

Religious Values and its Role in Human Society

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Abstract: Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what 'ought' to be. Values deal with what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, normal and abnormal. Values are always collective within a group. Value denotes the degree of importance of something or action with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live. Religious values defined what people expect of themselves and of others based on the beliefs common to the religions they practice. Such values represent the core principles that guide daily decision making. They help people determine which actions to take, and to make judgments about right or wrong and good or bad. Religious values are ethical principles founded in religious traditions, texts and beliefs. Religious values are based on scriptures and a religion's established norms. Various aspects of the significance of religious values have been considered with respect to novels, their relevance to a particular religious group and in relation to human society. The world's most commonly practiced religions often have similar values, although variations exist in the way some values are prioritized over others.

Keywords: values, religion, tradition, right, wrong, belief, society.

Introduction

Value denotes the degree of importance of something or action with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live, or to describe the significance of different actions. Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate course of action or outcomes. Values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be. "Equal rights for all", "Excellence deserves admiration" and "people should be treated with respect and dignity" are representative of values. Values tend to influence attitudes and behaviour. A value is a preference, shared with others from one's group, for one state of affairs above others. Values deal with what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, normal and abnormal. Values are always collective within a group. An example of a value is respect for older people within one's group, or that girls should behave one way and boys another. Values are deeply rooted and often unconscious, because they belong to the things we learned as children, before puberty. We learned them from our parents and from other adults and children around us, in the family, in the street and at school, and within a culture they are transferred from parents to children. Values are of different types, such as ethical, moral, religious, political, social, aesthetic etc. Each individual is guided by some values which determine his behaviour.

Objectives

- 1) To understand how religious values affect the daily life of people
- 2) To understand concept of Values and Value-based education
- 3) To appreciate need for Religious Values in daily life
- 4) To comprehend importance of value-based education in India

5) To understand how different religious values impact on our society

Methodology

In this paper, the research was based on secondary data taken from different research reports, journals and article papers, books etc.

Religious values

Religious values are what people expect of themselves and of others based on the beliefs common to the religions they practice. Religious values help people determine which actions to take and to make judgements about right or wrong. Religious values are ethical principles founded in religious traditions, text and beliefs. Religious values are based on scriptures and religion established norms. Religion refers to the way in which a group of people deals with the supernatural. Religion in this sense is a general characteristic of humanity: it is present in all peoples and tribes, even among people who consider themselves atheist. Religion is one of the things that distinguish men from animals. Religious practices are meant to influence events that we do not control ourselves, especially those related to birth and death. Think of prayer, baptism, circumcision, marriage ceremonies, dealing with the dying and the deceased.

Religions exist in many different forms, in their doctrines as well as in the behaviour of their followers. Political systems like communism and capitalism also show religious features. Both in the doctrines and in the behaviours, values, as I just described them, play a role. Religion and values affect each other but loosely: from someone's religion we can only predict a small part of that person's values, and in reverse, from someone's values we can deduce even less about that person's religion. Differences in values between human societies existed before our present religions were founded, and all great world religions have seen schisms based on differences in values: Sunni versus Shia in Islam, Catholic versus Protestant in Christianity, Mahayana versus Theravada in Buddhism. : Jewry, Christianity and Islam, to the great religions of Southern and Eastern Asia: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Shintoism. The basic dividing line between these two groups of religions rests in the priority of Truth versus Virtue. The religions of the Book, the Bible or the Koran, deal primarily with knowing the Truth. Virtue follows from Truth. In the Asian religions, truth is not a central concept. In Asian thinking, one truth, say A, does not exclude its opposite, say B. A and B together can lead to a higher-level insight. Asians switch relatively easily from one religion to another, or even confess more than one religion at the same time. The crucial question is not what one believes but what one does, the ritual and virtuous behaviour. Truth follows from Virtue. In the Asian religions the distinction relates to the tolerance for differences in what is seen as virtuous behaviour, tolerance which in some places is much larger than in others. . Within Christianity that role division is stricter in Catholicism than for most Protestants and stricter for Polish Catholics than for Dutch Catholics. Within Islam and the other world religions too large differences exist in this respect, if not in the doctrines certainly in practice, and these differences are based on fundamental values that have been imparted to little girls and little boys right from birth, and that therefore are very deeply rooted. The world's most commonly practiced religions often have similar values, although variations exist in the way some values are prioritised over others.

HINDUISM is a religion based on universality. It gives less importance to the image of God in your mind than to what values one carries and how the individual evolves. The evolution of the individual minds and personality is more important in Hindu value system than the just faith or religion one adheres to. Because of the importance it gives to the good value systems ingrained in all religions, it is the most secular and most tolerant religion in the world. In fact, India declared itself a secular nation based on the fundamental values of this religion. One must not miss out the fact that the vast majority of Indians, at that time around 90% of the population, supported the declaration of India as a secular country due to the principle ingrained in this religion. Some people believe that KARMA theory is one of the core values of Hinduism. Hindu philosophy only states that KARMA shapes one's future experiences, which is a scientifically acceptable statement. One's karma is the cause behind an

individual's behavioural manifestations and future experiences. Past karma shapes both the mind-body experiences and all human interactions.

One of the most important Christian values is directly linked to the belief that all people are made in the image of God and all members of the faith are said to be united in the body of Christ. This core belief is central to Christian teachings, which express that there is value to be found in all people, no matter their appearance or social status. Christians are commonly taught to respect the people around them, to help those in need and to treat others as they themselves would one to be treated.

One religious value that is central to the Jewish faith involves learning. The principal figure guiding followers in the faith is called a 'rabbi', which is a Hebrew word meaning 'my teacher'. A rabbi's principal function is not to perform rituals, but to study, continually growing both intellectually and spiritually. The wisdom gained from his studies is then called upon to guide community members in their own growth. A rabbi is also a judge, in that he can render decisions in matters relating to religious law.

Modesty is one of the most important Islamic values. Muslims believe that modesty is what keeps people above animals. This value is often made visible through dress. Women typically cover themselves to protect their modesty, although the degree to which they are covered in public varies, depending on their specific beliefs. Some cover even their eyes, using veils that leave only a small slit to look through or that include a thin section of fine mesh that enables them to see. Men are also expected to dress modestly, covering themselves from the waist to the knees in loose fitting and opaque clothing.

Compassion is a core value in Buddhism. Followers of this religion believe in the interconnectedness makes compassion empathetic in nature; the compassion extended to others is reflected in the person showing that compassion. Also central to this value is the belief in reincarnation and karma. Bad deeds might go unpunished in this life but through karma, the person performing bad deeds might pay for them by being reincarnated as a lower form of life, such as an insect. Being compassionate and non violent to all living things is returned with good karma and a better life.

The most fundamental value of Jainism is nonviolence or ahimsa. This word is usually found on the Jain symbol of the open palm which means 'stop'. Ahimsa is the first of the vows taken by both Jain householders and monks. Ahimsa means harming no living being as well as protecting all living beings from harm while several religions practice nonviolence and peace as a fundamental principle, Jainism is unique in extending this principle to all jivas (living beings). For Jains, living beings include not only humans and animals, but everything one finds on earth. Ahimsa must therefore be extended not only to humans and animals, but also soil, sand, oceans, fires, insects, microbes and plants. For this reason, most Jains are not just vegetarians but 'fruitarians' they eat only fruit, nuts and milk. These foods are acceptable because they are the by products of the living beings and not the living beings themselves. To pull up a carrot or chop a potato would be to do violence to a living being. This unique concept of nonviolence also explains why some Jain monks and nuns wear masks over their mouth and noses or carry whisks with which they brush chairs before seating. To inhale or squash even a microbe would constitute violence to a living thing, resulting in unwanted karma.

Conclusion

At the conclusion we can say that religious values play an important role in human society. No society can exist without morals. Religious values enrich people's morals, for the welfare of the individual and society at large. Religious values help people determine which actions to take and to make judgements about right or wrong.

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