

Value Education in the Light of Culture Quotient: A Step towards a Peaceful World

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Abstract

The term “value” is a loaded term with a multiplicity of nuances. What emerges as a crisis today is a conflict between traditional and moral values against the backdrop of a rapidly changing socio-cultural and economic perspective. New values emerge inevitably and an utter lack of synthesis has led to a tremendous confusion and resultant depression in the personal and social life of every individual. As a response to the crisis, emerged the concept of Cultural Intelligence and Culture Quotient (CQ), conceived of at the turn of the twenty first century when the world reeled under unprecedented globalization and its consequences through advance communication and transportation technologies. Value education is thus no longer a mechanical instruction or enforcement of traditional and ideological paradigms, but a more complex process with a neuro-genomic base that calls for elaborate research integrating the neurosciences with traditional knowledge for reorganization, modification and evolution of a new set of globally relevant values in the fast changing world today.

KEYWORDS: value, education, culture, Culture Quotient, peace, globalization

The term “value” is a loaded term with a multiplicity of nuances. German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is said to have used the word values first in 1880, to denote moral attitudes and beliefs, purely personal and subjective. A. Maslow in *The Further Research of Human Nature* (1982) asserts, “Values are defined in many ways and mean different things to different people. As a matter of fact, it is so confusing semantically that I am convinced we will soon give up this catch-all word in favour of more precise and more operational definitions”. John Dewey (1948) defines values as an intrinsic ability “to prize, to esteem, to appraise, and to estimate. It means the act of cherishing something, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgment upon the nature and amounts of values as compared with something else.” Talcott Parsons (1960) explains that “Value is an element of shared symbolic system which serves a criterion or standard for selection among the alternatives of orientation which are intrinsically open in a situation.” W.H.Kilpatrick has elaborated the concepts of values as “that out of man’s capacity for goal seeking behaviour arise his wants and efforts and out of these come in consciously chosen ends. Because ends conflict, man is led to weigh his goals against each other; when this is done critically enough values emerge.” Dr. R. Indira (1992) defines value as “a conception, explicit or implicit, and distinctive of an individual or a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from the available modes, means and ends of an action. In other words value is an enduring belief that has specific mode of conduct or state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of

conduct or state of existence.” Kireet Joshi (1997), former Educational Adviser to the Government of India in *Education for Character Development* has defined value in the following manner:

This word value as understood in the context of educational philosophy refers to those desirable ideas and goals which are intrinsic in themselves and which, when achieved or attempted to be achieved, evoke a deep sense of fulfillment to one or many or all parts of what we consider to be the highest elements of our nature. In a sense, it may be urged that the word ‘value’ is basically undefinable, since it denotes a fundamental category and it is itself the highest genus of that category...even if there are wide differences as to what is meant by Truth, Beauty and Goodness, there is agreement that they are most desirable ideas and mere orientation towards them inspires development of those states of our being and becoming in which we can hope to find some kind of ultimate fulfillment.

Interestingly there emerge subtle nuances of signification between the terms values, virtues and ethics. Professor B. Mukhopadhyay in *University News* (March 7-13, 2005) observes, “values do not mean only virtues. Moral values are known as virtues. Ethics deal with right and wrongs and is a system or code of morals. Once someone knows his values and knows what is important to him ethics can help him to set goals.” The Committee on Moral Education, Uttar Pradesh (1983) imparts a wider meaning to value education as including “not only ethical values but also spiritual, scientific, aesthetic and sporting values – all humanistic values. *Education in Values: A Source Book* published by NCERT (1992) defines ‘value education’ as encompassing moral, social, spiritual, aesthetic and many other dimensions.

Values signify different things ranging largely dependent upon the stage of development of a nation, its religious considerations, emerging technologies and the socio-politico-ideological system. Various scholars and great teachers have preferred lists of values to be inculcated in the psyche of the mass. Swami Vivekananda had emphasized values like –

- ❖ Cultivation of heart
- ❖ Fearlessness
- ❖ Non-injury
- ❖ Personal and social purity
- ❖ Self-sacrifice
- ❖ Service to others

Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, had prescribed eleven values essential for developmental manifestation of the innate human possibilities:

- ❖ Ahimsa (non-violence)
- ❖ Satya (truth)
- ❖ Astayam (non-thriving)
- ❖ Brahamacharya (purity)
- ❖ Aparigraha (non-acquisitiveness)

- ❖ Sharirshrama (physical work)
- ❖ Aswada (control of palate)
- ❖ Sarvatra Bhavjavarjana (fearlessness)
- ❖ Sarva Dharma Samvaba (religious tolerance)
- ❖ Swadeshi (patriotism)
- ❖ Sparsha Vavna (abolition of untouchability)

Dr. Karan Singh, a great scholar and Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University had summed up six essential values in an article in the Hindustan Times on 10th December, 2004. Such values, he argued, were necessary for the progress and sustainable development of the nation. He enumerated (i) family values, (ii) societal values, (iii) environmental values, (iv) inter-religious understanding values, (v) spiritual values and (vi) global values. The emerging global society, threatened by a ruthless exploitation and disruption of the biosphere calls for commitment to human welfare and sustenance through a wide array of innovative and interactive pedagogic praxis that gives contour to certain core values that would minimize the disruptive behaviour. A list compiled by NCERT on the basis of various documents on education emphasizes the values of abstinence, consideration for others, cooperation, compassion, common good, courtesy, anti-untouchability, democracy, dignity, duty, endurance, friendship, fellow feeling, honesty, humanism, initiative, justice, leadership, non violence, national integration, purity, regularity, secularism, self control, self reliance, socialism, ability of discrimination between good and bad, social service, spirit of enquiry, universal love, value for national and civic property, cultural values, citizenship, common cause, equality, gratitude, integrity, obedience, peace, resourcefulness, reverence for old age, self confidence, auto discipline, self esteem, sense of social responsibility, sincerity, solidarity and truth. The White House Conference on Education (1955) had come close with express emphasis upon certain core values like appreciation of democratic heritage, consistent and creative thoughts and evaluation, ethical behaviour, apt utilization of time and awareness of human relationships with the world community. The 81st report on value based education (1999), popularly known as Chavan Committee's report submitted in the parliament observes that satya (truth), dharma (righteous conduct), shanti (peace), prema (love) and ahimsa (non violence) are the core universal values which can be identified as the foundation stone upon which education programmes of the nation must be built up. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2000) too stress these five core values as representative of the five domains of human personality, viz., intellectual, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual, which are inextricably correlated with the five major objectives of education which are knowledge, skill, balance, vision and identity. The inculcation and nurturing of humanistic and constitutional values thus gain significance.

Value education emerges as an issue of supreme significance since national character is developed through it. Martin Luther King had aptly observed, "we have guided missiles and misguided men...this must be changed for the better by infusion of morality in private and public life". C. Rajagopalachari, the first and last Indian to occupy the position of Governor General of India had stressed the importance of value education as the principal force to determine the fate of our public affairs which no ideological 'ism' can achieve. The UNESCO-NIER joint report on *Moral Education in Asian*

Countries (1980) emphasized the need for cultivating the ability of taking independent decisions based on sound moral principles in tandem with an inherent reverence for the dignity of the individual and sanctity of fundamental human rights for social, national and international progress.

However what emerges as a crisis today is a conflict between traditional and moral values against the backdrop of a rapidly changing socio-cultural and economic perspective. New values emerge inevitably and an utter lack of synthesis has led to a tremendous confusion and resultant depression in the personal and social life of every individual. The Education Commission (1964-66) exposes the nature of this undeniable dilemma in asserting that – “We believe that India should strive to bring science and the values of the spirit together in harmony and thereby paved the way for the eventual emergence of a new society”. The core areas of value crisis identified by scholars are –

- ❖ Modern over emphasis on democratic values as against traditional colonial values
- ❖ Over emphasis on modern socialist values against traditional capitalist values
- ❖ Modern emphasis on secular values as opposed to traditional religious values
- ❖ Modern scientific values against traditional belief-based values
- ❖ Modern global values against traditional nationalist values
- ❖ Modern emphasis on emotional integration against traditional emphasis on local/regional emotions

The dynamics of the local in the global context today increasingly highlight the logical inconsistencies in the projected liberal position of the pedagogic praxis in the face of prejudicial knowledge and interstices of uneven developments. The value crisis and resultant confusion amidst a shrouding opacity of material usurpation of ecological and ethnic resources has emerged as a crisis of gargantuan proportions. Minoritization continually interrupts and interrogates the homogeneous, horizontal claim of the projected democratic liberal society. Social transformation, a continuous process, is increasingly digressing from the aspiration to a democratic common culture and what confronts the nation today is an upsurge of a culture of disparate interest groups, violent social movements with affiliations overtly antagonistic and ambivalent. Solidarity turns out to be situational and strategic while the concept of commonality is negotiated through contingencies of social interest and political claims. Homi K. Bhabha points out in *Cultures in Between*- “How did we allow ourselves to forget that the nationalist violence between Hindus and Muslims lie just under the skin of India’s secular modernity? ...We have entered an anxious age of identity” (p.59). One is reminded of the various zonal uprisings in the history of the world, a phenomenon that is operative in the present under the façade of equity and liberalism. Education becomes a critical agency in this scenario - homogenizing in philosophy and yet continually addressing covert interstitial paradigms. The question of cultural and more significantly religious identity evolves as a problematic one.

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The University Education Commission 1948-49 defined culture as “an attitude of mind, an inclination of the spirit and those who yearn for it, wish to have a vision of greatness, sit in the presence of nobility, and see the highest reach and scope of the spirit of man...a habitual vision of greatness is the way to cultural growth.” Changing culture on account of scientific and technological advancement influences the realization of religion and associated values. The sweeping multiplicity of cultures and perspectival plurality lead to severe dissensions and unrest. In the words of Hofstede (1983), “culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy; cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often disaster.” E.T.Hall (1976) attributes a severe limitation of the human potential to his inability to get beyond the immediate culture to more creative, expansive and responsive uses of the innate human capacity of resolution and reconciliation. A universal covert cultural perspective needs to be recognized to gain sufficient intercultural knowledge for global harmony. The locus of such a universal culture is values, though different societies with varying historical significance have different values that make cross border interaction a rather challenging task. As a response to the crisis, emerged the concept of Cultural Intelligence and Culture Quotient, conceived of at the turn of the twenty first century when the world reeled under unprecedented globalization and its consequences through advance communication and transportation technologies. It emerged at a time when ideological clashes and socio-cultural conflicts culminated in the collapse of the Twin Towers in September 2001. Eli Wiesel identified hatred towards culturally variant communities as the major source of problems. Ang et al. (2011) pointed out that probability of cultural communication gaps, disruption and mismatch of values, tensions and conflicts are necessary corollaries of the rapidly increasing intercultural interactions triggered by globalization.

Cultural Intelligence emerged as a special type of intelligence that is beyond mental and academic intelligence and distinct from emotional intelligence (EQ) which helps individuals to gain a broader perspective of culture and can offer ways to negotiate the plurality of cultural values in diverse societies. This special type of organizational psychology began with researchers Early and Ang at the Business School of London and later in America by a consortium of England and American professors like Ghorbanni, Kouhestani and Rasouli (2012). Cultural Intelligence is essentially a multidimensional construct, intimately correlated with the value education with the following dimensions:

- ❖ Meta-cognitive Culture Quotient
- ❖ Cognitive Culture Quotient
- ❖ Motivational Culture Quotient
- ❖ Behavioural Culture Quotient

According to Ang, Van Dyne and Mei (2011), Meta-cognitive CQ calls for active mental response to situations in divergent cultural settings and consequent adaptation to culturally appropriate values conducive to achieve sustainable cross cultural interaction. Value education thus assumes an intriguing dimension when assessed in this light and a new world pedagogy must then take cognizance of the evolution of such values necessary for sustaining and enhancing the Culture Quotient in the modern glocalised world. Cognitive CQ signifies a critical evaluation of traditional knowledge to enhance intercultural competency of an individual. The traditional value system is thus

readdressed in the light of cultural universals that negotiate subtler cultural differences. Behavioural CQ on the other hand involves culturally appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions that restructure traditional values in new forms suitable for construction of a collective and assimilative code of global values.

Culture being a collective programming of the human mind, modern value education must take cognizance of the Cultural Intelligence of the human brain supported by researches in cultural psychology and neuro-linguistic evidence as observed by Rockstuhl, Hong, Ang and Chiu (2010). Researchers have confirmed that cultural behaviour studies of the West exhibits a tendency to focus on objects while Asians palpably tend to focus on contextualization and relationships. Rockstuhl et al. (2010) conducted a research revealing a convergence in cultural neuro-science reflecting cultural variation in psychological, neural and genomic processes that describes how cultural values and neurobiology shape each other. In the Asian culture an individual's mother elicits preferential activation in the ventral medial pre-frontal cortex for the Chinese but, not for a Westerner, indicating the wide difference in the psychological structure that compels the former to consider a stereotyped identity as an extension of the context imprinted in the cell. Thus it is now being increasingly acknowledged that culture has profound biological foundations that need to a plurality of cognitive processes and must be considered for identifying and enhancing values through education. Value education is thus no longer a mechanical instruction or enforcement of traditional and ideological paradigms, but a more complex process that calls for elaborate research integrating the neurosciences with traditional knowledge for reorganization, modification and evolution of a new set of globally relevant values in the fast changing world today. Researches by Rockstuhl et al. revealed that westerners focus on focal events while East Asians focus on the phenomenon of embedding of any event in their physical as well as psycho-social environment.

Appropriate value education must then promote a capacity for perspectival plurality and assimilative or accommodating potency fostering mutual respect and creative collaboration for maximum economic, institutional and societal benefit, and must be planned with the psycho-social and genomic characteristics in mind. Value education in India had anticipated the trend years ago with Section VIII of the National Policy of Education professing the need for such a value education "in our culturally plural society [where] education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism". The new world calls for inter-ethnic collaboration for sustainable development and CQ emerges as a strong determinant for effective inculcation of values in a fast evolving and perennially altering global scenario. Much has to be done to salvage the damage already done to human race and a new ray of hope emerges with such findings for addressing the burning problem of decadent values.

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