

Moral/value education: History and its present state

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive background of moral and value education starting from ancient age through medieval period till the modern period. The history of value education must be studied in order to understand how value education has arrived at its current state. First, education in Indian traditions was more comprehensive, with the ultimate goal of education under the Vedic education system being the cultivation of character. However, there are some distinctions in the western educational system regarding value education. This paper will look at how value education was in the ancient world, how it persisted in the Middle Ages, and how education was completely restructured at the dawn of the modern era. Finally, this paper will give details about the current situation of value and character education, as well as how nation states are adopting value education in their own countries.

Keywords: Value education, History of value education, Modern value education system, logical positivism and its impact on value education.

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Ancient period and value education

Almost all ancient Greek philosophers emphasise the importance of moral or character development. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle stressed about the need of moral education for children. Courses can be planned to increase both physical and spiritual growth, according to the goals of Aristotelian education; however, the latter would take precedence over the former. Reading and writing, drawing, gymnastics, which promotes the virtue of courage, and music, which amuses, relaxes, and cultivates the intellect, would be taught before biology, history, physics, and the theory of the heavens in elementary school, according to Aristotle. Ethics and its associated practical applications would then aid in mind training and the development of a strong character in students. This can be considerably boosted by a capable instructor who can instil good character in the learner. As a result, in ancient Greece, character development was the fundamental purpose of education. So, Plato's educational method does not "spoon-feed" knowledge to students, but rather encourages the development of intellectual virtues through problem-solving. Aristotle also discusses the value of virtues in leading a good and happy life. According to Aristotle, virtue is a united, uncomplicated state in which emotional responses and rational judgements coexist. He, like Plato, believes that training our emotional responses is essential for the formation of virtue. If our emotional responses are correctly taught, we will learn to enjoy pleasure or pain in the appropriate things. Aristotle investigates the psychological roots of moral character in order to understand what this harmony consists of. There is no list of responsibilities that one must follow in order to do the right thing in Aristotle's virtue ethics. Happiness, according to Aristotle, is the ultimate goal of human life,

and character development is a prerequisite for it. As a result, he emphasises the importance of education in the formation of students' personalities.

Mediaeval education focused on both the teaching of ancient texts and character development. The fundamental goal of education is to teach religious books to pupils so that they can grow spiritually and morally. As a result, both the ancient and middle centuries have had a significant impact on student moral development. Up to the beginning of the 18th century, or modern period, these traditions were followed in both India and the West. From human civilisation to the contemporary era, education was viewed as the development of an individual's complete personality, with a particular focus on morals and character development. This moral growth is considered as beneficial in and of itself, because human life is incomplete without virtue. These educational goals were questioned during the dawn of the modern era due to a variety of issues such as secularism, moral relativism, and placing a premium on human rationality, among others, which I will examine in the next section. These epistemological attitudes shaped the landscape of education for future generations, and contemporary industrial schooling was born as a result of these forces and influences.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century period Value Education Practices

In contemporary education in the liberal democracies of the West, there is a value gap. It has something to do with the post-Enlightenment erosion of the traditional sources of morality in teleology and religion, but even more to do with the deeply misguided fact-value distinction, the fact that educational institutions in the West have typically refrained from trying to fill the value gap by engaging in the development of young people's moral characters and aspiring to create better, wiser, and happier people. This has something to do with the deeply misguided fact-value distinction, but it has even more to do. The so-called "de-moralization" of the institution is a very recent departure from that historically established norm. The widespread agreement that character education was important started to fall apart in the 18th century as a result of the combined effects of a number of powerful forces. The Western world's philosophical traditions were undergoing a sea change at that moment. It has an effect on the standards used to judge what is true, the weight placed on rationality, and other types of reason. Therefore, it has an effect on the field of education as well. For this reason, it is necessary for us to engage in some intellectual history in tabloid, beginning with the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which was the time when traditional European moral philosophy, which had its origins in Greek and Hebrew culture, was struck two serious blows. Therefore, with its attendant disenchantment and secularisation of society, growing religious agnosticism, had destroyed one of the two fundamental underpinnings of moral conviction, which was the notion that morality is a system of divine instructions. However, by the nineteenth century, faith in rationality had developed into a significant epistemological paradigm, which undermined other methods of generating knowledge. During the nineteenth century, two new perspectives on morality began to gain traction and gain popularity. One was founded on the belief

that human rationality serves as an unwavering standard of appropriate behaviour, while the other was founded on the empirical claim that we all seek happiness through the satisfaction of profound and bountiful pleasures, and that a viable morality is one that ensures the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. In addition, Darwinism presented a novel metaphor in the form of evolution, which caused people to view everything, including morality, as always being subject to change. Therefore, all of these elements have an effect on and alter the landscape of education, particularly character education.

Secularism and personalism

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was also a growing backlash against organised religion and belief in a spiritual dimension to human existence. The ideas of the English naturalist Charles Darwin, the German political philosopher Karl Marx, the Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud, and the German philosopher and poet Friedrich Nietzsche, who was an Existentialist and rejected God, as well as a growing strict interpretation of the separation of church and state doctrine, influenced intellectual leaders and writers. Because religious beliefs are the strongest roots of moral truth for so many people, educators and others have become wary of using schools for moral education. This is increasingly seen as the domain of the family and the church. To be value free, schooling's role is limited to the development of rationality and intellectual discipline alone. As a result, educators became advocates for "value-free" education, ignoring the fact that it is impossible to design a school that is free of ethical issues, lessons, and controversies. However, because modern schooling is based on these premises, moral education is largely ignored in the classroom. Now Families, societies, and religious institutions had the authority to teach character and morals, and religion was the only possible source of morality, values, and ethics (Berkowitz, 2000). So Individuals, groups, and institutions are questioning the legitimacy of educational institutions to engage in character education as secular ideology becomes more prevalent in modern societies (Berkowitz, 2000). As a result, secularisation ideas influence the curriculum, and schooling begins to ignore character development and moral education in order to follow the concept of value freedom and secularism.

A worldwide rise in personalism in the 1960s celebrated the worth, autonomy, and subjectivity of the individual, emphasising individual rights and freedom over responsibility. Personalism, while rightly protesting societal oppression and injustice, also delegitimized moral authority. As a result, these personal freedom values liberate an individual from all moral obligations. As a result of the rapidly intensifying pluralism of society (Whose values should we teach?) and the increasing secularisation of the public arena (Won't moral education violate the separation of church and state?) two more barriers to achieving the moral consensus required for character education in public schools have emerged. As a natural outcome, education has become more or less self-contained, with moral education largely neglected. As a result, the "turbulent 1960s" emphasised individual rights and replaced the previous emphasis on the classroom teacher as the sole moral authority (Massey, 1993). According to Lickona (1993), "public schools retreated from their once central role as moral and character educators" due to three powerful forces that weakened schools' character education efforts: personalism, pluralism, and secularisation. Personalism "emphasised individual rights and freedom over responsibility, undermined moral authority, eroded belief in objective moral norms, turned people inward toward self-fulfillment, and weakened social commitments" (Lickona, 1993). Pluralism raised the issue of whose values would be taught in public schools, and secularisation fueled debate over whether moral education violates the separation of church and state. As a result, combining these major forces becomes the most significant barrier to moral education.

Logical positivism and moral reasoning approach to character education

The major tradition that impacts character education thought is structural adherence to logical positivism. Within the charmed circle of academic moral philosophy, the practitioners have all but given up on normative moral theory, replacing it with somewhat bloodless conceptual analyses of moral terms. Logical positivism insists on a necessary divorce between facts and values, so any knowledge without a stamp of scientific authority is not taken seriously. So, the philosophy of logical positivism asserted a radical

distinction between facts (which could be scientifically proven) and values (which positivism held were mere expressions of feelings, not objective truth). So logical positivism emerged and introduced the notion that the only truths that could be stated unequivocally were those that could be scientifically proven. So value education started being ignored in educational institutions.

Also, By the 1950s, cognitive psychology was becoming a discipline and gave great emphasis to Kohlberg's theories, helping to make them popular in education. The success of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Erik Erikson was due to their themes of development, which indicated progress. These themes satisfied the demands of culture at the time. Also, it aligned with the larger philosophy of logical positivism. It satisfied the rationale and factual criteria set by logical positivists for arriving at valid knowledge. So, as culture and society have become more pluralistic, and therefore, schooling has become more sensitive to the increasing heterogeneity of children in many schools. These cognitive approaches to moral education—character education—were also more compatible with the liberal traditions of critical thinking than a virtues- based approach.

It has a major impact on schooling and its curriculum. As a result of positivism, morality was relativized and privatised—made to seem like a matter of personal "value judgment," not a subject for public debate and transmission through the schools. Moral education had thus lost its mooring as a standard school subject, and while "the language and appearances of morality" persisted among the public, its "integral substance" had been "fragmented and then in part destroyed," as Macintyre puts it. So moral philosophy is seriously trivialised by logical positivists. This has impacted much of the educational landscape, about criteria for valid knowledge, what constitutes the truth and how knowledge is generated and tested. The dichotomous view of logical positivism replaced the curriculum consensus of the previous century. So Positivism did not leave morality unaffected in that morality was now "relativized and privatized—made to seem a matter of personal value judgment," not a subject for public debate and transmission through the schools" (Lickona, T). Also, in the name of character education, the moral reasoning approach has become quite popular and the value analysis and value clarification approaches have started to be followed in classrooms.

So, in the 1960s and 1970s, they were concerned with values clarification and procedural neutrality in the classroom, and there was a widespread presumption in favour of moral relativism. The 1970s saw a return of values education, but in new forms: values clarification and Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussions. In different ways, both expressed the individualist spirit of the age. Values clarification said, don't impose values; help students choose their values freely. Kohlberg said that he develops students' powers of moral reasoning so they can judge which values are better than others.

So, in the shadow of logical positivism and secularism and other modern thoughts like relativism and moral reasoning, the value clarification and value analysis methods of value education have become very popular and thus widely followed in classrooms.

Each approach made contributions, but each had problems. Values clarification, though rich in methodology, failed to distinguish between personal preferences (truly a matter of free choice) and moral values (a matter of obligation). Kohlberg focused on moral reasoning, "which is necessary but not sufficient for good character, and underestimated the school's role as a moral socialiser" (Smith & Blasé, 1988). Students participated in moral dilemma discussions that were designed to develop students' moral reasoning skills. By synthesis, moral reasoning and values clarification could not and did not serve the purposes of character educators as the original proponents had planned. Because without any universal

core value concerns, which serve as standard criteria, there is no logic to teaching morals or values to students.

According to (Lasley, 1997) schools in the 1960s and 1970s assumed a value neutral stance, which precipitated the need for character education in the subsequent decades of the eighties and beyond. It was the reaction against this relativistic thought that has seen the reemergence of more traditional character education approaches.

Recent rise of Interest in Value Education

The general moral relativism of society is also routinely blamed by character educators for this litany of social and moral breakdown, which is often referred to as a "crisis in moral education" (Kilpatrick, 1992). This moral relativism, it is claimed, has replaced the belief in personal responsibility with the notion of social causation. (Lickona, 1991) asserted that, "When much of society came to think of morality as being in flux, relative to the individual, situationally variable, and essentially private, public schools retreated from their once central role as moral educators." This has resulted in the emergence of many problems which impact schools as well as society as a whole. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, as many schools attempted to ignore the moral dimension of schooling, three things happened: Achievement scores began to decline, discipline and behaviour problems increased, and voices were raised accusing the schools of teaching secular humanism. As a result, moral decline in society has become severe enough to shake us out of the privatism and relativism that have dominated in recent decades.

So there is a rise in voices all over the world for the need for character and value education. Some leading educationalists like Thomas Lickona, David Carr, Berkowitz, and Kristjánsson started making arguments for the need for character education. In addition, many countries, including India, began to use a core value concern approach, in which some mutually agreeable and non-conflicting values were identified, and the curriculum and pedagogy were designed to teach these values.

"Character education," which can be defined as a "deliberate attempt to inculcate virtues," is the oldest and best-known form of moral education (Noddings 2003). Along with the increasing emphasis on rationality and individuality, traditional character education lost its centrality in values education in the United States (Lickona 1991), but towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a revival of philosophical interest in character education (Goodman & Lesnick 2001), and "after a lapse of just a few decades", the promotion of character education gained popularity again at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Noddings 2003). So there is a strong resurgence in interest in character education in this decade. Also in Europe, for instance, Carr speaks strongly for virtue ethics (Carr, 2012). Cognitive psychologists, until recently, placed much emphasis on the development of the structure of moral reasoning, which they claimed underlies decision-making. Some even claim universal application for this method, but (Carr, 2002) casts doubt on the scientific basis of many of these developmental theories and questions their logical status. He observes that these theories were generally employed in support of progressive approaches to education, with their emphasis on choice of lifestyle. This, he claims, ignores the more traditionalist perspectives that are generally concerned with initiating students into the knowledge, values, and virtues of civil society (Carr, 2002). So David Carr started challenging these progressive notions of moral education. He claims that recent research in fields as diverse as educational philosophy and psychology, as well as in the neurobiological sciences, has underlined the need to reassess many of the assumptions that underpin the role of the school, the teacher, and education in general. So, among the philosophers, the works of Carr (2002, 2017) and Kristjánsson (2007) stand out for their persistent appeal

to Aristotelian ethics in attempting to forge a sustainable basis for teaching that has both philosophical integrity and practical application. So they both subscribe to the traditional approach to moral education, in which the development of virtuous people is the main aim of education.

Also, recent research in Neuro-sciences has rekindled the interest in the role of emotions in moral decision making. Their renewed interest in Aristotle is to be found amidst a rekindled interest by philosophy in the interaction between reason and emotion and the consequent need for the education of those emotions (Carr, 2017; Kristjánsson, 2010). This philosophical interest is paralleled by an emerging focus on the relationship between cognition and emotion to be found in the psychological (Brackett et al., 2010) and neurobiological sciences. Also, Modern biology reveals humans to be fundamentally emotional and social creatures. And yet, those of us in the field of education often fail to consider that the high-level cognitive skills taught in schools, including reasoning, decision-making, and processes related to language, reading, and mathematics, do not function as rational, disembodied systems, somehow influenced by but detached from emotion and the body.

Research findings of this sort are causing educationists to re-think many of their assumptions about a range of developmental issues, including that of learning itself. The taxonomic notion that cognitive learning outcomes are separable from affective or social ones comes to be seen as inadequate. The idea that learning can be achieved through mastery instruction and testing without reference to the physical, emotional, and social ambience within which the learning is occurring, nor, moreover, to the levels of confidence and self-esteem of the learner, is similarly seen as potentially an obstruction rather than a facilitation of learning. Such findings point to the need for pedagogy that engages the whole person rather than a "separably cognitive" person. So there is a renewed interest in character education and curriculum makers' emphasis on the role of morals and values education. This is reflected in many national and international findings. Recent research shows that character education is the greatest reform concern of Americans and the fastest growing school movement (Lickona, 1991).

Institutes such as the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (Noddings, 2007), The Josephson Institute of Ethics (Chase, 2001), and the Character Education Partnership (Peterson, 2002) are just some of the many organisations that provide curricular support for schools seeking to adopt programmes for moral education. So the majority of contemporary surveys show that society prefers schools to actively participate in building the character of the youth, contrary to the opposition found in teaching character education (Berkowitz, 1999). Because in democratic societies, the school's role is to develop moral citizens and focuses on moral and character development, teaching of civics, and the development of citizenship skills and dispositions (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Character education in the United States and all over the world is presently experiencing a revival after a lapse in interest of several decades.

Summary: Hence Today, modifications of the earlier approach to character education are of increasing interest. Several important literature-based programmes of moral education have been developed. Most of these are not, however, aimed directly at the inculcation of specific virtues. Rather, they combine features of character education with those of more cognitively oriented approaches. And the most important programme which is followed is the core value concerns approach in recent times.

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