

Topic: Development of Moral foundation among Children of 3 to 6 years age through Sri Aurobindo's Integral System of Education

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Abstract

In general, reading refines the human mind. Sri Aurobindo's literature reading transforms the nature of the being. Sri Aurobindo through his writings tries to upraise the present state of consciousness to higher stages of psychic and spiritual development. The primary objective of integral education is to help children to apprehend his spiritual destiny by living life of morality. Morality is part of human life, first step towards the religious life then towards the spiritual life. It is an effort to rule the external conduct by following certain cerebral rules or to form the character by these rules in the image of a certain psychological ideals on the other hand spiritual life goes beyond the mind. This paper focus on training of moral values among young children of 3 to 6 years of age by providing training to Anganwadi workers who deals with this age group in our country.

Keywords: Integral Education, Moral Values, Anganwadi workers etc.

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education could be a branch of education which relates to the teaching of youngsters from birth up to the age of eight either formally or informally. It's very beneficial for kids ages 3, 4 and 5 and infrequently remarked as preschool, pre-kindergarten, day care, preschool, Anganwadi centre or Early Education. This can be a preparation phase, because it prepares young minds for primary education. It aims at the holistic development of a pupil's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, aesthetic and moral needs so as to create a robust foundation for lifelong learning and brighter future. Children develop various forms of skills through early education like good habits, literacy and numeracy skills, emotional resilience and also develop strong lifelong love for learning. Daily routines also help children to feel safe, secure and assured. By special

attention before primary school helps in giving children a head starts for his or her future. The possible benefits derived from subordinate time of life progress range from improved growth and development to raised education outcomes to increased productivity in life (World Bank, 2017).

It's a process when toddler unfolds behavioural patterns from immature to mature, which enabled the kid to emerge from a dependent entity to an independent adult. The more a toddler receives, better his intelligence, his personality and his growth and development. Therefore, the requirement for more protection, care, affection, interaction, stimulation and learning. These are the rights of the kid and not mere concessions. (Bhavya,2007). Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is quite preparation for elementary school. It aims at the holistic development of a being it's moral, social, emotional, cognitive, moral and physical

requirements so as to make a dense and broad foundation for lifelong learning and security. ECCE has the likelihood to create nurture caring, capable humans and responsible future citizens (UNESCO, 2017).

Researches in the field of early childhood education find out significant reasons for early childhood Education:

□ Brain Development is highest during the first four years of life. The brain is creating important neuronal route to help to grow the child's capability to accomplish and function well. Children are able to learn at a rapid rate and want and need to learn new information. (Mustard,2007)

□ Going hand in hand with brain development is structure. Structure is vital for the young pre-schooler and the child thrives in a loving, structured environment with stimulating colours, sounds, textures, classroom layout, varying activities and books. (Mohanty,2007)

□ Social skills are next on the list and they are important to learn at this age rather than waiting until kinder garden age or later social skills such as learning how to listen, nice talks, brave talks, taking turns, acceptance of multi-cultural differences, apologies when to say please and thank you, how to speak in a group helping each other, learning compassion and empathy. There are so many opportunities for a child to develop social skills.

□ Academic are now being emphasized more than in past years because there is more research substantiality that a child is able to learn and perform more than what we used to expect. Also, there are more academic in the preschool curriculum now because the schools expect a child entering kindergarten to know what once used to be taught in kindergarten. (Aggarwal,2007)

□ Systematic provision of ECCE helps in development of children in variety of ways as group socialisation, inculcation of good habits, stimulation of creative learning process and enhanced scope for overall personality development. ICDS works as a support service

for universalisation of primary education, child care and pre-primary education (Nanda.2008)

□ "Planning and Management of School Education as per Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, Case Study of An Intervention" concluded that the base of integral growth stands for the unfolding of the psychic being which always act as a guide throughout the life of young children. Physical development and physical purity are important for the moral development of the child. Training of all the five senses is the essential component of integral education and can be achieved only when Chita, manas and nerve are pure (Kaushal, 2018)

□ In a research paper Rethinking Integral Education in India, it is stated that future of India depends on the education based on value-oriented, cultural character and nature. We should begin with the integration of our moral philosophy into the existing system of education. (Singh, 2016)

In the economy of man, the mental nature rests upon the moral, and the education of the intellect divorced from the perfection of the moral and emotional nature is injurious to human progress. Yet it is easy to arrange some kind of curriculum for early childhood education which will do well enough for the training of the mind, it is not yet have been possible to provide a suitable moral training under modern conditions for the pre-school education.

Moral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo

According to moral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, the ultimate end is God realisation. Man, world and God are the three forms of same reality. Thus, Good is all that helps the individual and the world towards their divine fullness and evil is all that retards or breaks up that increasing perfection. The word 'morality' connotes an enquiry of the control and mastery over impulses and desires under the guidance and supervening inspiration of a regular of conduct formulated in consideration of man's station and duties within the society or in

consideration of any discovered or prescribed intrinsic law of a perfect. Morality is usually conceived as preparation for spirituality.

Moral values can be practised among children irrespective of whether one believes in no religion. Morality can be independent of rituals and ceremonies prescribed by one particular religion. Dharma can be regarded as ordered system of moral and spiritual values. Values that we seek in the moral and spiritual domain are those of sincerity, faithfulness, obedience etc. These values are intrinsic and ends in themselves, irrespective of whether one holds any particular doctrine of religion, ethics or spirituality. According to Sri Aurobindo, Moral Education should be imparted at the end of infancy stage by the caretakers by proving as a good example of moral values while dealing with the children, as children at this stage imitate their elders.

Integral Education and Moral Foundation among 3- to 6-year-old Children

The attempt to make children moral by teaching moral and religious text books is a vanity and a delusion, precisely because the heart is not the mind and to train the mind does not essentially progress the heart. It would be an error to say that it has no effect. It throws certain seeds of thoughts into the Antahkara and if these thoughts become habitual, they influence the conduct. But the danger of moral text book is that they make the thinking of high things mechanical and artificial is inoperative for good. (Joshi,2008)

There are three things which are of the utmost importance in dealing with man's moral nature, the emotions, formed habits or associations and innate nature of a being. The only way to train children morally is to habituate themselves to the right emotions, the noblest associations the best mental, emotional and physical habits and the following out move into right action of the ultimate impulses of his vital nature. We should impose certain discipline on children, dress them into a certain mould, lash them into a desired path, but unless

we can get hearts and natures on our side, the conformity to the present imposed rule becomes a duplicitous and heartless, a standard, often a cowardly amenability.

As in the education of mind, so in the education of the heart, the best way is to put the child on the right road to his perfection and inspire him to follow it, observing, suggesting, serving but not interfering. The old Indian System of the guru commanding by his knowledge and sanctity the implicit obedience, perfect admiration, reverent emulation of the student was a far superior method of moral discipline. It is impossible to restore the ancient system but it is not impossible to substitute the wise friend, guide and helper for the hired instruction. The primary rule of moral training suggests and offer, not command or enforce. The most effective method of suggestion is by personal example, daily converse and therefore books read from day to day. The books should contain stories for younger children, the lofty examples of the past given, not as moral lessons, but as things of supreme human interest. The effect become highest if the personal life of the teacher or concerned care taker is itself moulded by the great things he places before his pupils.

It cannot however have full strength unless the early life is given a chance, within the restricted sphere, of representing in action the moral compulsions which rise within it. Every child, therefore incline practical opportunity as well as intellectual encouragement to develop all that's best within the nature. If he has had bad qualities, bad habits, whether of mind or of body, he should be treated harshly as a delinquent, but encouraged to induce them by the Raj yogic method of rejection and substitution. Falsehood being rejected whenever it rises into the mind and replaced by truth, fear by courage, selfishness by sacrifice and renunciation, hatred by love. (Aurobindo)

If the child from the very beginning of his existence, learns good habits, it'll save him a decent deal of trouble and inconvenience for the remainder of his life and besides people who have the responsibility of caring for him

during his first years will find their task pretty much easier. Another thing should be taught to child in early years for moral foundation is to enjoy cleanliness and observe hygienic habits. According to Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, the first rule of moral training is to suggest and invite, not command or impose. The best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily converse and the books read from day to day. Great care will have to be taken by caretakers that unformed virtues are not rejected as faults. The wildness and unruliness of many young children are only the overflowing of an excessive strength, greatness and nobility. They should be purified, not discouraged. Through moral training there is also need of progressing awareness and control of the character, culminating in its transformation.

As a Ph. D research work of department of Education, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar launched training programme of Six Weeks based on Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education for Anganwadi Workers of Punjab. While developing this programme of action we also kept in mind the roles and responsibilities expected from Anganwadi workers as a frontline workers of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

Training was meant to provide training to Anganwadi workers about informal education of Anganwadi children in physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual domains, to create self-awareness to build one's relationship with others, nature and surroundings, Anganwadi workers were also made conscious of their role in the development of their Anganwadi centres at village level, of their society and the country.

The training programme consist of yoga asanas, meditation, health and nutrition awareness, physical activities, cognitive and emotional activities for children of 3 to 6 years of age, it also works on development of concentration, attention, moral values among children. The day started with meditation, prayer and yoga asanas then Anganwadi Workers were made aware of the beneficial effects of particular Yoga and meditation

techniques with the help of presentations. Later, various types of sessions were taken on basics of early childhood education based on Integral Education on different topics as per the schedule using methodology of stories, group discussions, collaborations, consultations, individual introspection, role plays, games and activities.

During the training programme, training includes knowledge about basics of early childhood education and Integral Education, development of five domains of integral education like development of physical, mental, vital, psychic and spiritual domain for the development of integral being. It also aware Anganwadi Workers about the roles and responsibilities assigned to them by their profession, works on one's religious values, thoughts, attitudes and belief system. This was followed by detailed discussions individually and in groups on importance of morality as well as spirituality in life, importance of good sleep, importance of Health and Hygiene among Anganwadi children's etc.

The sessions were planned to bring out awareness of the physical and mental capacities and emotional responses of the Anganwadi Workers. They are made aware of their potentials, weaknesses, fears and aspirations through stories and situation analysis, we took them through a journey of their moral values and the morality crises that exists within oneself and in society at large. They were made to use inner dynamics which plays a major role in their behaviour. A lot of emphasis was placed on building up power of willingness to do, building confidence to handle situation peacefully with patience and tolerance.

They were also taught how to field visit with young children and attach them with natural surroundings and collect waste material to prepare decorative items, play material as well as low-cost teaching aid to teach children informally. Through the process of learning by doing, they prepared greeting cards, paper bags as well as variety of classroom material from waste material to make classrooms more colourful as per the choice of young children. As a part of advocacy and communication,

effective communication skills were also taught to the Anganwadi Workers so that they become more effective in fulfilling their responsibility of counselling parents regarding sending their children to Anganwadi centres at the age of three. Some plants and trees were also planted to train them regarding gardening at their respective centres.

Music, drama and dance were considered important source of stimulating patriotism and uplifting human consciousness. Keeping this aim in mind, music sessions were organised where songs of different languages and prayers by playing musical instruments were taught. Anganwadi workers were played variety of dramas on parent teacher's meetings and performed cultural dances in groups. The trainees learnt to live spiritually, collective life oriented and harmoniously. Each day, after training there is eating and living together which helped in bringing the trainee's close to each other in a healthy and meaningful way. The training was well appreciated as could be seen from the feedback received from the trainees.

The training programme based on Sri Aurobindo's concept of Integral Education was provided to 50 Anganwadi workers belong to 50 different Anganwadi centres of Amritsar district. 96% of Anganwadi workers are of the perception that training based on activities related to integral development of the children will really be helpful for moral foundation among 3- to 6-year-old children and they all will transfer their learning at their respective Anganwadi centres for the integral development of children of their centres.

Conclusion

The participants got an opportunity to develop higher life values through meditation and consultation on spiritual experiences, through cultural exchange activities, interaction with other trainees through benign influence of the ordered and creative life, through a union with nature, through the spiritually charged atmosphere of the place. They learned to channelise their energies along with positive

constructive and creative lines and motivated to apply learned methods and strategies in their day-to-day activities at Anganwadi Centres.

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