

LECTURE -1

HUMAN VALUES: CONCEPT, DEFINITION, SIGNIFICANCE AND SOURCES

Human values are the values of the human beings for the human beings and by the human beings. Morals and values are the foundation of human values. Just as a building has a foundation of concrete, the building of human values rests on morals and values.

Human values = Morals + Ethics + Values.

Morals: Morals are the standards, norms or principles of right and wrong. They are basically principles which help to guide our behaviour and accept behaviour of others. 'Morality' refers to any aspect of human action. Very often, **morals** are the 'standards' and **values** are 'bundle of morals'. **Ethics:** The term ethics is from the Greek word ethos (Character), refers to the philosophical science that deals with rightness and wrongness of human actions. Ethics is concerned with what is good and right for society. Ethics refer to the most important values and beliefs of an individual or a society. These beliefs help shape the character of the people in that society, teaching them what is good and bad and motivate them to make the appropriate choice when necessary. **Ethics is a manifestation of morals and values in the form of decision. It is an applied moral science.**

Concept of Values

The word value is derived from the Latin word 'Valerie' which means to be strong and vigorous. The German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche first used the word 'Values' in plural to denote moral beliefs and attitudes in 1880.

As per dictionary, value gives the following meaning: relative worth, utility or importance, degree of excellence, quality, intrinsically valuable. Value literally means something that has a price, something precious, dear and worthwhile.

The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences refers to values, as "interest, pleasure, duties, likes, preferences, moral obligations, desires, wants, needs and many modalities of social orientation".

Edward Spranger defines the values 'as the constellation of likes, dislikes, viewpoints, inner inclinations, rational and irrational judgments, prejudices and association pattern that determine a person's view of the world'.

Values are the evaluative standards we use for deciding what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, what is desirable and what is undesirable. Our value judgments are expressed through statements like, 'She is a good person' etc.

The value system we acquire and develop affects our attitudes, preferences, goals and aspirations. It sets the standards and guidelines which govern our behaviour, the quality of relationships we build and the responses we make to life situations. Those who value money, power and status most will direct all their efforts for achieving them, ignoring the social, human and ethical implications of their pursuits. For them human relationships will have only instrumental value, to be nurtured to the extent it helps in their career growth. Even moral and human values will have only secondary, if at all any, role for them. On the other hand those who value morality, justice, kindness, compassion may decline even lucrative career options if it requires compromising on these values. If someone values nature and natural beauty he or she will be trekking in Himalayas during holidays rather than shopping in Singapore. Similarly those who value music, art, and literature will spend their evenings in these pursuits instead of watching TV or partying on short, the quality of living space we create for ourselves is determined by our system of values.

At the collective level it is commonly shared values of a social group which determine the quality of life in it. In a society like ours, which values collectivism, it is the group needs of the family, the village community which get preference over the interests of the individuals. As opposed to this, it is the individual ambitions, capabilities and dynamism which are admired more in the west. The balance between the material and the moral values decides the overall goodness of a society.

Values are taken from life, environment, from self, society and culture, and, beyond all, from the ideal, transcended dimension of human existence and experience. As per the opinions of psychologists and social scientists, values are mere preferences and aversions, as, desirable goals, emotions and interests. Values make actions, characters, traits and objects of anyone good or bad.

With the aid of values, man delays his satisfaction and sets his mind and behaviour to distant and sometimes unrealizable goals, strivings and ideals. Values guide us to do the right things and be morally sound.

Characteristics of Values

1. All values are not equal in merit.
2. Values are at the core of personality and are a powerful force affecting behaviour.
3. Values mold the human nature in our social environment.
4. Values contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right or desirable.
5. A value is always an experience, never a thing or an object. Values vary from person to person that is no two individuals can have same value system.
6. Values are a special kind of attitudes functioning as standards by which choices are evaluated.
7. Values cannot be directly observed, seen or perceived but have to be inferred from some value indicates like, what people say and do. The behavioural action and statements of people give clues about their values.
8. Values are not fixed, but they change over time.
9. Values can also derive their origin from a variety of sources like literature, philosophy, religion, science, social customs and the constitution.
10. Every individual takes care of things, which they value. Thus values have emotional dimensions, a powerful emotional commitment, a strong liking for something.
11. Values influence our thoughts, feelings and action. They guide us to do right things.
12. Values don't exist as objects in space and time, but are established by judgment, by judging things, qualities, events or actions from a personal point of view.
13. Every individual has values but they may or may not be aware of what values exist in minds of individual, which act as guiding principles of life.
14. All of us have a hierarchy of values that forms our value system. But everyone does not hold the same values.

PRESENT DAY VALUES SCENARIO IN INDIAN SOCIETY

- The mad race caused by globalization and liberalization unfortunately led to criminalization, exploitation and dehumanization etc. tarnishing the traditional Indian value system.
- India is passing through a critical phase of its history. We are witnessing the worst erosion of values in the form of crime, corruption and violence where in adherence to moral and ethical values which have been the hallmark of social, ethos in India, has been put on the backburner, it not totally extinguished.
- Despite the continuous emphasis of the educational system on national and religious values, families and the younger generation exhibit increasing tendency toward egocentrism and the priority of self-interest over those of the community. This tendency is refer to as “money-making era as opposed to man-making era”.
- As a result of continuous exposure to mass media especially the visual and printed media such as T.V. movies, internet and sensational literature, young people are losing sensitivity to aesthetic, cultural and moral values.
- As for the global values, globalization trend has significantly contributed to the weakening national and religious values.

THE NEED FOR VALUE EDUCATION

- The core idea behind value education is to cultivate essential values in the students so that the civilization that teaches us to manage complexities can be sustained and further developed.
- Value education is important to help everyone in improving the value system that he / she holds and put them to use.
- Value education is essential to shape one’s life and to give him an opportunity of performing himself on the global stage.
- The need for value education among the parents, children, teachers etc., is constantly increasing as we continue to witness increasing violent activities, behavioural disorders and lack of unity in the society.
- Value education is necessary to develop interaction between society to create awareness, conviction and commitment to values for improving the quality of life through education, and for advancing social and human well being.

- Content of value education must include all dimensions – thought, behaviour, work and realization and all levels – individual, family, society, nature and existence of human living.
- Process of value education has to be that of self-investigation and self-exploration.

SOURCES OF VALUES

The following are the sources of values:-

1. Home/ Family
2. Friends/ Peers
3. School
4. Religion/ Religious institutions
5. Community/ Society
6. Media
7. Culture, customs and Traditions

Young people learn their moral values in the process of growing up – from their parents, their childhood friends, elders and so on. They also learn to appreciate what is right and wrong by experiencing the consequences of their own actions and those of others

According to Morris Massey values are formed during three significant periods:

1. **Imprint period** from birth to 7 years of age.
2. **Modelling period** from 8 -14 years.
3. **Socialization period** from 15 -21 years.

Your age will greatly influence your values. Different people and things influence you at different ages

Age 1-7 parents

Age 8-13 teachers/ heroes(sports/media)

Age 14-20 peers

Age 21+ Your values are established but you may test your values time to time

Values exert a powerful effect upon your life. They determine how you relate to your family and your partner, what products you buy, how you perform your job and who you vote for. Values dictate your leisure time activities, your interests, what you learn, your religious convictions and so on.

➤ **Attachment and Detachment:**

Attachment is something we all have. Anybody & everybody around us have an attachment to something and/or someone. There are a lot of emotions when we say attachment. Attachment can be defined as a feeling of affection for something or someone. According to yogis and Hindu mythology, attachment is a somewhat negative trait as it encourages the idea of possession, and a sense of ownership. It causes us to rely on tangible and materialistic things for deriving pleasure and satisfaction. They believe that a person who is higher on attachment will have a consumerist approach towards everything and everyone. His happiness will always be dependent on external sources and thus he will always have to face disappointment, this will lead to a constant swing of moods from euphoria to sorrow

Detachment on the other hand is an emotion that helps in the ability to be unbiased. Detachment, also expressed as non-attachment, is a state in which a person overcomes their attachment to desire for things, people or concepts of the world and thus attains a heightened [perspective](#). Detachment means a complete lack of interest in the world around you. Detaching yourself means to distance yourself from the rest of the world, usually in an attempt to avoid disturbing feelings. Detachment involves distancing yourself from experiences, often in an unhealthy way. It may involve escaping the existing moment through non-constructive or even harming behaviors such as [excessive eating](#), excessive shopping, spending too much time playing video-games, watching TV, abusing alcohol and drugs.