REFLECTION ON ICT Vs VALUES

N.Johnson

Instructor In Educational Technology

Perunthalaivar Kamarajar College Of Education

Karaikal, U. T Of Puducherry

Abstract

We live in a world that is rapidly progressing in each and every dimension of material life due to the advancements in the field of Information and Communication technology (ICT). As we know ICT is a combination of Information technology and Communications technology. The information aspect has advanced leaps and bounds with the advent of Internet and its varied uses. Same is the case with Communications technology with traditional forms of long distance communication being rapidly displaced by 2G, 3G or even 4G. The world has in fact transformed itself into a global village thanks to developments in ICT. Distances between people, societies and nations have narrowed. *Have the human minds also become narrower? Are human values, which are considered the backbone of social well being and peaceful co-existence of the citizens of the globe, deteriorating in some way or other?* The paper is an attempt to reflect upon these aspects. The investigators have listed that there are indeed some threats to the value system that have occurred as a result of the advancements in ICT. Suggestions to integrate value enhancement along with ICT development are also incorporated in the paper.

Keywords: *ICT Development, Value enhancement*

Introduction

The Scientific inventions, technological developments and rapid processes of urbanization have improved the standard of living by bringing forth varied range of materialistic sufficiency, comfort and enjoyment in human life. Information technology and the process of Information processing has made rapid progress over the years that a new faculty of study called 'Knowledge management' has developed over the last few years, which deals with data, information knowledge and wisdom generation in a systematic way. Communication technology has also a similar story to that of Information technology with the traditional forms of long distance communication being rapidly displaced by 2G, 3G or even 4G with the arrival of Mobile Devices, Sensor Technology, Optical fibres and Wireless Communication.

The world has in fact transformed itself into a global village thanks to developments in ICT. Distances between people, societies and nations have narrowed. In this scenario, two important questions that may come to any persons mind are:-

Are the human minds also become narrower along with the narrowing distances between people as a result of the advancements in ICT?

Are human values, which are considered the backbone of social well being and peaceful co-existence of the citizens of the globe, deteriorating in some way or other?

The investigator felt that there is some reason to be perturbed on consideration of the answers to both the questions mentioned above, are in the affirmative. *Human minds are indeed becoming narrower as the horizons expand with regard to the advancements in ICT.* As a result *human values are also deteriorating, or rather changing very rapidly-* much to a social being's dismay.

Threats to the value system that have occurred as a result of the advancements in ICT

The investigators would also wish to point out some of the threats to the value system that have occurred as a by-product of the advancements in ICT. The list is, in no means exhaustive.

❖ Widespread piracy of Proprietary Software – Operating System Software as well as Application Software; CD - ROMS, VCD's, DVD's all are copied indiscriminately without even thinking that it is against our basic ethical values. Piracy is stealing or cheating, but majority of the people are used to this unassuming evil, without even thinking about it. In fact all people who use these in any form are in fact, partners in crime.

❖ Cybercrimes are increasing at an alarming rate. – Examples of cybercrimes include fraudulent e-mails, peeping into the private virtual lives of unsuspecting social network users; unethical hacking – or rather cracking; impersonation on social networking sites, uploading and downloading inappropriate content including pornographic material or those that incite hate propaganda or character assassination; using intellectual property or copyrighted material for personal use; plagiarism; developing, spreading viruses, worms, trojans, spyware malware, adware, malicious scripts etc.; phishing, and so on.

❖ A new life style has developed with life style disorders like obesity, lack of stamina etc. This new life style has developed a new species called '*machine human*' or '*tech – human*' that thinks without reasoning or logic; and, acts without reflection.

❖ Impatience; intolerance; frustration; lack of 'we-feeling' and caring attitude, is another important side-effect of ICT advancement. This is because people are nowadays conditioned to instant gratification of needs and wants through modern gadgets that are offshoots of developing ICT. Fear, Loss, Anger and Guilt are said to be 4 agents that in high doses can lead to abnormalcy/ neurotic conditions. It is to be noted that ICT development has increased the fear of lack of privacy or lack of online contacts; chances of online thefts incurring in losses; developing series of bouts of anger due to frustration; or guilt due to some known or unknown offence done through these devices.

❖ Meetings and face-to-face interactions are slowly being replaced by online virtual meetings, which would drain the 'life' out of our lives, with the people acting like machines which can think and act to some extent, but can't sense or 'feel' the emotions of other people. If we consider the Gandhian notion of 3H – Head (denoting thought), Heart (denoting emotions/ feelings) and Hand (denoting action), the e-generation individual can be termed an incomplete entity with parts of the Head and the Hand only working, with the Heart having no role at all. At this juncture, let us check the various combinations of Head, Hand and Heart to verify which combination is ideal for success. (Table 1)

Table 1

Combinations of Components of 3H's and their characteristics

Component		Characteristic
Hand only	-	Too Mechanical
Head only	-	Egoistic, Insensitively Rational
Heart only	-	Too Sensitive and Emotional
Head + Hand	**-**	**Can be more Destructive than creative**
Heart + Hand	-	Can be Foolishly Illogical
Head + Heart	-	Logical and Sensitive but impractical
Head + Heart +Hand	**-**	**Empowered and Tuned for Success**

It is only with the proportional combination of 3H's that can lead a person towards success.

Coming back to our discussions on an average individual of the e-generation who has predominance of Head and Hand with the Heart having no role at all, we can see from the above table that these people can be more destructive than creative.

❖ Contemporary world demands e-literacy to be more important than mere literacy, and lack of e-literacy to be more dangerous than illiteracy. This has led to the development of another set of dialectical classes – '*ICT haves*' and '*ICT have-nots*' and the digital divide between these two classes have created value conflicts. And another issue that is related is that some people may not be exposed to ICT due to socio-economic or geographic reasons, which can create a kind of resentment among these technologically underprivileged. This is against the basic tenets of socialism, which is considered as a virtue that the whole world would ideally like to have.

❖ Over dependency on ICT has created generation that is far away from being self reliant. Self reliance is one of the virtues that Gandhiji always stood for.

People have a tendency to accept and adopt anything and everything that comes along with technology development and push aside ill effects without giving much conscious thought. Creating a future generation of persons who are egoistic and are devoid of values would lead to drastic consequences.

Suggestions

✓ In no way are the investigator against developments in ICT; but it is the indiscriminate use that they beg to differ. Gandhian principle of 'Live and Let live', should be the guiding motto in the use of all ICT advancements.

✓ As discussed in Table 1, it is only through the proportional combination of Head, Heart and Hand, can a person march towards success by become a good individual as well as a good social being. So the heart must also be given importance in the educational system that is being followed at all levels.

✓ The Indigenous value system (based on cultural ethos) is to be revitalized by incorporating modern values also, without affecting the basic value ethic of the nation This must be done without blindly adopting each and every western value in the name of modernity.

✓ Globalisation of Gandhian value system and implementing them at all aspects of human life can have magical effects.

✓ People unsuspectingly fall into clutches of 'destructive technological wizards' and become victims or partners of cybercrimes. Hence it is important that people are made

conscious of the ill-effects or rather negative by-products of ICT advancements, like Piracy and other Cybercrimes.

✓ Promoting use of Free and Open software (FOSS) can help prevent such crimes to some extent.

✓ A technological etiquette is to be developed and followed in such a way that people are aware of the 'do's' and 'do not's' while using ICT.

✓ Provide ICT training, couple with value education to all classes and masses so that the digital divide between the '*ICT haves'* and *ICT have nots* decreases.

✓ Reduce the over dependency on ICT for even basic chores.

✓ People should be made aware of the need for de-stressing their lives and should be made to develop positive attitude.

✓ There should be a shift from 'Cognition Centered pedagogy' to *'Affection centered pedagogy',* at all levels of education where all the 3 H's are given equal importance.

Conclusion

Gandhian values have stood the test of time and they are surely powerful enough to guide generations and generations, across the globe through the process of modernization and technological advancements. They represent a readily available panacea to the deteriorating value system, which is one of the ills of ICT advancement. Indeed, We Indians have our own remedy here in Gandhian values, but we are looking elsewhere for solace. It is for us to adapt and implement these values in our personal values to ensure a better tomorrow for our future generations. It also becomes our duty to propagate these values to the western side of the globe, to ensure a world of peace, non-violence, equality, mutual respect, co-operation etc. Let's remember the guiding lamp of India – Gandhiji- and thus make the world a better place to live.

References

Begum Qudsia Zaidi (2002) Our Bapu, Navajivan Publishing house, Ahmedabad.

Bharatan Kumarappa (1954) Nature Cure-Gandhiji, Navajivan Publishing house, Ahmedabad.

Gandhi, M.K. (1938) Hind Swaraj or India home rule, Navajivan Publishing house, Ahmedabad.

Gandhi, M.K. (1955) The Story of my life, Navajivan Publishing house, Ahmedabad.

Kothari, L.S (2001) Education and Peace, GSDS Publication, New Delhi.