

Ethical and Moral Values and the Indian Education System

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***Abstract:** Spirituality as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary among others refers to deep beliefs and feelings often of a metaphysical and supernatural nature. Spirituality can also be defined in terms of finding both our inner self as well as a universal love where peace, happiness, and calmness reside. Spirituality is often closely related to moral values and ethics. Morality itself is based on cultural values, general codes of conduct, and social values. It is a fact that morality and ethics play a vital role in the individual, social, and national realm. A child learns moral values from formal, informal, and non-formal agencies of education. In earlier times, education was considered as not only imparting knowledge and necessary training but also imbibing the child with good values and ideals. However, with the expansion of population and education institutions, there is a marked decline in the personality and moral development of the child.*

In present times, in most of the educational institutions, there is a lack of emphasis on the concept of moral and ethical development and progress. The emphasis instead is on materialistic values like securing good grades, career placements, and training of competitive and managerial personnel. This has resulted in the decline of values among students. This paper focuses on the possible causes of ethical and moral deterioration of the modern student related to the current education curricula, teaching approaches, and practices employed at the school level.

***Key Word:** ethical values, moral values, education curricula, and teaching approaches.*

Introduction

The word Ethics has been taken from the Greek word “ethos” which means character. It is an inherent feature of a civilized society. It is a standard that focuses the mind to distinguish

between good and bad behavior, character, and practices in our society. Value is a term used in a philosophical context where it deals with its useful contribution to mankind. Aristotle concluded ethics was more than a moral, religious, or legal concept. To determine what is ethically good for the individual and for the society, he said, it is necessary to possess three virtues of practical wisdom: temperance, courage, and justice (Pabla, 2011).

The Indian culture is recognized the world over unique because it has developed values. For example, in Hindu's perception, there are four primordial embodiments- *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha* and Five practices- *Satya, Ahinsha, Astaya, Aparigrah and Brahmacharya* (Gupta Pallavi, 2016).

Material wealth is considered the hallmark of success in many nations of the world, but as Emerson (2009) said, a person's real success should be measured instead by the values that he possesses such as empathy, care, love, enthusiasm, and humaneness. Nowadays, there has been a steep decline noticed in the values and morals of mankind. Epidemics, natural disasters and manmade conflicts ruin nations, materialism and shallow goals direct human relations, people are influenced by false and malicious propaganda and humanity is talked more in international conferences than felt in the hearts and minds of people.

Value education should occupy a more important place in the curriculum of the present education curriculum (Neena Aneja, 2014). The responsibility of strengthening the values of an individual lies not only on the family; teachers must assume a greater role at this time and bring about change to usher in a better world. If we look at our ancient education system, we realize that the education system was very efficient, vocation based yet enriched in values and morals. In ancient times, the teachers were concerned about the total development of their students which included their mental and spiritual enrichment as well. However, these above qualities are not seen in the present education system.

What does one understand by the term Morality and Ethics?

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with morality; the word ethic has been derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means character (Pabla, 2011). According to Aristotle ethics were more than a moral, religious, or legal concept. Ethics can be defined formally as "the

discipline dealing with what is good and bad with respect to moral duty and obligation” (Harris, C. E., Davis, M., Pritchard, M. S. and Rabins, M. J., 1996). To determine what is ethically good for the individual and for the society, it is necessary to possess three virtues of practical wisdom: temperance, courage and justice (Pabla, 2011). According to Rushmore Kidder’s research, the ethics of justice, the ethic of critique, the ethic of care, ethics of the profession are ethics in education.

Ethics can be defined formally as “the discipline dealing with what is good and bad with respect to moral duty and obligation”. Ethics education is essential in an engineering curriculum to assist the students in facing issues of ethical dilemma in professional practice. Every engineer has to exhibit his ethically in the aspects of safety, testing procedures, or in the ways of designing reliability and durability (Harris, C.E., Davis, M., Pritchard, M.S. & Rabins, M.J. (1996). Desplaces, Beauvais, Melchar and Bosco (2007) reported that proper ethics education can influence the ability of an individual to make important ethical decisions in their profession. They found that ethical codes and students’ perception of these ethical codes can affect how they perceive, maintain, and act according to the ethical standards set at their place of work or study. However, just the proper code of ethics alone does not influence an individual’s view.

According to Shurden (2010) the importance of teaching and ethical behavior of faculty also reinforces the development of positive perception of students in terms of ethics overtime. To properly evaluate students’ views on ethical issues, a survey was utilized to from the conclusion that teaching ethics has an impact on students’ personal beliefs and behaviors throughout the course of their lifetime (Linda K. Lau et al. 2014). However, Blood good et al. (2010) suggested that teaching ethics can have an adverse impact on students who obtain a high score on Machiavellianism (Shurden, S., Santandreu, J., and Shurden, M., 2010). Machiavellianism can be defined as the “implementation of cunning activities and cheating in general conduct. It focuses on the personal gain disregard of morality”. This type of trait, such as Machiavellianism, can create a much larger impact on behaviors of students than simply teaching ethics.

The difference in ethics education at different institutions around the world is reported by comparing the countries such as South Africa. This comparison stated that students remain uncommitted to their studies, disrespectful to their teachers, and are devoid of self-disciplinary actions which lead to poor behavior in the classroom in certain countries. This is due to the low level of commitment by teachers not enforcing proper disciplinary action and exhibiting unprofessional conduct themselves (Weeks, F., 2012). Another element of the problem lies in unsupportive parents who are often illiterate and are unable or unwilling to involve in their children's education. The combination of both factors and lack of discipline leads to a low ethical environment due to there being no consequence for unethical behavior (Kitahara, R., Westfall, F., and Mankelwicz, J., 2011). Due to the vast amount of data on the internet, cheating can impact student's academics. The students who spend more time watching television and participating in extracurricular activities tend to cheat more when compared to the students who spend time on learning.

Anitsal and Elmore (2009) argued that cheating within one's academic career can lead to unethical behavior in the work environment. Teaching ethics at the college-level can be beneficial due to the fact that it can develop the ability to analyze situations from an ethical perspective. A properly designed ethics course would require students to critically think about the issues and consequences that can arise from unethical behavior. Teaching ethics within the engineering curriculum can improve judgment when it involves ethical decisions. The main issue of ethics education understands how much instruction is required for each student due to the difference in each of their ethical habits (Bhatia, K., & Dash, M. K., 2011). Awareness of higher education is low in India when compared to Western Countries. There is such a sector in India which provides collection of statistical information on higher education. Moreover, a shortage of accreditation policies and quality faculty leads the students to become more unethical and does not defend them from fraud and abuse activities. As a result, there is a need to introduce qualified people and incentives in institutions to ensure the quality of education.

According to Luthar and Karri (2005), the requirement of incorporating ethics education in engineering education is still being questioned, although most students thought that receiving ethical education and training would benefit them later on in the

workplace (Verschoor, C., 2003). According to the proposed ABET criteria; engineering ethics and its concepts can be inculcated in the mainstream engineering courses (Herkert, J.R., 1997). Rossouw (2002) suggested that education on ethics can aid students in improving their moral reasoning skills. The ethical codes listed by many engineering societies are a good reference for ethical teaching within engineering programs. However, they cannot be used to train students entirely in recognizing and resolving ethical dilemmas that they may face in their day to day jobs (Selby, M. A., 2015).

It is evident from the above research studies that the goals, purposes, aspirations, attitudes, interests, feelings, activities, convictions, and obstacles are the major factors that influence the value system of any individual.

Evidence of the moral crisis in Indian culture:

It is very clear that the moral crisis is related to anti-social activities in society. The present situation of violence, corruption, alcohol & drugs, poverty, family breakdown and consumerism and materialism in India showing its moral crisis in culture.

Violence-It is found that youth of age between 14 to 35 years involves a different kind of violence in India. Although violence remains the part of the human development journey as a widely expected theory of survival of the fittest given by Darwin. Foods, selection of strongest genes, self-defense, and maintain the hierarchy are the main causes of violence in the society. There are many other secondary causes of violence such as lack of education, population, poor parental guidance, imbalance economy, less political understating and unemployment. According to the data collected by NCRB from States/UTs rape cases have increased from 24206 cases in 2011 to 38947 cases in 2016 and similarly cases of criminal assault to outrage the modesty of women have increased from 42968 cases in 2011 to 84746 cases in 2016 (excluding POCSO cases). A total of 36022 cases were registered in different sections of POCSO (Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences) Act, 2012 in 2016.

A child by the age of two is endowed with the capacity to refrain from hurting another person purely by identifying himself with the other. This moral strength is developed by parental

training, appropriate role models, and nurturing society. In India today, the weakening of cultural values due to rapid social change and the inability of elders and leadership to present a clear set of values which they themselves live by has induced a sense of alienation, powerlessness, and meaninglessness among the youth. This makes them extremely susceptible to programs of aggression, all the while weakening their empathic and moral inclinations.

Corruption- Corruption is an issue that adversely affects India's economy of central, state and local government agencies. Not only has it held the economy back from reaching new heights, but rampant corruption has stunted the country's development. A study conducted by Transparency International in 2005 recorded that more than 62% of Indians had at some point or another paid a bribe to a public official to get a job done. In a study conducted in 2008, Transparency International reported that about 50% of Indians had first-hand experience of paying bribes or using contacts to get services performed by public offices. Although, Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perception Index ranks the country 78th place out of 180 countries reflecting steady decline in perception of corruption among people.

Alcohol & drugs -Millions of Indians are dependent on alcohol, cannabis, and opiates, and drug misuse is a pervasive phenomenon in Indian society, says a new report, published jointly by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and India's Ministry of Social Justice. "They (the previous government) did not want to admit the magnitude of the problem indicated by the national household survey and that this too was happening within India-something they considered antithetical to Indian culture and embarrassing," said a senior government official. Applying estimates of prevalence to population figures, the survey estimated that in India, whose the population is just over a billion, 62.5 million people use alcohol, 8.75 million use cannabis, two million use opiates, and 0.6 million use sedatives or hypnotic.

Seventeen percent to 26% of these people can be classified as dependent on a user who needs urgent treatment, says the report. About 25% of users of opiates and cannabis are likely to seek treatment, while about one in six people who drink alcohol are likely to do so. Drug Use in the country, the only systematic effort to document the nation-wide prevalence of drug use recorded alcohol use in the past year in only 21% of adult males. Expectedly, this figure cannot mirror accurately the wide variation that obtains in a large and complex country such as India. The prevalence of current use of alcohol ranged from a low of 7% in the western

state of Gujarat (officially under Prohibition) to 75% in the North-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh. There is also an extreme gender difference. Prevalence among women has consistently been estimated at less than 5% (3–5) but is much higher in the Northeastern states. Significantly higher use has been recorded among tribal, rural and lower socio-economic urban sections

Poverty- The different definitions and different underlying small sample surveys used to determine poverty in India, have resulted in widely different estimates of poverty from 1950s to 2010s. In 2012, the Indian government stated 22% of its population is below its official poverty limit. The World Bank, in 2011 based on 2005's PPPs International Comparison Program, estimated 23.6% of Indian population, or about 276 million people, and lived below \$1.25 per day on purchasing power parity. According to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) programme 270 million or 21.9% of people out of 1.2 billion of Indians lived below the poverty line of \$1.25 in 2011-2012. The Rangarajan Committee said in 2014 that the population below the poverty line in 2009-2010 was 454 million (38.2% of the population) and that in 2011-2012 was 363 million (29.5% of the population).

In 2019, only 46 million people out of 1.3 billion people live below poverty line due to the efforts put in by the Indian government to end extreme poverty. Deutsche Bank Research estimated that there are nearly 300 million people who are middle class. If former trends continue, India's share of world GDP will significantly increase from 7.3% in 2016 to 8.5% by 2020. In 2015, around 170 million people, or 12.4%, lived in poverty (defined as \$1.90 (Rs 123.5), a reduction from 29.8% in 2009. Economists Sandhya Krishnan and Neeraj Hatekar conclude that 600 million people, or more than half of India's population, belong to the middle class.

The Asian Development Bank estimates India's population to be at 1.28 billion with an average growth rate, from 2010-2015, at 1.3%. In In 2014, 49.9% of the population aged 15 years and above were employed. However, there are still 21.9% of the population live below the national poverty line. The World Poverty Clock shows real-time poverty trends in India, which are based on the latest data, of the World Bank, among others. As per recent estimates, the country is

well on its way of ending extreme poverty by meeting its sustainable development goals by 2030.

Family breakdown - A perusal of varied literature on Indian society and culture, particularly generated by ethnographers, historians, Christian missionaries and subsequently by anthropologists and sociologists, suggests that the twentieth century had certain changes of great importance in the family structure due to the influence of industrialization, modernization and greater population mobility across the country. The Indian family system has progressively confronted various kinds of problems and challenges, and yet India does not have any family policy per se so far; although the Government of India has made various laws and policies, which have impacted the Indian family system in more ways than one. According to 2001 census, India consists of 192.7 million households spread over 0.59 million villages and about 5,000 towns. The nuclear family is now the characteristic feature of the Indian family structure. According to the census of India data, of all the households' nuclear family constituted 70 percent and single-member or more than one member households without a spouse (or eroded families) comprised about 11 percent. The extended and joint family or households together claim merely 20 percent of all households. This is the overall picture of the entire country, whereas in the case of urban areas the proportion of nuclear family is somewhat higher still. The available data from the National Family and Health Survey-1 of 1992-93 (henceforth NFHS) suggest that joint family does not make up more than five percent of all families in urban areas (Singh, 2004:137).

Consumerism and materialism - Consumerism is a social and economic order that encourages the acquisition of goods and services in ever-increasing amounts. With the industrial revolution, but particularly in the 20th century, mass production led to an economic crisis: there was overproduction-the supply of goods would grow beyond consumer demand, and so manufacturers turned to planned obsolescence and advertising to manipulate consumer spending. In 1899, a book on consumerism published by Thorstein Veblen, called *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, examined the widespread values and economic institutions emerging along with the widespread "leisure time" in the beginning of the 20th century. In it Veblen "views the activities and spending habits of this leisure class in terms of conspicuous and vicarious

consumption and waste. Both are related to the display of status and not to functionality or usefulness."

The Need for Value Education

The collapse of some economies in past years due to fraudulent practices in commercial enterprises or in governance reaffirms that value-based education for children is essential for growth and progress in every sphere-whether it is in production, technology or the human element. World Com and Enron are examples of how the absence of human values can devastate even professional business organizations. In colleges, especially professional colleges here, however, not much importance is attributed to moral education.

Various changes such as modernization, urbanization, and globalization as well as the influence of western culture accompanied many problems and evils in Indian society that cause declining ethical values in the Indian education system (Pathania, 2011). This educational system has definitely increased the literacy and employment rate but not aimed at producing righteous people and ideal citizens in the country. Today, our society is destined to encounter new and complicated problems. We see large scale corruption and illegal activities, luxurious and immoral consumption, disregard of human values which is destroying the fabric and structure of Indian society and culture.

The Role of Teachers

Educators in India need to awaken to the most precious task of teachers, that is, rekindling in the minds and hearts of students an increased awareness about the strengths of their values. Curriculum designers must become sensitive to this dimension of education because it is an area that has attracted little or no attention until recently since it was assumed that all students uphold moral values and belief systems. The truth is that, on the whole, they are, but these values are slowly becoming obscured in the growing materialism of the young workforce.

Teachers in India must be entrusted with the task of helping to mold the character of students. This responsibility involves many painstaking exercises for the teacher. Teachers who help students must learn to listen to the specific comments they make. This assistance will help

to determine the type of value system that guides their behaviors. Students who are listless and apathetic should become more purposeful and self-directed after being trained in value education.

Every teacher should aspire to strengthen students' minds, fortify their hearts, vitalize their thoughts, and help them crystallize their principles. Teachers must help students clarify their values so that they can make wise choices when faced with confusing options. Colleges must become training grounds for students to become better-adjusted, tolerant, and neighborly citizens. This should also be backed up by professional guidance and counseling sessions.

Thus, education is not merely imparting knowledge in a particular subject or branch of study making employable to the industries but is also training in dynamic and critical thinking which helps to adjust to the changing environment. Education should aim at making human life better not only through economic upliftment of individuals but also through social, moral, and spiritual strengthening. This will not only improve human life but also realize the "higher truth" i.e. Thus education is not only a way of earning but it also helps to develop a human personality with skills, values, morals, and enhancement of different attributes of man. So education is a vital means for the potentialities of a human being to emerge in a positive direction so that a man can live in a society full of dignity (Bordoloi, 2011). Education is a tool for the total development of human, if any one aspect of human personality is ignored, it can result very adversely. Without imparting values and morals in education, human development will be incomplete. Values and morals are inbuilt in human beings and Education should help in the improvement of human character and recognition of their inner purity, so the essential part of the education system should emphasize the values and morals with other development.

Causes of ethical deterioration in Indian education system:

A) Privatization of educational institutes:

The purpose of education is to enrich human life and to ensure the quality and standard of values to be maintained. Privatization of education has emerged in several forms in recent times in India. The Government has allowed opening self-financed and other private institutions, which function on commercial and business lines, because of which education has acquired the

status of a saleable commodity, where educational institutes are the ruthless sellers and students are the customers. These institutions start popular technical and professional courses without desired intent, infrastructure, and qualified teaching faculties. Teachers with low salaries and poor service conditions are appointed and teachers for the lack of job security serve as per management desires. Most of these teaching standards are substandard and just exams oriented. Many times students are helped in examinations through illegal and unethical ways. The uncontrolled growth of such institutions, especially in engineering, medical, and management disciplines created a huge unemployed youth. This kind of ethical deterioration has not only affected economics but also has a negative social impact on society.

B) Lack of value education in curriculum:

Today people mostly live in nuclear families and parents are involved in their jobs and whereby they cannot inculcate proper values at home. The present School curriculum lacks emphasis on value education. At present value, education is not started at home nor taught at schools in India. Although value education is included in the primary education curriculum at the adolescent or adult stage, which are the most sensitive stages to build the character of the youth, the curriculum finds no space to value education. However, the present curriculum makes them perfect moneymakers, the best politicians, the well-known doctors, the skillful engineers, the greatest musicians, the marvelous actors but fails to make them realize a bit to their identity as human beings (Bala Harish, 2011).

C) Corruption in Education Field:

The major cause of ethical degeneration in the education system is rapidly spreading corruption. Corruption in education can include bribes and illegal fees for admission and examination; academic fraud; withholding teacher salaries; preferential promotion and placement; charging students for “tutoring” sessions to cover the curriculum needed to pass mandatory examinations which should have been taught in the classroom; teacher absenteeism; and illegal practices in textbook procurement, meal provision, and infrastructure (Patrinos and Ruthkagia, 2007). Corruption on the basis of magnitude can be differentiating between large scale and petty corruption: Grand corruption where high-level officials and politicians involved for example,

fraud in public tendering for school construction or textbook production. The economic impact is higher when corruption involves large government purchases, but the number of people affected is much greater when corruption involves education services (Rosea and Mishler, 2010). India have IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, BITS, CSIR, Space Research and Atomic Energy Commission that ranks among the best institutes in the world and on the contrary, most of the schools in the country do not even have the minimum basic infrastructure (Singh and Purohit, 2011). In the recent times, many Indian educational institutes are under the clutches of corruption cases. According to a recent government report two-third of India's colleges and universities are below standard (Uttara Dukkupati, 2010). MHRD ministry has decided to derecognize as many as "44 deemed universities" (Gupta and Gupta, 2012). In this deemed university status swindle, the status was granted with a massive violation of the University Grant Commission rules.

D) Educator's pedagogy- does not engage properly in teaching methodologies. Evaluation stresses on routine remembrance. Curriculum design is done by the university and little collection of topics and subjects out of the syllabus. The accumulation or presentation of data is not enough to decide the criteria for quality education. Guru & Shisya (teacher & Student) Bounding Going Away: There are many more things to discuss, students should learn to respect Guru (Teacher), a guru should selflessly teach his Shishya (Student), these days the bounding between Guru-Shishya is going away, there is no respect for guru.

Some Other Causes:

At present, almost all countries in the modern world are competing in almost every sector: political, economic, military, and cultural. All countries will realize that one of the most important aids in this competition is education, so these countries have become more actively involved in organizing, supervising, encouraging, and controlling education (Wisadavet, 2003). The education system has grown quickly in areas like the technology sector. In this sector, Indians have proved themselves but in real life, they lack some essential human character. Technical, scientific, I.T. and other such education is essential to compete with other developed or developing nations but the element of values and moral based education is also essential so the citizens will be civilized and the country will get its past glory of rich heritage. School is a common platform for all children coming from various backgrounds. Therefore, schools need to

organize various education activities aimed at inculcating values and ethics that help to adjust students in the modern environment.

Conclusion

Nelson Mandela said “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” India has the fastest growing economy and youth population in the world. It is at this time that India needs to tap into this potential and thereby uplift its economy and the nation as a whole. Malpractices and mismanagement in education, commercialization, undue political interference, and inadequate attention to teaching are the probable causes of the decline of the quality of the Indian education system. One of the major ways to stop this decline is to provide value orientation in the Indian educational system. Therefore, there is an urgent need to re-invigorate value-based education in the curriculum at all stages to help improve and hasten the growth of the Indian educational system.

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