

An Empirical Study on Human Values – A Study with Reference to Adolescents’

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Abstract- Human values are the core of human being and acts as guiding principles of life. They are essential for positive human behavior. Human values are usually formed out of one’s own interest, wish, urge and liking. They are often described as universal and are shared by all human beings irrespective of their religion, their nationality, their culture and their personal history. The two main objectives of the present study are, to understand the significance of human values in life and to analyze the human values of adolescents. The study was conducted among fifty adolescents in Erode using random sampling method. Both primary and secondary data was used to meet the need of the study. To frame the questionnaire Schwartz’s Value Survey was also considered and the same was analyzed using simple percentage analysis, two-way table, chi-square test and correlation. Hypothesis framed for the study include, there is no significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values and there is no significant relationship between gender and changes in human values over the years. It was found from the analysis that there is a close significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values and also found that there is no significant relationship between gender and changes in human values over the years. Finally, the study concluded that parents, educational institutions and community should educate human values to the adolescents so as make them lead a wholesome life of human.

Index Terms - Human Values, Adolescents’, Schwartz’s Value Survey

I. INTRODUCTION

Human values are most important in one’s life. It includes truth, honesty, love, peace, sincerity, non-violence, friendship, empathy, etc. They are beliefs that have an inherent worth to the holder as principles, standards or qualities. They are characteristics of self-concept and serve as supervisory principles for person. The word “value” originated from the Latin word ‘VALERE’ which means ‘to be of worth’. Human values are very important in today’s world. The human values are the basis for any practical life within society. They build space for a drive, a movement towards one another, which leads to peace. In simple term, human values are described as universal and are shared by all human beings, whatever their religion, their nationality, their culture and their personal history. There are several universal human values such as Truth, Right conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence which are directly associated to physical, intellectual, emotional psyche and spiritual facets of human personality. There is need and urgency to reinforce these values for a better and humane society. However it varies from person to person. It can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic value. Intrinsic values are those values which are associated with certain objects appearing to have such value that they would retain it even if they were to exist completely alone, whereas extrinsic values are those values where certain objects have values as part of other objects of value, or as means to ends of value. Values may be regarded as positive and negative. Anything that has positive value is considered to be good, whereas anything that has negative value is said to be evil. Several models have been developed to measure the basic values. The most measures are the Schwartz Value Survey and the Portrait Values Questionnaire is that the former is explicit while the latter is implicit.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Babita Jharia (2013) stated the importance of human values in the private institutes of Rajpur. Study considers human values are the basis of human being. It also mentions that home is the first school of the child and school and college is the second for learning human values. Value education is education in values and education towards the inculcation of values should an initiative of all private institutions. It is a universal phenomenon intrinsic to all learning and education, whether at home or in an institution.

Sheela.S.Khedikar (2013) pointed out the deterioration of human values in many nations, including India. It states that decline in human values does not only pose serious threat to the future development of the country but even for its presentation survival. Though, change in social or human values in younger generation is inevitable with time but the decline in Indian younger generation is at an alarming rate as compared to any other country all over the world. Hence the schools and colleges are required to play an important role in the matter of value education to younger generations.

Mohan Debbarma (2014) explored the importance of human values in the global society. It is found that the modern society has been undergoing significant crises for last few decades and indeed; human values are also now withering very fast for which humans are most responsible. Hence the study concludes that value based education should be emphasized ranging from school to university level of education. And the study also recommended that many researches and publications should be done on several aspects of the society which help to perpetuate the human values of the human community in the post-modern era.

Himanshoo Kumar Sharma (2015) studied the importance of moral values in modern era. It is understood that in the technological era, value crisis is one of the burning problems. Dowry system, divorce, abortion, gang-rape, murder, child abuse, corruption, animal sacrifice, etc. are ever growing problem. In order overcome this issues educators have an essential role to play. The study emphasizes that the teachers should have an integrated perspective to nurture the hearts and minds of learners in a balanced way so as to retain human values within oneself.

Pallavi Gupta (2016) explained the factors how and why the human values are consistently degraded in higher education in India. It states that higher education institutions lack to provide learning positive atmosphere, academic syllabus related to human values and extracurricular activities based on human values which leads to many societal issues in recent days. Hence to uplift human values among younger generations it delegates the responsibility to parents, teachers and society.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Human values are regarded as the moral standards of human behavior in the society. It is a quality of human, which is applied to human activities. It is essential for one's personality, and it affects to make decisions. And indeed, human society may not significantly sustain without human values. But in spite of that, every day in the media we do come across many social issues which deliberately spoil our human and cultural values. Hence, the present study attempts to ascertain human values among adolescents' who are in the transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood by keeping that in mind the researcher probed the following questions:

- ❖ In the technological era, do human beings feel the significance of human values in life?
- ❖ Whether adolescents' have human values in life?

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

From the statement of the problem, the following objects have been framed for the present study.

1. To study the significance of human values in life.
2. To analyze the human values of adolescents.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₁ : There is no significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

H₂ : There is no significant relationship between gender and changes in human values over the years.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is systematically and scientifically organized. It describes human values and its significance and hence the study is descriptive in nature. Instead of obtaining information from each and every unit of the universe, only a small representative part is studied and the conclusion are drawn on that basis for the entire universe or whole population. The study on human values confines to adolescents' who always remains as the future backbone of our nation and it becomes essential to assess and develop their build in human values so that our nation becomes more holistic nation in future. Adolescents are broadly classified into three stages - early adolescence, generally ages eleven to fourteen; middle adolescence, ages fifteen to seventeen; and late adolescence, ages eighteen to twenty-one. The study used random sampling method to collect the data. The sample size considered was 50 respondents. Study has made an extensive use of both primary and secondary data. To collect primary data, questionnaire was employed. To frame the questionnaire the researcher considered Schwartz's Value Survey and the same was used with needed changes. The secondary data was collected from all associated sources such as books, research journals, magazines, periodicals published and internet web sources. The tools used in the study include simple percentage analysis, two way table, chi-square test and correlation analysis.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following limitations.

1. The study is encompassed to human values of the adolescents' in Erode only; hence, the findings are not generalized.
2. Respondent's bias in understanding the questionnaire is also considered.

VIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN VALUE

Human values are those attributes and qualities that are the very heart of humanity, representing highest expression of the human spirit. They are innate in all people and include: a deep caring for all life, non-violence, compassion, friendliness and cooperation, generosity and sharing, a feeling of belonging and openness with all life, an eco-friendly attitude and caring for the planet, service to society, a sense of commitment and responsibility, peace and contentment, enthusiasm, integrity, honesty and sincerity. Human values do not depend on, and are not derived from, any external authority. As the infinite potentiality within all people, human values are already present in every human being; they need only be rekindled to thrive and grow.

Human values have been a central concept in the social sciences since their inception. Human values play a vital role in the society, for they are said to be the basis of human beings for leading a better life. It is believed that all holy books of all religions contain the values of good life. The importance of human values is seen right from the childhood of a person. Preschool is the first stage or period that lays the foundation of information on human values. There are different factors which affect human values in the life of an individual and the society. Value education starts from families and it continuous at schools with the help of educators.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected through the questionnaire has been classified according to various demographic characteristics of the respondents like age, gender, educational qualification, monthly income, marital status, family size, family type and residential area. Simple percentage is used to analyze the data and presented in a table format.

Table: 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S.No.	Demographic Variables	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Age (Yrs.)	11-14	11	22
		15-17	28	56
		18-21	11	22
2	Gender	Male	22	44
		Female	28	56
3	Educational Qualification	No formal education	5	10
		School	9	18
		Diploma	9	18
		UG	22	44
		PG	5	10
4	Monthly Income (in Rs.)	No earnings	31	62
		Below 5000	13	26
		5000-10000	3	6
		Above 10000	3	6
5	Marital Status	Married	8	16
		Unmarried	42	84
6	Family size (Members)	Upto 3	16	32
		4-5	18	36
		Above 5	16	32
7	Family type	Joint family	37	74
		Nuclear family	13	26
8	Residential area	Urban	12	24
		Semi-urban	17	34
		Rural	21	42

Inference

From the above table no.1 it is observed that majority 56% of the respondents were in the age group of 15-17 years. 56% of the respondents were female. 44% of them were with educational qualification of under graduation. 62% of them were with no earnings per month. 84% were unmarried. 36% were with the family size of 4-5 members in the family. 74% were living in joint family type and 42% were residing in rural area.

Table: 2 Respondents' Opinion about Human Values

S.No.	Factors	NI	SI	MI	I	VI
1	Power (authority)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	11 (22%)	13 (36%)	14 (28%)
2	Achievement (success)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	19 (38%)	15 (30%)
3	Hedonism (enjoyment in life)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	17 (34%)	23 (46%)
4	Stimulation (an exciting life)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	11 (22%)	12 (24%)	18 (36%)
5	Self-direction (freedom, independence)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	11 (22%)	32 (64%)
6	Universalism (equality, universal justice)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	19 (38%)	11 (22%)	11 (22%)
7	Benevolence (helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness)	6 (12%)	15 (30%)	12 (24%)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)
8	Tradition (respect for tradition, humbleness, devotion)	8 (16%)	8 (16%)	16 (38%)	5 (10%)	13 (36%)
9	Conformity (obedience, honoring parents and elders, politeness)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	12 (12%)	23 (46%)	6 (12%)
10	Security (national security, family security)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	20 (40%)	19 (38%)

Note: NI-Not Important, SI-Slightly Important, MI-Moderately Important, I-Important, VI-Very Important.

Inference

It is inferred from the above table no.2 that among ten factors of human values, majority of the respondents rated self-direction as very important factor to them followed by hedonism, security, stimulation, achievement, power, tradition, universalism, benevolence and conformity.

Table: 3 Age and Initiatives to enhance human values (Two-Way Table)

Initiatives to Enhance Human Values	Always	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Age						
11-14	5 (45.4%)	0 (0%)	4 (36.4)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)	11
15-17	3 (10.7%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	13 (46.4%)	4 (14.3%)	28
18-21	1 (9.1%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (18.2%)	5 (45.4%)	11
Total	9	7	8	16	10	50

Inference

The above table no.3 shows that the responses of always towards the initiatives to enhance human values was highest (45.4%) among the respondents in the age group of 11-14 years and the same was lowest (9.1%) among 18-21 years. The responses of very often was highest (14.3%) among the age group of 15-17 years and the same was lowest among 11-14 years. Responses of sometimes is highest (36.4%) among the age group of 11-14 years and the same was lowest among 18-21 years. Responses of rarely was highest (46.4%) among the age group of 15-17 years and the same was lowest (9.1%) among 11-14 years. The responses of never was highest (45.4%) among 18-21 years and the same was lowest (9.1%) among 11-14 years.

In order to find the relationship between the age and initiatives to enhance human values, the following hypothesis was framed and tested with the help of chi-square test and the results is shown in the following table.

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

H₁ : There is close significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

Table:4 Age and Initiatives to enhance human values (Chi-Square Test)

	Values	df	Asymp.Sig.(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.463 ^a	8	.004
Likelihood Ratio	23.448	8	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.520	1	.034
N of Valid Cases	50		

- a. 12 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.54.

Inference

It is divulged from the above table no.4 that, as P value is .004 which is less than 0.05, Null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is a close significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

Correlation Analysis

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

H₁ : There is close significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

Table: 5 Age and Initiatives to enhance human values (Correlation Analysis)

		Age	Initiative to enhance human values
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.304*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.032
	N	50	50
Initiative to enhance human values	Pearson Correlation	.304*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	
	N	50	50

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Inference

It is noticed from the above table no.5 that there is a negative correlation between (.304) age and initiative to enhance human values. Since P value .304 is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance) Null Hypothesis is rejected. There is close significant relationship between age and initiatives to enhance human values.

X. FINDINGS

1. It is examined from the percentage analysis that majority (46%) of the respondents agree towards the importance of human values in one's life.
2. It is noted from the analysis that majority (32%) of the respondents rarely takes up the initiative to enhance human values towards others.

3. It is inferred from the analysis that majority (36%) of the respondents feel changes in human values over the years is much worse.
4. It is observed from chi-square test that p value is .190 which is greater than .05, Null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant relationship between gender and changes in human values over the years.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

It is noticed from the analysis that adolescents living in nuclear family lack human values. So parents should take up steps to teach human values to their children. It is observed that, in comparison to rural adolescents, semi urban and rural adolescents have less of human values. So, educational institutions and communities should march together to impart human value education to young generation. It is found that, when earnings of the adolescents increase human values decreases. So working adolescents should take self initiatives to enhance human values so as to ensure very cordial and conducive work environment and the corporate management can also organize workshops to uplift the human values among their employees.

XII. CONCLUSION

According to Rokeach, "Value is an enduring belief, a specific mode of conduct or an end state of existence, along a continuum of relative importance." We need value in our lives to guide us in the right path, to learn the importance of certainty, goodness and beauty, give positive direction to life and bring joy, preserve our culture and heritage, bring changes in behavior towards positive thoughts; Promote the peace and harmony in the society and much more. To improve one's human values self interest plays a very crucial role, parents should educate human values, educational institutions, community and work place should voluntarily come forward to develop human values among future generation. As a result we can lead a happy, peaceful and satisfied life throughout.

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