

Information Technology for Value Based Education

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Abstract

Value Based Education (VBE) is gaining considerable importance in schools all over the world and Indian Government is making all efforts to introduce the same in our schools and colleges. In this paper, a brief history of VBE is presented and its relevance in Indian context is discussed. The importance of applying Information Technology (IT) for imparting VBE is highlighted and a few ideas for its implementation are discussed.

Keywords: Value Based Education, Information Technology,

1 Introduction:

According to ancient Indian saying, “sa vidya ya vimukyate” – means Education is that which liberates us. The whole lifestyle in India was built around this liberation from the tyranny of our own mind. Education should deal with the constantly changing man in a constantly changing society and provide stability. However, the present system of education is not dynamic enough to accommodate the changes in society due to ever increasing level of technology and its use and misuse. Our education philosophies are now based on skill development and knowledge transfer. It is now quite obvious that these are not adequate since the misuse of technology has caused deterioration in human values – as evidenced by increasing crime rates, lack of commitment and ever increasing inequality of wealth distribution.

Most of the newspaper headlines are on acts of violence against women, children and senior citizens, political crimes, corruption, scams, cyber crimes and the like. Then we have the endless sufferings of the common man – suicides by farmers, students and teachers, bonded child labor etc. Introduction of cable TV, computers and now the smart-phone has isolated people from their nearest neighbors and relatives and made them isolated individuals. There is an urgent need for corrective action. To forge universal human values in the society, it is necessary to bring up our children with right set of values and a proper direction. Education is a very powerful tool which can achieve this end. To correct the malady in society, Value Based Education (VBE) is a starting point.

This fact has been recognized the world over. Many individuals – leaders, trainers, educators and the UNESCO has brought a number of publications on value education and some are discussed by Yojana Patil [1]. Indian Government has presented a recent report through NCERT [2] on value education: “Education for Values in Schools – A Framework NCERT, New Delhi”

According to Patanjali Yoga Sutras the main don't's are ahimsa, sathya, astheya, aparigraha, brahmacharya, and the do's saucha, santhosha, thapas, swadhyaya and iswara pranidhana. These are individual values and added to this, social values like unity and social harmony and universal peace should be taught in the course of education. Once these are imparted at a young age, they remain permanently with the person. To bring about a rapid implementation of VBE, besides proper schools and teachers, the available technology should be used effectively and Information Technology is the forerunner among these for imparting education.

2. History of Education in India:

The ancient method of teaching and education in India was the system 'Gurukula vasam' where the student resided at the place of the teacher and learnt all relevant subjects. In the Stories of Vikramaditya[3], the full education of an educated person is cited to contain the study of 4 Vedas, 6 Sastras, 18 Puranas, 28 Agamas and 64 Arts. These stories are also full of information pertaining to values prevalent in that period. In addition, training is imparted in accordance with the back ground of the person, likes and dislikes etc. The traditional method trained students in all these subjects and more and were adept in the basics by the time they attained around 15 or 16 years of age. Ramayana and Stories about Lord Krishna provide the basis for this information. The teachers were role models for their wards.

With the advent of invasions and the British Rule, the Gurukula system died a natural death. British curriculum involved classrooms with a separate teacher for each subject – History, Geography, English prose, English poetry, Grammar, Mathematics, Science etc. Traditional values were totally ignored by the British Government. In the name of Science, subjects were introduced which ridiculed the traditional wisdom and practices. (Now these very ideas are copied by the westerners and given to us for a price!)

As time went by, it was observed that Indian students were not on par with their counterparts in other parts of the world and so the Indian Government initiated many steps including the introduction of "skill based education" and "outcome based education" where the subjects were taught with emphasis on their practical implementation [4]. In spite of this, the students were not able to cope up with the curriculum and it resulted in the schools becoming sources of stress for the students and the teachers as evidenced by newspaper and other media reports. The same situation is prevalent in many other parts of the world.

What is Value Based Education?

The question arises – why this sudden interest in Values and their education? In 2005, Neil Hawkes [5] a head teacher in Palmer Primary School in UK submitted a thesis entitled "Does teaching values improve the quality of education in primary schools?" In his study, Neil studied the literature on education as proposed by Greek philosophers – Socrates, Plato and

Aristotle and also the modern thinkers like Kant. This thesis evaluated in a 'scientific way' the effect of values based education and the results were quite significant. He found that values based education improved the overall academic performance besides providing more responsible students with acceptable behavior. He also found that many young children possess an intuitive capacity to experience life from a spiritual perspective. It is possible that through this reflective process, each child gained greater autonomy, self-respect and self-esteem. According to Neil, the system helps the students to become self-aware.

While there were many studies on value education earlier, the work of Neil was done with scientific rigor and results were analyzed in a scientifically accepted procedure.

Encouraged by his success, Neil started the '**International Values-based Education Trust**' and shared his findings to impart Values Based Education to other schools. While in his study he used values words such as peace, co-operation, care and respect, other schools were free to development their own value sets.

The membership for this program started increasing and the performance of all the member schools improved significantly. Soon many social organizations and governments started taking notice of the improvement and UNESCO even published a report on the same. The system involved teaching values – making students to absorb, reflect and live the concepts they picked up. While the system still is not like the gurukula system, it has many ingredients of the ancient system and the teacher and school environment provided the ethos.

Implementation of Value Based Education:

Neil [5] discusses one of the methods called circle time which was used earlier for obtaining acceptable behavior among school children. To quote from his thesis "The aim of circle time is to give an opportunity for the class (including its teacher) to sit in a circle and, in a spirit of equality, share thoughts and feelings.

"To make circle time effective, the teacher has to negotiate clear ground rules with students that include appropriate social behavior, such as listening to others, taking turns and not making negative comments. The teacher may offer a starter phrase such as "one thing that makes me feel relaxed is, or invite students to suggest ways of solving problems that have arisen in the class." While implementing circle time, one may use rules like – only one person speak at a time and all should listen attentively, no negative comments while talking etc. It was found the circle time developed problem-solving skills and also enhanced personal confidence.

The summary of his findings is that the school environment or ethos, teachers and their personality and providing the opportunity for children to listen and think reflectively about what they learnt helped them to internalize their learning and express it in modified behavior.

Implementation of VBE:

In the Indian context, Kirtinath Kalita [6] discusses the importance of value education and the role of religious books, teachers and parents in imparting value education.

Chaitanya [7] presented a set of methods for imparting value education in schools and these are: Classroom learning activities methods/approach, Practical activities method, Socialized techniques and activities and Incidental learning method

Australian Government [8] suggested nine values for the schools including Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, understanding, tolerance etc. Hussain and Safdar [9] explain the various ways in which IT can be used for better teaching. However, these are the conventional ways like appropriate multimedia usage for teaching besides conventional methods of conducting tests and evaluation in addition to evaluating the class performance appropriate using software.

Use of IT in the implementation of VBE.

Information Technology or IT is a powerful tool for communication. Many applications are available for teaching, evaluating and summarizing the performance of individual students and the school as a whole. However, specifically to Value Based Education, some of the existing technologies can be used for implementation. In this paper, three such methods are suggested for implementation.

1. Use of Binaural Beats/ Binaural Music:

Binaural beats are the generation of low frequency waves in the brain using two head phones (Left and Right) which carry two sounds which differ in frequency slightly say 4 to 7 Hz which causes the brain to vibrate sympathetically and as this frequency corresponds to theta brain waves – it produces quietness of the mind. The technology is presently available and can be modified to meet the needs of Value Based Education. IT is needed to modify the frequency of the original music to produce the binaural beat. This is similar to the sounds produced in a Tibetan monastery which has a calming effect on the personality.

2. Use of Paraliminal Tapes:

Paraliminals were created by Paul R. Scheele [11] and uses speech to produce deep changes in the mind using a special technique. These tapes are claimed to produce changes in the attitudes and can be used to overcome inner problems. They contain multiple voices speaking to different parts of the brain? They are claimed to be unusual, pleasurable, and very effective. IT can be used to produce paraliminal tapes to suit the students' needs.

3. Use of Gait Analysis:

Gait Analysis is a technique to identify a person. As a result of deep inner changes due to Value Based Education, external manifestation in more presentable gait is to be expected and this can be used to determine the personality changes in the student. Software for gait analysis is already in use for identification of individuals in secure facilities.

Conclusions:

It is now an accepted fact that Value Based Education is an essential aspect of school curriculum. Many accepted methods are available for its implementation as suggested by Neil and followed by many others all over the world. In this paper, three methods involving Information Technology are suggested – two (Binaural Beats and Paraliminal sound) for producing deep inner changes and one method –Gait Analysis to evaluate the effect of Value Based Education. This being an emerging field, many tools are needed for implementation and evaluation and the methods suggested here are expected to produce tangible results.

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