

VALUES- THEIR IDENTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION

Meenakshi

Head & Professor of Education, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab, India

Abstract

"An unpleasant, combative environment at home and unresponsive, unsympathetic or ignorant teachers who cannot act as role models, are the principal reasons for decline of values," says Luther. Our school textbooks talk more about wars than about the lives of people with exemplary values. The students look for role models from the contemporary world, as they can relate to them. However, textbooks imply that such people lived only in Sat Yuga (the spiritually evolved era according to Hinduism) or centuries ago. The media also underplays reports of exemplary people as it assumes that good deeds are uninteresting, hence unsaleable. Cutthroat competition and the resulting higher stress levels. Stress may affect moral reasoning capacity and the ability to use it in real-life situations. Competitiveness exists because instead of trying to discover who we are, where our roots lie and how we can serve others, we are trying to become what we are not. Instead of trusting that real security comes from within, we are looking for it in money, possessions and power. Today, there is a powerful image of people, who seem to be leading happy and respectable lives even without ethics. Respect is proportional to money and external achievements, not to the quality of means employed to get them. Impressionable young minds choose unhealthy role models for themselves early in their lives. In this article an attempt has been made to identify values and their justification in contemporary Indian society.

Key Words: Values, Identification of values, Justification of values.

The Right to Education to every child of the age group of 6-14 will give birth to a literate and educated India. It will be the kind of India that the children of today and tomorrow are equipped through education to build and to live in. The great question is "what should this education be?" Will the children in existing framework, acquire in their homes, in their schools and in their communities the Social Vision, the Moral Stamina, the Mastery of Self and the Continuing Technical Competence necessary for the tasks that will be theirs? The answer depends upon how education influencing them.

Each of these four proposed acquisitions may have independent or related ingredients which education is to provide for. But what is there which would determine priorities and which would link them all. Obviously it is the values which an individual or a community or country or Mankind believes in and cherishes which guides the behaviour, forms the attitudes and directs the activity of the people. And if values are missing or negatively directed, a nation loses ground. India is gradually being placed in this situation. The Indian mind has grown new but wrong dimensions, deceitfulness is called tact, slyness is equated to wisdom, abuse of power called efficient administration, corruption and blackmailing are termed as business and hitting below the belt diplomacy and so on. The picture is dismal and dreadful, everywhere, in school at home, in office, in assembly, in parliament, hope can't feed people too long and mere promise can't sustain life. The country is trumpling. The school, the home, the community and the government, all are blaming one another. Introspection is nobody's concern. Let the more enlightened i.e. one's concerned with education give the lead. Let us place before us at least in schools and universities a handful of ideals to guide us and strive hard to achieve them.

What should these ideals be and where should look for them? It is an easy task indeed. Enlist some selected idioms and proverbs from any language (s) used in India and you will get a fairly comprehensive list of values which are born out of our culture, heritage, aspirations and capacities and in which there is no conflict, there is perfect agreement. Some such idioms may be: (1) Time is money, (2) Knowledge is power, (3) Work is worship, (4) Service before self, (5) Cleanliness is next to godliness, (6) Truth is evergreen and so on.

These idioms directly put forth values which we should cherish and work for. Some values which we should strive to inculcate in ourselves and in children may include (i) Knowledge, (ii) Hard work, (iii) Civilized language, (iv) Scientific thinking, (v) Service, (vi) Fairness, (vii) Freedom, (viii) Patriotism, (ix) Truth and (x) Discipline.

Students must have some conceptions of how much there is to know, and to how he should know and how little he himself knows. Is it not painful to find that thousands of young men and women pass through schools and universities without acquiring any interest in reading of books, without experiencing the magnificent thrill of coming into contact with creative ideas or great literature, without realising that an infinitely rich world of mind lies in front of them which they can but will not explore. Knowledge has to be accepted as an important value.

We can inculcate this value by changing the technology of teaching; by causing learning through situations, discussions self study and book readings.

Work is worship; devotion to duty is one of the virtues of centuries. Huxley said: "Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not." There are children and people of great ability who have never fulfilled their potentiality because they lacked the discipline necessary to get down to hard work. Realisation of certain minimum of knowledge and understanding (33% marks) is not enough. Students must learn to strive, to struggle, to work and to attain levels of performance related to their own capacities. Soft pedagogy must be replaced by rigorous course of activities and programmes.

Language is the distinguishing factor between the educated and uneducated. Use of civilized language by the students and teachers should be a goal worth achieving. A sample awareness of this fact can result in wonders.

Let me now turn to the third value: Scientific thinking. It is a common knowledge that we possess an idea or value with conviction only if we have something rejected it, argued against it. Ideas that are simply taken over from one generation by another, soon lose their meaning and vitality. They must be challenged by every new generation, tossed by intellectual battle, refined and improved. When ideas go through such a process not only do they have fresh meanings, but those who have worked them over, possess them and believe in them firmly and with conviction. Children have to be so oriented that their critical faculties develop fully, they are enabled to see clearly, hear clearly, observe clearly and infer and generalise without prejudice or bias. This is a great task which education has to accomplish. "A life of freedom" remarked late Dr. Zakir Hussain, "is not possible by being told, one has to think and to learn to do so readily and effectively." The life of dependence is narrow, a prescribed life. The life of freedom is wide and expensive; it is one long procession of choices. It requires constant explorations of diverse possibilities, it requires constant adaptation to change, it demands initiative and resourcefulness. But only if our children begin to think, think independently and on scientific lines. Again a challenge for teaching technology.

I touch one more value i.e. Service. Have our children learned to care. By care is meant love- love for one-self, for others, for country for people who are hungry, for people who suffer. Have our children learned to care about religion, about justice, righteousness and so on. If not their education has not as yet begun. Let us start with 'Care for Self'. A man who does not care for himself cannot care for others. A man who does not have respect for himself, who does not have a sense of his own dignity, who is not comfortable with the thought of his own nature, such a man cannot understand respect or love others. The great Urdu poet Iqbal has written two couplets which convey this concept vividly, one regarding self-exaltation, the other regarding self-lessness.

1. Meeta de apni hasti ko agar kuch Martaba chahe
ki dana khak main mil kar gule gulzar hota hain
2. Khudi ko kar buland itna ki Har takdeer se pehle
Khuda bande se puche ki teri raza kya hai

This way all the ten values enlisted above can be justified. Two changes hold a promise. One, in the teaching technology and the other in the behaviour of teachers

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