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Human Values and Life Skills: A Holistic Approach

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Abstract

Basic human values refer to those values which are at the core of being human. They are considered as basic inherent values in humans. They include truth, honesty, loyalty, love, peace, etc. because they bring out the fundamental goodness of human beings and society at large. Human values are the virtues that guide us to take into account the human element when we interact with other human beings. They are, for example, respect, acceptance, consideration, appreciation, listening, openness, affection, empathy and love towards other human beings. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable humans to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. This concept is also termed as psycho-social competency. The subject varies greatly depending on social norms and community expectations but skills that function for well-being and aid individuals to develop into active and productive members of their communities are considered as life skills. Any skill that is useful in your life can be considered a life skill. . It has been felt that life skills manage the gap between basic functioning and capabilities. It strengthens the ability of an individual to meet the needs and demands of the present society and helps in dealing with the current issues in a manner to get desired behaviour practical. A holistic approach means to provide support that looks at the whole person, not just their mental health needs. The support should also consider their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. The present paper focuses on the importance of human values and life skills that imparts a holistic approach to our civilised society.

Keywords: *Holistic, Life Skill, Universal Value, Ethics*

"Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behaviour. Keep your behaviour positive because your behaviour becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny."

Mahatma Gandhi

INTRODUCTION

Universal value

A value is a universal value if it has the same value or worth for all, or almost all, people. Spheres of human value encompass morality, aesthetic preference, human traits, human endeavour, and social order. Whether universal values exist is an unproven conjecture of moral philosophy and cultural anthropology, though it is clear that certain values are found across a great diversity of human cultures, such as primary attributes of physical attractiveness whereas other attributes are subject to aesthetic relativism as governed by cultural norms.

The claim for universal values can be understood in two different ways. First, it could be that something has a universal value when everybody finds it valuable. This was Isaiah Berlin's understanding of the term. According to Berlin, "...universal values....are values that a great many

human beings in the vast majority of places and situations, at almost all times, do in fact hold in common, whether consciously and explicitly or as expressed in their behaviour..." Second, something could have universal value when all people have reason to believe it has value. Amartya Sen interprets the term in this way, pointing out that when Mahatma Gandhi argued that non-violence is a universal value, he was arguing that all people have reason to value non-violence, not that all people currently value non-violence. Many different things have been claimed to be of universal value, for example, fertility, pleasure, and democracy. The issue of whether anything is of universal value, and, if so, what that thing or those things are, is relevant to psychology, political science, and philosophy, among other fields.

Schwartz's ten types of universal value are: power, achievement, hedonism,

stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. Below is each of the value types, with the specific related values alongside:

- Power: authority; leadership; dominance, social power, wealth
- Achievement: success; capability; ambition; influence; intelligence; self-respect
- Hedonism: pleasure; enjoying life
- Stimulation: daring activities; varied life; exciting life
- Self-direction: creativity; freedom; independence; curiosity; choosing your own goals
- Universalism: broadmindedness; wisdom; social justice; equality; a world at peace; a world of beauty; unity with nature; protecting the environment; inner harmony
- Benevolence: helpfulness; honesty; forgiveness; loyalty; responsibility; friendship
- Tradition: accepting one's portion in life; humility; devoutness; respect for tradition; moderation
- Conformity: self-discipline; obedience
- Security: cleanliness; family security; national security; stability of social order; reciprocation of favours; health; sense of belonging

Importance of Human Values: Human values are the indispensable part of our socio-cultural and work-related avenues. They play a vital role for regulating our lives.

- Provide understanding of the attitudes, motivations and behaviours
- Influence our perceptions of the world around us
- Represent interpretation of “right and wrong”
- Provide a way to understand humans and organisations.

BASIC HUMAN VALUES

The five human values which are expected in all human beings, irrespective of whether they are employees or not in whichever profession or service, are:

- Right Conduct – Contains values like self-help skills (modesty, self-reliance, hygiene etc.), social skills (good behaviour, good manners, environment awareness etc.), ethical skills (courage, efficiency, initiative, punctuality etc.) and Ownership.
- Peace – Contains values like equality, focus, humility, optimism, patience, self-confidence, self-control, self-esteem etc.

- Truth – Contains values like accuracy, fairness, honesty, justice, quest for knowledge, determination etc.
- Peaceful co-existence – Contains values like psychological (benevolence, compassion, consideration, morality, forgiveness etc.) and social (brotherhood, equality, perseverance, respect for others, environmental awareness etc.)
- Discipline – Contains values like regulation, direction, order etc.

The father of our nation, M. K. Gandhi, remarks that “The greatness of humanity is not in being human, but in being humane.” This line exposes the true spirit of service of each individual for others. It is narrated in the following manners:

Love

- love everybody unconditionally
- develop compassion, kindness, generosity and greatness of spirit
- care for our environment

Truth

- speak and act truthfully and confidently with a clean and clear conscience
- develop wisdom, the power of reason, intuition and a sense of inquiry.

- understand the oneness of all creation and the truth behind all faiths

Peace

- develop self respect, concentration, inner contentment and calmness
- co-operate with and value the contributions of others, including their constructive feedback concerning our behaviours
- develop forgiveness, patience, forbearance and self-control

Right Conduct

- Practice acceptance of good and rejection of the bad according to the law and one’s own conscience.
- develop respect for human beings and to accept responsibility for one’s own actions
- develop self-reliance, exercise initiative and to do one’s best at everything

Non-violence

- avoid mistreating others in thought, word and deed
- develop reverence and concern for all living beings, all of nature and to involve in acts of selfless service
- practice forbearance, endurance and tolerance towards other

Life skills allow you to deal with and manage with everyday challenges in the work and social places. These skills help you excel at your workplace and manage your professional relationships. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 1999 identified the following core cross-cultural areas of life skills:

- decision-making and problem-solving;
- creative thinking, lateral thinking and critical thinking;
- communication and interpersonal skills;
- self-awareness and empathy;
- assertiveness and equanimity; and
- Resilience and coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Skills for work and life, known as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) comprises of education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may lead to qualifications. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn and the development of literacy and numeracy

skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET. According to UNICEF, Life Skills are a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address balance of three areas:

- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Skills.

The world bodies such as UNESCO, and WHO list the ten core Life Skills as:

1. Self-awareness
2. Critical thinking
3. Creative thinking
4. Decision making
5. Problem Solving
6. Effective communication
7. Interpersonal relationship
8. Empathy
9. Coping with stress
10. Coping with emotion

Life skill has been classified into three broad categories:

- **Thinking skills:** Thinking skills are the skill that enhances the logical faculty of the brain using an analytical ability, thinking creatively and critically, and developing problem-solving skills and improving decision-making abilities.

- **Social skills:** Social skills include interpersonal skills, communication skills, leadership skills, management skills, advocacy skills, co-operation and team building skills, etc.
- **Emotional skills:** Emotional skills, involves, knowing and being comfortable with oneself. Thus, self – management, includes managing/coping with feelings, emotions, stress and resisting peer and family pressure.

A holistic approach focuses on a person's wellness and the growth and development of moral and ethical values.

1. To understand the moral values.
2. To create an awareness.
3. To inspire moral and social values and loyalty.
4. To appreciate the rights of others.
5. Resolve the moral issues in the profession,
6. To justify the moral judgment concerning the profession.
7. intended to develop a set of beliefs and attitudes,

To maintain human values and life skills systematically you have to follow three types of ethics or morality as per the information of Harris, Charles E. etal. According to them, it is significant to

study three types of ethics or morality. 1. Common Morality – It is the set of moral beliefs shared by almost everyone. 2. Personal Morality - It is the set of moral beliefs that a person holds. 3. Professional Morality - It is the set of standards adopted by professionals in so far as they view themselves acting as professionals.

To contribute our human values and life skills effectively, we need to be conscious aware of our soft and hard skills. For a holistic approach of our work we should be proficient of these skills. Soft skills are the personal attributes that you need to succeed in the workplace. These are related to how you work with others – in other words, these are people skills. Soft skills are different from hard skills, which are directly relevant to the job you are applying for. These are often more quantifiable, and easier to learn.

The technical skills that are acquired through professional education, training and on-the-job experience, are referred to as hard skills. Technocrats may be technically competent, but unless they are able to interact effectively with people inside as well as outside their organisations, their technical skills may remain unutilised. So, a second set of skills

is required for professionals that are referred to as soft skills or peoples skills.

The term 'soft skills' refers to a cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits and attitudes of friendliness, optimism etc and includes competencies in the areas of leadership, ability to work in a team, articulateness, assertiveness, basic etiquette etc. These skills determine a person's ability to suit into a given social structure, for example, Business Corporation.

Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. Sociologists may use the term soft skills to describe a person's "EIQ" or "Emotional Intelligence Quotient," as opposed to "IQ" or "Intelligence Quotient."

The Collins English Dictionary defines the term "soft skills" as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude."

WORK ETHICS

Employers want job candidates with a strong work ethic. People having strong work ethic complete tasks on time, stay focused and stays organized. They are able to budget their time and complete their work thoroughly. While they can work independently, people with a strong work ethic can also follow instructions. A strong work ethic is difficult to teach, so employers will be impressed if you can demonstrate your strong work ethic in your job application.

- Attentive
- Business ethics
- Competitive
- Dedicated
- Follow direction
- Highly organized
- Independent
- Make deadlines
- Motivated
- Multitasking
- Organization
- Perseverant
- Persistent
- Planning
- Proper business etiquette
- Punctual
- Reliable
- Resilient
- Results oriented

- Scheduling
- Self-directed
- Self-monitoring
- Self-supervising
- Stay on task
- Strategic planning
- Time management
- Trainable
- Work well under pressure

According to B. B. Dash, (Professional English, pg. 198-199), the Top ten soft skill attributes for business executives include:

1. Communication – oral, speaking capability, written, presenting, listening.
2. Courtesy – manners, etiquette, business etiquette, gracious, says please and thank you, respectful.
3. Flexibility – adaptability, willing to change, lifelong learner, accepts new things, adjusts, teachable.
4. Integrity – honest, ethical, high morals, has personal values, does what's right.
5. Interpersonal skills – nice, personable, sense of humour, friendly, nurturing, empathetic, has self-control, patient, sociability, warmth, social skills.
6. Positive attitude – optimistic, enthusiastic, encouraging, happy, confident.

7. Professionalism – businesslike, well-dressed, appearance, poised.
8. Responsibility – accountable, reliable, gets the job done, resourceful, self-disciplined wants to do well, conscientious, common sense.
9. Teamwork – cooperative gets along with others, agreeable, supportive, helpful, and collaborative.
10. Work ethic – hard working, willing to work, loyal, initiative, self-motivated, on time, good attendance.

The major soft skills/Peoples Skills/Professional Skills are:

1. Interviews
2. Group Discussions
3. Oral Presentations
4. Personality Development
5. Leadership skills
6. Teamsmanship
7. Time Management
8. Assertiveness
9. Emotional Intelligence
10. Lateral Thinking

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is pertinent to note that a relevant and proper implementation of life skill is a need of the hour. Imparting life skills and human values are helpful as they specifically address the needs of ours, supports in motivating, providing for the

practical, cognitive, emotional, social and self-management skills for the life adjustments. However, they stand for holistic approach to a positive, social, and mental health of the people which plays an important role in all aspects such as strengthening work culture, developing self-confidence in social life. The present approach is a principle that promotes well-being. The significant people who are responsible for inculcating and evolving human values and life skills for a holistic approach are the parents, religious leaders & gurus in daily life and teachers at the institute's level. They assure a happy and harmonious human civilisation and society. In nutshell, the above discussion brings out an overall philosophy of our lives.

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