



In the current scenario of scams, corruption, atrocities on women etc, the real issue today is to build character in the young minds. Can education ensure a good moral character through a process of character education?

Character education can be defined as a process that encourages the students to develop fundamental moral and cultural values that affect their behaviour throughout in life rather than be just smart in lessons or in business. It involves understanding and practising values and cultures throughout one's life and in every step. Implementation of values and culture begins at schools and teachers play a very important role. Implicit in this statement is the way the teacher/ administrative staff and others relate to parents and students and the communication style the school administration and faculty have with their students. Character education is a planned comprehensive and systematic approach for teaching self-respect, responsibility, trustworthiness and citizenship and hence enables the individuals to be... [ed in their decision making processes] throughout their life.

The objectives of an effective character education can be stated as follows:

- To create an awareness, self-awareness, promotion of core ethical values.
- To reach students to act upon their core ethical values.
- To teach relevance of diversity.
- To offer opportunities for moral action.
- To support academic achievement.
- To develop intrinsic motivation.
- To develop positive leadership styles among students.

Detailed discussions with the knowledgeable persons indicate that the most powerful lessons about ethics and morality primarily emanate from the family life where children learn from family values. The discussions also reveal that students coming from value-based families are more armed in value

Towards an Educated India: Imperatives of Character Education



systems, positive leadership, practical intelligence, wisdom, social intelligence, spirituality and to act-in ways which involve giving love or being loved. The studies also reveal that there is a direct relationship between literacy rate and crime and violence committed: higher the literacy rate, lower is the crime rate.

Character education encourages students to cultivate virtues like cheerfulness of mind, serenity, purity, simplicity, magnanimity, forbearance, etc. These soft skills can be developed through education programs or projects that help in empowering students to make a difference in the lives of others. Such projects could include social projects like visits to a cancer hospital, distribution of food to slum children, blood donation camps, teaching to children of below the poverty line parents, visit to old age homes and spending a day or two there, among others. In addition, case studies involving CSR projects and discussions

on differentiations between the rightness and wrongness of these projects also help in a big way. Additionally, students could be made to work on projects, develop case studies which help in differentiating and bringing out the impact of these behavioural patterns.

The net effect of these projects would be to connect to the basic pillars of character like trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. With the objective of building a right character in the students, it is necessary that students are explained right and wrong behavioural aspects and impact thereof. In character education, parents also have a very important role to play. Character of a child cannot just be built in schools; it is also built at homes. Educational institutions, however, can play a major role by encouraging parents to check about the child's behaviour, encourage outside reading, help the child in group working, team building, etc.

Unless proper education is imparted among students about character, India is bound to have high rates of corruption, crime and violence. It takes character to build healthy relationships and improve work environment and finally world environment. Character education also encourages students to think critically and act responsibly. It is the development of knowledge, skills and abilities that enables the child to make informed and responsible choices.

Character education would help students develop some additional traits. These include initiative - the willingness to do the thing that should be done without someone's prompting one to do, imagination - the need to im, grow & develop new plans on old plans, enthusiasm - the power to enthuse

and be enthused and finally action - the need to do and not just think. This means that the student would learn aspects of self control, performing more than what he/ she is paid for, develop passion for whatever he/ she is doing, concentrate or focus on his/ her activities through persistence, tolerance, etc.

The critical aspect of this character education in schools / other educational institutions is the role played by the faculty - the first point of contact, the management of the institution and finally the society. Thus, at the end of this process students will be left with a legacy that will remain constant throughout life to know good, love good and do good to climb and help India become a superpower in the years to come.

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