

## PHILOSOPHY OF VALUE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*The present paper "Philosophy of value education" is the response or reaction of a teacher to the on-going debate and dialogue on the nature of value education. The time is right for a well-thought out plan for the implementation of value education to achieve our goal of a good society and enlightened citizens. As Goethe said, "Knowing is not enough, we must apply, willing is not enough, we must do".*

**Key words:** Philosophy, Education, Value Education, Teacher.

### Introduction

The word 'Philosophy', according to Chamber's 21st century Dictionary, has broadly three meanings:

1. The search for truth and knowledge, concerning the universe, human existence, perception and behaviour, pursued by means of reflection, reasoning and arguments;
2. Any particular system or set of beliefs established as a result of this;
3. A set of principles that serves as a basis for making judgments and decisions.

The issues relating to value education have to be discussed in this perspective for meaningful and practical results. Education is supposed to impart two main benefits, capability and character: Both ought to be harmoniously blended. Education gives the knowledge, skills and attitude to shoulder the responsibilities with confidence and a sense of self-respect in the world. Again, it helps to cultivate character, which is the hallmark of a civilized human being and an enlightened citizen. Values may be viewed as beliefs that help to model our assessment of relative worth and importance. They influence our approaches to:

1. How one ought or ought not to behave.
2. The desirability or undesirability of achieving certain ends or goals.

From this angle, values influence and shape both our goals and patterns of activity. Our values often make conflicting demands upon our behaviour because they relate to roles which are not always consistent and congruent...when two or more values are making conflicting claims on our conduct, ethical reflection helps us to devise the paramount value in that particular context. The clarity of approach, naturally, depends on our sensitivity to the ethical dimension of our work and behavior and how far we are really trying to strengthen and sharpen it. Sometimes, an objection is made that values are relative and one's freedom of choice cannot be fettered by a set of values. The plea of relativism cannot be permitted to justify unfettered conduct, permissiveness, or action only from one's selfish viewpoint. It certainly points to the dynamic nature of values and its ones conscience that can act as a guide in certain circumstances. There are certain universal values like honesty, truthfulness, justice, freedom, equity, order, beauty, loyalty and so on which can hardly be dispensed within any situation. It is neither possible nor necessary for one to attempt to catalogue various values that society cherishes and wants to promote and preserve. It may also not be worthwhile to classify them as individual values, social values, holistic values, community or professional values. Values are values: the perception and adherence as the right time makes all the difference. Deviance from value creates a climate of distrust. Edmund Burke David, it is the virtues of individual citizens which add to the greatness of the nation.

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Education is rooted in humanities civilizational quest and perspective within each society and in an interaction and reciprocative relationship among different civilizations. Civilization and culture represent the process of evolving values and the hierarchy of values and the possibility of conscious reflection and replacement of values. Education is meant to cultivate the minds and hone the skills of those who are educated. It is meant to advance the frontiers of knowledge and philosophy. It is meant to build character. It is meant to inculcate moral commitment and to inspire humanity to higher purpose. The purpose of knowledge is to organize and consolidate knowledge, to transmit knowledge, to make knowledge serve the overarching twin purposes of social progress and individual evolution, to establish justice and human dignity. Value-based education is like a slup with a compass; it is a road-map of cognitive and constitutional moral consciousness. That is why the value which we wish to promote and inculcate depends largely on the view we take of human life and universe, which in turn, depends also on our view of human nature: Hobbes, a great western philosopher thought that human nature is essentially predatory, aggressive, and hostile. He said that a human being to another human being is like a wolf. Home Homim Lupus, Rousseau thoughts of the primitive man as a noble savage. Both of them came to the conclusion that for human civilization is to preserve itself and to make progress, it became necessary for the civilization to be based on a social contract. The social contract is in the nature of an organic law or constitution, based on human instincts, aspirations and values and meant to regulate human relations within the framework of state and society. Every social contract is based on the basic conception of the good life and on the ground norm of ethics.

Values can be inculcated in every society to preserve order, to establish justice, to foster fellow-feeling, to preserve human freedom and dignity and to provide checks and balances in respect to the authority and institutions of state and society. No society can exist without moral and spiritual values and without self-discipline. That is why it is necessary to consider the role of education as an instrument of establishing, advancing and self-guarding moral values. Value-based education is meant to provide a sense of direction, a sense of purpose, a sense of commitment for individual development and for social progress. Without the sheet of anchor of value orientation, education will be steroid and will be like a rudderless ship on uncharted waters. As Einstein put it, "The foremost task of education in the Atomic Age is that all human endeavors are based on morality. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our action can give beauty and dignity to life". In Kothari's view, to make values a living force and weave them into the fabric of consciousness is the foremost task of education. He emphasized that never before in human history there was as today so much knowledge especially science and technology and yet never before there was so much violence, hatred, mistrust and greed. He lamented dehumanization of man in our age and felt that something had gone wrong terribly. For that dismal situation education divorced from character building bore a major responsibility. Dr. Kothari's unhesitating and unequivocal prescription was value based education and the building of a sense of responsibility and development of the ability to judge, he therein right and the wrong in order to rescue humanity from the dangers of moral decay. To him no knowledge would be immoral and knowledge and its use could never be ethically a matter of neutrality. Those who take a negative and pessimistic view of value-oriented education belong basically to the human species of cynics. A cynic is in the words of Oscar Wild, "a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing". Cynicism is essentially a kind of intellectual dandyism. These cynics oppose value oriented education and are often heard to speak in the name of secularism and modernization. The Kothari Commission report explained that modernization did not mean last of all in our national situation....a refusal to recognize the importance of inculcating necessary moral and spiritual

values and self-discipline.

National policy of Education 1986 speaks of the need for value education as follows:

*“The growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for re-adjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values”.*

In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstitions and fatalism. In India, there have been glimpses of understanding and consciousness of value education since the very dawn of freedom. Many committees, headed by distinguished personalities have discussed the subject and made substantive recommendations. Two important commissions, headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Kothari, underscored the need for induction of values in our educational system. ‘Religious Education’, ‘Moral education’ and ‘Spiritual Education’ have also been used, now there is greater consensus as regard the use of the term “value education”. The report of the Kothari Commission refers to the mis-understanding that the use of the word ‘religion’ quite often causes in certain quarters in the context of our pluralistic and multi-cultural society. It also observes:

*“In such a society however, one had to make a distinction between ‘religious education’ and ‘education about religions’. The former is largely concerned with the teaching of the tenants and practices of particular religion, generally in the form in which the religious group envisages whereas the latter is a study of religion and religious thought from a broad point of view-the internal quest of the spirit”.*

The commission goes on to recommend that:

*“It is however necessary for a multi-religious democratic state to promote a tolerant study of all religions so that its citizens can understand each other better and live amicably together.....we suggest that a syllabus giving well-chosen information about each of the major religions should be included as a part of the course in citizenship or as part of general education to be introduced in schools and colleges up to the first degree”.*

This highlights the dilemma of a pluralistic society in daily life. Hence the cautious approach about the need for awareness of religions and the presentation of the problems in its wider context.

We have the constitutional provision which stipulates that,

*“No religious instructions shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of the state funds”.*

In this background the Kothari commission makes this distinction between ‘religious education’ and ‘education about religions’ or ‘information about religion’. The perception of the Kothari Commission is also reflected in the 1986 National Policy on Education which emphasizes truth, peace, Non-violence, right conduct and love as the core values. Thus religion becomes one of the powerful source of values for a society, but not the main or sole one. With globalization and movement of people from one country to another, many countries are now facing increasingly the problem of religions and cultural pluralism. There is a growing realization that mutual understanding of the basics and essentials of other religions is necessary if social or political cohesion is to be maintained. We find that the movement of inter-faith dialogue is gaining ground. The essential purpose of the need for such a meeting of minds had its impact on UNESCO which promoted on recent years in many regions of the world a ‘dialogue on civilization’ after which heat had been generated in intellectual circles about Samuel Huntington’s thesis on the ‘clash of

civilizations'. While the Indian constitution is wedded to secularism, our concept of secularism is not anti-religious or irreligious. It has repeatedly clarified by our judicial interpretations that our constitution gives equal freedom to the followers of all religions. It stands for equality of treatment. The state as such has no religion of its own.

Aurobindo Ghosh's educational vision, which he describes as 'integral education', the genesis of his vision for present day India can be traced to four facts:

01. Age-old neglect and exploitation of the masses;
02. Religion as vital force in the lives of even the poorest and the lowliest;
03. The need to eradicate their hunger and bare necessities of life; and
04. The need for the masses to have both secular as well as spiritual knowledge.

He made a fervent plea for harmonizing the scientific knowledge of the west and Indian spirituality. On the other hand, universal Spirituality that Swami Vivekananda proposed has a unique and important characteristic; it does not have barriers separating the sacred from the secular. 21<sup>st</sup> Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, on Value based education which was presided over by the late Sh. S.B. Chavan, a senior statesman and a former Union Minister of Education; it may be worthwhile to quote two relevant extracts from the report which sums up the purpose, approach and the content of value education:

*"Truth (Satya), righteous conduct (Dharma), Peace (Shanti), love (prema), and non-violence (Ahimsa) are the core universal values which can be identified as the foundation stone in which the value-based education programme can be built. These five are indeed universal values and respectively represent the five domains of human personality- intellectual, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. They are also correspondingly co-related with five major objectives of education, namely- knowledge, skill, balance, vision and identity".*

India has the potential to become a land of splendid opportunities if only the human resources are properly developed and a disciplined work culture is cultivated. Our problems are corruption, reluctance, to work hard and lack of scientific temper. If education can help overcome these handicaps, we can eradicate poverty from this land and provide opportunities for every citizen to develop his or her potential. This is where values become important in education and personality development. Today, the society in general and youth in particular are passing through a state which portends danger for the future. Education should condition the mind to make individuals to function effectively and to have a fulfilling life. In a situation in which children spend less and less time with parents and are bombarded with quick fix solutions for every problem through media, it is important that centers of higher learning devise ways to promote ethical choices to the educated persons who are expected to be thinking individuals.

Values become important for an educated person in the context of the emerging forces of globalization converting everything to the naked fury of the market forces. Knowledge benefit of values can be dangerous. Look at the way organized crimes, financial frauds and violence are being perpetrated by some of the people with the best educational and technical endowments. Look at the way even the members of the learned professions indulge in scandalous unethical conduct to make money in total disregard to their professional obligations and social responsibilities. The need for Value based education is central to all forms of education, but there are differences of opinion among teachers and educational administrators on how to organize it in the curriculum. The result is that it is not attempted at all and is left to individual judgment based on one's own perception and experience. Dr. Kothari was deeply concerned about

unbelievable de-humanization of man and decay of humanness in today's world. He noticed that there is on the one hand the exponentially rising spiral of science, technology and production (in STP spiral) and on the other we have greed, hatred and delusion (in GHD spiral). He felt this in today's world something has terribly gone wrong resulting in total disregard for human values and the sufferings of the poor and the destitute. The world is rampant with violence. Dr. Kothari considered knowledge and values as complimentary and mutually reinforcing. He was of the view that, knowledge without ethical, moral values degenerates into arrogance and is of little avail to the individual or of benefits to the community. In the UGC Report 1972, he elaborated his ideas about the type of education which is required at all levels in the country. According to him:

*“The role of education is to improve the material standard of the people and to enrich the quality of life. Besides Knowledge and skills, education should be also concerned with the ‘inner content’ of our lives, with ideals and idealism and strengthening of the spirit. We need a balance between three overlapping divisions of education (at all levels) which may perhaps be described as: technical, strategic and humanistic. The first refers to the theoretical and practical knowledge of immediate and short term utility, the second to knowledge of life long utility and value, and the third relates the quality and meaning of life”*

In one of his convocation address, he said:

*“The basic task of education at all levels is to promote powers of the mind, acquisition of special skills and advancement of knowledge; but above all to generate in the young generations a sense of purposefulness and mission, dedication, confidence in themselves and faith in the country's future. This underscores the significance of moral education and promotion of an abiding sense of ethical values and social responsibility, as integral element of education in any society, secular or otherwise. The ultimate source within us, which leads to self-less and courageous deeds and creative work, is moral and spiritual, and education should help an individual to find, nourish and strengthen it”.*

Dr. Kothari noted that serious defect in the school curriculum is the absence of provision for education in social, moral and spiritual values. He further noted that in the life of the Indians religion is a great motivating force and is ultimately bound up with the formation of character and the inculcation of ethical values. A national system of education that is related to the life needs, and aspirations of the people cannot afford to ignore this purposeful force. The commission recommended that conscious and organized attempt should be made for imparting moral education and inculcating spiritual values in schools through direct and indirect method with the help of the ethical teaching of great religions. To conclude, the significance of value education, Shri Aurobindo says:

*“It is essential that society should refuse to give exclusive importance to success, career and money and that it should insist instead on the paramount need of the full and real development of the students by contact with the spirit and the growth and manifestation of the truth of the being in the body, life and mind”.*

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