

## Value-Based and Moral Education in Accordance with Indian Tradition

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### ABSTRACT

Indian tradition has long emphasized the significance of value-based and moral education as the cornerstone of individual and societal development. Rooted in ancient philosophical systems such as Vedanta, and enriched by teachings from scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita, Indian education has historically aimed at the holistic development of human personality. Core values such as truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa), righteousness (Dharma), compassion (Karuna), tolerance, and self-discipline have been central to shaping ethical individuals and harmonious societies. In the contemporary era, rapid globalization, technological advancement, and consumerist culture have contributed to a decline in moral values, especially among youth. Issues such as indiscipline, intolerance, emotional instability, and lack of social responsibility are becoming increasingly prevalent. This study explores the concept, significance, and relevance of value-based and moral education in accordance with Indian tradition. Using a qualitative and analytical approach based on secondary sources, the paper examines contributions of thinkers such as Ved Vyas, Adi Shankaracharya, Swami Vivekananda, and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The findings reveal that modern education systems often prioritize academic success over ethical development, leading to societal imbalance. The paper concludes that integrating traditional Indian values into modern education is essential for fostering ethical leadership, emotional intelligence, and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Value-Based Education, Moral Education, Indian Tradition, Ethics, Character Development.

### Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a vital instrument for individual and societal progress. In India, education has traditionally been perceived not merely as a process of knowledge acquisition but as a pathway to self-realization and moral elevation. Ancient Indian education systems emphasized the integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of human development.

However, in the modern era, education has increasingly become career-oriented, focusing on economic advancement and technological proficiency. While these aspects are important, they often overshadow the fundamental goal of character formation. Consequently, society is witnessing a decline in moral values, reflected in rising corruption, violence, intolerance, and ethical dilemmas.

The youth today face challenges such as information overload, cultural conflicts, and technological distractions, which contribute to confusion and lack of direction. The absence of strong moral foundations has led to emotional instability and weakened social cohesion.

Indian philosophical traditions, particularly Vedanta, offer timeless guidance on ethical living, emphasizing self-discipline, truth, and inner harmony. Therefore, reintegrating value-based education into modern systems is essential for achieving holistic development.

### Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the concept of value-based and moral education in Indian tradition
- To examine its philosophical foundations
- To evaluate its relevance in contemporary society
- To identify challenges in implementation
- To propose strategies for integration into modern education

### Research Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative and descriptive research design**. Data has been collected from:

- Ancient scriptures (Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita)
- Scholarly books and journal articles
- Educational reports and policy documents

The analysis is based on **content analysis and interpretative methods**.

### Review of Literature

- The importance of value-based education has been widely recognized by Indian thinkers and scholars.
- Ved Vyas emphasized knowledge as a path to liberation and structured the Vedic corpus for systematic learning.
- Adi Shankaracharya advocated Advaita philosophy, focusing on self-realization and spiritual knowledge.
- Swami Vivekananda highlighted that education should manifest the perfection already within individuals.
- Mahatma Gandhi proposed Nai Talim, emphasizing moral and vocational education.
- Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan stressed the integration of ethics and spirituality in education.
- Modern research also confirms that value-based education enhances emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility.

### Concept of Value-Based and Moral Education

- **Goal of Education:** Each society wants its children to acquire a desirable set of values. The goal of education in any country is the development of desirable values. Obviously, it is important to know what values are held by students. What kind of values do they possess? Such knowledge is important in order to allow curricular experiences to achieve the educational goals that society would formulate. Today, we see decadence in society. One of the reasons for the decline is conflicting values. If we go through history, we find that the society is changing rapidly. The impact of the West has led to changes. The Western way of thinking, dressing and behaving influenced the Indians. This embargo effect is seen in any large society and likely to increase.

The values have social, psychological, economic, spiritual and philosophical aspects. They have a broad effect. One cannot say that life-long steps in a person's life are worthless. So if the values are good, life will be quiet and useful, if the values are not desirable, life will be difficult and undesirable. Value-based education refers to the process of inculcating moral, ethical, and spiritual values in individuals. It aims to develop responsible citizens capable of making ethical decisions.

Moral education focuses on distinguishing right from wrong and promoting ethical conduct. In Indian tradition, morality is closely linked to **Dharma**, which signifies righteousness and duty.

### Objectives of Value-Based Education

- To instill virtues such as honesty, integrity, and compassion for moral development.
- To encourage appreciation of India's traditions and heritage for cultural awareness.
- To develop emotional, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions for holistic growth.
- To foster commitment to community service and sustainable living for social responsibility.
- To enable students to make ethical decisions in personal and professional life through critical thinking.

**Types of Values**

- Moral (honesty, integrity)
- Social (respect, cooperation)
- Spiritual (self-realization)
- Cultural (tradition, heritage)

**Indian Traditional Perspective on Education**

- **Gurukul System**

सा विद्या या विमुक्तये (विष्णु पुराण-1.19.41)

**Meaning:** True education is that which liberates (leads to self-realization and freedom).

विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद् याति पात्रताम्।

पात्रत्वात् धनमाप्नोति धनात् धर्मं ततः सुखम्॥ (हितोपदेश)

**Meaning:** Knowledge gives humility; humility leads to worthiness; worthiness brings wealth; wealth leads to righteousness, and from righteousness comes happiness.

Ancient Indian education was deeply rooted in the principles of holistic learning, emphasizing the development of moral character, ethical conduct, self-discipline, and intellectual growth. It aimed not only at the acquisition of knowledge but also at the cultivation of wisdom, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility. The system sought to nurture well-rounded individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

One of the most significant models of education in ancient India was the **Gurukul system**, wherein students resided with their teachers (Gurus) in an ashram or hermitage. The relationship between the Guru and the student was highly revered and was founded on trust, respect, discipline, and devotion. Students were imparted knowledge in diverse disciplines such as scriptures, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and warfare, along with practical life skills and ethical values. The Gurukul system emphasized experiential learning through observation, practice, and contemplation, making education a continuous and lifelong process.

Another important aspect of ancient Indian education was the **Upanishadic tradition**, which encouraged deep inquiry into metaphysical and philosophical questions. The Upanishads promoted self-reflection, critical thinking, and the pursuit of higher knowledge. Concepts such as self-realization (*Atma-jnana*), unity of existence, and righteous living (*Dharma*) were central to this tradition. The learning process was dialogical in nature, involving meaningful discussions between the teacher and the student to explore deeper truths of life and existence.

In addition to the Gurukul and Upanishadic traditions, **Buddhist monastic education** played a vital role in shaping value-based learning in ancient India. Renowned institutions such as Nalanda, Takshashila, and Vikramashila emerged as prominent centers of higher learning, attracting scholars from across the world. Buddhist education emphasized ethical conduct (*Śīla*), meditation (*Dhyāna*), and wisdom (*Prajñā*), ensuring that knowledge was pursued not merely for intellectual development but also for societal well-being. Values such as compassion, non-violence, self-discipline, and mindfulness were integral to this system.

Ancient Indian education was inherently student-centric, fostering curiosity, self-awareness, and a lifelong quest for knowledge. It promoted a harmonious balance between material knowledge (*Apara Vidya*) and spiritual wisdom (*Para Vidya*), ensuring both personal development and social harmony. The integration of arts, sciences, philosophy, and vocational training made it a comprehensive system that combined theoretical understanding with practical application.

The ultimate goal of value-based education in ancient India was to cultivate individuals embodying virtue (*Sadachara*), wisdom (*Jnana*), and service (*Seva*). Education was regarded as a means to achieve liberation (*Moksha*) and self-realization, reinforcing the idea that learning should contribute to both individual upliftment and societal progress. These enduring principles continue to influence modern educational philosophies, underscoring the importance of ethics, values, and holistic development in contemporary education systems.

The Gurukul system emphasized:

- Guru–Shishya relationship
- Discipline and simplicity
- Holistic development

#### **Philosophical Foundations**

- Vedanta – Self-realization
- Buddhism – Compassion and mindfulness
- Jainism – Non-violence and self-control

#### **Core Values**

- Satya, Ahimsa, Dharma, Karuna, Seva

#### **Relevance in Modern Society**

Modern society faces challenges such as:

- Ethical decline
- Corruption
- Stress and mental health issues
- Social fragmentation

Value-based education promotes ethical awareness, emotional stability, and responsible citizenship.

#### **Role of Educational Institutions**

- Integrating ethics in curriculum
- Teacher as role model
- Yoga, meditation, community service
- Experiential learning

#### **Challenges in Implementation**

- Exam-oriented system
- Lack of trained teachers
- Media and technological influence
- Diverse interpretations of values

#### **Strategies for Implementation**

- Curriculum redesign
- Value-based pedagogy
- Teacher training
- Parental involvement
- Policy reforms (aligned with NEP 2020)

#### **NEP Is Addressing Indian Value-Based Teaching Learning**

##### **Ecosystem**

Modern Integration (NEP 2020): Recent studies analyze the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizing its focus on holistic development, empathy, and incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to address modern ethical gaps. NEP 2020 aligns with India's traditional educational ethos by:

- Promoting Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in curricula.
- Encouraging multidisciplinary and holistic education.
- Emphasizing ethics, morality, and human values in learning.
- Integrating yoga, meditation, and well-being into school education.
- Reviving ancient teaching methodologies blended with modern learning techniques.

Promoting Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in curricula involves integrating traditional wisdom, indigenous knowledge, and classical Indian texts into mainstream education. This includes subjects such as Vedic mathematics, Ayurveda, Indian philosophy, environmental sustainability from ancient Indian perspectives, and the contributions of Indian scholars in science, literature, and arts. By embedding IKS into educational frameworks, students can develop a deeper appreciation for India's rich intellectual heritage while fostering critical thinking and innovation.

### Findings and Discussion

The study reveals that value-based education is essential for holistic development. Traditional Indian systems successfully integrated moral values, whereas modern systems need to reintroduce them systematically.

### Conclusion

“गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥“ (स्कंद पुराण)

The Guru is Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver), and Mahesh (destroyer). The Guru is the Supreme Reality itself. I bow to that revered Guru.

“संगच्छध्वं संवदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्” (ऋग्वेद 10.191.2)

A harmonious society is built on unity, understanding, and shared values. Value-based education is indispensable for creating ethical, responsible, and socially conscious individuals.

Integrating Indian traditional values with modern education will ensure sustainable development and global harmony.

Value-based and moral education in accordance with Indian tradition prioritizes holistic development—intellectual, physical, and spiritual—aiming to cultivate virtue (Sadachara), wisdom (Jnana), and service (Seva) rather than mere academic achievement. Traditional Indian education is deeply rooted in the concept of Dharma (righteousness/duty) and is designed to create self-disciplined, ethical individuals who contribute positively to society.

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