

4th International Conference on
HUMAN VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Educating for a GNH Society – Universal Human Values
27th to 29th March 2015 at Gaeddu College of Business Studies, Gedu
(Bhutan), Royal University of Bhutan



This conference was a 3-day, residential gathering of 120 distinguished individuals from 10 countries* working in various fields – academia, government, civil society, foundations, and many others. The participants included 33 Government Policy Makers, Chancellors, current Vice Chancellors, former Vice Chancellors, Pro-Vice Chancellors, and over 85 Institute Directors, Champions and leaders of human values education, heads of government and non-government agencies, leaders in the justice system, professors, research scholars, thought leaders, students and many others. The purpose of the conference was to deliberate to arrive at conclusions and develop commitment for incorporating Human Values in Education.

* Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Germany, Japan, Thailand, Norway

Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck blessed the event and said that it was “significant” as the event coincides with Bhutan and the Bhutanese people’s quiet and calm observance of the 60th birth anniversary of His Majesty the 4th King, the person who pronounced that Bhutan’s national development goals must be underpinned by the sustainable wellbeing and happiness of its people.



Her majesty endorsed RUB’s initiative to promote human values. **She said that we must “Do everything we can to propagate universal human values education” in higher education** and that the motivation should be for the “Greater Common Good”. All the people who’ve participated in the event are extremely fortunate indeed.

The acting Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the district head priest, the Executive Director of the GNH Centre, the judge of the district of Chukha and other senior functionaries of the Government of Bhutan attended the ceremony.

The purpose of the conference was:

- 1. To provide further impetus to the experiments being conducted on Universal Human Values in Bhutan by reaching out to the educators and policy makers
- 2. To articulate the vision for Humane Society
- 3. To sensitize educators and policy makers, particularly from SAARC nations, about the need, guidelines, process (methodology) and content of Universal Human Values, so that it leads to clarity and commitment for imparting Universal Human Values in education

The conference was organised jointly by 4 universities:

- 1. Royal University of Bhutan – both VC & Ex VC were present for all 3 days along with college directors
- 2. Punjab Technical University – Dean Academics, Dr. AP Singh along with Dr. HS Bedi and Dr. MS Grewal in a team of 5 people was present. Dr. AP Singh read the messages from Hon. Minister of Technical Education and VC PTU at the inauguration. Ex VC, Dr. Rajneesh Arora was present
- 3. IIIT, Hyderabad - Dr. Ramancharla Pradeep Kumar was present. Director had sent a recorded video message



- 4. IIT (BHU) Varanasi – Director Prof. Rajeev Sangal was present with a team of 3 faculty members

The discussion was around **education required for preparing people to develop a humane society**, a society composed of families living in harmony and having a common goal: *resolution (happiness) in every human being, prosperity in every family, fearlessness (trust) in society, and co-existence in nature/existence.*

It was unanimously and strongly felt that universal human values education should be introduced as an essential part of the curriculum in the form a foundation course, particularly in the domain of higher technical education, at the national level. At the end of the conference, the Heads of Institutions expressed their commitments to introduce and emphasize this course in their institutions, and work to promote a humane society.

- Day 1: Societal Development, Current State & Role of Education
- Day 2: Human Society and Human Education – Experiences of Implementing Universal Human Values
- Day 3: Implementing Human Values in Higher Education

Dasho Nidup Dorji, VC, Royal University of Bhutan opened the conference with a talk on “Urgent Need for Value Education”.

Prof. Rajeev Sangal, Director IIT (BHU), Varanasi & Ex. Director, IIIT, Hyderabad shared the purpose of this conference. He shared the experience of including universal human values as an essential part of the academic curriculum at IIIT, Hyderabad.

Prof. Ramancharla Pradeep Kumar, IIIT, Hyderabad shared his personal journey and spoke about how the Government of Andhra Pradesh took the initiative of incorporating universal human values in 17 universities in Andhra Pradesh (now AP & Telangana).

Dr. A. P. Singh, Dean Research & Industrial Linkages, Punjab Technical University shared the overall progress in implementing universal human values in higher education between ICHVHE2014 and ICHVHE2015, i.e. in the last one year. He first read the messages of the Sh. Madan Mohan Mittal, Minister of Technical Education, Government of Punjab, as well as that of Sh. Rakesh Verma, IAS, Secretary Technical



Education, Government of Punjab. He shared that as a direct result of ICHVHE2014 at PTU, two universities in Pakistan and the Atmiya Group of Institutions, Rajkot have made significant effort on universal human values in their academic environment.

Sh. Ganesh Bagaria, Manaviya Shiksha Sanskar Sansthan, said “equanimity is the realisation of the co-existence in existence. It is in the form of continuity of the feeling of love, the feeling of co-existence. Equanimity expresses itself naturally in the form of equality, compassion in behaviour with human being. Equality from family to world family leads to undivided human family. Equanimity expresses itself naturally in the form of sovereignty, living in harmony with entire Nature. Sovereignty from family order to world family order leads to universal human order, a family and village based order in which the human goal of happiness, prosperity, fearlessness (trust) and co-existence is fulfilled, generation after generation. For this we need to make effort to establish humane education. This is the context in which we are gathered here”.

A book of experiences in implementing universal human values at the Royal University of Bhutan entitled “**Refocusing Education for GNH: Embracing Heaven on Earth**” was released by Her Majesty. Dasho Pema Thinley, the ex Vice Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan shared that universal human values or GNH values can help in realizing GNH. This book is a compilation of the experiences of students, teachers and staff in the effort on GNH values at RUB.

There were talks by resource persons, sharing of experiences and lively panel discussions over 3 days so as to:

1. Provide further impetus to the experiments being conducted on Universal Human Values in Bhutan by reaching out to the educators and policy makers
2. Articulate the vision for a humane society
3. Sensitise educators and policy makers from SAARC nations about the need, guidelines, process (methodology) and content of Universal Human Values, so that it leads to clarity and commitment for imparting Universal Human Values in education



Prof. Brij Kishore Kuthiala, Vice Chancellor, Mankal Chaturvedi Rashtriya Patrakarita & Sanchar University, Bhopal, India articulated a significant insight: “I have a confession to make” he said. “I belong to a school of thought where we were convinced that human values cannot be taught. In the last 5 five years we have been involved in the spread of human values, but in a different manner. **I must admit that these two [three] days have convinced me that human values are hidden in the individual, they can be awakened by a structured course and they should be strengthened. My first commitment is to the concept that human values can be taught.** This is a paradigm change in my conceptual and perceptual thinking”.

In the closing session, Dr. Dorji Thinlay, Director Research, Royal University of Bhutan shared his observations, summary and recommendations of the conference. He observed that the motivation/inspiration/wisdom behind this work is sustainable wellbeing and happiness of all by building a humane society. i.e. a society composed of families living in harmony and having a common goal: resolution, prosperity, fearlessness (trust), and co-existence. The methodology is holistic/comprehensive, grounded, bottom-up, empowering, process-oriented and impact-led. The process is self exploration/ self-investigation for developing “right understanding” in the self, and not about preaching. Of the 7 models of change: i) the commercial model; ii) the amusement model; iii) the passive-course model; iv) the scholar-practice disconnect model; v) the researcher-practice disconnect model; vi) the silent-but-powerful model; vii) and the holistic/comprehensive/sustainable model and at minimum costs, he said that the last one seems the most ideal one.

Dasho Nidup Dorji reiterated the commitments made by RUB in his closing remarks. The biggest challenge for us, he said, would be to walk the talk; of how we can first set an example ourselves – we require to be role models ourselves before we can ask our students to adopt such a lifestyle. This is definitely going to require a strong resolve. He went on to outline the commitments of his university:

1. Carry on the good work started by my predecessor, Dasho Pema Thinley
2. Strengthen the GNH/ UHV programs that have already started (offer UHV as a credited course)
3. Develop and introduce a PG program in UHV at ILCS under the guidance of Lopen Lungtaen Gyatso, Director ILCS
4. Organise a UHV Cell at RUB. It will assist not only RUB, but also our sister university, KGUMSB and outside Bhutan
5. With the capacity developed for conducting the level 1 workshop, conduct workshops within Bhutan and offer them to others outside Bhutan
6. Implement the recommendations read out by Dr. Dorji Thinley
7. Conduct research on UHV and share its findings and implications in future conferences

He said it had been a great pleasure to host this conference in collaboration with IIIT, Hyderabad, IIT (BHU), Varanasi and PTU, Jalandhar. He bid farewell to the participants with thanks for their friendship and cooperation.

The vote of thanks was graciously and candidly given by Mr. Lhato Jamba, Director General, GCBS. He said that they are working with commitment for undivided world family with the priority on right understanding and relationship over physical facility (or money). And it can be done.

The participants appreciated the efforts, particularly by the volunteers, by a standing ovation.

Tashi Delek!

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Commitments

Several new commitments were made for curricular reform, and for incorporating a Foundation Course in Universal Human Values in various universities and organisations. The progress will be shared during the next conference. By the 3rd day, the following commitments were recorded:

1. Dr. K. P. Tshering, President, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan:
 - a. We will introduce the foundation course in universal human values for all PG students
 - b. All faculty and staff of KGUMSB will be oriented in universal human values (8-day workshop)
 - c. Universal human values orientation will be included in the pre-service orientation program for all health service personnel (including doctors, nurses and support staff)
 - d. KGUMSB will set up a centre for “Universal Health Education”
 - e. I plan to attend the next available 8-day workshop on universal human values with my son, if I can convince him [He attended the 8-day workshop 1-8 April at Gedu along with his son]
2. Prof. Brij Kishore Kuthiala, Vice Chancellor, Mankanlal Chaturvedi Rashtriya Patrakarita & Sanchar University, Bhopal, India:
 - a. GNH is a significant socio-economic development paradigm. We seek the help of Royal University of Bhutan to develop the curriculum that will be part of all mass communication education at our university (along with Sumangalam, Antuday and Integral Humanism)
 - b. Introduce the foundation course in universal human values in all 37 courses of study at our university by the academic year 2017. I will convince my academic council, develop the required team of teachers and work on other pre-requisites
 - c. We aspire (loud thinking) to develop, in due course of time, a resource centre for media persons. It will organise research, conduct workshops and courses for sensitizing media persons about universal human values
 - d. On a personal note, I commit to attend an 8-day workshop on universal human values with my family
3. Dr. Ghulam Murtaza, University of Sindh, Pakistan:
 - a. I am here on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Abida Tehrani, who attended the last conference. She was to come for this conference also, but was unable to do so, on account of her health. She has instructed me to develop the plan for introducing the foundation course in our university at the earliest
4. Dr. Luftar Rehman, Vice Chancellor, Daffodil International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh:
 - a. We can unify all forms of thought under the umbrella of universal human values. This teaching has universal appeal
 - b. We will include this teaching as a part of our New Teacher Training course (currently 36 hours) starting April 2015
 - c. I will send teachers for orientation to India in the available workshops, particularly at IIT Kanpur
5. Prof. Ranjith Premalal De Sliva, Vice Chancellor, Uva Wellassa University, Sri Lanka:
 - a. We have a diverse set of courses offered under three faculty heads viz. medical, applied science & computer science and business studies. I will have a meeting with the three faculty heads, select at least three faculty members to attend the 8-day workshop in India and help me implement universal human values in my university
6. Prof. Sampath Priyantha Perera Amaratunge, Vice Chancellor, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka:
 - a. UGC is the apex body which is responsible for funding and regulating the 15 universities in Srilanka. I will discuss with the UGC about this topic

7. Prof. Subodh Sharma, Head, Department of Environmental Studies, Kathmandu University, Nepal:
 - a. Will introduce the foundation course in universal human values as an audit elective course in their M. tech program from the next academic term. He will personally teach this course and at the same time prepare other faculty members for it
8. Dr. Hem Raj Pant, Registrar, Far West University, Nepal:
 - a. There are 7 universities in Nepal. UGC is the apex regulatory body. We will approach UGC
9. Dr. Craig Smith, Founding Chair & Head, Department of Global Affairs, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan:
 - a. Introduce universal human values component in the Global Affairs course in April 2015
 - b. Add readings in human values in education as well as GNH
 - c. My university will participate in JUEMUN 2015 in June at Oasaka and will host JUEMUN 2016 (<http://juemun.weebly.com/>). I will try to include discussion on UHV and GNH at these conferences
 - d. I will introduce discussion on UHV and GNH at the bi-annual conference of the Asia Pacific University Network in 2017
 - e. I will explore other ways to keep the communication open amongst the conference participants
10. Prof. Bishal Sithula, University of Life Sciences, Oslo, Norway:
 - a. I will attend the forthcoming 8-day workshop [he did attend 1-8 April workshop at Gedu]
 - b. Will include this teaching in my course entitled "Personal Transformation"
 - c. Will share this awareness with my partners in South East Asian universities
 - d. Will explore details of GNH Society with the help of Royal University of Bhutan
11. Prof. Surachi Jewcharoensakul, Kasetsart University, Thailand:
 - a. MoU with Royal University of Bhutan for working together on universal human values
12. The Royal Civil Services Commission of Bhutan is likely to include a 3-day orientation to universal human values in the 14-day "Bhutan Executive Services Training (BEST)" which is to be conducted by the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) starting September 2015
13. Dr. GPI Singh, Vice Chancellor, Adesh University (Medical University), Bhatinda, Punjab, India:
 - a. We want to introduce a foundation course in universal human values in the curriculum of medical as well as para-medical education. We seek the help of Punjab Technical University for this
14. Prof. Yoginder Verma, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamsala, India
 - a. A course on human values and ethics is already a part of our curriculum. We will strengthen it with teacher orientation
15. Dr. R. K. Mishra, IIT (BHU), Varanasi, India:
 - a. IIT (BHU) has introduced a 2-semester foundation course in universal human values for all undergraduate students
 - b. We will introduce the foundation course for PG students in due course of time
16. Dr. J. N. Shah, Director, Atmiya Group of Institutions, Rajkot, India:
 - a. The foundation course in universal human values will continue to be provided to all new students (approximately 5,000/year)
 - b. All faculty members will be oriented in universal human values (8-day workshop) before the next term. We will also encourage family members to participate
 - c. Atmiya group of institutions commits to host the next conference (ICHVHE2016)

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Recommendations

1. It was unanimously and strongly felt that UHV education should be introduced as an essential part of the curriculum in the form a foundation course, particularly in the domain of higher technical education, at the national level. Extensive experiments which have been carried out so far have adequately established the viability and effectiveness of such a strategy. Necessary resource material, resource persons and teacher orientation programmes have also become available to enable its initiation in any university or institution of higher learning.
2. Even though different formats may be adapted for introducing such a foundational input, the content and process need to be compatible with the following guiding principles to achieve the desired goals:
 - a. Universal – for all human beings in all space in all time
 - b. Logical – students should be able to rationally discuss various issues
 - c. Verifiable – students should be able to verify on one’s own
(on the basis of one’s own Natural Acceptance and Validation experientially in living)
 - d. Humanistic – conducive to the good of humanity
 - e. All encompassing – touching all aspects of human life
3. The foundation course should be targeted to provide a holistic perception based on right understanding which is to be successively supplemented with appropriate extra-curricular activities and projects, higher elective courses, social internships etc. to consolidate right understanding and facilitate living in accordance with it.
4. Continuous efforts need to be made through the value education cell at the institutional level to create a conducive environment for ‘living the values’.
5. To provide requisite thrust to this activity, it is essential to promote R&D work for overall curricular modifications, development of resource material, teacher training etc. to finally evolve more appropriate models of education in the light of right understanding.
6. Efforts should also be made to develop P.G. diploma/degree courses to provide a comprehensive understanding of this theme particularly for prospective teachers and researches.
7. For this, centers of excellence need to be created at various nodal institutions/universities where already sufficient work has been accomplished.
8. MHRD, UGC, AICTE and other monitoring and accreditation bodies in respective countries should be approached to obtain policy as well as other umbrella support to proliferate this activity at a wider level and to duly recognize and reward the value competence of teachers and students along with their other academic skills.
9. The interest and commitment shown by the representatives from SAARC countries and the progress already made by Bhutan in this direction is really very encouraging. A coordination committee may be set up for close follow-up and initiation of new experiments in these neighbouring countries paving way towards building an International network.

10. Efforts should be made on priority, to introduce UHVE in teacher training programmes such as Lecturer training (B.Ed., M.Ed. etc. to prepare ground for introducing UHVE in school education as well.
11. Need for orienting bureaucracy on UHV through refresher training programmes in centre/state administration academies or mid-career training programs was also highlighted. In this context, introduction of a compulsory paper from this year on 'Ethics, Values and Aptitudes' in the civil services examination by UPSC (India) was hailed as a welcome step. This would really fructify if supported by appropriate training in this area, particularly by the administrative academies.
12. Orienting politicians and future politicians was also suggested.
13. The 5th ICHVHE 2016 to be held at Atmiya Group of Institutions, Rajkot, India in the month of February 2016. The exact date will be announced in due course of time.