

## Rationale & Results in Education

### Rationale & Need

The long history of mankind has seen a lot of progress. Science has enabled us to improve our understanding of the physical reality around us, while technology continues to offer us conveniences in increasingly newer ways. Meanwhile we are able to see the need for peaceful co-existence at the level of human society and have recognized the need for education for human beings as a 'fundamental need'. We have traversed a long way from the times of warring tribes and the fear of natural elements. While we have made many such improvements, the question is, are we satisfied with the state of affairs today? On looking into this issue, it becomes apparent that we are still faced with problems at two levels: at the level of the human, and at the level of nature. At the level of the human, we can see that there continue to be issues in individuals with respect to lack of clarity on life's goals, stress and depression, while at the level of human relationships we see problems in mutual understanding leading to breakdown in families and a feeling of isolation, and finally at the level of human relationships in society we see increasing communal conflict, strife, terrorism and war. When we look at nature, there are two issues: the problem of resource depletion, wherein water and fossil fuels are rapidly depleting, and the problem of increasing levels of pollution which is making our atmosphere and surroundings increasingly unlivable.

These problems continue to persist in spite of advancements in Science and Technology. In fact, the ecological problem is only increasing as we go down the current path. Where then, lays the solution?

The overall purpose of education is to enable a human being to live a fulfilling life, in harmony with family, society and nature. It hence becomes the purpose and goal of education to resolve these issues, so that human society can meet its universal goals. It thus becomes essential to find out what is of *value*, or what is valuable to a human being. The subject that deals with what *is of value*, or *what is valuable to a human being* is called value education. Values thus provide the *basis* for all our actions and activities.

As teachers, educationists and concerned human beings, with collective experience of several decades, we have been trying to imbibe values through education. In this, we found that although the importance of value education has been stressed by various commissions and expert committees and various solutions were proposed, these solutions have not had a wide impact. As a result, our mainstream education system continues to be lopsided in favour of skill generation – with the sole aim of getting into a profession or job. Most innovations in education are thus primarily targeted towards strengthening only information and skill competence.

While we did benefit from the learning's obtained via current proposals or commentaries on value education, social movements and knowledge systems, the success obtained was only partial. We were unable to find a holistic and convincing resolution to the issues we were concerned with, and it became clear that what was needed was consciousness development in the human being via knowledge or *right understanding* of the human being and his role in existence as a whole. As we journeyed on our search, we came across Co-existentialism (*Sah Astitvavaad*, also called *Madhyastha Darshan*) propounded by Shri A Nagraj of Amarkantak. In it, we found the promise of resolving the issues that were concerning us, and applied ourselves to its study.

We have been studying, living and experimenting on this basis for more than 15 years both within formal educational institutions– from the primary to the graduate level, as well as outside it – in cities, towns and villages, with people from various walks of life, comprising different ages and groups of society. Specifically in technical institutes, efforts have been on at places like IIT Kanpur – where a lot of students and teachers are now seriously evaluating this proposition; in IIT Delhi, where a value education cell has been established based on this, and in

IIIT Hyderabad where it is an essential part of the educational curriculum as well as at NIT Raipur and 27 such Universities around the country. People from these places have encouraging results to share.

We received the following feedback about this course:

- ***It is holistic and not fragmented*** – i.e. covers the entire expanse of human living: from self to society, nature and existence and covers all dimensions of human life: thought, behaviour, work and realization.
- ***Addresses the ‘self’*** – Discusses the human being or the self and does not just focus on external realities. This proves to be self empowering since each individual is able to make decisions and find out what is of value to them.
- ***Is closely associated with life and living*** – Establishes relevance in a person’s life and does not just deal with information and skills. One can see the results of this understanding in human living in the form of behaviour with people and work with nature
- ***Methodology is based on understanding and not just rote learning***: The focus is on understanding in one’s own right via by focusing on reality and its experiential verification and not just on reproduction of information and rote learning.

### **Jeevan Vidya in Education**

Jeevan Vidya (Co-existentialism) is a new development in human thought propounded by Shri A Nagraj of Amarkantak(MP), India. It has proposals for human living in four dimensions and at four levels, based on Reality:

a) At the level of individual b) In family c) In society d) In nature	a) Realization/Understanding b) Thought c) Behavior d) Work
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**Jeevan Vidya proposes on “human-ness” and “universal human values”.** It is not based on any caste, religion or sect, but on natural laws, on reality – in a way that every human can understand them in his/her own right and live with this understanding. Living according to this understanding enables a human being to live an awakened, purposeful, happy and responsible life. **In education, this input provides a universal basis for human values that supplements and provides direction to the current educational system.** We are able to thus resolve various root causes of problems facing mankind such as

- a) In Individuals: Stress and meaninglessness in living, suicides in students, lack of confidence, etc
- b) In Family: Problems and issues like break up, stress, etc
- c) In Society: Problems such as strife, communal conflict and hatred
- d) In Nature: Ecological problems like pollution and resource depletion

Over the past 15 years, thousands of people from various walks of life: from villagers to urbanites, academicians to housewives from scientists to politicians of all religious backgrounds have come in touch with it. Based on this success and its ability to provide a universal resolution to human problems, the following steps have been possible in education:

#### **I) In School Education**

- ❖ Part of School Educational curriculum in Chattisgarh State

## II) In Higher Education

- ❖ Part of course in Agricultural University, Chattisgarh State
- ❖ Part of course in IASE Deemed University, Rajasthan

## III) Human Values Course: Preliminary course based entirely on Jeevan Vidya in 30 Universities:

Institution	State	Institution	State
Indian Institute of Technology - Kanpur	UP	HP Technical University	HP
UP Technical University	UP	NIT, Raipur	Chattisgarh
Jawaharlal Nehru Agricultural University	MP	Galgotia University	Delhi
RV Scindia Agricultural University	MP	KL University	AP
Punjab Technical University	Punjab	Jawaharlal Nehru Technical Univ	AP
Royal University of Bhutan	Bhutan	IIIT, Hyderabad	AP

## Conventions

- ❖ A **National Convention on 'Human Values through Jeevan Vidya'** was conducted at **IIT Delhi** in association with **IIT Kanpur and IIIT Hyderabad**. This was attended by 70 vice-chancellors and directors and inaugurated by the then President, **Shri APJ Abdul Kalam**. **Shri Kalam** mentioned Jeevan Vidya as a crucial input in education in his **Independence Day address to the nation** on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2006.

The **National Convention on value education through Jeevan Vidya at IIT Delhi** found the same to be:

- **Universal** – with respect to time, space & individual
- **Secular** – is not dependent on any caste, creed, religion or sect
- **Rational** – in the sense that it appeals to human reasoning
- **Verifiable** - It can be self-investigated and verified on one's own right and its results can also be experientially validated via mutual fulfillment.
- **Natural for human being** – it is naturally acceptable to every human being and there is provision in nature for its fulfillment. I.e. it does not have to be imposed & is realizable.
- ❖ **International Conferences** on Value Education (Based on Jeevan Vidya) conducted at IIIT Hyderabad and PTU, Punjab, attended by 30+ Vice Chancellors from 6 SAARC countries

## In Sum:

Jeevan Vidya is a force for **universal human good** and its input as a course in all levels of education is thus with this in mind – to promote universal human values and human good in a **universal, rational, secular, understandable and realisable manner**. The ultimate goal is to work towards a happy, peaceful and prosperous society living in harmony with nature, to fulfill the human goal of **a) right understanding in every individual b) prosperity in every family, c) trust/fearlessness in society and d) co-existence with nature**. To sum up; Jeevan Vidya provides a universal understanding of human values and human living, that will form the basis of Humane Education leading to an Undivided Human Society and Universal Orderliness.

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