

Incorporation of “Human Values” in all Higher Education Curricula (Technical & Non-Technical) - An inevitable action to eradicate discriminations

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Abstract

This paper argues that the current education system needs a rational and radical change from the objective of materialistic education to humanistic education. Hence, incorporation of human values education (AICTE, 2017) in the modern education system particularly in higher education including both technical and non-technical streams becomes the fulcrum point of this paper. A critical analysis on the Gen Z learners' aversive mindset towards the current learning routines and education system is presented for discussion. As a remedial approach, a bunch of refreshing rough and ready but pragmatic learning strategies are advocated to nurture them both with human values and employability skills. Even in the scientific/digital era, it is noted with big concern that this civilized nation irrationally exercises discrimination and disparity across the globe. As a remedial action, the teaching fraternity should impart human values education without any compromises because the creation of a better world is only in the hands of rational teachers and compassionate Gen Z students. Finally, this paper places the following question for the perusal of the whole academia, “Which is essential to prepare the Gen Z to stand against all types of discrimination and live a harmonious life: a balanced curriculum inclusive of human values/moral values and competitive skills or a restricted curriculum imparting only technical knowledge and competitive skills excluding human values/moral values?”.

Keywords: human values education, Gen Z learners' mindset, pros and cons of exams and grades, human values, discrimination and disparity, rational teachers, compassionate learners.

Introduction

“Education is not limited to the imparting of information or training of skills. It has to give the educated a proper sense of values” Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan.

Education is instrumental in building society from the Stone Age to the digital age where the world grows by leaps and bounds. It is good to note that modern education is equipping the learners from Pre.KG to Ph.D. with employability skills to survive in the business world either as an employee or an entrepreneur. This is just one side of the coin. The other side is to making them good human beings to live their gifted life harmoniously wherein the current education system fails as it is on the materialistic objective of education sans the human values education.

The Problem

It is a debatable observation that a compassionate learner builds the society but competitive learner destroys it. Even amidst the fights and plights against the pandemic Covid19, the world has witnessed a few saddest casualties caused by unkindest and inhumane suppression enforced by fellow beings from the power center. There are so many unheard unkind stories too. “Covid19 does not see race, religion, colour, caste, creed, language or border before striking” stated by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (India tv news, 2020), but why does it always happen with men from all walks of life? How could this mindset of discrimination and disparity be removed from society? It is sad to note that today’s education system is producing the Gen Z only with the competitive spirits essential to participate in the rat race. The answer is only NO to the question “Is teaching human values education a part of the curriculum?” Moreover, the subject human values education exists just as an untouched concept in the current education system. Hence, it is argued that lack of value education is the cause of all discriminations witnessed around the world viz., racial and caste discriminations, corruptions and immoral activities, so on and so forth. So there arises a big concern about academia with its modern education system turning blind eye to the value education.

The Solution

Dr. Rev. David George (2013) stated that, “Affirmation that human values should permeate and inform teaching in all branches of knowledge and all subjects” (University Grants Commission Seminar, para. 1)

Academicians and social reformers are appealed to consider the re-incorporation of human values in the curriculums and revival of higher education. Human values education focuses compassionate education with right understanding of behavioral aspects of human beings. Dr. Jumsai (2005) said in his talk (Sri Sathya Sai Baba Articles) that human values education will bring peace in the world. Inculcation of human values in the minds of young learners is sure to create a positive impact on character building. Adapting entertaining means and methods is another vital part to tune the young learners to imbibe the values. This competitive education system is preparing human beings towards war, not peace and hence inclusion of human values in the curriculums of both technical and non-technical education becomes an inevitable act and need of the hour.

The Discussion

“We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one’s own feet” Swami Vivekananda.(Para. 2)

Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE, initiated Inculcation of Universal Human Values (UHV) in Technical Education in 2017 for the faculty of engineering colleges. Yes, it is very promising to note that UHV will build life skills and produce useful good citizens. It is a much needed reformative action from the academia. The same UHV is required for Non-Technical Education too. So incorporation of human values in all higher education curriculums becomes the pivotal point of revival of a new value-based education. Every young learner should be taught UHV as he /she is going to be the next builder or leader of his future. A new world, with peace, love, truth, right conduct and non-violence, is all possible only when human values are taught in both technical and non-technical education. It is time to realize that human values education is a blessing in disguise to build a happy and compassionate Gen Z.

The Challenges

It is satirical to observe that teachers and learners themselves are the two big challenges towards imparting human values. The present learners are notably distracted by lots of tech-

attractions and hence have aversive mindsets towards college education while it is sad to note that teachers also have less exposure to values education.

1. The Gen Z learners' readiness and aversion on receiving Human Values Education

"If a man carefully cultivates values in his conduct, he may still err a little but he won't be far from the standard of truth." Confucius

Since modern curriculums are focusing on materialistic and competitive education, students are prepared for corporate examination through lots of coaching. They are unfortunate to cherish the pleasures of learning aesthetic part of the learning and thereby there is no room for human values education. It is also critical to note that the present Gen-Z learners are centuries away from Human Values Education. Since they are absolutely immersed in the virtual world where building good virtues in them stands as a big challenge. Moreover the plethora of virtual sources poses a real challenge to teaching fraternity who have to keep abreast of themselves to cater the knowledge requirements of the digital natives. The Gen Z students are digitally empowered to garner any information and knowledge from any part of the world just with a single click of a mouse and most of the learners are well informed about the subject. Hence they have an aversion to learning something that they are aware of wherein the teachers need to be ahead of them. At the same juncture, with regarding to learning human values education they may not have aversion.

2. The readiness and willingness of the present teaching community towards imparting Human Values Education

Thirukkural, Kalvi 399 (2014)

தாமி வ உலகி றக
கா வ கற்றி தா .

The learned/teachers derive great pleasure by seeing the pleasures of the readers. Thirukkural no.399 underlines the goodwill attitude of teaching community with regarding to learning more knowledge so as to educate and empower the learners. Teachers are ever willing to update and upgrade themselves. They are so happy about the blessings the readers are fortunate to derive from reading. Teachers are the pillars of this thriving world and it is an open secret that since ancient times, the teaching community has been playing a vital role in the creation of marvelous things and great leaders. Hence teachers are ever ready to go extra miles in qualifying themselves for the betterment of the young generation. As far as teaching Human Values is concerned, the teaching fraternity is happy and ready to impart to the digital natives.

2.1. A Survey on imparting Human Values Education for Gen Z learners

This was conducted among 153 participants of the International Conference on "Enhancing Digitization Teaching in the Post-Covid Period" between June 18-24, 2020 hosted by Mepco Schlenk Engineering College, India. It was a prerequisite for the Resource Talk on Enhancing Digitization Teaching to Enhance (L) Skills and (H) Values by Suresh G S, Assistant Professor of English on 24.06.2020.

1. In the current scenario, do you believe Teachers can be instrumental in building a promising generation with Human Values ?
 153 responses

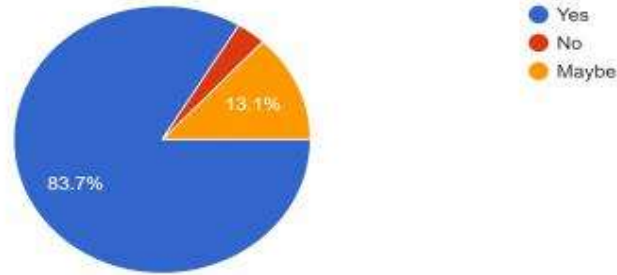


Fig. 1

3. What is the primary role of a Teacher ?
 153 responses

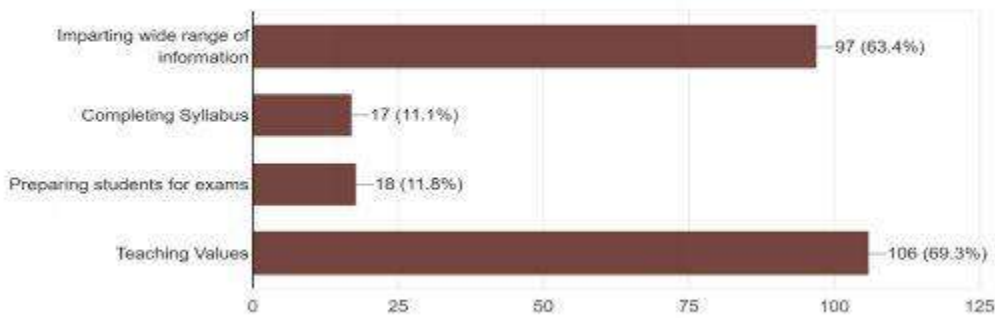


Fig. 2

4. How often do you impart Human Values to the students?
 153 responses

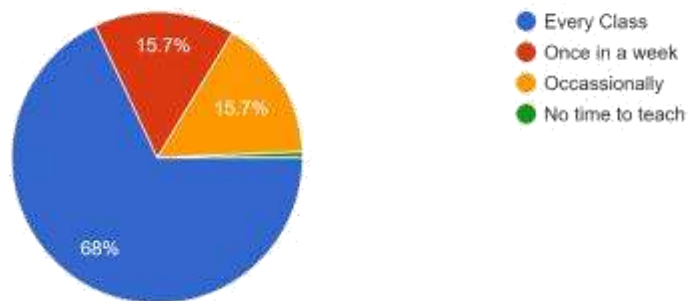


Fig. 3

5 | Incorporation of “Human Values” in all Higher Education Curricula (Technical & Non-Technical) - An inevitable action to eradicate discriminations

5.What could be the ideal ways and means to impart Human Values?

153 responses

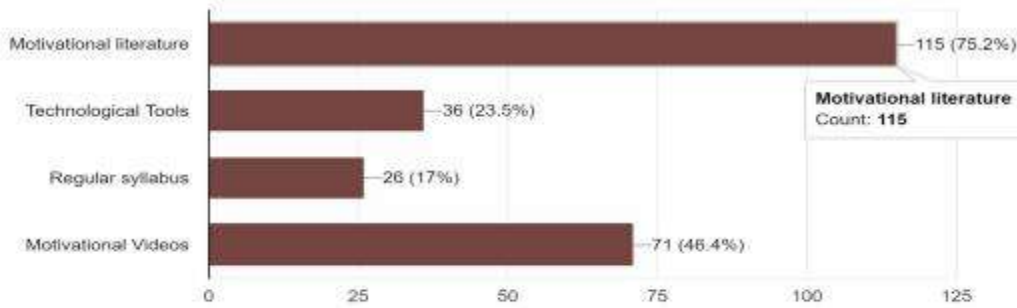


Fig. 4

6. What are the tech-platforms/gadgets to be used for building Human Values?

153 responses

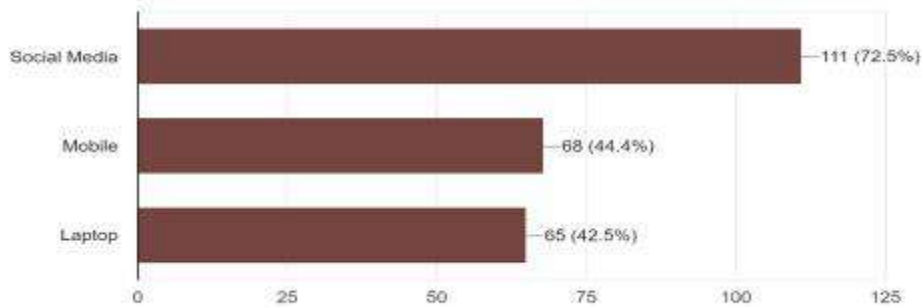


Fig. 5

9.Motivational literature blended with Technology could be an ideal subject to teach both Language Skills and Human Values through.

153 responses



Fig. 6

10. Teaching Human Values for Gen Z will create a better future.

153 responses

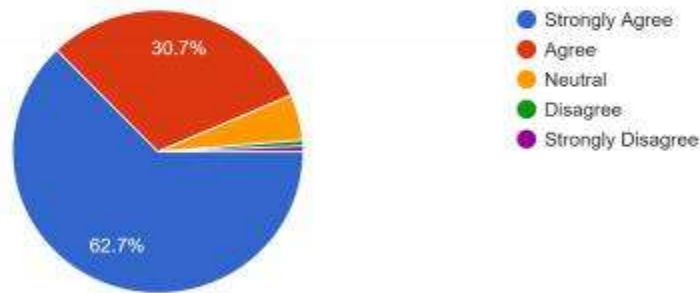


Fig. 7

This survey consisting of 7 questions presents a positive consensus on the readiness of teaching community towards teaching Human Values education to the Gen Z learners. As per figure 1(q.1), teachers are always vital and instrumental in building values in students despite the threat of digitalized learning scenarios. Imparting both the subject knowledge required for the survival race and building the human values required for harmonious life are the predominant roles of a teacher and thereby figure 2(q.3). presents more weightage i.e 69.3% for human values education and 63.4% for imparting wide range of knowledge. In spite of regular academic duties such as syllabus completion, examination and evaluation and other academic workloads, almost every teacher gives importance to teaching human values during the class hours and this is clearly recorded in figure 3(q.4) with 68% of them giving more focus on value education and it is a notable sign of responsible education. Considering the preferable means and methods for teaching human values as per figure 4(q.5), 115 teachers (75.2%) prefer motivational literature, 71 teachers (46.4%) prefer motivational videos and others go for technological tools and thereby emphasising the exploitation of motivational course materials that are both attractions and attention builders for the Gen Z learners. Social media, mobile and laptop also gain pivotal part in building the values. But it is highly a challenging area for teachers who might lack expertise in them. Since 72.5% of teachers prefer social media presented in figure 5(q.6), there is an urgency for them to have wide exposure and hands-on experience in these tech-platforms. Figure 6(q.9), calls the attention of the academia for a new course material amalgamating motivational literature and technology wherein the response is very promising that almost all go for it with a strong support of 62.1% and 30.7%. It reiterates the importance and exploitation of motivational materials in imparting human values. As per figure 7(q.10), it is strongly appreciated that human values education is a key ingredient to build a harmonious life and a better future for posterity. In a nutshell, according to this enterprising survey, the teachers of Higher Educational Institutions are passionately ready to transform the Gen Z through Human Values education.

3. The Practical Challenge: an introspection: How should teachers prepare themselves for imparting Human Values Education?

“Everyone understands the need for change in the abstract, but on the day-to-day level people are creatures of habit, (p. 180)” says Robert Greene (2005) in his book ‘The 48 Laws of Power’ and in

the so called civilized society, every individual is a part and parcel of both good and bad life values where teachers are no exception for that matter. Despite materialistic perspectives and survival attitudes, teaching is always revered as a noble profession and hence teachers should be values builders. But the reality shows a very big negative picture of the teaching community. So first and foremost, this has to be corrected through various faculty development programs. The teacher and the taught are the embodiment of values and they have to realize this innate power of changing themselves and others by building a better world. This thought is well expressed in the following words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” There lies a crucial responsibility of re-educating the whole academia. Teachers should play a crucial role in being role models to the students and hence teachers need to do lots of introspection and come out of their bad values if they have been victims of such values.

The teaching community is suggested to consider the following pledge for the betterment of the posterity. “We, the teaching community are determined to empower the Gen Z learners both with competitive skills and human values. Moreover, we will set ourselves as the embodiment of human values thereby standing as admirable role models. We will create altruistic and humanistic young leaders by all means.”

Rough and Ready Ideas but Pragmatic Strategy to Impart Human Values

“Values are intrinsic to our lives. All of us are entrusted with the duty of being promoters and protectors of values” says Shiv Khera in his book ‘Living with Honour’. In the corporate education system, though human values education is a blessing, teaching them needs to happen only in disguise to strengthen the character and instill righteousness in the present digital generation. Hence, Gen Z learners’ areas of interest such as gadgets, social media content, cinema and sports should be exploited to impart value education like diamond cuts diamond.

List of pragmatic strategical proposals to impart human values:

The teaching fraternity is encouraged to exploit any interesting snippet for teaching human values.

1. “Forgiveness” through stories and quotes from Holy Books of every religion.
2. “Honesty” through thought-provoking songs and clippings from movies.
3. “Respect for others” through social media contents.
4. “Hard work and Determination” through the inspiring life stories of celebrities from sports and business.
5. “Equality” through the news projecting unkindest practice of caste and racial discrimination.
6. “Compassion” through the real stories of unpopular people in and around our localities.
7. “Love and Kindness” through the day-to-day real stories from every family.
8. “Tolerance and Peace” through soulful yoga. Yes! It can very well be taught to students of HEIs.
9. Classroom activity: “Meet and greet” an enterprising activity to build human values and help students receive each other well.
10. Classroom activity: “Born to build Unity and spread Happiness” an essential pledge taking activity towards building a strong world.

Formation of a balanced curriculum inclusive Human Values –a call for a favourable consideration

J. Williard Marriot, (founder of the Marriot Hotel Chain in the USA) writes the following guidepost to his son “Guard your habits - bad ones will destroy you. (p.81)” (Promod Batra, 2007). Yes it is high time to teach our netizens the human values and moral values. In the name of growth and development, world leaders are vehemently and passionately waging a war against nature and humanity and this is sure to result in peril and unhappy climaxes. So it is argued that only a balanced education inclusive of Human Values can sow the seed of love for the humanity and care for nature in the minds of Gen Z community. This education should help the Gen Z learners to have a profound understanding of social injustice by putting themselves in the shoes of those victims. Subsequently this internalisation will certainly transform their perspectives about the discrimination and they will surely become creators of a better future. It is reiterated that incorporation of Human Values education in the curriculums of Technical and non-Technical HEIs is an urgency that should never be overlooked by the academicians just for the sake of sophisticated development alone.

Conclusion

If professional knowledge is considered as the mind, human values education is the heart and both are vital for life. Even though this generation is much privileged to acquire a wide range of information from Google, it is an undeniable fact that the teaching fraternity is the ultimate authenticity to rely on. Even today teachers are hailed as gurus by students and imparting values and goodness is the true quality of the gurus. Hence, the learned gurus from academia are beseeched to build a generation with human values in addition to imparting competitive skills. And it is high time to formulating balanced curricula inclusive of human values so that a peaceful future is possible for the shining generation. Let the academia and the learned leaders not become the cause of a dark future by turning blind eyes to this inevitable action of revising the current education system. It is vital that the Gen Z learners should rise and shine with human values and moral values.

A harmonious and win-win future could be built by every altruistic and humanistic teacher.

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