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An Insight into Sanatan (Eternal) Values

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Abstract

This study is aimed at understanding the broader implications of Sanatan or eternal values emanating from Vedic Scriptures. To attain this objective, two primary tools of data collection, namely document analysis and structured interview were used; whereas, the collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Amid several findings, this study has found that only 60% human values are practiced up to 15 %.

Keywords: Human value, Education value, Family Value, Professional value, Cultural Value

Introduction

The way a country without laws is not a nation, similarly a person without human values is wayward and worthless in his or her life. Human values are universal in nature as they pertain to human beings across the globe regardless of any cast, creed, culture, colour, race, religion, or nationality. Therefore, human values hold a prominent place in all social settings by intertwining human language, thought and behaviour from time immemorial. According to Indian knowledge system, the purpose of our education was सा विद्या या विमुक्तये which means *a true education is one that liberates us from physical, mental, and social sufferings*. Ironically, the stated purpose is not being served today as today's education multiplies our sufferings because it keeps information, intelligence, and survival skills in the centerstage. As a result, today's education is producing an army of mere degree holders. Merely great academic degrees and

qualifications cannot make us great human beings because the real greatness exists in imbibing and radiating human values in all genres of life. Pertinently, **National Education Policy 2020** has been introduced not only to make mainstream education more utilitarian but has laid great emphasis on moral or value education accentuating human values to instill a sense of nationality and humanity in all the stakeholders of academia.

Background of the Study

Setting the background of this study, it is imperative first to understand the rationale behind this study. Why has the value education become so indispensable now? As we know our planet is becoming unlivable day by day due to an array of humanitarian crises like *education crisis, economic crisis, job crisis, family crisis, food crisis, political crisis, sensitivity crisis, leadership crisis, value crisis*, and several crises of other types. It is remarkable that all these crises revolve around human. These crises have not come from any other planets like Jupiter or Mars rather we have given birth to these crises. An obvious reason of this perilous condition is we are no more human or humane. To this end, Indian knowledge system as enshrined in Rig Veda (10:53.6) has aptly articulated the following verse:

मनुर्भव जनया दैव्यं जनम्

‘Be Human and create the divine race’.

The chief cause of human’s derailing from its ideal path is attributed to modern mainstream education. Here, we need to understand first the difference between mainstream and moral or value education. The mainstream education that comprises nursery to tertiary level education on natural, applied, and social sciences will teach you "how to make a living", but the moral education will teach you "how to live". But moral education teaches us living life not making livelihood. Mainstream education ends within the four walls of classrooms, whereas moral education is an unending process which ends only with life. For lack of moral or value education, many of our highly educated professionals, businesspersons, leaders and scholars become alcoholics, short-tempered and meet premature deaths. On the other hand, a person with values, even without academic degree, knowledge, or qualification, can control his/her mind and spell success and peace in life. So, whatever education policy we bring in, its prime responsibility should be to strike a balance between acquiring intelligence and developing intellect. Only then we can see good governance, good leadership, happy family, peaceful society, and prosperous nation.

In the recent past, we have to a great extent deviated from our core value system. And a small example of that we have all witnessed in recent waves of Corona in which people almost lost their *Karuna* (compassion). That Corona made us think **are we really human**. It is hard to forget how our values went deep down the drain when the country saw several cases of rape and molestation of female Covid patients and female attendants and the commoners were left in a pool of problems during the pandemic. It was not a Corona pandemic, it was a

sinful pandemic because the corona-caused deaths and sufferings could have been reduced if we had not lost our human values. For such sinful and heinous acts, no one should be blamed except us. Before any government or an administration, such a pervert belongs to our society and our family.

Going by the Indian knowledge system, human values are aimed at performing certain duties of life like Duty towards self, Duty towards others, Duty towards gods, Duty towards ancestors, Duty towards progeny, Duty towards fellow human beings, Duty towards other living beings, Duty towards society, Duty towards our family, Duty towards our professions, Duties towards other faiths and so on. Thus, Indian knowledge system is more based on duties has been influenced by colonial thinking which is based on rights. But the saddest part is without imbibing human qualities and without performing our duties, we begin to fight for our rights. This should not happen. Only a human can expect human rights.

Statement of the Problem

Humanity is at stake today. Education has lost its meaning and purpose. Human beings have turned into intelligent robots without enquiring into the meaning and purpose of life. Wherever you go you find intelligence but no intellect. *Despite unprecedented advancement in science and technology, what we wake up with every morning is the same sad and bad news of crime, violence, war, disasters, suicides, betrayal, and what not.* What arrest the eyes of our teenagers on TV, magazine covers, or newspaper headlines are pictures of war, violence, and vulgarity. Never do they see pictures of humanity. Media reports of increasing crimes of numerous types and resentment causing war within family to intercontinental war have made us declare a moral or value crisis all over the globe. A world that we all are living in does not have enlightened or ethical individual, family, society, groups, or organizations that could ensure social cohesion, harmony and peace, national integrity, good quality of life, good character, morality, and overall humanity. And, this is the point of departure for this study that tries to unearth human values that surround human beings and ways of inculcating them in human beings.

Research Objectives

1. Exploring the characteristics and types of human value.
2. Exploring the extent of practicing of human values.
3. Exploring the ways of inculcating human values.

Research Questions

1. What is human value and what are its major types to live a happy life?
2. Do we observe essential human values to a satisfactory degree?
3. How to inculcate human values for a better living?

Significance of the Study

Discussing human values has become the need of the hour as present society is on the verge of losing righteousness because of growing clashes between traditional values with modern values. Given that, this study is significant in that its outcome will pave the path of inculcating human values in children, youth, and people of all age groups. The hallmark of this study is its exploration and thematic categorization of human values into nine major types. The study is also an eye-opener in terms of presenting the degrees of observing important human values by the people of India.

Literature Review

Human values are the guidelines while making important decisions of life. They often come from experiences, aspirations, and worldly phenomena that requires conflict resolutions. At the same time, human values emanate from our religious discourses. Today, the need of inculcating human values through NEP value education is constantly increasing as negative human values have taken the driver's seat and ideal human values have taken the back seat. The world is witnessing and reporting everyday unthinkable crimes, conflicts, and wars. At the same time, we see behavioural disorders, rift in family, discrimination in society on regular basis. Given this, a strong need is being felt to delve into human values emanating from Indian knowledge system. It may be because of neglect of value education which created vagueness and indiscipline in the mind of people (Ruhela, 1996). According to Ruhela (1996), the total number of values that a person possesses is not many. Although, the degree of observing essential human values may differ but human values are almost alike in all social settings across the globe. Values are organized into value systems. A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable mode of conduct or end state of existence along a continuum of relative importance (Rokeach, 1973).

Human values empower us to disseminate peace indirectly. The receptivity of human values start at an early age of five and remains till the ages of 18. The inculcation of human values in child, teen, adult will differ due to their distinct cognitive abilities. Human values become more meaningful when are combined with other values. A human value requires consideration and appreciation. To have respectful relations, one must appreciate others one's human qualities, even if it is contrary to one's expectations. Several universal human values such as Truth, Righteous conduct, Peace, Love and Non- violence are directly associated to physical, intellectual, emotional psyche and spiritual facets of human personality. There is need and urgency to reinforce these values for a better and humane society. These human values have been discussed as part of responding the first research question of this study.

Values are bridge between individual and society. Individual holds value but others influence the formation of those values (Kenneth Fleischmann, 2013). In philosophical frameworks, values are those standards or code for conduct conditioned by one's cultural doctrines and guided by conscience, according to which human being is supposed to conduct himself and shape his life patterns by integrating his beliefs, ideas and attitudes to realize cherished ideas and aims of life (Gupta, 1986). Families, groups and societies tend to share common values (Kenneth Fleischmann, 2013). Family has been regarded as cornerstone of society. It forms a basic unit of social organisation (Goel, 2008).

Results and Analysis

In response to the first research question, the study firstly defines human value followed by listing its major types as follows:

What is human value?

Kluckhohn (1951) described human value as a conception: explicit or implicit of desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and end of action. For Rokeach (1968), human value is abstract ideals, positive or negative, not tied to any specific object, or situation, representing a person's belief about modes of conduct and ideal terminal goal. They believe that human value is a type of belief that is "centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave" (p. 124).

Types of Human Values

Although different social settings will have different types of human values, this study has tried to explore human values emanating from Indian knowledge system. identified a set of values pertaining to different domains of human life across the globe. The universal human values and human values as discussed in Indian knowledge system, can be broadly classified into ten types as follows:

1. SOCIAL VALUES

Social values are aimed at societal well-being.

- **Peace:** The state of being calm and quiet.
- **Justice:** The quality of being fair to others.
- **Freedom:** The right to do or say something what you want which is socially acceptable.
- **Equality:** The situation in which everyone has the same rights and advantages.
- **Empowerment:** Volunteering time and skills in the community
- **Brotherhood:** The quality of being considerate to others in thick and thin.

- **Friendship:** The quality of having interpersonal bond with others.
- **Co-operation:** Co-operation has been under-appreciated for years in its importance and should be held in high regard. This human value is viewed as exhibiting kindness and concern for others, the true importance of this value comes from the work or practice of looking after those unable to care for themselves. Caring for others both physically and spiritually is an extremely important value to have.
- **Faith:** Faith is complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

2. EDUCATIONAL VALUES

Education has the greatest value in human life. According to J. Ruskin, “Education does not mean teaching people to know that they do not know, it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave”.

- **Attentiveness:** The action of paying close attention to something.
- **Inculcation of Creativity:** This value requires us to hone life skills and develop ability to solve problems by transforming imagination and ideas into reality.
- **Fair Competition:** This is an open and equitable opportunities of being part any competition.
- **Academic Integrity:** This value requires us to be honest, responsible, and fair in our academic undertakings.
- **Discipline:** Quality of behaving in controlled way.
- **Objectivity:** The quality of being able to make a decision or judgment in fair way that is not influenced by personal feelings or beliefs.
- **Inquisitiveness:** Quality of desiring to know or learning more. Continually learning and growing both spiritually and intellectually
- **Human well-being research:**
- **Fair assessment:** Fair assessment here not only means being ethical and fair in assessing what learners know but it also requires us to see what learners can do from what they know.
- **Recognition:** Quality of simply acknowledging somebody/something.

3. PROFESSIONAL VALUES (for managers)

- **Sthitpragya (Unperturbed):** Sthitpragya is a term taken from the Gita (2:54) which is the quality of being firm in every situation no matter be it painful or pleasant. The lesson is ‘a successful leader needs to be unperturbed.’ Such a person ignores an insult, meaningless fight, and any false allegations.
- **Panchtatwa Qualities:** To know the leadership qualities, Indian knowledge system is an apt help which recommends our leaders to have panchtatwa or five elements (Land, Water, Air, Fire, and Sky) in their personality. The way these five elements govern our existence, similarly

they have great implication to leadership qualities. The first element Land expects a leader to be grounded and calm with empathy to deal with the ground realities of all the stakeholders. As for Water, it has the implication of flexibilities. The way water takes the shape where it is contained, similarly a leader needs to be adaptive and flexible to meet the concerns of everyone. As for the implication of Air, the way air exists everywhere, similarly, a leader is expected to observe its employees invisibly in a way that employees remain unaware of being monitored as over-monitoring is one of the impediments in the organizational growth as it deprives an individual to use his/her potential instinctively or naturally. As for Fire, it implies termination of wrongdoers in an organization. As for Sky, it expects a leader to see immense hope and endless opportunities for an organization and its employees.

- **Honesty:** The quality of being straight, upright, sincere and fair true to others brings more reward to the soul than the damage a lie could do.

3. PROFESSIONAL VALUES (for employees)

- **Equanimity (samatva):** Equanimity refers to participating in teamwork whenever possible. Samatva in the Gita implies integration, team-spirit, and mutual interdependence. It also implies impartiality and finding right job for right person because every person cannot do everything, but every person is capable of doing something.
- **Diligent:** The quality of working hard for success
- **Self-confidence:** Quality of trusting your ability.
- **Integrity:** As a human value, integrity is imperative that people stand spiritually undivided and hold true to our integrity, the importance of which is often forgotten. Even when it looks like someone is going to fail in a project, he or she has the integrity to finish the project. Another example is in a marathon race a runner is about to cross the finish line and then suddenly the runner falls and suffers an injury. The runner can easily quit the race and get help, but having the integrity to finish what was started, the runner crosses the finish line anyway.

4. RELIGIOUS VALUES

Religious values are aimed at spiritual well-being of human being. Irrespective of the fact that each religion has a distinct set of beliefs, there are certain values that are common to all the religions and ought to be common to the practitioners of all the religions for the well-being of mankind at large.

- **Compassion:** Showing compassion to those in need
- **Empathy (Aatmiyataa):** Treating others as one would like to be treated
- **Absence of anger (Akrodho):** The quality of not getting angry.
- **Indriya Nigrah (Sense Control):**

- **Humility:** Being modest in your relations with others
- **Wisdom:** Wisdom is the quality of having experience and good judgment and the resulting soundness of that action or decision.

5. POLITICAL VALUES

Political values are oriented towards a nation's well-being. For this, all political leaders regardless of their political differences within and across the parties must inculcate a set of values that are in the interest of lawful functioning of their country.

- **Patriotism:** Treating everyone alike, regardless of ethnicity, race, or religion.
- **Orientation:** Being open-minded to new things
- **Lawful righteousness:** Following the law and respecting those who enforce it
- **Nyas:** Nyas in the Gita refers to detachment. To accomplish any work perfectly, it requires utmost concentration which is possible only through detachment. A detached mind is more productive when it comes to taking right decisions. Many great leaders of India are examples of nyas including our present prime minister Shri Narendra Modi, Shri Narendra Modi, Shri Yogi Adityanath, Baba Ramdev, etc.
- **Conventionalist:** Conventionalist marks the absence of separatism and inclusiveness.

6. CULTURAL VALUES

- **Dutifulness (Kartavya-parayanta):** In the Indian culture rights flowed from duties. The performance of one's boundless duties in accordance with *dharma* (duties) ensured the rights of another. Non-adherence to the neatly defined and minutely worked out duty code would lead to a state of anarchy in society which would destroy the individual himself. Another dimension of this duty-first value system of Indian culture is that since the emphasis on rights leads to conflicts and claims of one's own due, the architects of society and its law-makers, probably sought to avoid a scenario wherein each one would be fighting for his rights. Such a situation would have resulted in an anarchy defeating the very purpose of arranging a stable social order.
- **Nishkam Karm:** Another dictum of the Gita which has taken deep roots in the Indian mind is *Karmanye badhika rastu ma falesu kadachan*. That is, one must go on performing one's duties without being worried about the rewards or the results.

7. MORAL VALUES

Moral values are one's intrinsic sense of righteousness (right and wrong) used before taking any decisions of life.

- **Contentment (Santosh):** Being satisfied with what you have.
- **Self-control (Aatma Sanyam):** This value requires us to manage our behaviour, emotions especially in adverse situations.
- **Aparigrah (Non accumulation of Extra Wealth):** This value tells us not to possess more than what we need.
- **Righteousness (Satyanishtha):** Righteousness is the quality of being honest, truthful, and trustworthy.
- **Compassion:** Understanding of pity for somebody who is suffering
- **Humility:** The quality of not thinking that you are better than other people.
- **Patience (Dhairya):** The quality of being to stay calm and not get angry, especially when there is a difficulty or you have to wait a long time.
- **Forgiveness (Kshama):** To stop feeling anger toward someone who has done something wrong.
- **Conduct (Sadachar):** A person's overall behavior.
- **Non-Violence (Ahinsa):** It is the quality of not causing harm to others under every condition.
- **Tolerance (Sahan Shakti):** Quality of enduring pain and hardship.
- **Perseverance:** One's quality of reaching to one's goal despite hurdles and delay.

8. GLOBAL VALUES

- **Sincerity:** Quality of being genuine.
- **Benevolence (Paropkarita):** Helping or Standing up for financially and emotionally needy.
- **Courtesy:** Showing respect for others.
- **Unbiased:** Quality of being free from prejudice and favoritism.
- **Not Usurping and Stealing (Asteyam):** The quality of not stealing others property.
- **Fundamental Rights:** Freedom of Expression, Justice, Opportunities.
- **Charity (Daan):** Quality of generosity and helpfulness especially towards the needy.
- **Trust:** Quality of believing somebody.
Trust can be understood in many ways, but finally it comes down to reliability and truth. Without trust, the world simply would not function.
- **Appreciation:** Our children needs appreciation for developing pro-social behaviour, especially for any specific action they have done to help others.

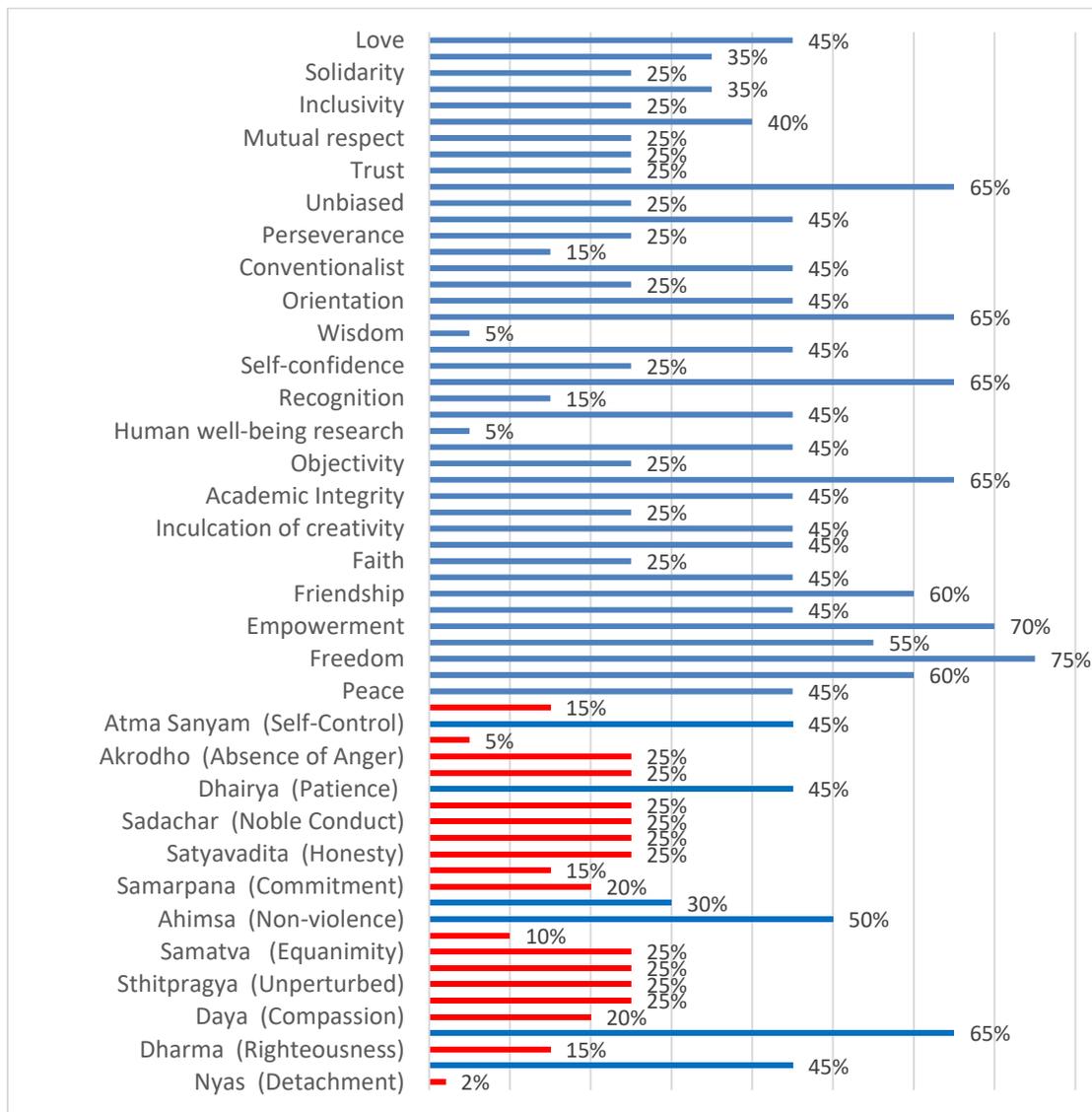
It devolves on the parents, teachers and society to imbibe the desired human values in young age group (Gandhi K. K., 1993).

9. FAMILY VALUES

After we made technological advancement, our family values started fading. Earlier, families lived and spent more time together but after the Industrial Revolution families became more distant, more independent from each other. This also resulted into change in gender roles. Earlier, women were supposed to look after household and raise families by staying at home; whereas, men used to do outdoor activities. After gender empowerment, women were regarded equally efficient to carry out any social tasks. Nonetheless, a family should have inclusive environment created by each and every member of the family.

- **Commitment (Samarpan):** Quality of keeping one's promise.
- **Mutual respect:** Quality of having polite behavior towards each other.
- **Inclusivity:** A mindset which purposefully attempts to involve all types of people.
- **Loyalty:** A family can have a value-based motto as a core family value to be adhered by every family member to peacefully resolve any conflict by being kind and loyal to each other.
- **Solidarity:** Quality of supporting each other. With modernization, family values can be seen shifting to an emphasis on independence and development versus togetherness.
- **Sharing:** Sense of doing something collectively.
- **Love:** The presence of love in human life, the love they have for their families, friends, our faith and for themselves is important source of energy to lead smooth life.

In response to the second research question, the study presents the following findings in terms of the degree of observing human values. The aim of this survey (a perception survey) in which a sample of 150 respondents was selected to see the extent or degree of having these values in their personality. It is noteworthy that out of 65 values, 28 values are being observed or practiced up to 25% only (as shown in red) and only 16 values are observed in the range of 30% to 65%. The most notable fact in the bar chart is not even a single value is observed up to 100%. This finding is very disturbing as it can be deemed as a complete collapse of our core values.



Degree of Observing Sanatan Values

In response to the third research question, the study lists the following ways of inculcating human values in society. Moral values must be instilled in children right from the very early age. For stable internalization, values must be instilled in our students from the age of 5 to 18 because psychologically this period is crucial. The following are few ways of inculcating human values in us.

- There should be periodic audits of human values at workplaces to ensure whether human values are being practiced by us or not.
- The modern education should give due recognition to value holders rather than mere degree holders. For this, values must be talked if not taught on regular basis.
- Prioritize moral education in parallel with mainstream education and students should be conferred any academic degrees only after exhibiting

desired ethical values in their personality.

- The country needs to roll out value-based rewarding competitions at all levels which could help us live with desirable values in our social settings.
- Showcase good behaviour to your children. For this, you need to be role model by living values. This is the way to teach your children learn values from you and valued-individuals in their surroundings.
- Share your personal experiences and of others for following human values that brought good results.
- Praise and reward your child for showing good behaviour.
- Ensure your child watches good contents on TV or social media.
- Teach your children to respect not only their elders but all regardless of their age or social strata.
- Teach your child not to cherish affluence but also to cope up with shortage.
- Teach your children helping mentality. More your child is empathetic to others better will be that society that s/he lives in.
- Teach your children to raise their voices against any wrongdoing for themselves and for others.
- Teach your child to be honest as it is always the best policy.
- Teach your children to apologise if they hurt anyone physically or verbally.
- Develop love for both mainstream and moral education in your child.

Conclusion

To sum up, the study has responded to all the research questions in terms of understanding human values followed by the degree of observing them and ways of inculcating them. A great paradigm shift is required to move from knowledge and information centric world to intellect centric world. In other words, *unless we stop compromising with our values or unless all our thoughts and actions are humane, we are bound to run into a series of unending problems*. Hence, the need of the hour is not only to incorporate moral education as a part of our academic curriculum but also to instill human values in all so that they could live in peaceful coexistence with cooperation rather than competition. In doing so, we need to involve all the stakeholders especially teachers, parents, students, different regulatory bodies, and valued policy makers from judiciary, legislative, executive, and media on one platform and find ways of humanizing our countrymen with human values so that our social wounds could be healed faster and society could see a better species of human with human values.

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