

First National Conference on Universal Human Values ***Bahá'í Academy, Panchgani, 5-6 April 2014:*** **A Report**

Introduction:

The First National Conference on Universal Human Values was held on 5-6 April, 2014 at the Bahá'í Academy, Shivajinagar, Panchgani. It was attended by over a hundred participants, including delegates from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and China. The keynote speakers, experts, college principals, administrators, other presenters, and observers all agreed that it was an excellent beginning for what can surely become an annual experience.

As this was the first conference ever held in India with the theme of Universal Human Values, and only students and mentors of the Bahá'í Academy's programme on Education in Universal Human Values could participate, the research papers presented were very focused on putting Universal Human Values into action in both the classroom setting and the community.

Interdisciplinary in nature, the presenters came from many fields, including Computer Science, Medical Science and Education. Particularly pleasing were the interactions between experts, mentors and students, each valuing the contribution of the other to the ongoing improvement of the work. Students were able to immediately see the impact of their research, action plans and the learnings that took place on those listening to their presentations. With over 30 presentations, one could hear the conversations and feedback continue during the breaks, mealtimes and after the evening sessions. "Application of knowledge is important," said one participant. "The papers were based on new ideas, which, when implemented in schools/colleges, will give good results. I hadn't thought in some of these directions before, but listening to the research done by the students, I saw that it was based on true experiences and activity oriented. Therefore, it was more effective."

Inaugural Function:

At the Inaugural Function Dr. Shashi Gaikwad, Asst. Director (Research) of the Bahá'í Academy and Conference Coordinator welcomed the participants and spoke of the processes that had attained their climax in this Conference. The Chief Guest of the Inaugural Function, Prof. N.J. Pawar, Honorable Vice- Chancellor of Shivaji University, Kolhapur, gave an inspiring inaugural speech on evolution of value systems. He said how the value system in ancient times was based on religion due to the fact that science, technology and knowledge had not advanced to any great

extent. With the advent of the Information Age and cultural mixing, values have gotten lost in the process. Now, we need to understand the value of values, so that dilemmas and conflicts can be resolved smoothly. He emphasized the need to follow the path of principles and values in a multi-cultural society if we are to have peace and prosperity. "Values like equality, humanity, peace and respect inspire each and every culture and will help us create a new set of citizens who operate on these universal human values."

Conference Sessions:

Six sessions during the two days were able to highlight the research of over 30 presenters and each session hosted a keynote speaker.



Day1: In the session "A" dedicated to "Universal Human Values", Prof. A.N. Joshi, a member of the Academy's Research Committee, and Ex-Director of School of Education, YCMOU, shared his message of hope. "Values can be taught, but they must be instilled, not imposed. Values must facilitate coordinated social interaction, smooth functioning and survival of the



group." The session was ably chaired by Dr. Vinayak Sholapurkar, a member of the Academy's Research Committee and HOD Mathematics, S.P. College, Pune, who summed up the five presentations and enriched the session with his comments.

Session "B", with the theme of "Building Moral Capabilities" welcomed Mr. Vivek Sawant, M.D., MKCL, who distinguished between capacity and capability in a way which resonated with the

participants. "A water tank has capacity. Using the water in different ways through the tap is capability." After telling stories of the simple, but abundant life of tribes living in the jungles of Africa, he shared that they never locked their doors the way people do in more "developed" countries, because they operate on the moral standard of "enough for need, not for greed". The session was chaired by Dr. Chetan Parikh, HOD Electronics, ICT, Ahmedabad and a member of the Academy's Research Committee. Dr. Parikh summed up the five presentations and enriched the session with his comments.



Mr. Lesan Azadi, Director Bahá'í Academy, was the keynote speaker for session "C" focused on Attraction to Beauty and Thirst for Knowledge. "Attraction to beauty is a moral force," he said, "whether it is beauty of thought, of words, of deeds. These beautiful truths emanate from the soul. Our thirst for knowledge guides us to be



just and fair. Education should strengthen our desire for knowledge and our attraction to beauty." The session was ably chaired by Prof. Bhalba Vibhute, a member of the Academy's Research Committee, and former Head and Director of the Department of Adult Education and Extension Services, Shivaji University. Dr. Vibhute summed up the five presentations and enriched the session with his comments.

The first day ended with an open session that included an overview of the Happy Hippo Show from Mr. Trip Barthel from China, a resource person of the

Bahá'í Academy, with a photo filled PPT sharing the international flavor of the programme and presentations by few other participants.

Day 2: The second day of the Conference began with session "D" that was reserved for Basic Concepts in Education. Prof. Sanjeev Sonawne, HOD, Education Dept. and Dean of Education, University of Pune, regaled the audience with a vision of the future where intellectual achievement and attainment of values would be the twin foci of education, where teachers would explain concepts at the level of the students, where students would be groomed to be citizens in a democratic society who accept and respect



the thoughts of others. "The cardinal principles of education include both fundamental academics such as reading and writing, vocational preparation, citizenship, how to live a healthy lifestyle including physical fitness and healthy relationships, contribution to family and community and ethical characteristics." The chairman of the session was Dr. P. V. Kulkarni, Asst. Registrar and Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor University of Pune, who summed up the six presentations and enriched the session with his comments.



True Happiness, Social Harmony and Peace were the themes of Session "E" keynoted by Prof. Mangesh Teli, a member of the Bahá'í Academy's Advisory Board, Prof. and HOD, ICT, Mumbai. Dr. Teli likened the Universal Human Values programmes at the Bahá'í Academy to seeds. "Consider this apple seed," he said. "If I ask you how many apples are there in this seed, what would you say? I'm a scientist, so after planting it and observation I might say that there are more than 100 apples in this seed, but in truth you cannot count the apples in this seed. The Bahá'í Academy is like the seeds of an apple. We

are all here now as seeds, but the fruit will be borne in an unknown future. The only thing we know is that we can anticipate growth." The session was chaired by Mrs. Cindy Savage, an international resource person of the Bahá'í Academy. She summed up the five presentations and the discussions and enriched the conclusions with her comments.

In Session "F", presenters focused on the theme of Service Learning Activities: Education in Action. Mr. Lesan Azadi shared his thoughts on human values and sustainable development. The session was chaired by Mr. Trip Barthel. Five presentations were made during this session.



To end the Conference's valedictory session on a rousing note, Prof. Ram Takwale, President of I-Consent and an eminent educationist and a member of the Bahá'í Academy's Advisory Board shared his visionary views of "tomorrow's student". "Tomorrow's student will decide his future, educate himself, and design his own job. Classrooms will be in cyber space. Creativity is the purpose of life and work. Instead of grabbing all that we can, let social wealth grow. If you need "it", take "it". If not, let it go and let it grow."

Feedback from the Participants:



Participants definitely felt the growth. Due to the delicious meals, one served around an outdoor bonfire, the songs and energizers, the chance to give feedback as the conference was going on, the comfortable accommodations and even the chance to dance a little, the energy remained high.

It's rare that administrators, teachers and students are all joined in one conference, but unity of purpose was evident. "There were so many good presentations," said one student. "I've never had the chance to participate in a conference like this and I learned new ways to think, new ways to be."

"While we were still in bed," said another, "we were welcomed in the morning with a smile."

“We felt as though we were welcomed as part of a very special family. The volunteers and Academy staff, serving food in the beautiful surroundings, the happy faces and constant smiles, (boost to our experience). I slept so peacefully and was quite satisfied with the sessions that all made me think.”

To sum it all up in the words of the participants, it was enlightening, thought provoking, inspiring, awakening, motivating and fruitful. “This type of conference will become a landmark—a milestone for youth.”

Titles of 30 Papers That Were Presented In the Conference

Paper No.	Title of the Paper	Presenter
1	“इयत्ता दुसरीच्या पुनरीक्षित मराठी विषयाच्या पाठयक्रमाचे मानवी मूल्यांच्या संदर्भातील विश्लेषण व मानवी मूल्यांच्या रुजवणुकीसाठीच्या उपक्रमांची परिणामकारकता यांचा अभ्यास	Dr. Rama Bhosale & Dr. Vijayshree Patil
2	Restructuring Mathematics Education At School Level For Inculcating Universal Human Values	Dr. Bibhishan N. Karale & Dr. Geetanjali S.Patil
3	Role Of Education In Promoting Gender Equality Among Secondary School Students – A Study	Dr. (Ms) Rupali Sankpal
5	स्त्री-पुरुष समानतेसाठी विज्ञान विषयाच्या योगदानाचा अभ्यास	Nilima Arvind More
9	उच्च माध्यमिक स्तरावरील प्रथम भाषा मराठीच्या अभ्यासक्रमातून वैश्विक मानवी मूल्यांची रुजवणूक : एक अभ्यास	Dr. Deepak Shankar Kamble
10	वैश्विक मानवी मूल्ये: सदाचरणा वृद्धिंगत करणे	Smt. Pranita Zambre
14	A Study of Social Problems: In the Context of Beauty of Thoughts	Ms. M. Nagina S, Dr. P. Patankar & Mr. R. Chavau
16	बालगृहस्थाला बालकामध्ये सदाचरण वृद्धी व आत्मविश्वास निर्माण होण्यासाठी केलेले कृतीकार्यक्रम व यांची परिणामकारकता	Dr. Sharda Niwate
18	Harmonious Development of Moral Capabilities and Medical Profession :A Must	Dr. Gayatri & Dr. Vishal Nimbhore
19	The Study of Impact of Promoting Role of Education In Junior Youth	Ms.Anam Kagadi
20	An Effort To Promote Beauty Of Thoughts, Words And Deeds	Mr.Suyog Rajendra Gorhe
24	A Study Of The Impact Of The Action Taken To Minimise The Inequality Among Men And Women	Mr.Dilip Rokade
25	An Impact Of Value Based Activities On One's Learning	Mr.Ravind Yadav
26	A Survey of the Situations of Violation of Human Rights Prevailing in the Extended Families	Ms. May Patil
28	विज्ञान आणि धर्म यात सुसंगती निर्माण करणे: एक प्रयास	Mr.Deepak Mhaske
30	बहाई अकादमीने संमंत्रकांसाठी तयार केलेल्या 'वैश्विक मानवी मूल्यांचे शिक्षण' या शिक्षणक्रमाच्या परिणामकारकतेचा अभ्यास	Dr. Kavitha Salunke & Dr. Shashi Gaikwad
31	वैश्विक मानवी मूल्यांच्या संदर्भात हेल्पर्स ऑफ द हँडिकॅड संस्थेचा व्यष्टी अभ्यास	Dr. Sanjeevani Mahale, Dr. Hemant Rajguru & Mr. S. Pati
38	Impact of the Course Developed by the Bahá'í Academy - Abilities, Skills and Healthy Attitudes- 'ASHA' on PG students	Dr. Shashi Gaikwad
39	A study of the Impact of the Moral Capabilities Module on Students of Surabhi Computers, Wai	Mr.Donesh Anwari
40	A Study of the Impact of the Service Learning Activity on Students and community	Mr. Navnath Bomble
41	जळगाव येथील निरीक्षण गृह/बाल सुधार गृह येथील इ.२री च्या विद्यार्थ्यांनीवर सेवा अध्ययन कृतीची परिणामकारकता अभ्यासणे	Mr. Kishor Vasave
43	The Impact on and Challenges Faced by the Interns at MKCL while taking The Foundation Level Course of Education in Universal Human Values: A Study	Mrs. Sayali Dubash
45	Impact of Co-Operative Learning Strategies In Medical Field	Dr. S.U. Bhalerao & Dr. K. P. Bagmar
46	छात्राध्यापकांच्या संदर्भात मूल्य शिक्षण कार्यक्रमाची उपयोगिता पहाणे	Dr. Vijaya Patil
55	शब्द, कृती आणि विचार यांचे सौंदर्य यांची परिणामकारकता तपासणे	Ms. Vaishnavi & Ms. Reshma
57	वैज्ञानिक दृष्टीकोनच्या सहाय्याने अंधश्रद्धा दूर करणे: एक अभ्यास	Ms. Chaitrali & Mr. Prathamesh
64	Relevance Of Values In Today's Higher Education	Dr. P. V. Kulkarni
68	वैश्विक मानवी मूल्यांचे शिक्षण: मॉड्यूल एक नैतिक सक्षमताचा विद्यार्थ्यांवर होणाऱ्या परिणामाचा अभ्यास	Prof. Prashant Salve
71	बी.एड. शिक्षणक्रमाच्या विद्यार्थ्यांनी मूल्यशिक्षण या वैकल्पिक विषया संबंधी केलेले मूल्यांकन व सुचवलेले बदल: एक अभ्यास	Mr. Navnath Bomble
72	आयुष्यातील भौतिक आणि अर्भातिक चे संतुलन: एक अभ्यास	Ms. Akshada Mandare & Ms. Aishwarya Suryawanshi