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**An Insight into Values, Morals, and Ethics**

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## ABSTRACT

In the face of unprecedented moral debacles world over, the mankind is groaning in agony to see the present form of human beings. Pertinently, the following Shloka from the Holy Rigveda (10.53.6) states the purpose of life and knowledge:

मनुर्भव जनया दैव्यं जनम्

The above shloka invokes mankind **to be a human and produce more and more righteous humans**. And the know-how of the above shloka is the point of departure for this study. The way an unskilled driver is bound to make an accident; similarly, one without righteousness is bound to wreak havoc on society and world citizens. Thus, this study is primarily aimed at understanding the subtle differences between value, moral, and ethic followed by listing up probable universal human values for societal harmony and peace.

## INTRODUCTION

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). This leads us to the understanding that righteousness is focal point in the process of humanizing self and others and the notion of righteousness comprises three related concepts called values, morals, and ethics.

The virtues called *values*, *morals*, and *ethics* may sound the same but are slightly distinct in their implications on a continuum of human disposition. Thus, this study has made an attempt to understand the psychodynamics and underlying principles of different values, morals, and ethics which are universally imperative to be imbibed by all the global citizens.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, it is imperative to mention that values, morals, and ethics form the continuum of righteousness in the sense that traits of values are inherent in morals and the traits of morals are inherent in ethics but the traits of values are not inherent in ethics.

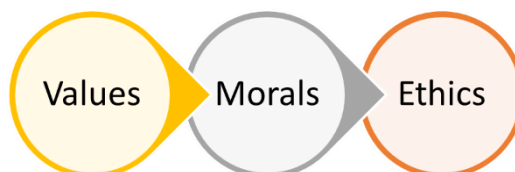


Figure 1: Continuum of Human righteousness

As per definitional implications, **values**, often linked with religious texts, can be seen as ideals of a community about what is virtue and vice. To be more precise, values constitute a generic belief system of righteousness (*sense of right and wrong*) emanating generally from an individual's religion, culture, community, family, and Gurus. Although, values do not compel us for their strict adherence, but they are expected to be controlled by our deep-rooted subconsciousness to lead a righteous life.

The term **moral(s)** has derived from its Latin root 'mos' that means custom or habit. Morals, in this regard, are very close to socio-cultural values and practices. In other words, morals are byproducts of cultural values. In comparison with values, morals are less axiomatic or dogmatic because morals are often based on our gut feelings about *good* or *bad*. Thus, morals are aimed at practicing morality or acceptable norms of a society.

As for **Ethics**, it is derived from the Latin word 'ethos' which means a set of moral beliefs that are particular to a group of people and organization. Precisely speaking, ethics is less axiomatic and more judgmental, more pragmatic, more systematic, more formalized, more universal, and more rational as it awakens us about the consequences or repercussions of our observed behavior in terms of *right* or *wrong*.

If morals show our intentions; ethics shows whether our actions are acceptable or not. If values motivate; morals and ethics constrain. This is why, ethics is followed more as a binding principle in all spheres of life like business, health, game, etc. in a somewhat legal form. In other words, if values and morals are personal or societal belief system; ethics is aimed at regulating our behavior in a formal setting like an institution or corporate. If we violate our values, we may face Karmic reaction; if we violate our morality, we may experience inner guilt and regret but if we break ethics, we may face societal humiliation and sometimes some punishments too. For instance, *helping others* is considered one of the good values but helping someone in cheating during examination is considered an immoral act and helping

someone in wrong-doing will be more not only be unethical but also unlawful. It is noteworthy that neither values nor morals, nor ethics can be the part of laws or lawful clauses. However, they play a crucial roles in the formation and functioning of law.

Given the importance of values, morals, and ethics, this study has separately revealed prominent values, morals, and ethics practiced in day-to-day life.

| <b>VALUES</b>    | <b>MORALS</b>              | <b>ETHICS</b>    |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Akrodho          | Humility                   | Adapt or Balance |
| Aparigrah        | Contentment                | Sincerity        |
| Asteyam          | Generosity                 | Fairness         |
| Authenticity     | Courtesy (Respect for all) | Objectivity      |
| Compassion       | Growth for All             | Perseverance     |
| Courage          | Faith                      | Creativity       |
| Empathy          | Attentiveness              | Equanimity       |
| Equality         | Commitment                 | Justice          |
| Forgiveness      | Solidarity                 | Learning         |
| Non-violence     | Patriotism                 | Integrity        |
| Nyas (detchment) | Prudence                   | Diligence        |
| Patience         | Appreciation / Gratitude   | Freedom          |
| Righteousness    | Sharing and Caring         | Dutifulness      |
| Sthitpragya      | Friendliness               | Resilience       |
| Tolerance        | Loyalty                    | Self-confidence  |

Moving to achieving the second objective, the study has listed up 69 universal human values and most of them intersect with the aforementioned 45 human traits (consisting of 15 values, 15 morals, and 15 ethics). 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:

## **TYPES OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES**

### **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:**
- **Fair Competition:**
- **Academic Integrity:**
- **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:**
- **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 and being true to others brings more reward to the soul than the damage a lie could do.

#### 4. 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.

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. 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.

## 7. 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 *Karmanyē badhika rastu ma falesu kadachan*. That is, one must go on performing one's duties without being worried about the rewards or the results.

## 8. MORAL VALUES

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

- **Contentment (Santosh):** Being content with what you have.
- **Self-control (Aatma Sanyam)**
- **Aparigrah (Non accumulation of Extra Wealth)**
- **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.

## 9. 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).

## 10. FAMILY VALUES

As society becomes more technologically advanced, the family values change. Before the Industrial Revolution, families worked together, shared more time together as they lived in closer proximities. The scenario changed after the Industrial Revolution and 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. Today, women are equally regarded efficient to work at all types of workplaces. Thus, family values underwent changes along with acceptance of social norms over the period of time. To this end, 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.

## **Conclusion**

The crux of this study is to make people aware of 45 values, morality, and ethics-based life principles. Apart from recommending the stated 45 human traits, the study lists up 69 universal human values covering 10 majoring domains of life. The purpose of this discussion is to profusely instill all the universal human values into the heads of today's global citizens so that that the world could become more livable with a better species of human.

## **References**

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