

All human beings aspire for a happy, fulfilling life. For a human being, there are two important

questions pertaining to this:

1. What is my aspiration? (What to do?)
2. How to fulfil my aspiration? (How to do?)

The purpose of education is to facilitate the development of clarity on the aspiration and adequate competence to actualize it. For this, it is essential to understand what a happy, fulfilling and successful life is – what is really valuable for human being; what is our purpose as a human being? Understanding human aspiration, or what is really valuable for human being, is the value domain. The subject which enables us to understand this domain is called ‘Value Education’ (VE). It enables us to understand our aspirations and visualise our goals for a fulfilling life and indicates the direction for their fulfilment. In relation to these issues, it also helps to remove our confusions and contradictions. In that sense, VE addresses the issues related to ‘what to do?’.

It is also necessary to learn the skills to actualise our aspirations. This is the skill domain. The subject which enables us to learn the skills is called ‘Skill Development’ (SD). It enables us to learn the science, technology, management and other skills for fulfilling our aspiration. In that sense, Skill Development addresses the issues related to ‘how to do?’ Both values and skills are required. The priority is values, then skills; i.e. first understanding ‘what to do’ and then developing the skills for ‘how to do’.

The present education system has largely become skill-biased. For developing skills, the prime emphasis is on science and technology, without a base of values. Skills can only help to provide the means to achieve what is considered valuable. It is not within the scope of science and technology to provide a way to decide what really is valuable. The consequence of skill-biased education is clearly visible in the form of serious crises at the individual, societal and environmental level. Thus, there is a strong need to rectify this situation. Value education is a crucial missing link in the present education system. But more importantly, the prime need of value education is to understand human aspirations, to discover what is truly valuable in life; and work out the program for its fulfilment.

Guidelines for Value Education

For any input to qualify for Value Education, the following guidelines for the content of the course are important:

Universal: It has to be universally applicable to all human beings for all time and all places. This implies that values should not change according to nationality, gender, etc.

Rational: It has to appeal to reasoning; and not be based on blind beliefs. It has to be open to address the related questions. It cannot be a set of do's and don'ts.

Natural and Verifiable: It has to be 'naturally acceptable' to the human being and there needs to be every provision in nature for its fulfilment. It needs to be experientially verifiable, and not based on dogmas, beliefs or assumptions. It is not merely an intellectual exercise or information transfer.

All Encompassing: It needs to cover all dimensions (thought, behaviour, work and understanding) and levels (individual, family, society and nature/existence) of human life.

Content of Value Education

The value of an entity is its participation in the larger order of which it is a part. The context is always the larger order. Value has to do with the participation of a unit in the larger order. E.g. a piece of chalk is a unit. The classroom is the larger order for this unit. The value of chalk is that it can be used to write on the blackboard for the desired functioning of the classroom. The value or role of a human being is its participation in the larger order. E.g. my role in living with the other human being is to ensure the feeling of respect in the relationship. Interestingly, I feel happy in fulfilling my role; and it is fulfilling for the other as well!

This value is worth understanding, worth thinking about, worth living. The value of human being is to ensure mutual fulfilment in the larger order¹, i.e. in the entire nature/existence, but starting from within themselves, then extending in their family and in the society. Hence, to understand human values, we need to study the human reality along with all that is there in the entire nature/existence which constitutes the larger order. We need to explore and understand things as they are; so that we are able

to recognise and fulfil our participation with them. That means the content or scope of study has to be all encompassing, i.e.

- ☐ It has to cover all dimensions of human being – thought, behaviour, work and realisation.
- ☐ It has to cover all levels of human living – individual, family, society, nature and existence.