Character Education: Creating A Framework for Excellent Society

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ABSTRACT

Globalization is a process of disseminating the resources and increasing access in global perspective. Process of globalization has influence on every sphere of society including its basic values, ideals, living style, goals and ambitions. We constantly see in the news that character is set aside for the feeling of the moment. The time has come to bring character to the forefront again and raise the moral values we have as a society, and as individuals. To preserve our rich cultural heritage and old Indian moral values among our students, character education could serve as succor to curriculum planner. Character education is the only remedy to drive away all the ill effects on our children. It is not the sole responsibility of teacher or any educational institute but every unit of our society must come forward to contribute its precious effort. This paper will throw light on the meaning and need of character education. The Role of different agencies for developing the character education in students and other issues will also be discussed.

Keywords: Character education, moral values, , globalization, True education, society.

INTODUCTION

We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character- that is the goal of true education. **Martin Luther King Jr.,(1948)**

Globalization has become key term in this 21 st century for the economic progress of any country. Indian society is also passing through a period of transition. Definitely this transition has opened new vistas for material prosperity but its adverse effects are also numerous. The western domination to every sphere of life is becoming more and more sharp these days which has become a threat to preserve our pristine cultural heritage. The growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in the society has brought to the focus the need for readjustment in our educational system. The development of the inner moral and spiritual potentialities and supernatural consciousness of adolescent students is required for the prosperity of our nation.

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Why we need character education today

Character Education is more important today than ever. We live in a society that has not been taught basic moral values. The value of life and property, the value of respect and honesty. We constantly see in the news that character is set aside for the feeling of the moment. Anger, jealousy, hatred, and selfishness are instead placed center stage and acted upon. The time has come to bring character to the forefront again and raise the moral values we have as a society, and as individuals. It is never too late to start teaching character. No matter what the circumstances, or who is involved, everyone can benefit from character education. Both children and adults will see positive changes in their lives when this character education programme is followed. With it, we have a functioning society of self controlled, respectful individuals, who think before they act and consider the consequences of their actions before deciding what direction those actions will take. They then make the right positive choices. It is the time to get out of our self centered world and open our eyes to the horrible suffering of the children and the people worldwide. We often hear the phrase "do it for the children" and "the children are our future" yet the children are being sacrificed

by the thousands and by the millions. History repeats itself over and over.

What Is Character Education?

Character education is an umbrella term loosely used to describe the teaching of children in a manner that will help them develop variously as moral, civic, good, mannered, behaved, non-bullying, healthy, critical, successful, traditional, compliant and/ or socially-acceptable beings. Character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share.

Character education is the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable the learner to make informed and responsible choices. It involves a shared educational commitment that emphasizes the responsibilities and rewards of productive living in a global a diverse society. Character education enables students to come face to face with the realities of life. It encourages them to think critically and then act responsibly. Instructional materials, methods, and strategies, when developed into interdisciplinary curricular themes, empower teachers to create meaning while allowing students time for purposeful exploration and self-reflection. Character development provides a foundation upon which we can build respect for human dignity and create.

Character Education as a holistic approach

"Effective character education is not adding a program or set of programs to a school. Rather it is a transformation of the culture and life of the school."
— Dr. Marvin Berkowitz

Popular wisdom holds that the best way to implement character education is through a holistic approach that integrates character development into every aspect of school life. This approach is also known as whole school reform, and it's a biggie. Character education is not an "add-on" but is instead a different way of teaching; it is a comprehensive approach that promotes core values in all phases of school life and permeates the entire school culture. It is not an imposition on already overburdened schools;

rather, it helps educators fulfil their fundamental responsibility to prepare young children for the future by laying a foundation for learning through the creation of caring, respectful school environments.

Here are some of the distinguishing features of the holistic model:

- Everything in the school is organized around the development of relationships between and among students, staff, and community.

- The school is a caring community of learners in which there is a palpable bond connecting the students, the staff, and the school.

- Social and emotional learning is emphasized as much as academic learning.

- Cooperation and collaboration among students are emphasized over competition.

- Values such as fairness, respect, and honesty are part of everyday lessons in and out of the classroom.

- Students are given ample opportunities to practice moral behaviour through activities such as service learning (see below).

- Discipline and classroom management concentrate on problem-solving rather than rewards and punishments.

- The old model of the teacher-centered classroom is abandoned in favor of democratic classrooms where teachers and students hold class meetings to build unity, establish norms, and solve problems.

Obviously, this is a best-of-all-possible-worlds approach and requires a significant commitment from the administration and teaching staff. Also, it is usually a multi-year process involving consultants, staff development, and a serious budget.

Participation in Character Education

Developing good character is first and foremost a parental responsibility but the task must also be shared with school and the broader community. As today's society provides more

and tougher challenges to raising ethical, responsible children, increasingly parents and communities are looking to schools for assistance. It is very important that each school, community reach consensus on what values should be taught in a school in order to create the sense of ownership. Early in the planning process, schools should collaborate with parents and their communities to craft a shared vision and objectives. Collectively, they should identify the core values to be taught in their school as well as the particular approaches to teaching them. A child's personality is a white paper on which both the parents and the teachers write. So, teachers, parents and community should take up the following roles for inculcating character in the children-

Role of parents

House provided the first learning environment for the child and parents are the first teachers. So they should play the following role-

- Be an ideal model of good character in the home.

- Teach your children good manner and values.

- Show respect for your spouse, your children and other family members.

- Set clear expectations for your children and hold them accountable for the actions.

- Take time everyday to listen to your children.

- Encourage your children to solve their day to day problems.

- Have family meal together as often as possible.

Role of Teachers

Teacher is a sole agent of education who actually acts upon different goals and objectives explicitly. Therefore the onus lies on the shoulder of a teacher to be a role model for all the students. Following are some role of teachers-

- Be a model for the traits you want your student to exhibit.

- Try to develop a democratic classroom environment where every student can be familiar with his role.

- Involve the students in designing your programme and in planning character development related activities.

- Teacher must design various processes of the school so that every student can be involved in decision making.

- Teacher can use Cooperative learning to teach children, to work together and share academic responsibility and regard for the value of learning and work.

- Include every member of school community in character education initiative.

- Permeate the school climate with the elements of characters.

- Teacher need to encourage moral reflection through reading, writing, discussion and debate.

Role of Community

It was John Dewey, who said that education is a tri polar process, where teacher student and society are the three poles of education. He felt that community involvement, social values and social learning experiences are important requirement to enable teachers and schools to perform better. Following are some roles of community-

- Share some of the researches that shows what powerful influences parents have.

- Sponser parenting workshops.

- Tell parents how vital they are in their child's character development.

- Involve parents in the planning committee for character education.

- Plan the awareness camp to reduce the negative effect of T.V media on children moral growth.

- Establish a family resource centre including counseling corner.

How much time each day/week is needed for character education?

Character education should take place throughout the entire school day as administrators, teachers and other staff are presented with opportunities to model and teach positive character traits. Character education should not be relegated to a "character education class" that is conducted periodically but should be infused throughout the structures and processes of the entire school curriculum and culture.

When to teach character

It is never too late to start teaching character. No matter what the circumstances, or who is involved, everyone can benefit from character education. Both Children and adults will see positive changes in their lives when this character education program is followed. Varying age-appropriate strategies and practices are being successfully applied to all grade levels, from teaching social and emotional skills in the earliest grades, to service learning and prejudice reduction in secondary schools. It is important to set a strong foundation during the earlier grades and to reinforce and build upon that foundation during the later grades. With it, we have a functioning society of self-controlled, respectful individuals, who think before they act and consider the consequences of their actions before deciding what direction those actions will take. They then make the right positive choices. However, character education can be initiated at any grade level.

CONCLUSION

The development in science in technological area is bringing a vast change in our values, and thinking pattern. So our primary responsibility is to direct our efforts towards preservation and transmission of our culture in its pure and pristine form. Character Education is a programme which promotes core ethical values in our students in a congenial and healthy environment. It teaches student to understand think about and act upon these core ethical values. It provides a guideline to curriculum planners, teachers, administrators and policy makers to provide a strong base for character formation. Character education is the only remedy to drive away all the ill effects on our children. It is not the sole responsibility of teacher or any educational institute but every unit of our society must come forward to contribute its precious effort.

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