



SIGNIFICANCE OF VALUES IN HUMAN LIVES

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ABSTRACT

Human lives are being influenced by values. Irrespective of any nation or race it is common phenomenon of every human being to follow some values internally or externally throughout his life for leading a better and gentle life. Here there is a question about values. Are they Human values? Ethical values? Traditional values? Cultural values? etc. and how do we (especially the present generation) learn and follow them? It is a valid point for discussion and need of the hour.

Values are nothing but principles or standards of behavior; ones judgment of what is important in life. All the aforesaid values play a vital role in human lives in various situations. They are guidelines for our success. Human values include morals, integrity, peaceful life, respecting others, honesty (Truthfulness and trustworthiness), caring, kindness, courage, sharing, time management, adjustment (co-operation), self confidence, commitment, spirituality and service, learning a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. This paper especially focuses on how human beings exhibit values in various situations, through the examples from some famous writings of eminent authors and from the life of Mahathma Gandhi.

Key Words: *significance, values, ethical, traditional, cultural*

Introduction

Values reflect our sense of right and wrong. They help us grow and develop. They help us create the future we want. The decisions we make every day are a reflection of our values. We learn most of our values from our parents and extended families. Sometimes new life experiences may change values we previously held. Individual values reflect how we live our life and what we consider important for our own self-interests. These values include enthusiasm, creativity and personal fulfillment

The status of values in the present society:

Now -a -days it is highly impossible to find values in any human being and all relations are become commercial. Selfishness is deeply rooted and there is no harmony and right understanding in human lives.

In today's world, it may seem our society doesn't practice many values. We have a rise in discrimination, abuse of power, greed, etc. What are we leaving behind for our future generations? May be it's time society takes a hard look at its values.

Presently our society is endangered of lacking values. People are not following any ethics. No proper relations between parents and children, wife and husband & between siblings. They

are living together only for commercial purposes. They are killing each other over small issues. Most of the human beings are leading lives like wild animals with lack of truth, honesty, love etc.

The Last Leaf – O. Henry

In O. Henry's short stories he clearly depicted the values love, honesty, sacrifice. In the short story, 'The Last Leaf' his characters are Sue, Johnsy, Doctor & Behrman. The whole story revolves around this Washington Square Street; where on the top of the building with three floors. Sue and Johnsy were young artists and friends who were living there. Sue is caring and strong headed girl and supports Johnsy to fight her illness whereas Johnsy is weak, sentimental and shown as a feeble character. Johnsy has been suffering from Pneumonia for long and Sue was taking care of her very much and worrying about Johnsy's health. Sue called doctor and explained Johnsy's problem. The doctor noticed that it was not only a physical problem she was worrying more about something. He said "medicine only cannot cure her disease if she doesn't have hope of her life. The doctor was very nice human being instead of suggesting too many medicines he identified the problem. Johnsy was watching and counting Ivy leaves through her window (**Ivy symbolizes** fidelity (it won't easily let go of something it's attached itself to) eternal life) and comparing chances of her life with the falling Ivy leaves. Finally one leaf left. Johnsy thought that her last day has come. It symbolizes her blind belief. Sue observed her mental condition and worried more about the chances of Johnsy to live. She approached Behrman the old artist living downstairs and had been waiting for his master piece for decades. Sue described Johnsy's health condition and requested him to do something with his art and save Johnsy. It shows the loving and friendly nature of Sue.

Mr. Behrman, an approximately 60 plus old wreck painter climbed up on a ladder and painted the **leaf** in the cold and rain and caught pneumonia himself and died. The **leaf** is a symbol of despair that turns into a symbol of hope. Johnsy thought the ivy **leaf** stands for her life, slowly falling away. When the **leaf** remains, however, it becomes a symbol of hope for her. However, Behrman ignored the violent storm and stayed out all night in a violent storm to paint a realistic-looking leaf onto the wall outside Sue and Johnsy's window. Johnsy saw the leaf next morning and got hope for her life as she did not know that it was a painted one. Behrman caught pneumonia from exposure to the rain and cold, and died a few days later. He showed ultimate human value in this regard. The Last Leaf is a story with a lot of values. Here we can see the values love and honesty of Sue towards her friend and Behrman's sacrifice his own life for an unknown human being. This story is the best example for values which we are missing now

The Gift of the Magi –O. Henry

Possibly one of the most anthologized of O. Henry's stories is "The Gift of the Magi," a tale about the redeeming power of love. The protagonists, a couple named James and Della Young, struggle to live on a small salary. By Christmas Eve, Della's thrift has gained her only \$1.87 for her husband's gift, which she had hoped would be "something fine and rare and sterling." She decides to sell one of the family "treasures"—her long, beautiful chestnut

hair—to buy a platinum chain for her husband's prized possession, his watch. The first reversal is that he has bought her a set of pure tortoiseshell combs with which to adorn her long hair; the second, that he has sold his watch to do so.

In this story about the true spirit of gift-giving, both the family treasures and the protagonists take on Old Testamentary significance. Della's hair, the reader is told, puts the queen of Sheba's wealth to shame; Jim's watch rivals all of Solomon's gold. Both unselfishly sacrifice their most precious possession for the other, thereby ushering in a new dispensation on Christmas Eve. Even more, these "two foolish children" acquire allegorical value in their act of giving insofar as they replicate the giving of the three wise men: "Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the wisest," O. Henry tells us: "They are the magi." In O. Henry's version, then, the "Gift of the Magi" turns out not to be gold, frankincense, or myrrh, not even hair-combs or a watch chain, but rather, selfless love which plays a vital role in human values.

The Beggar Woman - Tagore

Tagore described values by identifying reality with eternal humanity or immortal man. The values that man seeks constitute his reality or his truth. He believed that man dies when they lose their physical life but they perish when they miss their humanity. In his short story *The Beggar Woman*, Anjali was not a beggar from the beginning. But her life was not a bed of roses. Her husband was a drunkard and used to show hell to Anjali everyday. Anjali, who gives importance for traditional values, bore all the sufferings silently. After her husband's death, she became a beggar for the survival of herself and her two daughters, Sush and Sashi. They totally depended upon their mother without bearing any responsibility. It shows their nature of exploitation. Sashi eloped with a vendor and reached home after six months as a widow. Anjali let her in without showing anger. Sashi also married a conductor who was a lazy fellow and they settled in Anjali's home. Anjali was the only breadwinner of the whole family. Her daughters and son-in-law enjoyed the food and other things brought by Anjali through begging, but they did not even ask whether she had eaten or not. They did not show any concern and humanity to their mother. They did not even offer a cup of tea to their mother. Anjali could not bear the humility and exploitation of their daughters and son-in-law. With uncontrollable anger, she had beaten and drove them away. This story showed the absence of human values. If the daughters showed love and respect over their mother, the ending of the story would be different, the family would have been living together peacefully and happily.

According to Tagore, humanity is the "dharma" of man. It is clearly observed that Tagore's notion of beauty as truth links aesthetics with ethics through metaphysics. Tagore defined human personality as the principle of unity.

Like The Sun – R.K. Narayan

In R. K. Narayan's short story 'Like The Sun', truth is the theme. In this character, named Sekhar, tried to observe **truth** at least for one day. That day when his wife was serving him food and observed that he was not eating well. When his wife asked about the taste of the

food he very honestly told that it was not good. He knew the consequences he would have been faced in the evening. At school when his colleague informed about some body's death Sekhar reacted differently. He said that that person was not good enough to mourn. When his head master invited him to his home to listen his music Sekhar unwillingly accepted his invitation. The Head master offered Sekhar delicious food and a week time to correct the test papers for what Sekhar is worrying about to submit the next day. When the head master asked him about his music, Sekhar said bluntly that it was not nice and he left. That night he experienced his wife's anger and the next day his head master's. Head master did not keep his word and ordered Sekhar to complete the correction of test papers by tomorrow. This was what Sekhar expected. Here we should know that though Sekhar thought about the consequences, he could not stop speaking truth at least one day. As a result he faced bad experiences at home and school.

In the case of Emperor Satya Harischandra he stood on truth throughout his life. He lost his kingdom, sold his wife and son to keep his oath given to Viswamitra. In the end he was blessed by god and received everything what he had lost. Here In our story Sekhar did not get any reward except satisfaction. But one day definitely he will be rewarded for his honesty and truth. As this is Kali yuga we should be smart and add some sugar coated words for peaceful life otherwise we will be isolated. We deliver the truth but in a way that makes it easier and friendlier to bear, while motivating a person to improve next time. If truth is Sun, tactfulness and smartness are sun glasses. Ultimately truth and honesty will be rewarded.

The Guide – R.K.Narayan

The Guide is the most acclaimed novel of R. K. Narayan that won him not only immense popularity but also the Sahitya Academy Award for 1960. Narayan presents the human values, social values, customs and traditions which have been in existence and still continue to play a major role in shaping the lives of people. The important family themes like Marital fidelity, husband-wife & father-son relationship, parental love and lack of communication between the old and the young generation etc. all are beautifully dealt by Narayan in his novels.

In 'The Guide', Narayan's main characters resist the traditional, religious and familial duties and then accidentally drift towards their destined destiny 'The Guide' begins with realistic settings and everyday happenings in the lives of a cross section of Indian society with characters of all sections. Unexpected disasters befall the hero as easily as unforeseen good fortune. The characters accept their fates with an equanimity that suggests the faith that things will somehow turn out happily.

In the novel 'The Guide', the protagonist Raju encounters questions of traditional existence when he sets out to realise his dreams and aspirations. He does not care to abide by the social and moral norms when it comes to Rosie. He seduces Rosie, the other man Marco's wife, begins living with him and thus, violates a major conventional order. The whole society including his own widowed mother stands against him but he puts a blind eye on the severity

of the chaotic situation. He gets into financial trouble and becomes a kind of social outcast due to his relationship with Rosie, but he refuses to mend his ways and thus fails to bring order and harmony in his own life and his surrounding society. Raju's life becomes a total failure and he earns the wrath of everyone around him because he deals erratically with each one of him or her.

One Night @ Call centre- Chethan Bhagath

Losing of moral & ethical values is clearly shown in Chetan Bhagth's all stories. He showed very keenly how families are broken due to losing moral & ethical values in the form of civilization.

In India Twenty first century is the age of modernization. It is the age of science and technology and has brought about certain promising advantages to the urban sector of India. The modernization has considerably benefited the urban part of developing India. It has brought about better public transport facility, healthcare facility, facility of world class education at the door step, world class production houses and manufacturing units. Such changes have brought ample opportunities for better job options or better earning opportunities, and high standards of living. Modernization no doubt gave many advantages to India but at the same time it has created certain serious issues in Indian urban society especially in the lives of the rising middle class. The changing urban realities have also given birth to many antisocial evils in the society like smoking, prostitution, drinking, gambling, crimes of different kinds. The impact of modernization on India is so profound that she adopted all the pros and cons of western society giving birth to a new India where western culture and values have and values have been rapidly permeating in lives of people converting the urban part of India into a waste land.

In One Night @ the Call Center all the prominent characters experience the embarrassment of broken relationship in their families resulting a worse impact on their personal and professional life. Vroom has serious issues with his father as he leaves his wife and son and builds a relationship with his office secretary. As Shyam states, "Vroom's dad was a businessman who parted from his wife two years ago. Vroom and his mother now live without him. The case of Radhika and her husband Anuj is another example of broken family. Radhika being loyal and committed to her family has been deceived by her husband Anuj who develops extra marital affair with a so-called modern girl named Payal. Radhika is from a rich family and for love she leaves her father's home for middle class man. She does many compromises in the traditional family of Anuj but in return she gets disloyalty from her husband. The disappointment from her husband compels her to break her marriage.

In the novel The Three Mistakes of My life the relation of Vidya with Govind is shocking. Vidya is more rebellious in her nature following her own dreams. She shows no interest in her studies searching something else in her life. Govind spares sometime in the evening to

teach Vidya but she does not care at all about her studies. It has been seen that Govind has been attracted by Vidya right from the beginning. Govind shows shyness to take the initiative but she does not hesitate to give him an opportunity. She chooses to lose her virginity even on her birthday. Besides she chooses her brother's best friend Govind for that purpose who even was her tutor. She feels happy after losing her virginity and even thanks God for making her adult. She says, "Wow, I am an adult now and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God" (201). Her behavior and desperation for immoral activities reflects her ignorance towards moral values of India. Omi also breaks the conventions of his family. He is a Brahmin boy whose father works in a temple as a priest. He is not at all interested in religious matters although he is traditionally bound to do the rituals of the temple. He enjoys every bit of life and takes wine, watches movies and hankers after beautiful girls.

Half-Girl Friend – Chetan Bhagath

In Half Girlfriend Riya is from upper class family in which the atmosphere is quite dejected. Every member of the family feels alienated and there is no sign of love and care present in anyone. Riya being the member of the family spends most of her time in boarding school feeling completely separated from the family. Her family plans things for her but she has her own plans and dreams. She has been married with a man against her will but that marriage does not last for long time. Due to modernization and westernization, the ideal Indian value system has broken considerably. In India people do not adhere to the conventional ways of living. The western values appeal to them a lot. They are inspired by values and norms that are suitable to other civilizations but not to Indian civilization. It is observed in the contemporary Indian society that the degradation of social and moral values has been become very common way of life. To achieve their ends People in India follow all sorts of moral compromises. Therefore, Chetan Bhagat has rightly portrayed this change in his novels

According to the characters in Chetan Bhagat's stories Imitation is civilization. Losing values is modernization. Following tradition & culture is foolishness & innocence. This can be clearly observed in Anuj's character. He did not like Radhika as she is very traditional.

Mahatma – The Man of Values

Born in India in the late 19th century, Mohandas Gandhi, known as 'Mahatma' (or 'Great Soul') is known for his civil rights leadership. He was the leader of the Indian independence movement in British-ruled India. Although he was killed in 1948, his years of civil disobedience to promote peace have influenced countless other leaders including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela.

Gandhi taught us to never lose faith in humanity, to watch our thoughts, to remake ourselves, empathize with others, and learn to forgive. Gandhi was a wise man whose life lessons far extend past the 79 years he spent spreading messages of peace, acceptance and love on Earth. “As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world – that is the myth of the atomic age – as in being able to remake ourselves.”

In his childhood Gandhiji committed so many mistakes out of his curiosity. He smoked & drunk along with friends. He ate non-veg. He visited red light area. Theft money from his father's pocket. He used to gambling. After that he felt very guilty over his wrong deeds. When he started to South Africa his mother took an oath that he never drink & smoke & never touch non-veg. Gandhiji strictly followed the promise he gave to his mother & till the end he stood on his word and transformed as Mahathma

In South Africa he was severely humiliated & harassed by whites. He felt bad about the worst status of Indians living there. Out of his humanity he fought against the British for the rights of Indians. He was imprisoned several times. In one of the issues he did not like to file a case against whites who bit him severely. It shows his non-violent nature. Most of the whites attracted with Gandhi's behaviour became his fans & some of them were best friends of Gandhi. They even funded for his movements

We might feel like our actions are insignificant. It may seem that what we are doing is of no value. Maybe we tell ourselves, “There's too much bad in the world. It will never change.” Instead of focusing on changing the world, focus on changing yourself. Set goals for how you can improve. If you could change any bad habit, what would it be? Work on remaking yourself first. Gandhi fervently believed in humanity. He trusted and had faith that there were good people in the world. Though there may be a ‘few drops’ in the ocean that are dirty, the entire ocean does not become dirty.

Decades later, we still remember Mahatma Gandhi in our hearts for his unparalleled life and teachings. Whether it was his fight against illiteracy or his effort to uplift the distressed sections of society, we always saw him fight for what he believed

Conclusion

Values like truth, honest, love, humanity, following ethics & morals etc. play a significant role in our lives. They guide our beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in all aspects of our life. They help us to live happily at home, at work place and in the society. The property we can forward to our future generations is nothing but living with all values. As are the founders, so are the followers.

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