

## IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING LIFE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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*The article looks at Life Education in general and ClearLight Life Education in particular as a tool to inculcate character-building in learners in schools and colleges on duty-first lines. Navdeep Eduhub's ClearLight Life Education uses the individual-based approach to inculcate positivity in individuals using the formula: 'change yourself positively and you can change the world.' Abandoning the language of do's and don'ts, ClearLight addresses the minds of learners using the modern idiom to explain universal principles of life and help them apply their related values in life. This makes learners fulfill their duties, and pragmatically receive their rights in return using the principle of reciprocity, unilaterally.*

*The article concludes that Life Education, if followed sincerely can ensure character-building in individuals so one is able to learn (a) to think positively, (b) to cultivate positive personalities, (c) to form positive connections with others in society (d) towards societal progress. And in making our fellow Indians an enlightened, aware and dutiful people, Life Education can help educational institutions lay the foundation of nation- building and global citizenship.*

**Key Words:** Life-Education, Duty-First, Character-Building, Addressing Minds, Positive Thinking, Positive Personalities, Positive Connections, Nation-Building, Global Citizenship, Life Management.

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization, in making today's schools and colleges economy-driven, centers on preparing people for a profession, not in developing their character-building. This is making our youth undisciplined and rights-consciousness. The solution is educating in duty-consciousness. India has a long tradition of moral education, having some great teachers of the 20th century such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, and Aurobindo Ghosh. In independent India this is being taught through morals, peace and life skills education. It was found that more effort is, however, needed to make Indians dutiful.

Indiscipline in people is a challenge in the globalized world. Peterson Institute for International Economics defines globalization as “the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information.” Globalization is changing the very fundamentals of human relations and social life [UNESCO IIEP: Globalization and Educational Reform, p. 14]. Globalization has made today's schools and colleges economically-driven, focusing primarily on preparing people for a profession. While this is good, the downside is that contemporary education is no longer holistic. While it prepares individuals for a profession, it does not develop their character. As a result, schools and colleges, which were meant to lay the foundation of peace and development, consequently, are, often, becoming transmission points for indiscipline, aggression, confrontation and, often, violence. A blame-game is on between parents and educational institutions, with parents blaming the schools and college administrations for inadequate security and training and the schools and colleges blaming the parents for not doing their share in

preparing their children. The question remains: What should be done? An analysis identified rights-consciousness as the root cause of such negative behavior.

**Educating India in Duty-Consciousness:** Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, assured freedom and rights for all. This made human rights integral to modernity. While assuring people's rights is good, this needs to go in tandem with people performing their duties for holistic character-building. With little or no emphasis on duties people are becoming rights-conscious. Driven by economic exigencies, they want more and more, and expect others to give things to them as their rights. And when people do not give them what they think is their due they hold them to be at fault and act and react negatively towards them. This leads to indiscipline. The only solution is educating people in duty-consciousness.

Signing the UDHR (1948) assured rights to everyone. However, it failed to make them realize that these rights were subject to the fulfillment of human duties by everyone. This was realized when innumerable activities over decades yielded little development. Therefore, 50 years after the signing of the UDHR, UNESCO's Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities (DHDR) was signed in 1998, which stated that "The effective enjoyment and implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms is inextricably linked to the assumption of the duties and responsibilities implicit in those rights." [DHDR Preamble]

This clearly showed that performing one's duties was implicit to receiving one's rights, as both go hand-in-hand. This shows that rights cannot be unilaterally demanded and enforced on others. Duties need

to be fulfilled first. India understood this early on and introduced Article 51-A in its Constitution giving the Fundamental Duties of every citizen in 1949 itself. Ten duties of every Indian citizen were listed, to which an 11<sup>th</sup> was added through the Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002, s. 4 (w.e.f. 1-4-2010). These fundamental duties of every Indian citizen are: (a) To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the national Flag and the National Anthem (b) To cherish and follow the noble ideals that inspired our national struggle for freedom (c) To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India (d) To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so (e) To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (f) To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture (g) To protect and improve the natural environment (h) To develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform (i) To safeguard public property and to abjure violence (j) To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavor and achievement (k) Who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ... ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

India has a long tradition of moral education, having some great teachers of the 20th century such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, and Aurobindo Ghosh. In independent India schools are educating learners to be dutiful, in the name of moral education, peace education and recently through life skills education. Let us learn more about each.

Moral Science or Value Education is the responsibility of each State

of India. It was found that recommendations have been given through many avenues like the Kothari Commission (1964-66), Curriculum for the ten- year school: A Framework (1975), National Policy of Education of 1986, with modifications in 1992, Recommendations of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development—81<sup>st</sup> Report on Value based Education of 1999 as well as National Curriculum Framework 1988, 2000 and 2005. However, little implementation has taken place. The Supreme Court issued a notice to the Centre and CBSE on a Public Interest Litigation in February 2015 directing them to include moral science as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. The petitioner stated, “The state is under a constitutional obligation to endeavor to provide education facilities which inculcate moral values from primary education to secondary education. But the state has failed in this primary and vital task of making students good human beings and (in) turn good citizens.” [“SC notice on moral science in schools,” TNN, February 3 2015] Schools have been including moral or value education in their curriculum at their own initiative. Such ethical education, showing students right from the wrong, implores them to follow the good and right principles of life like truthfulness, honesty, charity, hospitality, tolerance, love, kindness and sympathy. [Education Post Staff, “Education on moral values a must for children,” The Education Post, May 22 2017]

**Peace Education:** NCERT brought out a Position Paper by the National Focus Group on 'Education for Peace' [September 2006]stating: 'Peace, as an integrative perspective for the school curriculum, is an idea whose time has come.' [National Curriculum Framework 2005, NCERT, New Delhi, 2005, p. 61] The position paper acknowledges that the goal of 'education for peace' is the nurturing of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that comprise

and promote a culture of peace as the purpose shaping the enterprise of education. Peace education promotes values like nonviolence and social justice to prevent the occurrence of conflict, resolve conflicts peacefully, or create social conditions conducive to peace. This was found to be limiting, needing a more holistic approach.

**Life Skill Education:** Life skills have recently been included in the school curriculum. Life skills are defined as “The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable humans to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life for individual well-being and to help them become productive members of their communities such as critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, communication and inter-personal skills, resilience and empathy.” It was found that Life Skills Education prepares individuals for a profession. The Annual World Economic Forum Conference (2016, Davos) released The Future of Jobs Report listing Top 10 vital skills needed to succeed in workplaces of 2020. These are problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision-making, service orientation, negotiation skills and cognitive flexibility. The report suggested that life skills be acquired in schools (and colleges), while “the most practical way of teaching life skills in schools (and colleges) is to incorporate them in the lesson plans so it's a win-win for all. Academics with life skills interwoven and we have a true winner.” [Sunaina Gera, “The Importance of Life Skills as Part of the School Curriculum.” June 18, 2019] It was found that “most school and undergrad college principals have at best a hazy idea of the type of life and especially soft skills students need to be equipped with in the new and fast-globalizing world. [Sruty Susan Ullas, “Life Skills: New Mantra of Indian Education,” Education World, June 2019.]

In 2019, celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> year of the adoption of the Indian

Constitution, the government started an outreach program to “educate” people, especially school students on fundamental duties. [TNN, “Govt. begins drive to teach fundamental duties,” Times of India, December 3, 2019] A 'uniform' and 'Common Minimum Program for Value Education' was rolled out to be implemented across India's entire schooling system, in the 2019-20 academic session that focuses on 'core Constitutional values' like Justice, Equality, Fraternity and Liberty. If these efforts are implemented successfully, will help in character-building in duty-consciousness in schools and colleges.

**Life Education for Character-Building:** I have been carrying on projects to inculcate character-building in learners of schools and colleges on duty- first lines for some years now. My doctoral thesis, in transforming individuals on positive lines (a) had identified hundreds of principles of life that could be practically applied to transform individuals on positive lines, (b) had developed a practical program to transform individuals positively entitled Towards a Culture of Peace and Reconciliation Program and (c) had tested the program on a sample, n=584 from Delhi University (Ramanujan College), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Hamdard, Jamia Millia Islamia and others institutions.

A program was developed further for schools, colleges and universities, under the concept of Life Education or Educating for Life, as it is has a broader perspective than moral, peace and life skills education. Life Education goes beyond: (a) moral education that offers morals or prescriptions that differentiate between right and wrong, to help people understand and apply universal principles in their lives, (b) peace education of avoiding, managing and resolving conflicts to develop positive, peaceful personalities and (c) life skills education that helps to face the challenges of life, to actually

managing life. Life Education means developing character- building in people, especially the youth, so they develop on positive lines, succeed themselves and become contributors of societal progress, nation- building and global citizenship. The salient features of Life Education are:

**1. Individual-Based Approach:** Life Education transforms individuals on positive lines. As individuals are the building-blocks of society, if they change using the formula: 'change yourself positively and you can change the world,' they become an instrument of broader positive change in society. [Funk, Nathan, C.: *Peace Paradigms: Five Approaches to Peace*, Gandhi Marg, Vol. 24, [2002], p. 3.]

**2. Inculcating Positivity in individuals' integral to Life Education:** Frederick Langbridge wrote: "Two men look out through the same prison bars. One sees the mud, and one the stars." [*Leslie Vernick, Lord, I Just Want to Be Happy*, p. 204] In *Thriving on Chaos*, Tom Peters (b. 1942) writes: "The problem is attitude, and the solution lies in changing it to... being positive rather than negative...." Life Education guides individuals to cultivate modesty and positive attitudes so they develop (a) positive thinking, (b) cultivate positive personalities and (c) form positive connections with others. This is 'a glass half full' approach rather than 'a glass half empty' approach.

**3. Addressing Minds in the Modern Idiom:** The reason traditional means of ethical education gave little results was that they are undertaken in the language of do's and don'ts. And as such didactic prescriptions do not address minds, they do not activate minds. As a result, either positive transformation is not achieved at all, or it is achieved at a superficial level. Life Education addresses the



individual mind using the modern idiom by giving universal principles of life and helping them to apply the related values in daily life. Once the universal principle of life addresses one's mind, the related values and ethics are internalized personalities are formed on positive lines.

**4. Training in Duties-First:** People often talk of promoting duty-consciousness in society. This is seen in the words of Mahatma Gandhi: 'be the change you wish to see in the world.' Francis of Assisi's (d. 1226) stated: "For it is in giving that we receive." Life Education postulates the Duties- First approach, wherein human rights are not demanded as one's absolute rights, but fulfilled as one's responsibilities. And as it is in giving that we receive, fulfilling our duties assures that we will pragmatically receive our rights in return.

**5. Principle of Reciprocity, unilaterally:** Life Education promotes the principle of reciprocity which means that one must refrain from such behavior that one does not want to receive from others. This is used extensively while imparting value education. [National Curriculum Framework 2005, NCERT] Reciprocity is a simple and effective principle as everyone knows what attitude he or she wants or does not want from others. When Life Education proposes that the choice is theirs, one freely makes the better choice, and behaves positively with others, no matter how they behave with them. Reciprocity and other principles are to be followed unilaterally in Life Education.

These principles are integral to imparting Life Education. And if this process is followed sincerely it can build character in individuals on duty- first lines.

**ClearLight Life Education Launch in Academic Year 2020-2021:** Having found that the program is effective in character-building of

individuals, the time had come to take this at a broader level. The question was: from where to begin? Finding direction from Gandhiji's quote, 'If we are to teach real peace in the world we shall have to begin with children' Navdeep Eduhub developed Clear Light Life Education One-Stop Character-Building Platform for Classes 1 to 8 for the academic year 2020- 2021. The team has commenced work to develop the Clear Light Life Education Tools for Classes 9 to 12 and Graduate-Level Programs. These will be launched in the coming academic sessions. ClearLight Life Education has these salient features:

- Abandons old idioms, language of dos and don'ts, to address minds using the modern idiom.
- Teaches universal principles like duty-first, humility and discipline through pictorial stories.
- Teaches lessons like always be Hopeful, Be Gentle Not Harsh, Be the Bigger Person, Learn Positive Lessons from Failures and others through interactions.
- Gives morals and values derived from principles like Every Dark Cloud has a Silver Lining, Failures are Greater than Success, Combined Effort Needs Sacrifice and others.
- Helps cultivate positive personalities through introspection, to respond positively even to negative situations by converting negative experiences into positive lessons.
- Trains in success-management using principles like Take Problems as Challenges, Accept Defeat, Find Opportunities in Problems, Patiently Work Hard and others.
- Trains in Life Management using the principle of conversion,

modesty, anger-management, ego-management, stress-management, failure- management and success-achievement.

- Helps one to be a contributor of a peaceful, progressive society using principles like non-confrontation, burying grudges, not provoking the egos of others, reconciliation and others.
- Helps to form positive connections in society by respecting all and giving good in return for even the bad actions of others, so even enemies can become one's dearest friends.
- Helps make our fellow Indians, especially our youth, enlightened, aware and dutiful for societal progress, nation-building and global citizenship.

ClearLight Life Education for Classes 1 to 8 has a comprehensive set of multimedia tools and unique delivery methods to introduce character- building in schools. Material used at Ramanujan College, University of Delhi is available for Colleges and Universities to inculcate character- building in their learners on duty-conscious lines. The Clear Light Life Education Tools for Classes 1 to 8 are as follows:

ClearLight Tools for Learners include Learners' Textbooks for Classes 1 to 8 that use the power of story-telling, human interaction and biographies to facilitate character building in learners. Engaging pictorial stories address minds using the modern idiom to explain concepts, principles and values. Each chapter is supported by Learners' Videos that make the stories come alive, to be used by life educators to introduce and/or revise the principles, values and lessons of the chapter. Rigorous post-chapter exercises help instill the values and principles of the chapter in a child's mind and assess their comprehension and application. Formative Assessment is facilitated

through the post chapter exercises: Values and Principles, Worksheets, Cultivate and Connect in all classes, and Diary Time and ClearLight Society for classes 6-8. Summative Assessment is facilitated through Think & Do Section at the end of the Text Books in Classes 3 to 8.

**ClearLight Life Educators' Tools:** While developing the Life Education Package we were often asked, “Who will teach life education?” “Where are the trained life educators?” We found the answer to such questions in the words of Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam: “if a country is to be a nation of beautiful minds there are three key societal members who can make a difference: father, mother and teacher.” ClearLight Life Educators were identified as 1. School Management, 2. Teachers and 3. Parents and the following tools were developed to help each facilitate character-building in learners.

- **ClearLight Schools' Tools:** As the school management has the visionary role of introducing Life Education in schools, Navdeep developed the ClearLight Presentation, 40<sup>+</sup> School's Videos and Social Media Posters and Communiqués to be shared with them through [www.navdeepeduhub.com](http://www.navdeepeduhub.com) and social media like YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp.
- **ClearLight Teachers' Tools:** Teachers are the primary life educators of the ClearLight Platform. To help them facilitate character-building in learners, a package of easy-to-use multimedia tools were developed as an in-service, self-learning teachers-training platform. These include Life Educators' Handbooks for Classes 1 to 8 that give complete guidelines on how to use each multimedia tool as well as introduce, teach and assess all the sections of the Learners' Textbooks. These are supported by Chapter-wise Teachers' Videos that help to break up

the principles of the chapter into lessons, ethics and values that learners can easily comprehend and apply in life. The Cultivate Posters and Connect Posters for Classes 1 to 8 are developed as classroom displays that give pointers on how to cultivate positive personalities and form positive connections respectively. Together, these tools will help life educators, in general and teachers in particular to inculcate character-building in learners.

- ClearLight Parents' Tools were developed on the premise that the family is a mini-society, and if children are trained to live positively in a family, they can do the same in society. The role of parents in life education is to become mentors and sustain the process of character-building at home. They can do this by rationally addressing the minds of their children instead of using the language of dos and don'ts. Clear Light developed Family Time in the Learners' Text Books and Parents' Videos as well as Parents' Sections in the Life Educators' Hand Books to interact with parents and give them tools to address their children's' minds.

ClearLight Life Education if used effectively can help schools and colleges prepare a new generation of positive and dutiful individuals who can successfully face the global challenges of life. The platform can help Life Educators—schools and college management, educators and parents facilitate character-building in our youth on duty-first lines so they are able to succeed themselves, become global citizens and become contributors of societal progress.

## **CONCLUSION**

We need to invest in our youth, our future. An important way of doing this is by developing their character on duty-conscious lines to make them global- ready. For this, educational institution—schools,

colleges and universities need to make Life Education a compulsory part of their curriculum. And in making our fellow Indians an enlightened, aware and dutiful people, ClearLight Life Education can help educational institutions lay the foundation of nation-building and global citizenship.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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