

Importance of Integrating Local Culture- Based Human Values into Elementary School Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses why it is important and how to integrate some human values with the local Balinese Hindu teachings into an elementary school curriculum. The study suggests that when taught properly the values could enable collective awareness in the educational level that may impact the development of the generation quality. This qualitative research was carried out at Sathya Sai Elementary School in Denpasar-Bali, a private school that in addition to adopting some universally essential values also features Balinese Hindu teaching. The data were analyzed after long observation on the teaching learning activities as well as through conducting a FGD (focus group discussion) involving the teachers, headmaster, the foundation, and the representative parents of the students. The study shows that integrating such values could be an effective character education needed by the recent generation.

Keywords: local culture; human values; curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

The recent globalisation era and recent covid-19 pandemic have made four major problems. The first one is an economic crisis. A lot of people are facing difficulties in fulfilling their daily needs. Some people in some areas have been suffering more than some others yet none are not facing economic problems due to social distancing and prohibited business activities. Second is health problem. Although there has been a certain development in the medical field recently, there has come the pandemic to be faced. Invention of the vaccines only waits for the finding of another disease. Physical and non-physical health problems keep coming to fear the people. Thirdly, is an intellectual and spiritual problem. For centuries human beings have been developing their knowledge and science. Many secrets of natures have been disclose. Yet has the world been more disadvantaged or advantaged by such achievement? In Indonesia, Firli Bahuri, the chairman of the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission, said recently that the cases in this country show that most of the corruptors were those who held academic degrees, from Bachelor to

Professor. This suggests that high intellectual or academic achievement cannot guarantee any best characters of the men needed to overcome life problems. (<https://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/9April 2022>). These economic, pandemic, and academic issues seem to root from something lacking in the education that might have been neglecting the non material aspect of human life.

Thus, the most challenging task of the generation today is reaching the balance between improving the non material aspect of life and continuing the material achievement, which would be the ideal condition of life. The non material side lacking today means there is a need for more attention towards spirituality. Such attention could help all realize their true nature and avoid attachment to merely material and temporal satisfaction (Ashshidieqy, 2018) but these days, spiritual sight is ironically questioned. The fading of moral values is the sign of this tendency. In recent societies dishonesty is not seen as a problem; social discrimination, violence (Astiari, 2017), social conflicts, murdering, are all becoming daily news (Kurniasari, 2012). Brotherhood is not regarded as something important anymore. Ideological difference is taken as an excuse for threatening others. Thus, human values are going far away; compassion, forgiveness, tender feeling, low heartedness, respect to parents, elderly, strangers, simplicity, peace, could have beenq isolated.

Some researches on the “crisis of value” have been done before. Among others the studies are on misbehaving children (Sarwirini, 2011), Indonesian problems of its teenagers (Lestari, 2012), the degrading human values found with the Indian youngsters (Gupta, 2016), students’ misconducts (Wija Astawa, 2018), roles of parents in establishing religious characters in addition to upbringing and educating (Perbowosari, 2018), patterns of nursing children (Hamdani & Hermaleni, 2020).

In general the studies view that the success in reaching the end¹ of education depends on having the commitment towards restoring the human values because mere intellectual development, especially resulting in modern technology, economics, sciences, and other material cultures, would only benefit one side of life (Dewi, 2019). This is the reason for present missing and longing for the spiritually humanitarian movement. How should it start? Are schools still trusted to be the institutions that not only transfer knowledges but also educate the future generations? Have been there serious efforts about it? Is today education really putting on character building as its crucial end?

Regarding the Chapter 28 of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution, which states “Every Indonesian has the right to have education therefore benefited from the knowledge for improving the individual life quality as well as the humanity in general, (Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945, n.d.), this study is conducted on. It focuses describing the education on human values, as a formulae of education challenge. The main discussion is on the importance and the way to integrating the character based-values in the curriculum of elementary school. The purposes are projecting such education for realizing the *human excellence*, discussing its roles for

the capability of good reasoning. and growing interest, especially among educators to implement such values.

METHOD

This is a descriptive qualitative research. It discusses the importance of human values and how they are related to the Hindu teaching common to Balinese. The data were collected through reading books describing the problems. The general steps that were carried out were (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) verification as well as conclusion (Miles, AM Huberman, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Sathya Sai School is located in jalan Kemuda III No. 9 Peguyangan Kangin, Northern Denpasar. The school started by opening officially its kindegarten on 12 July 2002. The idea came from the Sathya Sai School of India, a school that can be found around the world. The Sathya Sai School implements *Education of Human Values (EHV)*, which are realized as a character education. Its goal is to develop the potencies in children for facing the life challenges, namely by teaching them human values in addition to general school subjects.

At Sathya Sai School before a child is accepted as a student the parents should attend a parenting program and be interviewed by the members of the school foundation. Putu Gede Karang, the foundation chairman, said that the procedure is a kind of confirming a “contract” between the school and the parents. It is also a way to establish mutual commitment for the children education as well as to implant the EHV mission. Through the interview the EHV is introduced as the core of the school program. The procedure is regarded as a crucial reminder to the parents that most time of a day spent by their children is at home for which the biggest portion of educating is actually shared by the parents. For the Sathya Sai School itself, such a program can be the means for establishing a foundation of ideal human characters, namely *Sathya* (truth), *Dharma* (righteousness), *Prema* (love), *Shanti* (peace) and *Ahimsa* (non-violence). The five should then fill the school curriculum.

The Sathya Sai Elementary School now has an Accredited A. With the movement of “Freedom of Learning” set by the Indonesian Ministry of Education recently, some of the Sathya Sai School teachers are now becoming “Driver Teachers” and the school itself is a “Driver School”.

Essentially, EHV is a teaching of unifying 3-H, namely Head (*thinking*), Heart (*feeling*), and Hand (*acting*) (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003). The values teach that what we say and what we do should be also aligned with the heart or the inner voice.

The local Balinese Hindu teaching, popularly known as *Tri Kaya Parisudha* (Istri Agung & Suta, 2020) is essentially an ethics that teaches similar values. Etymologically the concept is represented with the word *Tri* or ‘three’, *Kaya* or

'attitude', and *Parisudha* or 'pure'. The three are *Manacika Parisudha* or 'holy thinking', *Wacika Parisudha* 'holy speaking', and *Kayika Parisudha* or 'holy doing'. It can function as a social guidance to avoid violence therefore create harmony in society. Thus, EHV and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* both aim at developing such a quality. The EHV program in the Sathya Sai Elementary school aims at producing generation with good thinking as well as good moral and social behaviors (Hadi Rianto, 2016). This is also similar to another Hindu philosophical teaching, i.e. *Tatwamasi*, which is known widely by Hindu Balinese (Sri & Purnamawati, 2022). From the perspective of the Hindu spirituality, Sathya Sai, an Indian spiritual guru, said:

Education should help to make students the embodiments of human values such as Truth, Love, Right Conduct, Peace and NonViolence. Academic knowledge alone is of no great value. It may help one to earn a livelihood. But education should go beyond the preparation for earning a living. It should prepare one for the challenges of life morally and spiritually. It is because human values are absent in "educated" persons that we find them steeped in anxiety and worry (in Burrows, 2000).

The selection of the five values for the education in the school, namely *Sathya, Dharma, Prema, Santhi, Ahimsa*, does not mean ignoring other values such as discipline, honesty, accuracy, and so on. However, the values are seen to be covered by the five because they are universal (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003). For example, the value of accuracy is included in the value of *right conduct (Dharma)* because it basically refers to doing something properly; democracy can be seen to be part of *non-violence (Ahimsa)*, calmness is part of *peace (Shanti)*, and so on. The five universals are the ideals that are supposed to be part of school teachings. Any education should develop and integrated them to be part of the goal of education, namely the formation of character.

The EHV program of the Sathya Sai School in Denpasar is derived from the model developed by the Institute of Sathya Sai Education in India. The teaching is also based on the program in Thailand (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003). The chairman for the Indonesian Education of Sathya Sai Teachings, Mr. Anuraga Duarsa, said that in Indonesia, the EHV is taught by considering the local contexts. The practice would always involve social skills that cannot be taught through the conventional teaching. He stressed that EHV should be able to optimally develop the potencies of the students and for that, the learning atmosphere include the local context that facilitate it. The EHV at Sathya Sai School is not only aimed at the students and the teachers; the parents and all other school employees are also programmed to be familiar with the values. The goal is to create good relation between all of the school components. This is the background for the school to rear the monthly program of *Parenting and Personal Development*.

In the program conducted at the Sathya Sai School Denpasar some speakers of educational occupations or local practitioners have been invited to deliver EHV in the form of character education. Before the pandemic started limiting the social and educational activities in 2019, the school had held regularly its Parenting and Personal Development Programs at the school area. However, during the pandemic the program was held only virtually. Yet the content and the goal were maintained: the invited speakers and the attendants were discussing the importance of observing the children character development. The school program has seen it crucial to pay attention to the formation of personality especially when all nerves of a child are developing during the first six years of their ages. When a child is entering 14 years old the nerves are believed to be going to start stable (Rahman, 2009). Thus, the character education program at the school has been based on the view that between 6 and 14 years old, children are in their crucial period in which any important values are best prepared (Rahman, 2009) (Indriani, 2017).

Regarding the school program for the teachers, there are two essences, namely: personality and profession. The first initiative is implementing human values in the teacher's personal life. When a teacher fails to implement the values they are not supposed to do the teaching because whatever he/she says about the values will affect none of his/her students (Menon, 2011). Thus, to the teachers, the most important one is how to practice the values themselves. The second one is the teacher's profession (Jayandi, 2021). All teachers should believe that human values are the core of education. One of the most important values for the global movement today is multiculturalism (Indriani et al., 2020). Believing in the importance of respecting multiculturalism is needed as part of the EHV mission, namely to emphasize the importance of living and accepting differences, respecting equality, and uniqueness in every religion (Hanum, 2013) because only with such an insight, human relation and social interdependency can be achieved. The EHV program regards multicultural education as inseparable from any concepts of reforming education. Thus, the main challenge for the program is to ensure that all teachers keep, maintain, and transform themselves into the values that is constructive and "humanizing mankind" (Syahrial et al., 2019) without uprooting the local and national identity from the children.

The Sathya Sai School has developed the needed ability to use correct strategies to implant human values in the children. There are three of them (Sukayasa, 2014). First strategy is to integrate them in the curriculum. This means, that teaching the values should be part of any classes (math, history, English, etc). Without teaching the values, the education is pointless. Second strategy is to integrate the values into some extra-curricular activities (drama, tailoring, scouting, musics, et.) Third strategy is to tell and explain the values directly before the students in the classrooms.

It is important to realize that learning in the classrooms for the students could mean entering a “discomfort zone”. Thus, in Sathya Sai School the teachers are always reminded that it is the students who should allow the teachers to teach them and not any other institution. They are also reminded that to teach students should be regarded as a way of helping the students to learn knowing their spiritual potencies. In teaching the human values in the classrooms there are five technics that are used by the Sathya Sai School teachers. (1) Silent sitting and focusing, which help strengthen memory, sharpen concentration and intuition, and create peaceful mind. (2) Praying, which helps positive mind and build confidence, and self introspection, calmness, and humble heart; Before teaching the students the importance of praying and how to focus or sit in silence, the teacher should practice them all in their families at homes. (3) Singing, which creates a class harmony, brings happiness, cooperativeness, characterization, and health. 4) Story telling. This is a skill that the teacher should have. A story is a means to implant a character. It helps the habit of paying attention, building imagination, creativeness, giving comfortness, humor, and knowledge; and (5) Group dynamics, *role play*, personality test, intellegency test, and so on. These all develop attention and joy, attract creativity, build confidence, train discrimination, coordination, strengthen concentration, develop skills and cooperation. These technics are like the way to “*condition*” the students to move from the “ comfortable” area to the “comfortable and peaceful ” one (Faisal, 2007).

To the teachers and also to the parents EHV is supposed to be developed as a stimulus to the senses. Thus, when taught to children at early ages, most of the values are believed to be stored subconsciously. In other words, when teaching the Sathya Sai School teachers work to integrate all of the values by implanting them to the children’s subconsciously. The long run goal is to transform the children to be the ones who have good thoughts and acts in which the thought should be controlled by the heart before becoming words or deeds.

The Sathya Sai teachers realize that EHV are not kinds of lessons that can be “ taught” like other ordinary school subjects, instead the values should be affirmed, inspired, and habituated. In addition to the EHV, they also should affirm the essential spiritual concepts, namely Truth (*Sathya*), Right conduct (*Dharma*), Peace (*Shanti*), Love (*Prema*), and Non-violence (*Ahimsa*). When implemented these five values are believed to grow self realization or *self awareness* (Wija Astawa, 2019). The habitual practice of the values in education is represented in the chart below.

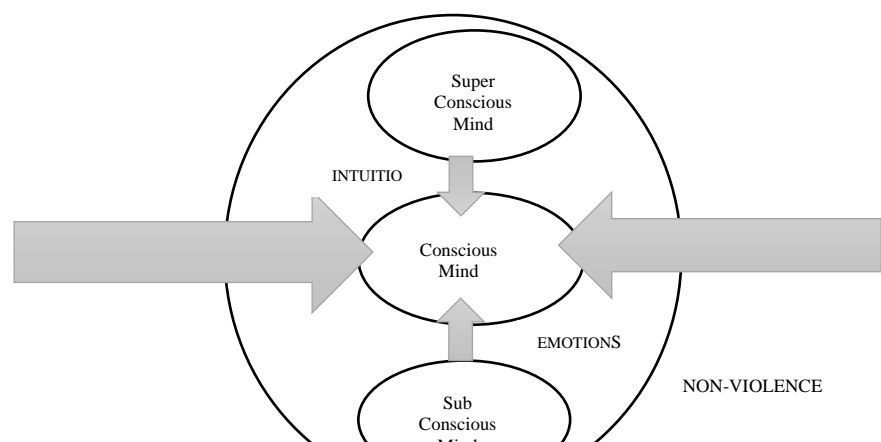


Figure 3.1. The Human Values Integrated Learning Concept (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003)

Good and comprehensive education could produce educators that are needed by the nation. Regarding that, the Sathya Sai students seem to be prepared with soft and hard skills and the most important one is the commitment to the human values. The school would help the parents understand that its educational program is not merely giving information, having the students graduate fast, telling them to find good jobs, etc. because such traditional concept has often ignored the spiritual and emotional potencies within the children.

In accordance with the failure of such educational system Holden (2020) argued that it has become the reason why doctors, lawyers, engineers, who are very skilled in their areas yet know nothing about handling their own mental problems that they suffer stressful, burdening, and embarrassing days. He put it that because of that none of such professionals would be happy with their friends nor in their families. According to Bornstein (2019) parents are the first thing in children education yet what parenting means could depend on the ecological aspects in which the process takes place as parents themselves are affected by the larger social system. Thus, he believed that the role of parents should be accommodated in the education program. The Sathya Sai School in Denpasar has put an intra-curricular program of parenting. Thw program is compulsory to all parents of the students. It is held once a month to keep the communication between the school, parents, and society run effectively. It provides the needs for critical mind upon the children education through building *collective consciousness* of the generation.

The program strives to create learning atmosphere in which character building is achieved through universal values that contribute to academic excellence. The workload and the social problems surrounding it would only harden the job of a teacher. Test cheating, bullying, drug abusing, stealing represent the problem. The program would return the values to be part of education to ensure the students to have the positive morales. It can be done through having "Triple Partnership for

Education" (Kaliannan & Chandran, 2010) between teachers, parents, and the children. The parents are expected to become the key agents of the values in their environment because most time spent by the children is in the family. Parents should become models and stimulus to their children.

Parenting at the Sathya Sai School Denpasar is centralized around the role of parents, their influential behaviors, and their social attitudes. Art-Ong (Jumsai Na Ayudhya, 2003) used the analogy of two wheels in a bike that supports each other. When both function properly, the bike would run properly too. In other words, when one of them is troubled the other one cannot run well. Thus, both parents and teachers should work hand in hand for the children education go properly by establishing good communication.

The construction of self awareness establishes the foundation for children to realize the human essence. It could only be done through the collaboration between the teachers at school and the parents at home. For that the Sathya Sai School in Denpasar implements three strategies. First, integrating the values to the curriculum. This means, any subjects studied by the students should contain the values. Teachers who neglect them might be regarded as liars (Burrows, 2000). Secondly, integrating the values in the extra-curricular programs, such as tailoring, drama, musics, sports, etc. The third one is through teaching the values directly. The techniques include these five activities, namely: (1) silent sitting, meditating. A teacher should practice all these spiritual activities at homes before teaching them to the students; (2) praying, reading holy books; (3) chanting (a pleasant means of internalizing the values; (4) story telling (a skill that is a must for EHV teachers); and (5) role playing, personality test, etc. In this context, learning is equal entering a "risky and discomfort zone" (Faisal, 2007). Consequently, any teaching should starts with the students who want their teachers to do it not from any authoritative institution.

Thus, *silent sitting*, for example, should become a habit part of studying at homes and at schools. During the silence, the philosophical words that are simplified can be implanted to the children. The human values should be contemplated. In singing, the words of the song lyrics are to be understood as giving spirit to do the good thing. Another practice is morning circling in which the teacher can remind the students to keep doing good things at home, at school, or anywhere. In "school eating" the students learn to value food, thanking, sharing, and also cleaning environment.

CONCLUSION

Essentially human being think and act in accordance with universal values. Awareness about it cannot be reached through attending any conventional school programs. The Sathya Sai School teachers realize that the EHV that are taught at the school but not practiced at homes would only be meaningless. The role of the parents is crucial then. Therefore, understanding properly the values and how to transfer them to the children at homes are part of the educational program of the

school. Growing the sense of belonging through taking part in any school activities, such as cleaning, preparing food, would contribute to the effectiveness of setting the parents as the EHV collaborators. Constructing the meaning of the values could help the construction of the children to be independent, discipline, responsible, honest, strong, and perseverant in study. In turn these can create a good educational atmosphere and culture.

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