

Values across the curriculum

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Today the world is growing fast. India has kept pace in science and technology with great advancement in the field of information technology, but we have shown slower pace in our value system even when we have a strong heritage of great human values.

The NPE(1986) and subsequently POA(1992) have been emphasizing the faith in vidya dadati vinayam, vinyat yati patratam, patratwat dhanamapnoti, dhanat dharmam tataha sukham- it is learning and knowledge that gives capability to earn, and earning the ability to do dharma for a noble cause and this results in gaining peace. The analysts and educationists of our country have consciously changed the curriculum and prioritized universalization of primary education, the girl child education and inculcating value-based education in their recent policy recommendation like- the Ishwarbhai Patel, Rammurthy commission, Prof. Yashpal commission and the present focus on the same issues through the National Curriculum Framework. All these commissions, reports and recommendations have one thing in common and that is, changing curriculum at different levels for capacity building among teachers. Further recent studies and analysis of evaluation of achievements at different levels have clearly shown the quality concerns and that teacher factor and their performance is poor but their responsibilities are more and there is need to train teachers in many new techniques and bring them to frontline in the task of building a national system of education with a clear focus on Value education.

NCERT Curriculum Framework (2000) has explicitly mentioned that value education and education about religion should not form a separate subject of study or examination at any level but it should be integrated with the core curriculum.

Here I want to quote an example of Muriel Cosby, in her volume on Curriculum Development for Elementary Schools concerning the aims of social studies “ social studies are identified as those studies which are concerned with how people build a better life for themselves and their fellow men, how people deal with the problems of living together, how people change and are changed by their environment.

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In the same context Bruce Joyce summarized the three goals of Social Studies as:

1. Humanistic Education- the social study should help the child comprehend his experience and find meaning in life.
2. Citizenship Education- each child must be prepared to participate effectively in the dynamic life of the society.
3. Intellectual Education- every person must acquire analytical ideas and problem solving tools.....

The planning and design of the curriculum guide is based upon four broad questions that teachers in present times should engage children and young people in asking and then helping them to find at least some of the answers:

1. What am I becoming?
2. Is this the best I can be?
3. How can I harness all the available resources to help me to become what I want to become?
4. How will what I am becoming serve mankind?

These questions are the moral issues and values which must be made explicit and debated in public and in our classroom too. The important linkages to moral and value education are: spirituality, citizenship, interpersonal relationships, character education, peace studies, human rights/ rights of child.

Moral and value education is fundamentally about making meaning of life in all its dimensions. The traditional academic curriculum is no more the "be all and end all". This implies that certain common values enshrined in religious beliefs, international conventions and declarations must be made part and parcel of education in order to provide meaning beyond the mere teaching of abstractions.

The national task force on education (white paper, 1993), accepted the forgoing positions when it stipulated that programmes of value education will:

- Explore the meaning and significance of a wide range of values (spiritual, aesthetic, economic, ecological, cultural, scientific, political) and their contribution to the quality of life.
- Assist teachers and others to reflect upon theoretical formulations of value education and their own value systems and their roles as models in relationships.
- Identify appropriate strategies, student learning activities and the organizational structures to support these.

- Provide guidelines for teaching materials, formats and activities, and the assessment of growth in positive directions.
- Allow for a social action component that will facilitate the translations of values into positive attitudes and acceptable behavior.

Some practical efforts of schools for inculcating value education

- Attempts to supplement the efforts of parents through the provision of guidance and counseling services.
- Formulation of policies which support the teaching of parenting, health and family life education in schools.
- Ongoing in-service training of teachers in classroom management, discipline and correct procedures for assessment and evaluation.
- Helping young people to navigate the world of loud and tempting advertisements from all corners and from all kinds of interest groups.
- National adherence to the terms, conditions and requirements of international documents, charters and conventions supporting the rights of the child.
- Increasing recognition of the role of NGOs and other civic society bodies to promote social action programme (self-esteem, abstinence, the legal process among students).

Principles behind moral and value education

The first principle is that morals and value education is first and foremost a way of introducing philosophical, in particular ethical issues into the school curriculum. Thus the questions of philosophy, its methods and products should influence schools lives. The nature of concepts and ideas, philosophical disputations, meaning and purpose, "what are we living for"? should be part and parcel of matters concerning moral and value education. In this respect, critical thinking as an essential learning outcome must assume that elements of logic and disputations are taught at schools.

The second principle is that value education should influence character formation. It sees every point of interaction within the school and indeed the school itself as a possible pathway for the promotion of moral and value education.

The third principle is that, the existing international organizations and their viable social action programmes which target specific social ills should be configured into education as additional teaching and resource capacity.

The fourth principle states that discussion is an indispensable tool in the search for meaning. It is the medium through which arguments are presented,

assessed and defended or rejected on the basis of their merit. Discussion promotes the search for knowledge and keenness to evaluate the worth of claims against standards of public acceptability and logical thinking.

Thus these principles lead to a multidimensional concept of morals and values.

The role of the school

These principles to be effectively translated into actions, children and youth must be provided with learning experiences which relate as far as possible to the challenges of their everyday lives. Schools are strategically placed to make a significant contribution to this process and by doing so play their appropriate role as exemplars of value and moral action. Schools must act out of a fundamental understanding of the multiplicity of factors which influence the development of children and youth. They must focus on working with all social action groups with viable programme which cater to children, youth including parents and community. School rules and regulations, teaching and other staff relationships must be infused with democratic principles and the quality of the physical environment must be shaped deliberately to continually and consistently provide opportunities that support and reinforce the adoption of positive values within the school, the family and the nation.

Teacher preparation for value education: After going through the teachers training programme, the teacher trainees must be able to:

- appreciate the importance of understanding the factors and contexts which are influencing the behavior, choices, lifestyles, health and welfare of children and young people and their families.
- utilize this information to develop learning experiences that go beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge to equip young people and children with the skills to examine critically the choices they make.
- help children and young people to acquire and practice specific skills that support positive values.
- show knowledge of strategies which provide children and young people with opportunities to engage in participatory, experiential and action oriented learning experiences.
- apply principles that forge bonds and linkages between school, home and the community as a means of effective social control.
- implement appropriate evaluation strategies and to monitor progress made by children and young towards acquiring positive values.

- develop a standard of personal life practices which will help to maintain his or her positive self image in order to serve as a role model to students.

Teaching strategies

- The use of co-operative learning, field research, drama, skits etc. will reinforce conviviality and positive social values e.g. co-operation, peer tutoring/ support exchange of ideas, negotiation, conflict resolution, debate, creation of knowledge etc.
- The deliberate socialization to the extent possible, of even the most abstract of subjects.
- Group activities will serve to humanize abstract subjects. This will involve values such as listening, showing respect, helpfulness, sharing, kindness, etc.

Thus the core values and principles of education should be the promotion of rationality, the development of empathy, the fostering of empowerment and self-esteem, developing and furthering cooperation, encouraging spiritual values, safeguarding democratic citizenship.

References:

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