

Promoting Human Values & Quality Concern in Indian Higher Education

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BACKDROP

At present juncture the entire world is witnessing major innovations in science and technology, changes in the constraints to economies and politics, and transformations in demographic and social structures in the emerging new imperatives of globalization. These upheavals, which are likely to further accelerate in the present century will place considerable strain on the education community in particular, to respond to growing needs and to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The exigencies of our time demand the dynamic interplay of creativity, courage and determination to make effective changes and the will to rise to the challenges before us. In response to this situation. "educational reform plans on both the national and international levels" observes the International Commission on Education (1995), "need to transcend adequate planning and financial resource allocation." So conceived Educational reform policies have to aim at achieving educational excellence and ensuring quality with genuine concerns for equality and equity.

In the past two decades in particular, governmental and international agencies in the developing world sought to respond to developmental challenges by focusing increasingly on expanding educational opportunities. This drive by developing countries was in fulfillment of UNESCO's mission to achieve 'Education for All'. But the expansion in education was concentrated on coping with the growing demand for schooling, while the quality of education itself was not given priority. The result was over-crowded schools, colleges and universities, outdated teaching methods based on learning by rote and teachers who have become unable to adapt to more modern approaches such as democratic participation in the class-room, cooperative learning and creative problem solving. These are now the great impediments to quality education.

I

The vast and rapid expansion of the education system. and its overburdening in many countries, have resulted in the inability to attend adequately to the question of educational equity, which calls for providing learning experiences appropriate to the learning needs of students with varying abilities. In the overwhelming ambition to provide education for all the needs of students with high potential

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have been neglected and students with differing abilities have been treated equally. As Jefferson once said, "There is nothing more unequal than equal treatment of unequal people". It may be stressed that notwithstanding the good intentions of traditional policies, to deprive outstanding students of appropriate educational opportunities is to deprive society of the best human resources that lead towards real and effective development.

With the entry into the twenty first century, developing countries are facing a multiplicity of challenges in their quest for development. Taking up these challenges squarely requires properly -trained and adequately prepared leaders to address the various socio-economic needs arising specially emphasis on human values. In this context, the specific educational needs and value-centric predicament for 'the leaders of tomorrow' must be realistically comprehended, appreciated and met.

Equality and Excellence: Not Contradictory Concepts

There is no antinomy visualized between the concepts of human value rooted in equality and the quality domain leading to excellence. In fact when a social system is so devised that equality is ensured, impliedly it also sets forth that everybody will be provided opportunity to realize the best he is capable of. There are examples of social order which illustrate that we can be equal and excellent too. This was the main thrust of the argument advanced by John W. Gardner about four decades ago when he said that a society cannot achieve greatness unless individuals at many levels of ability accept the need for higher standards of performance and strive to achieve those standards within the limits possible for them. We want the highest conceivable excellence, of course in the activities crucial to our effectiveness and creativity as a society; but that isn't enough. If the man in the street says, "Those fellows at the top have to be good, but I'm just a slob and can act like one"- then our days of greatness are behind us.

We must foster a conception of quality which may be applied to every degree of ability and to every socially acceptable activity. A missile may blow up on its launching pad because the designer was incompetent or because the mechanic who adjusted the last valve was incompetent. The same is true of everything else in our society. We need excellent physicists and excellent mechanics. We need excellent cabinet members and excellent first grade teachers. The tone and fiber of a society depend upon a pervasive and almost universal striving for good performance.

We are not going to get that kind of striving, that kind of alert and proud attention, to performance, unless we can instruct the whole society in a conception of

excellence that leaves room for everybody who is willing to strive- a conception of excellence which means that whoever I am or whatever I am doing, provided that I am engaged in a socially acceptable activity, some kind of excellence is within my reach. As James B. Conant put it. "Each honest calling, each walk of life, has its own elite, its own aristocracy based upon excellence of performance".

This is the condition of the society we must work toward. Then, unhampered by popular attitudes disparaging excellence, we can dedicate ourselves to the cultivation of distinction and a sense of quality. We can demand the best of our most gifted, most talented most spirited youngsters. And we can render appropriate honor to that striving for excellence which has produced so many of mankind's greatest achievements.

- The concept of equality implies that in the final matters of life and death all men are equally worthy of our care and concern. As early as 1775, George Mason observed, "We come equals into the world and equals shall we go out of it." Chesterton also talked on the same wave length when he reminded us that in an accident at sea we do not cry, "Bad citizens overboard". Beyond this we believe that men are equal in the possession of certain legal, civil and political rights. We believe with Aristotle that the "only state is the one in which all men are equal before law. Long back the seers of 'Isa Upanishad' had averred:

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मेवानुपश्यति।

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते॥

(He who sees all beings in the self and
the self in all being, he never
turns away from It. (The self)

In the Indian case the Vedant Philosophy also asserted the equality concept by postulating that we are same as the Brahman- (Tattwamasi). But in the empirical sense we know that men are not equal in their native gifts, nor in their motivation; and it follows that they will not be equal in their achievements. That is why the democratic governance entails equality of opportunity to be the guiding social philosophy. "We may not all hit home runs" the saying goes, "but every man should have his chance at bat."

Equality should not be confused with extreme equalitarianism implying thereby mediocrity breed mediocrity and which ignores differences in native capacity and achievement. Needless to mention that such a conception of equality has not

served democracy well. Carried far enough, it means that the lopping off of any heads which come above dead level. And it means the end of that striving for excellence which has produced mankind's greatest achievements.

In its moderate forms, equalitarianism prohibits ruthlessness in the strong, protects the weak from wanton injury and defines certain areas of equality which must not be transgressed, but does not seek altogether to eliminate individual differences or their consequences. Moderate equalitarianism has produced innumerable measures- minimum wage law, the graduated income tax and the principle that each citizen has one vote. In its extreme forms, equalitarianism denies that there are inequalities in capacity eliminates the situations in which such inequalities can exhibit themselves and ensures that if such differences do emerge, they will not result in differences in status.

II

The Conceptual side of Quality

It will be pertinent to observe at the very outset that the concept of quality can be taken to imply very different needs and intents by different groups of people. It may be interpreted to indicate effectiveness and efficiency, relevance to human and environment needs and conditions, something more in relation to the pursuit of excellence and human betterment. Chandogyapnishad says 'Competence, Confidence and Commitment converge into quality'. In this enunciation, it has to be noted that it is a dynamic idea and exact definitions are neither actually called for nor are helpful.

In the context of education specially that of higher education it denotes the quality of its graduates- their knowledge, skill, attitude, values, conduct and demeanor on the one hand and the quality of inputs and processes of the system on the other. It also stands for relevance and responsiveness viewed in terms of the kind of cognitive capital stressed and the sensitivity to national and international concerns and contexts.

To strive for excellence and quality in education means to strive for a richer curriculum and transaction based on the varying talents and needs of all students the realization of each student's potential and the development and nurturing of outstanding talent. It is also most important to ensure that teachers receive better training in how to teach high level curricula. Otherwise, society's message to students would be to aim for academic adequacy, not academic excellence.

The efficiency of any institution turns on the quality of those attracted to and retained in its service. As Sir Charles Grant Robertson, the erstwhile Vice-

Chancellor of the University of Birmingham asserts," Second- rate equipment and first rate brains will achieve more than first rate equipment and second rate brains. Professors are not made by calling them such in a university calendar and more than admirals and generals are produced by conferring the rank in the Army and Navy Gazettes. Two or three impressive personalities two of three brains of a really high caliber, will in a single generation vitalize and give distinction to a university and more than two or three such at one time, even in large university are rarer than is often supposed.

III

Changing Contextualities

Large scale expansion in any system invariably results in dilution of quality. Education system in India has been no exception. In the post- Independence period, expansion and extension was desirable, necessary and an inevitable national need at the school stage as well as the university stage. While access, opportunities and participation have been enhanced, quality has gradually become a major concern at each stage of education. Quality in the context of higher education cannot be perceived in isolation to school education. The direct relationship of the universities and the schools unfortunately does not exist in systematic functioning. Universities prepare trained teachers for the secondary stage and the higher secondary stage. They do not directly prepare teachers for the primary stage or upper primary stage but they do prepare teacher educators for the elementary stage also. The teachers of elementary stage are also trained by teacher educators who in turn are prepared by the universities. The qualified, competent and specialized human resources of any country depend upon the quality of products of education system. These depend on how the universities synchronize with the school system to ensure the optimum utilization of available resources to regularly upgrade their efforts to enhance quality. These can be only gradual and part of a long term strategy. Sudden transformation would be impossible.

In India it has been observed and experienced that while policy formulations and planning processes have been commended and appreciated, the issues and problems at the implementation stage have generally been allowed to remain unsolved or unresolved. The decline in the quality of education permeates from initial school education to the arena of higher education. Unless this vast base of the cognitive capital i.e. products of the schools are improved, the quality of university education will not attain desirable results. The mismatch between policy and implementation; theory and practice is glaringly evident across the entire spectrum of education. The universities have a responsibility to study and

monitor these discrepancies at the implementation stage in their total perspective. Several of these can be identified easily.

While elementary education and its expansion are supposed to lead to a better quality of life, higher education should normally lead to not only a better but also a higher quality of life. To focus on these distinctions and expectations, a congenial environment in educational institutions is a pre-requisite. The teacher must work in conditions free from tensions, apprehensions and pressures. The existing climate in educational institutions rarely reflects this. As a result, many faculty members in schools and colleges are often disappointed, dejected and consequently detached. Vigorous and joint efforts to improve the educational climate in colleges by principals and faculty members rarely take place. The focus is gradually drifting to tactful handling of situations. Maintaining peace is considered the greatest achievement. They could also refer to several earlier initiatives intended to improve the institutional environment.

IV

Policy Perspective

At present there are more than 700 universities including the deemed & private universities and nearly 12000 colleges of general education in the country. The enrolment in higher education is around 70 lakhs. The overall situation in higher education was summarized in the Ramamurti Committee Report entitled: "Towards an Enlightened Humane Society (1990)," "There are serious complaints at all levels about the lack of responsiveness in the system. Academic activities are at a low ebb and the academic calendar itself gets seriously disrupted almost every year. The system of higher education continues to encourage memorization of facts and regurgitation rather than creativity. While the results in higher education are clearly determined by the foundation laid in school education, we cannot wait for the ills of school education to be remedied before bringing in meaningful improvements in higher education. We cannot ignore the fact that we do not have many colleges today which can pride themselves of imparting undergraduate education of the highest quality, comparable to some of the well-known institutions in the world."

Even earlier in (1964-66) the Kothari Commission had made a very comprehensive statement on these issues. "There is a general feeling in India that the situation in higher education is unsatisfactory and even alarming in some ways, that the average standards have been falling and that rapid expansion has resulted in lowering quality. The examination results, the reports of Public Service Commissions, the views of employers and the assessment of teachers

themselves, the results of research- all seem to support this conclusion. In view of the difficulties inherent in the objective measurement of standards over a given period and as no serious attempt to measure standards has been undertaken so far, it is difficult to say definitely to what extent and in what respects, they have been falling. What is, however, apparent and really matters is that over a large area of education, the content and quality are inadequate for our present needs and future requirements and compare unfavorably with the average standards in other educationally advanced countries. What is worse, the large gap between the standards in our country and those in the advanced countries is widening rapidly. Many of our educationist and public men, however, have not fully realized how serious are the actual conditions, academic and physical, that obtain in the colleges and universities. Even those who are broadly aware of the situation fail to notice its poignancy because they have become used to such conditions."

Reflecting upon the number of universities and colleges, the National Policy on Education 1986, with modifications undertaken in 1992, proposed a different approach. "In view of the need to effect an all round improvement in the institutions, it is proposed that, in the near future, the main emphasis will be on the consolidation of, and expansion of facilities in the existing institutions"

Based upon these policy stipulations, several interventions have been made by the central government, University Grants Commission, State governments and individual universities and institutions aiming at improving the quality, credibility and social acceptability of higher education. Those in the field are well familiar with these efforts. The establishment of curriculum development centers, academic staff colleges and departments with special assistance can be cited in this regard. The outputs and contributions made by these initiatives deserve attention and provide avenues for marching ahead towards quality enhancement. However these alone, again, are not sufficient. The most depressing aspect before the young persons who are lucky to get admission in institutions of higher learning is the uncertainty that looms large before them all the time. Even if they successfully complete their courses of study, they have to be tested and retested on umpteen occasions before they qualify amongst the lucky few to get a placement in life. The colleges and universities are not able to cut much ice in this regard.

Several aspects of institution management have also shown declining trends. Cheating in examinations, leakage of question papers, unfair practices in evaluation are trends which cannot be ignored as just freak instances. Universities and institutions which had a reputation of producing products acceptable everywhere are losing their credibility. Prestigious institutions of technical and

management education have become places which cater predominantly to the outside world. There are public schools, beyond the reach of the public, which consider it their fundamental right to serve the higher and the highest crest of society, ensuring the broadening of the gap between the elite and masses. Such trends though presented as steps towards quality would be seriously questioned once India achieves universal elementary education.

With the advent of 21st century, the challenges of higher education have attained a menacing proportion. It has to be noted that the challenge of higher education of today's university in particular has to be understood, as Robert F. Goheen, the president of Princeton university put it, in terms of some of the internal tensions that give it dynamism using the word tension in a Heraclitean sense: meaning a cross pull not of a good thing against an evil thing but, most often, between competing goods. The modern university has been conceptualized as one of the few places where the individual can be greater than the group, and his imaginings given free play. Of all the places, it is a place where, if teaching is sound and alive, students learn to do their own thinking, their own reflecting. It is a place where the search for truth and value must be unending.

To quote Goheen again, "when a person inveighs against a university because it does not offer training in surf casting, or sales- promotion, or mink ranching, he is revealing a distorted notion of it as a super- market rather as a place of inquiry and investigation. Or, again, when someone sneers at the testimony of university professors as too theoretical, he is really saying he distrusts theory, which is an aspect of hard thought, and is precisely one of the prime things a university exists to nurture and pursue." Why should a university not dispense dogma, not become a supermarket, not scorn theory? Asks Goheen. He soon answers- because our civilization and the very existence of free and open society require places where the adventurous, uninhibited search for improved knowledge, for rational understanding and rational principles can be carried on.

V

It may be observed that civilization has never been very secure on this globe: nor have the ideas of freedom and justice. Man has now walked on the moon but despite the magnificent achievements of 20th century science & technology, he still walks with uncertainty and sometimes with fear on the earth. Let us look at some of the internal tensions with which a modern university has to constantly grapple and realize its true form particularly in the context of quality. The most important tensions of the modern university arises from the conception that it is to look simultaneously both backward and forward: to be always both a conservative and an innovative force in the world. The process of conservation in

a university envisages an engagement in those great currents of thought and knowledge that flow down to us out of the past, constantly renewing, transforming, evolving, enduring as central and precious components of civilized life. And, above all the self-renewing life of the untrammelled mind the right or man to know and seek knowledge freely- is what the university seeks to conserve. Along with this, a university has to provide impetus or momentum that makes an individual want to go on inquiring and learning long after his formal education ends. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this is the aspect of university function in which we have succeeded least well, but which today is of the most heightened importance because of the rate at which advancing knowledge makes inadequate and obsolete old theories, methodologies and assemblages of data.

The dual demand on our universities for quality teaching and research is the source of another tension to realizing its true form and character. It may be asserted that brought into effective interaction, teaching and scholarship produce a harmony that cannot be achieved by either separately. Pursued together, they guarantee an atmosphere of learning that invigorates and gives added point to both. In this connection it will be best to remember the advice of Rabindra Nath Tagore who said,

"... a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject who has no living traffic with his knowledge but merely repeats his lesson to his students can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them. Truth not only must inform but also must improve. If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its infinity" and as a consequence thereof, the scope for nurturing human values gets considerably thwarted.

It may, thus be apparent that the tension between good research and good teaching is a balanced one and will remain so. Those from the university world have to admit that it is our obligation to help keep that balance and preserve the dignity of the teacher-scholar as teacher not solely as scholar.

Another tension which seems to be equally important in the modern contexts is concerned with the university's pre-occupation to deal with the minds of its students and at the same time its obligation to pay heed to moral and spiritual values- and not only in its students but in itself as well. In terms of these continuing tensions, a university must not surrender its role as foregazer and critic- as searching mind and probing conscience of the society. Perhaps the highest and most difficult function of the university, its most irreplaceable form of service in a free society, lies here: that is not merely to be an instrument

responsible to popular pressures, but with due temperance born of a long heritage and enduring tradition to be willing to stand up as a judge of society's tastes and actions.

The scenario of higher education in India when looked at from these basic enunciations of tensions inherent in the very character of our universities presents a somewhat dismal picture. In terms of the ancient Vedic envisioning the university has to be a place where noble thoughts and ideas will be permitted to flow from everywhere. In essence, it has to provide a leadership to the society for the well-being of the entire humanity. It is probably in this context that it is said to be the "light house" of the society for whose sustenance it is established. Of late, however, there is a growing realization, that of all the sectors, it is the university which presents a disparaging situation in respect of its roles and responsibility, its areas of concerns and commitment, its averments and achievements and its being relevant and responsive to the fast emerging new horizons of knowledge specially of the 21st century scenario. This is more so in case of the Indian universities when viewed squarely in the new era of globalization and interdependence overtaking the dynamics of international organizations in particular and that of local and national level in general.

VI

It is unfortunate that Indian universities are presently undergoing a typical crisis of identity. There may be several factors responsible for this. The most obvious one, however, seems to be the quality of leadership being provided through the leadership of its head of the organization. The way our vice-chancellors are being identified and recruited, the way university teachers are being selected and promoted, the way teaching, research and extension activities are being given a ritualistic slant, the casual ways in which the curricula are being designed and implemented, the way our support services such as library, the laboratory, the play fields, the hostels, the cultural and hobby clubs etc. are being put to use, the way elections on the campus including that of students, teachers and employees are being organized; the way admissions and examinations are being conducted and the way under fundraising drive self-financing programs are being mushroomed, to refer to a few very conspicuous ones, all tend to imply and indicate that we are bound to be heading towards meeting an inevitable catastrophe.

Most of the university's calendar is virtually eaten up by the rituals of admissions, elections and examinations interspersed with students, teachers and employees' agitations and activists moves. One does not know for sure as to how many actual hours of meaningful teacher-student interactions take place in the various

faculties which constitute the university system. The observance of university calendar with a minimal 180-280 days of instructional programs becomes more or less a ritual without adequate evidence of authentic participation on the part of teachers and students.

All this signalizes the surfacing of the deep-rooted malaise from which our educational system has been allowed to suffer for long and is still being made to suffer it. One wonders whether there is any hope for a revamp of the system? Is our national and state leadership genuinely interested in facilitating the processes of metamorphosis so acutely needed at the present juncture? The answer seems to be both "Yes" and "No". In the past few decades, our universities have been made to practice and handle the situations of a "pseudo-autonomy". Financial improprieties and lack of academic credibility and accountability. The emergence of an Open University system in the shape of distance education/ correspondence courses and virtual universities has not been able to herald and inaugurate the much trumpeted, so called era of "openness in education" in its truer perspectives. The result is the twin goals of achieving equity and excellence through our university system could be stressed only in peripheral terms.

VII

It goes without saying that our universities, as at present, have become a replica, a minor of the evils and negative instrumentalities which have gripped our social system. There is rampant regionalism, casteism, sectarian and linguistic jingoism and lawlessness on the campuses. There are groups- nay subgroups within subgroups formed in the various pockets of teachers, students and employees. They have converted themselves into groups of self-seekers and active vested interest promoters without any sensitivity to the immediate or long term goals keeping in view which the university was founded as an institution.

As a consequence thereof, more often than not, one finds the university campuses to be the ruling places of the so called non student forces, a battle field of the various kinds of warring factions and the willing mechanisms or instruments, for conducting ritualistic operations by a team of officials headed by the ineffectual angels. If we are really bothered about quality and excellence, as is the case of the affluent and also the developing countries of the world, a firm resolve has to be taken by the state/ national level governments to go in for a critical exercise with regard to the choice of leadership concerns of the universities. New enactments will have to be gone into, the new structures will have to be created so as to restore the lost glories of our universities. The question is who will do it? when and how?

In our attempt to bring about a qualitative revamp of our universities, it will be worthwhile to remember that an all out endeavor to ensure sustainable human development with a focus on improved value system has to be our watch word. The 21st century educational scenario has to assiduously try, adopt and realize the force of this contention.

VIII

Defining Values for Promoting a Human Value Paradigm

Values are classified in a number of ways. According to John M. Heffron (1998), "if the social sciences have taught us anything over the last century, it is that we live in stratified societies, stratified by class, race, ethnicity, gender, occupation, family status, religion and education. As a matter of pure economy, relatively few value dimensions constitute the organizing principles for hundreds of specific beliefs and attitudes". The former maybe termed the core values of a society; the latter its subordinate or instrumental values. The problem for an empirical classification of values is to identify these penultimate generalities that people judge to be intrinsically satisfying and that anchor all the other desiderata that affect their lives.

In this connection it will be pertinent to refer to the observations of Harold Fallding (1965) who wrote as follows:

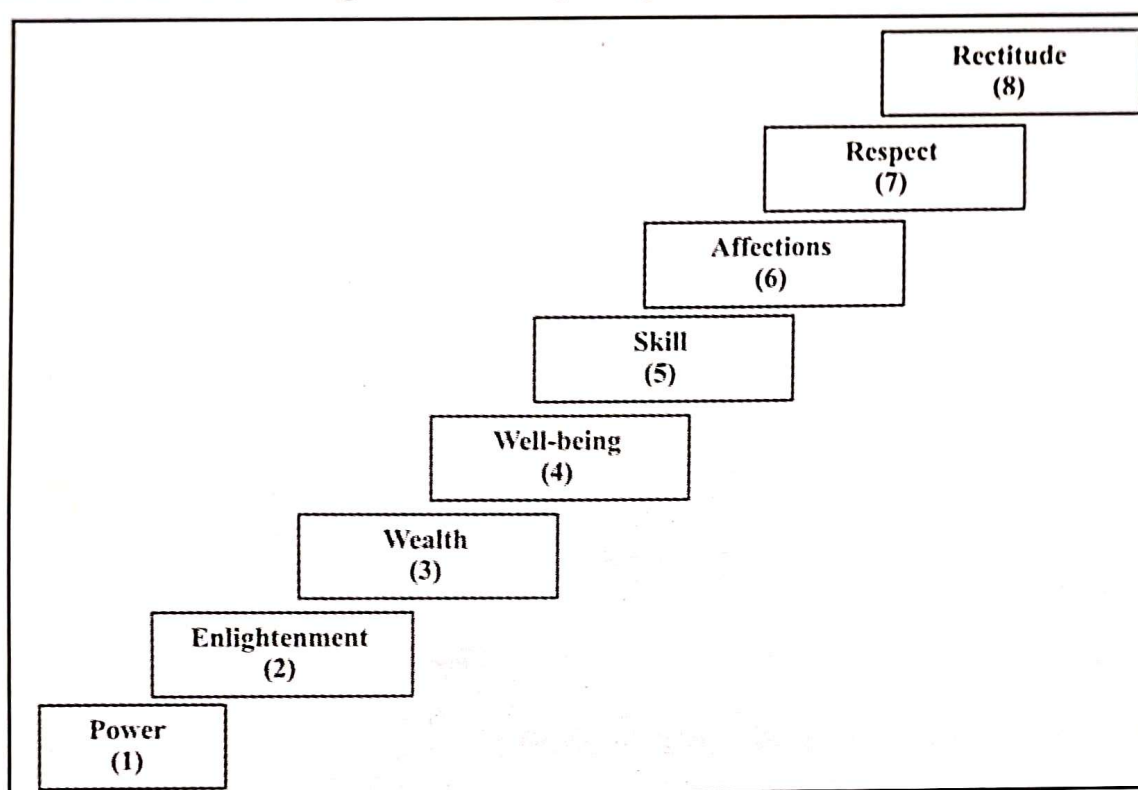
"The ordering of ends into a hierarchy means- that a person will desire not only one thing, but everything he believes its attainment depends upon. Yet it would still be realistic to say that he values only one thing if his other desires include only the things he believes are necessary for it and are made instrumental to the autonomous end. There is a world of divergence between two persons who desire the same things, if an end which is instrumental to one is self-sufficient to another"

Thus, values are organizing ends, organizing precisely because many other satisfactions and actions, are subordinate to them. It may, therefore, be seen that a rank ordering of these organizing ends and of the instrumental satisfactions leading up to them is one way of beginning to come to terms with the vast range and complexity of human values.

Ranking Models for Value Ordering

Three popular ranking models in respect of value ordering are prevalent. These are from the policy sciences, from sociology and from anthropology. One of the widely reported is Lasswell Value Dictionary (LVD) which has been used to study political behaviour, development performance, jurisprudence, educational policy

and of late "positive" human rights. The basic scheme when employed to education refers to the eight normative principles shown in Box A.



Box A : Eight normative principles associated with education in a value matrix

1. Power which implies that education should increase the political capacity of individual citizens to effect not only in their own lives but in the lives of others as well.
2. Enlightenment which envisions that education should create the desire and capacity for further learning It should help the student in the process of creating value and in pursuing "the good"
3. Wealth which postulates that education should raise capital-generating and income-earning potential through basic education, commercial science courses, job-training, career counseling and professional development.
4. Well-being which sets forth that education should improve the health prospects of all people by introducing to the fundamental of health. and hygiene, including the physical, emotional and psychological sources of wellness.
5. Skill which implies that education should improve the quality of the work force through job-training and apprenticeship programmes, vocational

education, and basic math and science education.

6. Affections which posits that education should reaffirm family and community values through civics courses, community service requirements, and regular parent-teacher conferences. It may be added that affection implies loyalty and commitment. In this connection, McDermoth (1969) quoting Josiah Royce stated that: "you can love an individual but you can be loyal only to a tie that binds you and other into some sort of unity, and loyal to individual only through the tie".
7. Respect which suggests that education should raise the level of tolerance of diversity through multi-cultural learning and teaching, mainstreaming and 'inclusion', and school desegregation policy.
8. Rectitude which lays down that education should provide a moral standard of right and wrong either through religious instrumentation or through more cognitive approaches such as values classification as advocated by Kohlberg (1975).

John M. Heffron (1999) has rightly maintained that the magnitude and direction of these values may vary considerably from one region, one country, one educational system, one university or school and classroom to the other. Equilibrating effects have to be distinguished from dis-equilibrating ones as the effort to maximize one or all these values may lead to either conflict or consensus. It may also be understood that Lasswellian values described in the foregoing exposition imply a fairly consistent and accepted set of goals, that cannot all be maximized, at least not without jeopardizing what is characteristic and discrete about each of them. For all social choices there are always trade offs. The important question is what direction these trade offs take.

IX

The Concerns of Higher Education

In this conceptual framework of pluralistic education, the basic function specially of the university in a modern community: acquires a distinct role when re-evaluated in the light of the pressing need for "Education in Human values and life Skills" These are more than mere concerns of teaching, Norman B Henderson (1969) in "University Teaching" has identified seven basic functions of the university. These are to provide a place for pure culture and learning, to conduct research and advance the boundaries of knowledge, to serve as a training school for the professions, to turn out trained leaders for every walk of life, to act as a liaison between the so called "academic, person" and the "good solid practical

man" to produce men and women of character and high ideas and to be-the custodian of intellectual freedom safe guarding liberty and unfettered search for truth. It may be observed that the function related 'to producing men and women of character and high ideas: has become specially significant for the 21st century world which is face to face with a rising tide of dehumanizing forces in the wake of the upsurge of IT era'.

The psychological stage of development to which our youth, joining college and university level education belongs is marked by a high degree of awareness, of doubts and questionings, of a search possibly unaware of itself, of meaning and, purpose. It is the stage of a growing sense of personal autonomy. It is a stage at which education with a commitment to values and life skills has to participate in the young persons' development, directing the questionings to the personal relations and motives and to social responsibilities. The educational commitment is not directed to "implanting" any set of values. Its main purpose, on the other hand, is to develop in the young minds a moral sensibility and discernment, and-to help them to deepen their insights so that they may develop for themselves a body of convictions and guiding beliefs. Philosopher Kant once remarked that the proof of an ultimate reality is the "starry heavens above and the moral sense within". That "sense within" is what education in human- values is all about. This implies that our young men and women have to be exposed to the great ideas and great expression of values which have lifted humanity to the high ranges of the spirit-ideas of human dignity and freedom, of individuality and- social responsibility, of kindness and compassion. It may, however, be remembered that the teaching of moral values in the context of great ideas will not be "instructional". It can only be dialogic, the conversation between the teacher and the taught and the ideas. Only by dialogic method can the ideas be internalised and made as their own by the young learners; and by that means to make their own lives less unintelligible and more meaningful. This is the learning that makes the soul of the learner capable of defending itself.

X

Summing up

It will be pertinent to quote Prof. Raja Roy Singh (1991) who rightly observed: "value are the doors of perception through which we look at the world and ourselves and interpret the experience and make it intelligible to ourselves", He asserted that 'to shut these doors on the learners on grounds of "detached view" or "moral neutrality" or "irrelevance of values in the preparation for earning a living' is arguing for education without purpose". Thus, education that is infused with a constant sense of values should mean deeper moral sensibility, and greater human

understanding so that the learners, as they have more education can more clearly perceive the barriers that divide and separate one human being from another.

In the end, it may be admitted that the components on 'Education in Human Values and Life Skills' should be made an integral and prominent part of the various disciplines being formally taught at present. This should arise from the 'infusion' approach to course designing as is being contemplated for environment education, human rights and empowerment programmes. In any case, the various concepts and skills have to be synthesized and integrated with a focus on promoting personality traits which will engender basic sanskaras of national integration, fellow feeling, tolerance, empathy and commitment to the quality of life and living at the local, national and global levels so as to fulfil the truly Indian vision of 'SaraveBhavantu-Sukhinah, SarveSantuNiramyah; SarveBhadrani-Pashyantuh, Ma KashchitDukhbhagBhavet' advocated through the ages. Let us now remember and reflect on the cardinal messages embodied in our Upanishads. Three things make a person great, A university as an organization great and a nation as collectivity great. There are:

- Firm conviction in the power of goodness and truth.
- Absence of jealousy and suspicion.
- Helping those who are doing good or trying to be good.