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BUILDING THE INNER CORE: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF HUMAN VALUES EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Values are necessary for people to lead a fulfilling life. Values are the fundamental building blocks of personality that drive people's behavior. The foundation of education is the cultivation of values. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the cultivation of moral and human values as an important part of values education. This study aims to assess the differences in knowledge and understanding of human values among students of different genders and classes. A descriptive research design was used in this study to survey 220 students of grades VII to IX in five government secondary schools in the Jaipur district of Rajasthan. Data were collected before and after the educational intervention and analyzed using the paired sample t-test to assess whether there was a significant difference in the mean scores between different genders or classes. The results showed that the knowledge of human values among students of government schools varies depending on the family, school, and social environment. This difference can be improved and enhanced through training and educational interventions. The positive transformation observed through such interventions highlights the key role that values education plays in shaping the moral outlook of students.

Keywords: Inculcating Values, Human Values, Values Education, Value Orientation, Moral Behavior, NEP 2020.

INTRODUCTION

Study Background

Indian philosophy places great emphasis on cultivating human values in education. It emphasizes the pursuit of wisdom, self-realization, and understanding of the nature of reality. These values are often intertwined with spiritual practice, moral living, and personal transformation (Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2024). The primary inspiration for human values education comes from the Vedas and Upanishads. These ancient, sacred texts in Hinduism represent different aspects of Vedic knowledge. Children have received values education since the Gurukul era. By adding values education as an extra subject to the standard curriculum, the Indian educational system has carried on this legacy even after the country's independence. Instilling moral and ethical values in children and preparing them as good future citizens is the primary goal of human values education in educational institutions (Majumder, 2024).

The fundamental components of personality that control a person's behavior are values. A person's value orientations, belief systems, and attitudes are strongly influenced by the larger social context in which they live (Mifsud & Sammut, 2023). They even determine their behavioral dispositions. To prepare mankind for a better future, value orientations are essential. Past research (such as Gray *et al.*, 2022; Rajput, 2023) observed that people occasionally approve (moral behavior) and occasionally disapprove (immoral behavior) of the actions of others. People cannot develop moral behavior until they have a clear understanding of right and wrong, as well as good and evil (Gray *et al.*, 2022). This comprehension of good and wrong, good and evil is referred to as moral values. An essential dimension of children's education is the development of moral values (Rajput, 2023).

Family is regarded as the first social institution. Since birth, inculcating values begins at the child's home. However, values education may be more formally handled when it comes to social harmony and the continuation of societies (Garg



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et al., 2017). This is where schools and educators play a crucial role. Educators actively contribute to the transfer of values from society to society through implicit or deliberate values education in the classroom. The process of teaching and learning about the values that society deems significant is known as values education. Although values education can assume varied forms, its primary goal is to help children understand the significance of moral principles, apply and model those principles in their attitudes and behavior, and ultimately use those principles and good behavior to benefit society (Carbonilla *et al.*, 2024).

Values education can be inculcated in either of two ways: (1) by teaching or passing on a set of values that are derived from socio-cultural practices, ethical practices, or religious institutions, or (2) by gradually educating people or making them aware of the significance of good behavior for both the individual and society (Carbonilla *et al.*, 2024). Children's moral and personal development is greatly impacted by their schools and educators. In school, educators serve as role models for the students. They are crucial in helping children develop moral behavior. They are encouraged by their peers to be courteous to others and refrain from lying, cheating, and stealing. Educational institutions continue to informally impart values to children and develop moral behavior in them (Nandwani, 2023).

Values education fosters virtues like humanism, happiness, honesty, simplicity, cooperation, unity, love, and peace. Children can learn inspirational principles from the experiences, biographies, and autobiographies of great and noble people. Additionally, children can develop strong moral and ethical principles through humorous, engaging, and thought-provoking stories. It is possible to assist them accept personal responsibility and instill values in their own lives by emphasizing quality literature, employing various teaching strategies, and involving themselves in school activities and role-playing (Gamage *et al.*, 2021).

Study Objectives

In light of the above context, this study seeks to examine the personal profiles of secondary-level students in government schools of Rajasthan. It aims to assess their knowledge and understanding of human values before and after an educational intervention. In addition, the study aims to find out if there are differences in students' understanding of values based on their gender and class.

METHOD AND TOOL

Research Design: This study adopted a descriptive research design and aimed to investigate the knowledge and understanding of human values among secondary school students. The study conducted a detailed questionnaire survey before and after the education intervention.

Research Approach: This study adopted an empirical research approach. Data was collected directly from students using an observational survey method to assess their knowledge and understanding of human values.

Study Population: The study population included secondary-level students of government schools in Rajasthan.

Sampling Method and Sample Size: This study surveyed 220 students of classes VII to IX of five government secondary schools in the Jaipur district. All students participated in the study. Hence, the researcher adopted a census method.

Data Collection Tool: The self-made tool was used to observe and collect data to assess the knowledge and understanding of human values among government school students. After the initial collection of data, the students participated in the educational intervention for four months. Subsequent to the completion of the intervention, the researcher again assessed the students' knowledge and understanding of human values.



Statistical Techniques: To summarize the data, the researcher used descriptive statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage. Inferential technique (paired samples *t*-test) was used to test whether there was a difference in the mean scores between different genders or classes.

Data Analysis Software: SPSS 23.0 was used for data analysis to ensure the accuracy of the results.

Research Hypothesis: This study assumes that students' knowledge and understanding of human values will not differ significantly by gender or class.

Ethical Considerations: Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to the survey. They were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and would only be used for academic research.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Students

Demographic profile factors such as class, gender, family type, and socioeconomic status have a significant impact on the formation of students' attitudes, behaviors, and values. These factors help identify how an individual perceive and internalize values (Chrystal *et al.*, 2019). Together, they shape an individual's understanding of what is important and what are right or wrong behaviors. The following table presents the demographic profile of students –

Students' Profile (N=220)		Count	Percent
Class	VII	97	44.09%
	VIII	72	32.73%
	IX	51	23.18%
Gender	Boys	86	39.09%
	Girls	134	60.91%
Family Type	Nuclear	128	58.18%
	Joint	92	41.82%
Socio-economic Status	Low	117	53.18%
	Medium	89	40.45%
	High	14	6.36%

The study included 220 students, with the highest representation from Class VII (44.09%), followed by Class VIII (32.73%) and Class IX (23.18%). A greater proportion of participants were girls (60.91%) compared to boys (39.09%). Most students came from nuclear families (58.18%), while the rest belonged to joint families (41.82%). Socio-economically, over half of the students (53.18%) were from low-income families, 40.45% from medium, and only 6.36% from high-income backgrounds. The analysis showed that students were predominantly girls and came mainly from nuclear families with low or middle socioeconomic status.

Pre-test and Post-test Mean Score on Human Values

The study examined eight essential human values necessary for students' character development. Respect is recognizing the worth and rights of others. Responsibility is taking obligation for one's actions. Honesty is being honest with others. Empathy is the ability to understand and empathize with others. Discipline is the ability to exercise self-discipline and follow rules. Cooperation is working well with others to achieve common goals. Fairness is treating others



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equally and fairly. Citizenship is contributing to society and fulfilling civic obligations. The average scores observed before and after the educational intervention are presented in the following table –

Human Values	Class VII			Class VIII			Class IX		
	Pre-test Mean Score	Post-test Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Pre-test Mean Score	Post-test Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Pre-test Mean Score	Post-test Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Respect	59	76	17	54	73	19	45	64	19
Responsibility	43	65	22	47	71	24	58	81	23
Honesty	52	81	29	50	77	27	46	72	26
Empathy	38	59	21	29	51	22	27	46	19
Discipline	62	90	28	56	88	32	49	84	35
Cooperation	56	79	23	55	75	20	48	63	15
Fairness	48	72	24	55	80	25	64	85	21
Citizenship	34	63	29	44	68	24	56	80	24

The comparison of pre-test and post-test mean scores across Classes VII to IX shows a consistent improvement in human values after the educational intervention. For instance, Honesty and Discipline saw some of the highest mean differences, particularly in Class VII (29 and 28 points respectively). This indicates a strong impact of the intervention in fostering these values. Empathy and Citizenship, which had lower pre-test scores, also showed significant improvements, especially among Class VII students (21 and 29 points respectively). This indicates that the intervention effectively targeted under-prevailing values. Class IX showed the largest improvement in Discipline (35 points). This indicates growing maturity and responsiveness in senior students. Larger mean differences indicated greater effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing specific human values. The overall trends suggest that the intervention was beneficial across all classes and values.

Statistical Results

This study investigated whether students' knowledge and understanding of human values significantly differ based on gender or class. To assess changes before and after an educational intervention, a paired samples *t*-test was conducted for students across three grade levels (VII, VIII, and IX), with results further disaggregated by gender. The test compared pre-test and post-test scores to evaluate the benefits of the intervention and to examine whether these benefits varied significantly across class or gender. This statistical approach enabled the detection of within-group improvements and provided insights into the magnitude and significance of the observed differences.

Class	Gender	Pre-test			Post-test			Results		
		N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> -score	<i>p</i> -value	Effect Size (d)
VII	Boys	36	46.25	1.89	36	72.71	1.36	68.183	.000	16.07
	Girls	61	50.62	1.41	61	73.37	1.19	96.303	.000	17.44
VIII	Boys	31	47.17	1.73	31	71.56	1.27	63.276	.000	16.07
	Girls	41	49.94	1.32	41	73.87	1.04	91.181	.000	20.14
IX	Boys	19	45.91	1.48	19	70.63	1.16	57.302	.000	18.59
	Girls	32	51.03	1.20	32	72.61	0.92	80.733	.000	20.18

The descriptive statistics show consistent improvements in mean post-test scores over the mean pre-test scores across all classes or both gender. In Class VII, boys improved from a mean of 46.25 (SD = 1.89) to 72.71 (SD = 1.36), while



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girls increased from 50.62 (SD = 1.41) to 73.37 (SD = 1.19). Similar trends were observed in Class VIII, with boys moving from 47.17 (SD = 1.73) to 71.56 (SD = 1.27) and girls from 49.94 (SD = 1.32) to 73.87 (SD = 1.04). In Class IX, boys' scores increased from 45.91 (SD = 1.48) to 70.63 (SD = 1.16), and for girls from 51.03 (SD = 1.20) to 72.61 (SD = 0.92). These results indicate that, regardless of gender or class, students showed substantial improvements following the intervention.

The inferential statistics further support the conclusion that the educational intervention was highly effective. All *t*-test scores were extremely high, ranging from 57.302 to 96.303. The corresponding *p*-values were .000 ($p < .05$). This indicated statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores. Moreover, the effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) ranged from 16.07 to 20.18 ($d > 0.80$). These high effect sizes suggest that the intervention had a very powerful impact on students' knowledge and understanding of human values. Thus, the results refuted the null hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The results reveal that the knowledge of human values among government school students varies with respect to their family, school, and the society they live. This can be modified and enhanced by using training and educational interventions. The study's findings align with earlier research emphasizing the influence of family, school, and society on students' value formation. As Wu & Tan (2022) and Yalcin (2021) observed, children's moral and value development is largely shaped by the environments they interact with most frequently, particularly during their formative years. The variation in knowledge and understanding of human values among secondary-level government school students supports the view of Hafizi (2023), who asserted that moral education is deeply connected to social institutions.

Furthermore, Silke *et al.* (2024) noted that educational interventions can effectively nurture ethical behavior and empathy among adolescents. The current study reinforces these conclusions by demonstrating that structured training can foster positive changes in students' attitudes, behavior, and character. It underscores the potential of educational settings as pivotal spaces for value inculcation, provided they are supported by consistent family and societal reinforcement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the awareness and internalization of human values among secondary-level students in government schools are significantly influenced by their immediate environments—family, educational institutions, and societal contexts. However, these influences are not fixed; rather, they are malleable through targeted educational and training programs. The positive transformation observed through such interventions highlights the critical role that value-based education can play in shaping the moral compass of young individuals.

This has profound implications for educational policy, suggesting that value education must be woven systematically into the school curriculum and reinforced through teacher training, parental engagement, and community participation. Such an approach can help nurture a generation of citizens who uphold democratic ideals of equality, fraternity, and justice. Future research could explore the impacts of varied value-based education programs, compare effectiveness across different socio-economic groups and school types, and investigate the role of digital platforms in enhancing value education in diverse educational contexts.

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