

1. Value Education

Character oriented education that instils basic values and ethnic values in one's psyche is called 'Value Based Education'. The subject that enables us to understand 'what is valuable' for human happiness is called value education. Value education is important to help everyone in improving the value system that he/she holds and puts it to use. Once, one has understood his/ her values in life he/she can examine and control the various choices he/she makes in his/ her life. Value education enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly and also helps to remove our confusions and contradictions and bring harmony at all levels. It also helps remove our confusions and contradictions and enables us to rightly utilize the technological innovations.

Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behaviours and actions. Once we know what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor for our actions. We also need to understand the universality of various human values, because only then we can have a definite and common program for value education. Then only we can be assured of a happy and harmonious human society.

2. What are the basic guidelines for value education?

The subject that enables us to understand 'what is valuable' for human happiness is called value education. In order to qualify for any course on value education, the following guidelines for the content of the course are important:

- **Universal:** It needs to be applicable to all the human beings irrespective of cast, creed, nationalities, religion, etc., for all times and regions.
- **Rational:** It has to appeal to human reasoning. It has to be amenable to reasoning and not based on dogmas or blind beliefs.
- **Natural and verifiable:** It has to be naturally acceptable to the human being who goes through the course and when we live on the basis of such values it leads to our happiness. It needs to be experientially verifiable, and not based on dogmas, beliefs or assumptions.
- **All encompassing:** Value education is aimed at transforming our consciousness and living. Hence, it needs to cover all the dimensions (thought, behaviour, work and realization) and levels (individual, family, society, nature and existence) of human life and profession.

• **Leading to harmony:** The value education ultimately is targeted to promote harmony within the individual, among human beings and with nature.

3. Need for Value Education Today's Scenario

The subject that enables us to understand 'what is valuable' for human happiness is called value education.

* **Correct identification of our aspirations.** The subject which enables us to understand 'what is valuable' for human happiness is called 'value education' (VE). Thus, VE enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly and also indicate the direction for their fulfilment. It also helps to remove our confusions and contradictions and bring harmony at all levels.

* **Understanding universal human values to fulfil our aspirations in continuity.** Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behaviours and actions. Once we know what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor for our actions. We also need to understand the universality of various human values, because only then we can have a definite and common program for value education. Then only we can be assured of a happy and harmonious human society.

* **Complementarity of values and skills.** To fulfil our aspirations both values and skills are necessary. When we identify and set the right goals and produced in right direction. This is known as **value domain**, the domain of wisdom, and when we learn and practices to actualize this goal to develop the techniques to make this happen in real life, in various dimensions of human endeavor (struggle). This is known as **domain of skills**.

Hence, there is an essential complementarity between values and skills for the success of any human endeavor. For example, I want to lead a healthy life. Only wishing for good health will not help me keep my body fit and healthy and without having understood the meaning of health, I will not be able to choose things correctly to keep my body fit and healthy.

* **Evaluation of our beliefs.** Each one of us believes in certain things and we base our values on these beliefs, be they false or true which may or may not be true in reality. These believes come to us from what we read, see, hear, what our parents tells us, our friends talk about, what the magazines talk of, what we see from TV etc. Value Education helps us to evaluate our beliefs and assumed values.

***Technology and human values.** The present education system has become largely skill-based. The prime emphasis is on science and technology. However, science and technology can only help to provide the means to achieve what is considered valuable. It is not within the scope of science and technology to provide the competence of deciding what really is valuable. Value Education is a crucial missing link in the present education system. Because of this deficiency, most of our efforts may prove to be counterproductive and serious crises at the individual, societal and environmental level are manifesting.

4. Skills and Human Values are Complementary

Values means importance or participation and skills means qualities, training, and capabilities. To fulfil our aspirations both values and skills are necessary. When we identify and set the right goals and produced in right direction. This is known as value domain, the domain of wisdom. Basically we must know what really is useful to achieve human happiness, the happiness to all and for all the time.

And when we learn and practices to actualize this goal to develop the techniques to make this happen in real life, in various dimensions of human endeavour (struggle). This is known as domain of skills. Hence, there is an essential complementarity between values and skills for the success of any human endeavour.

For example, I want to lead a healthy life. Only wishing for good health will not help me keep my body fit and healthy and without having understood the meaning of health, I will not be able to choose things correctly to keep my body fit and healthy. So i have to learn the skills to achieve the goal of good health i.e. food to be consumed, the physical workout to be designed. So without knowing the meaning of good health, health cannot be achieved and also it is necessary to make use of the goal to achieve the goal of the goal.

5. Self – Exploration

Self-exploration is the process to find out what is valuable to me by investigating within myself, what is right for me, true for me, has to be judged within myself. Through self-exploration we get the value of ourself. We live with different entirety (family, friends, air, soil, water, trees, etc.) and we want to understand our relationship with all these. For this we need to start observing inside. The main focus of self-exploration is myself - the human being. Content of self-exploration is just finding answers to the following fundamental questions of all human beings:

1. The Desire/Goal: What is my (human) Desire/ Goal? What do I really want in life, or what is the goal of human life?

2. Program: What is my (human) program for fulfilling the desire? How to fulfil it? What is the program to actualize the above?

In short, the above two questions cover the whole domain of human aspirations and human endeavor. Thus, they form the content of self- exploration.

6. What you are' and What you really want to be

Self-exploration is the process to find out what is valuable to me by investigating within myself, what is right for me, true for me, has to be judged within myself. Through self-exploration we get the value of ourself. It is a process of focusing attention on ourself, our present beliefs and aspirations vis-à-vis what we really want to be (that is to say, what is naturally acceptable to us. If these two are the same, then there is no problem. If on investigation we find that these two are not the same, then it means we are living with this contradiction (of not being what we really want to be) and hence, we need to resolve this contradiction this conflict within us. It is a process of discovering that there is something innate, invariant and universal in all human beings. This enables us to look at our confusions and contradictions within and resolve them by becoming aware of our natural acceptance.

7. Natural Acceptance

Natural acceptance implies unconditional and total acceptance of the self, people and environment. It also refers to the absence of any exception from others. Once we fully and truly commit ourself on the basis of natural acceptance, we feel a holistic sense of inner harmony, tranquillity and fulfilment. Actually natural acceptance is way to accept the good things naturally. Learn everything that is good from others, but bring it in, and in our own way absorb it; do not become others. We can easily verify proposals in the basis of characteristics of natural acceptance mentioned below:

a) Natural acceptance does not change with time. It remains invariant with time. For example, our natural acceptance for trust and respect does not change with age.

b) It does not depend on the place. Whatever we have accepted, in our life, at any time of our age, does not change, even if we move from one place to another one.

c) **It does not depend on our beliefs or past conditionings.** No matter how deep our belief or past conditioning, as long as we ask ourselves the question sincerely, as long as we refer deep within ourselves, the answer will always be the same.

d) **This natural acceptance is 'constantly there', something we can refer to.** Natural acceptance is always there. Whatever we do, this natural acceptance is within us, it is telling us what is right.

e) **Natural acceptance is the same for all of us: it is part and parcel of every human being, it is part of humanness.** Though each one of us, may have different likes and dislikes and means to live and to react etc. but if we go deep in our mind the purpose of our work, behaviour, efforts etc. are based on common goals like need to be happy, need to be respected, need to get prosperity. So our basic acceptance remains the same.

8. Prosperity

The feeling of having or making available more than required physical facilities is prosperity. Almost all of us feel that wealth alone means prosperity and try to explain this phenomenon on this non-existent or half fact. We are trying to achieve happiness and prosperity by maximizing accumulation and consumption of physical facilities. It is becoming anti-ecological and anti-people, and threatening the human survival itself. For prosperity, two things are required-

- 1. Identification of the required quantity of physical facilities, and**
- 2. Ensuring availability / production of more than required physical facilities.**

We can be prosperous only if there is a limit to the need for physical facilities. If there is no limit what so ever be the availability the feeling of prosperity cannot be assured.

Secondly, just assessing the need is not enough. We need to be able to produce or make available more than the perceived need.

9. Difference between Prosperity and Wealth

Prosperity is a feeling of having more than required physical facilities; it is not just physical facilities. Almost all of us feel that wealth alone means prosperity and try to explain this phenomenon on this non-existent or half fact. Wealth is a physical thing. It means having money, or having a lot of physical facilities or both. This is a very important distinction. We mostly fail to make this distinction today. We keep working for wealth, without realizing that

the basic desire is for the feeling of prosperity, to have a *feeling* of having enough. Prosperity is more acceptable to us because wealth is just a part of prosperity. We are trying to achieve happiness and prosperity by maximizing accumulation and consumption of physical facilities. It is becoming anti-ecological and anti-people, and threatening the human survival itself. A person has lot of money, but does not want to share even a bit of it. The person 'has wealth' but feels 'deprived'. If one felt prosperous he/she would have shared what one has, since there is lot more than enough wealth anyway.

10. Present Vision of a Happy and Prosperous life

We are trying to achieve happiness and prosperity by maximizing accumulation and consumption of physical facilities. It is becoming anti-ecological and anti-people, and threatening the human survival itself.

Some of the consequences of such trend are summarized below:

* **At the level of individual:** rising problems of depression, psychological disorders, suicides, stress, insecurity, etc.

* **At the level of family:** breaking of joint families, mistrust, and conflict between older and younger generations, insecurity in relationships, divorce, dowry tortures, etc.

* **At the level of society:** growing incidence of terrorism and naxalism, rising communalism, spreading casteism, racial and ethnic struggle, wars between nations, etc.

* **At the level of nature:** global warming, water, air, soil, noise etc. pollution, resource depletion of minerals and mineral oils, etc.

All the problems are a direct outcome of an incorrect understanding, our wrong notion about happiness and prosperity and their continuity – this is an issue for serious exploration.

