
THE NEED FOR VALUES IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: ROLE OF LITERATURE

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Abstract: People love literature because they believe that it holds a mirror to society and because it is didactic in nature to some extent. Undoubtedly, while reading literary works presented in various genres, it is evident that it conveys profound lessons of life, and it serves as a source of abundant knowledge on the cultures and values of people from all across the world and their diversities. There is an immediate need to nurture values and pass it on to the new generation because morals and values seem to be receding away with the rapid advancements in the field of technology. There is a dire need to rewire, relearn and reaffirm the strength of the values that we received from our family, elders, society and scriptures. Human values are quintessential in one's life. The need for value education has become crucial as we continue to witness the increasing violent activities, behavioural disorders, chaos and lack of unity in the society. Value education enables us to focus on the higher purposes of life leading to harmony and peaceful co-existence. It also shapes the future of every individual and the society at large. Value education also creates opportunities for perpetual training that could be a strong foundation for a value-based society. Moreover, it may also minimise the generation gap and create more harmony and understanding between people of different generations. English literary texts have been, since ages, serving as a strong base for values and morals which need to be inculcated irrespective of the age, region, culture and social background. Therefore it is suggested that the curriculum designers incorporate more value-oriented literary works for study from lower classes of school itself, so that there is adequate training in morals and ethics.

Keywords: Imbibe, Values, Perpetual Learning, Contemporary Society, Harmony, Co-Existence, Diversity, Culture, Generation Gap, Higher Purpose, Behavior, Value Education, Scriptures, Technology

Introduction: According to De Paix Graines, human values convey a positive and affective surge, which reinforces the rationale of moral values. They are the values that permit us to live together in harmony, and personally contribute to peace. Human values are the virtues that guide us to take into account the human element when we interact with other human beings. Human values are, for example, respect, acceptance, consideration, appreciation, listening, openness, affection, empathy and love towards other human beings. It is with those human values that one becomes truly able to put into practice his/her ethical values, such as justice, integrity, refusal of violence and ban to kill—even in a crisis situation.

According to R Patil, J., Thombare, D. and A Kharade, R. (2016), human values play an important role in the life of human at various stages including education and career. When a child enters in school, her/his behavior depends on the home culture that is family circle. In primary and secondary school life, there is major influence of friends and teachers on her/his behavior that is the school circle. When she/he enters the college or professional course, the

social circle plays an important role which has a dominant impact on humanity and moral capabilities. The overall personality of individual depends on those circles. The author of this paper clarifies how education in human values is deeply essential to nourish the moral capabilities in the students and ultimately in society in a positive way.

Values are universally accepted. Except for a few that are exclusive to certain communities or cultures. These values that begin with fundamental or basic thing like courtesy and therefore values act like lubricants in social life by making interactions, transactions and dealing with others smoothly. Values are mostly not about intellect and reason but about emotion, common and social. Values are taught in a best way through narratives, maxims or short sayings. For example, proverbs are best said in the form of a parable. In every teaching there will be use of parables or fables, as narrative is more effective teaching tool than any other traditional ways.

Objectives:

- To suggest inclusion of narratives and imagery in the curriculum of primary education.
- To create awareness about values through various sources of literature.
- To reiterate the impact of human values leading to harmony and peaceful co-existence in the society.

Discussion:

Legalistic/Formulaic form vs. Narrative & Imagery: When we look at the commandment which is, 'Love your neighbor as yourself', one may not be able to comprehend the depth of the meaning, till one reads the parable of the 'Good Samaritan', which is fleshed out in the form of a story. Which would further reflect upon the question, 'who is my neighbour'? Every other person is our neighbour. This is one of the commandment which encapsulates the whole idea of value based human existence. It is a value that is all too abstract and ideal, but when it is communicated through a story it becomes personal real to the hearer. The answer doesn't come from Jesus but the listener himself of the question: who is neighbor my neighbor? He answers that the Samaritan is because he helped him. Hence narrative makes abstract values more concrete.

Aesop's Fables-The Shepherd's Boy Fable: There was once a young Shepherd Boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf," and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out "Wolf, Wolf," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help. So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said:

Moral: "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

In the story presented above the moral is conveyed strongly only because it appears in the form of a fable, it is easily understandable as it has a lasting impression on the minds of the readers. If these fables and parables are introduced at an early stage the morals and values would be ingrained in the minds of the children.

Vemana Padyam:

“తల్లితండ్రులందు దయలేని పుత్రుండు
 పుట్టనేమి? వాడు గిట్టనేమి?
 పుట్టలోని చెదలు పుట్టడా గిట్టడా
 విశ్వదాభిరామ విసుర వేమ!”

Meaning: One who doesn't love nor care for their parents are in vain, as there is no value for them whether they are alive or dead. Just as those insects which do not make a difference when they live or die in the ant hills, so are the children of such parents.

Through this poem by Vemana one can easily understand one of the major values of honouring and taking care of one's parents according to various scriptures, as by doing so we can attain long life which is a gift from the above.

Sumati Padyam:

“బలవంతుడ నాకేమని
 పలువురతో నిగ్రహించి పలుకుట మేలా
 బలవంతమైన సర్పము
 చలిచీమలచేత చిక్కిచావదె సుమతీ!”

Meaning: One should never pride about oneself thinking that he or she is big and strong, as we can see that a snake is strong, but it can be killed by the ants which are very tiny creatures. Through the above poem from Sumati Shatakam one can easily understand that “pride goes before destruction”, which is a commonly used phrase. It is in detail put in verse by the poet by using imagery

Kabir Ke Dohe:

“पौथी पढ़ि पढ़ि जग मुआ, पंडित भया न कोय,
 ढाई आखर प्रेम का, पढ़े सो पंडित होय”।

Meaning: By attaining higher knowledge, no person becomes a scholar, if no one can understand the value of it, they cannot understand the value of knowledge, then he/she is ignorant, but whoever has understood words of love correctly, then he/she is a true and right scholar.

By the above parable, fable and poems we can see the usage of different imagery and there is a traditional mode of narrative which has been employed by the narrators and poets to make it more interesting to listen to and to instil the values in the minds of the individuals so that they can follow them and continue to transfer to their next generations.

Conclusion: The author of this paper aimed at emphasizing the importance of imbibing human values from the primary level of education among the children by introducing them through various sources and works of literature. By adopting this kind of pedagogy in schools the morals and values in children will be nurtured and help them in growing towards perfection. It will also have a huge impact on future society, with the same children becoming

responsible future citizens of the nation, with the right knowledge about good and bad firmly rooted in their psyche.

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