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SECRETARY

Government of India

Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Secondary & Higher Education

New Delhi - 110 001

August 18, 2000

Dear Prof. Raju,

A number of initiatives have been taken by this Ministry to promote Value Education in the different areas of education. In this connection, I have summed up the position for an article which will be published in the Journal of Value Education being brought out by the NCERT.

2. This article puts the entire strategy for implementation of the Value Education programme in its total perspective and also indicates what each agency has to do in order to make this a viable and effective initiative.

3. I am circulating this paper so that everybody is sensitized to the overall strategy, so that we all work together and in a cohesive manner.

4. I shall be glad to have your response on any of the points raised in this paper.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Maharaj Krishen Kaw)

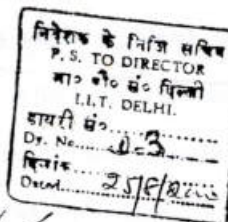
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Papers on
Proposed
INTRODUCTORY
COURSE
ON.
VALUE EDUCATION

Giving Value Education a Stable Infrastructure

The path of educational development is littered with the reports of commissions and committees. Every subject has been endlessly discussed and debated, and there is detailed and comprehensive documentation of every imaginable concept or idea that has been or can be tried out either in this country or abroad. Where we fail is in implementation. We are big on ideas and small in working out the practical implications of those ideas.

This is as true of education in human values (EHV, for short) as it is of other branches and facets of education. During the last year or so, I have been mulling over all the bright ideas on EHV that have already been enunciated over the years, in order to work out a strategy for putting up a stable and permanent infrastructure, so that those ideas can be operationalised.

This article will try to bring together the different initiatives that we have taken in the various fields of education and the organizations which look after the different levels and aspects of the educational process.

The Philosophy of EHV

The basic premise of our strategy is that EHV cannot be implemented unless there is a clear-cut philosophy behind it. Merely to itemize the different values that need to be inculcated among the teachers and the students, whether it a generic classification of values into the five fundamental values of truth, dharma (righteous conduct), love, peace and non-violence or the highly detailed

classification of more than a hundred values developed by the NCERT, cannot take us far. It is not enough to tell a boy or a girl to be good. He would like to know why he should be good, why not rich or powerful or strong?

Now the interesting point about the philosophy of EHV is that most people try to find an escape route that is easy and non-controversial. Some of the most common escape routes are the following:

- Some people refuse to teach EHV in educational institutions on the ground that values cannot be taught, they have to be imbibed. If there are no values being practised at home or in society, there is no point in talking about values in the classrooms. The students will just make fun of it.
- Others say that values have been prescribed by traditional religions. Because there are multi-religious societies in most countries, they decide not to teach religion or morality in the schools. This is called "secularism". The theory is that the state has to be neutral towards all faiths and the best way of maintaining equi-distance from all of them is to ban their entry.
- There are others who believe that religions may be superficially different in terms of their founders, cosmogony, rituals or deities, but the values all religions teach are broadly the same. Thus, the values can be taught without reference to any particular religion.

It is our basic hypothesis that religions have lost their traditional hold over the minds of educated people. Most scientifically trained persons today are either unbelievers or at best, agnostics. The moment we teach anything that traces its

lineage from a religious doctrine, it would be anathema to the scientists and they will discard it as shibboleth and superstition.

However, just as astronomy grew out of astrology and chemistry out of alchemy, there are positive signs that a new Science of Spirituality is emerging out of the welter of competing doctrines and ideologies that are vying for supremacy over the minds of men. This new Science has the following novel features:

- It is a science, in the sense that it accepts only those facts and theories which are capable of being experimented upon and verified. It is also prepared to accept certain unproved theorems as tentative hypotheses, that have to establish their credibility over a period of time.
- It is a science in the sense that it does not go against any known law or concept of modern science. It accepts the present theories about the origin of the universe, origin of our solar system, the theories of gravitation, relativity, uncertainty, quantum mechanics, biological evolution, genetic transmission of characteristics over generations and so on.
- It also accepts the findings of the social sciences about the ideal systems of economic development, political governance, social equity, gender parity, justice, fair play, democracy, freedom, autonomy, self-governance, non-exploitation, etc.
- At the same time, it enunciates certain broad parameters which redefine everything in terms of consciousness. It assumes as a fundamental hypothesis that the true nature of reality is cosmic consciousness, which is

at once unborn, immortal, undying, eternal and ineffable. No human being with his limited equipment can ever hope to understand the nature of the total or the cosmic in all its ramifications.

- It is consciousness which is the stuff of existence. In that sense, only consciousness exists. Everything else is a manifestation of consciousness at different levels. At the intellectual level, it manifests as thought; at the emotional level as emotion; at the vital level as energy; and at the gross level as matter. The universe is only consciousness manifesting itself in various names and forms.
- There is a certain direction to the total. Consciousness first involves itself in matter, matter then evolves into consciousness. This is an eternal process of involution and evolution. The process of biological evolution is, therefore, true, but only a part of the story. The full story would take matter right upto cosmic consciousness.
- We are part of this evolutionary process. The aim of our life is thus clearly to flow with the total and move to higher and higher levels of awareness, from unconsciousness to sub-consciousness to uni-consciousness to consciousness to super-consciousness and finally to cosmic consciousness. While moving through this overall process, we have also to tread the middle path, remain in a state of mindfulness, try to move from the past and the future to an ever evolving and ever lasting present, and be in a state of dynamic equilibrium at every moment.

It is only an overarching hypothesis like this that can provide a stable basis for any discussion on values. Values are not things that we have conjured up like rabbits out of a magician's hat, but logical corollaries of this process of evolution into progressively higher levels of awareness. To a child's question, "Why should I be good?", we can then give a clear-cut answer: "Because that is the way you can evolve into a person at a higher level of awareness and be in tune with the movement of the macro-reality of which you are a part."

All these thoughts have been summarized by me in a book called 'The Science of Spirituality' (Full Circle). What is required to be done is to build on this foundation and create a number of inter-disciplinary teams that can work on the project of building a universal science of spirituality.

The various ideas that are currently in the process of germination are the following:

- a) Vice-Chancellor, JNU has accepted the challenge that JNU should create a multi-disciplinary Centre for Spirituality, with a team that draws upon the faculties of physics, biosciences, philosophy, psychology, economics, political science, sociology and so on. A proposal is currently being formulated.
- b) Chairman, Indian Council of Philosophical Research has agreed to set up a National Centre for Research into Consciousness, which will provide the philosophical under-pinning to consciousness research in this country.

- c) I have received overwhelming response to a letter I wrote to the VCs of universities, asking for their views on the possibility of starting courses on Applied Philosophy for Everyday Living in the university departments of philosophy. A debate has started and this will lead to such courses being started in a few universities.
- d) The UGC recently announced that it would sanction Departments of Yoga and Consciousness in 11 universities. This will also give a spurt to research and teaching in yoga and consciousness.
- e) The MHRD has given deemed university status to the Bihar Yoga Bharati at Mungher. A “yoga-spirituality” pattern has thus been innovated within the deemed university system and this will open the way for according similar status to other such institutions. This will create the necessary infrastructure for further research into yoga and consciousness.

Value Education – The Educational Aspects

The philosophical basis of value education apart, what we have to do next is to create an educational expertise in the teaching of values in the classroom. A number of initiatives have been started in this direction and these need to be enunciated as follows:

- (i) At the apex of the school system, the main responsibility has been placed on the shoulders of National Council for Educational Research & Training (NCERT). It is currently in the process of setting up a National Centre for Value Education. This is collecting all the educational material – the

books, poems, stories, parables, teaching-learning material etc. that have been brought out by a host of spiritual, religious and educational organizations belonging to all religions, sects and denominations in order to build a national data-base, documentation centre and library. It is also creating a separate Website on Value Education, which will bring together all this material and place it in the public domain. NCERT has decided to bring out a Journal on EHV, which will provide a forum for educationists around the world to publish their experiences and research papers on this important subject. Thus the NCERT will be the epicenter for the EHV explosion in the schools.

- (ii) NCERT has also agreed to write textbooks on EHV. These will be the model textbooks for all the Boards in this country and will create the necessary basic teaching material, duly certified by a national body. Textbooks have to be written for classes I to XII. Even at the primary level, certain values can be inculcated by the oral telling of stories, common singing of songs that exhort children to uphold different values, playacting etc. These will provide a joyful learning experience to children of different ages. At senior levels, the teaching will also be of philosophy and teachings. An attempt will be made to impart the teachings of all important religions in order to discover the common thread that binds them all. In the senior classes, comparative religion would make a fruitful subject of study.

in order to show that the differences are superficial, while the similarities are amazing.

- (iii) There is need to create a similar body of literature for the university and college system. This task has been assigned to the UGC. We have to teach a core course on spirituality or applied philosophy to all students at the under-graduate level. This can be a foundational compulsory course, which includes spirituality, value education, personality development, time and energy management, stress management, yoga and meditation, comparative religion, the art of living and so on. It is planned to devise this course in some universities to begin with and then make it compulsory for all the universities and colleges.
- (iv) For the entire engineering system, the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi has taken the initiative to suggest the creation of a National Centre for Value Education for the Engineering Sector. This is being set up, in order to devise course material for all the engineering colleges in the country. Apart from core teaching courses on the pattern envisaged for general universities and colleges, there would also be special techniques for including value education as part of normal teaching of course material on individual subjects.
- (v) Similarly, the Centre for Value Education, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta has been working assiduously for the last more than two decades to inculcate values among the management graduates. Despite all this

effort, it has not been possible as yet to create a paradigm shift in the mainstream thinking of management specialists, in order to enunciate a theory of management based entirely on classical Indian concepts. It is, therefore, proposed to strengthen the Centre in IIM, Calcutta and also create a Centre for Consciousness and Leadership in IIM, Lucknow. Other IIMs have also shown interest in setting up cells on value education. An important input here is the work done by the management faculty of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthinilayam which bases its entire management education on the Bhagwad Gita.

- (vi) The National Open School has also agreed to run a Course on the Art of Living as a programme of continuing education. This will take spiritual ideas to a large audience through the distance education mode. A similar initiative is expected to be taken by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for its special clientele.

A Network of Teacher Training Centres

All this effort will come to naught if we do not have adequate provision for teacher training. In the ultimate analysis, all high-sounding courses and programmes can only reach the students if the teachers are first trained in this difficult area of learning. And this is not only an intellectual effort at understanding, memorizing and recapitulating, but also a spiritual effort at practically applying the principles that have been theoretically learnt from books.

It has, therefore, been suggested that we should select 15-20 Resource Centres such as those belonging to the Ramakrishna Mission, Chinmaya Mission, Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Bahai' World Faith, the Brahmakumaris, Radhaswami Satsang, Shivananda Ashram, the Christian Missions and other religio-spiritual organizations, in order to activate them as 'Resource Centres for Teachers' Training in EHV. Such Resource Centres would be selected by the NCERT for the school system, the UGC for the university and college system and the AICTE for the technical and management education system.

It will be necessary to network these Resource Centres so that, over a period of time, it seems gradually possible to have somewhat uniform syllabi, course content, textbooks, teaching-learning materials, pedagogic strategies, etc. Such networking would be facilitated by the setting up of the separate Website on EHV and the Journal of EHV, referred to earlier.

The National Council of Teacher Education will also need to take active interest in this area, as the elements of EHV will have to be made an integral part of all teacher training programmes across the country.

EHV – The Organisational Back-up

Finally, there is need to have an organizational backing for the EHV programmes. This has been initiated on the following lines:

- (i) At the level of the Ministry of HRD, a separate EHV Division has been created under an exclusive Deputy Secretary, to deal with value education.

Apart from the above strategic initiatives, this Division also services the Expert Group on Value Education which meets once a quarter under the chairmanship of Education Secretary to frame further policies and coordinate action on the various fronts.

- (ii) There is an on-going scheme for promotion of NGO Initiatives in Value Education, which is being implemented by the Ministry of H.R.D. Under this scheme, grant-in-aid upto a maximum amount of Rs.5 lakh per year can be given to NGOs which apply for the same. Grants are generally given for promotion of value education among school and college students, by organization of training programmes. This scheme needs to be given more funds and greater depth.
- (iii) Instructions have been issued to all organizations under the MHRD to create Cells on Value Education.
- (iv) NCERT has established the National Centre for Value Education.
- (v) IIT, Delhi is in the process of setting up the National Centre for Value Education for the Engineering Sector.
- (vi) IIM, Calcutta has an on-going Centre for Value Education which is promoting EHV in management institutions. IIM, Lucknow is setting up a Centre on Consciousness and Leadership.
- (vii) UGC, AICTE, NCTE, IGNOU, NOS, etc. have either set up or are in the process of setting up Cells on Value Education.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is felt that if the EHV Programme in India is adequately backed up by

- a philosophical base
- a pedagogical strategy
- a network of training institutions
- and an organizational structure

we can be assured that EHV will be here to stay and it will go on from strength to strength. We have, therefore, to ensure that firm and active steps are taken to bring all these ideas on the ground and start implementing them in the right earnest.