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VALUE EDUCATION AND PEACE EDUCATION IN THE 21st CENTURY



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

Recent crisis in 'value' in our youth has revived concern for value Education in India. The aim of education is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values (William S. Burroughs). Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men [and women] that the defenses of peace must be constructed — Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution. The dawn of the 21st century has seen our horizon being darkened with the daily tribulations, apathy and decadence of our every value system and beliefs. Peace is but a

mere word like honour, courage, and truth. Being a witness in this scenario of horror and bloodshed, one should make every attempt to address the issue of loss of peace and corroding of our values, polluting our very existence and severely eroding our sense of justice and good conscience.

KEYWORDS

Value, Society UNESCO, Peace, Education.

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INTRODUCTION :

Peace education is the process of acquiring the value, the knowledge and developing the attitude, skills and behaviour to live in harmony with one self, with others, and with the natural environment. The adage that the pen is mightier than the sword (Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1839) has its worth in understanding the value of a good quality education. The aim of quality education is to prepare a human being who is intelligent, knowledgeable, hard-working, efficient, disciplined, smart, successful, loving, compassionate, and to inculcate such qualities one needs to have a holistic approach of imparting education. 'By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning" -M. K. Gandhi [Harijan: July 31, 1937]. The whole education system should include not just the school where a child receives his basic learning skills, but his total environment, his school, his family and the society of which he is an integral part. A child's mind is hungry for knowledge and he learns from his surroundings, even more so than his classroom, absorbing the good and the evil of his environment.

We have made great strides in the 21st century in every sphere of life. The new innovations in the field of science and technology has seen us visiting moon, winning our fight against deadly diseases like small pox, tuberculosis, cholera, pneumonia and such others, taking gigantic leap in the field of communication by sending radio messages in search of extra stellar beings and improving communication from one end of the earth to the other with the help of mobile, satellite phones and Internet. We have made effective laws to stop the violence of racism, took measures to secure women's dignity and self-respect, and tried to imbibe the values of free speech and movement, respect of self and others. Despite all our efforts and goodwill, we still find the degradation of our value and belief systems.

The erosion of our value system becomes evident when brilliant young minds use them to fulfill their criminal intentions. The bombings of numerous places around the world by terrorists like Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Toiba, and the killing of thousand of innocents by the Taliban and the ISIS, the plundering of merchant and passenger vessels by the Somali pirates, the outrageous acts of physical and mental abuse, sexual harassments on women and children all over the world are a dangerous trend of mutation and annihilation of our values. Human history is a history of wars and exploits, murders and mayhem alongwith the understanding of peace and co-operation, value of teamwork and solidarity, development of aesthetics, arts and culture, values and traditions, new innovations, always striking a balance between the two. This balance between Yin and Yang is very much essential for maintaining progress, achieving success and overall development of our world for posterity.

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss the Value Education in Indian History.
- To discuss the challenges in 21st century Education system.
- To discuss the Value Education and Peace Education.
- To discuss the role of Parents, Teachers & Society in shaping the youth

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METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature and purely relies on secondary data sourced from various books, articles, journals, reports and websites.

Value Education in Indian History

Since the early Vedic ages, value education had its place in our Indian society and culture. In the Gurukul system of learning in those days, children were sent to Ashrams, where they used to get training required to live a full and meaningful life. Along with the important subjects of science and astrology, politics and warfare, value education at every point in their life were taught in the form of moral stories, and practical experiments. They were taught to learn to respect their elders, treat their peers as brothers, and fight for the dignity of women and to treat them as equal partners to men. Through the art of fighting, they were also taught to practice non-violence, treat children with empathy, cherish honour and dignity, and also to love animals and not harm them without a just cause. The respect for nature was ingrained in them during their Ashram life, which was mostly spent among the natural habitats of the forest areas, where the Ashrams were located.

This system of belief and values saw a radical change during the Muslim rule in India. The calm and quiet forest life of Ashram was no longer enough to secure the dignity of motherland. The invaders, who came to India during this period, severely challenged the Indian belief system of peace and non-violence. The plundering of Indian temples, forceful conversions to Islam, kidnapping of women, killing of innocents all lead to a time of tribulations. People needed security and protection, and value education took a backseat, and wielding a sword became a necessity. The Rajputs (warrior kings) came into prominence fighting for freedom, protecting the dignity and honour of women and children, and maintaining the general norms of tradition and culture of Hindu religion. Slowly and extensively with the rise of Mughal power over India saw a new set of value system gaining prominence.

The Mughals, unlike their predecessors were not only conquerors, but they were also keen on setting up their own kingdom in India. In spite of fights with the Rajput kings, the Mughal emperors also develop friendship and kinship with them. It leads to an admixing of the Hindu value system with the Mughal temperament. Some of the great Mughal rulers like Babur, Akbar, Shahjahan were great patrons of art and architecture. During their rule, people from different views and value systems learn to reside together in peace and harmony, practising their own religion and values. The period saw the erection of beautiful monuments like the Tajmahal, Humayun's tomb, Agra fort and Red fort on one hand, and the development of art and literature in the form of beautiful works of Amir Khusrau, Omar Khayyam and such others. Singers like Tansen were considered as jewels of Emperor Akbar's court. This period also witnessed the rising of the Bhakti Movement; Rajput princess Meera Bai, a devotee of Lord Krishna, travelling saints like Kabir, Sur Das, all preached the words of peace, tolerance, dignity, honour, courage, and self-respect. They were all crucial in their own way of maintaining and inculcating values in the minds of people leading them to a path of righteousness.

The weakening of the Mughal era saw the birth of a new age. The world of opulence and religious tolerance prevailing under the Mughal rule in India saw another radical change. After the failed war of Independence of 1857, the British came into power and started their rule all over India. The British East India Company were mainly traders those who travelled a long distance to develop a

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colony to further their business interests. They look upon India as a land of opportunity for harvesting cheap labour, agriculture and machinery products. The comfort and development of their subjects were never encouraged by them. They required clerks to run their offices and do their biddings and so education was limited to learning the few skills of the trade. After years of oppression under British rule and during the struggle of freedom, men like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar all understood and stressed the importance of education. They were responsible in developing a sense of value and justice, urge the youth to fight against country's freedom in peaceful and non violent ways, and taught self reliance, dignity and self respect as cherished ideals to be treasured by all as basic human qualities.

The Challenges in 21st Century Education System

The present era has seen us facing many challenges. The world is getting fragmented with different issues like individuals getting tagged as belonging to certain groups, like racial, ethnic, religious, political and social, and these people are showing loyalty and defending their respective groups.

Science and technology have been misused for our ill gains. Earlier wars were fought using simple weapons like bows, arrows and swords. But modern technology has provided us with weapons of mass destruction; with one flick of a button we can wipe out an entire city within a few seconds. These kinds of technology in retaliatory warfare along with nuclear capability of so many countries are a threat to our very own existence.

We use nature as a means to an end for our benefit. The rampant ill use and destruction of natural resources and non renewable energy without any thought for the dangerous consequences has seen the deadly effect with rampaging tornadoes, destructive floods, major tsunamis and earthquakes wreaking havoc all over the world. Our natural resources like fresh groundwater level and the oil and natural gas storages are also getting depleted with a rise in global pollution level. We are suffering from innumerable diseases a major fallout of the natural calamity for which we alone are responsible. But still the race is on to exploit nature for our immediate benefit and to strengthen one's economy is as steadfast as ever.

The threats posed by dictatorship in some third world nations are responsible for killing the voice of reason. As is said that power corrupts and that is so true in dictatorship which has its roots in wielding power over the weak and exploiting the needy. The true spirit of democracy can only shine through this darkness when education triumphs over our hearts driving away the erosion of values, strengthening our interpersonal bonds, awakening our compassion and foster convivial atmosphere amongst us all.

The family institution since time immemorial has played a definitive role in developing our value system and strengthening our moral backbone. Within joint family system, we had learnt the capacity of love, values of discipline, spirit of care and share, respect for all and self belief in our abilities. The disappearance of joint family system coupled with breakdown in marriages through divorce has placed our children in a situation of anxiety, insecurity and fear. They are suffering from identity crises, developing volatile anger towards their family, taking to drugs and other such criminal activities, losing interest in education, performing poorly in schools and later at jobs, developing suicidal and/or homicidal tendencies, and falling into a life of general decadence.

The general disposition of today's youth is a concern for the society, and the world at large. Prejudices, intolerance, animosity, and recklessness prevalent in our society have been responsible in

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creating a cruel and cavalier attitude amongst youths, ruining their moral values and resulting in hampering peace. The rise in crime rate all over the world is a direct result of this inaction of society and indifferent attitude towards all kinds of problem.

Value Education and Peace

We are all striving towards achieving success and fulfilling our life goals. Our system of education is preparing students to develop their skills so that they can be successful professionals in their respective chosen fields. So we are developing the technical knowledge of the students. We are thus failing to stress the importance of inculcating values, to temper the sharpness of our knowledge with the sweetness of our moral compass. The degradation of our values has given birth to robots and not human beings full of compassion and love, educated youths being seen falling for the charms of criminal world being lured by easy money. Success nowadays is equated with power and wealth, and to be successful people are breaking all kinds of rules with nonchalance, not fearing any consequences resulting from their actions. The crimes of forgery, theft and taking bribes have become commonplace occurrences, and we are not shocked by gruesome tales of murder or sexual abuse on women. Standing at this juncture the importance of attributes of peace education (Appendix 1) - respect for all, to empathize with each other's viewpoints, show appreciation of and respect for diversity, be committed to social justice, equity and equality, and nonviolence, so that there is a boost in the self esteem of young adults to meet the rising problems of social issues, and also grow a concern for the environment is monumental in shaping the moral backbone of our youth. There are three levels of Peace building for developing global society.

1. Peace building at individual level
2. Peace building at community level for developing peaceful communities, and
3. Peace building for developing global society (—Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution)

Value education can be used to imbue the attributes of peace, and it stands on the four pillars of life-long learning concepts. They are learning to know applying general knowledge to develop self learning techniques. Learning to do applying skills to deal with situations and developing team spirit. Learning to be enabling each student to discover, expose and enrich his creative potential and Learning to live together educating students about human diversity, promoting social awareness, acceptance and respect towards others (UNESCO, 1996).

Values are those qualities which inspire people to choose the righteous path of action, and provide them with lifelong direction. They are devoid of any political, religious and philosophical influence, and are thus universal. They built attitudes which are beneficial for society and also the individual in the long run. Values which are taught at a young age can leave an everlasting impression and create enlightened persona leading to the birth of a society which can exist in peace and harmony.

Role of Parents, Teachers and Society in Shaping the Youth

A child is educated by his surrounding environment inclusive of parents, teachers and society, all of whom moulds the child to create a better society.

Role of Parents: Parental love should not be a hindrance in the path of developing right attitudes and behavior in their children. A child should be encouraged to learn from his mistakes, and wrong

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attitudes should not be fostered. Value education begins within family and children from broken homes or nuclear families usually show a weakened value system and sometimes head on the road of violence and aggression. So the role of family in infusing the values of peace and morality cannot be denied.

Role of School: In today's world, schools strive for education that prepares students for productive job market. Success is equated with wealth and power acquire through education while quality education, and value education recedes to the background. Mere transfer of theoretical and practical knowledge won't do, instead the teacher should awake originality, curiosity and positive emotions in the child. The teacher should practice what he preaches, and accept the philosophy of value education in his own life. The teachers should realize his inherent limitations and the traditional education they have received should not be an impediment while fulfilling their duties.

Role of Society: Society worships the rich and powerful. Inherent social values are not appreciated. Even mass media projects the suffering of good at the hands of the evil. The wrong but quick shortcut to fame, success and wealth enchants young minds. Again society has some traditional beliefs handed down generations, value education must create an inquisitive mind questioning and breaking down these prejudices. It's high time we realize as a society that technology and cooperative values are equally essential in ensuring our progress.

CONCLUSION

LVEP (Living Values Education Program) is a worldwide program, providing teacher training methodologies and value based activities using which teachers and parents can develop universal values in children. Teachers are made to self assess their value system and use their imagination to include values into content and classroom. Students are engaged in activities which develop their cognitive and emotional skills through analyzing situations and generating solutions. NPE, 1986 and NCF, 2000 have stressed upon value education in educational institutions. In line with this, IIM, Kozhikode and IIM, Calcutta have incorporated courses based on values and spirituality in their curriculum. Education must encourage self assessment, power of judgment and provide all round development of individual in senses (cognitive) and sentiments (affective). Education sharpens the child's intellectual power but value education teaches him the right way to use the power.

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