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Teacher: The Custodian of National Values and Mankind

Dr. Anu Salaria,

Ph.D. Dept. of Education, University of Jammu, Jammu

Abstract

India is the country where greater importance is attached to the teachers since ancient times. They are believed as the wisest men in the community and regarded as the backbone of the society. A teacher is the most vital single factor in the system of education that plays a dominant role in moulding and shaping the attitudes, habits and personality of young students. Since classrooms are controlled by teachers, therefore the children are always exposed to the influence of the teacher. If students are considered as the potential wealth of a nation then the teachers are recognised as the maker of that wealth. Teachers' duty is not limited inside the classrooms only. They have a responsibility towards society and the nation. They have to play the role of an architect of the national values by preparing their students to become citizens who will preserve and shape democracy in future and at the same time keeping their knowledge up- to- date, understanding the problems of the country and making a sincere effort to solve those problems. For democracy to continue to thrive in India, teacher must teach students to value it by keeping the country uppermost in mind, respect diverse culture of India, respect national flag, national anthem etc., and refrain from taking part in such activities which may spread feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious and linguistic groups. Simply standing before students and passing information that are collected from various sources is not merely the role of a teacher. A teacher is bound to transact the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

This paper introduces the meaning of national values, the recommendations of different commissions and committees on national value education in India and the role of teachers in disseminating the national values among students.

Keywords: National values, Teacher, Equality, Freedom, Economic Justice, Constitution and Preamble of India

Introduction

A human being is a social being. He cannot break the shackles of mutual dependence and live alone. For his survival, he must meet certain natural basic needs. Therefore, he relies on others in many aspects of his life. In order to meet his needs, he must form relationships with his fellowmen, such as family, friends, community, state

and nation. This interaction between people who live in the same place and share the same values, interests and objectives makes them feel like they are a part of each other.

A nation will never be prosperous unless its people are men of character, virtues and values. India is a land where people of various religions, cultures, traditions, languages and so on coexist. Being a socialist country, social values are an important part of Indian culture. They provide general guidelines for behaviour. They guard the individual against deviation and being drawn into negative desires (Subheyyin, Mawajdeh, Talhouni & Rfou, 2017). The nature of society and the natural environment are influenced by social values. Thus, these values must be cultivated and nurtured in everyone since childhood.

The greatness of a nation is determined by its citizens, not by its wealth, economy or urban infrastructure. Furthermore, a nation's national values are what propel a nation to greatness (Rao, 2018). Now-a-days national values, which hold the threads of humanity together, are loosening their ground as many social evils have arisen in our society like mass killings, mob lynching, gang rape, child labour, corruption, intolerance, insecurity, poverty, terrorism, lawlessness, violence against women and child abuse etc. People in the modern era have become technologically advanced but they have forgotten basic life values. Modernization and industrialization have raised living standards and made people more materially wealthy, but they have deteriorated the moral strength of the nation. People have become self-centred; they are willing to threaten the interests of others in pursuit of their own selfish gains (Mustafa & Shafeeq, 2019). The concepts of 'Man-making' and 'Nationbuilding' are pushed to the sidelines, while 'Money-making' and 'Material building' are prioritised. Because of the increase in nuclear families and the busy schedules of parents, values are not being instilled in children in a proper manner, resulting in an alarming increase in juvenile delinquency. Education is the only way to get out of this precarious situation. The promotion of values and the creation of a conducive environment in educational institutions to ingrain them in students, the future citizens, have become essential for the smooth operation of society. There is a great need for value education among students for inculcating our national values such as democracy, socialism, secularism, and national integration. Elders should promote value education in homes, schools, clubs and various religious organisations in order to realize the ethical and moral fibre of society and for the long-term well-being of all.

Teachers can have a significant impact on a society's progress and well-being. They are regarded by society as the wisest men in the community and as the backbone of society. Since, teacher control classrooms, the children are always subject to the teacher's influence. If students are considered as a nation's potential wealth, then teachers are regarded as the creators of that wealth. The Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) stated in this context, 'The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms'. Teachers' responsibilities do not end in the classroom. They have a responsibility to society and the nation. They must play the role of an architect of national values by preparing their students to become citizens who will preserve and shape democracy in the future, while also keeping their knowledge up to date, understanding the problems of the country and making a genuine effort to solve those problems.

What are National Values?

National values are broadly acquired beliefs about what is good, desirable and useful in a particular state and society, as opposed to what is undesirable and unacceptable.

Xoldorova & Khomidjonova (2022) defines national values as the unique features, signs and characteristics that represent the contribution to the nation's cultural heritage formed in the process of social development of the nation. National values are an expression of national spiritual culture and the result of each nation's worthy contribution to the treasury of humanity.

According to the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (2019), National values are a nation's beliefs that guide its citizens' attitudes, actions and behaviour. These are prescriptive standards that bind the government to carry out its functions in a way that promotes the general well-being of the people. The feeling of mutual love and acceptance among the people of the nation exemplifies national values. They are also exemplified by a strong attachment to a particular country and a sense of responsibility to and defence of that country. National values include, for example, freedom, independence, peace, security, justice, democracy, patriotism, inclusiveness, human rights, non-discrimination, transparency and a healthy natural environment.

Citizenship is the all-encompassing framework for citizens' interactions with their homeland and among themselves within the political, social, geographic, legal and economic dimensions of the state (Subheyyin et al., 2017). Citizens of a country may share certain beliefs, interests or ideas, but they may not agree on all issues. As a result, the Constitution of the nation comes to the rescue with a set of principles, rules and procedures on which citizens agree (Chandra, Mohansundaram, & Singaravelu, 2013). The Indian Constitution best expresses the idea of what values should be fostered through education.

In Article 51A, the Indian Constitution has explicitly laid down Fundamental Duties of its citizens. Emphasizing that every Indian citizen must:

- promote harmony and a spirit of common brotherhood across religious, linguistic, regional, or sectoral differences
- renounce practises derogatory to women's dignity
- value and protect our diverse culture's rich heritage
- conservation and enhancement of the natural environment
- develop the scientific temperament
- avoid violence and

• strive for excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity, so that the nation is always striving for greater levels of effort and achievement (NCERT)

The National goal, as envisioned in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution speaks of the nation's vision, and every citizen owes his allegiance to it. Democracy, Socialism, and Secularism emerge as national guiding principles. In a nutshell, it is a solemn pledge made to the nation; the Preamble itself provides a key to unlocking and exploring the spirit of the Constitution by spelling out the objectives and values-

Justice: It ensures that some people's freedom does not become oppression for others. As a result, there is a significant need for power allocation and sympathy towards the disadvantaged or marginalised groups.

Liberty: The Constitution establishes certain fundamental values, such as freedom of thought and expression. These values are essential for the development and evaluation of new and innovative ideas that can help a society progress.

Equality: It is an important value enshrined in the Constitution of India. This value defines exploitation and the provision of opportunities for development of an individual regardless of the caste, gender, colour, creed or socio-economic status to which he/she belongs to.

Fraternity: It is regarded as the heart of the society and the nation as a whole. Social and national harmony is an important aspect of society that prioritizes the needs of all members of a society or nation.

Socialism: It plays a significant role in the economy of a country. It advocates the principles such as the elimination of inequalities, the provision of basic necessities to all and equal pay for work, and so on.

Unity and Integrity of the Nation: This aspect of the Constitution is necessary for maintaining the country's dignity. Thus, the emphasis has been placed on preservation and protection of India's unity and national integration thereby promoting brotherhood among its citizens (Malik, 2019).

Why do we need national values education?

Education is the most important factor in the development of national values. The primary goal of education is to produce men of culture and knowledge. It helps individuals to develop an all-around and wellbalanced personality, as well as develops all dimensions of the human intellect, so that individuals can help in making the nation more democratic, cohesive, socially responsible, culturally rich and intellectually competitive. However, it is disheartening to see the present status of education which makes every effort to nourish the intellect of the child at the expense of 'humanity'. It has become nothing more than a tool for inculcating professional skills and transmitting knowledge and information.

People in the modern scientific era have become technologically modern and advanced, but their moral and ethical fibre has weakened. Communalism, intolerance of other religions, casteism, regionalism and narrow-mindedness has divided the people of India. Fundamental values like selflessness, patriotism, individual dignity, endurance, social service, justice, national integration and service to mankind have no place in today's world of corruption, violence and intolerance (Barahate, 2014).

The present curriculum in educational system is filled with technologically informative data such as laws, facts, theories, and so on, with little concern for the students' moral and character development. There are no special efforts made to provide young minds with the 'soil of values', which is the hallmark of a civilised society. More emphasis is placed unduly on knowledge-based and information-oriented education (Piyasa, n.d.) and is designed in such a way that an individual will achieve materialistic success while lacking virtues such as kindness, honesty, compassion, righteousness, peace, love, non-violence and so on, causing him to become self-centred. This self-centred attitude infuses in him vices such as jealousy, hatred and rivalry against his countrymen. This is a serious concern as it diverts individuals from the right path. It brings into question the educational system and poses a significant challenge to those concerned about the well-balanced and all-around development of individuals' personalities. Therefore, immediate attention should be paid to this aspect, and appropriate action should be taken before it further threatens our value system. There is a need to change the

educational system as a whole in order to inculcate basic morals and values in growing minds for dealing with character crises, increased crime and violence, the misuse of overloaded information, and the competitive mindset. Education should concern with the construction of a value system and assists learners in developing a system of national, humanitarian, social, economic, religious values and beliefs.

Initiatives to Promote National Values Education

Many commissions and committees have advocated for emphasising national values in education. In 1999, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Justice J.S. Verma to implement the recommendations for teaching Fundamental Duties to citizens of India. The report includes a conceptual definition of "Duty", the Preamble to the Constitution, and all the Fundamental Duties.

The Education Commission of 1964-66 placed a premium on "education and national development", recommending that social, moral and spiritual values be taught "with the help, wherever possible, of the ethical teachings of great religions", as well as "direct moral instruction", for which "one or two periods a week should be set aside in the school time-table".

In its paper titled "Education in the Fifth Year Plan, 1974-1979," the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare of the Government of India, 1972 (as cited in Mustafa & Shafeeq, 2019) stated about value education, "Perhaps the most significant need of the hour is to transform the educational system with a view to cultivating the basic values of humanism, democracy, socialism, and secularism. The teachers, teacher educators, educational workers, and administrators should try their best to promote value-oriented education in the educational institutions. Adequate awareness is to be generated among the adults through various mass media and organizations. Educational institutions can play an important role in inculcating the desirable values in the pupils through effective organization of different curricular and co-curricular programmes. This should be the joint responsibility of all teachers and not the assigned duty of one or two teachers only.....".

The National Policy on Education (1986) was concerned about the "erosion of essential values". It advocated for transforming education into a powerful tool for instilling universal and eternal values, with a focus on India's unity and integration. The Programme of Action (1992) attempted to incorporate various components of value education into the curriculum at all levels of schooling, including secondary stage.

According to NCERT, the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution specify the principles of equality, fraternity, social justice and appreciation of cultural values of others, as well as the dignity of all individuals. These values can foster inclusivity, in which all members of society feel included regardless of religion or community, gender, caste, creed, colour, culture, social or economic status. Thus, young school students must be taught that if societies are not built on inclusivity, the peace, prosperity and happiness of the masses will be jeopardised. Efforts should be made to ensure that every member of the school, every child, every worker and every teacher feels included rather than excluded due to disparities. Furthermore, key characteristics like regularity, punctuality, self-control, industriousness, a sense of duty and responsibility to the nation, a desire to serve the nation, sensitivity to democratic attitudes and a sense of obligation to environmental protection have

been highlighted. The framework, therefore, has proposed inculcation and sustenance of moral, ethical, humanistic and constitutional values to education.

Also, the National Curriculum Framework (2005) emphasised values such as cooperation, respect for human rights, tolerance, justice, responsible citizenship, diversity, reverence for democracy and peaceful conflict resolution (Patra, 2015). The NCF, 2005 strongly advocates 'Education for Peace' as one of the national and global concerns that aims to provide students with the values and attitudes needed to live in harmony with oneself and others as responsible citizens. The framework expresses the need to continue the liability to the concept of equality amidst diversity, mutual interdependence of humans and enabling children to experience dignity, confidence to learn, development of self-esteem and ethics, making children environmentally sensitive and the need to foster democracy as a way of life rather than just as a system of governance.

The National Education Policy (2020) envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that directly contributes to the long-term transformation of India, or Bharat, into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all, thereby transforming India into a global knowledge superpower. The Policy envisions our institutions' curriculum and pedagogy instilling in students a deep respect for Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values, a sense of belonging to one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The Policy's vision is to infuse in learners a deep sense of pride in being Indian, not just in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deed, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, reflecting a truly global citizen.

Despite various commissions, policies and frameworks, values are not translated into actions because value-oriented education is viewed as an add-on programme or activity. It is critical to recognize that education and values are inextricably linked to educational goals and should not be viewed as a separate task for schools. Teachers should be encouraged to discover values in their lessons and to incorporate them into lesson plans and classroom activities. Therefore, it must be emphasised that our national values must pervade the entire curriculum and activities at school.

Role of Teachers in infusing National values among the students

Teachers' commitment and responsibility are vital for developing excellent teacher-student relationships and maintaining a peaceful school environment. Teachers should be role models for their students in terms of character, behaviour and all virtuous things. Teachers are expected to advise and guide students in their general behaviour both inside and outside of school. The teacher can assist the child in developing a positive self-image. There should be no gap between their preaching and their actions. It means that by embodying values, we can truly radiate values to our students. So, a good teacher should have a sound psychological understanding of the various parts of the being, the various qualities that come into play in various actions, and the right laws of personality development in relation to the development of capacities and values of an integrated personality (Akila & Ratheeswari, 2016). Every teacher is first a moral education teacher, then a teacher in his or her subject of specialisation. This is the most basic and fundamental requirement for the moral development of children in any educational institution. When it comes to co-curricular activities, a teacher must make adjustments to the time-table in order to accommodate activities that encourage pupil participation, and provide guidance. Then these activities will have a positive impact while also being educational. Thus, by planning a coherent programme that is rich in stimuli, they will be able to improve their abilities of self-expression, preparation for vocation, loyalty, organising ability, creativity, constructiveness, and maintaining good relations between school and community. Without these activities, the school would be nothing more than a teaching shop, and the students would be nothing more than bookworms. He must lead by example by displaying the proper work attitudes. He must instil in students the value of punctuality and consistency.

A teacher has enormous potential to redirect students' energy in a positive direction by instilling values such as respect, cooperation, tolerance, equality, and so on. As a result, the teacher can make effort to teach students to respect their classmates, elders, friends and neighbours as every individual is an important part of society. In the classroom as well as in society, teachers must teach their students about tolerance, fraternity and unity. Every individual should be given equal opportunity to develop his or her own way of life, and individual differences must be tolerated. Because there are so many aspects in the education system that connect students to their lives, students should receive healthy and balanced attention through the teaching learning process. It will aid students in developing social and cultural experiences (Rahaman, 2019). As a teacher, she or he should assess students' social progress (team spirit, sharing, cooperation, tolerance, and so on) by organising cultural and sports events. Teachers should encourage children to develop strong moral identities and set a good example for their students. Teachers must be convinced within themselves that teaching is more than a profession or occupation, but rather a distinct mission to develop values and provide vision and direction to society. In a democratic country, a teacher is the only mean to save a nation. For democracy to thrive in India, teachers must teach students to value it by keeping the country first and foremost in mind, respecting India's diverse culture, national flag, national anthem and refraining from participating in activities that may spread feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious and linguistic groups.

Teachers must sensitize students through motivation to adhere to values in order to shape their character. Teaching national movement in the subject of history, for example, can help instil values such as love, universal brotherhood, unity and integrity of the country, tolerance, patriotism, secularism, and so on. Similarly, teaching of civics aids in instilling democratic ideas such as equality, freedom, social, political, and economic justice, and respect for India's Constitution and the Preamble.

Biographies, debates, discussions, stories, essays, article writing, news paper reading and small classroom incidents should be used by teachers in the classroom to make students aware of the importance of values. Students should be put in situations that are similar to real-life situations, which will aid in the development of important life skills. This approach will allow them to apply the concepts and experiences they have already learned.

Certain social activities, such as school campus or classroom maintenance, social forestry, community environmental awareness, literacy, or health and sanitation programmes, can make a difference. Students should be encouraged to organize and participate in message-based programmes such as drama, street plays, cultural festivals, and so on, which can help children develop values.

The teacher's role in inculcation of national values among students is enormous and superb because he or she is the guardian of organizing classroom teaching learning. Teachers face multiple values that students and their families may hold, especially in culturally diverse societies. Value education is required in teacher education curricula, which includes "educating the heart as well as the head". Learning to live together becomes the most important pillar of education (Mohan, 2016).

Strategies for inculcating National values

It is not easy for a school to design a 'whole school approach' and plan to implement a practical curriculum that meets the National Curriculum. NCERT has worked to improve the quality of school education in accordance with educational policies. One of the major tasks of the Council is the development of instructional materials. These materials are supposed to include content materials to foster values of national educational policies and the Indian Constitution, in addition to pedagogical principles.

These instructional materials, which include curricular frameworks, syllabi, textbooks, supplementary reading materials, and so on, have also been evaluated on whether or not they included core components such as 'National Integration' and 'Communal Harmony'.

Action plan (1986) on Education Policy recommends the development of model syllabi and exemplar instructional package in the following core areas:

- 1. History of India's Freedom Movement.
- 2. Constitutional obligations.
- 3. Content essential to nature national identity
- 4. India's common cultural heritage.
- 5. Egalitarianism, democracy and secularism
- 6. Equality of sexes
- 7. Protection of environment
- 8. Removal of social barriers
- 9. Observance of small family norm and
- 10. Inculcation of scientific temper

The National Education Policy (2020) recommends that students must be taught the value of "doing what's right" from an early age, and a logical framework for making ethical decisions should be provided. Later on, this would be expanded along themes of cheating, violence, plagiarism, littering, tolerance, equality, empathy, and so on, with the goal of enabling children to embrace moral/ethical values in their daily lives, formulate a position/argument about an ethical issue from multiple perspectives and use ethical practices in all work.

As a result of such basic ethical reasoning, traditional Indian values, as well as all fundamental human and constitutional values (such as seva, ahimsa, swachchhata, satya, nishkam karma, shanti, sacrifice, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, righteous conduct, gender sensitivity, respect for elders, respect for all people and their

inherent capabilities regardless of background, respect for the environment, helpfulness, courtesy, patience, forgiveness, empathy, compassion, patriotism, democratic outlook, integrity, responsibility, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity) will be developed in all students. Children will be able to read and learn from original stories from the Panchatantra, Jataka, Hitopadesh, and other fun fables and inspiring tales from Indian tradition, as well as learn about their influences on global literature.

Excerpts from the Indian Constitution will be required reading for all students. Basic health education, such as preventive health, mental health, good nutrition, personal and public hygiene, disaster response, and first-aid training, will also be included in the curriculum, as well as scientific explanations of the harmful and damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Students will be sensitized as a result of this new school culture, which will be implemented by teachers, trained social workers, and counsellors, as well as corresponding changes to implement an inclusive school curriculum. In the school curriculum, material on human values such as respect for all people, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, nonviolence, global citizenship, inclusion, and equity will be included. It would also include a more in-depth understanding of various cultures, religions, languages, gender identities, and so on in order to sensitize and develop respect for diversity. Any biases and stereotypes in school curriculum will be removed, and more material that is relevant and relatable to all communities will be included.

Co-curricular activities provide numerous opportunities to instil democratic values and self-discipline. They play important roles in inculcating various values in students and developing their overall personalities (Sasthi, 2016). The following are some co-curricular activities that can easily incorporate national values:

Morning Assembly in school

Morning Assembly in school is important as it fosters a sense of belonging and unity among all students and teachers. Through all-religious prayer meetings among students, it promotes national integration, secularism and internal peace. The singing of the national anthem instils patriotism in children. Children in the assembly should read the news to keep them informed about what is going on in the world. Following that, students should read thoughts conveying moral messages. Morning speeches should be delivered on current societal issues.

Celebration of Special Occasion

Along with classroom activities, other important festivals should be celebrated in schools to help students understand the culture of their country. Such celebrations build strong bonds and friendships among students from diverse cultures. Barahate (2014) is of the view that religious and national festivals must be celebrated in order to foster a sense of national integration and brotherhood.

Sharing meals with other fellows

Teachers should encourage students to share meals with their classmates. Sharing meals has always been the focal point of social interactions. Sharing food is a natural way for us to bond with our friends. It brings children from all socio-economic backgrounds together to share not only food but also knowledge, culture and mutual respect.

Debates and discussions

Teachers should organize activities like debates and discussions on current social issues such as equality, democracy, regionalism, religion, casteism, communalism, culture, language conflicts, illiteracy, poverty,

environmental pollution, unemployment, corruption, population growth, child abuse, child labour, violence against women and drug abuse to instil proper civic values, attitudes and adjustment. This can develop in students the habit of forming opinions, understanding and respecting the perspectives of others.

Service during natural disasters

During natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis, earthquakes and droughts, teachers should volunteer alongside their students.

Anti-illiteracy campaigns

Students should be involved in anti-illiteracy campaigns by their teachers.

Excursions

Excursions to historical, religious and cultural sites should be organized by the teacher. The various temples, monuments, palaces and forts that can be found throughout the country reflect India's rich heritage.

Special Camps and club activities

Teachers should organize camps such as NCC, NSS, blood donation, collecting donations and environmental awareness, as well as club activities such as nature club, literary club, and wildlife prevention club, to provide a natural environment for students to develop a sense of solidarity, equality, cooperation, coordination and humanity.

Lectures on national topics

Teachers' lectures on Indian freedom Struggle to understand how freedom was obtained through the sacrifices made by patriots of the land. They had to overcome many obstacles, but they did not give up. This type of topic emphasizes the importance of patriotism and unconditional love for the country.

Productive work that is socially beneficial

Every boy and girl should be encouraged by their teachers to engage in socially useful productive work so that they are not a burden on others and can contribute to society. Moreover, it instils positive attitudes such as teamwork, self-reliance and dignity of labour, as well as tolerance, cooperation, sympathy and helpfulness.

Celebrate birthdays of great men

Educational institutions should commemorate the birthdays of great men and women throughout history like M.K. Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mother Teresa and many others. Teachers should give speeches about how these great people worked hard to bring equality and peace among humans.

Programs that encourage participation

Students can participate in sports and cultural events such as skits, role plays, dance, poetry, and drama to promote national values. These programmes can impart values such as team spirit, sharing, cooperation, patience, courtesy and so on.

Prize distribution

Every year, each school should give out "student of the year" awards to students who have excelled in humanitarian service (Sasthi, 2016).

Conclusion

To make India an incredible country, we must do everything we can to influence our younger generation's mindset. NCERT correctly points out that the type of individual we produce determines the type of society we live in. We cannot have a non-violent, peaceful, cooperative and harmonious society if we produce individuals who are self-centred, aggressive, competitive and greedy. Therefore, we must educate children about the importance of national values in helping them understand themselves and their identities, ensuring national unity, and strengthening a sense of belonging and loyalty to the nation.

There is a great need for ethical, spiritual, social, moral, and value-based education at all levels to meet the challenges of today's modern society and to ensure the smooth functioning of society. It is necessary to incorporate value education into the curriculum of teacher education programmes at all levels in order to strengthen our teachers' value systems. Only then will they be able to do their job of instilling values in future generations more honestly. A sincere and deliberate effort should be made to educate learners and educators about the importance of teaching human values. Teachers and students must shift their perspectives. The self- centred thoughts of "What's in it for me?" must be abandoned and replaced with thoughts of "What can I do to make a difference in someone's life?".

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