Importance of Human Values in the Society

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1. Introduction:-

The present paper is an attempt to explore the importance of human values in the global society. Human society may not significantly sustain without human values. Hence, it is necessary to talk on the subject and bring about awareness of human values into the modern society. There is no denying the fact that the present global society is facing a lot of crises. Human value crisis is a known fact of the modern society. Indeed, humans are aware of the global and national problems which they are currently facing. The impact of human activities on the earth in various ways is placing a significant amount of stress. For instance, the climate change due to global warming. There seems to be a significant link between the remedial measures and various solutions to climate change and the practice of human values. It is believed that at the end of the day, it is the human values which will save the mankind.

If any ethics are primarily to help a person to live a just and righteous life with him/her and in relation to others, ethics too is similarly oriented towards a righteous life. The personal and social life of every individual is permeated by a great sense of righteousness. Without this possibility of constituting the world-view of the community and the possibility of the individuals striving to achieve it, a value system can only be either an item in the "thought-museum" of cultural artifacts or a fantasy. It is perpetual preparedness to make cultural changes with a view to obtaining this balance (Anthony Giddens, 2011). [1]

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[1] Giddens, Anthony, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull Publications, London, 2011, p. 12.

It is believed that various global and national problems may be solved through the practical application of human values in every society. In order to fulfil this, goal humanity is to be considered as the highest value in the global human society. For, the test for humanity is to achieve unity among the living and non-living creatures of the world with the preservation of historical, ethnic and cultural differences as well as the distinctiveness of nation states and communities. Such human unity can be driven home only by recognizing human values such as truth, kindness, benevolence, peace, love, dignity, respect, forgiveness, etc. Of course, these values must be strictly determined and must not be treated as mere obligations. Hence, the most important task for philosophy students is to develop foundations and principles of a global human society and to formulate a global consciousness and a humanistic worldview that adequately reflects the realities of our epoch. Our action must increasingly be based on an acknowledgment of global and universally accepted values. Because, it is the human values which are to be treated as the keys to solving the global problems.

2. Meaning of Values:-

Values are generally regarded as the moral standards of human behaviors in the society. It is a kind of quality of humans, which is applied to human activities. It is transmitted to a circumstantial factor which depends upon the judgment of the fact. The word 'value' is derived from the Latin word 'valeo' which originally meant strength and also health, and then by natural transition, it came to mean being effective and adequate. In French the term 'valeur' means excellence. Value is a mixture of three concepts such as Idea, Quality and Supervention. Values can be defined as the principles that guide people's lives, and have varying significance. Values are the essence of our personality, and affect us to make decisions, trust people, and arrange our time and energy in our social life. Values may be treated as keys to solving many world problems.

It is to be pointed out that value is the worth of something. It is the importance or usefulness of something, a standard of behaviour and it is considered to be important or beneficial in human life. Conventionally speaking, the term 'value', itself came to ethics by way of economics. In economics it is used for (i) Value in use that is the capacity of an object

to satisfy a human need or desire, and (ii) Value in exchange or the amount of one commodity that came to be obtained in exchange for another. Besides, values may be broadly categorized into two – (i) Intrinsic value and (ii) 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 value as parts 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.

One of the most general philosophical issues in the study of value (axiology) is whether values arise from objective or subjective features of experience. Non-cognitivists defend a strict distinction between fact and value and many contemporary thinkers challenge the presumption that human knowledge can ever be genuinely free of value judgments (Anthony Giddens, 2011). [2] To acknowledge same feature of things as a value is to take it into account in decision making or in other words, to be inclined to advance it as a consideration in influencing the choice and guiding oneself and others. Those who see values as 'subjective' think of this in terms of a personal stance, occupied as a kind of choice and immune to rational argument (although often and curiously, deserving some kind of reverence and respect). Those who think of values as 'objective' suppose that for same reason – requirements of rationality human nature, God or other authority – choice can be guided and correct from same independent standpoint (Simon Blackburn, 1994).[3]

3. Significance of Human Values:-

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

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[2] Giddens, Anthony, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull Publications, London, 2011, p. 12.

[3] Blackburn, Simon, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy,* Oxford, 1996, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 390.

values of good life. The importance of values is frequently cited in relation to the global and national problems, whether it be in debates in international assemblies, in studies criticizing "value-free" approaches to research, or in discussion of quality of life and individual fulfilment. Thus, values are deemed especially important in questions of cultural development and are central to concern for the preservation of cultural heritage.

It is to be mentioned that 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. Because information about the values of life is a continuous process found in the society. However, the first information not only gains in earlier periods that begin and end in the period to adolescence but also continues personality. From now on, there can be changes on these values, but basic values have been developed. Changing child's wrong behaviour is more difficult than trying to develop a new behaviour. It is critical to develop the child's personality in a planned and systematic process in order to prevent the wrong development of values education.

There are different factors which affect human values in the life of an individual and the society. Value education starts from families and it is continuous at schools with the help of educators. Because of this, families, teachers and educational programs are crucial to values education. Families are the first source of information so they should be careful about their behaviours and attitudes as children see them as a model. Cooperation within families and teachers is very important for the thing that affects the children most is what the teacher does in the classroom. Besides this, education programs must be reorganized according to this cooperation. Also in this period by the help of educational activities like seminars, conferences; families can take an active part in organizing these programs. So that, there can be an effective harmony among families, educators and educational programs. It may be mentioned that value is a theory about "what things in the world are good, desirable, and important."(S.C. Sinha, 1990).[4]

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[4] Sinha, S.C., *Anmols Dictionary of Philosophy*, Anmols Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p. 196.

There are individual morality and social morality. Individual morality provides the basis of decisions of and judgments by the individual: honesty, loyalty, good faith, being responsible. Social morality means fairness, which is one basis of law, which helps to govern society and to control individual behavior. Social morality considers whether an action threatens society's well-being.

Philosophers have discerned these main forms of value - intrinsic, instrumental, inherent and relational value. Intrinsic value may be taken as basic and many of the others defined in terms of it. Among the many attempts to explicate the concept of intrinsic value, some deal primarily with the source of value, while others employ the concept of the "fittings" or "appropriateness" to it of certain kinds of emotions and desires. The first is favoured by G.E. Moore and the second by Brentano. Proponents of the first view hold that the intrinsic value of *X* is the value that *X* has solely in virtue of its intrinsic nature. Thus, the state of affairs of Smith's experiencing pleasure has intrinsic value provided it has value solely in virtue of its intrinsic nature. Followers of the second approach explicate intrinsic value in terms of the sorts of emotions and desires appropriate to a thing "in and for itself" (or "for its own sake"). Thus, one might say *X* has intrinsic value (or is intrinsically good) if and only if *X* is worthy of desire in and for itself, or, alternatively, it is fitting or appropriate for anyone to favour *X* in and for itself. Thus, the state of affairs of Smith's experiencing pleasure is intrinsically valuable provided that state of affairs is worthy of desire for its own sake, or it is fitting for anyone to favour that state of affairs in and for itself (Robert Audi, 1995).[5]

Thus, human values possess a significant position in the society. Values are a cognitive structure that describes the ideals of life of individuals, their preferences, priorities, principles and the behaviour of a cognitive. Values are the effective cultural elements which shape the elements around the point of view of individuals, members of a community that holds together. In line with the protection or disregarding of these values by individuals in a

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[5] Audi, Robert, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 948.

society, the values will be lost in time or they will be continued many years by transferring. Continuing and being permanent of these values depends on individuals' general acceptance and internalizing. But, together with the values that show differences in cultures, there is a case of values which are universal and ethical that are accepted in all cultures. Truth, respect, kindness, benevolence, patience, tolerance, peace, democracy, etc. are expected to be universal human values throughout globe. It is a universally accepted view that without these human values human society will not sustain for a long time.

We, human beings receive information through our five senses, and it is the human values that help us to discriminate from right and wrong, good and bad. We have access to information readily however, transformation is slow without practice of human values, and this is where the importance of human values plays a significant role in bringing solutions to the global problems such as ecological problems, moral problems, global warming, etc.

In this present global human society we almost see only the demoralizing values. What the genuine cause of the degradation of these values could be is an important question to be asked. According to philology, the word ethics are derived from the Latin 'Ethos', which means character. It is a question of moral value. In this way, ethics is the science of character, habits of activity or behaviour of human beings.

The word 'moral' is a derivative for the Latin word 'mores' meaning conventions or practice. In this way ethics literally mean the science of convention or practice. Ethics is the science of human conduct. Habits and behaviour are related to the permanent peculiarities of human character. Conduct is the mirror of the character. Thus, ethics is the science of character or habit. It evaluates human habits, character and voluntary determinations and discusses their propriety or otherwise.

It is to be mentioned here that social and moral values are essential elements of the collective lives of any community. Moral values are one basis on which we make decisions– right or wrong and good or evil. Every community develops and possesses some social and moral values of its own. There cannot be any value or standard of a community without a

social and cultural group. A social group is a collection of people who share a common identity and regularly interact with one another on the basis of some shared expectations concerning behaviour. People who belong to the same social and cultural group identify with each other, expect each other to conform to certain ways of thinking and acting and recognize the ethnic, cultural, social and moral boundaries that separate them from other groups of people. "In our need to congregate and belong, we have created a rich and varied group life that gives us our norms, practices, and values – our whole way of life**."** (Anthony Giddens, 2011). [6] Thus, society may be regarded as the Basis of the social and moral life of a human group.

Moreover, social values are certain qualities and beliefs that are shared within a specific culture or group of people. These traits can be religious, economic, political, educational, historical etc. Indeed, social and moral values are essential elements of the collective life of any community. Social values are that which an individual considers to be of value in their social existence. These are the standards by which one operates or is understood as an everyday function.

It is a known fact that man, a member of a society, is a rational animal. This simple truth provides a sort of foundation for ethics, and much of the history of moral philosophy involves attempts to do justice to both aspects of the human: rationality on the one hand, animal nature on the other (Roger Teichmann, 2011). [7] So, humans are animals first and rational being second. The area of philosophy traditionally known as 'ethics' or 'moral philosophy' is the attempt to arrive at an understanding of the nature of human values, of how we ought to live, and of what constitutes right conduct[8] in the society.

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[6] Giddens, Anthony, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull Publications, London, 2011, p. 11.

[7] Teichmann, Roger, *Nature, Reason and the Good Life – Ethics for Human Beings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, *2011*, P.ix.

[8] **7.** Norman, R., *The Moral Philosophers – An introduction to Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 1.

Values influence most, if not all motivated behavior. The value theory provides a framework for relating the system of ten values to behavior that enriches analysis, prediction, and explanation of value-behavior relations. It makes clear that behavior entails a trade-off between competing values. Almost any behavior has positive implications for expressing, withholding, or attaining some values, but negative implications for the values across the structural circle in opposing positions. People tend to behave in ways that balance their opposing values. They choose alternatives that promote higher as against lower priority values. As a result, the order of positive and negative associations between any specific behavior and the ten values tends to follow the order of the value circle. The value of a particular object depends on the necessity of it at a particular time and situation. Thus, the value of the particular object depends on the quality to satisfy the needs of the particular person.

4. Crisis of Human Values in the Present Age:-

A **crisis** is any event that is expected to lead to, an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group, community, or whole society. Crises are deemed to be negative changes in the <u>security</u>, <u>economic</u>, <u>political</u>, <u>societal</u>, or <u>environmental</u> <u>affairs</u>, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no <u>warning</u>. More loosely, it is a term meaning 'a testing time' or an 'emergency event'.

Value crisis is one of the burning problems in our daily life. Dowry system, divorce, abortion, animal sacrifice, superstitious beliefs, etc. are the burning problems in the present human society. These are ever growing problem. In order to uproot these, we provide value orientation classes so that, we may develop the optimum level of thinking. Women are actually facing existential crisis due to insecurity because of gang-rape, molestation, etc. Some people violate social norms, morality and ethics, penal code, constitutional and legal norms and people very often utilize freedom in the ultimate sense, consequence upon which we are facing problem in the society. Everybody is going to fulfil his or her need by utilizing ultimate freedom. He or she forgets the responsibility to society and tries to enjoy freedom in the ultimate sense. This is really a serious value crisis being faced by the present society.

Therefore, every person should be aware of removing the social problems which are deep-rooted in the human society. The values like truthfulness, kindness, honesty, law, justice, patriotism, humanism, etc. are to be preserved in society in order to regulate human life in a well-ordered manner. Value-crisis has emerged due to not understanding its proper role in our human society. To some thinkers, epistemological crisis and identity crisis are the two main crises of value which create the major problems like suicide, murder, robbery, extortion, rape, insurgency, or extremist problem and caste and class conflict, etc. The problem of value deterioration in our society can be stored out, if we are socially conscious about the deep-rooted values in our society. This awareness is possible only when we will flourish our philosophizing or spiritualizing force to assess the value in our life.

Philosophers today usually divide ethical theories into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. Normative ethics take on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on others. Finally, applied ethics involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment, or nuclear war. [9]

The case of human values contrasts sharply with that of world problems. Where it is common and meaningful to ask "do you have a problem", it is unusual and generally unacceptable to ask "do you have a value". The term is not common across languages and is not an early part of any vocabulary. It is far from being an immediate concern in any normal programme of action. And yet there is an intimate relationship between problems and values.

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[9] Tripathy, Preeti, *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, Axis Publications, New Delhi, 2011, p. 1.

Basically, no problem is recognizable except in the light of a value. For example, if "justice" is not a recognized "value", then "injustice" cannot be recognized as a problem.

It is stated that human values come to the fore as the driving force in many campaigns, where people's commitment is engaged through appeals to "freedom", "equality" and the like. As such, they too can unite opposing groups under the same banner but with much less ability to focus on the concrete remedial action required. Much cultural endeavour is associated with articulating the interplay of values.

Problems tend to be explicit, whereas values tend to be implicit. But both are artifacts of the human mind. Despite being treated as concrete, problems as such (like values) cannot be photographed. People interpret certain (photographable) conditions as problematic. But the future will recognize other problems in photographs of conditions today, which may now appear problem-free. It may be argued that awareness of a problem-value polarity is borne of exposure to certain conditions that cause some form of suffering. In different ways this suffering engenders learning through which sensitivity to a (new) value allows the suffered conditions to be constellated into a problem. In summary, whilst problems tend to be concrete, relatively unambiguous, detailed features of normal organized activity, values are much more ambiguously defined and less easily related to specific programmatic steps. Problems, provide focus through their concreteness and specificity in dealing with the present through established channels. Values provide focus through their inspirational value and their prescriptive potential in creating a more desirable future irrespective of established views.

Apart from natural crises that are inherently unpredictable most of the crises that we face are created by man. Hence the requirements of their being 'unexpected' depend upon man failing to note the onset of crisis conditions. Some of our inability to recognise crises before they become dangerous is due to denial and other psychological responses [4] that provide succor and protection for our emotions.

A different set of reasons for failing to notice the onset of crises is that we allow ourselves to be 'tricked' into believing that we are doing something for reasons that are false.

In other words, we are doing the wrong things for the right reasons. For example, we might believe that we are solving the threats of climate change by engaging in an economic trading activity that has no real impact on the climate. The effect of our inability to attend to the likely results of our actions can result in crisis.

An environmental disaster is a <u>disaster</u> that is due to human activity and should not be confused with <u>natural disasters</u>. In this case, the impact of humans' alteration of the <u>ecosystem</u> has led to widespread and/or long-lasting consequences. It can include the deaths of animals (including humans) and plant systems, or severe disruption of human life, possibly requiring migration.

A *natural disaster* is the consequence of a natural hazard (e.g. volcanic eruption, earthquake, landslide) which moves from potential into an active phase, and as a result affects human activities. Human vulnerability, exacerbated by the lack of planning or lack of appropriate emergency management, leads to financial, structural, and human losses.

Modern human society seems to be valued on the basis of material thing and its position. For instance, these days, a person who possesses wealth is respected and revered whereas a person without money is not honoured by anybody. The poor people, whoever they may be, have to woo the rich people just for the sake of earning their livelihood. Hence, human values have become neglected and meaningless, for human beings have become the means for the rich to earn money. People are so busy with earning material things that they have no time and no desire to think about the plight of humanity. For the self-centred there is no place for feelings of mercy, sympathy or kindness, etc. Nowadays, those who occupy high posts are respected. Thus, dignity seemed to be attached to a post or rank.

Today, educated people are so proud of their degrees that some of them detest illiterate people and avoid the company of commoners. Thus, they shun village life and live in towns or cities. Village people are deprived of all life's amenities. They are the candlestick of civilization: they stand erect with the candle resting on their head. Everyone gets light from it, while they suffer the discomfort of the wax trickling down their sides. In this way,

the dishonest of humanity or the neglect of human values has become a social malady in the present era.

Another glaring example of the disrepect or neglect of human values is the present judicial system. When arrested, people have to stand in the dock for the accused and face a trial based on evidence and the lawyer's eloquence, no matter if they are guilty or not. A criminal who can afford to hire a reputable lawyer may emerge from the legal processes unscathed, whereas an innocent person of meagre financial means who is unable to appoint a good counsel or lawyer, may end up in prison. If a thief is set free it is a crime, no doubt; but if an innocent person is punished it is a severe dishonour to humanity.

One of the primary causes of crime today is the lack of virtuous people. Those who are honest trying to follow moral principles in their private lives, but at times have to abandon morals under the pressure of poverty. Eventually they may find themselves in the dock of the accused, charged with committing theft. The law is not concerned with the poverty which forced them to steal, nor, indeed, does the law make provisions for the maintenance of their families if they are given a prison sentence. As a consequence, their children will have to become pickpockets and petty thieves and their unfortunate wives have to embrace an ignoble and sinful life in the underworld, because they have to survive.

It is a tradition to give preference to social value over human value. The spiritual revolutionaries want to strike at the root of this custom. For them, human value takes precedence over social value. Human beings form the society, and hence human value must lay the foundation for the social value. In other words, those who show respect to human value will be entitled to social value. Indeed, human value means nothing but to treat the joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations of human beings sympathetically, and see them merged in Cosmic Consciousness and established in divine majesty.

The value of human life surpasses all other values. So states and scriptures, societies and religions, acquire significance only insofar as they develop humanity to the maximum through learning, culture, physical health and economic plenty. It is for the sake of

developing humanity that civilization has so many institutions of different kinds, that states take their various forms, that theories proliferate, and that the scriptures abound in ordinances and regulations.

5. Conclusion:-

Human value is a theory about "what things in the world are good, desirable, and important."[10] Modern society has been undergoing significant crises for last few decades. Indeed, human values are now withering very fast for which we humans are most responsible. The age-old simplicity and close ties between family and clan and village co-operation are withering fast. The growth of different modern political parties among the people and the total involvement of the masses in party politics is a contributory factor to such development.

The modern people now think that their traditional socio-moral value is being threatened by the process of modernity. Therefore, their traditional social and moral system and identity are needed to be preserved by striking a balance between the traditional social and moral standards and the modern values. Value based education should be emphasized ranging from school to university level of education. They tend to reject everything traditional, their culture, their religion, their God, their morality, their values, their education, politics, etc., sometimes they regard their culture as inferior to the alternative models.

Human values play a very leading role in society. Human values take precedence over social values. Human value is the conception of mankind in general. It is true that the individual is the chief concern, but as long as individuals exist in society, it may be firmly said that the modern society will never outgrow its existence. Today with the technological advancement, communication has tremendously improved, therefore anything that we say, do or even think will have a direct bearing upon a larger group of people. Today, newspapers inform us of so many crimes: robbery, murder, genocide, injustice, and political and economic corruption. These do not pass by the millions of avid readers without creating at least some sort of influence upon their lives. Films and audio-visuals have been the greatest

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[10] Sinha, S.C., *Anmols Dictionary of Philosophy*, Anmols Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p. 196.

influence. Thus, one can finally arrive at a conclusion that the moral behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals affects the society at large. Consequently, human values play a vital role both for the integrity and longevity of any human society (L.B. Mawrie, 2005). [11]

Human value is generally known to be a moral standard of human behaviour. Social and moral values are essential elements of the collective lives of any community without which the present modern human society may not be able to continue to sustain. Therefore, human values should be preserved and protected. Looking at today's human society, one can see that it is deeply engrossed in materialism. Human values are beginning to lose their importance. The craze of materialism has been quite detrimental to the traditional social and moral system. The spirit of personal freedom has brought about the degradation in the moral life of the human community. Loss of moral integrity has always been responsible for the destruction of civilization in the past. There should be a general awareness being created by socio-cultural groups concerning the value of traditional customs and heritage. Today, 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. Human values may be treated as keys to the solution of the global problems.

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[11] The great Roman Empire collapsed because its citizens gave themselves to luxurious and immoral living. Thus, they became effeminate and when the Barbarians invaded the city, the Romans were no longer able to defend themselves. This is an example of how deterioration in social and ethical life can lead to self-destruction. Quoted by L.B. Mawrie in his *Introduction to Khasi Ethics*, DBCIC Publications, Shillong, 2005, p.11.

Notes and Reference

[1] Giddens, Anthony, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull Publications, London, 2011, p. 12.

[2] Giddens, Anthony, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull Publications, London, 2011, p. 12.

[3] Blackburn, Simon, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy,* Oxford, 1996, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 390.

[4] Sinha, S.C., *Anmols Dictionary of Philosophy*, Anmols Publications, New Delhi, 1990, p. 196.

[5] Audi, Robert, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 948.

[6] Giddens, Anthony, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull Publications, London, 2011, p. 11.

[7] Teichmann, Roger, *Nature, Reason and the Good Life – Ethics for Human Beings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, *2011*, P.ix.

[8] **7.** Norman, R., *The Moral Philosophers – An introduction to Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 1.

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