

“Value Education for Consciousness Transformation” (VECT)

Need for incorporating VECT Fundamentals - for Human Values, Happiness and Holistic Living

The state of affairs in human beings today is a direct result of the assumptions/understanding that we humans individually and collectively carry. We human beings conform to, or live according to our ‘mental-impressions’ as against animals that conform to, or behave according to their ‘race’. Education is the single most potent means by which such assumptions, mental impressions or understanding are formed.

While prevalent education is very good at providing information & skills via the method of memorization & analysis, it fails to touch upon the basic aspects of human living. It is amply clear that the current content and context of education is materialistic in nature – it predominantly involves the study of the material aspects of nature leading to a ‘material’ outcome. As a result, while we have increasing clarity about fundamental laws of nature, rising income levels and material comfort, we are still faced with the following societal issues:

- Increasing aimlessness in individuals, anxiety, individualism, anger, etc.
- Breakdown in interpersonal relationships and family structures
- Rise of communalism and societal intolerance.
- Jobless growth and lack of ethics in corporate and public life.
- Increasing consumption and ‘non-renewable’ technologies leading to destruction of nature and climatic imbalance – that are threatening humankind’s very survival on this planet.

Specifically in educational institutes, we are unable to adequately address the following issues in students:

- Lack of ‘real interest’ in subjects, the focus is largely on ‘marks’.
- Lack of ‘critical thinking’ abilities and choosing between ‘right’ & ‘wrong’.
- Little or no respect for the teacher, the *guru* and general rebelliousness at home and school
- Anxiety, peer pressure and extreme competition leading to aggressiveness or depression.
- Poor health, obesity and early onset of lifestyle diseases.
- Excess consumption, carnality and profit mentality have become the ‘aims of life’
- Little to no improvement in the ‘clarity of life’, ‘basic values’ and ‘character’ of a student even after 16 to 21 yrs of formal education and a lot of ‘degrees’. Information is largely theoretical, with little or no practical know-how

These conditions do not augur well for us. All this is despite large scale investment of thought and resources in education. The above is because our current content of education is ‘incomplete’ – it is within the purview of ‘animal-consciousness’, where our focus & understanding is *partial*. As a result, fundamental aspects like understanding of the human-self, understanding the nature & purpose of human relationships, living in family & society, and our relationship with nature are completely ignored, or at best addressed in a half-hearted manner in prevalent education. The key issues of human happiness, purpose & prosperity are lost in this discourse. The resolutions to these issues cannot be found within our current educational context.

This course takes a fundamentally new view and aims to charter a new path in education –by addressing ‘universal human values’ and the issue of consciousness-development that leads to a fundamental-inner transformation **resulting into Happiness and Wellbeing of the individual, family and society**. As a small beginning in this direction, this ‘alternative view’ of study and life can be provided to students so they may

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appreciate the need for living with human values and human-consciousness and make efforts to study & practice the same.

About VECT

VECT is based on the Madhyasth Darshan philosophy, or *saha-astitva-vaad* (coexistential thought), a new existential discovery by A.Nagraj. According to Coexistential thought, humans on this planet are in a state of 'awakening-progression' in which our understanding is partial. The basic need of the human being is *happiness*, and this is possible via 'knowledge of coexistence' that leads to transformation to 'human consciousness' & living with 'awakening'. Enabling this transformation to human consciousness & its expression in living is thus the *basic purpose* of education.

An awakened human being lives with resolution within, with material prosperity in family, trust & cooperation in society & coexistence with nature – which itself is happiness, peace, etc. Such an 'educated' individual then goes on to establish/play their role in humane culture, civility, norms & societal organization.

This new knowledge system has been provided as an '*alternative*' to prevalent thought systems and education. The complete VECT curriculum based on coexistential thought is contained in the 12 core books in the Madhyasth Darshan philosophy by A.Nagraj and shall have to be adopted for any real, long-lasting change or transformation to humanness in human beings.

Salient Features: The salient features of this course are

- It presents a 'universal' approach to value education since it is based on an understanding of reality "as it is"
- Conducted in the form of a dialogue whereby a set of proposals on various aspects of reality are presented and students are encouraged to exercise their right to research and verify them.
- The basic focus in this course is to enable a qualitative transformation in the consciousness of the student, rather than just a transfer of 'information'
- The course enables critical thinking in students by helping them evaluate every dimension of human existence in the light of the way things are in reality.

Content of VECT Education

The entire content for education is the study of physical, chemical & conscious activities & their interrelationships, leading to 'mental balance', 'behavioural balance', 'social balance' & 'natural balance'. This content covers the three dimensions below:

1. Self education (*jeevan vidya*, जीवन विद्या)

- *jeevan vidya* - understanding myself, my activities, goals and how I am conscious, the causes for my happiness and unhappiness, my aspirations and fears as they are, in reality.

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2. Behavioral education: (value education, मूल्य शिक्षा) - intrinsic values in living

- in Family: understanding my relationships with other humans: in family, with parents, brothers, etc and with friends & teachers.
- Social education: understanding my relationship with other humans, how human race and human religion is one. Understanding social-laws & human values and how to live in them
- Human organizational education: Learning how human society is formed and what our common goals are. Learning to live in family, and the roles, duties and responsibilities, like *seva* or service in family.

3. Material education: (vastu vidya, वस्तु विद्या) – covered by prevalent educational content

- Skill based occupational education: Learning useful skills so I can earn my own living when I grow up.
- Material science education: understanding the physical-chemical processes in nature and how they have evolved, their innate nature and characteristics
- Ecological education: understanding the evolution in nature and how to interact with and live with it in a harmonious manner. Understanding natural law.

Course Methodology:

- **Based on observation & reason**: The methodology of this course involves a systematic and rational study of the human being vis-à-vis the rest of Existence (Nature)
- **Not an imposition, non-sectarian**: It is free from any dogma and sectarian value-prescriptions - It is a process of guided self-investigation, and not of giving sermons. Whatever is found as truth or reality is stated as a proposal and the students are facilitated to verify the same using a process of research & study that includes Scrutiny, Observation & Survey.
- **Uncovers hidden assumptions & proposes answers**: This study also facilitates students to evaluate their preset notions or beliefs with respect to Goals of Life, Relationships, Lifestyle, Social and Ecological impact, etc and recognize their true meaning.

The course relies on introspection, observation, scrutiny, examination and survey of the human being vis-a-vis nature/existence. The content will be in the form of a proposal.

Course Pedagogy:

1. Addresses the 'human self' directly – answers the question: 'Who are we educating?'

- **Addresses inquisitiveness** and exploration by every student – *in place of memorization and rote learning*
- **Respect**: Respects the 'freedom of imagination' and 'freedom of action' in the student.
- **Critical thinking**: Enables students to scrutinize & evaluate between right & wrong, true & false, etc. The course is conducted in the form of a dialogue.

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2. Recognizes human relationship – sees students as ‘connected to the whole’

- Based on responsible **teacher-student relationship** –as against it merely being a ‘job’ to be done.
- Assessment is on **values & evaluation**, as against fear and enticement. (punishment and rewards)
- **Fosters cooperation** and mutual fulfillment with other children/ humans – in place of seeing them as opponents to compete against.
- **Promotes excellence** – everyone can be excellent. As against specialty & competition.

3. Integrated approach based on reality – answers the question: ‘Why are we educating?’

- **Subjects taught in an integrated manner** – as the inter-related fabric of the cosmos, human life on this planet and our roles as individuals, in families, society, nation-state etc – as against fragmented teaching leading only to specialization
- **Addresses all dimensions of human living:** experiential (spiritual), intellectual, behavioural and occupational – as against the current goal of education largely for an occupation, or ‘to make a living’
- **Based on the reality of ‘Coexistence’** – of Existence being in harmony, that can be known – as against material-centrist or mysticism views.

Outcomes:

Short-Term Certificate Course outcomes:

We can expect increased clarity and improvement in the following areas:

1. **Critical thinking:** Enable critical reasoning abilities between ‘Right’ and ‘Wrong’; ‘Desirable’ “Undesirable” and how our living is conditioned by external influences.
2. **Material Consumption:** Appreciate the role & limitations of material goods –what & how much to ‘consume’
3. **Family & Human Relationships:** Importance of & inherent responsibilities in Family & relationships. Harmonious relationship with other humans (in the place of jealousy, hatred etc)
4. **Honesty & Ethics:** Acceptance of honesty and ethics in life and occupation
5. **Relationship with nature,** our environmental footprint and maintaining balance
6. **Awareness & Clarity:** Increased awareness of internal mind and an integrated view of the holistic, universal goals spanning all dimensions of human living. Recognize and resolve ‘undesirable tendencies’ such as anger, cheating, lying, jealousy & hatred.

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Long Term Course outcomes:

The following is expected besides the outcomes above:

1. **Assurance in oneself:** Based on the clarity of the nature of underlying realities and their inter-connectedness, and one's goals as a human. Scrutiny and evaluation of one's own tendencies and mind.
2. **Respect for Human excellence:** Recognize desirable humane traits in other humans (teachers) and willingness to learn from and emulate them.
3. **Balance in living** – Identification of role and limitations of material goods. Balance in the four dimensions of Individual Living: a) in Thought, b) in Behavior, c) Work & d) Understanding-Realization. Synergy in 'talent' & 'personality'.
4. **Sociable in behaviour:** Commitment to family and its values, relationships & responsibilities. Living with Social Character which is: Rightful Livelihood; Fidelity in marital life, Kindness in Work and Behavior. Recognition of relationship with every human devoid of color, race, caste, religion, etc.
5. **Commitment for honest and ethical occupation:** Being responsible social citizens by recognizing and fulfilling participation across: a) Family, b) Society c) Nation State & Inter-nation d) with Nature

Course Guidelines:

Based on such efforts over the past 2 decades, we have found that the content in this 'Coexistential philosophy' fulfils the following qualifying guidelines for a generic course in value education ¹:

1. Universal

- Secular: Free from dogma and sectarian/faith based prescriptions.
- Humanistic: natural for every human being
- Natural to Existence: based on study-able natural principles

2. Eternal - Does not change with time

3. Communicable - Non mystical, appeals to human reasoning

4. Liveable - Improves clarity, quality & experience of life

5. Verifiable - Can be validated intuitively², rationally and experientially

More information: www.madhyasth-darshan.info.

Reference Source: *Madhyasth Darshan, Saha-Astitva-Vad (Jeevan Vidya)* by A.Nagraj.

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¹ IIT Delhi, National Conference on Value Education via Jeevan Vidya (adapted), 2007

² Bergson, Henri, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*