

## IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN VALUES AND ETHICS IN EDUCATION

**Dr. T. R. Shashipriya**

Faculty in English & Head  
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences  
Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology  
Bangalore-560056

Human Values are the principles or standards of behaviour or one's judgement of what is important in life. They are the most needed topic of discussion in the present context. Values are fundamental to human existence & integral to any society. They are the qualities that lie within humans and must be drawn out and translated into action. They are universal, inherent in all human beings, and intertwined with the cultural and spiritual aspects of life.

Human values make life worthwhile, noble, and excellent. Here every teacher has a role in nurturing of the human values in children during the formative years and that will result in making those children caring and responsible adults in the future. A teacher at the later stages brings out human values in the grown-up students as an internal motivator who reinforces good character, morality and ethics, resulting in caring and responsible citizens. A wide variety of human values are found in varying degrees in all societies, religious traditions, and civilizations. While different societies have different socio-cultural and value orientations, five basic themes of human values relevant to all are: **TRUTH, RIGHT CONDUCT, PEACE, LOVE, NON-VIOLENCE**

**Truth:** This speaks of honesty (being upright/fair), accuracy (correctness checked), courage (Bravery/ability to do even in fright), discernment (to judge well), integrity (having unity/ strong moral principles), reason (explanation/justification of an action or event), fairness (impartial/ behavior without discrimination), curiosity (desire to know/learn something), self-awareness (conscious knowledge of one's own character and feelings), trust (firm belief in the ability) and justice (the quality of being fair). There is one ultimate and universal Truth which may be expressed in a multitude of ways. Truth finds expression in nature. art. Music, poetry, ancient scriptures of all faiths and through scientific discipline. Ultimately however, Truth is found within. The pursuit of Truth requires discrimination, intuition, and introspection. The highest Truth is that it is changeless in the past, present and future.

**Right Conduct:** Good diet, tidy appearance, hygiene, responsibility, duty, self-reliance (depending on one-self), punctuality, good behavior, cooperation. The Right Conduct of which we speak is rooted in the Sanskrit word, Dharma. Though Dharma has no literal translation in English, it may be said to encompass the sum total of codes of ethics, ethical behavior and moral rectitude (moral thinking/righteousness). The injunction (order), "do good, see good, and be good" captures the essence and intent of this value. It is rooted in attitudes and habits inculcated from early childhood that mature into respect and adherence to the duties and responsibilities that come with one's life circumstances.

**Peace:** Being calm, have attention, contentment, patience, discipline, happiness, self esteem, surrender. Everyone desires and seeks Peace. Lasting Peace cannot be found in the material world. Peace requires the capacity for introspection and self-awareness. Self-awareness enables one to become mindful of his or her thoughts, words and deeds. When self-awareness becomes a habit, the individual begins to monitor and modify the habitual patterns of thought that obstruct the Peace within. True Peace requires inculcating equanimity, regardless of loss or gain, success or failure, pain or pleasure.

**Love:** Empathy, Kindness, Sharing, Friendship, Generosity, Patriotism, Acceptance, Consideration, Care, Compassion, Humanness. The human value of Love may be best expressed as an energy permeating (spread throughout) all life. That is, it is not an emotion or passionate feeling of desire and attachment. It refers to something much deeper, and more basic to human nature. It is totally unselfish and independent of whether there is reciprocity. It is kindness, caring, empathy, and compassion. Love is not passive, but active. and it grows, as Sri Sathya Sai Baba would say. “by giving and forgiving”.

**Non-violence:** Harmlessness, Equality, Citizenship, Care of the environment, Appreciation of other culture & religion, Universal compassion. The zenith of all human values is Nonviolence. Truth, Right Conduct, Peace and Love merge in Nonviolence. Nonviolence is a state of mind that recognizes the unity within the apparent diversity. It manifests as non-violation of the laws of nature and respect for law and order. It calls for restraint from the doing of harm to others and to nature in general. Nonviolence is rooted in forbearance (tolerance), morality, and integrity. When the ethics of Nonviolence are embraced as the means to world peace – there will be global harmony.

### **TRUTH:**

When a person follows truth interpersonal or social skills, values make him prepared to accept the truth. He understands what he should and shouldn't do. He understands what is equality, has respect for other cultures or ways of thinking and being, sees the good in others.

Within himself he examines the conscience to speak only the truth. He speaks up when he has something to say that is good and necessary and be silent if what he has to say what is untruthful or hurtful. There will be self-honesty and he does what he believes is right and don't just go along with others if they are doing something that he does not believe in. One can find unity of thought, word and deed (head, heart and hands) in such people.

**Right Conduct:** Being able to take care of oneself, having cleanliness, considering others feelings and needs are some of the interpersonal or social skills of such persons who have right conduct. They do their duty, have friendliness, good behaviour, manners, nutrition, health & hygiene and help others who are in need. They understand what is humility, know the value of saving/not wasting (money, energy, food, time), do not break a promise, do not indulge in gossip or any sort of killing, quarrelling, speaking ill of others, stealing, taking advantage of others. They have Punctuality, respect for others, including parents, teachers, elders. They feel the responsibility, teamwork, tidiness, and understand the dangers of harmful habits.

Within themselves they have courage to face their fears and stand up for what they believe to be right even if others do not agree with them. One can see harmony of head, heart and hands. In other words, when a thought comes into the head, he examines his conscience (heart) and puts into practice (hands) what his heart tells him is right. The self-confidence in him says that he has an inner diamond – something that is unique and special about himself. When he discovers what

it is he can use it to benefit himself and others. Sometimes he has thoughts and actions that prevent his diamond from becoming polished and shiny. He develops self-sacrifice and realizes what is he willing to give up for his own good and the good of others? If each of us contributes our special strengths to such a team the outcome is better than any one person working alone.

**Peace:** The social skill or the interpersonal behavior tells a person at peace to have correct and rhythmic breathing which is the sign of harmony of mind and body. One can find discipline, effort, gentleness and politeness. Good health, patience, satisfaction, silent sitting, think before speaking are some of the positive signs in a person at peace.

Such people always think even when things are not going well for them, on the outside (eg friends not playing with them, anyone would not get them something they wanted etc), they are still strong and peaceful on the inside and these things cannot hurt them. This is keeping a feeling of calmness on the inside even if there is turmoil on the outside. This is like not getting angry and developing strategies for getting rid of angry feelings (or other bad feelings like jealousy) before they harm us or others.

What are the things that really give us inner contentment or happiness? How do we feel when we are given a new game or something we have wanted for a long time? How long does the happiness last? How do we feel when we help somebody who needs our help? How long does that happiness last? A peaceful forgiving nature that remains undisturbed under all circumstances and always give good to others no matter what is received in return. Silent sitting is a useful tool that can help everyone to get in touch with one's inner computer to solve his problems. If one fails at something or make a mistake it is not the end of the world, he can learn something from the experience and become a better person because of what he has learnt.

**Love:** Concern for others, consideration, dedication, friendship, helping, kindness, kindness to animals, love for all, sharing, sincerity, sympathy, unselfishness are some of the interpersonal qualities.

The important intrapersonal quality is forgiveness. Even if somebody does something bad to us, such a person will feel better if he can really, truly forgive them and then forget it. He wants the best outcome for others; giving without expecting anything in return.

**Non-violence:** Appreciation of other cultures, being a good citizen, being ready to help others, caring for the environment, ceiling on desires, concern for the environment, discriminating about what to watch on tv, what books and cartoons to read, looking after public property, not hurting others (people, animals, plants), not speaking harmful words, sense of social service are the interpersonal qualities.

The intrapersonal thought is about patriotism- What does it mean to a person to want to be the best citizen he can be for his country? What can he learn from the great heroes of the past and present? When somebody else is successful should he feel as happy for them as he would for his own success. Should he not feel jealous because he knows that everyone has something special that they can succeed at, including himself.

In all a person who develops truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence has a very good inner strength, develops social skills, has creativity, self-confidence and tolerance.

In the educational field, teachers play a huge role in student's lives, and form a major influencing factor for them right from the childhood to instill all these human values in them. They, with the help of chalk and board, can help students develop imagination that will help them to paint their

own world. Teaching is regarded as the noblest profession of all and these educators can lay the foundation of students' life. Apart from imparting academic knowledge, these mentors are also responsible for inculcating invaluable life lessons in their students.

## **ETHICS:**

It is essential that educators recognize their unique and influential role in society by honouring the standards established for their profession. They have to think about their Interactions with students. Knowledge of school policies and procedures, reputation in the community, in other words, use common sense. Every educator must ponder on what is the role and responsibility in maintaining the high ethical standards that define the teaching profession? Schooling is a trusted profession in which society holds teachers to the highest standard as role models. In accepting a position of public trust, teachers measure success by the progress of each student toward the realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. Lack of ethics at educational institutions are breeding greed, jealousy, bad career and disastrous life. Therefore, faculty and staff have a responsibility for creating an academic environment that promotes an honest academic discovery and teach students ethical behaviour in the process.

Teddy Roosevelt says: "To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace a society." Further, Margaret Chase Smith (the first woman elected to both houses of US Congress) thus spoke: "The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test for moral character." And Cal Thomas, in the book **The Death of Ethics in America**, expresses, "If we want to produce people who share the values, of a democratic culture, they must be taught those values and not be left to acquire them by chance." So we have to Empower individuals, Help others, Introduce Ethics and teach others, Create Whistle-blower policy, Feel responsible if any unethical activity happens from our side. As Gandhiji said, Practice What you Preach. Here we have to remind ourselves the story of 3 Jewels wished by a mother....

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar of India was the epitome of compassion. He along with his aged mother lived in a village near Calcutta. They lived in such abject poverty that they had hardly anything for food other than gruel. As Vidyasagar had sincerity and earnestness, he used to study even under street lights. One with sincerity can accomplish any task. Vidyasagar passed the law examination and obtained a good job. Neither happiness nor sorrow is permanent. One follows the other with the passage of time. Likewise, Vidyasagar's days of poverty were over as he was drawing a handsome salary.

One day, he told his mother that he wanted to buy some good Saris (Indian dresses) and jewels for her as he was earning sufficient money. He asked his mother to express her wish. The mother said that she did not need anything at that time and would express her wish at the appropriate time. Being an obedient son, he would never force his mother on any matter. As months passed by, his salary increased substantially. On a particular Sunday, he sat by his mother's side and said, "Mother, I have a lot of money with me, I pray you express your wish at least now". The mother said, "Son, I want three jewels. As there is no school in our village, the children are forced to walk long distances to attend school. The parents are concerned about their safety and spend anxious moments till they return from school in the evening. So, please construct a small school in our village. This is the first 'jewel' I desire from you". Accordingly, Vidyasagar got a school constructed in his village. After some time, his mother expressed her second wish. She said, "Our villagers are suffering from lack of medical facilities. When the children are afflicted with any disease, the mothers have to carry them to the town for treatment. So, I want you to

construct a small hospital in our village. This is the second 'jewel' I expect from you." Vidyasagar built a hospital too. As days rolled by, Vidyasagar's name and fame spread far and wide. People were all praise for his social activities. After some time, his mother expressed her third wish. She said, "Son! The water in all the wells in our village has been reduced to a trickle. The villagers are suffering due to lack of drinking water. So, I want you to make arrangements for water supply in our village."

As per his mother's wish, Vidyasagar provided drinking water to the villagers. His mother was overjoyed. She blessed her son saying, "I wish every mother had a noble son like you who dedicates his life to the welfare of the society.".....

*Story based on a discourse by Sathya Sai Baba in Sai Ramesh Hall, May 6, 2000. June 2000 Issue of Sanathana Sarathi.*

Everyone of us must understand that a foundation of Nation is at home and parents are the first teachers. But unfortunately both the parents are earning now and so society (films and others) took the responsibility of parenting. Added parents are in pursuit of their egos. This affects children's mindsets and grandparents do baby sitting on compulsion. They in turn say their sorrows to them which has an adverse effect on them. Sometimes the child is sent to a boarding school or taken care by a maid. Pocket money offered leads to spoiled habits. What is expected?

Society should stop pointing their fingers towards the teacher. Mass media should stop manipulating the issues. Parents should play their roles to raise their children. If any problem arises, have a discussion and come to an agreement. Give the teacher freedom to choose things and decide. And the teacher from his/her side must need to practice openness with colleagues, see that work is equally divided among all, there should be no ego of elder teachers with the new teachers.

Ethics is the study of right and wrong, duties and obligations. Ethics involves critical reflection on morality, including the ability to make choices between values and the examination of the moral dimensions of relationships. Professional ethics are the moral commitments of a profession that involve moral reflection. It extends and enhances the personal morality practitioners bring to their work, that concern actions of right and wrong in the workplace, and that help individuals resolve moral dilemmas they encounter in their work. Hence forth the teachers must be duly licensed professionals who possess dignity and reputation with high moral values as well as technical and professional competence. In the practice of his/her noble profession, he/she must strictly adhere to observe, and practice the set of ethical and moral principles, standard and values....

- Every teacher shall merit reasonable and social recognition for which purpose he shall behave with honour and dignity at all times.
- A teacher shall place premium upon self-respect and self-discipline as the principle of personal behaviour in all relationships with others and in all situations.
- A teacher shall maintain at all times a dignified personality which could serve as model worthy of emulation (match/surpass) by learners, peers, and others.
- A teacher both in his official and personal conduct must display exemplary behaviour.
- He must freely and willingly accept restrictions on his conduct that might be viewed irksome (irritating/annoying).
- The personal behaviour of teachers, in and outside the classroom, must be beyond reproach (disapproval/ disappointment).
- They must observe a high standard of integrity and honesty.



A simple reason for the want of quality Education.....

- Making sure that basic education is really solid, because if it is not solid, it affects the quality of secondary education.
- If secondary education is poor, then the person goes to college unprepared for college work.
- And if he is allowed to graduate again with a poor quality college education, he goes to university professional education even more unprepared.
- An institute, before promoting or graduating a student, must be sure that he/she (the student) is functionally literate to go through next higher level.
- Teachers must model strong character traits, including perseverance (determination), honesty, respect, lawfulness, fairness, patience, and unity. As an educator, teachers must treat every student with kindness and respect without showing any favoritism, prejudice or partiality.

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