

VALUES FOR CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY: A STUDY OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

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Abstract

Values are the guidelines which give meaning to our life and lead to the development of an integrated personality and character development (Sw. Tathagatananda, 2012). The aim of the present study was to identify, select and prioritize the values to be imparted to children with intellectual disability in order to promote harmonious growth of social, practical and conceptual skills among them. The study also makes an attempt to understand the meaning of some common core values and the justification behind selecting such values according to the views of the target group comprising of educators (N=100) and parents (N=100) using specially designed research tools. The findings reveal the selection of values such as cleanliness, decision making skills, courtesy, kindness and team spirit among others, selected from among 81 values listed under NCERT (1981; 2000) as some of the basic core values and skills which needs to be developed among children with special educational needs especially those with intellectual disability.

Keywords: values, value education, children with intellectual disabilities, core values



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INTRODUCTION

Understanding Values

Values impart significance to life. The word ‘value’, is derived from the Latin root word ‘Valerie’ meaning to be strong and vigorous. Values are similar to attitudes but are more ingrained, permanent and stable in nature, thus they become guiding principles which guide a person’s desires, feelings and actions (Bhaskar, 2005). These are patterns; enduring beliefs, choices which work as motivational forces forming a central pole around which people mould their lives (Srivastava, 1998). Values are guidelines, beliefs upon which a man acts by preference. According to Mukerji, (1996) values are defined as “socially approved desires, goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations.” Allport (1969) defines value as ‘a belief upon which a man acts by preferences’. Research studies in the past have

supported the need for teaching basic human values such as: humility, compassion, honesty, self respect and regard for others, cleanliness, dignity of work among other values to be taught in day to day transactions (Shetty & Pushpanadham, 1998).

Education

According to Swami Vivekananda, 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. Knowledge is inherent; it only has to be unveiled and discovered (learnt). Thus learning can be termed as our advancement from ignorance to knowledge (Avinasahilingam & Swaminathan, 2017). Teaching only means removing the obstacles to pave the way for manifestation of the inherent knowledge. The educational training should be man making and character building which will help to control and tame the will.

Value Education

The purpose of education is to promote a harmonious development of physical, mental, emotional, moral, spiritual and social aspects of the individual in order to produce enlightened citizens. There is need to answer the eternal question 'should values be taught or caught'? According to the view of formalists in the field of education, values can be taught through formal, compulsory core courses- such as specially designed value education courses. While according to the view of behaviorists, values are caught through exemplary actions, indirect suggestions, participative experiences in value based actions. Hence values can be caught as well as taught (Srivastava, 1998). The importance of value education can be demonstrated by stating that education is an instrument of development-individual and social. 'true education must humanize' by liberating man from the shackles of numerous prejudices borne out of discrimination based on caste, gender, creed, language, abilities, ungrounded superstitions and false notions (Shetty & Pushpanadham, 1998). According to Sanyal (2005), some values are taught consciously or intentionally like cleanliness, routine, discipline, truthfulness, compassion and some inadvertently like compassion, empathy.

Children with Intellectual Disability (CWID)

According to the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD, 2010), Intellectual Disability is characterized by significant imitations both in intellectual functioning as well as adaptive behavioral skills as expressed in social, conceptual and practical adaptive skills. It originates before the age eighteen years. These children have poor social skills, slow learning rate and inability to understand social cues due to cognitive deficit and significantly sub average general intellectual functioning (RCI

Training Manual). Thus, these children need value education which can be imparted through a specially designed, formal, direct, systematic value education curriculum having selected values required in daily living and for future needs.

Need and significance of the study

There is an immense need for value oriented and character transforming education, work-culture and lifestyle, as a solution to the growing problems of the world such as value deterioration, fanaticism, degenerate social skills and lack of peace. Moral courage is more potent than any military but modern education does not foster our moral life (Sw. Tathagatananda, 2012). Value education helps in development of an integrated personality which is able to withstand the shocks of life. Education to be useful should be of value to the users at every level and meet every expectation, thus providing wisdom and peace, paving the way for perfection (Subrahmanyam, 2002).

Objectives

The present study was carried out to find out and understand the perspectives of teachers and parents in identifying, selecting and prioritizing 10 core values from among 81 values listed under NCERT value education framework (1984; 2000). The study was thus done to attain the following objectives by understanding the views obtained from the target group:

Objective-1: To identify, select and prioritize ten core values to be taught to CWID.

Objective-2: To understand the need and relevance of teaching such values (justification) to CWID.

METHOD

Participants

Random sampling technique under probability sampling was used to draw the sample of 100 special educators (having at least one year experience of handling CWID and holding at least a diploma degree in spl. education) from 21 special schools in and around Coimbatore. Parents of CWID (having CWID and an educational qualification of at least 10th class) (N=100) were selected using non purposive sampling technique.

Instruments

Instrument-1: A ranking scale (with ranks 1-10), exclusively designed by the researcher for the present study, was provided to all participants along with the list of 81 values listed under NCERT value education framework. The participants were required to go through the list of values stated by NCERT and then identify, select and prioritize the core values to be taught to

CWID at primary and secondary levels of educational training through a systematic, well planned and designed value education curriculum for CWID.

Instrument-2: An open ended questionnaire was designed to gain insight into the understanding of the values identified, selected and prioritized by the target group in order to gauge the need and effectiveness of the selected values for teaching to CWID.

Both the instruments used for the present study were validated and reliability testing ($r = 0.8$) was done using appropriate statistical tools.

Research design

This is a survey study carried under exploratory research design. The survey was conducted in special schools located in and around Coimbatore.

Procedure

The required data was collected from the participants through direct administration of the ranking scale. The data was then subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis using appropriate statistical tools.

RESULTS

Table-1: Response of target group on values which can be taught to CWID

Objective-1: To identify, select and prioritize the values to be taught to CWID, according to views of educators and parents.

Objective-2: To develop, construct and understand the meaning of the values selected for CWID with reference to their unique needs.

Research Question-1: What are the values that can be taught to CWID and thus can be included in the VEC for CWID?

Research Question-2: How are the values selected for CWID understood with special reference to their unique needs and demands?

S. No.	Values to be taught	Meaning of the selected value and Justification
1	Cleanliness	<p>Meaning: this value deals with personal self care and hygiene and cleanliness of the surroundings. Promotes hygienic living, control of spread of infections and diseases, helps in the maintenance of physical and mental well being.</p> <p>Justification: CWID have significant limitations in adaptive behavior due to which they need training in basic SHS and cleanliness such as regular bathing, wearing clean clothes, keeping self well groomed, clean appearance</p>

2	Courtesy	Meaning: this value refers to respectful, polite and courteous behavior with elders as well as peers such as talking without yelling or hitting, soft speech. Justification: CWID are often at risk of showing impulsive behavior such as throwing things, hurting others, shouting etc. they should be taught to respect others, display good manners
3	Decision making	Meaning: it refers to the ability take valid, conscious and correct decisions based on the situation and context. The ability to make decisions and accept responsibility for them needs courage and uprightness. Justification: They show inability to learn fast, inability to decide, they do not know what to say, do etc and absence of clarity due to deficit in cognition, hence they can be taught the value of decision making which can help them to take independent decisions.
4	Discrimination between right and wrong, good and bad	Meaning: this value refers to the ability to discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong thus requiring the need for identification and understanding of good/bad actions. Justification: Due to limitations in mental functioning, they fail to discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong, so such values can be taught.
5	Discipline	Meaning: this value refers to performing ones actions with regularity and routine, being disciplined, obeying elders, finishing given work on time with perfection. Justification: They often show resistance to discipline and routine as they are unable to shift attention from one task to another and continue doing that task for a long time, if interested. Hence they need to be taught the value of discipline and routine.
6	Empathy	Meaning: showing compassion, care, helping those in need, awareness about others feelings and emotions, understanding that others can have a different set of emotions towards any situation/event/person than us. Justification: CWID are focused on their needs due to lack of clarity, slow reaction, lack of socialization skills all of which can be attributed to cognitive deficiency. Hence they need to be taught the value of empathy- feeling and consideration for others
7	Good manners	Meaning: it refers to the performance and following of good habits and behaviors which lead to character development. Justification: They need to learn good manners which will help them in better adjustment in society such as saying please, thank you, good habits like cleanliness, helping others etc
8	Kindness	Meaning: being kind to others, polite behavior, no hitting or beating others, no unnecessary complains. Justification: CWID lack feelings of kindness to other due to lack of understanding and slow reaction rate they do not show kindness' to others, hence need to be

		taught.
9	Self confidence	<p>Meaning: having self belief, self-respect, ability to believe in ones actions and thoughts, courage to accept ones weaknesses and strengths.</p> <p>Justification: CWID often lack in self confidence and self worth, hence they can be taught such values which will promote their self worth, self importance.</p>
10	Team spirit	<p>Meaning: ability to act and work in a group, following and understanding group dynamics, leading others, following others, respecting the judgment/decision of the leader, cooperation.</p> <p>Justification: They should be taught the value of team spirit as working in a team is needed in the workplace for vocational success. Team spirit helps in the development of leadership skills as well which enable CWID to take responsibility of themselves and of others.</p>

Table-1, discusses the various values selected and prioritized for CWID, along with their meanings as understood and expressed by the target group, comprising of teachers (special educators) and parents (of CWID). As can be seen from the table, the sample has chosen 10 core values such as cleanliness, courtesy, team spirit among other values for imparting to CWID and has framed the meaning of these values with special reference to their unique needs. This understanding of values with reference to CWID is essential, as values are abstract concepts and mean different to different persons. Such values when developed in children with special needs will help to promote greater social inclusion and success in school, work and life.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Education as a learning and a developmental tool promotes and initiates life long process of exploration and enhancement of – primarily of the self, secondly of the community and wider society (Shetty & Pushpanadham, 1998). Values are fundamental beliefs held important by an individual and are stable over time. Values are acquired from a variety of sources: home, school, workplace, educational system, mass media, child rearing and upbringing practices, culture, socio-economic conditions, family background, political situation of a State (Bhaskar, 2005). The present study helped to identify some of the core values which can be taught to CWID in order to facilitate social skills development, full inclusion and independent living. The study also highlights the important role of values and the need for value education in everyone's lives which can be summarized as follows (Sanyal, 2005; Gupta, 2005)

1. Values such as cleanliness, kindness, empathy, team spirit promote social consciousness and development of social skills.
2. Such values spell out expected 'societal norms' which when followed lead to better acceptance and full inclusion.
3. Value development facilitates problem solving and decision making through reasoning and critical thinking.
4. These values help one to develop self orientation, and increases self confidence by enabling the persons to accept weaknesses and develop ones strength.

Hence, Value Education helps in personality development and character making which enables the individual to act as a proper role model and perform age appropriate, mature actions and is needed by both children with and without special needs.

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