

# **UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF HUMAN VALUES**

**Feedback by students of Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, March 2022**

The below response by students was obtained during a course on VALUES BASED CHANGE offered by Varun Vidyarthi of Manavodaya at the National Resource Centre for Values Education, IIT Delhi, during February-March 2022. The response is divided in four sections relating to different aspects of Human Values as described by students at the end of the course.

## **I. SELF AWAKENING : A NEW VISION AND PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE**

**Trishani Sarkar, Mechanical Engineering**

Before the start of this semester I was very anxious and struggling with my academics, faced a lack of confidence and the feeling of unworthiness was overwhelming. But this course somewhat helped me in getting better perspective of life rather than focusing on smaller goals like marks. I understood that as a student studying should be my duty rather than focusing and getting depressed about my results. I realised that we have greater goals than getting self absorbed, chasing materialistic success and trying to impress the world at the cost of our well being. It had been a very helpful and enriching course for me and I would like to thank Prof. Varun Vidyarthi in sharing and teaching us about how to live a better life

Sir also highlighted upon the contributions of Maharishi Patanjali, Shri Aurobindo, and Mirra Alfassa, the mother and how they focused on simplicity of life. The mother taught that an aimless life is always a miserable life. Quality of life depends on the kind of ambitions we choose. We got to know about the importance of knowing oneself. Otherwise life is empty. In one of the classes we learnt about importance of mental discipline, to make the mind silent and attentive to receive knowledge. The most effective advice I would carry with myself, is never to react in a situation where we are annoyed or angry because it can have destructive consequences.

After this course my viewpoint about life changed a lot. We often end up just focusing on superficial things in and around our lives but our consciousness is just like a submerged iceberg in ocean of life.

This course can prove to be very beneficial for not only students but anybody to look at the broader aspect of life.

### **DUSHYANT SONI, Research Scholar**

This course is far better than reading dozens of books as it covers vast topics. We learned about a brief history of Greek civilization, Chinese civilization, and Indian civilization. Many great philosophers and saints were discussed in class including Socrates, Plato, Francis of Assisi, Lao Tzu, Maharishi Patanjali. We had a dedicated lecture on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and Mother which was very inspiring and enlightening. It was a life-transforming experience. Most of the learning will stay with me forever.

I am learning a lot of new things in this course that I would try to implement in my life. The best part of the learning is helping others through self help groups. Rather than indulging myself in leisure activities, I now plan to work for the welfare of the society. I would spend less in buying sports clothes for myself.

### **ANANDA BARDHAN**

Many of my convictions were challenged and I was forced to learn how to give them a more scholarly edge as well as to thoroughly go through and evaluate the veracity of many of my beliefs.

## **II. COMMUNITY AWAKENING : ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE**

### **KOTHAMASU NIHARIKA, Mechanical Engineering Department**

I learnt that physical things can only give us external happiness but real happiness lies in helping others and taking care of others. I learnt that in this life race, we all are forgetting to be kind, to be loving, to be caring. We all are so involved in this race called life that we have stopped caring while hurting others knowingly or unknowingly.

For the first time, I talked to someone about their life problems and wanted them to share their feelings of sadness and their agonies with me. I initially thought doing this for assignment will be a very tough and I thought I couldn't do it. But when I approached the women to talk to them about their problems in life, I observed that they are all very welcoming. They talked to me patiently and shared their problems with me. This task built a confidence in me and also increased my willingness to help the needy. I observed that just sharing our problems with others will lower our burden.

**VARUN SINGH POONIA, Research Scholar**

The key learning of the course: To identify the goal of our life. Questioning own self-worth, Try to explore a unique opportunity to see a world where everyone helps each other. I realised that the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. Serving others is not a planned act; it is by default our highest purpose in life.

**HARSH PRIYA, Civil Engineering**

Speaking with the villagers made us realise the plight of people living in India's remote communities, and we came up with a number of solutions. We were also able to instil a sense of awareness in them through these conversations. Sir had informed us that the best approach to connect with people is to immerse ourselves in their way of life, their way of speaking, and to understand their point of view in order to get to know them better.

We have the ability to alter the world, but we do not take the little measures necessary to accomplish so. We are hesitant to reach our full potential. So, instead of blaming it on a lack of resources, I've learned that we need to push ourselves to encourage happiness, harmony, and hard work.

**AVINASH KUMAR, Mechanical Engineering**

The last assignment, which requires students to take a problem and work through it step-by-step before finding people who can implement the solution, is another one of a kind that will have a positive impact on both students and society.

**PUSHPENDRA BANSAL, Civil Engineering**

Such a course leads to independent thinking and also motivates us to think about the society like how we can contribute to the society by extracting small amount of time from our daily life.

I would like to work on

- Incorporating enough time for self-reflection into our everyday routine.
- Restricting myself from the activities which are not going to benefit me at all and affecting my life adversely like going outside, eating out, spending money on the fashion etc.
- Adopting simple things in the life and doing some activities for mental health and calmness in my daily life.
- Helping the society by taking small steps on the individual basis and also motivate other people for doing it.

**PRAVEEN, Civil Engineering**

It was surprising and exciting that I learned from India's great social activists who promoted self-help groups, a revolutionary program that changed the lives of millions of people, especially in rural India. In this course sir taught us how we can solve problems of our society and uplift their living. And how a strong leadership is essential, as we know, many philanthropists give donations for poor people, but they do not know how it reaches the needful.

My suggestion is that everybody should do this course it adds values in our social aspects of our life, and we learn many things that we always avoid, everybody lives their life for their own and do not care about others.

**III. FAMILY AWAKENING : TOWARDS BETTER UNDERSTANDING****M. AMATYA BHARADWAJ, Mechanical Engineering**

An important lesson which I learned was: The household works are not the responsibility of only women but men equally have to contribute in these works. As part of the course, I devoted 2 hours of my time cooking, folding clothes, watering plants et cetera. This time really taught me how happy I can make my parents when I spend some time with them. From now on, I have decided to spend at least a few hours daily indulging myself in family time.

**KOTHAMASU NIHARIKA, Mechanical Engineering**

I washed utensils at home. It was my first time to do all the utensils. I was so exhausted. It's a very long process. It took about 45 minutes for me to wash all the utensils. I understood how difficult it is for my mom to wash utensils everyday. My mom was so happy watching me helping her in her household chores.

**JEET BORO, Mechanical Engineering**

After we had dinner, I decided to wash all the dishes (both dining and cooking utensils). It took a long time as I was not used to it (around 40 minutes), and I also wasted a lot of water in the process, not to mention my fingers absorbed a lot of water and became soggy. Reaction: It was not an easy task, and I didn't really enjoy it like the cooking task. But I guess if you have to cook and eat, you also have to clean the dishes. Maybe if I wash the dishes regularly in the future, I'll get used to it. Family members were fairly surprised by this act, and they might have mocked me in a friendly manner as I was washing the dishes.

### **PUSPENDRA BANSAL, Civil Engineering**

Generally, in a group of friends we don't discuss any kind of serious topic or problem, we just have some fun. But this course forces us to do some very important and useful discussions among our friends.

### **PRASHANT KUMAR, Metallurgy Engineering**

**Works I did as part of the assignment:** I washed the dishes after the dinner, I also made the bed by keeping blankets in the places. The next day I cleaned the house starting with cleaning the almirah and cupboards, then I cleaned the floor by sweeping the floor. Along with this I also washed the clothes, in the evening as I'm living in my village I also helped in mixing fodder and preparing food for our cattle.

I feel pretty good by doing all these works, my heart was filled with gratitude for my mother, sister and father who are doing these daily. I have decided it's not just for this assignment I'll be actively helping my family daily.

**Family's reactions:** I saw mixed reactions from my family. My mom was really shocked and she was very curious to know why I'm doing these things. She did not want me to do more work and asked me to go and study. But I convinced her that this will not affect my studies in any way. My sister was making fun of me doing all these works and she also said "aaj suraj kidhar se nikla h". But everyone was happy and when I told them I'll be helping with some of the work daily they welcomed this decision. I also heard my mother talking to someone on the phone and praising my work a lot

## **IV. LIFESTYLE AND LEADERSHIP**

### **HARSH PRIYA, Civil Engineering**

I believe that Sir has offered ample examples and methods for becoming a successful leader. He has made us aware of the duties of a leader and has even enlightened and encouraged us in various ways. I would recommend this course to everyone since, despite the short time frame of 14 hours, Sir has left an impression on us.

This course has taught me how to live a simple life. Basic living entails more than just wearing simple clothes and eating simple, natural foods; it also entails empathy for others, environmental stewardship, and personal development. What I discovered is that the solution is already inside us; all we need to do now is put it into action.

**KHUSHBU, Metallurgy**

I can for sure say that not even my humanities course would have made me so excited towards the subject and that day after the class I started reading about all these people e.g Lao Tzu and found it really exciting

**PRASHANT KUMAR, Metallurgy**

There are many instances where my ego has put me in trouble. Ego often gives rise to arrogance. The virtues of being humble, supportive and gentle, slowly vanishes with the growing ego. Kindness gradually decreases and the person merely becomes a robot lacking the much needed human emotions.

Our lives are getting pushed by the views of our peers to an outwardly rich and fashionable life. We lack simplicity and have just forgotten to live happy with the minimum and necessary. Our dressing, eating habits, travelling, lifestyle all these things have been hugely affected by western culture or rich culture. Recalling an incident from a few days ago, there was a marriage in my family and I did plenty of shopping for clothes and shoes.

**AASHITA, Civil Engineering**

My current lifestyle is highly pigmented by consumerism. There is almost a compulsive need to purchase goods and services, may it be food, clothes, personal care or any field for that matter. The keenness for such high levels of consumerism has led to a rather complex lifestyle, where I purchase fancy cloths and accessories, order food more often.

**VARUN SINGH POONIA, Research Scholar**

We are scrolling our fingers on Instagram, Whatsapp, and other social sites, but we are wasting our time and energy by using these sites. We are getting very little helpful information from these sites and wasting more valuable time

**DUSHYANT SONI, Research Scholar**

I have suffered a lot in terms of insecurities but now I realize these are just cooked in my head. We are conditioned in such a way that we chase things without knowing our actual needs. We don't examine our inner callings and purpose of life instead we try to replicate the way of life as told by people.