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Role of Educational Institutions and English Literature in Imparting Value Based Education

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Abstract:

Development of a human being encompasses various aspects namely, physical, social and moral development as well. Education has been recognized as a fundamental tool in achieving the goal of development. Schools should focus on value-based education for development of a knowledge-based society, so that quality education will bring more accolades to their students and schools themselves. This will ensure that students grow in both mind and heart, and learn the special virtues of life. This may change people's attitude from one of the only gaining an education for a particular job and the basic skills that are needed to make a living. In the present day, in any society, there is an urge toward the spirit of coexistence, tolerance and mutual respect among individuals. Placing the highest priority and focus on value-based education will greatly achieve those traits among the younger generation.

It is moral duty of all of us to make children grow up to their optimum potential by enriching them emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and socially. This in turn will enrich and empower the society as such. It cannot be possible without institutional mechanism. It becomes an actuality when efforts are put in thoughtfully, consistently and creatively to actualize it. English literature also plays a vital role in imparting the moral values in students. This paper will bring out that every form of literature imparts values in human beings.

Keywords: Institutions, English literature, Moral values, Education, Ethics.

Human values are ornaments which shine like stars in the personality of the individual who possess those values. India has been a land of ethics, spirituality, religion, tradition, culture, arts and literature. India is blessed with unity in diversity. Therefore, inculcation of human values is the need of the hour especially in view of the deteriorating status of human life. Students, scholars, teachers, academicians, social workers and industrialists must identify and understand real human values for which they should strive hard in life. Without any human values in life, we are in the clutches of darkness.

The study of moral and ethical values that makes us a perfect man is Value-based education. We never paid attention to value-based education though we have been learning through a number of books all these years. Indian education experts have been advocating the implementation of value-based education among Indian schools. Addressing the need to introduce value-based education in schools in August 2002, the National Council for Education Research and Training (N.C.E.R.T.) organized a program on “National Consultation on Value Education in Indian Schools-----Experiences and Strategies of Implementation.” Similarly, the Parliamentary Committee in India, in its 81st report on value-based education in 1999, strongly suggested that it be introduced at the school level and extended to college and university level. In the secondary stage, some advanced values, which are of vital importance for national integration, should be included into the syllabus. According to committee, “Education should aim at multifaceted development of a human being- his intellectual, physical, spiritual and ethical development. Youth is the mirror in which future of a nation is fully reflected. In order to preserve, maintain and advance the position of our country in the world, it is imperative that there should be a comprehensive program of value-based education starting from the pre-primary level, embracing the entire spectrum of educational process.”

Mahatma Gandhi once said that education not only moulds the new generation but also reflects a society’s fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals that compose it.

Now-a-days a man is considered educated if he has qualified some prescribed examinations or can talk eloquently, irrespective of his personal qualities i.e. value, character and conduct. The education which does not equip people to face the

challenges of life; does not bring out the strengths of character; does not promote an spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion- Is it worth the name? Real education is that which makes a man good human being.

For the wholesome development of a person, one needs to possess both-- - the knowledge of modern science and human values. It is the call of the day to integrate the modern science with human values. The education imparted these days in schools and colleges prepare us only for a wild goose chase, where we keep working endlessly like machines. The study of modern science and technology alone is not complete knowledge and incomplete knowledge is always dangerous. A person with incomplete knowledge may turn into a well-crook, a selfish and corrupt individual who may be ultimately harmful to himself and the society.

It is easy to teach science and technology but it is very difficult to teach human values. Whatever is taught generally gets stored in one's brain but mere storing of the human values in brain is no solution of the problem. Human values have to be imbibed in the sub-conscious of a person in such a way that these reflect in his conduct; become his guiding force and adherence to human value becomes a part of his nature. To make it possible human values are to be imbibed by him during his formative years, for which 'sanskar' has been the only scientific and time tested method since ancient ages.

Sanskar based value education enable people to rise above the differences of race, religion, caste, sect, creed etc. and prepare people to check the systematic exploitation and corruption etc. It will also be interesting to discover sanskar/value education teachings which are of very private, restricted and secret type.

Value education takes place at school level as the child is exposed to friends, teachers, syllabus and various extra-curricular activities.

Values can not be taught like abstract subjects like history, science and maths. However, they can be inculcated only through situations deliberately planned while teaching the subjects. For example, National Movement can be taught in such a way that it leads to inculcate the values of patriotism, secularism, universal love and tolerance etc. similarly, world history can help to inculcate values of liberty, equality and fraternity. Science can help to inculcate values of appreciation towards laws of

nature: Indian civic can help to inculcate values of respect to constitution, respect for democracy, secularism, integrity and unity of the country, social, political and economic justice etc. further, man can help in inculcating the values of honesty and integrity. Geography and environment can help to inculcate values of respect for other's culture, and world is one family (Vasudhev Kutumbkam).

At the same time, teachings from the biographies of the great and noble leaders also inculcate the inspiring values among the students and people of large. For example, Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on truth, non-violence and iole teaches the basic human values.

Millions of Indians have left for foreign shores and their second generations are growing up there. These young ones are more susceptible to change and assimilation. They are the ones growing up in an environment alien to us but quite natural to them. The surprising part is that even after all the exposure to this foreign culture, they continue to retain the basics of the culture their parents had imbibed in them by behaving normally at home. The roots are so deep that it is quite difficult to strip them off. Anita Desai's 'Bye Bye Black Bird' and Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake' are good examples of migrated Indians. They go to the foreign lands but remain associated with their roots. Dev goes to England for higher education but he gives up his idea to continue his studies as he is never happy and at ease there. Indian culture is imbibed so much in his life that he does not like to live with all the doors and windows shut. He does not like people there even he hates those Indians who support English culture. Adit is also not comfortable there and comes back to India.

Just by singing and strumming Rock, Lazzard Pop music does not annihilate our culture. Wearing western dresses or speaking in a different accent does not mean that our culture is at the point of disintegration. Beauty pageants, which are being violently opposed by a section of our society, are not powerful enough to change and influence our culture. The younger generation has still its umbilical cord connected to their ethnic culture securely even as they become progressively modern. There are millions of youngsters in the metros at discotheques who go back to retain their tradition and culture where it really matters. It is definitely the strength of oyr

culture that it cannot be so easily traded off. It is not the physical being, 'It is a state of mind'.

What is civilized society without values? This is what results from lack of values. Man becomes an animal again and this is not a recent phenomenon. Our civilization has seen this from the ages of Ramayan when a great philosopher and sage like Ravana forgot his principles or just momentarily ignored them due to his lust for woman or was it revenge for his sister's humiliation. But if a person of his level, one whom even Lord Rama respected and asked his brother to learn philosophy from dying Ravana, then what about the weak and average human.

We see a repeat of similar revengeful attitude in the Mahabharat but we also see the exemplary attitude of the Suryavanshi family of Lord Rama and the Pandavas. This is how the civilized society triumphs. This is how good triumphs over evil and Human values play their important role.

Ramayan and Mahabharat are great epics and part of literature. So from ancient times, literature plays an important role in imbibing moral values. English Literature can be an effective tool to inculcate values in human society. Literature starts in delight but ends in wisdom. Literature teaches students appreciate different culture and certain emotions like love, anger, jealousy, greed etc. once they learn self-control over their emotions; it will help them in balancing their professional as well as family life. English literature opens a new era of world. It generates the abilities of Human society to have a set of core ethics and values to live. The study of literature in the form of short stories and novels forces students to find moral lessons everywhere. Students learn to monitor their behavior by reading stories and fables having a moral behind them. Every fable with a moral leaves a deep impression on their minds and imbibes such values in their day to day living.

The famous story of tortoise and hare teaches not to be lazy or over confident. Hard work pays. Another story of thirsty crow gives a lesson that there is always a solution of every problem. The moral of the story of 'Lion and Mouse' is that mercy brings its reward and that there is no being so small that it cannot help a greater.

Poetry is another powerful tool and most important universal vehicle of human expression. Poetry also helps in understanding universal truth and cultural differences. Poetry not only gives enjoyment but also encourages for creativity. It generates originality that engages students in some arts. It also awakens our senses; connect us with ourselves and others. In 'Ode to the West Wind' P.B.Shelley wants the help of the west wind to spread his revolutionary message among mankind all over the world, so that a new society based on great ideals such as equality, liberty and fraternity can be created. Milton's poetical works reveal that knowledge without morality is not only wicked but disastrous; that chastity is the bedrock of virtues; and ambition born of ego and pride makes a man deviate from the right path and lands him into hideous ruin.

We find numerous passages in prose that focus on morality. Prose has made learning more engaging in inculcation values and ethics. 'The Book of Proverbs', generally believed to have been written in the 10th century B.C., is a collection of sayings attributed to some sages but mainly to the famous King Solomon, known far and wide for his wisdom. Tempered by common sense, it contains advice about how to treat and solve day to day problems, how to live happily and lead successful lives. The remarkable feature of these sayings and advice is that even though they were written hundreds of years ago in a complete different time and social context, they are as relevant today as they were at that time.

Bacon's essays like 'Of Studies' and 'Of Revenge' etc. leaves everlasting impact on the minds of the readers. Samuel Johnson's famous essay 'Letter to Chesterfield' arises self-reliance and confidence.

It does not stop here only. Drama and novel are more powerful instruments to shape the mind of the readers. Morality plays were very popular in Europe during 15th and 16th centuries in which the characters personify moral qualities of goodness and evil. This provides the play's audience with moral guidance. Marlow's 'Doctor Faustus' is the best example of it. Faustus is endowed with the Renaissance 'will' or ambition peculiar to the sixteenth century England. The play is a parable of man who becomes the master of the secrets of nature but loses mastery over himself. It was a warning not only to the Elizabethans who were wild with the dreams of knowledge,

riches, powers and adventures but a warning to future generations, to us as well. Over-ambition leads to exploitation. Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' and Emile Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights' focuses on hazardous consequences of revenge.

In the continuation of different forms of literature, novel is the most prominent tool to teach moral lessons. One has to give more time to read the novel as it is a long story. Different characters are depicted in different ways. There is a wide scope to make comparisons. Its impact is printed on the mind of the readers. I read Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable' in my childhood. It aroused so much pity in my heart for sweepers that even today, after thirty years, it works and makes me sympathetic towards them. Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice' is a master piece for giving the true meaning of pity and compassion.

Religion teaches us about the omnipresence of God and a religious person is afraid of wrong doing. Unfortunately religion has also become a source of annihilation of mankind. There are fanatics in the name of religion who believe that their religion is the only true one and if anyone sane enough dares to oppose their views of treating women like slaves; intolerance of others' faith or any such dogmatic view, he is inviting death. How can they be called civilized, this when the world has shrunk to a global village, when they indulge in act of terrorism and destruction in the name of religion?

The civilized society and country, as a whole, are heading for disintegration because of changing values. What is a human being without values? How can one spend his life without basic principles and values in life? It's a senseless living, totally without purpose and truly like 'A Body without Soul', a person without a conscience, one who does not value what is right and good.

The society suffers, the world suffers, progress is hampered, peace and tranquility lost and the environment suffers, pollution harmed for nature and humanity. This is what is going on in Kashmir, this is what happened in U.S.A., and this is what had happened in Bosnia-Herzegovina of Yugoslavia and the result of all this is Taliban of Afghanistan. No sane person can condone of such mindless terrorism.

Most evident and astounding influence of literature in shaping the social milieu however is but reflected since dawn of 18th century especially in the European nations. When the western world was engulfed with the expansionist tendencies of various countries, the literature produced by Adam Smith in his book 'Wealth of Nations' transformed the entire scenario. Getting influenced by his ideas the countries experienced capitalist traits and within a half century mostly western Europe professed Industrial revolution. No one had imagined the express emergence of capitalism so fast. The literature thus molded the entire European continent especially western into a capitalist region which later on exploited the downtrodden to maximize their profit. Further with the decadent situation emerged the literature which had its source in the people like John Maynard Keynes and Karl Marx who propounded the socialist concept and the state intervention in life of people.

The teachings and books (i.e. literature) proposed by Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emil Durkheim had a remarkable impact on the social life of the period. People began to imbibe social ideals and talked of a welfare state where the resources are so distributed as to serve the common man and where concentration of wealth could be checked by just and reasonable state responsibility and intervention.

Values are a must if society has to survive and if we are to make our world a Global village in the true sense. Therefore, human valued should be preserved and protected. There should be a general awareness being created by socio-cultural groups concerning the value education of traditional customs and heritage. This is an age of nuclear weapons and if we do not retain values of Human civilization, values of our heritage and values of ethical principles, we are heading for another war which will be the 'end all' of all wars.

In modern emerging society, there has been a revolutionary change in the field of values due to many factors in addition to the influence of modern culture, industrialization, modernization, globalization, urbanization and multi-nationals.

Someone has rightly written "God said to me: Your task is to build a better world. I answered: How can I do that? The world is such a large, vast

place, so complicated now, and I am so small and useless. There is nothing I can do. But God in his great wisdom said: Just build a better you.”

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in character. If there is beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home. When there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation and when there is order in the nation there will be peace in the world.

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