

Title: Community Schooling: Novel Strategy to Expand Value Education

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Education aims at the all round development of the child to help them grow as able citizens those who understand the purpose of safe guarding natural values, virtues and wise use of the resources to campaign for conservation and preservation to safe guard the 'Mother Earth' from manmade coercion. There is a crisis and lapse of critical analysis of 'values' in all spheres of life in present day society. Qualities like love, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, co-operation, tolerance, non-violence, service etc. have almost vanishing as a result there is violence, terrorism, hatred, cruelty etc. are dominating in the whole world. The citizens of tomorrow are mainly the products of the present educational system. This indicates that the present system of education is not enough to produce good human beings. All the educational Commissions and Committees of preparing the National Agenda of the past have recommended stories on Value Education for children from the school stage. But this has not been attempted with spirit to attend success after manifold trials. The reasons are many but one of them is no substantial minimum awareness or knowledge of teachers and parents in this regard on various Value Education methodologies.

To initiate an experiment in this regard to empower the coastal communities, the Sandhan Foundation of Bhubaneswar, in conjunction with the UNEP-GPA and the Government of Odisha, has begun an innovative new project in the year 2005: the Coastal Community Resource Center (CCRC), located at village Gupti of Bhitarkanika Mangrove Ecosystem. The Center's objective is to educate the local population through 'community schooling' in adopting value education about the importance of wise management of the mangrove forest both for their own health, protection from the effects of climate change, and for sustainable development.

The Value Education is imparted to children in two different ways, those are: (i) Direct Method (ii) Indirect Method. The Direct Method is applied through some tested techniques in CCRC Community Schooling as per the following teaching mechanisms.

1. Routine Prayer
2. Story Telling
3. Group Activities
4. Group Singing
5. Silent Sitting

The Indirect Method through integration of Values are employed from school curriculum and subjects chosen important to their daily living in the coastal environment by inculcating nature-supportive co-curricular activities. With the repeat and continuous exercises for the last five years the community children, youth, women and the age old village guardians learn the magnificence of Nature and natural coastal wetland-marine resources around them.

Nature can seem so vast and bountiful, in fact, people are predisposed to view it as 'the environment,' that thing out there that effects us, whether this is by personification, deification, or simply in the modern view that human beings operate outside of nature, and that things that are human-made are 'unnatural.' It is the understanding of the collective ability to act, what in other words meant 'power' or the summation of individual actions and trade-off decisions leading to an overall outcome along with a conception of scarcity, that allows human beings to truly comprehend the kind of decisions we must make in order to conserve wisely.

Obviously, in order to want to conserve the environment, it is necessary to understand the need for conservation. There is no point in conserving something that's infinite or something that use does not impede (like conserving light, for example, or conserving the word 'apple'). Nature is big. Growing up in a city, or in a small area, it's hard to remember how big, but for people who have lived at the edge of the forest and had their livelihood provided to them by the forest for thousands of years, it's easy to think of nature as infinite, or infinitely bountiful at least. As long as nature can reproduce faster than humans can destroy it, it is essentially a gift that keeps giving, because of the ability of organisms to reproduce them. If the scope of human impact, or our imagination of our impact, is small enough, then we can make ourselves believe that we can continue to use wastefully forever.

Another important concept that, while very tangibly felt in a natural world that could turn on humanity at any instant (as opposed to a relatively stable air conditioned suburban home), is generally not applied to the habitat itself. Nature may lash out, but its existence seems certain. Certain services such as fresh water, food, oxygen, wood, seem assured. The more obscure ones, such as temperature regulation and waste cycling, seem even more indestructible.

Generally, people like to attribute will, action and consequence, to what can simply be natural uncertainty. A hurricane that blows down a house is an 'act of fate,' karma, the will of some wrathful deity. Almost every religion known to humankind depicts divine or cosmic will to natural events; a cynic could almost say that was the *purpose* of religion.

In order for conservation to succeed people must understand both that the future of the environment is uncertain and that their acts can either mitigate or exacerbate that uncertainty. In fact, the impact of any given human action (positive or negative) is often uncertain in and of itself. The natural response to uncertainty tends to be to act with caution. We can only hope that an understanding of the uncertain impacts of human actions on an ecosystem already put so far off-balance that any given action could be the 'straw that broke the camel's back' will help human beings to act with caution in their use of natural resources.

The Environment; it sounds so simple. Yet the world around us is far more than just a painting, a backdrop against which we live our lives. It is an ever changing, growing, complex world, like a machine operating smoothly, which each interlocking piece (of which human beings are but one) doing its own specific duty to keep the whole in motion. Normally, we like the view the environment from the point of view of the organism. An organism is a living creature and each person is one. There are billions of trillions of organisms on this planet, many of them so small that you need a microscope in order to spot them. They carpet nearly the entire world, from the freezing poles of the Arctic and Antarctic to the soil at the deepest darkest depths of the ocean.

Populations of these individuals make up species, types of organisms. The human race is a species, the scientific name for which is *homo sapiens*. There are more than 36 million species of living things on this earth and we have discovered and named only a small fraction of that. Try to imagine how many kinds of living things that is. And each species may have anywhere from one to trillions of members. That's a lot of organisms.

How did these organisms come into being? Why are all of these species so different? How did we get microscopic bacteria and ants and dolphins and crabs and monkeys and snakes and people? They're all so different and yet each species of the 36 million or more has a specific role to play in the drama that we call life. How did this come about? Scientists believe that, regardless of how the spark of life began

billions of years ago, life progressed into the variety and complexity we see today through a process called evolution.

Evolution is a concept envisioned by the biologist Charles Darwin after his visit to the Galapagos Islands and around the world. Darwin envisioned a world where organisms did not just appear on this earth as they are, but changed, or evolved, over time to fit their environment. This is why organisms today seem so perfectly suited to fit their environment and to do the jobs necessary in order to sustain the complex web of life on our planet.

Darwin's revelation came when he observed birds on different islands in the Galapagos, now named Darwin's Finches. These birds all resembled birds found on the mainland, but were unlike any known specimens found there. Additionally, on each island, the beak of the finch was especially suited to the kind of food available on that particular island. Finches that subsisted on large nuts with thick outer shells had strong wide beaks meant for crushing seeds. Other birds that lived on islands where the primary food source was grubs developed thin needlelike beaks to poke through the soil in search of food. Some even developed the use of sticks as tools to. Darwin surmised that all of these birds had descended from a common ancestor, swept out to sea from the mainland in a storm and have bred and lived in isolation since.

One of the best ways to do that is conservation. Conservation is what people can do; working *with* the environment in order to keep it functioning for future generations. Conservation is not preservation, which is when people try to keep something exactly how it is. Nature is constantly changing and it never something that can be set apart from humans, who are constantly contributing to that change. What we can do is to use the services that nature provides us wisely, trying to do our part in our own environmental niche to keep the entire biosphere going and thus support ourselves, as we are part of it. Ecosystems provide us with valuable services and we contribute to them as well. The best way to ensure that an ecosystem continues to function (even if we don't completely understand *how* it functions) is to preserve its biodiversity.

Biodiversity is the variety of life, as different and unique as the human population. Each species is special as any individual: friends, relatives, strangers all working together to create an earth-wide civilization more wonderful and complex than anything man-made, simply because the biodiversity of this planet *includes* the human world within it.

As Odisha's population continues to expand along with the demand for development, scarcity of water resources (also possibly exacerbated by climate change) for industry, human consumption and agriculture represents a threat to the Brahmani watershed, which supplies the freshwater inflow to the sanctuary. The efforts of the CCRC, especially in training local people to replant mangroves (which have a surprisingly slow natural re-growth rate) shows hope that those living in or near the sanctuary will at least have the tools at their disposal to adapt and to develop in harmony with the natural resources that will protect them from some of the worse effects of climate change as well as help to preserve them for humanity as a whole.

Conclusion:

Community Schooling is an innovative attempt to attract community folks irrespective of their age, gender and religion, what we have introduced in our UNEP-GPA assisted & Government of Odisha supported Coastal Community Resource Center (CCRC) to run the methodology of Conservation-Education. Here any methodology fits well with ease and that attracts the illiterate intelligent to understand what 'open learning' does to millions.

Our experiment on Open Learning has modeled 'Value Education' in the context of 'Online learning'. We are working to introduce Net-assisted value education in the mandate of Community Schooling. It is being adapted to address many of the coastal problems with traditional education and with the support of innovative approaches of computer application in forwarding Value Education.

It is the need and demand of the time to dress a changed role to teachers who should act as a Mentor, Motivator and Counselor what we have introduced in our CCRC as Volunteer-mentor or Value Educator to run the activities of our Community Schooling. They are motivated to attach thrust not on imparting bookish 'knowledge' but act on identifying the strengths and ready to play counseling to put the community folks and children in the right path of learning. Other than a guardian they are leading as catalysts to promote the potential creative abilities of the community students.

The much-discussed 'Type' indicators are the basis to act as the guideline to identify strength and weaknesses of the students. They are acting as the facilitators to change the "Personality-Type" to upward the homogeneity of serving conservation-education in spirit and philosophy. This experiment to introduce Volunteer-Teacher from the community itself has magnified the success scenario in this innovative endeavor. At every step the focus is on ensuring the development process in these coastal villages to remain "community-driven."

"Civilized rural atmosphere" contains aspects of ethics, cultures, custom and legal system. A civilized and harmonious coastal-rural atmosphere is more than the result of improvement of culture and human resources in rural areas, and also the goal of building a prosperous and stable coastal countryside. In some rural areas, the social atmosphere has degraded, cultures became boring and relations between neighbors deteriorated and some bad habits again revived, even though the economy has achieved sustained growth in recent years. As a result, although an ancient Chinese saying goes as "you can hardly pretend to be a gentleman when you are so poor without enough food" and "affluent life" can lay a good foundation for "civilized rural atmosphere", material civilization cannot bring spiritual and social civilization. A modest, harmonious, elegant and vibrant rural atmosphere requires multiple supports of policy, regulation and legal system, which are the things to be done in creating a "civilized rural atmosphere".

To integrate and to collaborate innovative value based ideas in CCRC community schooling, a good numbers of stories have been discussed among the coastal communities to make them understand the value of conservation and preservation of nature and wise use of natural coastal wetland-marine resources. To site a few we have chosen a story to discuss here for common appraisal.

One such story is to "Show Kindness to all Living Things". Children generally love plants, birds and animals. One day a father told her daughter "Can you trim the bushes in our habitats using the domestic equipment? "What I will get in return?" she immediately asked. The father consented to give her a new dress. The girl ran to the field with great enthusiasm. The work was finished and the father came and saw that the field adjacent to their habitat is cleaned beautifully, but leaving an area nearer to a water pond." Why did you leave that area?" go and clean that area. After that I will take you to the city and buy a new pair of dress. The girl immediately replied; please do not tell me that. It does not matter even if you do not give me the new dress. "Why?" the father was surprised." Go and see what is there". The father went to the bush and saw a small Water Monitor Lizard sleeping in the untrimmed bush. The child had left the area with a motive of not disturbing the swampy lizard. This story could spread the message among the community folks how one should learn from nature the theme of 'co-existence'.

This is the essence of value education and a novel strategy to expand value education by a community teacher in CCRC community schooling. This is certainly a pride to teach the ignorant community folks about the purpose of nature and its resources and help them learn the methods of conservation and wise use of the natural coastal wetland-marine resources in Bhitarkanika Mangrove Ecosystem region of Odisha with the establishment of Coastal Community Resource Center and the innovative Community Schooling initiatives.