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Decline of Social Values in Contemporary Society: Causes and Preventive Measures

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Abstract

This article reports an exploratory study into the preparation of student teachers for moral education. The designing of goals, program parts and teaching and learning methods for a part of the first year curriculum of a teacher education institute for primary education is described. Next the teacher educators who carried out the curriculum and the student teachers who participated in it, were asked whether they recognized the moral aspects of the curriculum as designed. Finally, we tested the effects of the curriculum on the learning of the student teachers, using a pre- and post-test. The results of the study evoke, among others, the conclusion that more attention is needed to the implicit and unplanned aspects of preparing students and teachers for moral education. For a question whether value can be taught as a separate subject, the answer is that both ways may be adopted as per the demands of the situation. Modern educationists are of the opinion that values are caught as well as taught. But the challenges before us are to revivify our country and society by inculcation of ethical, social and spiritual values. The present malady in our society is the absence of ethical conduct. Only education in human values can help retain humanness, promote purity and thereby help human beings to unfold the hidden divinity. Values Education is known internationally by a number of names, including Moral Education, Character Education and Ethics Education. Each variant has a slightly different meaning, pointing to one or other distinctive emphasis. Overriding these differences, however, is a common theme born of a growing belief that entering into the world of personal and societal values is a legitimate and increasingly important role for teachers and schools to play. International research into teaching and schooling effects is overturning earlier beliefs that values were exclusively the preserve of families and religious bodies and that schools therefore functioned best in values-neutral mode.

Keywords

Value education, Social values, Ethical conduct, Preventive measures.

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1. Introduction

The political, social and scientific attention to the moral aspects of teaching also concerns teacher education. If you ask any group of adults, from 18 through 80, whether kids today are worse than kids in their time, they will usually insist that they are. Teachers can offer terrifying examples of elementary school children cursing at them, middle school youngsters engaged in promiscuous sexual behaviour, high school students selling drugs, and a pervasive acceptance of bullying, cheating, lying, and general bad behaviour. What has happened to the world, that young people today appear so bereft of values? Are parents too busy? Is the media, from video gaming to television to movies, creating a selfish me-centred citizenry? Has moral relativism destroyed any notion of good? Or is this simply a case of misremembering what angels we all were when we were their ages? But regardless of such comparisons, we can consider ways in which education could offer our young people opportunities to learn better values, and live them. Each variant has a slightly different meaning, pointing to one or other distinctive emphasis. Overriding these differences, however, is a common theme born of a growing belief that entering into the world of personal and societal values is a legitimate and increasingly important role for teachers and schools to play.

Teaching moral values is very necessary for the all-round development of a person. It includes discipline, manners and etiquette, behaviour, control over oneself, politeness, strength, patriotism, love and care for each other. It also includes speaking truth, no stealing, becoming a good citizen. Moral values are also necessary for developing healthy and friendly relations with everyone. Loss of moral values is a direct loss of the country. A child must be given moral education at an early stage. He must be taught the importance of moral, ethical and family values.

By family values, we mean to have good thoughts, good intentions and good deeds, to love and to care for those whom we are close to and are part of our groups or communities, like parents and other family members and friends too. They must learn to treat others with the same set of values with which they wish to be treated. Ethical values define a set of principles of right conduct. A child must learn moral values in school, many of the schools teach the students to develop their character through books, moral stories, essays, plays.

An easy and one of the best ways to impart moral set of values and principles in a child. The child must be taught so as they must be filled with moral virtues such as wisdom, courage, justice. These days, we see some students misbehaving with teachers, people go on strike burning buses, including in bad politics or doing other kinds of harms, thus deteriorating moral values. They are having just opposite qualities of these moral virtues

such as they start believing in injustice, tyranny, or may be cowardness. A child gets to know and can easily decide what is right and what is wrong for him, learns to behave mannerly in a society, he understands his responsibilities through moral values.

Moral principles held the world together. So, there is a need of set of moral principles and values to be imparted in the children to make them a better and a responsible citizen.

The downfall of Indian Cultural Values is not as important so much as basic humanity morals. I don't care whether you are getting more westernized in your dressing; in fact you're being quite the hypocrite when you're talking against westernization while typing in a western language wearing western clothes on a western medium. What I care about is the fact that humanitarian values are degrading in our countries in a bid to keep onto Indian traditions. Women don't get raped because of western wear but because men seeing them as equals or even bigger than them get threatened, they feel that a patriarchal society where men are the supreme beings should be allowed to rule the way they wish to see fit, if they can't keep it in their pants then it's their problem and they should be dealt with extreme severity. Instead of focusing on teaching our children what to wear and how to "remain Indian" we should teach them how to behave with people, that everyone is created equal. We should tell them what's wrong or right from a humanitarian perspective rather than a cultural perspective that was established by mortal men who wanted to be at the top, even if you read your holy books there is no mention of these cultures we keep following brainlessly, if you want to follow culture follow it but with a deep understanding of it instead of a superficial one.

Also, I feel that the easy money in most hands, and the desire of easy money more than anything has led to this moral decline.

2. Causes of Decline of Social Values in Contemporary Society

The majority of people in any society usually follow the examples set by the leaders and popular people that they adore. Most of the leaders and popular people are usually involved in activities that are designed to satisfy their greed and selfishness with little or no regards for the welfare of others or for the environment.

The result of selfishness and greed is oppression and prejudice where the leaders and popular persons do not practice integrity, equity and justice so the society loses all respect for the rights of others in their struggle for self preservation. What one person thinks is a moral imperative is not necessarily a moral imperative to another. For example in some a woman walking along the street without a bag over her head would mean she is so immoral that she deserves to be killed for her loose behaviour. While we would see that treating the woman like that as an immoral act. It seems that morality in the end is in the opinion of the observer. A lot of the nicety's that were once part of everyday life seem to be disappearing because people everywhere are becoming a lot more self centered.

3. Preventive Measures to Preserve Social Values in Contemporary Society

The ultimate preventive measure to solve this severe social problem is emphasis on value education. Its inevitable need can be explained under following sub-heads:

3.1 Respect for Each Other

Respect for each other refers to recognizing the dignity, rights, feelings, and individuality of others irrespective of differences in caste, class, religion, gender, language, or culture. It promotes mutual understanding, cooperation, tolerance, empathy, and peaceful coexistence, which are essential for maintaining harmony in society and strengthening human relationships.

- **Altruism:** concern for and motivation to act for the welfare of others
- **Civility and cheerfulness:** courtesy and politeness in action or speech
- **Truth:** freedom from deceit or falseness; based on fact or reality
- **Trustworthiness:** worthy of confidence
- **Fairness and good sportsmanship:** freedom from favoritism, self-interest or indulgence of one's likes and dislikes; abiding by the rules of a contest and accepts victory or defeat graciously
- **Patience:** not being hasty or impetuous
- **Compassion, kindness and generosity:** concern for suffering or distress of others and response to their feelings and needs
- **Courtesy and cooperation:** recognition of mutual interdependence with others resulting in polite treatment and respect for them
- **Integrity:** confirmed virtue and uprightness of character, freedom from hypocrisy
- **Honesty:** truthfulness and sincerity

3.2 Respect for Self

Respect for self refers to recognizing one's own dignity, worth, and potential while maintaining discipline, responsibility, and moral integrity in personal and social life. It develops self-confidence, positive behaviour, and a sense of accountability, enabling individuals to contribute constructively to society. The following values and qualities help in strengthening self-respect and personal development:

- **Accountability:** responsibility for one's actions and their consequences.
- **Self-esteem:** pride and belief in oneself and in achievement of one's potential.
- **Knowledge:** learning, understanding, awareness.
- **Moderation:** avoidance of unreasonably extreme views or measures.
- **Respect for physical, mental and fiscal health:** awareness of the importance of and conscious activity toward maintaining fitness in these areas.
- **Commitment:** being emotionally, physically or intellectually bound to something.
- **Perseverance and diligence:** adherence to actions and their consequences.

- **Self control and virtue:** exercising authority over one's emotions and actions.
- **Frugality:** effective use of resources; thrift.
- **Cleanliness:** good habits of personal hygiene and grooming.
- **Work Ethic:** belief that work is good and that everyone who can, should work.
- **Punctuality:** being on time for attendance and tasks.
- **Accomplishment:** appreciation for completing a task.
- **Cooperation:** working with others for mutual benefit.
- **Dependability:** reliability; trustworthiness.
- **Diligence:** attentiveness; persistence; perseverance.
- **Pride:** dignity; self-respect; doing one's best.
- **Productivity:** supporting one's self, contributing to society.
- **Creativity:** exhibiting an entrepreneurial spirit inventiveness; originality; not bound by the norm.

3-3 School Pride

School pride refers to a sense of belongingness, loyalty, and respect towards one's educational institution. It encourages students to uphold the values, discipline, traditions, and reputation of the school through responsible behaviour, active participation, teamwork, and commitment to academic and social excellence. Playing has a contributing role in maintaining and improving all aspects of a school's environment, programs and activities within the context of contributing to the evaluation. This section is intended to guide schools and school systems in assessing the values and character education program. The following procedures (which are not exhaustive or inclusive) may be taken as a whole or piecemeal and may be long-term or short-term in focus; they will be subject to extraneous variables. They could be determined with self-report scales, anecdotal records or published scales. The evaluation model suggested here focuses on the following process and product.

A. Process: Things done, and the efficiency with which they are done:

- Numbers and VW of materials used.
- Numbers and kinds of activities.
- Lesson plans; course objectives.
- Curriculum scope and sequence statements.

B. Product: The effectiveness (outcomes) of what is done:

- Attitude changes regarding self, home, school.
- Behavioural changes in groups or individually: discipline referrals, suspensions, dropouts, fighting, participation in activities, volunteerism, etc.
- Academic performance betterment of the city, county and state.

3-4 Citizenship

Citizenship refers to the awareness of one's rights, duties, and responsibilities towards society and the nation. A good citizen respects laws, participates in

community welfare, promotes democratic values, and contributes positively to social harmony, national development, and the well-being of others. The following values and qualities help in strengthening citizenship:

- **Liberty:** freedom from oppression, tyranny or the domination of government
- **Tolerance:** the allowable deviation from a standard. Indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own.
- **Courage:** willingness to face danger with determination.
- **Loyalty:** steadfastness or faithfulness to a person, institution, custom or idea to which one is tied by duty, pledge or a promise.
- **Respect for and acceptance of authority:** the need for and primacy of authority, including the law, in given circumstances.
- **Equality:** the right and opportunity to develop one's potential as a human being.
- **Freedom of conscience and expression:** the right to hold beliefs, whether religious, ethical or political, and to express one's views Justice: equal and impartial treatment under the law.
- **Honour:** a keen sense of ethical conduct one's word given as a guarantee of performance ,Respect for the Natural Environment: care for and conservation of land, trees, clean air and pure water and of all living inhabitants of the earth.
- **Conservation:** avoiding waste and pollution of natural resources.
- **Respect for the creator:** our most basic freedoms and rights are not granted to us from the government but they are intrinsically ours; i.e., the Constitution does not grant Americans the right of freedom of speech, it simply recognizes that each of us is born with that right. This is to say that the founders of the republic recognized a higher authority, a power greater than themselves that endowed every human being with certain unalienable rights that no government or legal document could ever revoke or take away.

4. Strategies to Enhance Value Education

Value education can be promoted effectively through the following strategies that help learners understand, practice, and internalize moral and social values:

- **Telling:** A process for developing values that enables a pupil to have a clear picture of a value-laden situation by means of his own narration of the situation.
- **Inculcating:** An approach geared towards instilling and internalizing norms into person's own value systems.
- **Persuading:** the process of convincing the learner to accept certain values and behave in accordance with what is acceptable.
- **Modelling:** A strategy in which a certain individual perceived as epitomizing desirable/ideal values is presented to the learners as a model.
- **Role playing:** Acting out the true feelings of the actor(s) by taking the role of another person but without the risk of reprisals.

- **Simulating:** A strategy in which the learners are asked to pretend to be in a certain situation called for by the lesson and then to portray the events and also by imitating the character's personality.
- **Problem solving:** An approach wherein a dilemma is presented to the learners asking them what decisions they are going to take.
- Discussing situations, stories, pictures, etc: This technique asks the learners to deliberate on and explain the details in the lesson.
- **Studying biographies of great men:** This is an approach that makes use of the lives of great men as the subject matter for trying to elicit their good needs and thoughts worthy for emulation.
- **Moralizing:** The process of working out a sense of morality through active structuring and restructuring of one's social experiences (e.g. moral reasoning and analysis)
- **Values clarification:** Values clarification as a strategy for values development may be considered as learner-centered. It relies heavily on the pupils ability to process his beliefs, behave according to his beliefs and to make a decision whenever confronted.

Values are the foundation of a peaceful and progressive society. Their decline can lead to social conflict, corruption, crime, and moral instability. Therefore, collective efforts by families, educational institutions, governments, media, and individuals are essential to preserve and strengthen moral and social values for future generations.

5. Conclusion

Values and virtues cannot be developed merely through legislation or formal instruction; they are best nurtured through personal example, meaningful experiences, and educational practice. The study highlights that moral and values education should occupy a central place in teacher education programs, as teachers play a crucial role in shaping the ethical consciousness of future generations. Values are not only taught through curriculum and classroom instruction but are also "caught" through the attitudes, conduct, and interactions of educators and institutions. Values are normally taught by example. Remember, "if it is to be, then change must begin with me". Don't look for others to change first.

In the contemporary social context, the increasing decline of ethical conduct, tolerance, and social responsibility has created an urgent need to strengthen moral, social, and spiritual values. Schools and teacher education institutions must therefore go beyond planned curriculum and give greater attention to the implicit and unplanned dimensions of moral learning that influence students' character formation. Remember, a change in your inner world of thoughts brings a corresponding change in the outer world of events. Values education and its practice have always been the moral fabric of the noble profession.

Teachers and educators must recognize that value education is not merely an academic duty but a social and moral commitment. Effective value education requires engaging both the intellect and the emotions so that learners develop self-discipline, empathy, responsibility, and respect for others. A positive transformation in individual attitudes and behaviour can ultimately contribute to broader social harmony and national development. Thus, values education remains an essential foundation for preserving humanness, promoting ethical living, and building a more peaceful and responsible society.

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