

About the Human Values & Professional Ethics Workshop

The subject that deals with what *is of value*, or *what is valuable to a human being* is called value education. This subject focuses on what a human being is, what is purposeful and meaningful for him- what is the aim of human being and his life and how he can meet this aim, this purpose. This elaborates on what role he has to play as responsible human being at the level of individual, family, society and nature. With this clarity, he is able to see the meaning in life, purpose in life and is committed to fulfil that meaning, that purpose. This clarity and the satisfaction obtained out of the fulfilment of this purpose, gives him a feeling of self confidence. This instils confidence in their inner strengths. The students need to have this confidence in order to be able to proactively set their own goals. If the goal is set proactively (and not by default 'peer' pressure) the motivation comes from within and the rest follows- in terms of his commitment, untiring effort leading to success in achieving his aim, and his purpose of life.

Values thus provide the *basis* for all our actions and activities. Apart from skill development, education needs to focus on value-education. This needs to be introduced in our school education as well as higher education. Such value-based education can prepare students to live in harmony with other human beings and nature – this can provide a way out of the current morass that the world is in.

Dr. Abdul Kalam spoke about this topic in his address to the nation on the eve of the independence day (15th August) 2006:

“... being practiced by Prof Ganesh Bagaria, ... Prof Rajeev Sangal... and their teams ... [it] is a 'teachable human value based skill'... This process of imparting self-knowledge would promote a learning atmosphere, where this whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge would bring about naturally a psychological revolution.. **From this comes inevitably a totally different order in human relationship and therefore society as a whole. The intelligent understanding of this process itself can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind...**”

Full text of Dr Kalam's speech is at http://www.indianembassy.ru/docs-htm/en/en_hp_win_official_direct_t075.htm

At the root is holistic, and all encompassing detailed view of reality at every level of existence, from Individual to Family, Society and Nature/Existence – that the existence is innately co-existence (harmony, order) and not a chaos or disorder; and Man just needs to understand this co-existence and align with the innate order in the existence. With such a holistic viewpoint, one can rightly place existing assumptions and inputs. This knowledge is inherently self liberating, empowering and can lead to Human Conduct, Education, Constitution and Order (*Manaviya Acharan, Shiksha, Samvidhan* and *Vyavastha*) in the society.

The overall purpose of education is to enable the student to live a happy life – in harmony with family, society as well as nature. As we have more and more educated people, we seeing an alarming trend at an overall global level – we can observe increasing strife in family and society; destruction of nature leading to significant and potentially irreversible climate change. In particular, we can see that some of the greatest achievements of science and industry have become the biggest threats to human existence.

There is a growing realization in the world today that the path being followed currently needs to be re-evaluated. Human Beings' thought & actions depend on their education. If their education is right, their thought & actions are fulfilling otherwise they are not.

This workshop proposes the guidelines and the space for discussing this. There is a possibility of understanding the situation, developing a vision for the future and following through with responsibility & commitment – from this a totally different human order is possible – one which leads to continuity of happiness and prosperity – for all.

Effective and widely acceptable guidelines for value education have been drawn up to help decide what would qualify as a course on value education:

- Universal – Whatever is studied as value education needs to be universally applicable to all human beings and be true at all times and all places. In addition, it should not depend on sect, creed, nationality and gender etc. So it deals with universal human values
- Rational - It has to be amenable to reasoning and not based on dogmas or blind beliefs. It cannot be a set of sermons or Do's and Don'ts
- Natural and Verifiable – We want to study something that is natural to us. Being natural means, it has to be acceptable in a natural manner. When we live on the basis of such values that are natural to us, it leads to fulfilment i.e. it leads to our happiness, it is conducive to other people we interact with, and the interaction with nature is mutually enriching. We also want to verify these values ourselves, i.e. we don't want to assume something just because something is stated, rather, each one of us will want to verify these to find out whether they are true for us. This can be done by both checking for validity within ourselves, as well as something which we can implement in our living and observe its outcome
- All encompassing – Value education is not merely an academic exercise. It is aimed at transforming our consciousness and living. Hence, it has to permeate into all dimensions of our living, namely, thought, behaviour, work and understanding/realization; as well as all levels namely individual, family, society and nature
- Leading to harmony – Finally, value education has to enable us to be in harmony within and in harmony with others. Hence, when we live on the basis of these values, we start understanding that it will lead to harmony in us and harmony in our interactions with other humans and the rest of nature. That is it leads to human conduct

The workshop is conducted as a dialog, free from any value prescriptions or do's and don'ts. Proposals about universal principles of life are placed for evaluation and discussion at one's own right. Individuals from 3 years onwards can and have attended the workshop.

What this workshop IS and what it is NOT

- It is not a course in moral science. It does not tell you DOs and DONTs. It does not tell you what you should become, or what you should do
- It does not talk about rewards and punishments in an afterworld. The goal is happiness here and now. It puts forward the proposition that the basic human values are inherent and intact in all of us, what is needed is to be aware of them
- It does not say physical facilities are unimportant. It rather talks of prosperity in every family. It says that there is place for facilities in life and encourages people to fix their place in their own life
- It is not an organization or society. It does not insist on any specific faith or any specific belief
- It only proposes and asks its listeners to investigate and explore into their own inner self and connect to what is innate and intact in all of them as something which is universal, natural and all-fulfilling for them as well as others.

Some of the initiatives in Value Education

1. UP Technical University (UPTU) introduced this as an essential audit course in Human Values and Professional Ethics (HVPE) in all its professional colleges in June 2009. There are over 600 colleges, 1000 HVPE teachers and an intake of 1,00,000 students per year.
2. IIIT-Hyderabad. A course in value education has been implemented since 2005 as a part of academic curriculum. Since the initiation of the course, students have become more comfortable in themselves, there is a greater sense of belongingness to the institution, and less resentment in relationships with the teachers and among them. Along with the development of relationships, students have been doing well academically as well. In 2009, India Today recognized IIIT-Hyderabad as one of the Game Changers of Indian Education.
3. IIT-Delhi set up the National Resource Center for Value Education in Engineering in 1999. The Centre organized a National Convention on Value Education with the support of IIT Kanpur, IIIT Hyderabad and IIT Delhi where all the colleges under AICTE were invited. The panel discussions during the conventions were able to evoke the opinions of the faculty and heads of institutions on the urgent need to include courses in value education among all the colleges under AICTE.
4. At IIT Kanpur, workshops are being organized every semester for the faculty, students and staff since 2006. It was by virtue of the foundational work done at IITK that the students started volunteering towards initiation of such activities across the country. With the formation of a committed team here, the bold initiative at UPTU could be envisaged. Along with giving better performance in academics since they attended the workshops, an increasing number of students at IIT are volunteering to work for the all-round development of themselves and the society around through a collective effort. Some of these students were on academic probation, on the verge of termination or sluggish in studies (according to them) before they started coming to the workshops. Now they are not only performing well academically, but have become assets to the society at large. The faculty who attended the workshops is also showing consistent interest to participate in the workshops and associated activities. A regular course is being planned to be floated for the students of IITK very soon.
5. Chhattisgarh Government has started implementing this in all its schools for class 1-12 since 2008. There are 30,000 schools, 1,00,000 teachers and 58,00,000 students/year. The Chhattisgarh initiative has received wide support from teachers and government officials in SCERT and Department of Education. So far 30 schools have started teaching this in classes 1-5. All these elements have been put in place in Chhattisgarh involving SCERT, school board, the schools and, most importantly, the teachers. The text books are ready. All the officials are fully involved at all the steps. A massive program of teacher training is going on using EduSat which connects 100 centres followed by face to face in-depth week-long workshops. In the Chhattisgarh initiative, in place besides the physical targets, sensitivity and self-awareness aspects are being given great attention by the leadership. Role of the Secretary, Education, Mr. Nand Kumar has been vital to the success of the program. This initiative at Chhattisgarh is receiving the support of the government and both major political parties – BJP and Congress. Education fraternity is of course behind it. Even media which is usually quite critical of government programs has been speaking positively about it. It enjoys a large tacit support from different sections of society because it is seen to be a positive step with fresh air in an otherwise difficult education scenario.
6. NIT-Raipur took this initiative in the year 2003, and the overwhelming response from all corners helped the introduction of this course in all the thirteen colleges of Swami Vivekanand Technical University in Chhattisgarh within two years.

7. People from different walks of urban life. Many people realize the lack of time they give to their family in their relentless pursuit of wealth, and even more importantly, the way they behave with their children, spouse or old parents. Many such people are affected profoundly and come back to Human Values workshops with their family members, again and again.
8. Criminals in jail. Human Values touches criminals in jail most directly. Those who are seething with revenge, slowly start realizing that in fact their enemies are not bad. They are to be pitied and not hated. In turn, they themselves get depressurized and relaxed. This eventually gets reflected in their day to day behaviour with other jail inmates and with jail authorities. Bilaspur jail experience shows that some of the most violent criminals with also the worst behaviour inside the jail, got totally transformed.
9. Social workers from NGOs. People working for upliftment of downtrodden in rural and urban areas are greatly affected by Human Values. It dawns on them that along with work on employment generation, agriculture, irrigation, health, sanitation, scientific temper, it is also important to work on understanding of the self and on relationship, without which their work and successes are short lived.
10. Farmers and rural folk. Rural folk today are in a state of demoralization. The present political structure and market has led to a breakdown of the community living. They do not realize what they possess clean air, clean water, and a stronger possibility of a wholesome life with fulfilling relationship in family and community. Experience of rural people who attend Human Values workshop has been that they feel a sense of empowerment regarding themselves and what they can do at their own place. Rather than treating farming as an unworthy activity, they see value in what they are doing. The importance and necessity of physical labour for all, comes out as a corollary. Established business men who have done Human Values have taken up sustainable or zero-input farming where all the required resources for farming is generated from farm land itself. Several experiments in renewable energy are also in full swing. They are deriving happiness out of farming and physical labor.
11. People with spiritual background. People with spiritual background usually take time to come to terms that one can talk about human values without bringing in after-life or after-world. Many are elated at this discovery. People from different faiths Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity have started getting deep into a process of self-exploration after doing Human Values, and are able to see that the human values can be derived through this process of self exploration by each one of us and are the same as professed by their respective faiths.