

Value Perspectives In English Language Textbook Of Class-VIII Of West Bengal: An Analysis

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Abstract: Education is the benevolent, sublime spirit which elevates our lives and makes us resourceful, dignified and worthy citizen of our country. The very aim of education is the holistic development of learners by developing the cognitive, conative and affective domains of the learners. But in this era of knowledge explosion in the education system much more emphasis is given to the development of cognitive domain only and the other two domains are neglected though time and again different committees like “Learning to Be”(1972) and “Learning: The Treasure Within”(1996) emphasized the development of values. So, the present study focuses on the value perspectives in English language textbook of class-VIII because literature can develop among the adolescent learners a strong base of values which will help them to guide their lives towards proper direction and thus achieve self-actualization. The study also focuses on the teacher-factors (teacher’s personality, attitude, learning environment, teaching-learning process) which have inevitable effect on the learners particularly in respect of value promotion. Because values are to be interpreted and perceived by the teachers and inculcated in the personality of the learners by experiencing the manifestation of values through the personality of the teachers.

Keywords: value perspectives, knowledge explosion, holistic development, teacher factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are the best creation by almighty on earth and education is the best creation by human beings. Education is the benevolent force that manifests the potentialities within individuals and makes them having refined sensitivity, independent and unprejudiced mind and spirit, resourceful and productive power, scientific temperament and above all a head to think and a heart to feel. These are the qualities that only human beings possess being blessed with the boon of education. That’s why in present day context education is regarded as a human right not a privilege. It is the fundamental right of each and every individual to lead a worthy, resourceful and dignified life. Education is associated with quality of life related to production and interlinked with promotion of individual, social and national integration. Education builds the future of a nation. Value occupies the core of education as it is the only element that makes human being humane. All the cultural, moral, intellectual, aesthetic,

social, environmental and universal or spiritual values are inculcated among the young learners, the future of every nation through education. The aim of education is to bring holistic development of learners i.e. a perfect and harmonious development of three domains of a learner – cognitive, conative and affective. The proper and qualitative development of the three domains and a harmonious existence of these creates an ideal personality.

In this 21st century, popularly known as “knowledge century” due to overemphasis on the cognitive domain of the children because of the demand of the present age of science and technology, the harmonious development of the three domains has been lost. Education has lost its sublime position i.e. enlightening the soul and regressed to a means of getting a job. As a result now we have so called ‘highly educated’ but highly corrupted people, engaged in heinous activities in various levels-personal, social and national. Because of the sole lack of value aspects the present day education is incapable of providing the leading a peaceful and enlightened

life. UNESCO in its report "Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow" (Edgar Faure) first conceptualized out of fear that "The world will be dehumanized as a result of technical change".

The great Indian educationalist and seer Swami Vivekananda said, "We need education of western science coupled with Vedanta". The value integrated education for the development of social, moral, intellectual and spiritual or universal values has also been emphasized by UNESCO in its report "Learning to Be"(1972) and in the Delors' committee report "Learning :The Treasure within"(1996) where "Learning to Be" is considered the most important pillar of education. NCF (2005) regarding value inculcation among the students viewed-"Education must be able to promote values that foster peace, humanness and tolerance in a multicultural society". It also emphasized that education should aim to build a commitment to the values like –equality, justice, freedom, concern for others well-being, secularism, respect for human dignity. Value integration in the English language textbook of class VIII is especially important as it deals with the learners who are adolescent or at the advent of adolescence. Value integration in the textbook of English language, the link and library language of the world ,will not only open the arena of vast knowledge of the world but also can properly channelize the vast surge of physical, mental, emotional and, intellectual power of the adolescent learners so that they can be resourceful ,responsible human beings in future. So, through various poems, short stories, biography of great personalities value should be inculcated and a strong perception of Indian rich culture, traditions, ideals should be imbibed among the learners. Any literature plays very important role in this aspect as it reflects the contemporary society. The critical thinking regarding different social problems lurk in the social life in order to find sustainable solution can be developed through literature and language. That's why value integration in English language textbook is very important for study.

II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Value education plays very important role for the full blooming of the personality of an individual. Though it is important for all but it is especially hailed for its role during adolescent period, the stage of "identity versus identity confusion" (Erikson's psycho-social development), when the sudden surge of vast change overwhelm them. At this "Post-conventional morality level" (Kohlberg's moral development) learner questions the rigidity of moral beliefs and forms universal ethical principle. So imparting proper value is of utmost importance. In this respect textbook particularly English language textbook plays significant role because it not only enables students to have access to the world of knowledge but also helps the learner to use their power positively and to enrich their life constructively for the future. That is why analysis of English language textbook particularly its value perspective is gravely important.

From research point of view this study is also important. A number of research studies have been conducted on English text book analysis. Rajgopalan (1981), Mohan and Meera (2003), Mishra (2011) et al. conducted studies on

English language Text book particularly on teaching English as first language ,reading comprehension, methodology of teaching English as a second language etc. Besides a number of studies have been conducted on value education e.g. Dixit(1970), Roy (1980), Chaudhary (1985), Mandal and Mete (2009), Aneja (2014) and Shobha (2015) et al. conducted studies focused on value development ,value awareness among students, role of teachers in value promotion, values in textbook etc. But no research has been conducted focusing on value perspectives in English textbook, classroom transaction and influence of teacher factor i.e. attitude, personality on value promotion among students. That is the researcher has chosen to analyze English language text book of Class-VIII particularly in respect of its value perspectives and how the teacher has played very important role in the promotion of values among the learners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To identify the values reflected in the English language textbook of Class- VIII prepared by the Govt. of West Bengal.
- ✓ To study the influence of classroom transaction process on value promotion among learners.

III. METHOD OF THE STUDY

The investigator has used multiple methods for the study. The present study is a documentary analysis (textbook analysis) and content analysis method has been followed for the first objective and discourse analysis and the observation schedule have been followed for the second objective.

IV. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For studying the value perspectives in the class VIII English language textbook of West Bengal and influence of classroom transaction on value promotion among students views of teachers and students have been taken into consideration. As it is difficult to cover the entire population, the English teachers of selected schools (three from each school and total forty-five teachers) have been chosen through purposive sampling and students(eight students from each school and total hundred twenty students) of class VIII of those schools have been chosen through random sampling from Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal. The number of schools is fifteen which will include both urban and rural schools.

V. TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

For the first objective a check list, interview with teachers have been developed by the researcher for ascertaining the presence of values and to what extent they are present. A questionnaire has also been developed for the teachers to have critical reflection on those values.

For the second objective Focused Group Discussion of the students and classroom observation have been taken for studying the influence of classroom transaction and teacher factor on value promotion among students.

VI. PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION

At first the researcher has analyzed all contents of the English language text book of class VIII of West Bengal to identify values incorporated in the text book. A check list has been used for the teachers to identify the components of value reflected through the text-book, A questionnaire have been used to collect the teacher's perception regarding value Integration in the text book. Focused group discussion of selected students of class VIII and class room observation have been conducted to understand value promotion and effect of class room transaction on students.

VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

After the analysis of the data for the first objective it has been noticed that components related to different values are present more or less in the English language textbook of class –VIII of West Bengal. Components related to aesthetic value has been given the utmost emphasis, where as other values like social and moral values has been given medium emphasis, intellectual value is mainly focused through different activities (the questions asked at the end of every lesson,) emphasis on the environmental value and universal or spiritual value components have been given the least emphasis. As the textbook is concerned with the development of aesthetic sensibility among the learners. Only one Indian writer Sugata Bose, writer of "The Great Escape" has been included in the textbook which according to most of the teachers and the researcher should be more so that the learners can have a sound knowledge about the tradition, cultural diversity of India and thus can respect them. Writers from all over the world (America, India, Britain, Ireland, England,) have been included in the present textbook as it has been referred in the preface of the book "Blossoms" that "*the pieces selected in the series are aimed to expose the learners to the thoughts and writings of the world's best writers and thinkers...*" "*BLOSSOMS*" aims to inculcate in learners particularly the first-generation learners, love for the richness and variety of English language literature" (preface v). Though the aim of teaching English (as pointed out by NCF 2005) is to give optimum emphasis on life-centric experiences so that the learners will be able to co-relate, differentiate and analyze his/her learning through personal experiences comparing them with the experiences gathered from the lessons included in the textbook, components related to values for its proper inculcation among the learners should be given more emphasis as it deals with the adolescent learners. So that with strong base of different value the can be ideal human being in future.

VIII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION RELATED TO THE SECOND OBJECTIVE

After the analysis of the data it has been noticed that all the admitted that teachers play very important role in the value promotion among the learners. And classroom transaction plays very crucial role and have inevitable impression on the learners. The whole classroom transaction can be discussed from the following point of view-

Teachers personality and believe system (it has been measured only through the observation made by the students and the researcher not through any standardized scale) - By appearance most of the teachers were sober, friendly and co-operative. Though they consider themselves very important agent for promotion of values among the learners, in reality they are much more focused on completion of syllabus within a particular time span. They had belief in the learners' potentiality. Though most of them focus more in the class on the advanced learners and less on those who are academically backward which some of them perceived and had its impression on them.

Teaching-learning process: They mostly adopted discussion and explanation of the text though particularly reading the lesson and telling its meaning is given the utmost focus. Provision for practical exposure is very little though the teachers tried to make up it by sharing experience. They also sometimes motivated the learners to exercise the components of value in their lives. They never use technology in the classroom for teaching a particular topic which the students think would make the lesson impressive and interesting. The aspects related to different values are focused only when they are present at the surface level and very explicit. Students responded that debate, role playing, showing videos related to components of value can work successfully to make the lesson and its message interesting and clear.

Classroom environment: The classroom environment is not so flexible and well planned where all the learners can express themselves. Though the teachers believe that they play crucial role in value promotion among the learners they lacks the expertise to arrange and create the classroom environment in such a way that it spontaneously works for value promotion among the learners.

Major Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are as follows:

A. IDENTIFICATION OF THE COMPONENTS RELATED TO VALUES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK OF CLASS- VIII

- ✓ The content of text reflects different components related to different types of values. More emphasis is given to components of aesthetic value (particularly beauty of nature and adventure). Along with this, to some extent, emphasis is given on social, intellectual and moral values and little emphasis is given to spiritual and environmental values. No component related to health as a value was observed in the textbook.
- ✓ In most of the lessons components related to values are not explicit; rather it is hidden in the lesson.

- ✓ Only one Indian writer has been included in the text “Blossoms” (Sugata Bose, the writer of “The Great Escape”). So, the learners have little exposure to Indian culture, heritage, national ideals.
- ✓ “Blossoms” includes writers from all over the world based on the theme of the textbook- nature and adventure.
- ✓ As the textbook “Blossoms” mainly provides aesthetic values it is not so suitable for the adolescent learners for the development of social, moral and spiritual value among the learners so that they can easily overcome the topsy-turvy condition of their adolescent period.
- ✓ In the text there is a little suggestion for practical exposure for the inculcation and development of value among the learners.
- ✓ There is provision in the text only for drawing, making charts and writing.
- ✓ It will help in understanding the crucial role that the teachers play in value promotion among the students particularly the creation of socio-emotional environment which can help the learners for value inculcation.
- ✓ It will help the teachers to adopt various innovative strategies for the transaction of values from the text book to the students effectively.
- ✓ The study can also guide the teachers to be fair and maintain equality and equity while dealing with the adolescent students especially as otherwise it has adverse effect on the learners.
- ✓ The study also focuses though a little the importance of different co-curricular activities (like- NSS, NCC, Boy Scout, excursion, field visit, working with community) in the value promotion of the learners as these give the practical field to exercise the values so that they can be a part of the learners’ lives. So, the school can apply these techniques for value promotion among the learners.

B. FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE-2: THE INFLUENCE OF CLASSROOM TRANSACTION ON VALUE PROMOTION AMONG THE LEARNERS

- ✓ The teachers read, explain and discuss only the components related to value that are explicit. The hidden values are not given proper emphasis.
- ✓ In the classroom there is little scope for all the learners to be involved in the discussion. Debate, skit, role playing, etc. are not exercised at all by the English teachers who mostly stick to reading and explaining the meaning of the lesson.
- ✓ Most of the teachers give more attention to the learners who are academically advanced and less attention is paid to the learners who are academically not so good. This aspects is has its inevitable effect on the learners as perceived by the neglected learners. Though most of the students responded the teacher’s attitude unbiased.
- ✓ The students feel that most of the teachers are not very friendly so much so that the learners can share their personal problems with them and seek their guidance.
- ✓ In the teaching-learning process most of the time is spent for reading and explaining the meaning of the text and less time is provided for the learner’s engagement in the activities related to values for its inculcation.
- ✓ Values are mostly lectured by the teachers and that’s why it does not have a long-lasting impression upon the learners.
- ✓ The issues related to different values and the learners’ responsibility to solve them are not discussed in the class by the English teachers while dealing with a particular lesson.

IX. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- ✓ The present study can give a clear picture of different values and the proportion of the components of those values, integrated in the English language text book of class VIII prepared by SCERT, West Bengal.
- ✓ It can help the curriculum planner and administrators regarding the integration of value components in English language text book.

X. CONCLUSION

The study has explored that components related to different values like- social, moral, aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual, health and environmental values are more or less present in the text. Aesthetic values have been given the utmost focus as the theme of the textbook “Blossoms” is nature and adventure. Though all the participants admitted that practical exposure is very much necessary for the inculcation of values among the learners, the teachers are not able to provide effective practical situations for the exercise of the value components on the part of the learners. Besides, the teachers are not very much value-oriented and that’s why only the value components that are explicit in the lessons are explained by the teachers and other lessons which have implicit value components are overlooked and ignored by most of the teachers. The study also revealed that the socio-emotional environment of the classroom plays very significant role in the value promotion among the learners which has not been properly taken care of by most of the teachers. Above all, as it is the personality which matters the most for value promotion, as lecturing on values cannot help the learners for its inculcation, the development of teachers personality should be given proper emphasis as learners mostly take the teachers as their role model.

The study suggested that in the English language textbook of Class-VIII of West Bengal much more emphasis should be given to the components of spiritual, intellectual values and also the values related to environment and health which is utterly missing in the textbook as opined by the teachers, students and the researcher. Krippendorff in his book on content analysis has pointed out the fact that text is basically neutral. It does not provide any message. It is the readers who interpret the text differently and derive multiple meanings. So, when the teachers had opined that some texts are value-laden and some are not, it shows that the teachers lack value orientation which should be provided to them so that they can unravel the hidden components related to different values and thus the learners can also perceive them properly. Besides, the study also reflected that though the teachers wanted to

promote value inculcation among the learners, they could not be able to do it effectively. So, the study suggested that proper value-orientation programme is necessary so that the teachers can provide adequate and well planned environment to exercise the value components through various activities for the proper value inculcation among the learners which is the dire need of the present day.

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