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### VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM AND TEACHING - LEARNING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WITH REFERENCE TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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#### ABSTRACT

In the twenty-first century, the higher education system faces many challenges such as globalization, technological revolution, multiculturalism, social inequality and decline of moral values. Against such a background, the concept of 'Vasudevam Kutumbkam' in Indian philosophy is highly relevant to the teaching–learning process. The sense that the whole world is one family can create global citizenship, humanism, coexistence and moral consciousness in students. The present conceptual research paper analyzes the philosophical meaning of the concept 'vasudeva kutumbkam', its pedagogical significance, and its relationship with the teaching–learning process in higher education in the 21st century. It also highlights how this concept can be used in value-based learning, inclusive learning, and technology-based teaching.

**Keywords:** Vasudeva Kutumbkam, Higher Education, Teaching–Learning, Value-Based Education, Twenty-First Century

#### INTRODUCTION:

Research in higher education today underscores the significance of addressing intricate global issues—such as globalization, technological progress, cultural diversity, social inequalities, and the decline of moral principles. Within this framework, the philosophical principle of 'Vasudevam Kutumbkam,' rooted in Indian tradition, plays a pivotal role in shaping contemporary pedagogical approaches.<sup>1</sup> This concept, emphasizing that the entire world is one family, underpins efforts to cultivate global citizenship, humanistic values, peaceful coexistence, and moral consciousness among learners. Its application reflects a systematic effort to integrate cultural wisdom into the

educational process, guiding students toward a holistic understanding of interconnected global challenges through a structured and insightful lens.<sup>2</sup>

This study looks at the idea of ‘vasudeva kutumbakam,’ which means seeing the whole world as one family. It explains why this idea is important for learning and how it can be used in schools and colleges today. The study also shows how we can include this idea in teaching that teaches good values, makes everyone feel included, and uses modern technology.<sup>3</sup> All of this helps students learn in a complete and balanced way, helping them grow not just in knowledge but also as kind and caring people.

#### **‘VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBKAM’: A PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT**

There's a special phrase in an old Indian book called the Mahapanishad. It says, "Vasudevam Kutumbkam," which means "the whole world is like one big family." This idea teaches us that everyone on Earth is connected and should care for each other, no matter where they come from, what they believe, or what language they speak. It reminds us to think about not just ourselves, but also about our friends, our country, and even everyone in the world. This helps us become kind, caring, and good people—just like what we learn in school!<sup>4</sup>

#### **HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 21 CENTURY: FORMS AND CHALLENGES**

Addressing these challenges necessitates a systematic and deliberate approach rooted in values and human-centered principles. The adoption of a comprehensive, value-based framework within higher education can foster an environment that respects ethical standards, promotes equity, alleviates stress, and preserves cultural heritage, thereby ensuring that educational progress aligns with the broader goals of societal well-being.<sup>5</sup> The decline of moral values emerges as a concern, often attributed to the intense competition prevalent within academic environments, which can overshadow ethical considerations. Social inequality persists, particularly in the form of digital divides that create disparities in educational access, thereby reinforcing existing societal divides.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the heightened academic pressure contributes to increased mental stress among students, impacting their overall well-being. Cultural forgetfulness, manifested in the neglect of local and traditional knowledge systems, further complicates the educational landscape.

Research in the context of higher education policy reveals the intricate interplay between resource limitations, technological access, cultural dynamics, and implementation challenges. These issues reflect the underlying structure of systemic constraints, where funding deficits, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of trained

faculty impede the development of comprehensive, multidisciplinary programs aligned with the principles of unity. Such constraints underscore the importance of increased investment, with India's education expenditure needing to elevate to 6% of GDP to facilitate meaningful progress. The digital divide exemplifies the systematic barriers faced by rural and marginalized students, whose limited access to technology and digital literacy hampers the pursuit of inclusive, harmonious learning environments suited for the complexities of the 21st century. This divide signifies a structural gap that prevents the realization of a unified educational community. Implementation gaps further highlight the layered complexities within the system. Regulatory hurdles, a significant teacher shortage exceeding 7 million, and bureaucratic delays collectively slow the realization of NEP 2020's aspirational goals.

### **THE PLACE OF 'VASUDEVAM KUTUMBKAM' IN THE TEACHING–LEARNING PROCESS**

Teaching and learning is not only a process of imparting knowledge but also a process of personality development. The concept of 'Vasudevam Kutumbkam' gives a broad view of this process. Research in educational practices emphasizes the systematic integration of core values, inclusive principles, and global perspectives within the teaching framework. Such an approach underscores the importance of cultivating not only subject mastery but also moral and social virtues, transforming educators into guiding figures who foster tolerance, compassion, cooperation, and social responsibility.<sup>7</sup>

The foundational principle here is to create an environment where every student, regardless of social, economic, or cultural background, has access to equitable educational opportunities - reflecting the ethos of Vasudeva Kutumbkam, which advocates for universal brotherhood. Moreover, as students evolve into global citizens, the educational process must incorporate awareness of environmental sustainability, peace, and global development. This comprehensive methodology aligns with the scientific pursuit of systematic, value-oriented inquiry, ensuring that educational development is both inclusive and globally conscious.<sup>8</sup>

### **TECHNOLOGY-BASED LEARNING AND 'VASUDEVAM KUTUMBKAM'**

Technology, when integrated thoughtfully with human values, serves as a vital instrument in the realm of education. The online platform acts as a conduit that unites students and educators across diverse nations, fostering a global dialogue that embodies the spirit of 'One World–One Family'.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it is essential to uphold human

sensitivity, effective communication, and ethical standards within this technological framework. Failure to do so may lead to an education system that is impersonal and mechanical, undermining the fundamental purpose of learning.

### **CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

In the framework of ‘Vasudevam Kutumbkam’, the role of the teacher transcends the traditional notion of mere knowledge provider; instead, it embodies that of a guide and an inspirer. The learner, accordingly, transforms into an active collaborator in the educational process, engaging with the material rather than passively receiving information.<sup>10</sup> this approach fosters an environment rooted in mutual respect, open communication, and cooperative learning, thereby establishing a holistic and harmonious educational atmosphere.

Currently, student’s transition from passive recipients of information to active co-creators of knowledge, engaging as self-regulated learners responsible for charting personalized learning journeys, conducting research, and collaborating with peers through digital tools. This transformation empowers learners to build competencies necessary for addressing interconnected global challenges, embodying a sense of "one family" through meaningful cross-cultural engagement.

### **DISCUSSION**

Higher education in the 21st century is fundamentally skill-oriented, yet it cannot be divorced from the intrinsic value it embodies. The ancient principle of ‘vasudeva kutumbakam’ bestows moral authority upon the educational process, serving as a guiding framework to address pressing global challenges - such as environmental crises, social conflicts, and violations of human rights. Through comprehensive conceptual analysis, it becomes evident that ‘vasudeva kutumbakam’ offers a profound foundation for the teaching and learning paradigms of modern higher education.<sup>11</sup> This idea encourages people to focus on humans and what is right and good. It helps students learn to think about how their actions affect others and the world around them. By including these values in lessons, teaching methods, and school rules, colleges can help students grow into kind, caring, and responsible adults. This way, education helps create a peaceful and fair society where everyone can live happily and work together to take care of our planet.<sup>12</sup>

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