learners indulging in undesirable behavior. This means that not all students should receive identical treatment but that students must understand that their negative behavior can cause unwanted consequences. Some alternatives available to the teacher are use of soft reprimands, i.e. sending to the corner of the room, taking away privileges, taking away points or recording a poor score on behavior and habits or giving extra learning work. A teacher should not be vindictive or punitive but must be consistent, calm and firm. It is important to recognize that many negative consequences may be enforced by the classroom teacher but their use should be carefully reviewed in the light of the students' progress. The teacher should keep in mind the strengths of the student and look for opportunities to praise desirable behavior. If some of these strategies to handle disrupting behavior do not work, it is important to look for and find the cause. It is not that children do not always know the value of honesty and respect but they suffer from feelings of inferiority, cynicism or egocentrism. Researchers suggest that such emotions as shame, anger and cynicism eat away at caring, a sense of responsibility, and other important qualities and values. It is natural phenomenon that when one's beliefs and values conflict with one's moral actions these are changed to accommodate their actions. For example, one may justify 'stealing' because society is corrupt or because all people are basically 'selfish'.

Children in schools are only a part of the whole and carry with them a wealth of culture, language, habits and attitudes. It is, therefore, essential that teachers know their students. It is important to understand that a 10 year old with highly anxious mother and a father prone to fits on anger isolates herself at home becomes destructive and rude in school. Her teacher has little empathy for her because she feels harassed by her mother. The child looks to peers for support but other students find her rude and demanding. She becomes more provocative and the spiral continues. Such a child will look for teacher or someone who can make difference in her life or someone who can empathize and understand her perspective. Such students need to talk about themselves and their feelings. Learning more about students and their lives and letting them know that the teacher is keen to know them, itself is an act of compassion. It may be remembered that the purpose in using these methods is not to control the students' undesirable behavior but to help them behave in more acceptable manners.

Guidance and counseling services by way of student's support services needs to be given utmost priority in schools. These services rendered by a trained professional counselor/teacher offer proactive developmental guidance in meeting the needs of all students as well as providing remedial help to students with personal problems and difficulties in social, emotional and academic spheres. Active involvement of parents, peers and community for their support is also part of the guidance and counseling services. The interventions carried out by trained counselors help students in increasing their understanding about their own behavior, attitudes, values and empowering them to take right decisions –which is close to the process of values formation.

Proactive strategies:

Freedom for expression: One of the basic principles is creating a classroom environment, free from excessive competition, threat, ridicule, etc. It is neither an environment dominated by an authoritarian teacher nor it is a wholly permissive environment, without any structure. It aims at creating an emotional climate for students to experience a sense or feeling of personal worth, trust, dignity and self-confidence, leading to self-discipline. Yet another practice that helps change children is freedom of expression. It involves allowing children to ask questions that help them relate to what they are learning in school and reconcile that to things happening outside; the trick lies in children answering in their own words, and from their own experiences, rather than simply memorizing and getting answers right in just one way. All these are small but important steps in helping children develop their understanding of the world they are in and examining their own prejudices and biases. Quite often, children have an idea arising from their everyday experiences with parents and friends or because of their exposure to the media, but they are not quite ready to express it in ways that a teacher might appreciate. A sensitive and informed teacher is aware that these experiences accumulated in school, at home or in the community, underlie biases and prejudices of various kinds. Broadening the range of such experiences to include exposure to a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual environment reduces the scope for the formation of prejudices. However, just the presence of a multi-cultural student population does not mean that it is a multi-cultural environment. Only when there are

interactions and exchanges, and the involvement of each and every one that a multi-cultural environment is created, and is able to engage children through well-chosen tasks and questions, so that they are able to express their doubts, share views and question the assumptions underlying various beliefs, practices, rituals and social structures etc.

Constructive Feedback: Providing feedback is a necessary part of teaching. Students may lose confidence in teachers who accept everything and do not encourage them to improve. Many a time, criticism implies that the person is not worthy. A gentle way of criticism is when a student is told that the idea is not worthy of the person's potential or ability. Constructive and meaningful feedback is important. Negative comments need to be avoided. Instead of saying, "You cannot do anything right," "You never use your head," we might say, "Can you think of another way of doing this?" Or "Let me show you another way."

Positive Reinforcement: No strategy is considered more effective than positive reinforcement for desirable behaviour. Positive reinforcement where accomplishments (behavioral as well as academic) are appropriately recognised and self-esteem is strengthened is valuable. Whenever feasible, the teacher should try to find out ways to provide positive reinforces. It could be recognition, leadership role, a word of appreciation, verbal approval, non-verbal approval or even awards. It is better if the reinforcement is descriptive and more focused on work rather than the personal. Descriptive praise is the skill of describing a student's motivation and accomplishment and not his/her personality. A practice that some teachers adopt is to appreciate them for some quality of theirs, not necessarily in academics. Each child has one quality or the other, and we have to discover it. We need to recognize that all our students are smart and intelligent but in different ways, and accordingly, we need to discover and help our students discover where their passions and intelligence lie. Academic achievement is not the only marker for intelligence, and as teachers we need to be mindful of it and encourage various other skills that our students possess. It is not easy, but perseverance and constant mindfulness about such children will yield ways.

Accepting Mistakes: If students are made to understand that mistakes are a part of the work and that they are instructive, only then will they understand the value of mistakes, and will not try to hide mistakes or feel embarrassed about them. The teacher who focuses on creating an atmosphere in which it is safe to make mistakes is teaching the value of learning to make a choice, whether good or bad, and then, experiencing the consequences. By providing an emotionally safe terrain, teachers hold students accountable for their actions. It then helps in fostering responsibility for their actions rather than hiding the mistakes and putting up defenses to protect one's image.

Avoiding Impulsive Judgments and Evaluative Remarks: We are often in the habit of passing quick judgments. Instead of giving one's own judgment, we can ask, "Do you like what you have done? What would you like to change to improve upon it?" Even in a situation where they have made a mistake, depending on the gravity of the situation, it may help to forgive. Against the usual perception that forgiveness leads to more carelessness, if a teacher helps build reflection by appropriate questioning about the student's behavior and forgives, it is much more helpful than punishment.

Respecting Ideas and Questions: Criticism and making fun of children's remarks can hinder them from expressing themselves. It is important that students express themselves because we cannot know what they are thinking and feeling unless we let them express themselves freely. However, after they have expressed, even if there is an error, it should not be immediately corrected. Rather, use of expressions like, "Is there a better answer?" or "Does someone think differently?" Why? Is more useful.

Increasing Intrinsic Motivation: Excessive competition is detrimental to peace and harmony. Inherent in competition is a set of values wherein success depends upon beating and defeating others. What is valued is triumph over others and being Number One. Competition teaches that self-worth depends on victories; winning is the goal, and not learning or practice, or development. Trying to beat people is extrinsic motivation. It is important to develop intrinsic motivation, that is, motivation to do something for its own sake, to learn to enjoy, to meet the challenge rather than to win prize and defeat someone else. What is important is to reach one's own standards for success. Intrinsic

motivation flourishes when teachers provide encouragement, and appreciation for the efforts put in by the child and helps him/her be successful.

The shift in attitude and mindset can transform the ambience in the classroom, overcoming the daily hassles and challenges posed by the ever-fluctuating demands on both students and teachers. This is not for sacrificing any serious goals of education; rather, it fulfills the holistic goals of education. Relationships strengthened by the teachers' own skills and strategies of communication and listening, as empathetic and genuine mentors, and classroom practices that are caring, pave the way for real "teaching-learning." Students can then learn and develop, not as information banks but as informed human beings. Even teaching subjects and all other activities is to be viewed from this perspective.

Value Contexts in teaching of subjects: The different subjects at school stage - Social Sciences, Science, Languages, and Mathematics etc. seek to provide knowledge, attitudes and values intrinsic to the particular discipline. In the very act or process of acquiring knowledge, however, which is not the same as memorization and reproduction of information, certain attitudes, values, habits of thinking that are concomitant to the pursuit of that particular knowledge get transmitted. For example, Science teaching aims at the development of understanding of the concepts, facts, principles, theories and laws that describe the physical and natural world. It is intended to strengthen the commitment to inquiry, curiosity, objectivity -scientific outlook open-mindedness, search for truth etc. Mathematics is associated with logical thinking, order, decision making, neatness, accuracy, perseverance. The Social Sciences at school stage intend to broaden children's vision of society as good citizens. History portrays the values of patriotism, compassion, bravery, co-operation, loyalty, justice, perseverance as evidenced from the lives of great people. Geography communicates interdependence of countries, unity in diversity, environmental conservation etc. Language, besides encouraging communication and listening skills, is intended to inculcate imagination, creativity, sensitivity, appreciation and emotional development. It is for this reason that objectives of teaching different school subjects also include development of attitudes, appreciations, values, skills, which are appropriate to that subject. Every subject, considered from the stand point of value education is thus considered to be a repository of values.

Good teaching of a subject implies teaching the subject in such a way that the students gain insight into the nature of the subject, its logical structure, its methods and also imbibe the attitudes and values associated with that particular subject. Presenting the lesson from a humanistic and positive perspective is important. The lesson which would inspire, awaken positive feelings and experiences, help in understanding self, encourage openness and spirit of inquiry in raising questions, exploring, discovering and constructing their understanding of values and providing opportunity to put their knowledge of values into practice are meaningful. Strategies like questions, stories, anecdotes, games, experiments discussions, dialogues, value clarification, examples, analogies, metaphors, role play, simulation are helpful in promoting values during teaching-learning. Some values may be more adequately inculcated while teaching a particular subject at a particular stage or grade, others may be more appropriately integrated with the other subjects at a particular grade. Thus subject - appropriate and stage/grade –appropriate strategies vis-a-vis values need to be delineated.

Conclusion: Teachers are builders of the nation. Students are icons of the future. Educational institutions are sacred places. Students cherish their career in the wake of moral values with spiritual blend, innovative and creative talents and skills at the educational institutions along with emphasis on extra-curricular activities which are very essential for a person's physical and psychological growth and development.. Teachers, governments and parents should feel responsible towards making the right leaders for tomorrow.

Thus Teachers play an important role in the nation building by character building of the students. The best and the greatest profession in the world is that of a teacher, because the future of a nation depends upon the type of teachers who shape the future generations. Every teacher plays the most important role in shaping the students as enlightened citizen. Swami Vivekananda's words should not be forgotten by the teachers- "Arise, Awake and Stop not till the goal is reached."

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