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## Professional Ethics and Value Education in Higher Education

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### Abstract

*Education is the most powerful weapon which can transform a naïve to a sophisticated, knowledgeable person. Keeping this goal in focus education cannot aim at the only concept of attaining economic upliftment of an individual but should also target at achieving social, moral and spiritual strengthening of the individual. Developing human personality with skills, values and morals is a must because education without values and ethics will surely make man a cleverer devil merely working for his own good. The floundering and deficient present education system is a contrast to the prosperous, value-based, and skill based ancient gurukuls which India was well known for. Today's education system has led Indian society to encounter merely new and perpetual problems mainly due to due to the privatization of educational institutes and corruption. The lack of value education in curriculum, political interference, the upshot of money-making schemes of education institutes are also few reasons worth mentioning. These problems can be eradicated by re-introducing value-based education in the curriculum, re-structuring the curriculum of teacher education etc. so as to lead the new generation to become responsible corporate citizens and ethical leaders.*

**KEYWORDS:** Professional ethics, values, education, deterioration, value-based

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### INTRODUCTION

*“By education I mean, an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man-mind body and spirit” – Mahatma Gandhi*

Education is a lifelong process. Humans are distinguished from other living beings due to his capability to educate himself. Education has helped humans to develop the power of critical thinking and has brought advancement in rationality towards life. In fact, education not only educates humankind but helps in acquiring knowledge, enhancing skills, developing attitudes and values etc. The factual function of education is to teach one to think rigorously and critically. Hence, it can be rightly said that Education is not merely imparting knowledge about a particular subject or a pathway which leads an individual to attain a desired occupation rather, it is opening the doors of the mind, cleansing the soul and realization of the self (Pabla, 2011). Moreover, the aim of education is to make human life better but it cannot be attained only by economic upliftment of an individual, but it should also attain social, moral and spiritual strengthening. All these components together will help improve human life and thus realize the “higher truth” i.e. “*Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya*” from darkness to light. (Shelly and Jain, 2012).

Thus, education is not only a means to earn a livelihood but to help in enhancing the different attributes of man and developing human personality with skills, values and morals.

### PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND VALUE EDUCATION

Ethics is quite a substantial element which systematizes community life. It does not seem viable for a society to be existent for an extended period without ethical codes. It mainly focus on concern for all living beings in nature. Ethics covers an individual’s ability to distinguish right from wrong, his moral values, code of conduct and behavior. It also implies a life of righteous conduct: thought, word, action etc. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the morality. The word ‘ethic’ originated from the Greek word ‘ethos’ which means character (Pabla, 2011). Aristotle the great philosopher was the first to define ethics and for

him ethics was more than a moral, religious or legal concept. According to him for an individual to determine what is ethically good for him and for the society, one should possess three virtues of practical wisdom such as temperance, courage and justice (Pabla, 2011). Similar to ethic codes, every occupation owns specific professional ethic codes which are mainly set by the members of a specific profession to reach the highest standard in that profession. Following these professional ethical codes can make ones profession more viable and can contribute his best to the society.

On the other hand, values can be defined as a set of deeply held, socially-shared beliefs. They are the significant and persistent beliefs or principles, based on which an individual makes judgements in life. It is at the center of our lives which act as a standard of behavior. The emotional state of mind of an individual is severely affected by values. The possession of certain behavior of an individual or the reason for him to behave differently in different situation is because of the values present in him.

With regard to Value education, it was deeply rooted in Indian philosophy and culture and imbedded in every tradition of Indian culture. The ancient education system of India was very prosperous, value-based, and skill oriented. The Vedas and Upanishads had formed the source of inspiration for value education. Value education was given priority throughout. When both value education and professional ethics are considered together it can be said that both go hand in hand and are essential tools in the higher education. Though great emphasis is laid on inculcating these aspects in the higher education there is always a question unanswered.

“Is the present education system effectively instilling the values and ethical codes in the present generation?”

If no is the answer, then Lewis’s words would be the caution of the day

“Education without values, as useful as it is, seems  
rather to make man a more clever devil.”

## **PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND VALUE EDUCATION IN PRESENT SCENARIO**

The present India is considered to be the country of chaos and anarchy. The political and economic exploitation, scandals and scams, anti-social and anti-national activities are a common newscast in India (Balamohandas,2008).The various changes that has taken place recently such as modernization, industrialization, urbanization, privatization, globalization etc. has only resulted in the massive erosion of values. Today every individual strives to

achieve a high life style and attain a high standard of living. Due to this fact the main objective of education of the Indian students has changed from all round development of the personality to merely earning a degree and finding a profession which is of economic gain. No priority is given to ethical values and the wellbeing of the society. The present model of education exclusively focusses on cognitive to the total neglect of the affective domain and presents an alienation between head and heart. This has in turn led the Indian society to encounter new and perpetual problems like corruption, illegal activities inhuman behavior etc. which has already damaged the structure of Indian society.

India had its own identity based on the great values in the ancient period. The renowned Nalanda University had become an international center of learning and transmitted value education by inculcating values in the learners (Gupta, 2010 and Amanda, 2008). However, the Present education system imparts only “Apara Vidya” which means one can have the knowledge of the world but will not have knowledge of their own self or of the supreme reality which is beyond time and space. Today every individual is concerned about achieving materialistic success and superficial achievements whereas the virtues like kindness, honesty, compassion, righteousness, peace, love, non-violence etc. are totally neglected. The young learners of these days barely has any understanding of why one gets educated nor the reason for learning different subjects. They are merely concerned about the subject matter of the subjects and they hardly know anything about life. They are least bothered about the welfare of the country or of the environment they live in and other social and moral issues are out of their concern area. They are totally unclear of what sort of individuals they hope to become when they complete their school education.

The basic aim of the education is to produce men of knowledge and culture but in the present day set up values such as Patriotism, dignity of individuals, endurance, social service, justice, national integration etc. find no place due to the individualistic and self-centered attitude of the human beings. (Barahate, 2014) Humans are moving away from a value-based life to more of materialistic lifestyle. Though emphasis is laid on value-based education by each educational commission, they are almost ignored and ruled out. The Secondary Education Commission 1952-53 had laid special emphasis on the following values in the formation of character of the students:

- Efficiency
- Good Temper
- Cooperation

- Integrity
- Discipline (Sindhvani and Kumar 2013)

But in the present education system except for monetary gains or economic well-being there is nothing else education aims for. Hence it is high time to identify the major causes of declining moral values in Indian education system and the ways to eradicate these problems.

## **REASONS FOR ETHICAL CORROSION**

### **Curriculum**

The Vedas, the Upanishads, the epics of the ancient period displayed and endorsed the values of Indian society. The main aim of the teachers of the ancient age was to impart value education (Pathania,2011). In contrast the present curriculum lack emphasizes on value education. Although value education has been inculcated in the curriculum of primary education, but the curriculum of the higher education finds no space for value education. On the other hand, rather its only aim is to make learners professionally equipped.

### **Competition**

Competitions is a vital part of the present lifestyle because in every field competition has become a must. Competition has taken over the place of the most important values such as compassion and cooperation. High stress and anxiety in the younger students is the result of this unhealthy competitions among peers. Competitions between peers always has led to competitions in professional life. This has made life miserable and one of constant worry.

### **Corruption**

Corruption is the word of this century. In spite of spreading knowledge and values the present education system has been spreading corruption. Corruption can be seen in every field of education system which includes bribes and illegal fees for admission and examination; academic fraud; withholding teacher salaries; favored promotion and placement; teacher absenteeism; etc. (Patrinos & Ruthkagia, 2007).

### **Privatization of Higher Education**

The rise of private institutions has changed education into a marketable commodity that can be traded with. The institutions of higher education have considered themselves to be traders trying to avail maximum profit from the students, their mere customers. Today's private institutions and distance learning institutes in higher education are the business units bestowing poor quality of education. Today education is considered as a trade hence the teaching learning process has become mechanical and pragmatic. (Bhagat, 2016).

### **Development in technology**

The scientific and technological development has surely contributed for the development of the country but on the other hand it has deteriorated the values in every individual. This has made men to produce not only equipment's for an easy life but also powerful means of destruction like nuclear bombs which can destroy the whole world in no time (Anita, 2015)

### **Educator's pedagogy**

The teaching methodology used in the present education system is outdated and obsolete. Examination and evaluation in the Indian education system stresses on rote learning. India lags far behind in imparting skill training as compared to other countries. Due to this the students when they set their toes in any profession, they are unable to cope with the work assigned.

### **Teacher-student interaction**

The absence of openness during interaction between Teacher and students is the main reason for the deterioration in value education. The teachers are concerned only in the completion of the syllabus rather than integrating values and morals in the lessons taught. Teachers find no time to spare to correct student behavior or to mold the personality of the students. (Wisadavet, 2003). Teachers who are supposed to be the role models to the learners fail to follow the professional ethics sets a wrong example for the students.

### **Inadequate Govt. Policies**

Though quite a number of commissions, committees, and policies were setup for the development of Indian education system, the policies laid out by these commissions are rarely taken into account in imparting education. Even today the curriculum is based on academic and intellectual dimension of education rather than on values and morals.

### **Mass media influence**

Media plays an important role in honing and shaping the personality of the youth. But today media depicts only violence, vulgarity and the impact of these on the youth is unimaginable.

### **Absence of environmental and societal concerns**

The present generation has no concern for the negative changes happening in and around them. This is mainly due to the lack of parental and teacher support on these issues. Parents and teachers who mold the character of the students are themselves deficient in values and find it difficult to train the youth. (Mergler, 2008).

## **CONSEQUENCES OF ETHICAL CORROSION**

- The societal harmony and national integrity will be hampered if the youth of the present day become severe, violent and vicious.

- It will hinder the development of the country.
- Instead of thinking and acting creatively the mind of the youth will be diverted to unsocial activities
- If the social values are uprooted due to the declining factors of values the downfall of the society is inevitable.
- Criminal and antisocial behavior will be on increase with the change in social structure and individual motives.
- Scam and frauds will increase dramatically because the present youth is trained to achieve only economic gain giving least consideration to human values.
- Individuals will become self-centered and will never value any relation thus turning into a beast ready to suppress anyone who comes on their way.(Anita, 2015)

### RECOMMENDATION

*Einstein remarked once: "try not to become a man of success but try to become a man of values."*

If values are to be restored the main responsibility lies in the hands of the teachers and the educational institutions.

#### Role of teachers

- Teachers should assign such work that inspires students because it is stimulating, meaningful, affects others, and is therefore intrinsically rewarding.
- Students should be encouraged to perform skits; role plays which propagates moral values.
- Yoga should be made a compulsory subject and the teacher must explain the importance of meditation and yoga practices for realization or the attainment of oneness with God.
- Time should be allocated for moral lecturing every day.
- Teachers should be trained to inculcate moral values in their specialized subjects.
- Special training should be given to the teachers to treat their students with affection, to help them grow into integrated personalities. They should also try to enhance the thrust of motivation in all their doings. (Garg and Kaur, 2012).
- Constructive feedback should be given to students. Criticism may imply that the person is not worthy and if the teacher accepts everything the students may lose confidence in teachers. This in turn will not encourage the students to improve.

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- Positive reinforcement is an effective method to bring in desirable behavior in students. Reinforcement can be in the form of acknowledgement, leadership role, a word of appreciation, verbal approval, non-verbal approval or even awards.

### **Role of educational institution**

- Students should be motivated to conduct assemblies based on different values. Moreover “Thought for the Day” should be employed in assemblies because moral thoughts can trigger moral thinking.
- National and religious festivals if celebrated in schools without declaring that day as a holiday a feeling of homogeneity can be fostered in the students.
- More number of books related to values should be made available in the school. Students should be encouraged to read classics which are morally rich and inspiring.(Jarrar, 2013).
- The school should give stress on organizing group discussion on social problems. Certain values games, excursions, field research, modeling, visits to places of historical importance, simulations role playing etc. will instill or internalize values and ethics in students. Different clubs should be organized like nature club, literary club, wildlife prevention club, social service camps, blood donation etc. to inculcate value education. (Barahate 2014)

### **CONCLUSION**

Ethics and values are concepts that preserve, secure, promote and protect life. They nurture the positive side and help to reveal the divine side of man. Hence each individual is accountable in building a morally strong society and transform the planet into a beautiful place to live. Adolescence being the transitional period (Santrock, 2007) where major physical, mental and psychosocial changes occur, the students of this age should be molded and shaped in values and ethics to avoid the country from havoc and colossal crisis. Today's unskilled professionals and undisciplined students are the product of the declining ethical values in education. This trend needs to be addressed by prioritizing value-oriented education in Indian educational system. In this process the role of the teacher cannot be neglected because only a teacher can inculcate democratic, social, moral and spiritual values in the students. Thus, the need of the hour is to re-orient teachers in value-based education and thus help students improve their human character and recognize their inner purity if not, it is just letting the whole system to rot.

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