Quality Issues in School Education: Towards Compulsory Inculcation of Value Education in India

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The Indian education system recognizes the role of education in instilling the values of secularism, egalitarianism, respect for democratic traditions and civil liberties and quest for justice. It is interesting to add the relevance of value education in school education as an alternative knowledge system. Keeping in view the relevance of such education, the subject value education has come to acquire increasing prominence in educational discussions at all levels during recent times in our country. The issue has been projected as one of national priority in the National Educational Policy (NPE), 1986. It is emphasized here that how the knowledge and training in value education at school level can sensitize the adaptability of youths. It can also be instrumental against threats to humanity from climate change, globalization, emergence of technological choices, violence, terrorism, commercialization of education, the increasingly competitive environment and the aspirations of parents place a tremendous burden and add to the stress and anxiety on children.
[Key Words: Indian education system, education for all, Value education]

Introduction

Education is necessarily a process of inculcating values to equip the learner lead a life – a kind of life that is satisfying to the individual in accordance with the cherished values and ideals of the society. Prominent people have emphasized the role of education for 'character development', 'bringing out the latent potentialities and inherent qualities' and developing an 'integrated personality' for the well being of the individual and the society at large. Whatever term me may use, the importance of developing values has long been embedded in the age old traditions of India's civilizational and cultural heritage, spanning over the centuries. The concerns for value education are reflected in our key policy documents from time to time. After independence the National Commission of Secondary Education (1952-53) was a significant landmark in emphasizing character building as the defining goal of education. "The supreme end of the educative process should be the training of the character and personality of students in such a way that they will be able to realize their full potentialities and contribute to the well-being of the community."

Educators need to look at education and the vital role it plays in the transmission of social values. Education is a powerful instrument in the process of overcoming inequalities, accelerating social transformation and achieving economic progress. Simultaneously it can "effectively establish a new social order based on freedom, equality and justice" (Govinda 1995: 13). Thus education is considered as a "catalyst of social change" (Dreze and Sen 1995: 109) and in view of its intrinsic importance in improving the quality of life; it is also seen as an essential investment in human capital development.

Education assumes special importance in the process of nation building and its relevance needs no emphasizing, particularly in the context of a developing country like India, which is characterized by massive illiteracy. Education is one of the well-known determinants of social mobility. Educational policy in India has passed through several stages, particularly after independence (1947). The Indian Constitution has emphasized national integration and educational policy following the constitutional directives' stress on development of the national system of education. The Directive Principles of State Policy as enunciated in the Constitution envisage that the State shall provide free and compulsory education for children up to 14 years of age. The National Policy on Education, 1986 and its POA, 1992 suggested making urgent provision for essential facilities for achieving universal access to education of comparable quality. It recommended adopting specific strategies to reduce dropout and provision of non-formal education for children who cannot attend formal school. At the same time, the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), I992 suggested adopting a holistic approach to address the educational needs of working children, girls and disadvantaged groups and considering issues of content, process and quality more efficiently. Thus, 'Education for All' has been the basic thrust of the Indian education policy and elementary education has been assigned the highest priority. At present it is obvious that values education is coming under attack throughout the country, as it is not deemed one of the "basics." It would be difficult to ascertain what is more "basic" than honesty, lawfulness, and responsibility. Therefore, it is important for educators to champion values education, as it is the determiner of what the learner will perceive as worthy of his/her attention.

In India, we believe that education is the key to the task of nation-building. It is also a well-accepted fact that providing the right knowledge and skills to the youth can ensure the overall national progress and economic growth. The Indian education system recognizes the role of education in instilling the values of secularism, egalitarianism, respect for democratic traditions and civil liberties and quest for justice. The Report of the Education Commission (Kothari 1964: 66) which was titled 'Education and National Development' set a number of goals to be pursued. One of them was "to vocationalise secondary education." Here, vocational education and training is very cardinal to any economic development of the country.

India is referred to as a 'young nation' with 28 million population of youth being added every year. About 90 per cent of employment opportunities require vocational skills, something that is not being imparted on a large scale in schools and colleges. It is interesting to add the relevance of value education in school education as an alternative knowledge system. In general, value education refers to a wide gamut of learning and activities ranging from training in physical health, mental hygiene, etiquette and manners, appropriate social behaviour, civic rights and duties to aesthetic and even religious training. Traditionally the objectives of value education were based on religion and philosophy. There was no secular value education and very little scope for the development of moral thinking and the capacity for independent moral decision. Speaking about its basic requirement, it is pointed out; prepare an individual to meet these demands. Keeping in view the relevance of such education, the subject value education has come to acquire increasing prominence in educational discussions at all levels during recent times in our country. The issue has been projected as one of national priority in the National Educational Policy (NPE), 1986. The Policy declares: "the growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values".

It is emphasized in the paper that how the knowledge and training in value education at school level can sensitize the adaptability of youths. Training in general has potential benefits which accrue to the individual to an organization and to the country as a whole. To an individual, training enhances their future earning potential, career progression and employability. To the unemployed, training offers them capacities to find ways of earning a livelihood. This can be through self-employment or setting up of businesses. It is emphasized that both parents and teachers, need to present themselves as role models, whom the children can look upto, for guidance to be effective role models "self-realization" is the key, for it brings about an internal balance and harmony, which in turn is reflected externally by right conduct, character and personality. It can also be instrumental against threats to humanity from climate change, globalization, emergence of technological choices, violence, terrorism, commercialization of education, the increasingly competitive environment and the aspirations of parents place a tremendous burden and add to the stress and anxiety on children.

Issues related to School education

a) Why Schooling?

It is proven fact that any community or social group sustains itself through continuous self-renewal, and that this renewal takes place by means of the educational growth of the immature member of the group. Education is thus a fostering, a nurturing and a cultivating process. Etymologically, education means just a process of leading or bringing up. We speak of it as shaping and moulding- shaping into the standard form of social activity (Dewey 2004: 11).

In order to be certified as 'educated', all of us have to attend schools…. In other words, what is called education seems to be impossible to acquire without schooling (Pathak 2002:16).

In sociology scholars have debated on the implications of school education. Does it socializes and restore order and as an institution contributes to the development of social cohesion and moral order (Functionalist like Durkheim, Parsons)? Or does it legitimizes and perpetuates inequality (Marxists like Bourdieu)? Or does it have power to transform and bring about qualitative change in society (Karl Manheim, John Dewey)?

In nutshell, the functionalists argued that school socialize and discipline the child thereby strengthening the moral foundation of the society. For the Marxists, schools as an institution it serves the interests of the ruling and dominant class in the capitalist society. According to Ralph Miliband (1972) schools reproduce and legitimize the existing capitalist society and its inequality and class division. Foucault, the post-modernist, saw school as another illustration of disciplining institution (besides hospital and prison) where hierarchy as 'normality' is centralized and coerced.

Underlying Assumptions

- "Neither the people who engage in work, nor those who are directly affected by work, are capable of full and free interest in their work"
- There need not necessarily be any symmetry between the intended educational objective and what really emerge out of that (even government policies are also not at par with the praxis and only appears good on paper)
- We see education having purely strategic/instrumental orientation to it; consume all that the school is teaching for the purpose of passing the examination or getting a degree.

b) What is happening through education?

According to Cohen (1971:22), in contrast to socialization, 'education is the inculcation of standardized and stereotyped knowledge, skills, values and attitudes by means of standardized and stereotyped procedures.

To quote Paulo Freire (1996: 52) on schooling - A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level reveals its fundamentally narrative character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening object (the students). … Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the "Banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits.

To add with regard to public vs private dichotomy, Emily Talen (2001: 465) says that the geographic implications of consolidation have been largely neglected. Given the profound centrality of schools in social, political, and economic life, access to them is far from inconsequential: school locations and

the boundaries that create their constituencies dramatically affect the spatial interaction between home, school, and community.

c) What is required?

According to Dewey (2004:182):- Under the influence of the conception of the separation of mind and material, method tend to be reduced to a cut and dried routine, to following mechanically prescribed steps. …. Mechanical rigid woodenness is an inevitable corollary of any theory which separates mind from activity motivated by a purpose. To elaborate:

- In the first place, there is a neglect of concrete situations of experience. There can be no discovery of a method without cases to be studied…. 'Methods' have then to be authoritatively recommended to teachers instead of being an expression of their own intelligent observation (teacher have no space for innovation, and rewarded too by me). Under such circumstances, they have a mechanical uniformity, assumed to be alike for all minds. Here the need is for organic linkage of teacher to system.
- The notion of methods isolated from subject matter is responsible for the false conception of discipline and interest already noted. When the effective way of managing material is treated as something ready-made apart from material. Need for linkage of teacher with subject matter.
- The Act of learning is made a direct and conscious end in itself. Under normal condition, learning is a product and reward of occupation with subject matter. Children do not set out, consciously, to learn walking or talking. Thus need for informalization of education.

Reforming the system, Karl Mannheim and Stewart (1962: 28), saw the possibility of a more progressive form of schooling in tune with the process of democratization in society. What he had in mind was the movement for progressive/child-centred school. A major characteristic of progressive school is that the teacher is gradually being turned from an authoritative and possible authoritarian instructor into a guide who relies upon the initiative of the learner, and recognizes that for good intellectual learning, a prior condition is emotional respect between teacher and pupil. It can be further emphasized that democracy should incorporate parents and community in general.

In modern society, multiculturalism concerns the ideology with regard to the identity of society and how cultural differences between groups are to be dealt with. The ideology may fluctuate between the extremes of assimilation and pluralism. Assimilation means the merging of ethnic/cultural groups into a dominant group, culturally as well as structurally. Pluralism in its extreme form implies that the society is comprised of groups whose distinctive cultures are maintained by structural pluralism. Cultural pluralism cannot exist without duplication of institutions and hence without structural pluralism, according to sociologist Van den Berghe (1967). The public and private domains are interacting subsystems. Schools, for instance, have a function in preparing children for their public role, but at the same time, by transmitting cultural

values they have an impact on the private lives of the pupils and their families (Eldering: 1993). For their values to be accepted in the public domain, ethnic and cultural minorities should organize themselves and negotiate with other interest groups in society.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: A model of inclusive education

The scheme of SSA evolved from the recommendation of the state education minister's conference held in October 1998 to pursue UEE in a mission mode. The scheme of SSA was approved by the cabinet in its meeting held on 16th November 2000. It provides for a wide convergent framework for implementation of elementary education scheme such as Operation Black Board¸ Teacher's education, Non-formal education, Mahila Samakhya, National programme for primary education, District Primary education Programme (DPEP) in 248 districts of 18 states.

SSA schools, which can be thought of alternative schools, are basically the extension of government initiated programme, not very different from earlier ones like World Bank sponsored District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) ot Total Literacy Campaign. But these schools are of non-formal nature that is meant to cater to the needs of the people in remote areas and for those that require the education most – the SC/ST women and the poor communities. These groups, and in particular women among them face greater problems.

Objectives

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, ' Back-to-School' camp by 2003;
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010
- Universal retention by 2010

SSA is a holistic and comprehensive approach to the issue of quality. It is a programme with a clear time frame for universal elementary education. Specifically it aims in this regard that all are children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternative School, Back to School Camp – by 2003 and complete five years of schooling by 2007 and eight years of schooling by 2010. It aims to ensure universal retention by 2010. SSA also aims to promote social justice through basic education, hence it clearly aims that all gender and social gaps in primary education have to be bridged by 2002 and at elementary education level by 2007.

It is an effort for effectively involving the Panchayat Raj Institutions, School Management Committees, Village/Urban Smallest Unit Level Education Committees, Parents'-Teachers' Associations, Mother-Teacher Association,

Tribal Autonomous Councils and other grassroots level structures in the management of elementary schools.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is also an expression of political will for universal elementary education across the country and is partnership between the Central, State and local government. It is also an opportunity for States to develop their own vision of elementary education and implement them (GoI, 2005).

- Under SSA, each district is divided into zones and each zone consists of about 30-40 Education Guarantee Scheme Center (EGS) / Upper primary school-middle school (UPS)/ Primary school (PS).
- The scheme of sarva shishka abhiyan, SSA (1998) to pursue universal education (by 2010 to children 6-14 yrs). The five social parameters of Universal Elementary Education:
- Access (availability of educational facilities within a walking distance of 1 k.m at the primary stage and within 3 k.m. at upper primary level.
- Enrolment (total enrolment and functional attendance of children)
- Retention (till the end of course)
- Equity (principle of justice supplementing law in society)
- Achievement (bridges the gaps in relation to gender, caste and class; expected level of learning by almost all children).
- The assistance under SSA is 50:50 Centre, State. The SSA funds will be transferred directly to state implementation societies, which in turn transfer to Village Education Committees (VEC), school management committee.

To achieve the basic objective i.e. objective of universalization of elementary education, with a clear thrust on quality and social and gender equity within the specific time frame, with a community owned and managed elementary education system, as outlined above, following frame work has been chalked out.

➢ Institutional reforms in Centre and States to improve efficiency and delivery system.
➢ Sustainable financing – Long term partnership between Centre and States- (IXth Plan 85:15, Xth Plan 75:25, After Xth Plan 50:50). SSA specifically mentions that it is additionality and the state government has to maintain their level of expenditure.
➢ Community ownership of school based interventions through effective decentralization and involvement of VEC, PRIs, Local Bodies, and Women Groups etc.
➢ Institutional capacity building for improvement in quality of elementary education. NCERT, NIEPA, NCTE, SCERT, SIEMAT and DIET to have a major role.
➢ Community based monitoring with full transparency in all aspects of implementation.

➢ Community based and down-top approach to planning with habitation as a unit for planning.
➢ A mainstreaming gender approach focused on girl's education and special component for girls in educationally backward blocks under SSA.
➢ Focus on the educational participation of children from the SC/ST, religious and linguistic minorities.
➢ Thrust on quality and making education relevant, with emphasis on providing "Education for Life".
➢ Recognition of critical role of teachers and focus on the human resource development needs of teachers.
➢ Preparation of District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP) reflecting all Governmental and Non-governmental investments. Convergence with various departments to optimize resource allocation and utilization in a holistic manner.

Prospects of value education in India

The National Policy on Education (1986) expressed concern over "the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society". It advocated turning education into a "forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values." Education should "foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people". The Programme of Action of 1992 tried to integrate the various components of value education into the curriculum at all stages of school education, including the secondary stage. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 echoed the vision of education where values are inherent in every aspect of schooling. The framework articulates the need to reaffirm our commitment to the concept of equality amidst diversity, mutual interdependence of humans to promote values that foster peace, humaneness and tolerance in a multi cultural society (p.2). Enabling children to experience dignity, confidence to learn, development of self-esteem and ethics, need to cultivate children's creativity, making children sensitive to the environment and the need for fostering democracy as a way of life rather than only as a system of governance as well as the values enshrined in the Constitution assume significance in the framework.

As Tyler (1949: 106) argues: Since educational objectives are essentially changes in human beings, that is, the objectives aimed at are to produce certain desirable changes in behaviour patterns of the student, then evaluation is the process of determining the degree to which these changes in behaviour are taking place.

Education, after all, is a purposive activity, one in which normative considerations are paramount. What we consider "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," "important" or "unimportant" constantly guides our practice. As R. S. Peters (1970) has observed, Education implies that something worthwhile has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner. It would be a logical contradiction to say that a man had been educated but that he had in no

way changed for the better, or that in educating his son a man was attempting nothing that was worthwhile.

Education is a means of cultural transmission from one generation to another in any given society and educational institutions are like micro-societies. Education as a social phenomenon does not take place in a vacuum or isolation; it takes place in the society and this normally begins with the family, which is one of the social institutions responsible for the education of the child. Educational development is an established means for socio-economic upliftment of any community.

The Indian school education system has often been subjected to severe criticism, ranging from its inequitable and hierarchical nature to the poor quality educational experiences that children go through in its classrooms. The need for meaningfully assessing children's growth in schools features in the recently enacted Right to Education Act (RTE) (Ministry of Human Resource Development or MHRD 2009) as well. It states that a "comprehensive and continuous evaluation of the child's understanding to knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same" will now be made.

Values are determining qualities of life. There is a very large body of knowledge and lists of values. Article 51 A of the Indian Constitution – Fundamental Duties – provides the most comprehensive list of values that should be inculcated by every Indian citizen. Values enshrined in the Constitution of India point towards the principles of equality and social justice and appreciation of cultural values, dignity of all individuals etc.

The values such as equality, fraternity, justice can promote inclusivity where all members of the society feel included irrespective of their colour, culture, economic social background, caste, religion, gender or community. The culture of inclusivity is particularly relevant and important in the context of our society, nation and making education a right for all children. The values can be acquired every moment and every day of our lives but some basic parameters and focus areas are:
- During the process of socialization like immediate family, friends, school teachers, peer group, neighbourhood etc.
- Contact with the broader community like, family network, mass media, work places etc.
- Habits imbibed as we grow up like, prohibitions, commands and identification with family and friends, approval and disapproval of actions, deeds etc.

Thus, Values should not be treated as ideal concepts but as „empowering tools □ which are helpful in meeting the challenges of the contemporary social world -be it religious fundamentalism, environmental degradation, multicultural conflicts, misuse of science and technology, inequalities, ill effects of mass media, globalization, commercialization and so on..

Value Concerns at School Stage

One of the major debates around value education is what values should be inculcated among students. While there is a kind of consensus as to what values are, there seems to be some confusion about which values and whose values need to be nurtured. Values are complex mix of understanding, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and skills. There are cluster of attitudes and beliefs associated with a particular value. For example, loyalty includes truth; peace is linked to commitment and justice. It is commonly expressed that the key values at school stage need to be anchored in the framework of student's holistic development as a human being and as a responsible member/citizen of society as well as the ground realities in which the schools are placed.

Growing into maturity is a step-by-step process. One important element in this complex developmental process is moral development, or the acquisition of a viable value system which promotes actions in line with one's philosophy of life. From the standpoint of individual experience morality evolves slowly, passing through certain definable stages during which one or another aspect appears to play a major role.

Increasing attention has recently been given to the issue of moral values in education. A moral development framework can also serve as a basis for integrating the efforts at value education made by home, school, and church.

The school's primary focus is on the process rather than on the content of moral experience, so that it's educational strategies can accommodate a wide variety of specific values. Schools are best seen as major arenas in which values are operationalized into moral experience. Therefore the school has the responsibility to provide educational experiences which will encourage the emergence of each student's moral capacities in ways which are both highly individualized and generally acceptable to the society. Ultimately, ensuring quality education for children is a task that involves not just individual families but the entire community. Experiments to involve the community as a whole. Quality teacher training, infrastructure, teaching resources and community involvement in ensuring teacher and school accountability must go hand in hand. The quality of our children's education will determine the quality of our citizenry in the coming years.

We all know that Values Education is inherent in our civilization, culture and traditions spanning over centuries. If the philosophy and principles as articulated in the '*Indian Intellectual Traditions', the 'National Curriculum Framework (NCF) – 2005'* and the '*Position Paper on Education for Peace'* are put into practice, values oriented education will indeed occupy centre stage.

As per the '*Education for Values in Schools – A Framework'* prepared by the *Department* of *Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education*, NCERT every school needs to evolve its own plan of values, create goals and laydown assessment criteria. It is suggested that every school prepares an annual plan highlighting the values concerns, activities/strategies to be adopted and age appropriate mechanisms to be created for each grade and at each level.

The *Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)* has brought out this '*Values Education – A Handbook for Teachers*' as a part of the Values Education Kit (VEK) that can help in bringing education for values in schools.

Values are essential for positive human behaviour. Education from time immemorial has focused on values. Values form the core of educational goals and objectives. Almost every education policy document has emphasized the role of education in fostering values. *Education Commission (1966)* recommended introduction of social, moral and spiritual values in the school curricula. *The National Policy of Education (1986)* also highlighted the need of education for values in removing intolerance, violence, superstition and upholding social, cultural and scientific principles to make India a secular, democratic and progressive nation taking pride in its cultural heritage. The *National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2000)* brought to focus the erosion of ethical, social and spiritual values and suggested the integration of values in the curriculum.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 strongly advocates values like Cooperation, respect for human rights, tolerance, justice, responsible citizenship, diversity, reverence towards democracy and peaceful conflict resolution. It also delineates education for peace as a significant national and global issue. The position paper on *Education for Peace* has also addressed the issue of equipping students with the values, attitudes and skills required to live in harmony as responsible citizens with the goal of education for peace (pg.1). Education for values will further equip students to make sensible choices on situations based on values of equality, integrity, democracy, freedom, and human rights.

What Values Education Aims at
- Holistic development of the child while addressing the head and the heart.
- Revisiting values and making everyone aware of eroding values.
- Creating balance between child and community.
- An education that connects the heart, head and hand.
- Inculcating the understanding of Interdependence between family, society, nation and the world.
- Bringing in a pro-active social conscience.
- Improvement of the quality of education.
- Harmony and peace with self.

Values Education: Challenges before Schools
- Need to prioritize Values Education in the curriculum.
- Integrating Values Education into school activities.
- Defining focus areas and planning for realizing desired objectives.

In lieu of conclusion

To consider the implications of moral development in adulthood is to focus on the character of the educator himself. The educator, as part of his own

identity, is committed to sharing something of himself with his students. Part of what he shares will be his values.

Education is inherently values oriented and must develop in learners caring, co-operation and respect for others. In addition to equipping them with life skills and attitudes, it must prepare them to lead a full life. Efforts to provide children with situations and circumstances which strengthen and enhance their own sense of self-esteem and individual worth will facilitate the acquisition of moral feelings (evaluations) which accompany those situations and circumstances. This implies that actual educational exercises aimed at strengthening self-esteem should be a primary part of value education in early childhood-and should continue as one strand of the total educational endeavor.

It is apparent that Values Education is an area that needs to be highlighted as it holds the key to real and meaningful education – that engages students in addressing real world challenges, issues important to humanity, and questions that affect them as individuals. Learning good judgment, even when the rules are known, requires recognizing the consequences of behavior. Much of this kind of learning occurs through trial and error; however, educators can minimize randomness and improve the effectiveness of learning by providing the student with helpful guidance and specific feedback on his actions, by highlighting consequences in advance, and by reinforcing appropriate responses when they occur. Adolescents need opportunities for experimentation with alternative value systems within safe limits. They need to practice the problem-solving and decision-making skills acquired in childhood.

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