



Value Education Towards Empowerment Of Youth A Holistic Approach

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Abstract

There has been growing concern over the erosion of values among youth and a need is felt for empowering them through education. Value education refers to those pedagogies that educators use to create enriching learning experiences for students and addresses issues related to character formation. Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni College for Women (MLACW) has partnered with DISHA, a NGO to conduct programs for students adopting a self-exploratory and scientific methodology. This paper presents an insight into the impact of such value education and reveals that a holistic approach to value education has enabled students to lead happy and successful lives.

Keywords: Education; empowerment; experiences; holistic; learning; value; youth

1. Introduction and Research Problem

An educational institution, in the present context, is viewed as an open adaptive system consisting of interrelated subsystems operating in the environmental supra-system. Educational practices are bound to be more dynamic and challenging to meet the complex changes in the environmental variables of the future. Fast changing technological, economic, ecological, legal and social environment, phenomenal growth in global education and the increasing complexity of decision making in the field of education will considerably influence the educational policies and practices. In a dynamic and turbulent environment, value education will assume unique importance.

To survive and sustain in a volatile, competitive and quickly changing world, educational institutions will be required to become more interconnected and holistic with greater stress on human values and with greater concern for others. Holistic and value oriented education can secure an integrated personality, thereby enabling the optimum development of the physical, emotional, mental, aesthetic, moral and spiritual entities of learners.

1.1. Values

Values represent basic convictions that 'a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence'. They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's idea as to what



is right, good or desirable. Values have both content and intensity attributes. The content attributes says that a mode of conduct or end-state of existence is important. The intensity attributes specifies how important it is. When an individual's value in terms of their intensity is ranked, the person's value system is obtained. Most people have a hierarchy of values that form their value system. This system is identified by the relative importance people assign to such values as freedom, pleasure, self-respect, honesty, obedience and equality. While value systems of people are genetically determined; a significant portion of the values held is established in early years – from parents, teachers, friends and others. It is attributable to factors such as national culture, parental dictates, educator's interventions, peer group influence and similar environmental influences. Values are relatively stable and enduring. This may be due to their genetic component and the way in which they are learned. Children are told to be honest and truthful. They are never taught to be a little bit honest and a little bit truthful. As a child, one learns that certain behaviours or outcomes are always desirable or always undesirable. It is this absolute learning of values, when combined with a significant portion of genetic imprinting that more or less assures their stability and endurance. The process of questioning an individual's value may result in a change. As people grow up and are exposed to other value systems, they may have altered a number of their values. For instance, in college, if a student desired to be part of a group whose values included the conviction that every member should use abusive language, there is a fair probability that the student changed his/her value system to align with that of group members, even if it meant rejecting their parents' value that only ill-mannered children use abusive language. While it is true that the underlying convictions may no longer be acceptable to some with previously held values, more often, questioning currently held values may result in reinforcing these values.

1.2. Value education

Education is meant not only to provide knowledge and information, but also to build character of human beings. Having a set of values and ideals, learners must be guided for self-development, so that values become a part of their character. There is a strong feeling that in the present times there is a crisis in character formation. It is also felt that since character is largely molded during childhood and youth, it is the responsibility of educational institutions to provide education for character building. As the contemporary world is rapidly demanding greater intercommunication and oneness, there is an urgent need for cultivating the values of co-operation, mutuality and harmony which can best be fostered through education. Harmony of man and nature is also being discussed and deliberated, in recent times due to greater global concern towards protection of the environment. The recent disturbing trend of increasing deviant behaviours among youth has also emphasized the need for education that promotes among youth the values of discipline, respect, self-control and peace. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity have been expressly stated in the preamble of the Indian constitution. Certain fundamental duties, such as pursuit of noble ideals like non-violence and patriotism, the promotion of harmony and spirit of common brotherhood, development of scientific temper and the spirit of inquiry, humaneness and striving towards excellence in all areas of individual and collective endeavour have also been enunciated. The quest for excellence has also stressed the need for value education at all levels. As human life is becoming more and more complex, there is a need to equip individuals with the requisite skills to deal effectively with such complexities. This will call for a radical change in human nature which can be facilitated only through moral transformation. As Swami Vivekananda rightly said, true education is man-making education; it implies that all education must stem from value education.



2. Literature Review

Most previous research on value education have focused upon the need for and approaches to value education as a means of developing ideal students and capable leaders. According to Dr. Savana Chandrasekar and Dr. R Emmaneil in the article titled, Impart value based education; educational institutions are sacred places where students build their character and career. The criteria for quality education consist in imparting value education with the highest intellectual quality in a superior learning environment to help students emerge as leaders in their chosen fields. Jyoti Kumta in the paper titled, Value education: what can be done, has suggested that the focus should be on finding good role models who will use modern teaching methods to teach values and help children become capable of making better choices in life.

In the paper titled, Need for value-based education in the twenty first century, the author Bikas C Sanyal has outlined the need for educational institutions, local, national and international agencies to work together in making value based education an essential component of educational programs to change the attitudes and behaviours of the human race. Dr. Nasrin in her paper on Value Based Environmental Education felt that in order to protect our society from value crisis, it is necessary to include value based education in school curriculum and value based environmental education makes one conscious about the need to understand the consequence of human action. The paper on the Contribution Of Value Education Towards Human Development In India by Shagufta Munir and Mariya Aftab emphasizes that value education in the modern context is considered much wider, transcending the boundaries of religions and encompassing ethical, social, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values. The authors advocate that a judicious combination of academics, culture and value education must form the crux of all educational initiatives in schools. In the paper titled, Need for value-based spiritual education in schools, Seetha Kunchithapadam has stressed upon the need for adopting an integrated approach to value education in which the teacher's role extends beyond the classroom to that of a facilitator and counsellor. Pathak, R D & Tripathi S K in the paper titled Information technology and value based education have raised concern over value erosion in society due to technological advancement. They suggest that value education needs to be introduced in universities and management institutes. The article, Management of human values: An overview of Ahmad A highlights the importance of cultivating several trans-cultural human values in corporate management. The author argues for management with ethics, science with human values and technology with a conscience. An Approach to Value Orientation of Teachers' Education by C Seshadri addresses the issue of teachers' training for value education and the need for preparing teachers as agents of social change.

3. The Study

The present study is essentially planned as a descriptive/analytical research. The main objective of the study is to understand the impact of value education as a means of youth empowerment. More specifically, the study aims to analyse the following:

- Whether value education has impacted all domains of students' personality
- Whether the cognitive, conative and affective dimensions of value education objectives have been met x Whether value education has developed a healthy and positive morality



This study is based on the assumption that the value education initiatives cover all aspects/domains of students' lives.

3.1. Methodology

This study has been undertaken by collecting data from students of the undergraduate degree course of the Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni College for Women (MLACW), Bangalore who have attended the value education programs facilitated by DISHA, a non-government organization (NGO). The workshops conducted by facilitators of DISHA, titled Know Yourself, Know Your Country, Know Your Culture follow an experiential learning methodology. Yoga sessions, group discussions, games, audio-visual presentations, counselling sessions, quiz and interaction with experts are some of the methods adopted. The respondents to the survey were drawn from a random sample of the final year degree students. The survey instrument (a structured questionnaire) was administered to 250 students and 226 responses were collected. Qualitative data were sourced from relevant literature, journals, websites, and observation and also through discussions and open-ended questions. The survey instrument included 25 statements describing how respondents felt after attending the value education workshops conducted by DISHA. A five point scale (Strongly disagree(SD), Disagree(D), Can't say(CS), Agree(A), Strongly agree(SA)) was used to find out the degree of agreement for each statement.

3.2. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are discussed in terms of the perceived changes in the physical, mental, moral, emotional, social and personal domains of the lives of respondents after attending the value education workshops. The impact of changes in various domains is analysed as follows:

3.2.1. Physical

58.41% of the respondents strongly agree that they realize the practice of yoga is energizing. Less than 2% of the respondents disagree which clearly indicates that the majority of them has realized that yoga and pranayama sessions have a positive impact on their physical health. With 31.86% of the total respondents agreeing that the yoga sessions of the workshop has enabled them to realize the value of fitness by enhancing physical energy; it is evident that there is a positive inclination among youth towards physical development. Discussions with respondents also revealed that games conducted by the facilitators energized them and rekindled the spirit of sportsmanship.

3.2.2. Mental

Over 80% of the respondents are able to concentrate better as a result of their experience at the workshop. Nearly 90% of them have developed greater clarity of thought, greater confidence than before and the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. This indicates that they have developed the ability to judge for themselves and make appropriate and balanced decisions for their future in the personal and professional spheres. This study has revealed that



participants get back with greater confidence to face the challenges and uncertainties of the future as the workshops provide an opportunity for self-discovery and self- introspection (Fig 1).

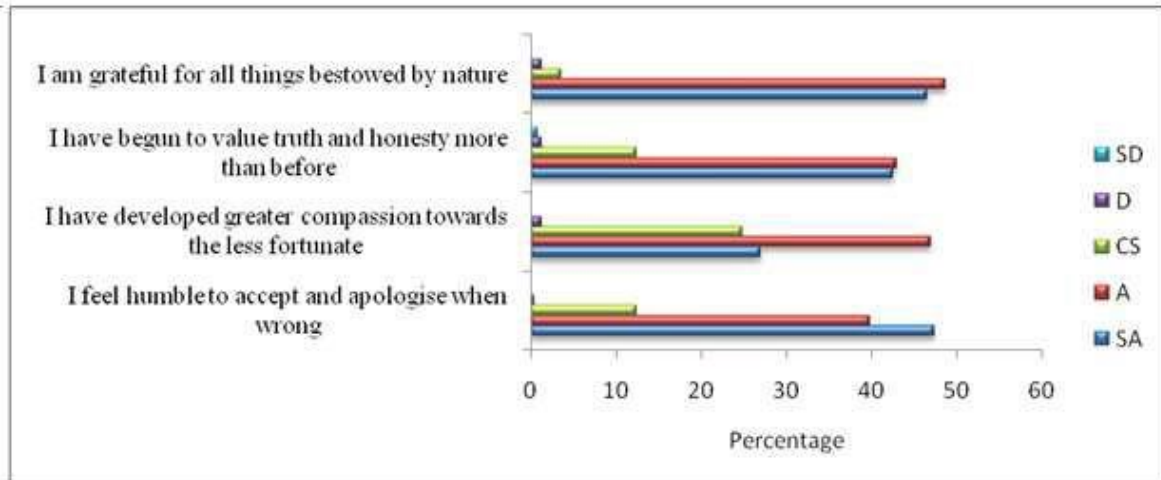


Figure 1. Mental

3.2.3. Moral

An overwhelming majority of the respondents, 95.13% agree that they feel gratuitous for all things bestowed by nature after attending the workshops. While 85.40% of the respondents agree that they value truth and honesty more than before, 87.16% of them have begun to feel humble and apologize when they are wrong. Discussions with respondents revealed that the eye-opener 3-5 minute audio-visual sessions which conveyed strong moral messages made a profound impact. 73.89% of the respondents have developed greater compassion towards the less fortunate. However, nearly one quarter of them are undecided about having developed greater compassion. (Fig.2) This may be attributed to conflict caused by imbalances of mind and heart perpetuated by a highly competitive and intensely individualistic environment. There is excessive focus upon personal advancement and personal ambition with little or no concern for others. In such an environment, there is bound to be confusion among youth about the practicality of being self-focused vis-avis following the ideal path of showing concern and compassion towards others.

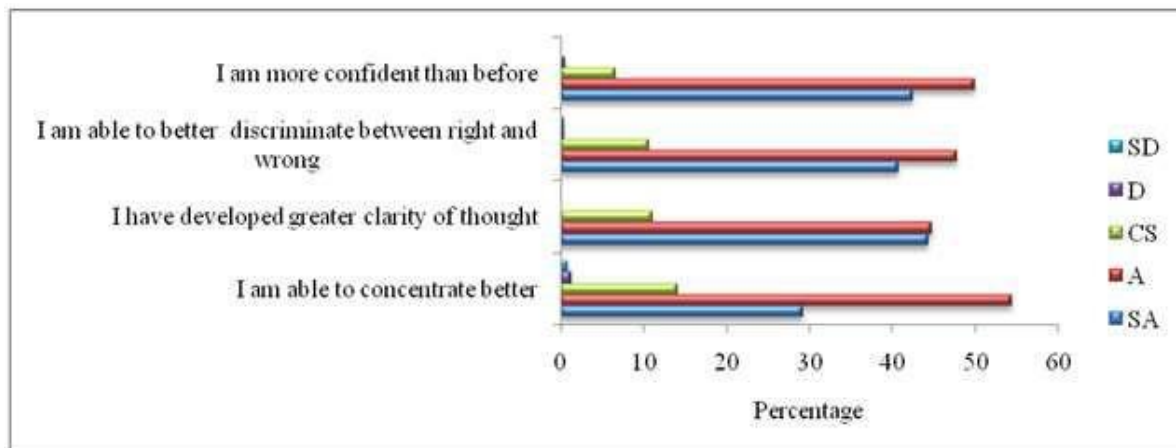


Fig.2: Moral

3.2.4.Emotional

When individuals are impacted by events in the social environment, they either respond or react. The manner in which they conduct their intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships reflect their emotional competence, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity. This study has revealed that over 80% of the respondents have developed greater sensitivity to the world around them, have gained better understanding of dealing with stress and felt positively charged after attending the counselling session. Around 90% of the respondents reported that they felt happy as they got an opportunity for self-expression. 91% of the respondents agree that value education workshops have also developed a sense of responsibility towards themselves by awakening their inner potential. An overwhelming majority (96.46%) of the respondents felt that they have developed a greater respect for themselves. (Fig.3) Discussions with participants revealed that they have begun to accept responsibility for their own actions, recognize and appreciate their own strengths and those of others and are more responsive rather than reactive even in the most challenging situations. Thus, their chances of success in every pursuit are enhanced leading to higher self-esteem and self-confidence.

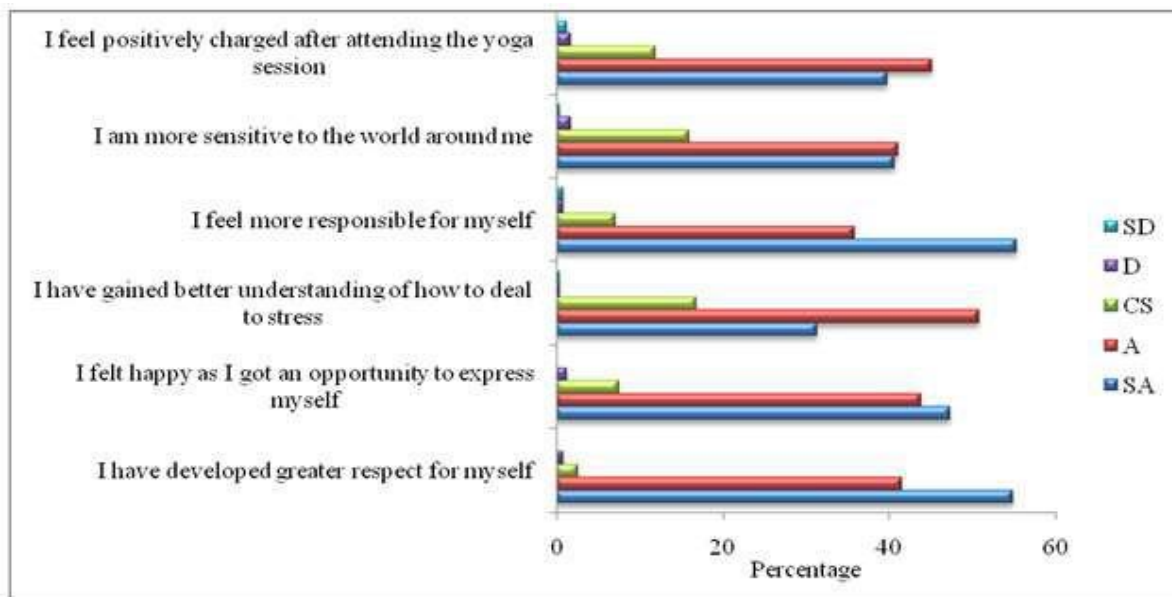


Fig.3. Emotional

3.2.5. Social

Over 93% of the respondents agree that they are not affected by caste or religion in their interrelationships with people. They have also begun to appreciate the good in others. This indicates that, tolerance as a value has been effectively communicated. It is found that the value education initiatives have facilitated groups sharing and celebration of one another's successes and strengths. 76% of the respondents agree that they have become better team players. However, one fifth of the total numbers are undecided. (Fig.4) This may be attributed to their limited interactions in the external environment of their home and educational institution providing limited scope for self-assessment of team behaviour. Overall, it can be inferred that value education has also enhanced their interpersonal communication and social competence.

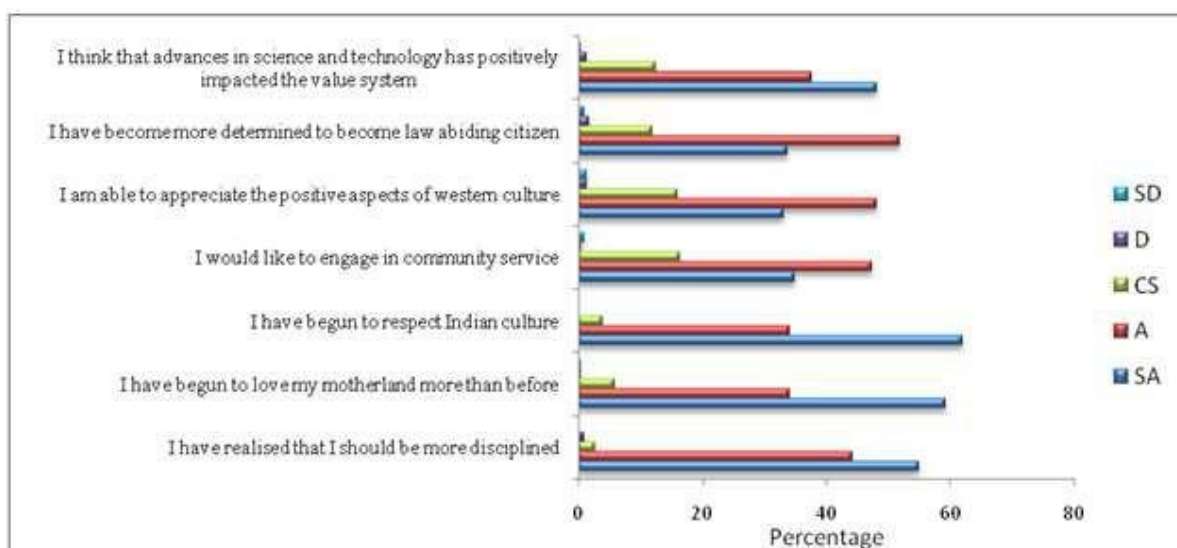


Fig.4: Social



3.2.6. Personal

Over 80% of the respondents agree that they are determined to be law abiding citizens, and would like to engage in community service. They are also able to appreciate the positive aspects of western culture and agree that advancement in science and technology has positively impacted value systems. This indicates their optimistic attitude to the world around them and the radiant faith in the triumph of life. It is found that they have developed a world outlook that has found expressions in their thoughts, emotions, will and activity. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (93%) agrees that they have begun to love their motherland more than earlier and have developed a greater respect for Indian culture after attending the value education workshops. (Fig. 5) It is seen that the ‘Know yourself, Know your country, Know your culture’ sessions of the workshop have laid the foundation for human dignity by inculcating patriotic ideas, emotions, duties and responsibilities to the homeland. Most importantly, this study has revealed that almost all respondents agree that they must be more disciplined indicating that they have developed a healthy personal morality enabling them to pave the path for a meaningful and superior existence. They have also developed greater clarity with which they perceive the world and themselves in the world.

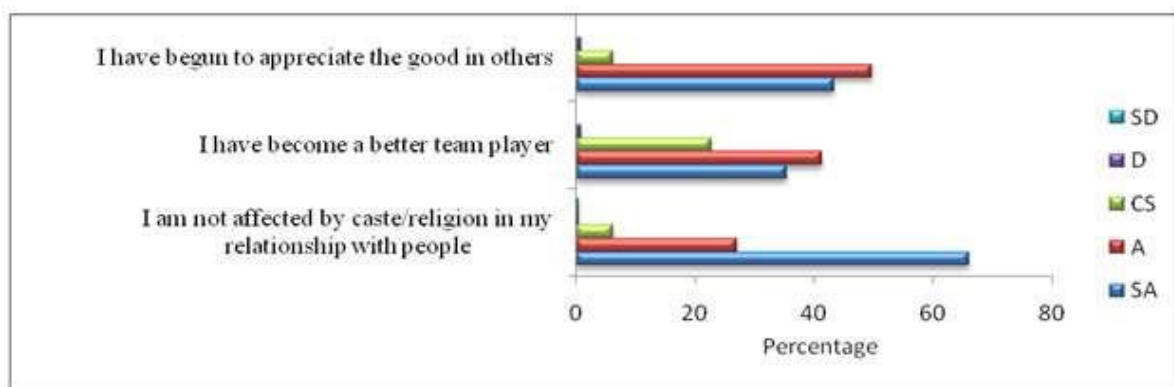


Fig.5. Personal

Keeping in view, the cognitive, conative and affective dimensions of value education objectives, the workshops conducted by DISHA for students of the Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni College for Women have been highly effective. The findings of this study clearly bring out the impact that the workshops have had on the physical, mental, moral, emotional, social and personal development of students. They have reported a marked improvement in their ability to understand and relate concepts to real life situations. Most of them feel empowered as they have developed greater self-esteem and self-worth. It is evident that in having risen in their own eyes, they have become empowered to help themselves and others. Cultivating an appreciative eye towards the world around them has positively influenced their personal, moral, aesthetic and spiritual growth.

4. Conclusion

The study on value education as an initiative towards empowerment of youth is an attempt to understand the role of value education in making a positive difference in the personality of students and their present and future lives. The study has revealed that exposure gained by



students through the value-education workshops have helped them to understand the value of discipline and moral uprightness. They have developed a greater team spirit, enhanced their levels of confidence, improved the power of concentration and built better interpersonal relationships. This has helped them develop into sensitive human beings and equipped them to effectively face the challenges of life. The students have gained enormously through these enriching experiences and are empowered to confront the uncertainties of the dynamic environment with clarity, courage and composure. A holistic approach to value education has ensured that there is the balanced development of all dimensions of students' personality. Spiritual and moral education are the powerful force that forges the strong and staunch individual.

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