

## **Inculcation of Value Education Among Students: vis-à-vis Sumi Traditional Values**

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### **Abstract**

*Values play an important role in the development of one's personality and considered the nerves of human civilization. However, Globalization has wide ranging impact on everything else connected with our lives and impacted our entire culture and value system leading to cultural rootless. Considering the importance of values, the*

*National Education Policy (2020) highlights the need for Indian Knowledge, values and culture including indigenous and tribal knowledge in view of the growing decadence of essential values and increasing cynicism in society. The NEP suggests that with a well-designed system of curriculum, to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of desirable ethical, spiritual and social values. Education should foster universal and eternal values, which will help in developing balanced individual and in creating a humane society. The study intends to revisit and reconnect the Sumi social cultural ethos and mores to inculcate value education among the present millennial generation.*

**Keywords:** Value Education, Modern, Millennial, Culture, Sumi, Traditional, Curriculum.

## **1. Introduction**

Values play an important role in the development of one's personality and considered the nerves of human civilization. However, Globalization has wide ranging impact on everything else connected with our lives and impacted our entire culture and value system leading to cultural rootless. There is decadence of value ethos in our society. People all over the world are often frequented by different vices. No nation or community is free from social menaces. Considering the importance of values, the National Education Policy (2020) highlights the need for Indian Knowledge, values and culture including indigenous and tribal knowledge in view of the growing decadence of essential values and erosion of indigenous knowledge and culture and increasing cynicism in society. The NPE suggests that with a well-designed system of curriculum, it is possible to make education a soft power tool for the cultivation of desirable ethical, spiritual and social values and should help to eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism. Education inculcates universal and eternal values like compassion, courage, humane society.

## **2. Objective**

- a) To recollect the age-old practices of the Sumi Naga tribe.
- b) To make a comparison of the traditional values in relation to the present modern complex human society.
- c) To revive, strengthen, promote and preserve folk values for harmonious existence.

### **3. Methodology**

The study was historical narrative in nature, and method applied was Philosophical enquiry under the ambit of Humanities and Social Sciences. The study comes under the domain of axiology as value is an inherent asset of all human races. It delved into the age-old practices of the Sumi tribe of Nagaland as it is explicitly on axiology in relation to millennial harmonious co-existence. Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used in the interpretation. Primary sources were in the form of unstructured interview, information were obtained with key informants of the community such as elders, leaders, youths, working person, housewives and students. Secondary sources of data were from Published articles, books, journals, official records.

### **4. Meaning and Definition of Value**

Oxford dictionary defines value as “to consider to be of great worth or importance” or “standards or principles considered valuable or important in life.” “Value means primarily to prize, to esteem, to estimate. It means the act of cherishing something, holding it dear and also the act of passing judgment upon the nature and the amount of its value as compared with something else (Dewey, 2004).”

Values are also viewed as socially approved goals and desires that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning and become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations. It is the standard of behavior in day-to-day activities and guiding principles in critical life situations, a standard that guide and determine behavior on a long term basis toward certain goals in preference to others. It is also a relationship between a person and an environmental situation which evoke an appreciative response in the individual. Any

human activity, thought or idea, feeling, sentiment or emotion, which could promote self-development of the individual in all its dimensions could be said to constitute a value. A person is known by the values he/she maintains.

#### **4.1. Meaning of Value Education**

Value Education refers to planned educational actions aimed at the development of proper attitudes, values, emotions and behavior patterns of the learners. It is the education that is concerned with the transformation of an individual's personality and aims at inculcating the children's sense of humanism through good citizen and ethical practice.

Hogan (1973) believes that moral behavior is determined by the factors like Socialization, Moral judgment, Moral feelings, Empathy, Confidence and knowledge of the child. Value education helps in development of Character, Good conduct, Moral integrity, Self discipline, Compassion, love for all living beings, responsibility and many more positive qualities in the students.

#### **4.2. Causes of Value Degeneration at the Altar of Urbanization and Civilization**

##### **• Value erosion**

The advancement in science and technology without simultaneous development in moral values has negative repercussion and we are going through a crisis of values in every aspects of our lives. Crime, violence, cruelty, greed and apathy to human suffering have impacted in all aspects of our life-political, economic and social. Pursuit of material wealth and selfish ends at any cost has become ultimate aim of life.

- **Education equated with transmission of knowledge**

Education is a process of initiating the learner to good life. But the present education system, primarily undue importance is given to transmission of knowledge based on information oriented which takes care of only the intellectual development of a child and cultivation of occupational skills. Here arises a question; is education aimed at character-building in the learners? In the present system of education there seems to be a “moral vacuum.” As Gandhi point out that, education without character, leads to criminality; educated persons have greater opportunities to indulge in crimes and that too committing them most efficiently and technically.

- **No social concern**

Today one sees everywhere pervasiveness and general insensitivity to finer feelings of welfare and social concern. The self-aggrandizement of human consumerism culture, luxurious mechanized material comfort life propelling our physical environment- rivers, mountains, forests, plants and animal life to extinction, extreme pollution and resources depleted bearing the brunt of human selfishness.

- **Indifference to National welfare**

Narrow mindedness, communalism, air-brushed tribalism, linguistic division and irrational outlooks have divided the people and come in the way of developing a unified National and International outlook.

- **Inhibition on one’s culture & influence of other cultures**

The world is a global village and culture is fluid, however, colonization, modernization and ignorance have made the Nagas and the especially the youths have inhibition on

one's own culture and adopt blind imitation to western and Korean culture. The present generation failed to understand the importance of the Naga folk values, which is the identity heritage of the Nagas.

- **Breakdown of parental control of children in families**

Research shows Parental conflict, stress resulting from separation, poverty, financial hardship can all negatively affects mental health, poor mental health affects the ability of parents whether married, separated or divorced which in turn impacts on children's well-being (Mooney, Oliver & Smith, 2009).

- Lack of respect for authority, seen through the brazen breaking of the law and total disregard for rules and regulations.

- **Abuse of technology**

Technology is a tool when used appropriately can have benefit for instance like communication, productivity, social connectivity, education and expression, digital literacy, cognitive enhancement, creativity. However, technology abuse has become a major concern given the difficulty to distinguish its frequent use from abuse. Research shows that smart phones addicted teenagers had significant scores in depression, anxiety, insomnia, severity and impulsivity. World Health Organization had declared 'Gaming Disorder' in its list of mental health (Hagler, 2018). The internet can be attributed as one detrimental factor for rise in rape of minor, women, old age person, crime and social ills in society.

What we need under the present circumstances is a drastic change in one's outlook on life, which could be brought about by value education, imparted systematically right from the

family. We know today's children are tomorrow's citizens. If we give good education to the present day children, the future of the next generation will be good as they are built on sturdy foundation of 'Values.' Value education is the solution for all types of problems. Thereby the study on Sumi folk values is relevant both from the point of view of reviving the age old socio-cultural mores and usages and the need of the present society to imbibe human values for harmonious existence.

### **5.1. Brief Profile of Sumi Naga**

The Sumis are one of the major tribes of Nagaland and it is believed that they migrated from east Myanmar and North of Manipur. They are mostly inhabited in Zunheboto district and spread to different parts of Nagaland and some small parts of Assam as well, they share close affinity with each other in terms of land and cultural heritage. The institution of the chieftainship '*Akukau*' is the common feature of the Sumi Naga. It is hereditary and the chief plays an important and dominant role in village polity empowered with political, economic, administrative and military functions. Sumi Naga is a Patriarchal society.

### **5.2. Sumi Traditional Values**

The traditional society of the Nagas and the Sumis in particular stood on the sturdy foundation of customs. There is a hope of picking the disappearing trail from the old traditions before they ultimately dilute with the deluge of modernity. Some of the Sumi-Naga traditional values are illustrated in brief.

#### **• Aesthetic Value**

It is a set of principles attached appreciation of beauty, form, harmony, fine arts- drawing, painting, music-dance, poetry,

sculpture, literature, clean surroundings etc. (a qualitative idea). The Sumi-Nagas are aesthetic in nature by which they exhibit the spirit of humanity, peace and affections.

### • **Music, Songs and Dances**

The Sumis are known as lovers of music, songs and dances; they sing and express their feelings. They have their own way of singing and dancing which they inherit from their forefathers passing on from one generation to another. It is the only tribe in the state where both female and male does not perform together in dancing. All men and women of the past were folk singers –there are different songs and dances for different occasions, the themes are usually connected with events, it convey a specific act of heroism, narrate events of the past, relate a love story, war or history and talks of person deeds. There were songs of work in the field; different songs for different work seasons are still in use. The musical ingenuity and the lyrics of poetry of the old folks are simply awesome. There are a number of love songs in the style of poetry.

### • **Dignity of Labor**

The Sumi like other Nagas were hard-working people. Culturally, every adult had to live on his own labor. Dependence on others and begging was unknown in the society. Even the member with some physical challenges did what one could do to help family members so that he should not be a liability to the family and the society.

### • **Rule of Customary Law**

Sumi Naga polity was governed by oral customs and practices. Mores represented the living character among the Sumi-Naga. Customary law was operative both at the



individual level of understanding of his cosmos, and at the larger level of maintaining order in the community. The law was unwritten tradition that was prominently manifested in its forbidding value. The word ‘forbid’ was more of ‘taboo’ in its application.

- **Community Living**

From the beginning, the Nagas had the culture of community life. They moved in groups during migration and that pattern had the influence on community living. Sumi and Nagas in general are close-knit society. In all the prime activities, like house construction, cultivation, hunting, fishing, celebration of festivals and gaiety, in times of adversity, etc., it is community activity.

- **Morung/Dormitory**

Dormitory in Sumi language is called “*Apuki*” for Boys dorm and “*Iliki*” for Girls’ dorm. It was the most important institution centered on the social religious education and cultural activities of the young people where they were taught the art and craft of war, dance, folk song, social etiquettes, handicrafts, importance of traditions and the valor of the ancestors’ heroic deeds. Well being of the village was indicated by well maintained “*morung.*”

- **Home as an Institution**

Naga tradition is an oral tradition and Sumi Naga home was a miniature institution. Family comprised of father, mother, children, paternal unmarried aunt or uncle. Family was an agent of cultural transmission from one generation to the next generation. Father teaches his son on life skills and values and a mother teaches her daughter on art and craft of pottery, weaving and good home maker skills. A story-

knowing father was like a history teacher for his children. Oral narration of stories about the near and far ones went on for generations.

- **Working peer group**

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Sumi community and the age-old practice of the Sumi peer working groups in the village known as '*alozhi*'. In most cases the groups are heterogeneous and forms working team for cultivation; working group of men folk, women and young peers of boys and girls. These working groups vary in numbers and the size. The peer group engaged themselves on rotation basis and work in the fields of their member group.

- **Giving refuge to a defenseless stranger**

During the past, the Sumi had been practicing a magnanimous culture of rescuing any stranger who took shelter to his house when running for life. If any defenseless person escapes into a house and declared that he/she was in danger, then there was no time to seek the reason and his identity. By tradition the host was bound to rescue the man.

- **Respect for the elders and aged persons**

Respect and honor are the pre-requisite elements and characteristics conditioned for the Sumi-Naga at all levels of life. The Sumis are known for their loyalty towards their elders and obedience to the established authority. Law passed by the Chief and elders for either individuals or community as a whole is observed and obeyed. Besides it, a young lad of Sumi would never dare to overtake an elderly person carrying a heavy load back to village without helping the later. On reaching the destination, the old person would invoke upon the young lad the blessings of god.

- **Self-restrain before elders**

The Sumi practice self-restrain in speaking and eating ahead of older people. When any formal meeting is held and the members have the chance to speak, younger members would restrain themselves giving the chance to the older citizen to break the ice. A young boy would offer his couch to the older man in the meeting. It is the moral and social ethics they had embraced upon from the time immemorial. So also, when the meal is to serve, it is the older member who must be honored with the privilege to lead the rest. The breach of such etiquette was believed to cause premature graying of hair and losing of teeth.

- **Abstained from stealing**

Stealing of any kind is taboo in Sumi tradition. In the olden days of yore, when the owner goes out for working in the fields, the practice of keeping cross sign with two bamboo poles with at the door “*Akhadu*”, symbolizing the door is locked and the owner is away. Abstention from stealing as a habit is taught from early childhood at home. Old beliefs such as these were practiced: ‘it is taboo to steal from the snares someone has laid’.

- **Hospitality**

Generosity and hospitality are the interwoven natures of Sumi. These noble characters spring from the bosoms of the simple-minded Sumis whose pleasure rest in pleasing others. People can see a surprised reversal of pre-disposed conception as they get closer and mingle with the Sumi Nagas.

- **Simplicity and Frankness**

Simplicity and frankness were the hallmark of the Sumis.

Their mind was simple and pure just as the entire scheme of life was regulated by the nature of simple living. Where the mind was not contaminated with the kind of present complexities and anxieties, where there was no chance for unfair dealings, jealousy and envy, and where life was self-dependent, simple living was the rule of the days.

- **Honesty and Integrity**

It is an aged old practice of Sumi that once a friendship is developed they value it and honour it. It was a taboo for the Sumi to tell a lie to others. The Sumi-Nagass were known by other Nagass for their honesty and integrity.

- **Honour for Land Boundary**

There are two types of land ownership among the Sumis; community property and individual land-ownership. In Sumi traditions, only the male member(s) of the family inherits the land. The Sumi retain and cultivate well-defined plots of ancestral land. It was taboo to touch or displace the demarcation boundary and if one tries to distort the boundary demarcation it was believed that some kind of bad omen befalls upon the family members, thereby the Sumis honor the land boundary.

- **Conflict Resolution**

The Sumis resort to an oath taking as a traditional method of conflict resolution. In regard to decision in a judgment when the matter becomes too complicated and the guilty refuses to give in to the verdict, it may be the case of land dispute, theft, and other offenses and crimes within the village members or inter-village cases. An oath is resorted to as the last option and when absolutely unavoidable.

## **Findings and Suggestions**

During British rule in pre-independence period in India, the education curriculum was on 3 Rs' i.e. reading, writing and simple arithmetic to cater the clerical and auxiliary jobs. In post independence period, nothing much had changed in India's educational system in thrust areas. In Nagaland context, the formal education system was a contribution of Christian missionaries in nineteenth century, the process of Christianization had adversely affected the socio-cultural life of the Nagas. Moreover, for the Nagas straight from head hunting practice to the present modern era of information technology, there was no gradual transitioning phase, Nagas were simply thrown in the arms of modernity and for them it was like they were living their life in fast lane; which they had no control over the modernization trends that carries along with it. The course curriculum and syllabi from primary to higher education miss-match the fine tuning balance of traditional and modernity and restricts innovative ideas, lacking in the socio-cultural foundation needs of present society. It needs a change befitting to the needs of present millennial.

Education as soft power tool plays significant role in transmitting desired value based, skills, aptitude, attitude, knowledge for good life. In order to bridge the gap, the past to the present modern education system and to maintain smooth continuity, it must aim to revived, promote and preserved the rich traditional socio-cultural heritage. Therefore, it is imperative to design the curriculum to achieve these objectives, thus curriculum and methodology of imparting pedagogy should be in tandem with values. It is pertinent to adopt variety of activities and strategies to be employed to impart value education, which includes:

- To develop healthy attitude towards life and balance personality.
- Besides imparting theoretical knowledge, equipped the pupils with vocational life skills lesson through hands on practical classes on weaving, basketry, pottery, carpentry, gardening, paddy cultivation, fishing, sculpture, painting, folklore, dance and music in order to develop social and enrich cultural competency.
- Need to revive and preserve the Naga traditional culture, ethical social values such as honesty, integrity, frankness, inclusiveness, bravery, loyalty, trustworthy, hospitability, adventurism, community sense of social ownership, etc.
- Through synthesizing traditional and modern education the students should be able to learnt to adjustment with the ever changing environmental conditions and modify the behavior accordingly.
- Imparting orientation training and development of teachers on soft skills as teachers is role model and they are investing on human resource development.
- Exposure to cultural value-loaded literature on languages, social customs and practices, history, polity, etc through audio and video shows, followed by discussion for conservation and development of linguistic skill studies and cultural heritage.
- Special time allotted in the time-table to inculcate values in a deliberate manner.
- Analysis of drama, music and dance concepts to instill aesthetic sense and ethical values and reasoning for harmonious existence.
- Visit to places of historical importance, etc.

- Exposure to exhibitions and cultural festivals can be organized for cultural enrichment.

## **Conclusion**

With the advent of modern education in the country, there has been a gradual erosion of values in the society. This is because character training and value education have been ignored in our educational system. It is proved that songs, stories, skits, dialogues, discussions, role-plays, and anecdotes from eminent personalities, festivals, and documentations of oral culture could be used as effective strategies for imparting value education. It is evident that value education has a crucial role to play in empowering individuals/human development and building sound community. Hence, a complex network of environmental factors such as home, parents, teachers, peer and working group, community, the media and serenity at large influence inculcation of values. Thus, value education is the medium to keep the youth abreast in rapid forces of changes in modern globalised state without compromising our identity and heritage.

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