
Universal Human Values and Gender Sensitization: Urgent Need of the Hour

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Abstract:

The 21st century stands as an age of highly competitive challenges, and is impacted by the cruel fever of digitalization; human beings rise as robots fixing their daily life schedule strictly against the hours of the greedy time's winged chariot. While going with the trends of corporate living and social media practices, the statistical sense of human values and commitment towards societal relationships are getting eroded. Man is silently getting transformed from a social being to a digital being, one without a heart, soul, body, or mind- the one who is callously rushing for power, money, fame, and name. The impact of choosing a technologically advanced and hi-tech lifestyle is day by day increasing crime rates, terrorism, and channeling inhuman behavior, manufacturing humans against human behaviors or humans against social expectations. Thus, this paper is an earnest attempt to discuss the growing need for empathy among men in an egalitarian society to promote a developed and cultural world and, most importantly, highlight gender sensitization, which is an urgent need and requirement of the hour under universal human values.

Keywords- #humanity #humanvalues #gender #culture #society

Introduction:

'Universal Human Values' is a set of ethical beliefs that motivate human behavior and help in developing the strong personality of human beings. Man, being a social animal, is always surrounded by a social community or a professional group where they need to know the exact technique of communication in order to grow a healthy relationship and bonding. According to Rani et al. (2022), values are the

reflection of human identities, and in certain instances, a person with values influences us psychologically, compelling us to inherit the same type of individuality, shaping the sense of universality for human values:

Values act as representatives for human beings. We bring these values to every place where we go, including the place where we work. At the same time, the people at the workplace influence us with their values and attitudes toward their work. We find that different groups working at the workplace, such as age and occupational groups, have different values and attitudes towards work. A particular value may be very essential to one person from one's perspective. We find many circumstances in which workplace workers show their knowledge differently, and we see that co-workers may have different attitudes toward organizational changes. These values work the same for all human beings in the Universe. That's why these values are called Universal Human Values. (p.36)

The concept of universal human values might differ from person to person, especially when analyzed based on the background of ancestral roots, community-based cultural practices, and spiritually based notions. Ruzmatovich (2023) categorized the term 'Universal Value' as a philosophical or axiological concept utilized to indicate the moral principles of things, events, and activities that are most valuable and significant for the human race, "the concept of universal values is a general form of values that are important for the whole society, reflecting the existence, past, present and future of mankind, the main directions of its existence, laws, requirements, and procedures ancient hopes and ideals of people." (p. 796) Values can be divided into two categories: national and universal- under national values- language, culture, identity, tradition, and customs are examined, whereas under universal values- peace, fraternity, labor, science, and literature are inspected. Thus, even though social performances vary from person to person, basic human empathy, integrity, and mutual respect are the true essence of universal human values. But with the transition of time period or the alteration of the lifestyle trends in human being's day to day living, the basic essence of human values are getting deteriorated and misused. Human beings are ignorant of the value education that they need to thoroughly intake in their routinized practices. The natural tendency of soft skills and empathetic behavior in human's internal temperament is getting deceased.

According to Sanatana Dharma, human life is dependent on four important concepts or 'Purusarthas'- *Dharma* (religion), *Artha* (money), *Kama* (desire), and *Moksha* (salvation), which are mentioned in Vedas and Upanishads. The Great Indian Epics- Mahabharata and Ramayana upgrade humans with various lessons of human values and enrich human persona with various techniques and life skill practices that can help man walk in the right direction in life. The supreme characters- Rama and Arjuna, stand as the epitome of human personalities in the history of the Indian

Knowledge System and the mythological chronicles. The ancient saints possess voracious knowledge of human values, and through their preaching, they share different types of human ethics recorded in the holy Vedic texts. Among all glorified souls, one such saint was Thiruvalluvar from Tamil Nadu, South India, who penned down a masterpiece of human ideals, *Tirukkural*. (Narayana 2015) The Kural text is an ancient system of Indian epistemology and metaphysics. The text holds traditional cultural values of Tamil ancestral roots. It highlights virtues such as truthfulness, self-restraint, gratitude, kindness, and hospitality.

Values are the guiding principle in a person's life that sums up the overall individual's growth. According to Swami Vivekananda, "Every man's character is the sum total of his tendencies, the bent of his intellect." (Chandra, 2022, p.71) But in the age of digitalization, human beings' dependency on social media tools has resulted in havoc, especially in deleting humanity and humility in a human's intramural character. Although social media has given humans access to freedom and speech and quicker connectivity to the human world:

However, problems arise when freedom of speech is used beyond its limits- resulting in the communication of hate speech as a means of expressing feelings of anger, hostility, frustration, and hatred. Social media becomes the most effective and dangerous tool for disseminating such speech". (Nor, 2018, p. 278)

As per the latest research, a post, reel, or video shared on any social networking site reaches people much faster than the traditional media structures. Social media is affecting adolescents' introspection towards self and interpersonal relationships due to social comparisons and negative interactions. According to Singh et al., after a field study, "94% of youth opined that social media is used to spread misinformation and rumors and responsible for increasing cybercrimes among young people like blackmailing, sexual harassment with their unknown friends through chatting." (p.3) The lessons of *the Bhagwad Gita* emphasize the concept of karma and dharma to direct people to achieve moral fulfillment and virtuous behavior. A person should limit himself to performing his own duties accurately without thinking of the results or the obligations, and also, one should abstain himself or herself from criticizing other's working styles or structures. The *Gita* stresses the importance of performing duties with a sense of complete detachment from the resulting outcomes. Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna, "You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions." (Mishra, 2024, p.195) Lord Krishna mentors Arjuna to deviate from the materialistic and sensual world in order to gain spiritual morality and restore the calmness of the mind. Maintaining equality, stability of mind, and concentration in work are the prime teachings of Lord Krishna. Unlike older ages, the issue of gender equality is in a much better phase in the twenty-first century, but still, the perceptivity between the two genders is hugely lacking, and

there is a gap in the development of human personality due to a lack of awareness of gender sensitization. Gender sensitization is the epistemological training of empathy, kindness, and awareness of equality between the categories of all genders. However, in our society, although gender equality is largely promoted by comparing men and women, the former is considered superior to the latter. Women are demarcated and have limited access to resources and decision-making. But society should alter these perspectives and delete discrimination policies for gender, "sensitization of gender is about changing behavior and installing empathy into the view that we hold about our own and the other gender. It assists people in holding their personal point of view and opinion and questioning the actualities they believed they know". (Parekh, 2022, p.49) Schools, colleges, and universities should be in the process of introducing more courses on gender sensitization and universal human values so that, from scratch, students will learn the need to grow empathy in their behaviors. According to Yadav and Ojha (2024), "Gender sensitization is an important part of creating a more fair and inclusive society. It entails increasing knowledge, comprehension, and empathy for different experience issues and identities associated with gender." (p.134) Societies should realize their potential and get closer to sustainable development by investing in women's academic, healthcare, and career prospects. Swami Vivekananda draws a line where he equates the status of both men and women, "In India, the mother is the center of the family and our highest ideal. She is to us the representative of God, as God is the mother of the Universe. It was the female sage who first found the unity of God, as God is the mother of the Universe." (Bansal, 2015, p.85) Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of respecting females in our society who always embrace an inferiority complex in terms of respect and dignity. And this mark of losing honor and life for women can best be recalled with the recent gruesome gang rape and murder case of a 31-year-old trainee postgraduate doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kolkata Hospital. In India, no matter how strict laws are implemented for women, they are not safe and secure starting from the age of three to eighty years; women are always undergoing stress and fear. The nation that worships Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati is the same nation that rapes and maltreats women.

But again, the discrimination of gender, especially in the case of men, can best be described with the shocking incident of the suicide of Atul Subhash, the AI engineer from Bangalore. Atul's suicidal note stressed the burden and stress that a man has to face in this society. When choosing money and power, humanity is erased or lost from the human beings. As per the allegations raised by the victim, her Wife instigated him suicide, and his Wife ruthlessly replied to a message, "...Everything owned by the husband belongs to the wife. After you die, your parents will die soon. The daughter-in-law has her share. Your whole family will make the rounds of court." (Bose 2024) The human blood and soul had probably dried up in Nikita Singhania's

body that she openly threatened a man, forgetting the consequences of the future. Atul became a revolutionary figure in Indian history who bravely died by sharing such an awe-struck story. Of course, there are more Atuls in this world who are perhaps suffering the same or worse situations, but the circumstances have made them silent. Unlike the Women's Court, which tries its best to do justice to women, the present legal system should design a men's council urging justice for men. Unlike women, men are also subjugated victims of patriarchy.

Conclusion: Thus, Universal Human Values and Gender Sensitization are the utmost need of the hour because scheduling a course in the syllabus or holding aristocratic workshops in the posh corner of the city is not solving any problem; the implementation of strict value education and gender-based awareness should be done in each and every home from the infant stage of every individual so that while growing from the period of teenage to adulthood, a person can easily get accustomed to gender sensitization. Our society should immediately encourage women to exercise weightlifting, self-dependency, and economic responsibilities, and at the same time, it should teach men kitchen-based practices and domicile activities so that the discrimination or differences between men and women are erased from society. The issue of gender equality should not be judged by ignoring biological differences between men and women, but men and women should be respected and treated on the basis of their unique contribution to society. Value-based education should be delivered to students not to increase their CGPA but for practical utilization in life.

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