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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### A STUDY ON THE PLACE OF MORAL EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN SRI LANKAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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#### ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to critically evaluate moral education in Sri Lankan school curriculum. Education is very important in our lives. It helps us to make a better life. It is a process of learning. On the other hand, it helps to improve different skills and capabilities, habits, knowledge, values as well as beliefs. What is moral education? It can simply define as teaching students about values or moral habits which helps to live in the society helpfully and peacefully. In this process, subjects have been introduced to develop moral education in the school curriculums. Teaching moral education belongs to the hidden curriculum because, from various subjects, we learn values and good habits. For example, if, through religion, we learn to be kind, then automatically it is teaching moral values. Education aims at development or growth intellectually as well as morally. It helps to develop good habits, civic, well-behaved, successful, and healthy qualities that are acceptable in society. In the process of learning, moral education is provided through various subjects such as civic education and life skills, health science, religion, and ethics. The fundamental way in which education helps social progress is by aiding the moral development of the individual and the society. According to Dewey, education means intellectual and moral development or growth. Talk of ethical theories is scarcely at a premium in current debates about morality and moral education, yet these are no more than attempts to make explicit the reasons why some things are considered good and others bad; to go beyond the simple commands 'Do this' and 'Don't do that, or else'. Few would suggest that anything resembling a formal course in ethics would provide an answer to our current problems. Therefore, the practice of moral development in our education system must be investigated in this sense and it is needed to analyze and evaluate the existing teaching and practice of moral education within Sri Lankan school education system. This research focuses on addressing the present practice of moral education in school setting. This study also critically investigates the gaps and inadequate areas of moral application in our country in comparison to the international standards. The methodology of this research applies mixed methods, for a qualitative approach this involves the conceptual clarification of moral education along with moral reasoning with reference to different texts on value education. As well, this study quantitatively gathers information by conducting on the teaching of civics subject in school curricula in grade 8 of the Sri Lankan national school syllabus. We selected two schools in Colombo district, namely Lumbini College and Musaeus College. The Sample is 100 students in 13 years of age, and analysis the data using SPSS analysis.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Education is a methodical effort towards learning basic facts about humanity, and the core idea behind value education is to cultivate essential values in the students. So that the civilization that teaches us to manage complexities can be sustained and further developed. It begins at home, and it continues in the schools.

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Value education is important to help everyone improve the value system that he/she holds and put it to use. Once we understand our values in life, we can examine and control the various choices we make in our lives. It is our duty to uphold the various types of values in life, such as cultural values, universal values, personal values, and social values. Thus, value education is always essential in shaping a student's life and giving him the opportunity to perform himself on the global stage. The need for value education among parents, children, teachers, etc. is constantly increasing as we continue to witness increasing violent activities, behavioral disorders, and a lack of unity in society.

Not only in this country, but in many other countries in this world, traditional education places a lot of emphasis on value education. They considered character development, discipline, and good qualities as the aims of education. '*Vidhya dadathivinayang*' (learning leads to discipline) explains the high ideal of education. 'Fear of God is the beginning of knowledge, a saying which is common in western countries, is also like this. German philosopher Kanthas said that 'character is the only thing that is valued most'. Most educationists in the past thought of education along these lines. Our ancestors memorized epics on values like *Lowveda Sangarawa*, *Lokopakaraya*, etc. So much so that they were able to remember them even in their old age. As for the Tamils, '*Thirukural*' is considered an inspiring treatise on values which shows them the way to lead a good life. But the worldly, commercialized modern culture which appeared in the western world and spread throughout the world has destroyed traditional social values. This has resulted in the degeneration of society. Today, the youth of this country go to the extent of committing suicide because of the emotional stress they must encounter. Youth make up a significant portion of the 6000-7000 suicides that occur each year. The number of youths getting addicted to alcohol is on the increase. It has become very easy to enlist them in terrorist movements. It is difficult to find youth who have a feeling for the country, race, or religion. They see no value in education other than passing examinations. They are unable to face life's challenges. This is the result of not having the right cultural values. Consequent to this, a society with no substance in life, conflicting values, and confusion have come about. We can see that these things are reflected in the daily newspapers. Doctors and nurses resorting to trade union action for trivial problems, entire family members being murdered, rape, deceit, dishonesty, power-hungry politics, and abuse of children have become common day-to-day occurrences. These horrors reveal the deterioration of values at its worst. Because of this, the need for values education has become far more important today. It can now be observed that there is more interest shown in including values in the school curriculum.

**What are values?:** Values have three essential anchor bases: first, values are anchored in the "head." To secure this anchoring, one must perceive and see reasons why something is valuable and become intellectually convinced about its worth. Secondly, values are anchored in the "heart." It is not enough to have the logic of the mind, but the person must experience the feeling in one's heart that something is worthwhile. As a result, an understanding heart can move towards what is perceived as prize-worthy. When the head and the heart are involved, the third anchor base also comes into force, namely the domain of action, namely the "hand." Such values that toughen both the head and the heart will necessarily lead to a personal stand and so to decisions and actions. We will first see what we really mean by "values." The word value means something valuable or treasured. It also refers to values in life. First, let us see what we mean by values. A special human quality is to give value to things. Mother Nature has no such thing as value. But it is this human mind that attributes a certain value to objects, people, occurrences, characteristics, and thoughts. For example, think about this statement: "Gold is more valuable than silver." At another period of time, silver may become more valuable than gold. Why do people value certain things? It may be because of their usefulness, beauty, satisfaction, good quality, strength, etc. Values are given to different things in different ways.

In the business world, it is indicated by the price. But all things cannot be valued in this manner. Certain types of things are valued as good, bad, beautiful, ugly, high-low, common, or uncommon. These values can be categorized into two categories: positive and negative. Good, beautiful, superior, and useful are all positive values. Bad, ugly, inferior, unless there are negative values.

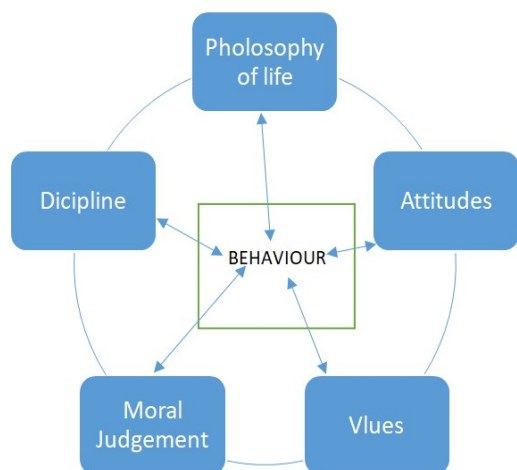
**Concept of Values:** "Value means worth; that which makes anything desirable or worth possessing—qualities, attitudes, methods, etc." Collins Cobbed Dictionary. "Anything that is desired, valued, received, held in high esteem, consumed, liked, and experienced is basically considered value." Brightman (1978). "The ideals, beliefs, and norms that are followed by a society or by a majority in a society are called values" (Kern 1962). From the above definition, it can be said that anything considered desirable or worthy by an individual or a member of a society is valuable. This definition is commonly used in sociology. But this definition causes problems in education. Can we regard anything that people desire or respect as valuable? If that is so, what are the values that should be included in education? Once in Yugoslavia, in the school curriculum under the theme "self-defense" subtopics on the making of hand bombs and simple guns and the use of weapons were included. One could see elements of destruction in this. Here, the problem regarding the relationship between value and value arises. Can all kinds of values be considered values? In English, by values, we mean anything that is worthy of and also lofty ideas. But according to Eastern thought, value and values refer to two different things. In Sinhala, the words "*gunadharma*" and "*purushartha*" mean values. In the early colloquial Sinhala, it was called "*sangasara*" (social values). A.S. Balasuriya (1997) has defined values as a "human characteristic or quality that enriches and develops an individual, society, and life." According to this, all values are considered good and positive. A humanist psychologist used the word values with a similar meaning. For example, Alpot said, "Values are related to one's soul." A famous humanist psychologist, Abraham Maslow (1971), goes along this line of thought and says, "The values that guide a man to his deeds are something inherent in human nature."

Valued resources are natural. And it can be realized that the order in which they are brought forth is also natural. Values can be expressed by man's effort, knowledge, and experiences. Values are something that should be expressed, not built up or created. Maslow, who identifies values as a natural trait of human beings, says that they help us to lead a good life. This reveals that human character is good at birth. It is therefore quite clear that the perspectives of humanistic psychologists are very close to those of Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism. Usually, western thought is that humans, by nature, have evil elements.

**Learning process of values:** When we talk of value education, we think of discipline, attitude, and morality. Balasooriya (1997) explained how these are related to values in the following diagram.

#### **Moral Process**

Learning process of Morality Value is something that is found in moral learning and behavior. This process is explained in circular form. It begins with attitudes. Values are formed by a combination of several attitudes. Values lead to moral judgment, and by strictly adhering to moral judgment, discipline is formed.:



Learning experiences gained through discipline will help build up life's philosophy. We shall learn about this learning process in more detail.

### The functions of values

- Consciousness expansion and nutrition – through every value learnt or internalized, some level in the consciousness of a person is strengthened and expanded.
- Affective Nutrition: in every value there is an affective profile. As a value is enhanced, the affective entity that is related to it is also enhanced. E.g., compassion, aesthetic donation.
- Moral Judgment – The judgment on deciding the correct course of action in some situations is based on values. Therefore, there is a close relationship between values and morality.
- Life guidance – values show the way for a person to grow towards a complete life.
- Cautionization – most values reflect the optimum behavior accepted by the society. We will be stepping into the culture of a society, to the extent we plant the values in ourselves.
- Social unity - when a group of people commonly accept a value or a value system, a social unity occurs. (Balasooriya – 1997)

### What are attitudes?

**The following are examples of attitudes:** Smoking harmful, I do not like fast pop music, Awakening early in the morning is a good habit. In the above statements, one and two are negative in evaluation, while the third is positive. Attitude is an evaluation that directs an individual to think positively or negatively about an individual, things, activities, events, and ideas. In short, attitude is an evaluation of the security of anything. From this, we understand that to develop values in children, first attitudes have to be built up. It is impossible to build up values immediately. It is a long process. Next, we will see how attitude or value is built up. In every attitude or value, there are three divisions: knowledge, emotions, and behavior.

**Morality:** What does morality mean? It means good behavior. The word morality is derived from the Latin word *mores*, which means social traditions and behavior traditions and norms accepted by the society. The meanings of word morality is given as follows in Collins Cobble Dictionary. One, according to his or her own conscience, may think that certain

behaviors are right, appropriate, and acceptable; at the same time, certain behaviors may appear to be wrong, inappropriate, and unacceptable.

- A person's action in a given context which may be considered as good, right and appropriate
- The accepted code of values and principles regarding the behavior of an individual

Jean Piaget (1932), when discussing children's morality, speaks about moral judgment. According to him, moral judgment will vary according to the developmental stage of an individual. M.V.H. Jeffrys (1962) defines morality as a collection of behavioral norms that help the growth of good and the disappearance of bad. In philosophy, morality is called "ethics." Ethical science tries to assess whether a person's action in a given context is right or wrong, high or low, honest or dishonest, good or bad. Morality, in short, is a behavior accepted by society. Morality is a behavior that can be logically proven to be right. In this context, a person should have the ability to reason out and act intelligently. He or she should select the best option out of several options. Finally, we will see how values form the basis for moral elements.

### Moral- elements/Values

- Stealing is bad, honesty, trustworthy, good deeds, responsibility
- Helping someone in difficulty, taking responsibility, brotherhood, empathy

**Discipline:** By discipline, we mean acting or behaving according to one's moral judgment. We shall explain this with an example. Students are reading books quietly in the absence of the teacher. What has determined their behavior? Moral elements such as it is wrong to waste time. It is bad to disturb others, which would have been the basis for such behavior. These are their moral judgments. In fact, the outcome of value education is morality. Parents insist on value education because they wish to include qualities of good discipline among their children. The remedy for declining discipline among students is providing them with a valuable education. The success of value education in a school can be seen in the discipline maintained in that school. We shall now explain "discipline" in more detail. Holliday (1961) says, "The self-control that develops in a person shows the good discipline that develops in him or her." Discipline, therefore, emerges through self-effort. Madame Agnew (1964) too emphasizes this aspect. She says discipline leads to the development and security of an individual. Balasooriya (1997) says self-understanding and doing the right thing are two aspects of discipline. Of these two, he argues that doing the right thing is more important.

**Life's Philosophy:** It is one's life's philosophy that controls one's cognitive behavior. What one has learned from his or her experience is his or her life's philosophy. For example, a person who does not lead a disciplined life may still argue that what he does is correct. Two eminent psychologists, Britt Hator (1958) and William Mackeyer (1960), had explained the basic truths about individual attitudes. A person will not have two attitudes that are contradictory to each other. If such contradictory attitudes do exist at a particular time, that would lead to restlessness in him. That is why it is said that it is very difficult to build up an attitude that may be against one's life's philosophy.

Changing one's attitude and values should be very carefully done. It should be acceptable to him. Students, through value education, should be able to build up a productive philosophy of life. In the present day, adolescents are searching for a philosophy that would enable them to understand the world and life and distinguish between good and bad. Youths develop inferiority complexes because of the type of knowledge and education given to them. The teaching of academic subjects occupies a predominant place in our education system, which prevents children from developing the correct philosophy of life.

#### **Selecting values to be included for school curriculum:**

- Helping children to develop their total personalities by providing the learning experiences and values that are required for their physical, mental, social and moral development.
- Guiding children to lead a secure, peaceful and happy life.
- Making children aware of how they could live a complete life. (Balasooriya 1997)

Values for a school curriculum should be selected in such a way that they agree with the international educational aims and educational aims of the school. The selected values should be logically arranged in a sequential order. The current school curriculum lacks this. Values included in different subjects should be integrated. Otherwise, values that are included in one subject may contradict values included in another subject. To prevent this, a collection of basic values for national education in the world's countries has been published. This would enable curriculum developers to include appropriate values in their own curriculum to suit them. complication of the basic education values of Malaysia. The values thus included in various subjects should be developed across the grades in a grid to enable students to study each value in more depth.

**Teachers' approaches regarding values:** How could teacher contribute to development of values in students? There are three approaches as seen in schools today (Merill Harmin and Sydney SIMIN 1971)

Teachers do not do anything to develop values in education. They put forward the following reasons to justify their stand:

- Their duty is to teach the particular subject assigned to them and that there is hardly any time to do anything beyond that
- They have no knowledge or training regarding value education
- Values cannot be taught, values should be taught through life experiences
- It is a vain effort to teach values in the present social setup
- Presenting the predetermined code of values.

This is the traditional approach. Values expounded by great men are transferred to the students. Here, the children act within the sphere of religion or race. Some teachers try to impress the values, and they think right in the minds of the children. The following methods are advocated for imparting the code of values accepted by society.

**Values in school:** Values help us organize our activities. They help us strengthen interpersonal relationships. According to this, values in education are determined by culture, beliefs, and behavioral patterns. What is a necessity for value education? This question is irrelevant. Already, values are embodied in education. In all school activities, importance is given to values. Anyhow, these are certain problems that must be encountered when introducing values in education in schools.

- Problems related to knowledge; what is the right type knowledge to be imparted?
- Economic problems; how could students be prepared for the future to cope with the world market?
- Environment related problems; how can the future be changed when limited resources are extinct?
- Problems related to excellence; when determining efficiency in schools, what activities and evaluation methods should be taken into consideration?

**Parents, schools and values:** More than schools, parents have to play a bigger role in developing values among children. Research done in 1994 by students and others includes the following characteristics of parents: Parents should know their responsibilities, be democratic, Should be dictatorial, Faith in parents to build up by self-evaluation methods, Should be interested in giving an explanation and desire. According to Pebar and Mazlis (1992), parents can do the following to develop efficiency in children: Allowing children to choose, respecting and recognizing students best efforts, Avoid raising unwanted questions. Avoid being hasty to provide answers, Encourage children to make the best use of resources outside the home.

**The contribution of schools:** According to Worston Erston (1945), most of the values are given to children by adults in the environment in which they live. Our biggest problem here is identifying whose values they are. To solve this problem, it is suggested that the students be presented with a value package. Education forms the basis for identifying the correct values. Here, the value of education is given indirectly as a byproduct when teaching a particular subject. It is assumed that all educational efforts are aimed at value development. Very little research has been done regarding the duties of parents to improve school discipline. Very little is done to bring the school and parents together in achieving this. According to Winston and Tom Lickson (1997), the opportunities for parental participation in school activities are fewer. Both parents and schools should jointly identify values that are to be inculcated in children. Discipline, adjustment to the environment, and respecting traditions are some of these values. There should be a dialog between the teacher and parents when identifying values.

**Values, students' problems and teacher education:** Several reasons can be attributed to the failure of education authorities to solve student problems. Teachers in general consider the violent activities of the students to be the order of the day. On the other hand, teachers themselves resort to trade union action to win their rights. This, according to Durheim (1986), results in student indiscipline. Our teacher, education, suffers from some definite drawbacks. It is, in particular, isolated from schools and even society. The government is concerned about the implementation of the national curriculum and the school-based assessment scheme.

The attention of the teachers is thus diverted to the day-to-day teaching activities. Schools, as a result, have failed to develop the right social behavior pattern among children. According to Armstone and Kolova, the existence of children with special needs and learning disabilities results in the inefficiency of the school. Pre-service, in-service, and continuing teacher education programs should be reoriented to give more and more emphasis to classroom management and student behavior. Teachers may adopt several methods to inculcate values among children. But a student-centered approach is supposed to be the best. Value-oriented education should be included in a teacher education program. The training program should make teachers sensitive to the values and needs of children and their full adjustment to society in the future. Evaluation of values is a very important education process. This evaluation is necessary to get feedback. Schools and parents have a responsibility to create a conducive environment for the moral development of children.

**Data Analysis:** The study was conducted on the teaching of Civics subject in two selected schools for Grade 8 (13 years of age). A sample of 100 was selected, which was split equally between Lumbini College and Musaeus College.

**Distribution of the sample:** Lumbini College is a mixed-government school, while Musaeus College is a semi-government girl school, and the distribution of students at the schools is illustrated in Figure below.

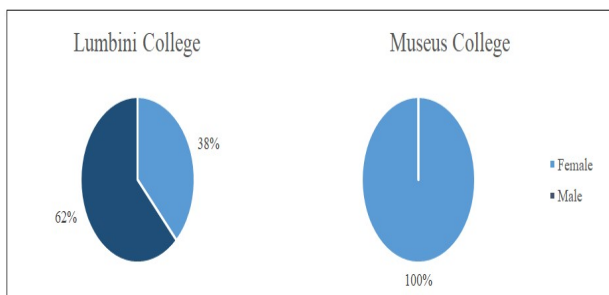


Figure 1. Gender distribution

The number of family members varied from 2 to 7 in the sample, in which the majority (54 percent) of the respondents have 4 members in the family, while there was only one respondent each who lives in a household with a number of family members of 2 and 7.

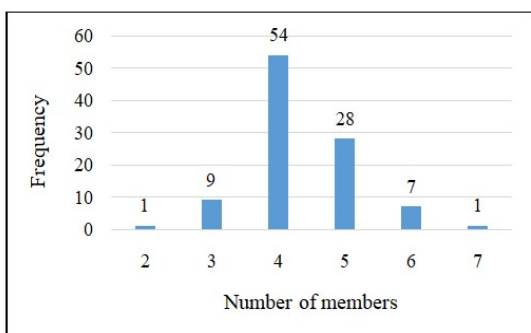


Figure 2. Number of household members

The study further considered the employment of the parents of the respondents and observed that the majority of the respondents are employed, as illustrated in Error! Reference source not found.

Further, it should be noted that Musaeus College respondents' parents have an employment rate of 100%.

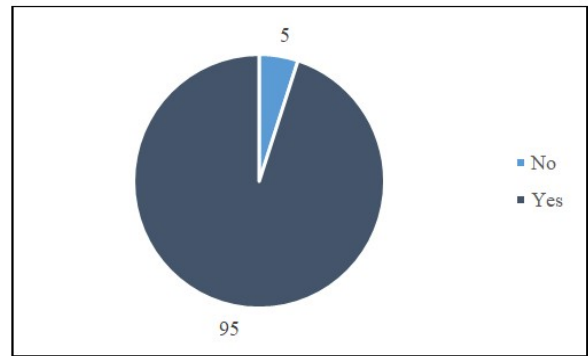


Figure 3. Employment status of parents

There were four religious groups identified, which are Buddhist, Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Christianity, in the sample, where 100% of the Musaeus College respondents were Buddhist. As illustrated in Figure 3, The majority of the respondents were Buddhists (96 percent), while other religions had 1% or 2% representation in the sample.

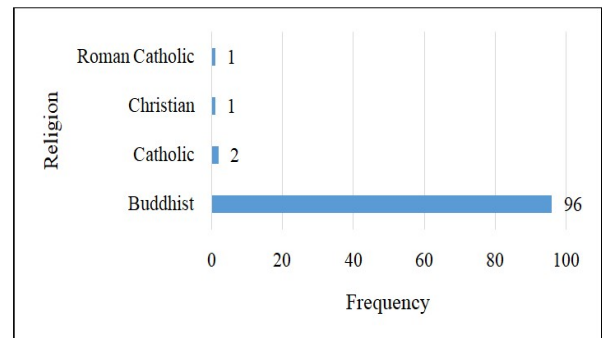


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents' religion

Thus, the study consists of respondents who come from Musaeus College and Lumbini College, with the majority being Buddhists and having parents who are employed.

**Civics education in schools:** Civics subject is taught at both Lumbini and Musaeus College as a subject for students in grade 8. However, permanent civics teachers are only employed at Musaeus College, while at Lumbini College there are no permanent teachers, as illustrated in Figure 4.

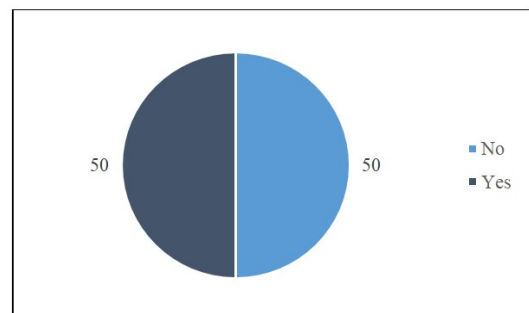


Figure 5. Employment of permanent teachers for civics education

The understanding of civics education varied from respondent to respondent, and many agree that through civics education they learn about (i) how to become a responsible or good

citizen in society, (ii) society and how people behave, (iii) structures of institutions such as family, government, (iv) social norms, ethics, and culture, etc. Many respondents believed that the peaceful co-existence of individuals in society while being responsible and good citizens was the message in civics education. However, 2% of the respondents did not believe that civics education teaches how to harmoniously co-exist in society with fellow brothers and sisters, as observed in Figure 3.

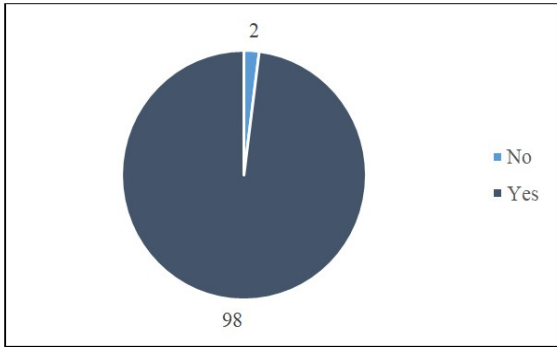


Figure 6. Does Civics education teach to harmoniously coexist?

The majority of the participants (99 percent) believed that civics education teaches that others' ideas need to be respected to live harmoniously in society (see Figure 4).

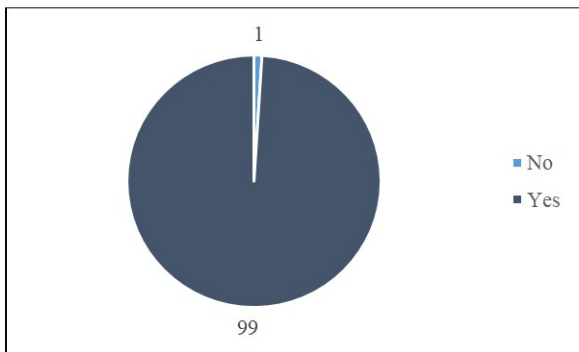


Figure 7. Does Civics education teach to respect others' ideas?

It should be noted that 100 percent of the Musaeus College respondents believed that civics education indeed taught students how to respect other individuals' ideas. Similarly, the majority of the respondents believed that civics education teaches how to live harmoniously with different ethnic groups present in Sri Lanka, such as Sinhalese and Tamils, and it was observed that all the respondents at Musaeus College agreed that the teachings comprise civics education. However, 1 percent of the respondents did not believe that it was part of the civics education teaching, as illustrated below. Another important lesson to be learnt from civics education is to differentiate between good and bad. 94 percent of the respondents believed that civics education helped to distinguish good from bad (Figure 9). Apart from teaching how to distinguish the good from the bad, the impact of civics education on making correct decisions in a manner that loved ones and other surrounding individuals may be affected by such decision-making 94 percent of the respondents believed that through civics education, they learned how to make the correct decisions without causing those around them any harm. Another aspect that was considered is whether civics education only provides knowledge on the politics of Sri Lanka. The majority of the respondents (92 percent) believed that they learned more than the country's political system in civics education, as observed in Figure 7 below.

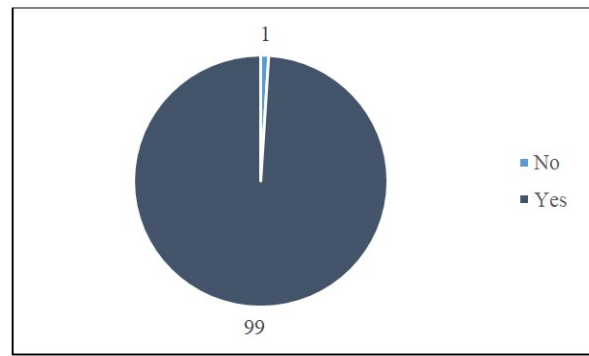


Figure 8. Does Civics education teach to coexist harmoniously among ethnic groups?

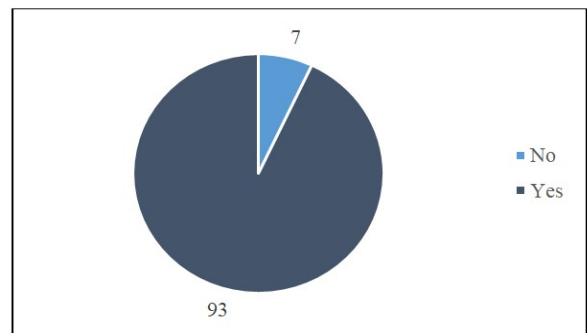


Figure 9. Does Civics education aid to distinguish good from bad?

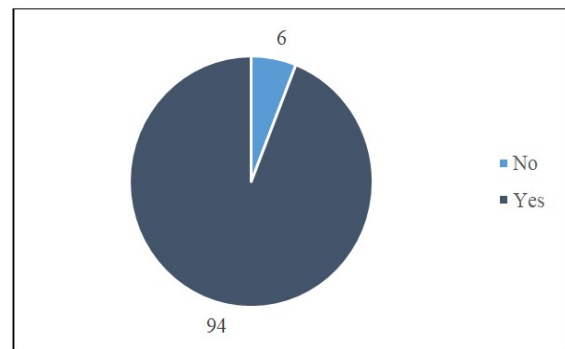


Figure 10. Does Civics education aid in making correct decisions?

As many subjects are compulsory along with civics education, the importance of civics education relative to other compulsory subjects should also be taken into consideration. 67 percent of the respondents believed that civics education was more important than other compulsory subjects, while 33 percent of the respondents did not agree, as observed in Figure 10.

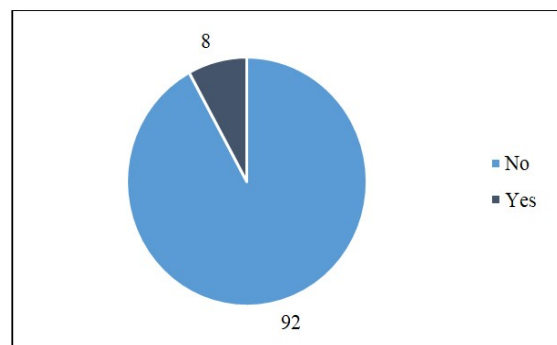


Figure 11. Does Civics education only teach about the country's political system?

Further, it can be observed that respondents from Musaeus College agreed that Civics education is more important than the rest of the compulsory subjects.

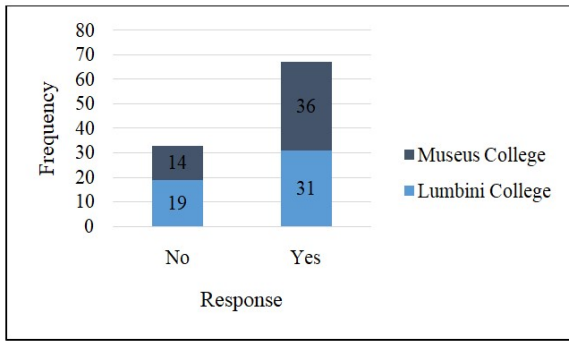


Figure 12. Is Civics education more important than the rest of the compulsory subjects?

As many of the respondents believed that civics education is a teaching on having a society with responsible citizens, the study considered whether the respondents believed that civics education teaches how to live as a good and disciplined citizen in the society. The majority of the respondents (92 percent) believed that civics education indeed teaches such practices, while 8 percent of the respondents did not agree.

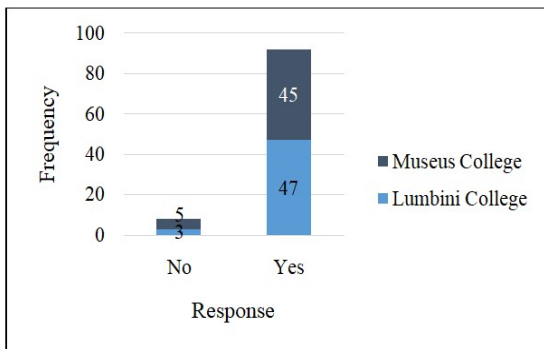


Figure 13. Does Civics education teach to live as a good and disciplined citizen?

**Religious studies:** Religion as a subject is a compulsory subject for grade 8 students. The four religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity—are taught in school based on the predominant religion in school or based on the availability of teachers in the school. Not all schools offer all four religions as subject options in religion. This can be observed within the study, as Musaeus College does not offer all religions while Lumbini College offers all religions.

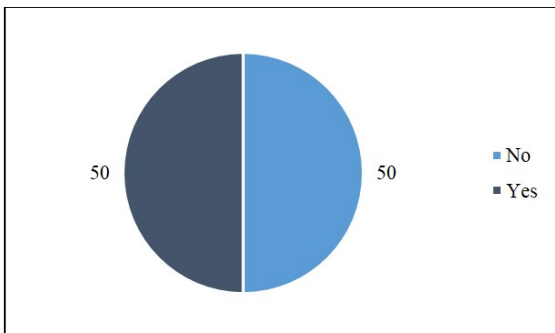


Figure 14. Does your school offer option of all religions?

Based on the religion taught in school, it is important to teach how to live in religious harmony by respecting other religions. The majority of the respondents (91 percent) believed that religious studies emphasize the importance of coexisting harmoniously with individuals coming from other religions. Only 4 percent of the Lumbini College respondents and 14 percent of the Musaeus College respondents believed that it was not taught in religious studies.

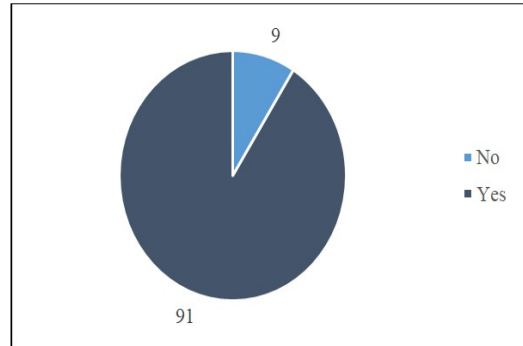


Figure 15. Does religion teach to coexist harmoniously with other religions?

The majority of the respondents believed that religious studies do not focus only on religious ideology. Only 15 percent of the respondents believed that religion only teaches about religious ideologies; 9 percent of the respondents from Lumbini College agreed, while only 12 percent of the Musaeus College respondents agreed.

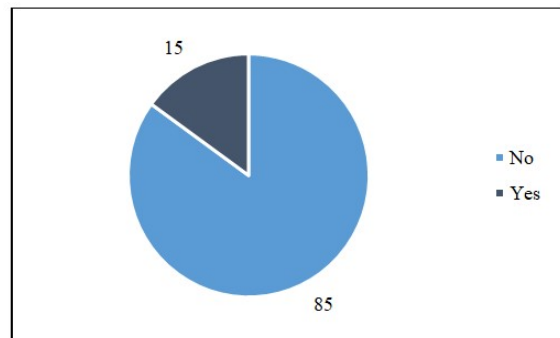


Figure 16: Does religion only provide knowledge about religious ideologies?

It is also important to consider whether religion paves the way to learning how to improve one’s discipline and behaviour. Only 93 percent of the respondents believed that religion helps to pave the way to improving one’s discipline and behaviour; 94 percent of the respondents from Lumbini College agreed, while only 92 percent of the Musaeus College respondents agreed.

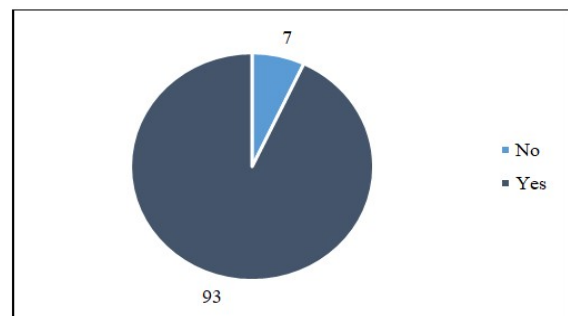
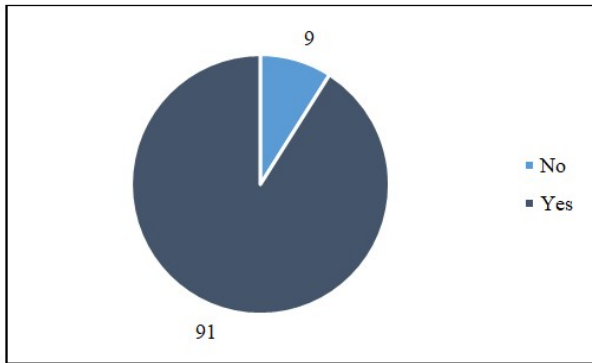


Figure 17. Does religion teaches how to improve discipline and behaviour?

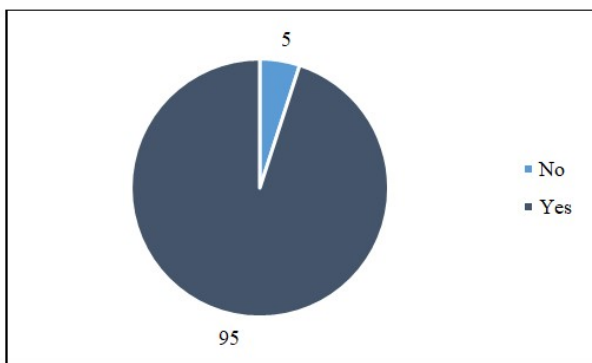
Another aspect of religious teachings considered by the study is whether they create good people who are useful to the country. The majority of the respondents (91 percent) agreed that religion does indeed create good people valuable to the country.



**Figure 18. Do you think that religion creates a good person who is helpful to the country?**

The study further considered whether there is a relationship between civics education and religious studies.

**Civics education and religion:** Civics education and religious studies, as compulsory studies, guide students to become better people and responsible citizens of the country. However, the question arises whether the syllabi of the two subjects themselves aid in the development of the student. 95 percent of the respondents believed that instead of the syllabi of civic education and religious studies, a practical approach would provide better development for the student. It should be noted that only 1 respondent from Lumbini College did not agree that a practical approach is better for development. In general, the respondents believed that both subjects should lean towards a more practical side, as they are two essential subjects in which every student must have robust knowledge, as they are about the art of living.



**Figure 19. Do you think that the development of students' practical approaches should be taken instead of the syllabi of civics education and religious studies?**

Further, respondents believed that the subjects produced productive citizens with good attitudes and valuable ideas. The importance of learning is highlighted as it guides the young generation to be disciplined while learning to reconcile and collaborate. Some respondents pointed out that the subjects were limited and needed to be updated and timely.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study is intended to critically evaluate the role of moral education in the context of Sri Lankan school curricula. Education is a very vital aspect of our lives, contributing to personal and societal development. Specifically, moral education focuses on instilling values and ethical habits that enhance individual ability to live harmoniously within society. The incorporation of moral education within the hidden curriculum is evident, as various subjects indirectly impart moral values and principles. This research recognizes education as a means of intellectual and moral growth, aligning with the views of Dewey and emphasizing the importance of ethics in societal progress. The study explored the practice of moral development within the Sri Lankan education system, assessing its effectiveness and identifying potential gaps when compared to international standards. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research employed qualitative analysis to clarify the conceptual foundations of moral education and moral reasoning, drawing upon relevant literature on value education. Furthermore, quantitative analysis was conducted on the teaching of civic subjects in the Grade 8 syllabus of two selected schools in the Colombo district: Lumbini College and Musaeus College. The data collected from 100 students, aged 13 years, was analyzed using SPSS. The findings of this study shed light on the existing practices of moral education within the Sri Lankan school system. By critically examining the gaps and deficiencies in moral application, this research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the subject and offers insights for potential improvements. It is crucial to constantly assess and evaluate the teaching and implementation of moral education to ensure its efficacy in fostering ethical development among students.

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