## “Value education in higher education”

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**State of the society today and the role of education:**

We are facing many kinds of problems today - corruption, exploitation, and violence in society, strife in family, destruction in nature and lack of satisfaction in the self. We all are having problems at all the level (individual, family, society, nature). So a considerable question comes in the mind. What is the main cause behind all these current problems while science has enabled us to improve our understanding of physical reality around us and technology continues to offer conveniences in increasingly newer ways? The source of current problems seems to be an emphasis on physical facilities, glamour, consumerist lifestyle, and a false sense of satisfaction in competition and one-upmanship ('neighbours envy - owner’s pride'). The focus on the external things leads to ignorance about the concerns of the self. It leads to a blind race for wealth, position and jobs. Many times, in spite of achieving ones goals, the individual remains dissatisfied - jobs and positions that are intellectually and mentally unfulfilling, and wealth that leads to chaos in family, problems in society, and imbalance in nature. Physical facilities are needed to lead a proper life; however, there is a need to examine how many physical facilities are needed and what is its role? It is also important to ask the question - besides physical facilities, what else is important in human life? The lack of attention to relationships leads to strife in the family, in spite of all the worldly successes. It is the human relationships and human values that are a source of our perennial happiness. So in the present day context human beings are able to see the need for a value oriented education system and also have to identify the role of education in our education system.

**Vision about educationValue**:

Education may seem vague term to many of us even though we may be hearing about it frequently. While starting about value education, let us understand what we are talking about and what its need is, particularly in present context of education. In this paper, we are going to clarify certain fundamental issues which are important to all of us in our life- issues which are directly relate to our happiness, our welfare, our aspirations, goals and success in life. In a sense, value education deals with what is universally valuable to all of us, what is conductive to our individual and collective happiness and prosperity in a sustainable way. It enables us to be in harmony within ourselves, with other human beings and with rest of nature at large. Such an understanding will be vital for the successful conduct of our profession as well.

In our present scenario education system concentrates on providing to its students the skills to do things (which are of economic value). In other words, it concentrates on providing “How to do” rather than “What to do” or “Why something should be done”. A result of this is the production of graduates who are neither aware of their surroundings nor of their own self, and face life with difficulty. The education system does not prepare students for dealing with life. It prepares them only for profession or jobs. They have to learn by themselves to deal with life, which includes examining ones goals, identifying and sorting out conflicts, dealing with relationships in family and friends, understanding society and a mutually enriching relationship with nature. This requires ability to think critically about everyday matters of life. Education does not address issues of commitment either. Thus, the education system is failing to develop critical thought which leads to clarity and commitment among its students. On looking into this issue, it becomes evident that we are stilled faced with serious problems at various levels. At the human level, we can see that there continue to be issues in individual with respect to clarity on life-goals, contradictions and stress, while at the level of human relationships in the family, we see problems in mutual understanding, increasing mistrust, insecurity and generation gap. Further, at the level of relationships in society we see increasing communal conflict, exploitation and strife, terrorism and violence in various forms. The increasing corruption and other unethical practices in various professions are also causing serious concern. At the level of nature, we have increasing problems of environmental degradation in various forms as well as resource depletion threatening the very survival of the human race. In fact, all these problems are a direct outcome of the ‘well planned’ human activity carried out in the name of progress and in spite of all the advancements of science and technology. Where then, lays the solutions? What exactly amiss? This is an important question intriguing the human mind today.

**Purpose of present education system-:**

In present day context we observe that excelling in competitive examinations, making a career, getting a job has become the primary focus for most of us, thus we summaries the total purpose of all our education so far! Is this why we have been studying? Is this the purpose of all one gets at school and college? What do we believe as our goal, our purpose of education we have had and the education that we will be going through spending more than 20 years process?

**Need for value education in higher education:-**

At the same time, besides spending a lot of time in school, college, studying and preparation for examinations- we have been living a big part of our lives at our home in relationship with our family and our friends. This network of relationship- with our parents, our siblings and our friends is an important aspect of our lives and brings to us a lot of support and joy but many a time, these relationships turn unpleasant and we find ourselves in conflict with the other person. At that point we become unsure and begin to blame, criticize the other and sometimes even ourselves. In the process both of us suffer. Sometimes, we are intrigued, baffled and even frustrated at the behavior of other human beings and even our own behavior with others. Many a time, we are at a loss to know how to handle these relationship issues properly and it ends up disturbing us. Some of us even look at our relationships with family and friends as a burden and avoid them and our present day education does not give even little guidance to help us identify and resolve these conflicts. At school or college- we get only little guidance about relationships and how properly live in them-since it is not a part of our syllabus.

The education system must try to develop not just skills but also an understanding of what should be done, and commitment to choose and do what one considers as right. Goal of education is to develop not just skills (or questions of how) but also ability to decide on questions of what and why. The latter questions are extremely important, and they have been left out of modern education system - not just in India but throughout the world. As a result, we find that students are ill-prepared to think about and face such questions in real-life. Such a lacuna is increasingly being noticed in education throughout the world. In fact, this lacuna is said to be the reason behind increasing violence in family and society, and exploitation of nature, Pollution (e.g. global warming). The overall purpose of education is to enable a human being to live a fulfilling life, in harmony with oneself and with family, society and nature. In light of this, it becomes essential to find out what is of value, or what is really valuable to a human being? While technology is an important human endeavor, it is only a means to achieve what is considered ‘valuable’ for human beings in an effective and efficient manner. It is thus not within the scope of technology to decide ‘what is valuable’ to a human being. The subject that deals with ‘what is of value’ or ‘what is valuable to a human being’ is called value education. Values thus provide the basis for all our actions and there is an essential complementarity between values and skills which needs to be ensured in my education system. All of us consider something or the other to be valuable. We set our goals, our aims on this basis, and then set out to work towards achieving them. While the need for determining what is valuable to us may seem evident, let us investigate into this a little more to understand the need for Value education. Let us look at the more aspects to appreciate the need for value education

**Correct identification of our aspirations:** All humans being have aspirations. Everyone must have made various plans for future, be it immediate or long term. The planning may include our personal life, our family, our profession, our participation in the society and other such domains. But before we invest our energies to actualize our plans, it is important that we find out what we basically aspire for. Thus we need to identify our basic aspiration. Based on the correct identification of the basic aspiration, we can frame our goals and sub-goals appropriately and working for these, we may hope to fulfill our basic aspiration.

**Understanding universal values to fulfill our aspirations in continuity:** Just identifying one’s aspiration is not enough. We need to know how to fulfill our aspirations, how to go about actualizing our goals. Generally we tend to pursue goals in variety of ways as per our appraisal and beliefs. We keep on making experiments, learning from these and accordingly improving our understanding. Complete understanding of human values gives us a definite way to fulfill our aspirations.

Basically all of us aspiring to be happy and whatever appears conducive to our happiness becomes valuable to us. Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behaviors and actions. Once we have known what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor of our actions. We know what we are doing is right and will lead to the fulfillment of our basics aspirations. Values thus become the source for our happiness, our success, our fulfillment. Without an appropriate value framework, we will not able to decide whether a chosen action is desirable or undesirable, right or wrong. Hence there is a prime need for correct understanding of the value domain. - Value education is the input necessary to fulfill this need. When we live with the correct understanding of values, we are happy in continuity otherwise we feel deprived frustrated and unhappy.

**Complementarity of values and skills:** In the endeavor to fulfill our aspirations two things are essential:

1. First and foremost one has to know what really is conducive to human happiness i.e. happiness for one for all, and happiness at all times. This is what becomes universally valuable to human beings. This is the ‘value’ domain, the domain of wisdom. This helps us to identify and set the right goals and to proceed in right direction.
2. Secondly, it becomes essential to learn methods and practices to actualize this goal, to develop the techniques to make this happen in real life, in various dimension of human endeavor. This is the domain of ‘skills’.

Thus values and skills have to go hand in hand. There is an essential complementarity between values and skills for the success of endeavor.

**Evaluation of Beliefs:**

In absence of a correct understanding of human values, we are driven by our ‘ad-hoc’ values and beliefs. If we look deep into ourselves we find that 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 beliefs come to us from what we read, see, hear, what our parents tell us, our friends talk about, what the magazine talk of, what we see on the TV etc. i.e. there whole body of belief system that we live with at any given time and these together constitute our worldview. These beliefs spread out far and wide in all our realms of living. The interesting thing about beliefs is that they usually change with time and we can trace examples of these by looking at our life in the past. Another thing about beliefs is that they are usually not the same for everybody. Beliefs could be held by a small group or a large group of people but they are not universal. The beliefs keep changing from person to person. What I may believe to be of ‘value’ to me may not be of ‘value’ to your belief-system so when we interact, it may lead to conflicts unhappiness. We face this problem today because the conditioned beliefs and values we hold today are usually contradictory, conflicting and unstable and not based upon the right understanding of values we are not vary sure of their correctness.

**Technology and Human Values:**

Technology is only a means to achieve what is considered ‘valuable’ for human beings in an effective and efficient manner. It is not within the scope of technology to decide what is valuable. This decision lies outside its scope. It thus becomes primarily important to know correctly what is ‘valuable’. Without this decision technology can be aimless, directionless and can therefore be put to any use, either constructive or destructive.

It is thus with the understanding of values that we can decide on the appropriateness of technology and its application. Both the structure and use of technology is are decided by values

**Conclusion-:**

Value education is required to correctly identify our basic aspirations, understands the value that enables us to fulfill our basics aspiration, ensure the complementarity of values and skills, and to properly evaluate our beliefs. It also facilitates the development of appropriate technology and its right utilization for human welfare. Thus there is a need to supplement education with value education in higher education as well. This will enable a human being to decide and pursue what is really ‘valuable’ i.e. conducive to human happiness, human welfare what is ‘value’ to him. At the end ‘value education’ enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly and also indicate the direction for their fulfillment. It also helps remove our confusions and contradictions and enables us to rightly utilize the technological innovations.

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