

## Decline of Professional Ethics in Indian Education System

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**Abstract** - Recently there is an increasing awareness and more importantly, an increasing interest in the field of professional ethics. In fact, perhaps there has not been any time in the history of education development where the concepts and an understanding of the nature of professional ethics have been so urgently needed. The popular concept that if it is education then it will be ethical and if it is ethical, it can be only education and this concept has been declined in last few decades.

In higher and technical education the ethical consideration has lost its value and place, in real life ethics cannot be learned by books or by any other source of information, therefore it is really difficult to find ethical people around us, whereas it is very easy to find large number of unethical managers, bureaucrats, educationalist, corporate heads, politicians and elected representatives.

This paper describes about ethics, professional ethics and its importance, professional code of ethics for teachers, factors affecting ethical standards in education, lack of ethical education in teachers training programmes and need to re-introduce value based education, spiritual education, ethical education and need based education in the curriculum which should deal with increase in human values, ethical values, rational thinking, learning, research and moral development in education system.

**Keywords-** Ethics, Education, Professional Ethics, Ethical Standard, Teacher

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### I. WHAT IS ETHICS? [1]

The word Ethics has been derived from the Latin word 'ēthicus' and in Greek from 'ēthikos' has come from the word 'ethos', meaning character or manners. It can be defined as the moral values, rule and standards, governing the conduct of a particular individual, group, profession and culture.

The character of a person is expressed in terms of his conduct (series of action), which together is termed 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong', 'moral' or 'immoral'. Thus ethics can be termed as the science of character of a person expressed as right or wrong conduct or action. Ethical dilemmas arise when one's own ethical standard's conflict with those who have some other entity.

### II. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS [2],[3]

Professional Ethics deals with applications of ethical standards of an individual at different levels of professional life. Professional Ethics helps a professional to maintain integrity as to choose what to do when faced with problems at workplace that raises moral issue.

Every professional is accountable to his stakeholders, but in profession other than teaching it is not the duty of professionals to educate or moulds the users. Teaching professional is such a profession in which all the stakeholders related to it has to follow an established social, moral and ethical values to develop harmony of an individual in all aspects.

### III. IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS [2],[4]

Ethics is one of the important parameters which correspond to human needs, as it is the desire of any human to be ethical not

only in his personal life but also in his professional life. As in the field of education an individual knows that his/her behaviour and decision may directly or indirectly affect the lives of many people and may benefit the society at large.

Most of the professional in education feels that there is urgent need of professional ethics in order to provide a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations and duties towards students, parents, colleagues, community and society.

### IV. PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR TEACHERS [2],[4]

The professional teacher attempts to create a learning environment that cultivates the potential of all students and develop highest ethical standards in them. In the middle of all of their responsibilities, the teachers are required to serve as strong role models and exhibit ethical behaviour as they interact with students, colleagues, parents and others.

Professional code of ethics helps the teachers to act in a professional and ethical manner at all times. Some of the professional code of ethics that need to be focused by a teacher in overall development of the students, community and society are:

#### A. Working with Student

The teachers must not show favoritism or discriminate any student/students from others based on race, caste or religion. They must interact with students appropriately and should not take advantage by bullying students or putting them down. Contact with students outside of the classroom or institute premises must be kept to a minimum and must focus on institute-related activities and events. Teachers should accept personal responsibility in developing student's character and

qualities which will help the students to evaluate their values and accept the responsibility for their actions. All the teachers are obliged to foster public virtues such as integrity, persistence, responsibility, cooperation, loyalty, commitment and respect for everyone.

#### B. *Students Safety*

Professional code of ethics also talks about teacher's responsibility to keep students safe other than the teacher's routine job to help all students to learn. Teachers must abide by all institute rules and regulations and safety procedures to ensure student safety and should be responsible enough to report cases of bullying and harassment. If a teacher suspect's case of abuse or neglect, or a student discloses to teacher in cases of abuse or neglect, the teacher is required to report it to the proper higher authorities.

#### C. *Enhances Performance and Professional Practices*

The teachers should accept responsibility and accountability for their performance and must constantly try to demonstrate proficiency which will help them to determine personal integrity and maintain the dignity of the profession. Teachers must maintain ethical behaviour in professional practice in terms of accurate representation and maintenance of valid certifications, membership and other qualifications. In addition to qualifications, teachers must practice ethical behaviour when it comes to writing grades and handling assessments.

#### D. *Working with Colleagues*

Teachers must work together with administrators, colleagues and other employees to provide a positive learning atmosphere for students. In order to set a positive goal for students, the teachers must follow the direction of administrators, even if rules or an expectation seems to be irrational. The teachers should not disclose confidential information or make false statement about colleagues when differences arise between them, they must handle the disparities in private and avoid from talking negative about colleagues in front of students. In addition, teachers must engage in appropriate relationships with colleagues, keeping personal feelings and adult behaviour out of the workplace that may violate individual professional integrity.

#### E. *Interaction with Stakeholders*

Apart from colleagues, teachers have a responsibility to interact positively with parents and other stakeholders. Interaction with parents must be kept professional, free from quarrels and physical contact. If a teacher has an issue with a parent, another teacher or administrator must be present during meetings. Teachers should avoid being excessively swayed by parents and other stakeholders when it comes to student's grades or other education-related matters. The teachers must communicate with parents and provide all information that should be revealed in the interest of the student and must understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in the classroom.

## V. FACTORS AFFECTING ETHICAL STANDARDS IN EDUCATION [5],[6],[7],[8]

Some of the immoral practices being followed by teachers, educational institutes and their stakeholders that hamper the ethical standards are being listed below:

#### A. *Corruption*

The major cause for decline in ethical standard in education system is due to rapid increase in corruption. Initially corruption was observed only in Government offices, private institutions, police stations etc., but now-a-day's corruption has spread its lines in education system too. Corruption in education can be defined as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services." 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; and infrastructural work.

#### B. *Privatization of Educational Institutes*

Privatization of educational institutes is another major cause for decline in ethical values in education. Permission and recognition given by government to open self-financed private institutions have made the education to acquire the status of a marketable commodity, where educational institutes act as the traders and students are their customers. These institutions run various courses without basic infrastructure and qualified faculties. The teachers appointed in such institutes are paid low with no job security and are far away from the required teaching standards.

#### C. *Political Interference*

The political interference is largely responsible for misuse of human resource management in education. Political parties often use many teachers as their party workers and these teachers also participate willingly in politics. Those teachers who are very close to political leaders have records of misconduct and unethical behaviour such as irregularity in class teaching, becoming absent from the workplace without taking leave. Political leaders, high-level bureaucrats and members of the teacher unions also attempt to influence decision-making regarding the recruitment and transfer of teachers. Favouritism, partiality and bribes are major types of misconduct in teacher's appointment, placement and transfer. So the moral and ethical commitment of teachers has gradually decreased over the years due to political interference.

#### D. *Un-Fair Assessments*

It is now a major problem in the field of education where many institutions and universities do the assessment and selection of upcoming teachers by taking illegal money from them. Course assessments of student learning must be objective, valid and fair, but at present there are many factors that may affect fairness in grading. Teachers should avoid

letting unrelated factors or personal biases which affect the grading of student assessments.

#### E. Teachers Absenteeism

Teachers are the role models of students and are the source of knowledge that helps to develop the students understanding, attitudes, skills, learning and core values. Education is now in the clutch of corruption because of high rate of teacher absenteeism. Teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious causes of ethical declining of education which greatly reduces the overall effectiveness of the institute, reduces student's achievements, damages the institute's reputation and induces student's absenteeism.

#### F. Boundaries in Teacher-student Relationships

Communication, cultural, emotional and relationship boundaries is the most salient issue in teacher-student relationship. Communication boundaries is the centre most issues of self-disclosure of a teacher to students. The teacher should properly regulate their emotions through proper communication which will help to motivate the students. Hindering students to understand the various influences, may lead to confusion, conflict and disharmony in the classroom as the students will not respect cultural differences. An inappropriate level of emotion such anger, frustration and hatred shared in the classroom may lead to un-comfortness among the students. No doubt the intimate teacher-student relationships have decreased over the last several years, but it is the responsibility of the teacher to be honest and care about the students and at the same time the teacher should ensure not to get involved or get carried away.

### VI. LACK OF ETHICAL EDUCATION IN TEACHERS TRAINING PROGRAMMES [6],[7]

The major problem in teacher education programme in India is the un-relatedness of the theoretical discourses at the training college and classroom realities. The duration of teacher preparation has also been the cause of concern. Imparting ethical education was the main aim of the teachers in the ancient age, but at present it is neither implemented at college nor at teacher institutional level in India. Although ethical education is included in the primary education curriculum but at the adolescent or adult stage the curriculum finds no space for ethical education; without making an adult to realize their identity as human beings.

Teacher education curriculum is expected to develop characters among teachers to discharge their duties effectively. The existing curriculum, however fails miserably and hence the whole teacher education programme remains theoretical and separated from the grass root realities of classrooms. It fails to develop an understanding among the students about education as independent discipline in itself and its relations with various related disciplines.

### VII. CONCLUSION

Teachers are accepted as the backbone and the greatest resources of any education system of any country as they are the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values that need to be imparted to the students in order to make

them disciplined human being. It is high time to find the major causes of decline in ethical values of education system which will give rise to unskilled professionals, undisciplined students. Corruption, privatization, unfair assessment, teacher absenteeism, undue political interference is the probable causes of ethical decline of Indian education system. The only way to stop this decline is to provide ethical or value orientation in Indian educational system. Thus there is an urgent need to re-introduce value based education, spiritual education, ethical education and need based education in the curriculum which should deal with increase in human values, ethical values, rational thinking, learning, research and moral development in education system.

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