**Conference Report: ICHVHE-18, 7th International Conference on Human Values in Higher Education: Education for Holistic Human Health**

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Conflict of interest: None

Financial Support: None

Previous Submission: None

The 7th International Conference on "Human Values in Higher Education: Education for Holistic Human Health" was held from 26th to 28th April 2018, at Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan, Thimphu (Bhutan). This conference was also celebrated as 50th Indo-Bhutan friendship. The historical friendship of India and Bhutan is a unique example of the respectable neighbourly relations in the world [[[1]](#endnote-1)]. The ICHVHE-18,conference was the result of collaborative efforts of eight universities, two from Bhutan and six from India. The international conference on human values in higher education (ICHVHE) is an annual conference aimed at developing a shared vision of holistic, human education, particularly in institutions of higher education. To start with the scope is within India and other SAARC nations. Ultimately the effort is to provide universal human value-based education to every child, globally.

**Purpose of the conference**

Medical professionals have greater responsibilities to understand the human behaviour and act appropriately by following the professional ethics and sensitivity. It is recognised that current medical system in many countries exploits patients, extort huge money but at the same time health care provided is meagre. So only, moral development of medical students must be given prime importance, but unfortunately, the evidence suggests that that their moral development may be stunted or even experience a downslide [[[2]](#endnote-2)]. This may be the reason that several Indian Medical Universities have already started incorporating the subjects of moral values and ethics into their curriculum [2]. Globally also, there is growing interest of medical students and educators in the promotion of ‘human’ values in science and in relationships – both collective and individual – between doctors and their patients [[[3]](#endnote-3)]. Witnessing these and by assessing the present need, the purpose of the conference was kept, to develop the guidelines, content and methodology for imparting Universal Human Values (UHV) in higher education, particularly in health education.

**Inaugural session**

The inaugural session started with the National Anthem of Bhutan and India and then the Marchang ceremony (the traditional welcome ceremony of Bhutan) was done. Dr. K.P. Tshering, Hon. President, Khesar Gyalpo University of Health Sciences of Bhutan welcomes the chief guest, Her Majesty the queen mother ‘Ashi Tshering Pem Wangchuk’, their Royal highness, minister of Health, Govt of Bhutan and other participants of the conference. Dr. K.P. Tshering, highlighted that this conference is aimed to develop a holistic human educational model particularly in institutions of higher education in India, Bhutan and other SAARC nations. In the inaugural address, Her Majesty the queen mother stated that the present education system is missing its core content which is to know about the real purpose of life. Therefore, it has become an urgent need to incorporate the UHV in all education systems in order to address the negative impact of modernization. She emphasized that there is a need to inculcate the human values from the home itself. She further quoted “Everyone of us must have an affair in life and that affair must be with Universal Human Values”.

**Key notes:**

Total four key notes were delivered in this three days conference. On the Day-1, Prof. Sri Ganesh Bagaria, from the Institute of Human Education-Sanskar, Kanpur, gave deliberation on ‘Basic Human Aspiration - Wellbeing of All’. He also addressed upon the wellbeing of all which includes healthy human being with healthy environment. On Day-2, Dr. Sharmila Asthana from Kanpur spoke about ‘Healthy Human Being’. She pointed out that the health needs perfect balance at the level of body and mind both and this is essential to ensure the harmony in the human being. She also emphasized that there is a need to create awareness among people about their right lifestyle behaviours and food choices. On the same day, Mr. Lopen Lungtaen Gyasto, President, College of Language and Cultural Studies, delivered key note on ‘Healthy Environment’. He described the healthy environment at the level of family, society and ultimately to the whole nature. On the Day-3, Mr. Dasho Pema Thinley, Ex- Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan, in his key note, talked about ‘Education for Wellbeing of All’. He stressed on the need for implementation of education of the wellbeing of all, its contents and methods.

**Panel Discussions:**

All the three days of the conference the panel discussions were done on various issues of UHV and human health related subjects. The important details are given hereafter.

**1. The current state of Human being and the society, and the state of Human health and Health care systems**

In this panel discussion, the current problems at the level of individual, society, education systems and at the level of health and health care systems were discussed. At the level of individual, we face the problems related to our right understanding of physical and self-related needs, lack of trust, lack of healthy relationships etc. Terrorism, communal war, regionalism, corruption etc. problems are damaging our social structure. In educational systems we come across problems related to drug abuse, alcoholism, raging, sexual harassment, depression, suicide, etc., which make us think that what exactly the present education is providing to us? The growing incidences of lifestyle disorders indicates that there is lack of health-related awareness among the people. There is an urgent need to develop a biophysical spiritual health care model to control it. The increasing cost of medical facilities, unethical behaviour of medical and nursing professionals, commercialization of health care systems was also highlighted by the discussants. It was found that these all problems are not limited to any one society or country but the participants of all the six countries, agreed that they all are facing such issues in their place. Though, economically we are progressing but the feeling of deprivation still persists in the society and it is even growing large. The UHV gives some hope to come out of these all problems.

**2. Approach towards Human Health– Need for the Change**

The session was dedicated to discuss about our approach to ensure the human health and what could be done at the level of individual, society and health care systems. At the individual level, we need to work to motivate the people and make them aware about their fundamental health needs. The society and health care systems have to work together to bring sustainable changes to ensure holistic health for the present and future generations. Most of the non-communicable diseases can be well prevented by creating the awareness among people. The health care systems have to give main emphasis to preserve and promote the health of the people rather than just focusing on the treatment of the ailments.

**3. Systems for Holistic Human Health**

The main points discussed in this session were about the ideal systems for holistic human. health. It requires a multi-dimensional approach at the level of physical, mental, social, spiritual and also the environmental. This is possible only by the correct utilization of the available resources. The concept of holistic health includes understanding of the mind and body in an inseparable relationship. To provide the health care in totality, it needs an integrated approach of all health care systems. AYUSH and modern medical system, all need to work together to achieve this. Ensuring health must be at the main priority and use of medicine should come at the end.

**4. Implementing Education for Wellbeing of All**

In this panel discussion, implementing education for wellbeing of all, its design, role of health care systems in that were discussed. The individual and family need to make aware that maintaining the health is their own responsibility and medical systems are always there to help them whenever necessary. Healthy mutual relationship in family and society has an important role to play in overall wellbeing of the person. Along with physical facilities we need love, care, respect, support and feelings of trust with our nearest people and next comes the conducive environment to support our health. The education for wellbeing should include altogether to ensure the harmony at all levels of human existence.

**Recommendations**

Following recommendations were made

* It was recognized that the teaching of UHV to students and every individual has become an urgent need to mitigate the negative effect of globalization.
* The UHV foundation course adopted by many institutes needs to be sensitized and scaled up to the other institutes, organizations, communities and workplaces.
* Regulatory bodies namely, Medical Council, Dental Council, Council of Indian Medicine, Pharmacy Council, Nursing Council of India will be given a proposal for the inclusion of UHV as a subject in their curriculum.
* Developing formal curriculum to offer integrated course for medical and nursing professionals, which includes human values and ethics, understanding each other’s roles and responsibilities, improving inter professional-commination and motivating team work.

**Valedictory Session**

During valedictory session, commitments by the delegates desiring to make specific changes in the current education systems was done. Valedictory address was given by the Dasho Pema Thinley. The session ended in a very unique way, all the participants were guided for meditation, traditional Bhutanese Gong sound was played during this and after that prayer for the peace of the world was performed.

**‘Let there be no disease, no sickness, no suffering, in this place of ours and the whole universe, and let the peace and harmony and prosperity prevail for all time to come’**

**References**

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2. Thomas B. Moral and human values in medical education. Journal of Indian Society of Periodontology. 2015;19(5):486. doi:10.4103/0972-124X.167209. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Bates V. Yesterday’s Doctors: The Human Aspects of Medical Education in Britain, 1957–93. Medical History. 2017;61(1):48-65. doi:10.1017/mdh.2016.100. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)