

"BUILDING FUTURE-READY SOCIETIES WITH HUMAN VALUES REFACTORIZING EDUCATION"

Research Paper

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"Abstract"

As the world navigates the twin transitions toward a digital and green economy, there is an urgent need to root the future in universal human values. "Building Societies with Human Values Refactoring", developed by Sathya Unar Charitable Trust, is a grassroots education model that re-engineers character, citizenship, and sustainability consciousness among youth. The curriculum is adaptable across age groups and program durations, bridging the value gap in education by cultivating empathy, responsibility, and resilience. Structured around a developmental flow from "Self → Society → Sustainability," the curriculum integrates introspection, journaling, storytelling, and project-based learning with self-reflection. Modules such as "Self-discovery", "Sustainable Relationship management", "Mindful morality in socio-digital ecosystems", "Human-Nature Integration", "Financial Management", and many more guide learners through deeply personal and social inquiries. The capstone involves real-world field immersion and community engagement, enabling learners to translate inner transformation into social contribution and sustainable futures.

Keywords: human-values refactoring, sustainable societies, moral framework, SDG-based community.

1 Introduction

As per (Bumbăcea, 2023) (Nations, 2023) by 2030, over 60% of young people aged 15–24, approximately 830 million individuals, are projected to lack the necessary skills to participate effectively in the green economy.

In parallel, (Benveniste, 2023) states that the digital economy is leaving youth behind, as less than 40% of young people in high and upper-middle-income countries possess minimum digital literacy proficiency. (UNICEF Generation Unlimited's report, 2025) states that the skills gap is particularly concerning, as less than half of youth globally (44%) believe they possess the green skills needed in today's workforce.

Compounding these structural challenges is the decline in empathy among youth. Analysis revealed in (Marsh and Razon, 2011) (Scott, 2019) that 48% reduction in empathic concern and a 34% drop in perspective-taking between 1979 and 2009. Another study from (Swanbrow, 2010) found that college students today exhibit approximately 40% lower empathy compared to peers from two to three decades earlier.

These declines raise concerns about the moral foundation of future generations regarding people and nature. Recognizing the pressing need for a moral framework to guide youth and future generations, NGO Sathya Unar Charitable Trust initiated the development of 'Building Future-ready Societies with Human Values Refactoring'.

2 About Sathya Unar Charitable Trust

The Sathya Unar Charitable Trust, headquartered in a village in the Tenkasi district of South Tamil Nadu, was established in 2005 and formally registered in 2015. Since then, it has been actively engaged in a range of social development and youth empowerment initiatives. All programs are guided by their central motto, ‘Realizing the Truth.’

2.1 Current programs

There are various social development programs conducted for all age categories, which include the initiatives in Table 1.

Initiative	Target Group	Focus/Activities	Value Orientation (Realizing the Truth)
Pattarai – Signature Initiative (Meditation & Deep Silence) - Pattu (புது – Light) + Arai (அறை – Chamber) signifying a ‘Chamber to Realize inner Light) in the Tamil language	All ages, mainly mid-age to elderly	Guided meditation, silence practice for peace and purpose	Self-realization through inner peace
Thulir (Scholarship Program)	Underprivileged youth (graduate level)	Scholarships for higher education; volunteer engagement in service	Serving students with humility, free from pride, ego, or sympathy
Gurukulam	Gen-Z (especially children of volunteers)	Personality development through nature exposure, meditation, exercise, and life coaching	Self-transformation to navigate a competitive society.
Disaster Recovery Support	Local communities in crisis	Mobilizing resources for timely relief in natural and social disasters	Compassionate action and realization of truth through helping others during challenging times

Table 1. Summary of the Trust programs.

3 Conceptualizing Human Values Refactoring

3.1 Importance of human values

Human values cannot be confined to the limited scope of psychology or any modern field of study, as they have existed since the beginning of civilization. They have always been an integral part of communities, regardless of race, religion, color, or creed. Therefore, revisiting traditional roots to understand and articulate human values is essential.

Sacred and philosophical texts across various traditions consistently highlight values including truth, compassion, selflessness, and integrity as foundational principles for human conduct. The core messages of these texts remain consistent when interpreted with clarity and a proper contextual understanding within each respective religious or cultural framework.

These traditions, while diverse in origin, converge on the universal principle that ‘human values’ are the inner compass for personal growth and the cornerstone for building sustainable, just, and peaceful societies.

Embedding human values from years-old tradition into education fosters wholeness—beyond academic proficiency. Value-based education instills moral, cultural, spiritual, and civic sensibilities, thereby nurturing conscientious and responsible citizens.

3.2 Current challenges

Today’s children face far more challenges in rapidly changing and evolving societies. To mention a few, with the facts in Table 2.

Challenge	Evidence / Data	Impact on Human Values
Digital Overexposure & Screen Dependence	Average global screen time for children has risen to 4–6 hours/day (Media, 2022)	Reduced face-to-face interaction, weak empathy, and poor patience.
Decline in Empathy & Social Skills	Empathy among college students declined by 40% in the last 30 years ((Sara H, Edward H and Hsing, 2010)	Lower perspective-taking, weaker community building.
Materialism & Consumer Culture	Rising consumerist attitudes among children are tied to social inequality.	Gratitude and simplicity are overshadowed by competitiveness.
Loss of Cultural & Ethical factors	Weakening intergenerational cultural transmission.	Loss of ethical grounding, disconnection from traditions.
Mental Health Pressures	WHO: 1 in 7 adolescents (10–19 years) suffer from mental health conditions (WHO, 2025)	Stress overrides value development and weak resilience.
Peer & Social Media Influence	46% of teens report cyberbullying or online pressure (Vogels A., 2022)	Compromised authenticity

Table 2. Challenges due to lack of Human Values.

3.3 Human values refactoring – a moral framework

3.3.1 Rationale for moral framework

Several frameworks on values, morals, and cultures have been developed within the field of psychology to explain how humans operate, while some attempt to prescribe how humans ought to operate. Prominent examples include Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede H., 2001) , Shalom H. Schwartz’s Theory of Basic Human Values (Schwartz H., 1992, 2012), and the Cultural Map by Inglehart and Welzel (Inglehart, Arbor and Welzel, 2012), among others.

On the other hand, traditional perspectives on values are derived from philosophers as well as from widely recognized religious scriptures, sacred texts, and spiritual literature. However, there exists no integrative framework that effectively bridges the empirical perspectives of psychology with the wisdom of tradition to create a comprehensive and workable model of human values.

This study aims to address this gap in (Table 3) by developing a *Moral Framework – Chaitanyam* as explained in (Figure 3).

Domain	Framework	Source Focus	Contribution Limitations (Gap)
Psychology & Social Sciences	Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory	Explains cultural differences in values (e.g., individualism–collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance) and their impact on organizations and behavior.	Descriptive, limited to cross-national comparisons; does not prescribe moral guidance.
	Schwartz’s Theory of Basic Human Values	Identifies universal values (e.g., benevolence, power, tradition) that shape attitudes and decision-making across cultures.	Lacks integration with traditions; primarily empirical.
	Inglehart & Welzel’s Cultural Map	Shows value shifts from survival to self-expression linked to modernization and democracy.	Provides Socioeconomic sense but does not connect to timeless moral traditions.
Tradition & Philosophy	Philosophers (e.g., Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Confucius , Vedanta Thinkers – Ramanar, Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramahansa)	Provide normative ethical systems (virtue ethics, deontology, spiritual-moral codes).	Context-bound, often abstract, with limited empirical validation.
	Religious Scriptures & Sacred Literature (e.g., Bible, Quran, Vedas)	Offer prescriptive moral guidance that is widely accepted across civilizations.	Diverse interpretations; lack empirical validation and integration with modern psychology.

Table 3. Comparative Overview of Human Values Frameworks

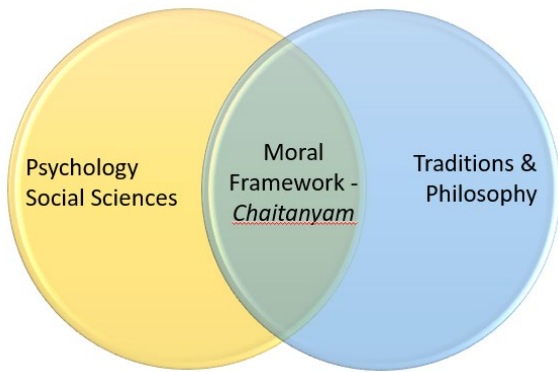


Figure 1. Bridging Psychology and Tradition through Chaitanyam

3.3.2 Theoretical underpinnings

The framework of *Chaitanyam* is rooted in a holistic understanding of the human being, drawing from both psychological science and philosophical traditions that emphasize the integration of consciousness, body, mind, and life force. These four dimensions (Figure 2) form the theoretical foundation of the framework, rooted in tradition.

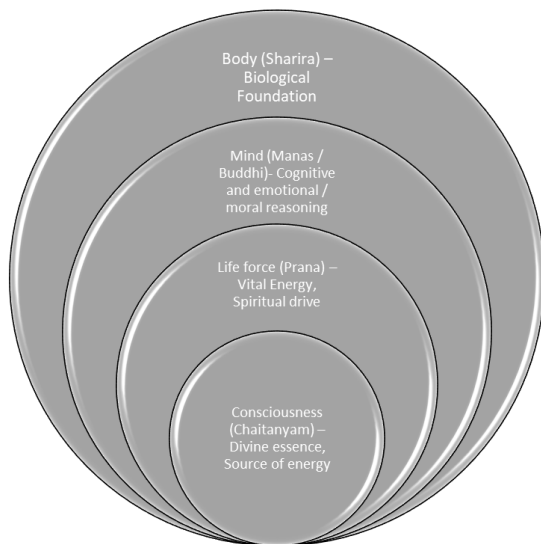


Figure 2. Framework Dimensions

Integrative basis

By synthesizing these four dimensions—consciousness, body, mind, and life force—Chaitanyam establishes a moral framework (Figure 3) that is both empirically grounded (drawing from psychology and behavioral sciences) and rich (drawing from philosophy, spirituality, and tradition). This integrative model acknowledges that values are not merely cognitive constructs, but realities sustained by awareness, embodiment, thought, and vital energy.

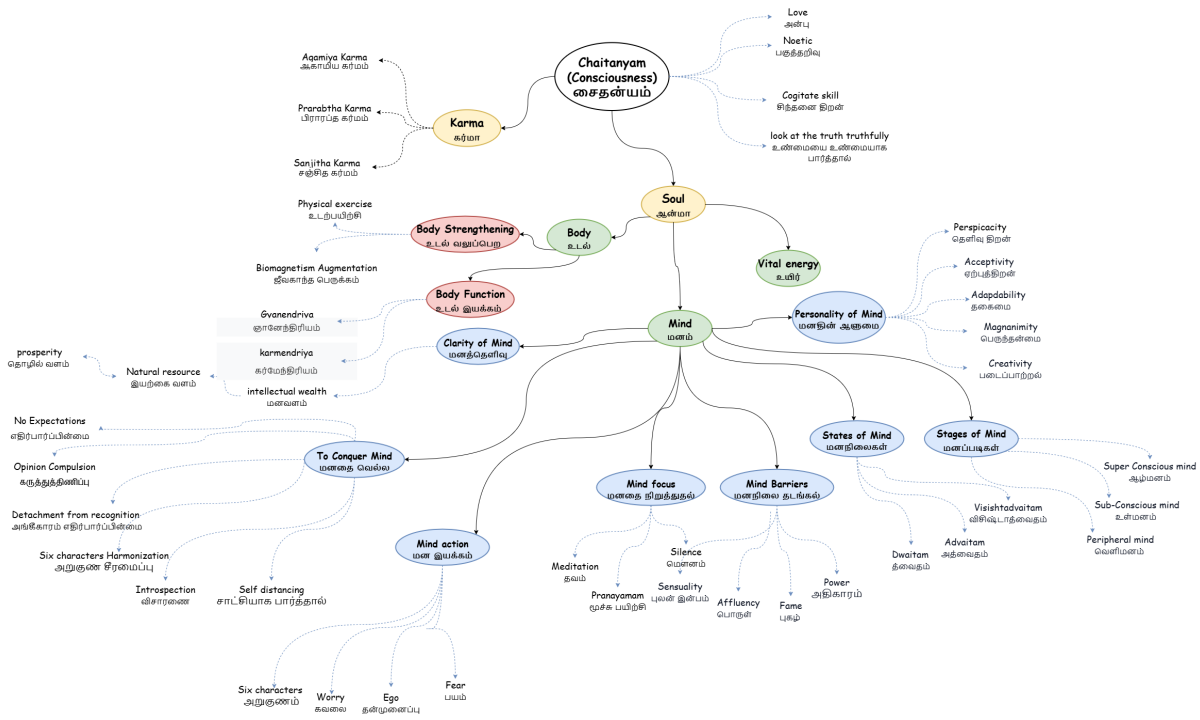


Figure 3. Chaitanyam – A Moral Framework of Sathya Unar Charitable Trust

3.4 Program framework and design

3.4.1 Developmental continuum

The Chaitanyam framework articulates human development as a continuum of Self-Discovery, Self-Transformation, and Self-Realization, integrating consciousness, body, mind, and life force. It emphasizes the transformation of the **self**, constructive engagement with **society**, and the advancement of **sustainable**, value-oriented communities, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Chaitanyam Developmental Continuum

3.4.2 Core principles

Core principles are based on three phases: Self-discovery, Self-transformation, and Self-realization, as illustrated in Figure 5 and summarized in Table 4.

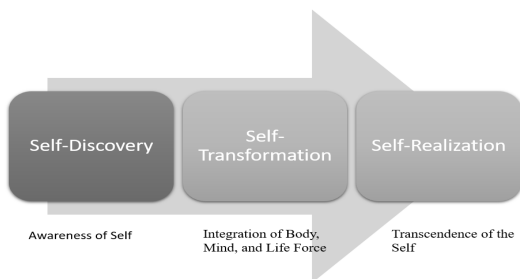


Figure 5. Chaitanyam Developmental Continuum

Stage	Focus	Psychological Basis	Traditional Basis	Methodologies	Personal Outcome	Societal Outcome
Self-Discovery (Awareness of Self)	Recognizing and becoming aware of values within oneself and in relation to others	Early stages of moral awareness, empathy, and perspective-taking	Awakening through self-reflection, self-stories, and moral inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises: WATCH (W- Words, A- Actions, T- Thoughts, C- Character, H- Habits) & “Accept as it is” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi) Introspection Journaling Storytelling Movies & documentaries (true stories) 	Observable shift in ‘thoughts’, ‘words’, and ‘actions’ as a personalized experience	Transformation in how individuals engage with self, family, school, and community; children identify educational pathways & career choices aligned with personality
Self-Transformation (Integration of Body, Mind, Life Force)	Internalizing and embodying values reflected in society	‘Character’ & ‘habit’ transformation; alignment of moral reasoning with action; identity development; post-conventional moral orientation	Practices such as yoga, meditation, and moral living to cultivate virtue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meditation (Vethathiri Maharishi) Biomagnetism (Vethathiri Maharishi) Exercises: WATCH, “Accept as it is,” Be in the moment Being with nature 	Observable shift in ‘Character’ and ‘Habit’	Participation in community service & projects; fostering social innovation, strengthening social enterprises, contributing to sustainable community development
Self-Realization (Transcendence of Self)	Living with divinity	Moral exemplarity, generativity, and self-actualization	Spiritual traditions emphasizing unity, compassion, and service (Vedanta, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meditation & breathing Biomagnetism Realizing nature & self 	Values expressed as a state of being: embodied wisdom, harmony, service to humanity	Leadership within communities as trusted guides & change-makers; fostering collective growth, resilience, and moral direction

Table 4. Chaitanyam Core Principles

3.5 Modules, exercises, and evidences

Modules and Exercises are designed to be practice-oriented, integrating body and mind through reflective, personalized activities such as WATCH, Accept as it is, and Be in the moment, supported by Moodle-based curriculum access. The modules cover self-discovery, moral grounding, sustainable

relationships, human–nature integration, financial ethics, and career alignment, all of which are adapted for use across various age groups.

Pilot programs with youth revealed that personalized, smaller cohorts enabled measurable outcomes, fostering self-discovery, career clarity, and social innovation. Community-based pilots (age above 18) further evolved into team projects with mentorship, ultimately giving rise to early forms of social enterprises. Community projects identified to fit into any of the SDG goals and targets to build value-based societies.

In rural schools, children (ages 8–14) who practiced ‘WATCH’ and ‘Accept as it is’ demonstrated observable behavioral changes, validating the scalability of these approaches across developmental stages. Figures 6 and 7 show the evidence of the exercises performed in the school.

Evidence of the Rural school with ‘WATCH’ and ‘Accept as it is’

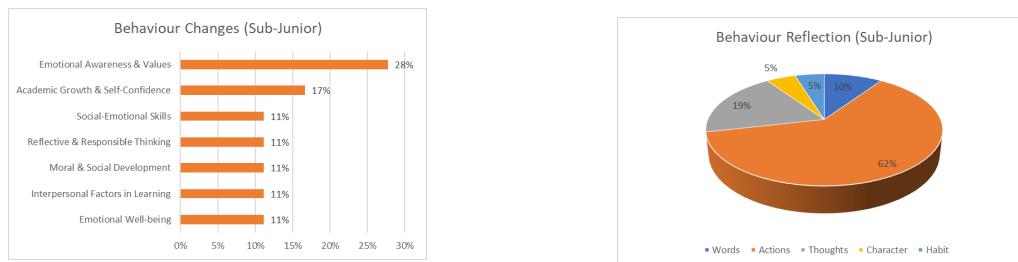


Figure 6: Sub-junior Reflection and Results

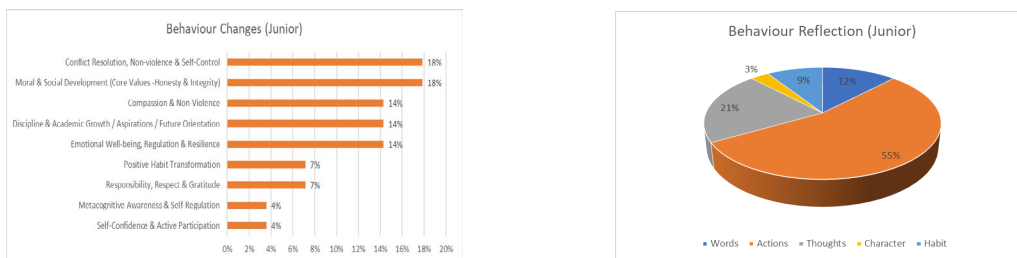


Figure 7: Junior Reflection and Results

4 Alignment with Global Agendas – SDG & GCED

The curriculum is designed to integrate with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED). The curriculum implemented so far aligns with SDG 3, SDG 4, and SDG 16, as well as with the GCED pillar. Table 5 illustrates how our Behavioural results align with the SDGs and GCED, highlighting the following SDG targets that can be achieved.

- 3.4: Promote healthy lifestyles and resilience
- 4.1: Quality primary/secondary education
- 4.4: Skills for employment
- 4.7: Lifelong learning
- 16.1: Significantly reduce violence everywhere
- 16.3: Promote rule of law and access to justice
- 16.7: Build strong, ethical institutions

Category	Relevant SDG(s)	SDG Skills	GCED Domain(s)	Related GCED Attributes / Skills / Values
Interpersonal Factors in Learning	SDG 4, SDG 16	Peer relationships and cooperation strengthen both learning and inclusivity.	Socio-emotional + Behavioral	Empathy, cooperation, respect, inclusivity; ability to manage peer relations; collaborative learning skills.
Reflective & Responsible Thinking	SDG 4	Reflection leads to responsible learners and ethical citizens.	Cognitive + Behavioral	Critical thinking, ethical reflection, decision-making, and translating reflection into responsible actions.
Social-Emotional Skills	SDG 3, SDG 16	Empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution aid well-being and peace.	Socio-emotional	Emotional regulation, empathy, conflict resolution, relationship management, resilience.
Emotional Awareness & Values	SDG 3, SDG 16	Awareness of emotions and values fosters inner well-being and peaceful societies.	Socio-emotional + Cognitive	Awareness of feelings, moral reasoning, integrity, respect for diversity; linking self-awareness to ethical values.
Self-Confidence & Active Participation	SDG 4	Participation fosters confidence, develops life skills, and promotes inclusive learning.	Behavioral + Socio-emotional	Participation, agency, confidence to act, sense of responsibility, and being an active citizen.
Metacognitive Awareness & Self-Regulation	SDG 4, SDG 3	Reflecting on thoughts/actions improves learning and emotional resilience.	Cognitive + Socio-emotional	Self-reflection, thought, and emotional regulation, as well as critical thinking.
Responsibility, Respect & Gratitude	SDG 16	Respect for parents/others strengthens peaceful and respectful societies.	Socio-emotional + Behavioral	Values/attitudes of respect, gratitude, responsibility; behavior aligned with these values.
Positive Habit Transformation	SDG 3, SDG 4	Replacing negative habits with positive ones aids well-being & responsible growth.	Behavioral	Behavior change, good practices, and internalizing positive habits.
Emotional Well-being, Regulation & Resilience	SDG 3	Directly linked to mental health, coping skills, and stress management.	Socio-emotional	Emotional awareness, coping, resilience, self-regulation, and well-being.
Discipline & Academic Growth / Aspirations / Future Orientation	SDG 4	Discipline and aspirations enable academic excellence and future readiness. Academic progress boosts confidence, fosters lifelong learning, and empowers individuals to achieve their goals.	Cognitive + Behavioral	Goal-setting, commitment, planning, and future thinking.
Compassion & Non-Violence	SDG 16, SDG 3	Compassion reduces violence and builds peaceful, empathetic communities.	Socio-emotional + Behavioral	Empathy, caring for others, non-violence, conflict resolution, ethics, and moral responsibility.
Moral & Social Development (Core Values – Honesty & Integrity)	SDG 16	Building empathy, compassion, and moral awareness contributes to peace and justice. Honesty and integrity are foundations for justice and ethical societies.	Socio-emotional + Cognitive	Understanding of values, integrity, honesty, moral awareness, and ethical reasoning.

Conflict Resolution, Non-Violence & Self-Control	SDG 16, SDG 3	Learning self-control helps reduce aggression and promotes peaceful living.	Socio-emotional + Behavioral	Skills in managing conflict, emotional control, non-violent communication, and behavior aligned with peace.
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Table 5. Alignment with Global Agenda – SDGs & GCED

5 Conclusion

Future direction

The program holds potential for cross-border expansion and cultural adaptation through global knowledge sharing, collaborative pilots with NGOs, student exchanges, international research networks (both within and outside the UN), youth-led initiatives, and joint advocacy for policy integration that incorporates human values refactoring. Community projects will extend the above-mentioned SDG goals and targets, building value-based societies.

Reinforcing the urgency of values refactoring

With the rising conflicts & violence, mental health crisis, and Education gaps, human values refactoring is the need of the hour. Globalization without values brings the risk of creating uniform skills and an unequal humanity. Without refactoring human values, cross-border collaboration will weaken. If we fail to re-anchor human values now, we risk passing a fractured morality to the next generation. The world has invested heavily in development and technology, becoming increasingly competitive; however, it has underinvested in empathy, integrity, and peace. Without urging for human values refactoring, we are building a future that may be technologically advanced but morally bankrupt.

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