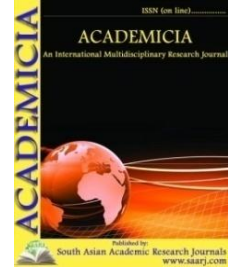


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ETHICS IN EDUCATORS: A CHALLENGE OF 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The present paper highlight the idea of theoretical prospective of ethics of teachers which are connected to other dimensions namely the regulation and creation of ethical, personal and professional conceptions of teachers. The concept of professional ethics is difficult to describe in words. Professional ethics of teachers refers to the principles, guidelines or norms or morality, which a teacher has to follow in teaching profession. The need of ethical principles is must in each and every profession and in society as a whole. Teaching profession is regarded as the most important profession as its social values lie in its significant contribution to the development in the quality of life and betterment of the society at large. Teacher form an essential aspect of the Indian system of education. Teacher is accepted as a guide and philosopher, the man of higher ideals in moulding the society. The teacher of the 21st century will belong to a learning society in which he will have to be a non-stop learner to play his role effectively as well as he is the key man who shapes and moulds the destiny of the nation. Thus, where a teacher has to discharge unlimited responsibilities in the society, it is inevitable for him to have professional ethics as he is the man on whom the future of mankind depends. Without high standards of professional ethics teaching could never be regarded as a full-fledged profession.

KEYWORDS: *Professional ethics and teacher education.*

INTRODUCTION

“The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole.”

- J. Krishnamurti

Teacher education worldwide has been the target of ongoing criticism, and this has contributed to the delegitimation of teacher education practices as well as to increasing pressure to change these practices. Teachers need to possess a body of knowledge and be able to apply that knowledge to a variety of situations within their professional setting. This body of knowledge involves knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, including pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), as well as a philosophical, historical and sociological framework for educational ideas.

Ethical issues, taken as complex and integrating dimensions pervade the reflection on values in the daily lives of people and communities, where the rational and emotional, affective and intuitive, thought and action, objective and subjective are layered upon each other, thus, contributing to the equation of individual and collective meanings. Education, as a social venture, a mediator between a past that is to be conveyed and a future that is to be prepared, presents tension on the one hand between socialization and conservatism, while on the other, is itself an interpreter, constructor and diffuser of meanings.

In the pre-independence era, when few people had access to formal education and it was known that educated persons would display civilized behavior, decency, good manners and ethical conduct, on the other hand uneducated persons would display uncivilized behavior and mostly crimes were committed by them. However, with a huge expansion of the education system, there is a marked decline in the characters, moral values. In most of the educational institutions, there is lack of emphasis on the concept of human development and nation building process. Their emphasis instead is on moneymaking and materialism. This has resulted in the gradual decline of values among people.

Values are the guiding principles of life that contribute to the all round development of an individual. Values also add a good quality to the life and it should also contribute to the welfare of family, the community and the nation (Pathania, 2011). Education is a tool for 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 being and Education should help in the improvement of human character and recognition of their inner purity, so the essential part of education system should emphasize the values and morals with other development.

ETHICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

It has been common in the philosophy of education to begin an inquiry into the aims of education by asking questions such as "What is the nature of the good life?" and "What kinds of societies promote the best lives?" The Greek philosopher Plato's Republic is a classical example. Such

questions fall within the range of the subject matter of ethics. Answers to these questions can provide part of the framework for building a comprehensive vision of education rooted in what John Rawls has termed a "comprehensive doctrine" (1993, p. 13), and they may guide the professional practice of teachers. In societies characterized by what Rawls calls durable pluralism, there are serious difficulties with such an approach. In such societies, the educational systems cannot be rooted in a single comprehensive doctrine without marginalizing or oppressing those who hold other doctrines and without restricting personal autonomy.

Arguably, societies committed to liberal democratic values may respect pluralism and personal autonomy while also emphasizing creation of citizens. Amy Gutmann in *Democratic Education* (1987) argues that the central aim of the schools of a democratic society must be to develop democratic character. Eamonn Callan in *Creating Citizens* (1997) argues that societies committed to liberal principles of tolerance and reasonableness must provide students with an education enabling them to understand and sympathetically engage a variety of ways of life. It may, however, be argued that such an education is itself intolerant of those who wish to transmit a distinctive way of life to their children. One of the more difficult issues for the schools of liberal democratic societies is how to respect diversity while having common schools that produce good citizens.

ETHICS AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The civic ethic provides conceptions that are relevant, not only to teachers' classroom practice, but to wide-ranging areas of educational policy. For example, it has been common in recent years to claim that equality of opportunity should emphasize equal educational outcomes instead of equal access or equal inputs. Assume that achievement can be measured by test scores. What pattern of test scores would be desired, and how should resources be distributed to attain it? Consider three possibilities:

1. Emphasize increasing average test scores. Possible objections are that this is consistent with considerable disparity in levels of achievement. Moreover, average scores might be increased by focusing resources on the most able at the expense of the least able.
2. Emphasize the achievement of the least advantaged or least able. Possible objections are that such an approach might lead to significant investment in the education of students where there will be only modest return, and resources will be used inefficiently.
3. Emphasize getting all who are able above some threshold that defines minimal ability to participate in our society. This approach may lead to difficulties similar to the previous one.

These are competing principles for distributing educational resources. Although they concern such matters as state or school district budgets, in fact they may also concern the distribution of teacher time. They shed light on such questions as whether teachers should spend disproportionate time with those who are most needful or with those who will make the most progress. These various approaches are analogous to principles of distributive justice that are widely discussed in philosophical literature. The first is a utilitarian principle emphasizing the maximization of good outcomes. The second seeks to maximize the welfare of those who occupy

the least advantaged positions in society. The third is a threshold view emphasizing getting everyone above some defined level. These principles illustrate the ways in which moral conceptions can inform policy and practice.

TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The meaning of ethics is what is right and what is wrong from scientific view point. The concept of professional ethics is difficult to describe in words. A profession's ethical standards must be compatible with our common morality and should go beyond. The code of ethics defines acceptable behaviours and promotes high standards of practice. The code of ethics provides a benchmark for member's self-evaluation and to establish a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities. It works as a vehicle for occupational identity and as a mark of occupational maturity in every profession.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the morality; the word ethic has been derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means character (Pabla, 2011). Aristotle was one of the first great philosophers to define the ethics. To him, 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).

By following professional ethics the teacher takes the society in the right direction and makes it a better place to live in. Professional ethics is a means of developing attitude conducive to responsible citizenship and to more orderly personal living. Professional ethics lie not in laws and government but in the honestly moral responsibility of the teacher.

POSITION OF TEACHER'S IN 21st CENTURY

The teacher of the 21st century will belong to a learning society in which he will have to be a non-stop learner to play his role effectively. Rabindranath Tagore was prophetic when he said, "A most important truth which we are apt to forget is that a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them. Truth not only must inform but inspire. If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its infinity. The greater part of our learning in the schools has been wasted because, for most of our teachers, their subjects are like dead specimens of once living things, with which they have a learned acquaintance but no communication of life and love." In this way the role of present day teacher has become very challenging, complex and multifaceted.

A teacher is viewed by hundreds of students, plays role-model for many and thus enjoys a respectable status in our society. It is important for a teacher to always keep this in mind that he/she is being watched, he/she being copied; in fact he/she is the one who sets standard for many.

Yadyad aacharati shreshtha,

Tadtad devetaro janah

Sa yat pramanam kurute,

Lokastadanuvartate | | 21/3 II

Here too it has been very clearly stated that the way a leader behaves, so do his/her followers. It is he/she who sets standards for other people whom he/she influences during the course of his/her interaction.

ETHICS OF TEACHERS IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The code of ethics for teachers is designed to protect the rights of the students. It is important that teachers understand that when they get a teaching position they are agreeing to follow the code of ethics.

The ethical dimensions are considered to be important in our educational system and are present in several legislative documents, both with regard to the education of pupils and to teacher education, and regarded as important for professional performance. Professional ethics refers to the basic values and conceptions of good practice that constitute guidelines for professional conduct. It refers to the principles, guidelines or norms of morality which a teacher has to follow in teaching profession while dealing with students, parents, community and higher authorities.

The definition and parameter of professional ethics varies from society to society and from time to time, it is dynamic in nature, with change in social set up, pattern and dimension of the society, the ethics also change. In fact, the professional ethics differ from place to place and hence there is no distinct line to distinguish ethics. What govern any ethic are social benefit, moral correctness, truth, value and progress of mankind. Without high standards of professional ethics it is doubtful that teaching could ever be regarded as a full-fledged profession.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A TEACHER

A child after home spends most of the time in a school where the teacher is the role model for him. In Indian traditions the guru is treated as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar. All the teachers are required to observe the following:

- Teacher as a role model
- Teacher's character
- Teacher's personality
- Teacher's mental health
- Teacher's social adjustment

- Teacher's professional efficiency
- Teacher's Academic Professional Training

TEACHER'S ROLE IN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

A profession is characterized by

- ❖ A sufficiently long period of academic training
- ❖ An organized body of knowledge
- ❖ A code of professional ethics
- ❖ An appropriate duration of formal and rigorous professional training with practical experience in the field

Professional success of every professional in his profession depends mainly on his up-to-date professional knowledge, fullest devotion and dedication along with his efficiency and effectiveness. In the present world education is the only mean through which these qualities can be inducted. Teaching occupies an honorable position in the society. Teaching is art as well as science. Teacher as artist mould their student in a desirable manner and prepared them as a bonafied piece of their perfection. Teaching profession is regarded as the most important profession as its social values lie in its significant contribution to the development of the society. The all-round development of children depends much upon the professional competency and efficiency of teachers. According to the International Commission on the Development of Education (UNESCO 1972): "The teacher's duty is less and less to inculcate knowledge and more and more to encourage thinking, his formal functions apart, he will have to become more and more an adviser, a partner to talk to; someone who helps seek out conflicting arguments rather than handing out readymade truths. He will have to devote more time and energy to productive and creative activities; interaction, discussion, stimulation, understandings, encouragement".

A teacher is the most accountable and responsible person of the society. He should feel the importance of his profession. He must be honest, devoted and dedicated to his profession. He must possess the essential zeal required by the teaching profession. He should be competent and efficient enough to discharge his unlimited responsibilities towards various groups of society. Professional ethics demand that teacher does not try to exploit his services for personal benefits. In teaching profession teacher must contribute his best for the welfare of mankind.

TRAINING AND THE ETHICAL REGULATION OF THE PROFESSION

Standards for the behavior and professional practice for the teacher is divided into:

1. **CODE OF ETHICS:** A set of aspirational goals based around the values of
 - Integrity

- Respect
 - Responsibility
2. **CODE OF CONDUCT:** A more detailed set of standards for professional and personal conduct and professional competence, based on the values set out of the code of ethics
3. **STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE:** A set of standards, which apply to all registered teachers, that articulate what all teachers should know and be able to do.

IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR TEACHERS

The professional ethics are important for teachers due to the following reasons:

- ❖ For self-satisfaction
- ❖ For self-correction
- ❖ To Guide their own behavior
- ❖ To shape the personality
- ❖ To set up ideal for students
- ❖ Improvement of human relations
- ❖ Development of society
- ❖ Professional excellence
- ❖ To improve the professional environment
- ❖ To follow the norms and principles of the profession
- ❖ Code of professional ethics for teachers in India
- ❖ Present scenario of teaching profession

SUGGESTIVE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR TEACHING PROFESSION

Parents hand over the future of their children to the teacher. So, a teacher should carry out the expectations of home, society, community and nation. Teaching is the most responsible profession than any other professions like doctors, engineers etc. Doctors, engineers and others responsibilities are limited to the particular extent. But the future of the whole nation rests in the hands of teacher.

A teacher is the top most person in the professional pyramid because the teacher makes all other professionals. So, to discharge his duties efficiently and effectively, a teacher must have professional ethics in the form of the following commitments.

- ❖ Commitment to the teaching profession
- ❖ Commitment to student
- ❖ Commitment to colleagues
- ❖ Commitment to community
- ❖ Commitment to parents
- ❖ Commitment to self
- ❖ Others commitment

ETHICS AND THE LAW

The education codes of many states require that teachers be persons of good character. Most states also permit teachers to be dismissed for unethical conduct. States also forbid particular forms of misconduct, such as child abuse, sexual harassment, and drug abuse, and their violation may be grounds for dismissal.

What counts as good character or conduct can be a contentious matter. In past decades teachers might have been dismissed not only for drunkenness, homosexuality, unwed pregnancy, or cohabitation, but also for myriad other offenses against the moral code of their community. Some of these may still be gray areas; however, in recent years, courts have been inclined to insist that actionable immoral conduct be job-related, providing some protection for the private lives of teachers. Here a particularly contentious matter is whether being a role model is part of the job of teachers, because this expectation can expand public authority over the lives of teachers. In certain cases, as when teachers discuss controversial matters in class or employ controversial teaching methods, they may be protected by the First Amendment. Teachers, especially those who are tenured, are also likely to have significant due-process rights. Dismissal for immoral conduct is most likely when the teacher has committed a felony, in cases of inappropriate sexual advances toward students, or in cases of child abuse.

Teachers, like others, are expected to not steal, kill, commit assault, abuse children, or engage in sexual harassment. Although the definition of immoral conduct in the law has not become coextensive with violations of criminal law, there is little in the meaning of immoral conduct that is distinctive to teachers or teaching.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Thus, this paper enriches our understanding that to follow professional ethics, the teachers conduct and behavior become respectable and socially acceptable. If a teacher behaves in a very

positive and appropriate manner, the students follow him and want to become like him. By this the teacher becomes the ideal for students. If the professional ethics are forgotten, the individual as well as the society in the right direction and makes it a better place to live in. A teacher is always a student; a seeker of knowledge. A teacher is not merely a teacher but he is a more effective demonstrator through his personal life of values, attitudes, outlook, behavior and performance.

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