VALUES

Values are ideals held by people that guide them towards desirable behaviour. Values are like an anchor and lighthouse – they hold us steadfast in the face of temptations and show us the right path in times of confusions. Values are innate as well as adopted.

Innate values can be due to our genes or conscience whereas other values are imparted by social institutions and influences. This happens through a complex and extensive process of inculcation of values. The biggest role in value inculcation is however, played by family, education and society as these are the most proximate influences around a person. Value inculcation is commonly known as socialization whereby a person is moulded to fit well in a society. The process of value inculcation is not just natural but also a very important process.

Importance of value inculcation

1. Values are ideals that guide us towards ethical actions. For example, patriotism, gender equality can be achieved with proper value inculcation among people since childhood.
2. Values inculcated by the society around us make us compatible with that social system and ensure coexistence and stability.
3. Values enable people to build a certain kind of personality which is a defining part of who they are.
They enable us to take positions on various socio-economic issues around us.

4. Values remain **stable and effective** at all times and govern human actions irrespective of situations and circumstances. They are reliable and **self-sustaining**. For example, civil servants like Ashok Khemka and Pradeep Kasni have endured with integrity despite contrary pressures due to their strong values.

5. Values can be inculcated very **easily in childhood** and they go on to have a lasting impact on the conduct of an individual for their whole life.

**Process of value inculcation**

1. **Obedience**: Up to 5 years old. At this stage, a child does what he/she is asked to do. Values are passed on to children through the use of commands.

2. **Reward & Punishment**: From 5 to 10 years old. At this stage, kids do the ethical things in order to escape punishment and fetch reward. Values are adhered to by children for the purpose of loss and gain.

3. **Good Boy**: From 10 to 15 years old. At this stage, adolescents do the right things in order to gain social respect and appreciation. Values are respected by people as it fulfils their social needs. During this stage values help in conformity and interpersonal accord.

4. **Rules and Regulations**: From 15 to 20 years old. At this stage, people do the ethical things in order to obey the rules and regulations of the society and maintain stability and order. Values are adhered to for the purpose of peace and stability. 90% of people remain at this stage of moral development.
5. **Social Contract**: From 20 to 25 years old. At this stage, people show ethical behaviour because it is in their own interest and in the interest of larger social order. People acknowledge that every member of society has to follow the ethics so as to coexist in a healthy manner.

6. **Internalization**: Beyond 25 years old. At this stage, people develop their own set of values and behave accordingly. They are not governed by external moral code but by their own values and hence, often show unique radical behaviour. For example, **Bhagat Singh** was driven by his own values and not the prevalent socio-political norms.

**Sources of values**

Values are imparted most effectively at an early age as the **child is like clay** and can be moulded as per the requirement. Values are imparted to children by credible institutions that are trusted by the children and are present around the child for the most amount of time. The process of imparting values to young kids for making them good social beings is called socialization.

Our social life is designed in such a way that each individual is properly socialized for their future life in the society. There are three main social institutions that inculcate values within us — **family, education and society**. They all act together to inculcate the desired values within us.

“There is no such thing as a self-made man. We are made up of thousands of others.”

— George Mathew Adams

“If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher.”
Role of Family

How family imparts values?

1. **Child rearing practices**: The manner and methods of upbringing imparts certain values to the children. Studies like the contact comfort study have shown that children who have received personal touch from their parents turn out to be more emotionally stable, compassionate, calm and composed.

2. **Observational learning**: Children observe what happens at home and begin to see such behaviour as normal and morally correct. This is a basic process of attitude formation. For example, children who witness domestic violence and gender discrimination at their home themselves develop similar vices and fail to develop values of gender equality.

3. **Role models**: Children see their parents as role models and authority figures. They emulate the behaviour of their parents, grandparents, elder siblings etc as it carries credibility and trust. For example, daughters dress like their mothers, sons talk and behave like their father.

4. **Teachings**: Families make special efforts to impart certain life lessons to their children through prayers, bedtime stories, real life incidents etc. These teachings have a lasting impact on the children and builds some values. For example, narrating Panchtantra stories was a common way of imparting values.

5. **Joint family**: The joint family structure stands for certain values like tolerance, cooperation, sacrifice, care. Living in a joint family and its healthy functioning imparts these values to the children.
6. Social influence (relatives, meetings): Apart from immediate family, relatives also give many teachings and life lessons to children. Family meetings are also an occasion where children are imparted values like respect, courtesy, friendliness etc.

7. Reward and punishment/Rules and regulations: In their day to day functioning, families frame certain rules and regulations which are to be followed by children. They are rewards for adherence and penalized for violation. For instance, when children clean up their room or show good behaviour, they are treated with sweets or given permission to go out with friends.

8. Authority: Members of the family carry some authority and hence, their directions are obeyed by children. Children also take their advice effectively and imbibe them as values. For example, grandfather and father often teach responsibility and toughness to the kids.

9. Traditions and customs: Families follow certain practices as a norm which are always adhered to by the children. Traditions themselves become a value for children due to regular and repetitive behaviour. For example, touching elders’ feet before leaving home makes children develop a respect for elders.

Strengths of family for value inculcation

1. Family is the first place of socialization for the child and acts as the first school. Thus, it plays a special role in imparting values to children.

2. Family is forever and continues to act as a source of values and lessons for a person. Such regular contact increases its impact on value inculcation in a person.

3. Children spend maximum time with their families and hence, it has a key role in imparting values to them.

4. Family consists of diverse kinds of people. Parents, grandparents, relative and siblings all have different personalities and values and thus impart different
values to a child. Together they impart diverse set of values to a child for holistic development.

5. People **trust** their families and thus give them due attention and respect when it comes to developing values.

6. A child is like a **blank slate** at early age and can be taught whatever values the family desires. Due to this first comer advantage, the role of family becomes very important.

7. Family has the **right** to adopt various means (both hard and soft) to inculcate values and thus has greater means at its disposal. In Indian society, a family is given lot of rights over its members. A family can use directions, incentives, punishments and so on.

8. Families can also effectively **observe and monitor** the inculcation of values among children and their adherence as children spend most amount of time with their families. Remedial action can be taken by families as and when children deviate from the values.

“**As goes the family, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live**” – Pope John Paul II

“**We are the average of the five people we spend the most time with**” – Jim Rohn

**Problems in the role of family**

1. Family values might often be **regressive and unjust**. For instance, some **patriarchal families** may teach gender inequality to children and paint an unfair picture of women.

2. Different members in a family may impart **conflicting values**. For instance, **grandparents** often ask children to come back home before it gets dark while **parents** may be ready to give greater liberty.

3. Families often fail to **practice what they preach** and children might observe the hypocrisy and thus, lose
faith in the process. For example, some parents might teach integrity and honesty to children but might take bribes themselves for a luxurious life.

4. Family structure is changing nuclear families are increasing in society. In such families, especially in urban areas, there are lesser number of members who spend time with each other and hence, value inculcation weakens.

5. In modern society, children are losing touch with their families. Boarding schools, tuitions leave less time for contact between children and families. Besides, use of technology such as mobiles and social media also add to the disconnect.

6. In modern materialistic society, children are imparted values of competition, success etc. but not the values of love, honesty, compassion etc. Due to the increasing rat race and materialism, families are imparting only a limited set of values to children. For instance, bright successful students in IITs are committing suicides because of lack of social values and life skills.

7. Inadequate autonomy is granted to children by the families to reflect upon their lives and value system. Due to this, values are only externally accepted but not internalized and thus, adherence is weak.

Role of Education

How education imparts values?

1. Curriculum: The syllabus and content of education is designed so as to not only teach science and maths but also moral values. Hitopadesh, Preamble of Constitution, Indian tolerance and pluralism are taught to children for inculcation of values. Recently, Delhi government has formulated the Happiness Curriculum to ensure inculcation of right values among students.

2. Teaching tools: Teaching uses tools like technology, case studies, project work to enhance the effectiveness
of learning and ensure lasting impact upon children.

3. **Visits and outings**: Students are taken to places and events which teach certain life lessons to children. For example, students are taken to Mother Teressa homes, slums to inculcate compassion and sensitivity among children.

4. **Disciplines**: Specific subjects like moral science, home science etc. are designed to make students aware of moral concepts and their importance. When students know about moral issues, they are likely to be more positive and sincere towards them.

5. **Community work**: It is a specific technique of learning and inculcating values like team work, empathy, care, unity etc. It is known as Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW) in educational curriculum. Gandhi ji’s Wardha scheme of education also emphasized upon community work, manual labour etc. for the same purpose.

6. **Observation**: Students observe the behaviour of fellow students, teachers etc. and they emulate good behaviour in order to imbibe good values.

7. **Peers**: Students get feedback from their peers about their behaviour. Social appreciation and sanction both work to inculcate values and peer pressure works effectively among people at young age.

8. **Teachers as role models**: Students emulate the behaviour of teachers who themselves behave as per a certain code of conduct. When teachers direct students to behave in a particular manner, students take it seriously.

9. **Dialectics**: This means using the technique of debate and discussion to make students aware of moral values and their importance. Socrates devised this technique based on the idea that when people lack values due to lack of proper knowledge and proper knowledge will lead to right behaviour. This idea is most used in higher education and can be used to create leaders of tomorrow.

10. **Culture and discipline**: Every school has a particular philosophy, motto and culture. These ideas are
combinations of certain values and students imbibe those values by adhering to the particular culture.

11. Reward and punishment: Value-laden behaviour is rewarded by institutions whereas as bad behaviour is penalized. In order to protect self-esteem, students develop the desired values and behave accordingly.

“Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.”

— C.S. Lewis

“Intelligence plus character, that is the true goal of education.”

— Martin Luther King

Strengths of education for value inculcation

1. School is the first formal place of socialization for the child and hence, its importance and impact are high upon the child. For this reason, place of schooling is given importance in job recruitment and admissions in higher education.

2. Schools exercise authority and control over children and hence have high impact upon values and behaviour of children.

3. Teachers and principals act as role models and students emulate their behaviour and follow their instructions.

4. People spend large amount of time in their schools and colleges and hence the impact on value system naturally increases.

5. Schools use well-designed pedagogic teaching methods and hence, the psychological impact of instruction is high.

6. Peer pressure, mutual comparison, competition take place in educational institutions and hence, students imbibe desirable traits more effectively.
7. **Cognitive methods** such as debates and discussions are used in education, particularly in higher education. These have high impact as they appeal to reason and logic.

**Problems in the role of education**

1. **Nature of education** in modern times is focused largely on technical knowledge and less on values and morals. The colonial approach to education is focused on creating skilled labour but not good human beings.  
2. **Politicization** of education often leads to conflict over the selection of values that are to be taught. For instance, recently there have been reports of tweaking primary education syllabus with change of State governments.  
3. **Rote learning** is emphasized in present scheme of education and learning by experience, observation, activity etc. are avoided. Thus, moral issues are not effectively communicated.  
4. **Quality of education** is on the decline due to lack of quality teachers, infrastructure etc.  
5. **Access to quality education** is limited in reach and also, there is inequity within society in terms of access to education. Thus, value inculcation also suffers.  
6. **Other institutions** such as family and society often have an overriding effect on a person’s values. For example, young civil servants are known to ask for dowry despite their high levels of education.

**Role of Society**

**How society imparts values**

1. **Religion**: Religion is one of the most important social institutions in the world and carries a set of values that are to be imbied by its followers. Moreover,
religion carries **great weight** among people particularly in India and thus, plays key role in value inculcation.

2. **Tradition and customs**: Such social practices are sincerely followed by people from generation to generation and are thus steady ways to pass on values. Traditions and customs are also based on various values such as **loyalty (rakshabandhan)**, **courage (tilak)** and thus their practice inculcates the respective values.

3. **Politics**: Politics of the day is based on values i.e. what people want. Political issues and promises shape the thought process and values of people, especially young citizens. For example, the **Anti-Emergency student movement of 1975** inculcated among youth the values of liberty, democracy, constitutionalism etc.

4. **Economy**: The nature of economy and market affects the value system of the players involved and decides what is valued by people. For instance, **socialist economy** inculcates values of unity, equity, temperance etc. whereas **market economy** inculcates values of creativity, competition, prosperity etc.

5. **Media**: In the 21st century, media is continuously present around us in various forms – electronic, print, digital etc. Mass media and mass communication affects the values of the people by determining what people think, what people give importance to and so on. For this reason, **governments around the world try to control** the media so as to control the value system of the people.

6. **Civil society**: Social and civic organizations mobilize people based on a common cause and promote their cause using media, demonstrations etc. and thus, influence people’s values. This happens through observation and inspiration among the masses. For instance, the **Jan Lokpal movement** in India in 2013 enhanced the values of honesty and integrity among people.

7. **Local community**: Every local community has certain values and norms which are passed on to everyone in the
community through the mechanism of social influence. This happens so as to achieve social stability and harmony through common values. For instance, the local Dongria Kondh tribal community of Odisha valued their sacred Niyamgiri mountain more than jobs and livelihood and hence, fought against mining projects.

8. Leadership: Social, political, economic and other leaders have significant effect on values of people. They mould people’s attitudes through persuasion. People also tend to imitate their leaders. Max Weber calls such social authority as ‘charismatic authority’ through which leaders control societies. For example, celebrities affect people’s values in terms of their dressing, eating, behaviour etc.

Strengths of society for value inculcation

1. Stability and harmony: Society inculcates such values among people which match with those of the society. This ensures that individuals fit in with the society and the social order is sustained. For instance, society teaches young persons to respect its old traditions and customs.

2. Diversity: The society is a large set of various actors that have different values to contribute and through different means. Diversity ensures inculcation of variety of values and holistic development of individuals. It also gives choice and freedom to individuals to choose their preferred values.

3. Social influence: Every individual has a natural and innate need to be accepted and liked by the group around them. They also imitate good examples around them. Hence, influence of the society drives them to adopt similar values.

4. Enforcement: Society also has formal as well as informal ways to incentivize adherence to some values whereas it penalizes breach of certain values. For example, some societies use censure or boycott as a way to ensure
adherence to its value system.

5. **Credibility**: Many actors in the society enjoy sufficient credibility in people’s eyes and therefore have special impact on values held by individuals. For example, *teachers, leaders, celebrities, religious leaders etc.* have influence and their teachings are accepted on face value.

**Problems in the role of society**

1. **Heterogeneity**: Diverse societies (like India) offer *a diverse set of values that might often be conflicting* and hence, confuse individuals. For example, in present times, Indian society has both spiritual and materialistic values to offer.

2. **Orthodoxy**: Societies often suffer from backwardness and social ills. Wrong values continue to be promoted by societies in the absence of reform. For example, *dowry* is often valued and celebrated in some sections of Indian society.

3. **Corruption**: Social institutions such as *education, religion, politics* are found to suffer from lack of integrity and honesty. Institutions and the leaders *indulge* in misdeeds and *people lose trust* due to which value inculcation is undermined.

4. **Misdirected**: Sometimes societies head in wrong directions due to larger political, economic and other phenomenon around them and thus, wrong types of values are inculcated. For example, *children in present times* are imparted values of rote-learning, materialism etc. but are not encouraged to be thoughtful, creative and so on.

5. **Introversion**: Some people have limited interaction with society and hence, cannot absorb the values imparted by society.

6. **Boomerang effect**: Sometimes society uses harsh and unreasonable methods to inculcate values which are not
understood by individuals. Instead, individuals are repelled by such influence which becomes counter-productive. For example, it is seen that when families exert excessive control over children, they tend to become more rebellious and mischievous. When society imposes its will over the youth without due explanation, it often leads to radical revolutionary tendencies among youth.

It can be seen that value inculcation is a complex and prolonged process. It is controlled by many actors which have different values to offer. The institutions of family, education, community etc. have strongest influence upon people and are thus, most important. Each institution has its pros and cons whose interplay can be seen in the form of complex value systems and personalities that people develop.