



## VALUE EDUCATION IN SCHOOL: A STEP BY STEP JOURNEY

**Susmita Pramanik**

Designation: Research Scholar, Vinaya Bhavana, Visva- Bharati, Shantiniketan, West Bengal

"The idea that education can ever be value-neutral is absurd"-Mal Fletcher

### ABSTRACT

*In India, most value education programmes have been initiated by religious organizations. They are generally secular in nature and universal values like honesty, trust, responsibility, compassion etc., are given prime importance. Over the years, value education has taken the back seat. In recent times, the CBSE and NCERT have been making efforts to re-introduce Value Education into the curriculum. CBSE has laid down guidelines for the Life Skills, Attitudes and Values in their Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation. Value based education (VBE) and Value Based Integrated Learning (VBIL) imparts social, moral, integrity, character, spirituality and many more. It builds the qualities of humility, strength and honesty in a person. Including our history and mythology we all discuss about high values and integrity, but it is the time for value based action. Our country very much needs a value-oriented educational system among the children. There have been efforts to define the role of education in national life. The values inculcated among young generation would remain with them permanently. Mother is the first teacher for her child. The role of schools and teachers are very important. The feeling of unity and communal harmony helps build values in a student. Value discipline is still a great lesson that has to be imparted and need to be taught through mutual interaction and inter-communion. Proper training of teachers should be arranged. Television can become an important medium for values based education. Value education should be included in higher education levels. Values can be taught from*

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*three different perspectives – the logical, the philosophical and the cognitive. To bring value education into our school and classroom the direct way is to teach values during planned value education classes with integrating teaching of values with other subjects in a holistic way- to make it a whole school. The process can easily be set into motion depend on individual teachers and the importance given by the school management. Value Based Education, is a part of the educational programme which cannot be shelved or done away with. It has to be a part of life and life is a constant education and the process of living is a process of learning.*

**Key words:** - Value education, curriculum, discipline, Integrated Learning

## **Introduction**

In India, most value education programmes have been initiated by religious organizations. However, they are generally secular in nature and universal values like honesty, trust, responsibility, compassion etc., are given prime importance. Sathya Sai Organization, Ramakrishna Mission, Ananda Sangha, Art of Living, Brahma Kumaris, The Chinmayananda Mission and many others are actively involved in promoting value education in their schools or in the form of informal or formal classes. Gandhiji said that ‘formation of character should have priority over the alphabet’ and Swami Vivekananda said that teaching of religion must be part and parcel of education which, according to him was essential to teach values. Over the years, however, value education has taken the back seat.

## **Key provisions for value education**

In recent times, the CBSE and NCERT have been making efforts to re-introduce Value Education (VE) into the curriculum. NCERT had set up a National Resource Centre for Value Education (NRCVE) in 2000. In 2002, it launched a “National Programme for Strengthening Value Education.” The focus was on generating awareness, material development, teachers’ training, promotion of research and innovations in the education of human values. Guidelines for value education in the school system were to be developed. The CBSE had introduced Life Skills in classes VI and VII in 2003 and by 2005 had extended it up to class X. Now, they not only have a set of lesson plans for teachers of the subject but have also introduced the concept of Value Based Integrated Learning (VBIL) wherein all lessons are linked to some “value”. However, 12 years since the NRCVE had been set up and

7 years since the CBSE sent out its directive, that schools should devote at least 2 periods a week to Life Skills, the situation on the ground is very different.

Some schools call it “Value Education”, others call it “Life Skills” and some even call it “Personality Development”. Some schools have prescribed books for the subject, but unlike subjects like Music, Dance, or Physical Education there are no specially trained teachers for the subject. No school, that I have come across, schedules more than one class a week for value education. All classes are taken by teachers who have not been trained to teach the subject and often, seem to have no interest in it. Most are unaware of the efforts made by CBSE to help them with teaching this subject. Many teachers use the period allotted for the subject to teach other subjects. How then can we expect “Value Education” class to make a difference?

In an attempt to ease assessment of Life Skills and Attitudes and Values, CBSE has laid down guidelines for the same in their Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation. The flip side however is that it has created resentment amongst some teachers and parents and created a lot of friction in schools. The class teachers, who are often subject teachers, do not have time to observe children’s reactions, behaviour, responses etc, since their focus tends to be on the “academics”. Hence, filling up the elaborate assessment sheet becomes a huge task. Parents seem to question the teachers’ judgment and the basis of their subjective statements regarding this subject in students’ reports. If we were to have specially trained teachers for Value Education/Life Skills and they were to observe the child in a structured environment, their comments would carry far more credibility. When we can have trained teachers for all other subjects, then why not for this?

Shouldn’t we actually be doing what great leaders and philosophers have advised for centuries? Shouldn’t we give priority to character building over academics? It might take decades for such a paradigm shift but in the meantime, teacher training in Value Education will go a long way in filling the present gap.

Though the NCERT and CBSE have been trying to do their bit in this area there is much that needs to be done. The first step can be to select teachers who have the aptitude and skills and train them to teach value education or life skills.

**Value based education (VBE)** imparts social, moral, integrity, character, spirituality and many more. It builds the qualities of humility, strength and honesty in a person. They become better citizens of a country. People with high ethical values will never cheat others. People are taught to co-operate with each other. They make their life happier and work hard to make others happy.

**The basic components are:-**

**Our history and mythology taught us of excellent values education.** We, the Indians, talk loud of our cultural heritage, we talk a lot of the characters of Ram, Krishna, Raja Harishchandra, Sita, Savitri and for that matter many more, Buddha, Mahavir, Kabir, Raidas, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramanujan. Good that India have these great men—god heads and godly as a part of our heritage. We have not to go out anywhere to seek for ideals. We have them all in our mythology and history. But what is needed is that they be not decorations on our walls but should be a source of enlightenment within. And how would that enlightenment come—from where and in what form?

**We all discuss about high values and integrity, but it is the time for value based action.** Anyone who stands on a pulpit to speak to the audience is found to talk of high principles, or moral conduct, of spiritual and cultural heritage of our country. Good that they do it but in actuality we are coming across so many scams which smear the face of the nation black.

**There is need for imparting proper values among the children.** A child learns a lot from the people around him. If the social environment is not good, then it becomes very difficult for him to display ethics and values in his behaviour.

**Our country very much needs a value-oriented educational system.** It is only at the level of the primary education that such lessons need to begin. If the impressionable mind once gets set to noble goals difficult would it is to lead him astray. It is not merely talking about great men that the child would get oriented to values; the teacher has to play a major and a decisive role in giving this lesson by precept as well as by example. It is the intellectual, the physical, the emotional, the psychological parts of the child's personality which would need to be molded and modeled.

**There have been efforts to define the role of education in national life.** The Radha Krishnan Commission; the Kothari Commission; National Policy on Education; Ramamurthi Committee; Central Advisory Board of Education Committee on Policy; Planning Commission Core Group on Value Orientation of Education, all have gone deep into the role that education plays and can play in designing and developing the national characters. The programmes and policies have remained just on paper, just due to lack of coordination between the different implementing agencies.

**The values inculcated among young generation would remain with them permanently.** It may just be that the young boy or girl of today is better informed than what their parents had been at their age. He or she may sound smarter with new knowledge but this is due to the modern techniques to which he/she stands exposed and of which he or she has the advantage. T.V., internet, computer, etc. were not available to the parents. Computers and the information received from them or the data fed by them may become outdated but values once inculcated would remain a permanent acquisition for all life. Swami Vivekananda once said, “If education is identical with information, libraries are the greatest sages of the world and encyclopedias are ‘Rishis’.” There is something very much more than mere information that has to be imparted to the young mind.

**Mother is the first teacher for her child.** Value based teachings and education are the fields, the first teacher in which is the mother. It is the mother who tends to lend the first lessons and it is on her that rests the foundation-laying responsibility. What is right, what is wrong, what is true, what is false, what is respectable and noble and what is not – it is the mother who imparts these lessons.

**The role of schools and teachers are very important.** Then, when the child enters the schools at the age now of four or five, the schools and the teachers there have to give him lessons in universal brotherhood, respect for all religions, feeling of honour for our great man, a sense of pride in our national flag. Students learn moral values at school. Along with these the child shall be given lessons in dignity of labour. No work is mean or low. Self-dependence, respect for the elders, concern for those who are handicapped or under-privileged.

**The feeling of unity and communal harmony helps build values in a student.** In a vast nation like India with so many sections in the society, so many sects, so many religions, so many regions, and so many languages the child has to be taught the lesson in ‘unity in diversity’. The daily morning prayer of the school should contain this lesson of national oneness. This should not only be repeated every morning but its import and meaning to be explained by the Principal or a teacher. Students are asked to come prepared with a short-speech on this oneness of the nation. They should be allowed to speak on any of its aspects and speak out to the whole congregation after the prayer. Similar speeches everyday on different moral values should be the first lesson given, not by any teacher but by students themselves, one each day. Community lunch, when all would sit together and eat even sharing one another’s lunch packet would give to them a sense of oneness, irrespective of class, caste or religion.

**Value Education need to be taught through mutual interaction and inter-communion.** There need not be any special classroom lectures on Moral Values Based Education. It is never needed to identify any particular religion or faith. God is one and we are all children of the same God. That is the basic lesson that needs to be given.

**Discipline is still a great lesson that has to be imparted.** It is the teacher who himself or herself should be an example of discipline and children would be the automatic learners. These are values which do not need to be the part of any curriculum—they have to be the part of the behaviour. Being any part of the curriculum can give rise to controversies; but general behaviors showing respect to all religions, celebrating all festivals together, would by itself be a lesson in national integrity.

**Proper training of teachers should be arranged,** so that the teachers acknowledged of their responsibilities. It is necessary that in the Teacher’s Training Programme, Value Oriented Education Programme, need to be highlighted so that the teachers are trained up to know their mission and method.

**Television can become an important medium for values based education.** Television, which is a craze for the young of today, should also be used to present value-based programmes through skits, cartoon scripts and such other means.

**Value education should be included in higher education levels.** NCC, boy scouts and guides programmes are also a helpful means of creating a consciousness in discipline and co-working. The Indian Education System should adopt value based education at all levels. The value-oriented educational programme should not be led only during the school level, but should be carried on further up to the level of higher education too, as it is from there that the nation's political leaders, bureaucrats and army personnel would emerge.

**The young should learn what is moral and what is immoral.** It has yet not been finally thought off how and in what manner sex-education is imparted to the young. But at least let them be made aware about AIDs/HIV etc, and why and how people catch these fatal diseases would automatically be explained. That is also a part of morality in society. That is a necessary part of value based education. It need not be any part of the curriculum but it is a lesson that they must learn through discussions and discourses.

### **Can values be taught?**

Given the state of public life in our country today – where corruption, violence and intolerance are increasingly evident in day to day interactions – isn't it high time that educationists made a concerted effort to teach values? The very first objection from many is that values cannot be taught, they need to be imbibed. My contention is that while it is mostly imbibed, it must also be taught. Ideally, values must be taught by people who are willing to lead by example. Fortunately for us, Indian culture has ensured that good role models can still be found amongst our midst. We only need to zero in on them.

Let me try to explain my point of view on how values can be taught from three different perspectives – the logical, the philosophical and the cognitive.

**The logical perspective** – If teaching is the giving of instruction or is intended to impart knowledge or skill and if it is done through discussions, experimenting, lectures, demonstration/modeling, role playing etc., why isn't it possible to use the same methods for value education or life skills? The knowledge content would relate to universal concepts like honesty, respect, compassion etc., and the methods used would be the same as is used for other subjects.

Can the lecture method be used to teach each and every subject including Values? Can discussions be used to teach all the subjects? It is possible to use all methods to teach all subjects including Values. Only the proportion would vary. While teaching Dance or Music, more time is spent on demonstration and less on discussion when compared to Social studies. Just as an English teacher would need to be articulate to be effective, to teach values, the teacher would need to ‘walk the talk’ and be a good role model. This, in other words, is ‘demonstration’.

Experimentation and practice are a must if we want to learn something new. Values too cannot be inculcated unless the laws of life are experimented with and put into practice. So though all methods are used, demonstration, discussion and practice would be the more important when it comes to teaching values.

**The philosophical perspective** – Let us now take a look at what great scientists and philosophers have to say about teaching.

“No great moralist was made so in neither a day nor any one of them was a born moralist”

“Education without vision is waste, Education without value is crime, and Education without mission is life burden.”

Sri Aurobindo had said "The first principle of teaching is that nothing can be taught.”

Swami Vivekananda had said “No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.”

Socrates had said “I cannot teach anybody anything; I can only make them think.”

Galileo had said “You cannot teach people anything. You can only help them discover it within themselves.

Einstein had said “I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn”.

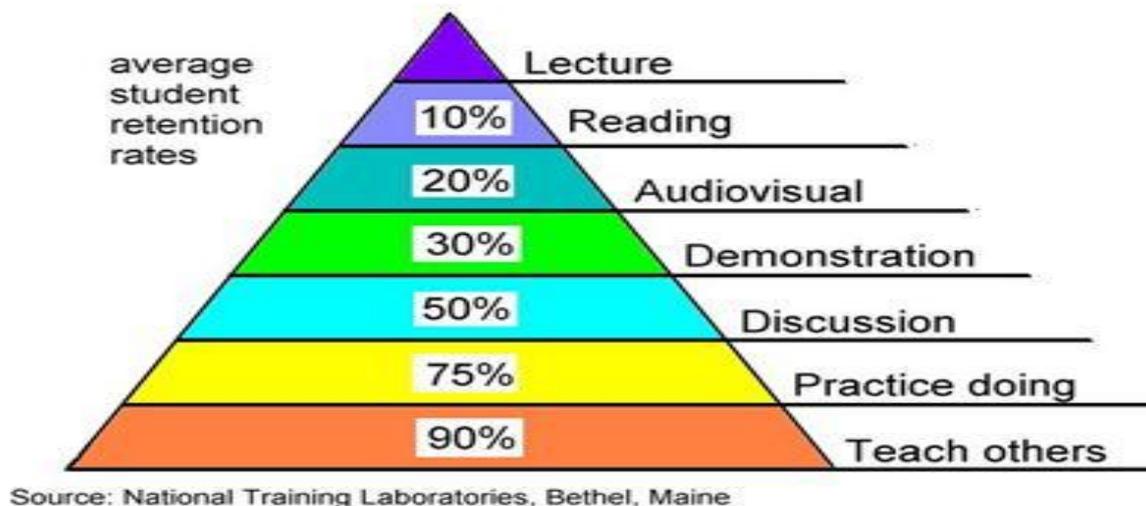
According to Gurudev Rabindranath, “The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but make our life in harmony with all existence and which can only be achieved through freedom of mind.”

So, according to all these luminaries, scientist or philosopher, Indian or Greek, nothing can be taught. It can only be learned, and we, as teachers, have to facilitate the process. Whether it is Math, Science, English, Music or Values, the methods would remain the same. The responsibility of the teacher increases manifold and the need for good role models becomes an absolute necessity.

**The cognitive perspective** – It has been said that nothing has been taught unless it is learned. So cognitive scientists focus on how learning takes place. The learning pyramid, below, shows very clearly that the traditional lecture method of teaching is practically ineffective and that it is demonstration, discussion and ‘doing’ that hold the key to effective learning.

In the case of teaching values I would consider demonstration (role models) to be more effective than discussion. However, the important point to note is that teaching others is considered the most effective way to learn. This would translate into the teachers of value education benefiting the most. So if values are taught in a structured manner by teachers who are specially selected for their interests and aptitudes, and then trained, it should have far reaching effects. Not only would students learn but teachers too would benefit and the results would have a domino effect.

## Learning Pyramid



The issue really should not be about whether values can be taught or not. The focus should be on finding good role models who will use modern teaching methods to teach values, and help children become capable of making better choices in life.

If we can at least agree that schools need to join hands with parents to counteract the negative influences of modern life and that children need a role model with whom they can discuss issues which confuse and confound them, on even a weekly basis, we would be making taking the first step. One period a week is already available in most schools. Why not use this time more effectively by selecting teachers with a specific set of skills, interests and aptitudes (from amongst existing staff) and training them to make best use of the resources available? Why don't we make value education classes something that both, teachers and students can look forward to?

### Ways to Value Education

There are different ways to bring value education into our school and classroom. Teaching is not a job, it is an attitude. Teacher is a source of information, a guide, a mentor, a surrogate parent, a motivator, all at the same time. Teaching is the only one profession which always deals with the future. The role of a teacher in the changing social scenario is becoming very challenging. According to Confucius, "only a person who is always a source of love, morally upright and whose behaviour not only in personal but also in the institutional life is impeccable is worthy of being a teacher".

Role of teachers can be summarized in three perspectives: three T's 1) Transfusion 2) Transaction 3) Transformation. If you believe that Value Education is a must in today's world but don't know how to go about it then here are three major approaches to Value Education/ Character Education/ Moral Education which are used globally, and could give you some ideas.

### **The Direct way- To teach values during planned Value Education classes**

In this method, values are taught through planned structured lessons, like any other subject. The lessons may be organized around specific values such as honesty, respect, trust, and responsibility or could be organized to deal with a particular problem that the school is facing. The latter is generally more satisfying. If children are using abusive language or there is too much bullying amongst them, then the lessons could be planned so as to address the problem at hand. Various activities like discussions, role plays, art, writing, debates, school-wide activities like surveys, dramas etc., could all be used to deal with the same issue. This approach is likely to be more satisfying because results are seen much faster and it gives the teachers a sense of achievement and the motivation to keep going.

### **The Integrated way-To integrate teaching of values with other subjects**

The curriculum that is currently being taught provides numerous opportunities to involve students in thinking about character and values. For instance, when reading a story in English, instead of asking only factual questions about the protagonist you could always ask questions like what were his strengths and weaknesses. How did he deal with his dilemma? What do you think of his choices? What bothers you about the choices he made and why? What would you have done if you were in his shoes? Have you ever had to deal with a very difficult situation like his, in your life? What did you do? How did it feel?

In history classes, students should not only learn about what happened but should be given an opportunity to make ethical judgments about it. History should not be just about dates and rote memory, but about real people, the choices they made and how it affected other people and the way of living. The ethical perspective could be discussed by talking about the different choices that historical figures might have had, the possible reasons for their behaviour and the action taken and what they could have done differently. Integration with

Maths and Science may be considered more difficult by most teachers but even that is possible.

### **The Holistic way- To make it a whole school approach**

There is no doubt that the best way to implement a Value Education program is through the holistic approach that integrates teaching of values into each and every aspect of school life. For this to happen all the teachers and staff should be committed to the teaching of values and consider it as important as academics. Everything in the school should be centered on the development of good relationships between students, staff, parents, and the community at large. Social and emotional development should get as much importance as pure academics. Co-operation and personal excellence should have precedence over competition. Values such as honesty, respect, and compassion should be a part and parcel of daily lessons and children should have ample opportunity to practice good and helpful behaviour through activities like social service. Discipline should be democratic and teachers and students should hold class meetings to establish norms of behaviour solve problems and build unity.

Each of these globally accepted approaches has its pros and cons. One could even start with a combination of these. Some exceptional teachers intuitively use the Integrated Approach and visionary Principals instinctively adopt the Holistic Approach However, it is my contention that if you start with the Direct Approach, proceed towards the Integrated Approach and strive for the Holistic Approach it is possible for each and every school to ensure that Value education becomes an integral part of education finally changing the very ethos of the school.

Though it is impractical to expect that such a colossal task be accomplished in a few days, weeks or months we must make a beginning and work towards a goal that we hope to accomplish in the future. To do that, we could start off by using the one period a week, which we already have in hand, and ensure that the time is used as effectively as possible (the direct approach). Soon teachers will start using the same methods in their own subject classes (integrated approach) and finally the whole school would adopt the holistic approach.

### **What is the road ahead:-**

The process can easily be set into motion by following a few simple steps which are given below. The first 3 steps can be completed in a few days. The next 3 in a few months, but for

the last two no time frame can be predicted, since a lot will depend on individual teachers and the importance given to such a program by the school management.

**Step 1-** Orient all teachers towards Value Education

During the orientation the teachers should be allowed to share and discuss their reservations about value education, be convinced about the need for value education, become aware about the global scene in character education/value education and understand the possibility of making a difference by changing their approach to education.

**Step 2-** Select teachers interested in teaching values from amongst existing staff.

Teaching values is not an easy task, nor is it like teaching any other academic subject. Hence there are some very fundamental differences in how we should approach it. The value education teacher has to be chosen for his or her interests and attitude not educational qualifications, age, or number of years of teaching experience - the usual criteria used for selection of teachers in our country. In my experience, in every school, you will find at least 10% of teachers who will fit the bill, and it is with these teachers that a value education programme can take off in any school.

**Step 3-** The selected teachers should be trained to prepare lesson plans for value education classes.

Some ready lesson plans can be provided, as samples, to help the teachers start off, but in the long term they should be trained to prepare their own, based on the requirements of the school.

To ensure that value education lessons are not boring and preachy but fun, and an opportunity to talk and learn about behaviours that are held in high esteem, there is a format and rationale that can be used. These are elaborated later but it is essential to know that at the heart of the lesson plan is the discussion which is based on questioning. Learning to conduct the discussion will be the most challenging part of a VE class.

**Step 4-** Involve parents.

Parents should be involved even before teachers actually start taking classes. They could be informed about the school's decision to start structured and planned value education classes

and their cooperation solicited by requesting them to keep track of the value education homework in which their involvement would be essential.

**Step 5-** Starting the classes.

Each class will be a learning experience for the teacher since he or she will be faced with a variety of responses from the students which may well be unexpected. Her/his ability to handle the questions and answers during these discussions will help single out the exceptional from the average value education teacher. The reactions from students, regarding value education classes, will also be an excellent indicator of the success of the value education teacher.

**Step 6-** Review and upgrade lessons based on the experience in class.

It is essential to review and upgrade lesson plans on a regular basis since it will take some time for the teacher to become adept at conducting the discussions. Some retrospection would go a long way in enhancing his or her facilitation skills.

**Step 7-** Integrate teaching of values with all subjects.

As teachers start taking value education classes they will find innumerable opportunities during their subject periods when they can amalgamate the teaching of values with academics. It will be a natural progression to the next stage of integration.

**Step 8-** Integrate Value Education into every aspect of regular school activities.

**Conclusion:-**

So in a nutshell the strategic plan to impart values in the school by a teacher is –(a) Telling (b) Inculcating (c) Persuading (d) Modelling (e) Role playing (f) Simulating (g) Problem solving (h) Discussing situations, stories, Pictures (i) Studying biographies of great men (j) Moralizing.

This is the ideal that we should aim for when value education becomes an integral part of every activity in school and is ingrained in the very ethos of schooling.

The advantages of following this process are that your school can start off on this journey immediately, your teachers will not be burdened any further, no additional resources will be required, your students will enjoy it and a more holistic form of education will take root in your school.

Value Based Education, therefore, is a part of the Educational programme which cannot be shelved or done away with. It has to be a part of life and life is a constant education and the process of living is a process of learning.

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