



# HUMAN VALUES

(INNOVATION CODE - SKM/18/01)

What is the true role of education in a person's life? If we say that it is to equip a person with the knowledge and skills to be able to perform well in the world and to have a fruitful career, we will be only touching the tip of the iceberg. The true role of education is to teach a person how to 'use' knowledge. My students may know and remember accurately all the facts on a subject, but can they really discern what is good for them, the society and humanity? Do they make an effort to understand their surroundings, the environment and human behaviour? Do my students feel that they are valuable individuals because they have certain qualities that can make this world a better place? This section on 'Human Values' talks about how teachers can lead their students towards the answers to these questions. It is for those teachers who are motivated to build their students' character, so they grow up as not just good citizens, but also good thinkers and leaders.

## Names of the innovators

1. Laden Pulger / Government Junior High School, Adam Pool, East Sikkim
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## Benefits of this innovation

- ◆ Strengthens the students' fundamental human values and sets them on the path to becoming responsible, conscious citizens.
- ◆ Honors their inherent qualities, including responsibility, confidence, co-operation, respect, and empathy.
- ◆ Influenced by the students, gradually their parents and community also develop a more positive outlook towards education.

## Impact areas

Inculcation of the deeper human values in teaching and learning.

## Summary

Each activity featured as part of this innovation is focused on specific human values. The positive change in students and learning environment through all these activities can be ensured by carrying these out on a regular basis throughout the year, rather than as a one-time activity. Hence, the teacher plays an important role in enabling students to participate meaningfully.

## Activities for classroom

### 1. Scouts & Guides

**Introduction:** Inspired by National Cadet Corps (NCC), this innovative activity encourages students to be always ready to help others and recognises their efforts by awarding them different badges/ribbons. The main idea is that students get opportunities to hone their sense of responsibility and empathy, and they willingly start identifying ways to develop leadership and life skills through self-development, challenge, adventure and fun!

**Classroom Application:** Scouts & Guides is all about young people's all-round development. Their general knowledge improves, and they learn important skills required for better learning in classroom and in life, including sense of Duty, Commitment, Discipline, Leadership, and Teamwork. Their confidence and self-esteem also improves significantly. This activity is most suitable for upper primary class, and can also be integrated with syllabus topics.

**Planning:** Teachers spend 10-15 minutes talking to students about the importance of helping others. In this discussion, the difference between sympathy and empathy can be also mentioned. Sympathy means you merely pity someone's misfortune. Whereas

empathy means that you understand the feelings of another and take some action to comfort this person. Then, discuss with students how they can lend a helping hand to their classmates, family members, neighbours, pets and stray animals. For this, they do not have to take any risky work. Sometimes simple and intuitive tasks can be a big support to others.

**Preparation:** Two key things need to be prepared beforehand -

- ◆ Teachers and students together decide the colours of badges/ribbons that will be awarded to students for different types of help rendered by the student. For instance, red colour ribbon for helping the elderly, yellow for helping mothers, green for helping children, pink for helping friends and classmates, brown for helping animals, and so on. Simple wool thread, coloured paper, cardboard or cloth pieces can be used to create the badges.

- ◆ Students create a notebook to record the help they have provided to someone along with date and name of the person who has been assisted. Any old notebook can be used, and needs to be maintained throughout the academic year. Students may also decorate their notebooks. Another option is to use a bulletin board or blackboard to keep this record on a daily basis.



**Implementation:** Please follow these steps to start Scouts & Guides in your classroom.

- ◆ Introduce Scouts & Guides to your class as a game of collecting badges/ribbons of all the colours within one academic year, by helping others in their school, home or community.

- ◆ Provide examples, like helping parents with household work (cleaning, feeding animals, feeding siblings etc.). The second example is teaching classmates, younger siblings or neighbourhood students. Another one is of helping the elderly persons cross the road, or fetch water, or visit the market.

- ◆ Scouts & Guides can also be integrated with subject topics taught in the classroom. For example, if students have read about mosquito-borne diseases or about cleanliness, then the teacher can ask them to help their neighbours ensure there is no stagnant water in their homes, bathrooms drainage is not blocked, kitchen is clean, etc.

- ◆ Students must write a description of the helping work done in their Scouts & Guides notebook.

- ◆ At the end of every week (or month), the teacher reviews students' notebooks and presents them the respective colour badges/ribbons based on the type of help provided by them. (If the teacher is not sure whether a student has written the truth or not, he/she may ask follow up questions and assess the student's sincerity.)

- ◆ At the end of the academic year, students who have managed to collect badges/ribbons of all the colours, are applauded and recognised in the class.

- ◆ At year-end/annual day celebrations, the teacher may also invite various persons helped by the students, so they can share their experience and further encourage children to continue the good work.

**Note:** Scouts & Guides can also be included in the



next activity of helping tourists, and a specific colour badge can be awarded to students for helping visitors to their state.

## 2. May I Help You?

**Introduction:** Tourism is a major engine of economic growth, employment and poverty alleviation in the state of Sikkim. For a child, it is important to know that tourism is not just an industry that brings jobs and money to the locals. More importantly, tourism is about being proud of our local heritage and culture, sharing it with others so they too can return home having learnt something good from Sikkim. It is about accepting outsiders and about human unity. If children, from an early age, understand this significance and how to make others feel like friends and not strangers, then they can help ensure that in future, tourism is more meaningful and constructive, as well as strengthen their human value of respecting others.

**Classroom Application:** Students sharpen their speaking skills, social awareness, and confidence. Teacher can also link this task to Social Studies syllabus topics. This activity is most suitable for upper primary classes, when students have developed enough sensitivity to discern when it is okay to talk to strangers and when to stay away.

**Planning:** Discuss the importance of tourism with your class, and why students should make an effort to help tourists. Also discuss how simple tasks can be

of big help to someone, like telling the way to people if they are lost, lending a hand to women with young children, giving a place to the elderly to sit, suggesting places to visit in Sikkim, and so on. Remember to also advise students of the possible situations where they should not talk to tourists, for example late at night, in lonely streets, or if the person seems drunk.

**Preparation:** Please refer to ‘Preparation’ section of Scouts & Guides activity above, where students prepare a note book to record their experiences of helping people.

**Implementation:** Name of this activity, ‘May I help you?’ signifies two things. First, the need of tourists to be able to find help from friendly people and not feel unwelcome in a new place. Secondly, this polite phrase signifies that students take the initiative to help others, instead of waiting for them to ask for help. Here is how you can start this practice with your students:

- ◆ Students are instructed to make an effort to meet, greet and help tourists. Make them aware of who to reach out to and how. For instance, travellers who need help the most are children, mothers, elderly, disabled, and those with an illness. On the other hand, help that is needed most often is simple but needs to be provided with politeness, such as telling the way to a particular place of interest, showing how to book a local taxi service, or where to find the tourism department office.

- ◆ Teacher may also ask students to role-play or write some common conversations, guiding them to speak well in English/Nepali/Hindi. Further, instructions on positive body language (smiling face, use of hand gestures, keeping a one-arm distance while talking, etc.), posture and importance of listening skills can also be shared with students for developing their personality and confidence.

- ◆ Every day, while going back from school, or at home while shopping with parents, or at other such times, students apply what they have learnt. If they

see someone who is in need of some help, they start a conversation by saying ‘May I help you?’. They listen to the person carefully and offer to help in the best way possible within their means.

- ◆ In their notebook, students must write a description of the helpful work done.

- ◆ At the end of every week (or month), the teacher reviews students’ notebooks and invites selected students to present their experience of helping others with the rest of the class. Teacher and classmates applaud the student’s efforts.

- ◆ At year-end, student who has proved to be the most respectful, helpful and responsible towards visitors to the state, can be recognised during morning assembly or during a school celebration event.

**Note:** ‘May I help you?’ activity can be extended into the Scouts & Guides activity described above.

### 3. My Postbox, My Voice

**Introduction:** Children have an innate sense of right and wrong. However, growing up they face multiple stimuli and influences — family, friends, school, society, television, social media — that sometimes guide them well, but also sometimes leave them confused as to what is values-based and what is not. The bigger problem is that often when children need clarity of thinking, they are hesitant of asking questions or expressing themselves to others. ‘My Postbox, My Voice’ is an interesting way to encourage them to find answers by posting letters to the teachers or friends they want to reach out to. These letters can be to ask questions to the teacher about deeper meanings of things children observe, about a complicated situation in a story they have read in the class, or these letters can be to say ‘thank you’ or ‘sorry’ to classmates.

**Classroom Application:** This activity improves teacher-student trust and bonding, and also creates a cordial, supportive learning environment as classmates get to understand each other’s goodness.

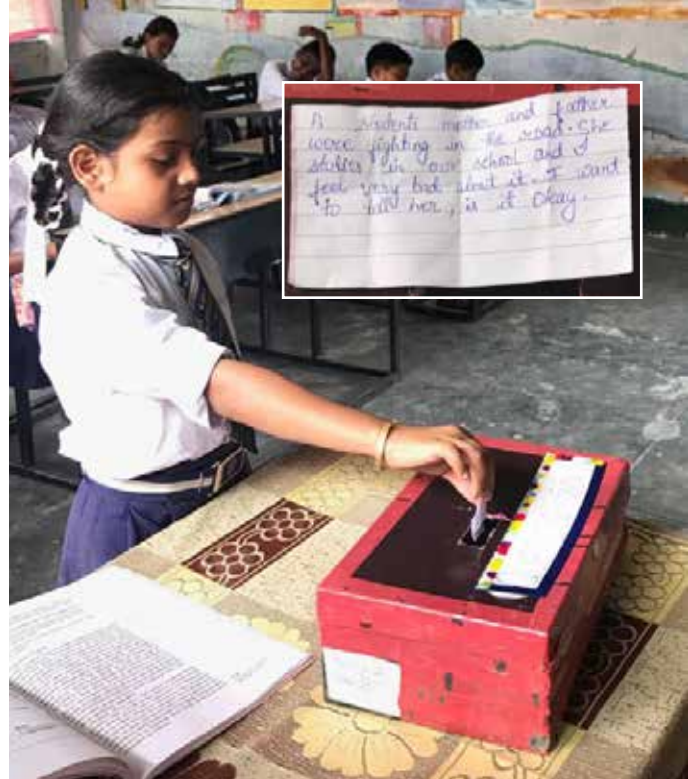
Values of gratitude and humility can be especially encouraged through this activity, along with curiosity and urge to understand things better.

**Planning/Preparation:** The teacher will need to create and hang a postbox in the classroom, as shown in the image. You may decorate an empty cardboard box with colourful paper and write 'My Postbox, My Voice' on it. Students may also participate in decoration work.

**Implementation:** Discuss with students that to stay on the path of righteousness as we grow up, it is important to keep asking questions and seek answers, so the right people can guide us at the right time. Also, many times, it is not easy to practice good behaviour. Even simple values-based tasks, like saying 'thank you' and 'sorry', can be a challenge if we are influenced by ego, hierarchy and social status. Overcoming these hesitations, and finding a way to express our thoughts is important. After this, encourage them towards character building by taking the following steps on a regular basis:

◆ **What to do** — Students are asked to always keep in mind that our human values are our greatest asset. Whenever they experience, see, hear, read something that is related to values, they should ponder on its meaning and decide what actions they should take. If they do not understand, they can ask questions by writing a letter.

◆ **How to do** — They can choose to post the anonymous letters (without their names on it) or letters with names. The letters are usually of four kinds. (a) To ask a question from the teacher about human values in a syllabus poem or story, (b) To express thoughts and opinion, or to understand better, anything related to them (from cartoons to social ills, from class fights to emotions of jealousy or revenge), (c) To say 'thank you' to express gratitude to a friend or a teacher when they have helped them in some way but the child is too shy to say it out loud, and (d) To say 'sorry' to a friend or a teacher whom they have wronged but are not sure how to say sorry. Some examples are:



- After reading a chapter on India's Independence Movement, a student posted a letter asking why it was considered okay for Indian freedom fighters to throw bombs, but not okay for British soldiers to arrest them when actually it was the law?

- When a student's sister got married, she was given dowry. The student posted an anonymous letter expressing strong opinion against the dowry system, which he could not speak among his family members being the youngest person.

- Two friends had a misunderstanding and stopped talking to each other. After many months, when one of them could not bear the loneliness, she posted an anonymous letter to her angered friend, with just one line saying 'Sorry I did not like that everyday you expected me to follow your orders.'

◆ **When to do** — Each student writes at least one letter every week. The teacher opens the post box every day at a fixed time.

◆ **What next** — The teacher goes through the letters and on-the-spot selects which letters should be discussed in the class, and which students need to be counselled individually. Regular practice maintains a lot of enthusiasm among children for writing letters and they get to strengthen their character on a daily basis through this communication channel. ■