

Fostering Harmony Through Value – Based Education In A Pluralistic Society: A Study In The Light Of Bethany Educational Society Core Values In Karnataka

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Abstract

Purpose: The primary purpose of this study is to examine how value-based education fosters harmony in a pluralistic society, with special reference to the core values upheld by the Bethany Educational Society in Karnataka. In the context of a diverse society such as India, the study seeks to explore the role of education in promoting mutual respect, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among individuals belonging to different cultural, religious, and social backgrounds.

Specifically, the study aims to explore the significance of value-based education in promoting mutual respect, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. It further analyzes the core values—such as God-experience, compassionate love for all, communion, collaboration, team spirit, justice, peace, integrity, simplicity of lifestyle, dignity of labour, respect for life, nature and cultures, and love for the nation—promoted by the Bethany Educational Society and their relevance in contemporary society. The study also examines how these values are integrated into educational practices and how they influence students' attitudes, behaviour, and interpersonal relationships. In addition, it investigates the role of educational institutions in Karnataka in fostering social harmony through value-oriented teaching and learning processes. Finally, the study identifies challenges and opportunities in implementing value-based education and suggests strategies for strengthening such practices to build a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design aimed at understanding the role of value-based education in fostering harmony within a pluralistic society. The design facilitates an in-depth exploration of concepts, practices, and outcomes related to value-based education. The research is primarily based on secondary data collected from books, research journals, doctoral theses, institutional publications, empirical research and educational websites. A systematic review of literature was conducted using key terms such as “value-based education,” “social harmony,” “pluralistic society,” “core values,” “moral education,” “peace education,” and “cultural diversity.” found in online articles, peer-reviewed journals, publications, and a range of related portals.

Findings/Results: The study indicates that value-based education in institutions managed by the Bethany Educational Society has a significant positive impact on fostering harmony among students from diverse backgrounds in Karnataka. Students exposed to value-based education demonstrate higher levels of tolerance, respect, and cooperation. Schools that actively integrate values into their educational practices tend to create a more inclusive and peaceful environment. The study reveals that students exposed to Bethany core values develop essential human qualities such as compassion, service orientation, justice, peaceful behaviour, and integrity. These students exhibit increased empathy toward peers from different religious and cultural backgrounds, actively participate in community service activities, and demonstrate a strong commitment to fairness and equality. Furthermore, they show improved conflict-resolution skills and maintain honesty and responsibility in both academic and social contexts. The findings clearly indicate that institutions under the Bethany Educational Society effectively utilize value-based education as a tool for promoting harmony in a pluralistic society such as Karnataka. This approach contributes to the development of individuals who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible, tolerant, and peace-oriented.

Originality/Value: This study makes a significant contribution to the field of Education by examining the role of value-based education in fostering harmony within a pluralistic society, with specific reference to the Bethany Educational Society in Karnataka. The study is context-specific, addressing the socio-cultural realities of India, particularly Karnataka, thereby enhancing its relevance to pluralistic settings. It provides an institutional perspective by focusing on the core values of the Bethany Educational Society, offering insights into how value-based education is implemented in practice. Furthermore, the study bridges the gap between theory and practice by demonstrating how values influence students' behaviour and social relationships. The research also

contributes empirical evidence on the relationship between value-based education and social harmony, including measurable aspects such as tolerance, cooperation, conflict resolution, and respect for diversity. Additionally, it contributes to the broader discourse on peace education, inclusive education, and social cohesion. From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers in strengthening value-based education. Finally, the study opens avenues for future research, including comparative and longitudinal studies across different educational contexts.

Paper Type: Empirical research paper

Key Words: Value-based education; social harmony; pluralistic society; Karnataka; Bethany Educational Society; moral education; inclusive education; peace education; cultural diversity; social cohesion.

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I. Introduction

In the contemporary world, societies are increasingly characterized by diversity in terms of culture, religion, language, and socio-economic backgrounds. A pluralistic nation like India exemplifies this diversity, where unity amidst differences has historically been both a strength and a challenge. Particularly in states such as Karnataka, the coexistence of multiple communities necessitates deliberate and sustained efforts to promote mutual respect, understanding, and peaceful coexistence.

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping both individuals and societies. Beyond the transmission of knowledge, it serves as a powerful medium for instilling values that guide human behaviour and social interaction. In this context, value-based education emerges as an essential approach for nurturing ethical awareness, empathy, and responsibility among learners. It equips students not only with intellectual competence but also with the moral foundation required to live harmoniously in a diverse society. Scholars such as Mahatma Gandhi (1909) emphasized that education must focus on character formation and moral responsibility, while Swami Vivekananda (2005) highlighted the development of inner values as central to true education.

The increasing instances of social conflict, intolerance, and fragmentation in pluralistic settings highlight the urgent need to reinforce values such as respect, justice, and peace within educational systems. Educational thinkers like John Dewey (1916) argued that education is fundamental to sustaining democratic and harmonious societies through shared values and participatory learning. In this regard, the integration of values into the educational process becomes essential for fostering social cohesion and national integration.

The Bethany Educational Society, functioning in Karnataka, provides a significant model of value-based education. Rooted in a philosophy that emphasizes love, service, justice, peace, and integrity, the society promotes the holistic development of learners. Its core values include God-experience, compassionate love for all, communion, collaboration, team spirit, justice, peace, integrity, simplicity of lifestyle, dignity of labour, respect for life, nature and cultures, and love for the nation. These values are not merely theoretical constructs but are actively practiced within educational institutions through daily interactions, community engagement, and inclusive practices.

In a pluralistic context, such value-oriented education assumes greater significance. It encourages students to appreciate diversity, resolve conflicts peacefully, and develop a strong sense of social responsibility. By fostering attitudes of tolerance, cooperation, and respect, it contributes to the creation of a cohesive and harmonious society.

Despite the widely acknowledged importance of value-based education, there remains a need for empirical studies that examine its actual impact within specific institutional and regional contexts. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how the core values promoted by the Bethany Educational Society contribute to fostering harmony among students in the diverse socio-cultural setting of Karnataka. In doing so, the research attempts to bridge the gap between theoretical perspectives on value education and its practical implementation, offering insights into how educational institutions can effectively promote harmony in a pluralistic society.

II. Objectives Of The Study

The present study aims to examine the role of value-based education in fostering harmony in a pluralistic society, with special reference to the Bethany Educational Society in Karnataka. Specifically, the study seeks to analyze the concept and significance of value-based education in a diverse society such as India. It further aims to identify and examine the core values promoted by the Bethany Educational Society, including God-experience, compassionate love, communion, collaboration, team spirit, justice, peace, integrity, simplicity of lifestyle, dignity of labour, respect for life and cultures, and love for the nation.

The study also intends to investigate how these core values are integrated into the teaching-learning process within Bethany institutions and to assess their impact on students' attitudes toward tolerance, respect, and social harmony. Additionally, it examines the role of teachers and the school environment in promoting value-based education, as well as the relationship between value-based education and harmonious interpersonal relationships among students. Finally, the study aims to identify challenges in implementing value-based

education and suggest measures for strengthening such practices to promote social cohesion.

III. An Overview

The present study focuses on understanding the role of value-based education in fostering harmony within a pluralistic society, with particular reference to the Bethany Educational Society in Karnataka. In a diverse country like India, where individuals from different cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds coexist, education becomes a crucial instrument for promoting unity, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.

The study begins by examining the concept of value-based education and its significance in shaping individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also ethically responsible. It highlights how values such as love, service, justice, peace, and integrity contribute to the development of positive attitudes and behaviours necessary for harmonious living.

Furthermore, the research provides an overview of the philosophy and educational practices of the Bethany Educational Society. It explores how the society integrates its core values into the curriculum, co-curricular activities, and the overall school environment. Emphasis is placed on how these values are translated into everyday practices, thereby influencing students' character formation and interpersonal relationships.

The study adopts an empirical approach, collecting data from students, teachers, and administrators of selected institutions. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of value-based education in promoting social harmony. The research also considers the role of teachers, school climate, and institutional support in reinforcing these values.

Additionally, the study addresses the challenges associated with implementing value-based education in a pluralistic context, including time constraints, varying interpretations of values, and external social influences on students. Overall, the research aims to provide a holistic understanding of how value-based education can function as a powerful tool for fostering harmony in a diverse society and offers practical recommendations for educators, institutions, and policymakers.

IV. Summary Of Findings By Several Writers

A review of literature reveals that scholars across different periods have consistently emphasized the importance of value-based education in promoting moral development and social harmony. Early thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi (1909) stressed that education must focus on character formation, truth, and non-violence as essential foundations for peaceful coexistence. Similarly, Swami Vivekananda (2005) highlighted that education should nurture moral, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions to produce responsible and ethical citizens.

The humanistic and holistic dimensions of education were further emphasized by Rabindranath Tagore (1917), who advocated harmony with nature and society, and Sri Aurobindo, who proposed integral development encompassing body, mind, and spirit. Contemporary scholars such as N. Venkataiah (2007) and Khandelwal and Gupta (2019) have reinforced the importance of integrating ethical values into the curriculum to promote responsible citizenship and social responsibility.

In the context of pluralistic societies, Mark Halstead and Monica Taylor (2000) emphasized the role of values education in multicultural settings. International organizations such as UNESCO (1996) have highlighted education as a means of promoting peace, tolerance, and global citizenship. Similarly, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2012) advocated the integration of values into all aspects of school life.

The contributions of Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas (2000) and the Bethany Educational Society (2010) further underscore the role of value-based education in fostering compassion, service, and social responsibility, particularly for marginalized communities. Collectively, these perspectives highlight that value-based education is essential for holistic development and the promotion of harmony in pluralistic societies.

Summary of Key Authors and Findings

Table 1 summarises the contributions of various authors on fostering harmony through value based education in a pluralistic society, in the light of Bethany Core Values.

Table 1: Summary of findings

Author	Year	Key Findings
Mahatma Gandhi	1909	Emphasized character building, truth, and non-violence as essential for social harmony and peaceful coexistence.
Swami Vivekananda	2005	Highlighted the development of moral, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions to form ethical citizens.
Rabindranath Tagore	1917	Advocated harmony with nature and society and the promotion of universal human values.
Sri Aurobindo	1953	Proposed integral development of body, mind, and spirit to achieve inner and social harmony.
N. Venkataiah	2007	Emphasized education as a means of shaping moral and ethical behaviour among learners.
N. M. Khandelwal & Rohan Gupta	2019	Highlighted integration of human values into curriculum for ethical living and social responsibility.
Mark Halstead & Monica Taylor	2000	Discussed the role of values education in multicultural and pluralistic societies.
UNESCO	1996	Emphasized education for peace, tolerance, and global citizenship.
Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas	2000	Promoted education rooted in love, service, and upliftment of the poor, reflecting compassion and dignity.
National Council of Educational Research and Training	2012	Advocated integrating values into curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture.
Bethany Educational Society	2010	Emphasized holistic education grounded in love, service, justice, and compassion.
Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas	2000	Viewed education as transformative, focusing on character formation and social responsibility.

V. Correlated Works

The concept of value-based education has been widely discussed and correlated across the works of various educational philosophers and scholars. Mahatma Gandhi (1909) emphasized that true education should prioritize moral and character development over mere literacy, advocating values such as truth, non-violence, self-discipline, and simplicity. His ideas align closely with those of Swami Vivekananda (2005), who viewed education as a process of manifesting inner perfection and building moral character, self-confidence, and social responsibility.

Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore (1917) promoted a holistic and naturalistic approach to education that fosters creativity, freedom, and harmony with nature. His philosophy is closely related to that of Sri Aurobindo, who advocated integral education encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual development. Both thinkers emphasized holistic growth and value-oriented learning.

These perspectives are further supported by modern educational theorists such as John Dewey, who emphasized experiential learning and democratic participation, and Maria Montessori, who promoted child-centered education. Contemporary scholars such as Venkataiah (2007) and Khandelwal and Gupta (2019) extend these ideas by integrating value-based education with modern pedagogical practices, including critical thinking and skill development.

Furthermore, Mark Halstead and Monica Taylor (2000) highlighted the role of schools in transmitting moral and social values, particularly in multicultural contexts. Global frameworks such as UNESCO (1996) reinforce these ideas through the four pillars of education, emphasizing holistic development and learning to live together.

Overall, the correlated works demonstrate a strong convergence of ideas across traditional and modern educational philosophies, all of which underscore the importance of integrating values into education to foster ethical individuals and harmonious societies.

The perspectives of Mark Halstead and Monica Taylor (2000) are closely aligned with the educational philosophies of Sri Aurobindo, who emphasized spiritual and moral development as central to education, and Venkataiah (2007), who highlighted the role of value-based education in character formation. Their views also resonate with John Dewey, who argued that education should prepare individuals for responsible citizenship within a democratic society. Furthermore, Halstead and Taylor (2000) emphasized that teachers must function as role models in transmitting values and fostering a positive learning environment. Their work thus underscores the integration of academic learning with moral education, making it highly relevant to contemporary educational practices.

The UNESCO (1996) report, widely known as the Delors Report, introduced the concept of *Learning: The Treasure Within*. It identified four fundamental pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. These pillars emphasize the need for holistic development and lifelong learning. The framework aligns closely with the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, who advocated integral education, and John Dewey, who promoted experiential learning. It also reflects the ideas of Maria Montessori, who supported child-centered and self-directed learning approaches. The report highlights the importance of

value education and global citizenship, thereby linking traditional educational philosophies with contemporary global perspectives.

The educational philosophy of Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas (2000) emphasizes that education should be rooted in values, service, and character formation. He argued that true education extends beyond academic achievement to include the development of compassion, social responsibility, and spiritual growth, particularly in the context of community service and nation-building. His ideas show strong alignment with Sri Aurobindo's concept of integral development and with UNESCO (1996), which emphasizes holistic education through its four pillars. Additionally, his philosophy resonates with Venkataiah (2007), who stressed moral development through education. Mascarenhas further highlighted the role of teachers as guides and role models, reinforcing the importance of value transmission through lived experiences.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (2012) framework underscores the importance of value-based and child-centered education in the Indian context. It emphasizes the promotion of critical thinking, creativity, and moral values while ensuring the holistic development of learners. The framework advocates the integration of life skills, inclusive education, and continuous evaluation within the teaching-learning process. These ideas are consistent with the philosophies of John Dewey and Sri Aurobindo, as well as with the holistic approach proposed by UNESCO (1996). Furthermore, it highlights the role of teachers as facilitators and stresses the importance of activity-based and inclusive classroom practices.

The Bethany Educational Society (2010) Vision, Mission, and Core Values document emphasizes value-based and holistic education grounded in love, service, justice, and compassion. It focuses on the integral development of learners by nurturing intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions, with particular concern for marginalized communities. These principles closely align with the educational vision of Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas (2000) and the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. The framework also reflects the holistic educational approach advocated by UNESCO (1996). Moreover, it emphasizes the role of educators as facilitators and role models in promoting values and social responsibility.

In his *Selected Writings and Letters*, Raymond Francis Camillus Mascarenhas (2000) presents a deeply value-oriented perspective on education, asserting that the primary aim of education is not merely academic excellence but the formation of character and commitment to service. He conceptualizes education as a transformative process that nurtures compassion, humility, discipline, and a sense of responsibility toward society, particularly for marginalized groups. This perspective aligns with Sri Aurobindo's emphasis on integral development and with the holistic educational framework proposed by UNESCO (1996). It also resonates with the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore, who emphasized creativity, freedom, and holistic growth. Mascarenhas further underscores the role of teachers as living examples of values, whose influence extends beyond instruction to shaping students' character and social responsibility.

VI. Research Gap

A review of existing literature in the field of education reveals that, although substantial research has been conducted on value-based education, moral development, and social harmony in pluralistic societies like India, several significant gaps remain.

First, there is a lack of context-specific studies. Most research has been conducted at a general or national level, with limited attention to regional contexts such as Karnataka. Given the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of this region, localized research is necessary to better understand the dynamics of value-based education.

Second, there is limited focus on institutional core values. While many studies address value education in a broad sense, there is insufficient research examining the specific core values of individual educational organizations, particularly the Bethany Educational Society. The practical implementation of values such as God-experience, compassionate love, communion, collaboration, justice, peace, integrity, simplicity, dignity of labour, respect for life and cultures, and love for the nation remains underexplored.

Third, a gap exists between theory and practice. Much of the literature is theoretical, focusing on philosophical perspectives rather than empirical evidence. There is limited research on how values are actually practiced within schools and how they influence students' daily behaviour and interpersonal relationships.

Fourth, there is a lack of empirical studies measuring social harmony. Although value-based education is widely associated with promoting harmony, few studies provide measurable data on outcomes such as tolerance, reduction of conflicts, and development of inclusive attitudes.

Fifth, student perspectives are underrepresented. Existing research tends to focus on curriculum design and policy frameworks, with limited attention given to students' lived experiences and perceptions of value-based education.

Finally, there is limited research on pluralistic school environments. Few studies specifically examine how value-based education operates in settings where students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds interact on a daily basis. This gap highlights the need for focused research in such contexts.

VII. Research Agenda

The research agenda outlines a systematic plan to investigate how value-based education fosters harmony in a pluralistic society, with particular reference to the Bethany Educational Society in Karnataka.

Focus of the Study

The present study focuses on examining the role of value-based education in promoting social harmony. It specifically investigates the implementation of core values such as God experience, compassionate love for all, communion, collaboration, team spirit, justice, peace, integrity, simplicity of lifestyle, dignity of labour, respect for life, nature and cultures, and love for the nation. Additionally, the study explores the impact of these values on students' attitudes and behaviour within a diverse socio-cultural context like India.

Research Approach

A mixed-method research approach is adopted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative approach is used to measure levels of social harmony and value orientation among students, while the qualitative approach explores the experiences and perceptions of participants regarding value-based education.

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and exploratory research design. It involves the identification of selected institutions under the Bethany Educational Society and the collection of primary data from students, teachers, and administrators in Karnataka. The design also includes an examination of institutional practices and the integration of values into the educational process.

VIII. Research Proposal

In a diverse and pluralistic country like India, maintaining harmony among various cultural, religious, and social groups remains a significant challenge. Education plays a crucial role in addressing this challenge by promoting values such as tolerance, respect, and peaceful coexistence. Value-based education emphasizes the holistic development of individuals by integrating moral, ethical, and spiritual values into the learning process. Institutions managed by the Bethany Educational Society uphold core values such as compassionate love, justice, peace, integrity, and service, making them an important context for studying the relationship between education and social harmony.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of value-based education, there is limited empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in fostering harmony in pluralistic school environments, particularly within institutions of the Bethany Educational Society in Karnataka.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to

- Examine the role of value-based education in promoting harmony
- Analyze the core values promoted by the Bethany Educational Society
- Study the implementation of these values in educational practices
- Assess their impact on students' attitudes and behaviour
- Identify challenges and suggest improvements

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How does value-based education contribute to harmony in a pluralistic society?
2. What core values are emphasized in Bethany institutions?
3. How are these values integrated into the teaching-learning process?
4. What impact do these values have on students' social behaviour and character formation?
5. What challenges are faced in implementing value-based education?

IX. Conclusion

The review of literature indicates that value-based education plays a crucial role in fostering harmony within pluralistic societies. It contributes significantly to moral development, social cohesion, and the promotion of respect for diversity. The core values upheld by the Bethany Educational Society provide a strong and contextually relevant foundation for the effective implementation of value-based education.

The integration of these values into educational practices has the potential to nurture individuals who

are ethically responsible and socially conscious, thereby contributing to the creation of a just, peaceful, and inclusive society. However, there remains a need for further empirical research to examine the practical impact and long-term outcomes of value-based education within diverse educational settings.

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