

Peace, Moral and Value Education- '*Mulyavardhan*': An Innovation for Social Transformation

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ABSTRACT Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana has developed a syllabus for Peace, Moral and Value Education referred to as '*Mulyavardhan*' for standards I to IV. Experience since 1985 in education and social work stimulated BJS in conceptualizing this new subject in view of the present day ethical challenges. Teachers are specially trained for imparting '*Mulyavardhan*' through innovative and experiential teaching methods. The syllabus has been approved by the Maharashtra government in Western India. In 2009, '*Mulyavardhan*' was implemented for 8288 children from 159 schools of a *tehsil* in District *Beed* of the State. The over-whelming response from all members of the community during its first year of operation led to its further fortification. Subsequently its operation area was expanded in 2010 to reach 34527 children from 490 schools and in 2011 for 38,000 children of 500 schools. Impact assessment of '*Mulyavardhan*' shows promising, positive changes in the socio-emotional behavior of children as cross-validated by various stakeholders of this innovation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Values and morals are a set of principles or standards of behavior. They give meaning and strength to a person's character by occupying a central place in one's life; reflect one's personal attitudes and judgments, decisions and choices, behavior and relationships, dreams and vision. They influence thoughts, feelings and actions. Values guide us to do the culturally appropriate things. They are the guiding principles of life and give directions, bring joy, satisfaction and peace. They bring quality to life and become internal guide posts.

Education, which has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development, has been used to create a more skilled work force, but often at the cost of the development of person as a whole. The long-term goals of human values, peace and moral principles tend to become less important when they have to compete with immediate economic considerations. Intervention is needed at all levels of education for a global society and peace in the world. For these reasons, peace education has been recog-

nized as an essential part of United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNICEF, UNESCO and Global Civil Society.

Spiritual and moral education is not a new concept in the context of India as it has been an integral part of ancient Indian culture; however it got diluted due to varied influences and changes in the society. It is still deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions, drawing human beings into relationship with each other, with nature and the world. Long school hours, the competitive environment and the rote learning to get ahead in career and economic world leaves today's youth with less choice and time for those activities that imbibe morals and values. Under such conditions, school is the best place where children could be imparted moral and value education. As such the importance of moral and value education in schools has always been emphasized by educators, researchers, and parents as a foundation of life.

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) recommended the introduction of education in moral, social and spiritual values in all institutions from kindergarten to postgraduate level. A balance has to be struck between the knowledge and skills that science and technology bring and the values and insights associated with ethics. The Education Policy in India recognizes the place of schools for moral and value education. The National Policy of Education drafted in 1986 and modified in 1992 states: "*The grow-*

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ing concern over the erosion of essential values and increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values. In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition, and fatalism. Apart from this combative role, value education has a profound positive content, based on our heritage, national goals and universal perceptions. It should lay primary emphasis on this aspect."

Individual schools have adopted some strategies in line with the recommendations proposed by the National Policy on Education (Nanda 1997) to impart moral and value education. However, different situations exist in schools all over India and the system is still marked with major inadequacies. School assemblies form an important part of value education provision, but often take the form of the school teachers preaching the 'right' values to the students. Rarely have schools experimented with alternative approaches, such as free dialogue and open-questioning between the students and teachers on social, moral, personal and emotional issues.

In an anthropological study of a rural school in Northern India, Sarangapani (2003) discovered a didactic and non-creative approach to moral education. Children were asked to make resolutions about changing their behavior. She reports, "*This made it seem as though he was reciting them from memory, without comprehending what they [resolutions] meant...The impression was that what they were saying was being retrieved from memory – received knowledge – and not the result of any independent thinking*"

Mehta and Whitebread (2003) conducted a small-scale survey on 21 teacher training colleges in Karnataka to understand the place of moral education training in those institutions. On the whole, the respondents agreed that moral education was extremely necessary and the group felt that a separate 'moral education tutor' should be in charge of the subject instead of the class Teachers or a particular subject teacher, for instance, history or English. After ascertaining the views of the heads of the teacher train-

ing institutions Mehta and Whitebread (2003) also conducted a few case studies to determine the actual situation in nine schools in Bangalore. They found that only two out of the nine schools had allocated a separate period for moral education. About half the schools in the case studies used a non-formal approach to moral education, for instance, via parent-teacher meetings or setting up a student council.

In earlier times, children used to absorb values as they grew up by observing and imitating the behavior of the significant persons in their lives. This trend has changed in the past couple of decades with the advent of affordable communication technology like television, mobiles, computers and internet. Consequently, children spend most of their time in front of the television and with various modern gadgets after school hours. Children relate to the television more than their own family members. Since children are spending so much time with the new technologies, the time spent with the family is drastically reduced. Such a scenario has impacted the values children acquire over time. Young people in today's world have access to diverse information from various media sources. At times the variety of information might be overwhelming or conflicting. Children need to develop confidence, independent thinking and decision-making skills to cope with conflicting situations.

In the current situation where the purpose of value education is either misunderstood or the methods adopted to provide value education are not really meaningful, Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana has initiated a comprehensive approach to value education in schools. This has led Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS), a Pune-based, non-profit and non-governmental organisation established in 1985 to formalize an intervention in 2009 for Peace, Moral and Value (PMV) Education referred to as "*'Mulyavardhan' (MV)*". *Mulyavardhan* is a Sanskrit word meaning 'enhancement of values'. *Mulyavardhan* deals with much more than value education. It encompasses the entire gamut of Peace, Moral and Value education and Conflict Resolution in view of the present day ethical challenges. It works to fill the gap and mould the impressionable minds of young children to reduce the repercussions of the current degradation.

Land and People

Patoda *Tehsil* in Beed, a district in Maharashtra state of India was chosen as the first site for implementation of *Mulyavardhan* in July 2009. At present, Beed has a population of 25,85,962 of which male and female are 13,52,468 and 12,33,494 respectively. Child Sex Ratio as per census 2011 is 801. 82% of total population of Beed district lives in villages and remaining 18% in its urban areas. Beed has a backward economy with a negligible growth. Beed is one of the poorest districts of Maharashtra with per capita GDP of Rs.15,303 (about \$380) which is lower than the Maharashtra State average GDP of Rs.17,079 (about \$427) (Kamdar and Basak 2007). Beed's population is composed of multiethnic groups who follow different religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity and Bahai.

Most of the land of this district is rough and rocky. Deforestation, desertification, frequent droughts, shrinking water reservoirs and extreme shortages of drinking water, especially in rural areas are the major issues. The town of Beed is reachable only by road. The main occupation in the district is agriculture particularly cotton farming but due to lack of adequate and timely rainfall there is scarcity of agricultural produce as it solely depends on the rain.

Almost 50% of the parents of children with whom MV program is being conducted are engaged in seasonal migration. Seasonal migration typically begins after the monsoons (October-November) and continues until the following summer (April-June). Families settle in camps near the work sites during the migration period. Most of the times, they leave the children with the grandparents or in the hostels at schools set up in the villages. Some others take their children along and if available and possible enroll them in schools at the site of migration. Upon return to their villages, if there is adequate rain, those with some land start cultivation, while the landless try to find work on the farms of others. If there is no rain, the families try to make both ends meet until the next round of migration begins.

Average literacy rate of Beed is 73.53 (Census 2011). There are 2019 primary schools run by the *zilla parishad* or state government. All children are enrolled in schools. However, attendance of children and continuity of school-

ing are at the discretion of parents. Children generally commute to school on foot all by themselves for a minimum distance of 0.5 km to maximum 2 to 3 km. In hilly terrains, children commute by state road transport to reach schools at a distance of 4 to 5 km from their homes. The school provides them books, uniform and mid-day meal. Daily routine of children of primary schools involves rising early and helping in household activities before leaving for school. Schools run till about 4 p.m., after which children go back home and then immediately leave for the farms to help their parents. At the farm, they are expected to pluck cotton from the plantations, dig out groundnuts during harvest time and graze the cattle. Girls as young as 8 to 10 years old cook and take care of younger siblings and engage in all household chores when the mother is away at the fields. Evening time is spent in watching television, outdoor games and studies. Children are generally shy and reticent. Parental education being minimal and their inability to give adequate time to children due to their struggle to make both ends meet, leaves children with little exposure and stimulation from family environment.

Children in Beed district are nurtured in an environment characterized by instability and under stimulation. Family environment is marked with alcohol abuse, domestic violence, other vices and domination of males in the guise of tradition. Tradition has put females in a disadvantageous position. Beed has recently become infamous for being the one of the ten districts with the lowest child sex ratio in India. Though the influence of print and electronic media is marginal as compared to urban environment, the emotional load on children coupled with stark poverty puts them at disadvantage. This environment dissuades the need for sustained education since basic needs for survival are met after tremendous hardships. Thus attendance in school and continuation of schooling becomes an area of concern. Such an environment can naturally be an impediment to the healthy psychosocial development of a child. Hence, the pressing need for Peace, Moral and Value education for this segment of society. Recognizing these impediments and understanding the growing need for provision of a morally sound environment for children in Beed, became the rationale for beginning *Mulyavardhan* program in Beed district.

Mulyavardhan program also aims at *enhancing* children's motivation and interest in school to facilitate their holistic development.

***Mulyavardhan* Program**

Mulyavardhan program has been formulated after detailed study of the eastern and western philosophy of value education. *Mulyavardhan* program largely draws its inspiration of value education from the ancient Indian education system which emphasized that education is the eye of insight and source of illumination. Ancient Indian Education System reflects the sense of peace and humanity which has been emphasized in the *Mulyavardhan* curriculum. The five approaches to value education specified by Superka et al. (1976) which include inculcation, moral development, analysis, clarification and action learning were analyzed. *Mulyavardhan* represents the methodology of value inculcation whereby certain values are instilled and inculcated in children. The values to be instilled were chosen by thorough research on universal values which are followed worldwide in value education programs.

Universal values are the focus of the *Mulyavardhan* syllabus. These values work towards reducing aggression, arrogance, intolerance and violence. The focus of the *Mulyavardhan* syllabus includes among other values: kindness, patience, tolerance, cooperation, empathy, equality and peace. Along with Universal Values, the syllabus includes core values and life skills accepted by National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT 2005).

The syllabus ensures: i) to deal sensitively with various subjects with local flavor; ii) to be religion-neutral rather secular; iii) to include age-appropriate content with child-friendly techniques of content delivery. Teachers are especially trained for imparting *Mulyavardhan*. Currently, '*Mulyavardhan*' syllabus has been designed for standard I to IV and is imparted every day for one period in each standard. This syllabus is delivered through the medium of co-operative games and co-operative learning. Innovative teaching methodology such as structured teacher driven oral and written activities, co-operative games, drawing, painting, songs and stories are included to allow each child to self-experience and inculcate values and morals. The syllabus has been approved by the Lo-

cal Government of Maharashtra state in Western India. Permission was obtained from the District Council (*Zilla Parishad*) to initiate the process of MV program implementation in schools of Beed district of Maharashtra.

After two academic sessions, BJS started getting positive feedback about the program from its stakeholders and the villagers. Teachers and Principals were speaking about positive changes in their students and the school. The *Mulyavardhan* teacher became popular among the students, parents and village community. It was imperative to study this change for qualitative and quantitative documentation. The present investigation studies the impact of '*Mulyavardhan*' since two academic sessions of its implementation (2009-2011) on various stakeholders namely children, Principals, Government teachers and *Mulyavardhan* teachers. The present study is a part of a larger project of Impact Assessment of *Mulyavardhan*. The principal focus of this paper is to discuss:

1. How is *Mulyavardhan* being perceived by the Principals and Government teachers and what are their experiences and opinions while hosting the program in their school?
2. How is *Mulyavardhan* being perceived by the *Mulyavardhan* (MV) teachers and what has been their experience in delivering the programme?
3. Does *Mulyavardhan* have a positive impact on children's social behaviour?

II. METHODOLOGY

The Sample

The sample selection of stakeholders which included children, Principals, Government teachers and *Mulyavardhan* teachers was carried out as follows:

Children: A sample of 40 schools was drawn from a total of 159 schools where '*Mulyavardhan*' program was being conducted since July 2009 in Patoda Tehsil of Beed district. A sample of 604 children out of 8288 children from standard I to IV were drawn with equal distribution over the two sexes. Systematic stratified sampling technique was used to identify the sample.

Principals: A total of 135 Principals from schools in Patoda Tehsil constituted the sample. Of this group, 40 Principals belonged to the schools which formed the main sample (40

schools) and the remaining 95 Principals were from the schools in Patoda Tehsil that had also been involved in the *Mulyavardhan* program from July 2009, but were not part of the selected sample for the overall impact assessment study.

Government Teachers:** A total of 59 Government Teachers from Patoda Tehsil formed the sample.

'Mulyavardhan' Teachers (MV Teachers): A total of 190 'Mulyavardhan' (MV) teachers formed the study sample.

Procedure

Selection and Training of MV Teachers: The MV teachers selected for the initial implementation in Patoda Tehsil required minimum qualification of Diploma in Education. All the MV teachers selected belonged to Beed district due to their familiarity with the terrain and culture and to facilitate effective delivery of the curriculum. Each MV teacher underwent 17 days of syllabus and induction training followed by 45 days of teaching practice in schools. During implementation, MV teachers were regularly monitored.

'Mulyavardhan' Implementation: The syllabus for standard I to IV was implemented every day for one period in each standard.

Post Intervention Assessment

Post intervention assessment was conducted after 20 months of implementation of 'Mulyavardhan'.

The Questionnaires: Questionnaires were developed for Principals, Government teachers and MV teachers. It comprised of a combination of closed-ended questions in the form of Likert scale and a few open-ended questions. Interview schedule was developed for recording responses of the children. The questionnaires and interview schedule were translated into Marathi language and the translated versions were ratified through back translation.

Data Collection: MV teachers, who were promoted to the post of Co-ordinators after functioning as MV teachers during the first year of implementation, were extensively trained for data collection by the research team. Additionally, a training manual was provided to the data collection team to ensure standardisation of the data collection process. A letter of invitation explaining the aim of the research project, scope of the questionnaire and confidentiality of re-

sponses were given to each adult respondent (Principals, Government Teachers, MV Teachers, and Coordinators). Interview schedule was used with the children. The Principal of each sample school was asked to notify the parents/guardians of the children about the research project. Codes were set up for each school by the research team, so that the data remained confidential and the responses could not be traced back to any individual respondent.

Data Analysis

The responses to the questions were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analyses consisted mainly of descriptive statistics. Content analysis was done for the qualitative responses.

III. RESULTS

The following account presents results concerning the impact of 'Mulyavardhan' on School Principals (n: 135), Government teachers (n: 59) and MV teachers (n: 190) and the children (n: 604) of standards I to IV.

Table 1 elaborates the perspectives of Principals, Government teachers and MV teachers about implementation of 'Mulyavardhan' program. The Principals and Government teachers agreed that infrastructure of the class was adequate for hosting MV. Principals agreed that their 'teaching style has changed because of MV program', whereas Government teachers were not sure of this change in themselves. Similarly, both groups agreed that MV teacher 'did understand the school culture'; 'gets along well with others'; 'provides updates about the MV impact regularly to Principals and Government teachers' and 'is an effective facilitator'. On the other hand, it is imperative to take into consideration the perspective of MV teacher regarding the support she/he is being provided by the school Principal and Government teachers. In this regard MV teachers as a group agreed that 'Government teachers give them advice on how to deal with certain children'; 'the Government teachers ask them about MV'; 'general advice was taken from a Government teacher before starting MV program in a school'. Thus MV teachers feel supported by the school and this goes a long way to facilitate implementation of the MV program. It could be concluded from these observations that Principals, Government

Table 1: Implementation of 'Mulyavardhan' program: Perspectives of principals, government teachers and MV teachers

S. No.	Aspect of the program	Positive or negative orientation	Mean score	Overall opinion	Mean score	Overall opinion	Mean score	Overall opinion
			(± SD)	of the group	(± SD)	of the group	(± SD)	of the group
			Principals		Government teachers		MV teachers	
1	Infrastructure of the class was adequate for hosting MV	Positive	2.18 (1.0)	Agree	1.93 (0.9)	Agree		
2	MV teacher does not understand the school culture	Negative	4.13 (1.0)	Disagree	4.0 (0.8)	Disagree		
3	MV teacher gets along well with other teachers	Positive	1.41 (0.6)	Strongly agree	1.59 (0.8)	Agree		Not applicable
4	MV teacher provides regular updates about the impact to me	Positive	1.88 (0.9)	Agree	2.03 (1.0)	Agree		
5	MV teacher is an effective facilitator	Positive	1.76 (0.7)	Agree	2.03 (1.0)	Agree		
6	I don't think this is a worthwhile program	Negative	4.16 (0.8)	Disagree	4.10 (0.9)	Disagree		
7	My teaching style has changed because of MV program	Positive	2.50 (1.0)	Agree	2.75 (1.2)	Neither agree nor disagree		
8	The teacher in the school gives me advice on how to deal with certain children	Positive					2.00 (1.0)	Agree
9	The teachers in the school come and ask me about MV sessions	Positive					1.59 (0.6)	Agree
10	Before starting MV sessions I took advice from the class teacher	Positive					1.56 (0.8)	Agree
11	I find the structure of MV prescriptive and feel it hinders with the sessions	Negative					3.71 (1.2)	Disagree

Note: The overall opinion of the group is based on the mean scores as follows: 1.00 to 1.50 = strongly agree; 1.51 to 2.50 = agree; 2.51 to 3.5 = neither agree nor disagree; 3.51 to 4.50 = disagree; 4.51 to 5.00 = strongly disagree

teachers and MV teachers found both the infrastructure and the environment conducive for the implementation of 'Mulyavardhan' program thus laying the foundation for success of the program. Above all, both Principals and Government teachers agreed that *Mulyavardhan* is a worthwhile program.

As is evident from Table 1, there was concordance between the Principals' and Government teachers' views of various elements of *Mulyavardhan* program. This agreement in views is encouraging and points towards the success of the program. It also points towards the potential of *Mulyavardhan* for imbuing morals and values through a separate curriculum and a unique system of implementation.

In an open-ended question in the survey, the Principals, Government teachers and MV teach-

ers were asked to mention the biggest change in children they had observed or experienced in relation to the *Mulyavardhan* program. 6% of the Principals, 8% Government teachers and 1% MV teachers did not mention any change.

Variety of positive changes amongst children was mentioned by remaining 94% Principals, 92% Government teachers and 99% MV teachers. Each open-ended response was categorized into its relevant theme depending on the content. However, responses by 8 Principals and 2 Government teachers could not fit into any of the broader themes and hence mentioned as 'others'.

The most frequently occurring category of change as indicated by 22.2% of the Principals' responses was 'improved interpersonal relations'. A few representative responses provided

by the Principals are: *"A cooperative attitude has developed amongst the students. A feeling of affection and closeness is seen."*; *"Due to implementation of 'Mulyavardhan' feeling of cooperation is developed. Students are helping each other."*; *"Due to 'Mulyavardhan' implementation change is noticed in students' behavior and interpersonal relationship."*

The most frequently occurring category of change as indicated by about 29% of the Government teachers was 'increased cooperation amongst children'. Some representative responses provided by the Government teachers for this category are: *"Students have started understanding what is meant by values. They have started understanding the principles behind cooperative games and have started understanding how to interact with others in a proper manner. They are becoming more cooperative."*; *"The students cooperate with their class mates. They have started respecting the elders and obeying their teachers. They cooperate to keep the class clean. If they find anything that doesn't belong to them, they return it back to the class teacher."* 61% of MV teachers mentioned that children had become 'more helpful and cooperative towards their peers and elders'. Some typical responses by the MV teachers were: *"The students help others; they follow the 'Golden Rule'"; "If a student falls down, someone comes to help him get up and take care of him; They help each other in the class as well as outside the class."*; *"Students work together in cooperation. They have started taking care of the animals by giving them food and water"*(Fig. 1).

Approximately, 18% of the Principals mentioned a 'discipline-related' change as the second most important change observed among children as a result of the Mulyavardhan program. According to one principal, for example, *"Students show a well disciplined behavior in the school campus. While playing games they follow rules."* About 17% of the Government teachers mentioned that children had become 'more confident' since the implementation of the Mulyavardhan program: *"The shy students can now talk in front of others boldly. They seem to be confident. They are getting a chance to show their hidden talents."* A little less than 10% of the MV teachers said that children had become 'more honest' (*"Truthfulness had been the most found attitude. Returned money to another boy of her class which was incredible"*). A similar percentage (10%) of the MV teachers said that they had noticed that the 'frequency of conflicts had reduced' amongst children (*"The boys and the girls never used to get along with each other. They always used to fight. But now the situation has changed"*) (Fig. 2).

About 13% of the Principals provided a concrete example of some positive change they had observed or experienced as the third most important change among children. Given below are a few examples that illustrate this aspect: *"Students remove their foot wears and keep it in line and also follow instructions."*; *"Students have started depositing lost-found things with teacher."*; *"Two kids of pre-primary schools were quarrelling and other children from primary school tried to resolve the issue and made them sit quiet."*

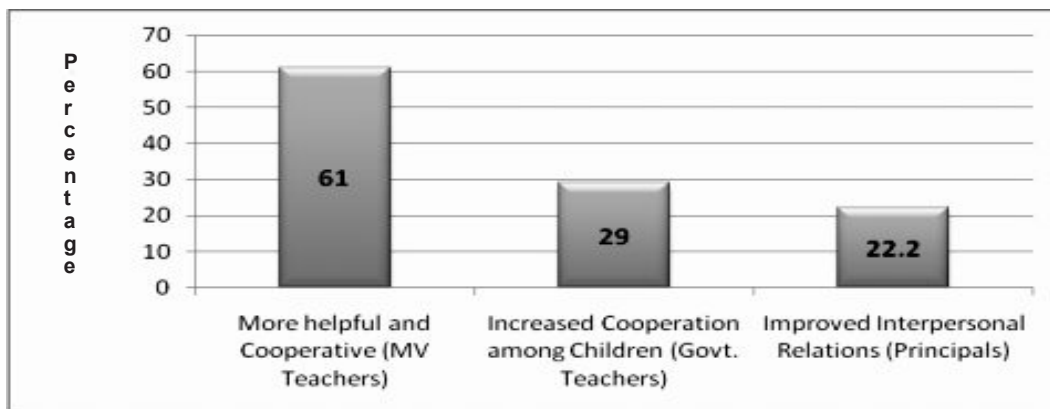


Fig. 1. The Most frequently experienced/observed biggest change amongst children by the principals, government teachers and MV teachers in relation to the MV program

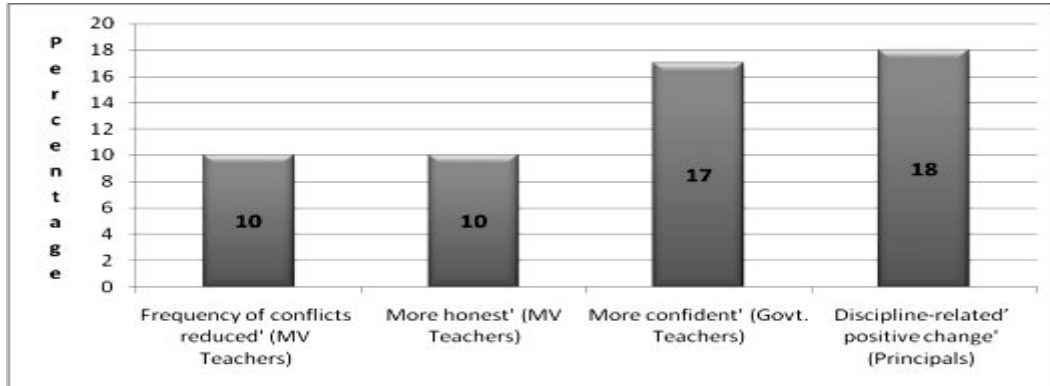


Fig. 2. The second most frequently experienced/observed biggest change amongst children by the principals, government teachers and MV teachers in relation to the MV program

Several Government teachers (11% of the respondents) felt that since the program had started, children showed more interest in attending schools and they had noticed an increase in attendance. However, not all Government teachers were convinced that the interest of the students in school had generalized beyond the MV sessions. Responses in this category were: *“A positive change in students’ behavior is observed. Their attendance at school has improved. They attend the MV classes happily.”* *“The students who were slow learners themselves approached me and started taking interest in what was being taught in my class.”* *“My students have become really enthusiastic and want to learn more and more. As a result their capacity to learn has increased.”*; *“Their attendance at school has improved.”*

About 7.3% of MV teachers perceived that children had become ‘more respectful and obedient’ since the implementation of MV program. One of the typical remarks illustrating their perception of children being respectful had been *“Students’ language is improving. They use polite words. Don’t use bad words. They talk to others respectfully”* (Fig. 3).

About 10% of the Principals listed a general value that they had observed in the students since the implementation of the *Mulyavardhan* program as the fourth most observed change. For instance, Principals mentioned aspects such as ‘respect’, ‘peace’ and ‘obedience’ in their responses. About 10% of the Government teachers felt that their students had become ‘more disciplined’ (*“Even if there is complete chaos in the class, the moment the ‘Quiet signal’ is*

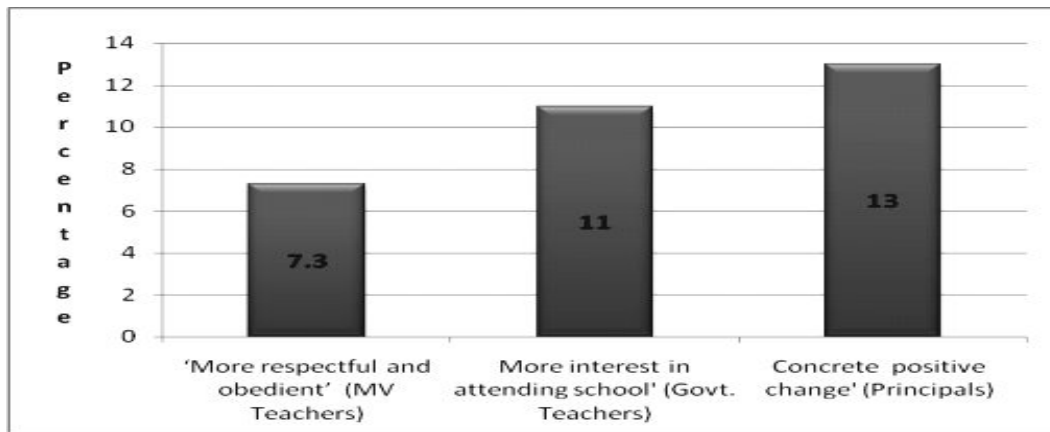


Fig. 3. The third most frequently experienced/observed biggest change amongst children by the principals, government teachers and MV teachers in relation to the MV program

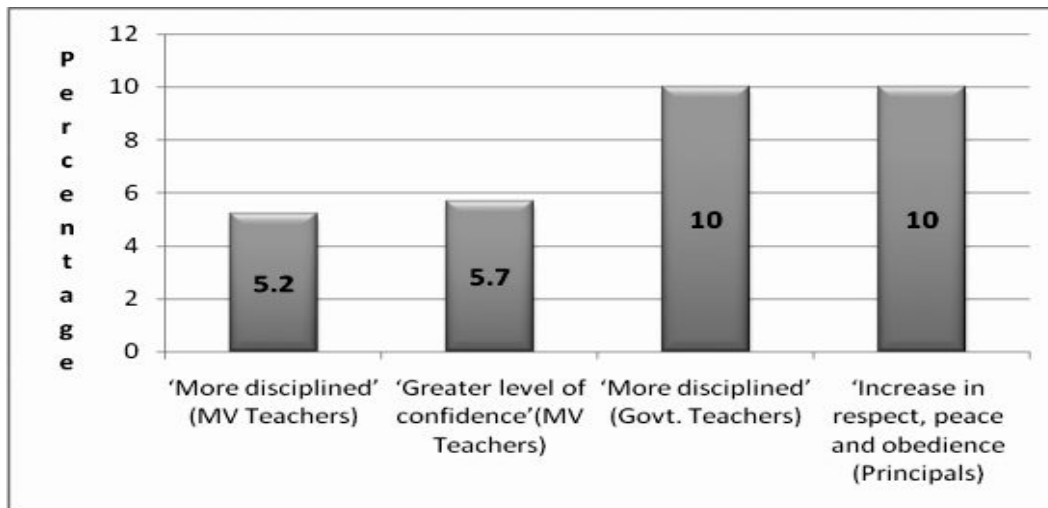


Fig. 4. The fourth most frequently experienced/observed biggest change amongst children by the principals, government teachers and MV teachers in relation to the MV program

given, the students become silent in seconds.”). Some MV teachers (5.7%) noticed a ‘greater level of confidence’ amongst children and somewhat equal percentage of them (5.2%) observed that children had become ‘more disciplined’ (“The students have overcome the fear of school. They have started answering in the class which they never used to do earlier.” and their stage fright is gone. They can speak confidently with people.”) (“The students, who used to come late to the school every day, now come on time as they have seen me coming on time.”) (Fig. 4).

Around 9% of the Principals explained that the program had a direct positive impact (the fifth most observed change) on either the drop-out rate in their school or on absenteeism. They indicated that more students had started attending school more regularly and also arrived on time. About 6% of the Government teachers said that children had become ‘more honest and truthful’ since the start of the program. This view is illustrated in the responses like, “Students have become more honest”.

About 3% of the Government teachers felt that children were ‘fighting less than before’. One illustrating comment to this effect was, for example, “Congratulations for implementing this program! A definite positive change in the behavior of the students in the age group of 6 to 10 is observed. Conflict is part of our life, but our students are learning how to find their path in such a situation.” Less than 3% of the

Principals mentioned that children had become better at ‘conflict resolution’. Less than 2% of Principals noticed children ‘happier and contented.’

Children’s Most Positive Experience in Relation to the Mulyavardhan Program

The children (n= 604) from all the four standards (Standard 1: n=148; Standard 2: n=151; Standard 3: n=143; Standard 4: n=162) were asked to narrate their most positive experience since the start of the MV program. The data shows that ‘helping other’ was the most frequently occurring category of response among the children across all four grades. The children indicated that they had started helping their friends, classmates, and family members more often. This was followed by the next most frequently occurring category ‘stopped fighting’. In this regard, the children stated that they had stopped getting into conflict with each other because of the lessons learnt from the MV program. ‘Use of Golden Rule was also mentioned by several children. According to these children they were following the Golden Rule taught to them in their MV sessions. Additionally, some children also mentioned that they were ‘playing together’, showing ‘respect and obedience’ to their elders, and were being more honest and truthful (Fig. 5).

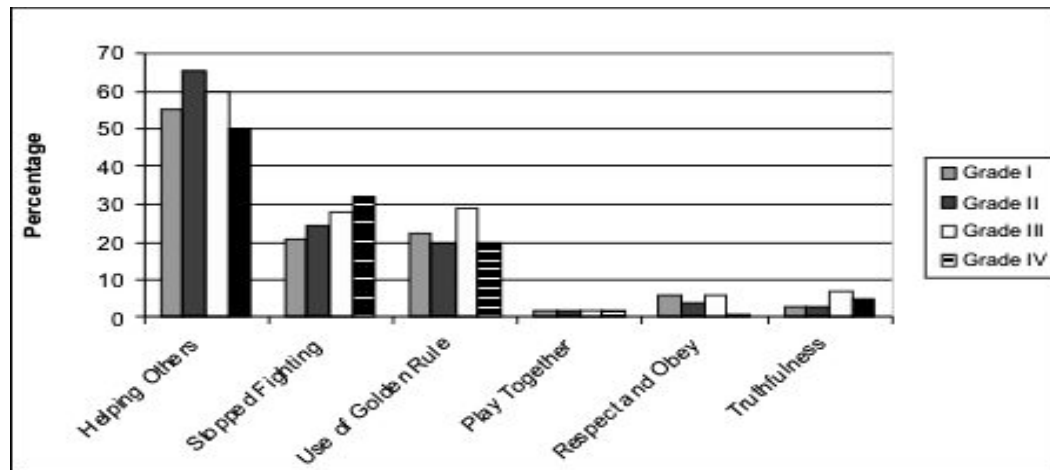


Fig. 5. Children's most positive experience as a result of participating in the MV program

Family's Interest in the *Mulyavardhan* Program

The children were asked to indicate if their family took an interest in their MV program. Table 2 shows the results for these items. Mean score of 2.38 on the question about their parents' interest in their program shows that on the whole children were positive and agreed that their parents were indeed taking an interest in their new program. Similar results can be seen for the interest taken by the students' siblings. Mean score of 2.45 shows that on the whole children felt that their siblings also took an interest in their program.

IV. DISCUSSION

It must be mentioned that '*Mulyavardhan*' is a unique example of Peace, Moral and Value education program that has been designed, developed and implemented by a non-governmental organization by incorporating it into the Government system. Nowhere in India, has Peace, Moral and Value education ever been implemented with such remarkable efficacy. It is marked by its unparalleled enormity as it cur-

rently covers 38,000 children from 500 schools in Maharashtra state of India. '*Mulyavardhan*' has been appreciated by all despite multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-caste and varied socio-economic strata in Maharashtra. There is an overwhelming demand for extension of the program to other districts of the state.

The Principals' responses to different aspects of the program indicated that on the whole the program was a success and has resulted in positive outcomes for themselves, the Teachers and the children. The Principals listed a variety of changes they had observed amongst children such as 'improved interpersonal relations'; 'discipline-related changes'; 'concrete positive change in behavior'; observance of 'respect', 'peace' and 'obedience'; 'positive impact on both the dropout rate and absenteeism; 'conflict resolution'.

The Government teachers presented a variety of interesting views on the MV program. The Government teachers on the whole believed in the usefulness of the MV program and several felt that it had a positive impact on them and children. Amongst other things, quite a few Government teachers felt that children had become more confident, cooperative, interested

Table 2: Interest expressed by the families of the children in the MV program

Family's interest in the program	Positive or negative orientation	Mean score	Overall opinion of the group	Standard deviation
Parents' interest in the program	Positive	2.38	Agree	1.3
Siblings' interest in the program	Positive	2.45	Agree	1.4

in learning, disciplined and honest and truthful since the MV program had started.

Many MV teachers reported to have observed several positive changes in children such as being 'more helpful and cooperative towards their peers and elders'; 'more honest'; 'frequency of conflicts reduced'; 'more respectful and obedient'; 'greater level of confidence'; 'more disciplined' since the start of the MV program. Almost all of them mentioned positive experience in relation to the program.

The overall response from this group of children is very positive. They appear to enjoy the MV content and the activities. Both in terms of content and approach, there is a lot of novelty for the students and perhaps the opportunities and experiences they receive in these sessions is less comparable to the rest of their academic experience. Children feel they have become more 'helpful'; 'have stopped fighting'; 'play together'; 'use golden rule'; 'respectful and obedient' and 'truthful' since the start of MV program. Moreover, they also report that their families and siblings are taking interest in their new program.

The present report besides showcasing overwhelming positive behavioral changes amongst children has brought about other desirable changes like increase in school attendance, reduction in dropout rate and children's overall motivation to learn. It may be pointed out here that low attendance, high dropout rate and low motivation to learn are one among the major roadblocks that hinder educational development in Asia. Thus, *Mulyavardhan* appears to offer a viable solution to overcome major educational problems and inculcate values, both elements being the most essential ingredients of social transformation.

V. CONCLUSION

The myriad positive changes observed in children's behavior by Principals, Government teachers, MV teachers and children themselves overlapped considerably thereby lending credence to each other's observations. Since all these positive behavioral changes have occurred in the target population in a short span, it tends to confirm its credibility for its philosophy, approach, implementation and thus continuity and expansion for social transformation. Undoubtedly the results of the present study have suc-

cessfully showcased '*Mulyavardhan*' program as a 'hope' to cultivate the virtues of peace, harmony, tolerance and brotherhood in today's and tomorrow's world.

EPILOGUE

Further progress has been made to strengthen '*Mulyavardhan*' since this study was conducted. The syllabus has been strengthened on the basis of field experience, feedback from all the stakeholders and opinions of various subject experts. A dedicated team of experts has overhauled the syllabus for Standard I to IV. Every year MV is being expanded to include one standard till it covers all the standards up to standard X. Since the efficiency of MV is heavily dependent upon the quality of MV teachers' training program, therefore, training of each batch of MV teachers is monitored closely. An independent research team with 56 social scientists is researching various aspects of social environment to work out strategies to enhance *Mulyavardhan's* practicability in varied environments.

NOTE

1. This paper was presented by the author in the International Moral Education Conference at Nanjing, China in 24-28 October 2011

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