

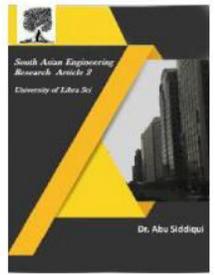


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PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The role of ethical values within Indian higher education and society is declining and requires a new way of thinking-i.e. based on Indian ethos. The code of ethics for teachers is designed to protect the rights of the students, all the students. It is important that teachers understand that when they get a teaching position they are agreeing to follow the code of ethics. In this world of globalization and competitive world, we are witnessing diverse changes in our educational system. Since, change is inevitable the aims and objectives of education is changing according to the need, interests and requirements of the learners, society an nation as a whole. Now, the concept of teacher and teaching also is changing day by day. A teacher in this contemporary era has many duties and responsibilities to play. Apart from having good academic and professional qualifications, they should also posses the knowledge of Professional ethics. Professional ethics is like a guide, which facilitates the teacher to provide quality education and inculcate good values among the learners. The professional ethics will enlighten the teachers that they have a major role in bringing desirable changes in the behaviour of the students. It also helps the teachers to understand their profession as a teacher. Their role is not just to become supreme and authoritarian in front of their students and colleagues. But then they have a wider and meaningful role to play. Teacher having the sense of professional ethics will treat their learners with love, care, affection and commitment. In addition to that, they would always ensure to make specific contribution from their angle. Therefore, this paper specially highlights the significance of professional ethics in teachers.

KEYWORDS: Globalization, Contemporary Educational, Professional Ethics, Values, Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "Education means all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind, and spirit." As such, education becomes the basis of personality development in all dimensions—moral, mental, and emotional. Therefore we can say that in the long run education forms

the foundations on which the castles of peace and prosperity can be built. Since ancient times, it is said "Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye," which means that with education we finally attain salvation. This small Sanskrit phrase essentially contains the thought and essence of Value Education

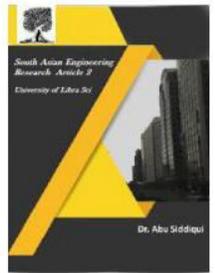


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that is relevant in all perspectives. This very concept, when applied to the simple but refined approach of Mahatma Gandhi, can provide us with a new dimension of educational development. Moral and ethical knowledge is the first point on which Mahatma Gandhi's concept of value education is based. Any education system that lacks these two cannot be termed as good. The reason behind such a thought is that, without morality and without ethics, no student, in a real sense, can be considered to be healthy in mental and physical terms because, for it, self-control and good character are essential. A person who is not a moralist and who does not differentiate between right and wrong cannot rise to the essential level of a true student. The attainment of spiritual growth that has been described by Mahatma Gandhi as an essential part of education can be gained only through morality and ethics. Seeing it through another viewpoint also proves the same thing, because when we consider education as a means of attaining salvation and also as a support on the pathway to liberation, we cannot differentiate it from spiritualism.

Mahatma Gandhi opined, "Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, Your words become your actions, Your actions become your habits, Your habits become your values, Your values become your destiny."

The word Ethics is derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means character and from Latin word 'Mores' which means customs. It can be defined as the moral

values, rules or standards governing the conduct of a particular group, profession or culture. Thus group, organization, professional and cultural ethics co-exist with one another. Together they influence the set of values.

Ethics serve as a guide to moral daily living and helps us judge whether our behavior can be justified. Ethics refers to society's sense of the right way of living our daily lives. It does this by establishing rules, principles, and values on which we can base our conduct. Ethics and values are important in every aspect of life, when we have to make a choice between two things, wherein ethics determine what is right, values determine what is important.

Professional ethics is becoming the need of the hour. Many institutions are facing lack of professional ethics within their teachers, besides having ample of degrees, achievements, medals, extra qualifications and content knowledge. Since, teaching is not just about imparting the content and subject-matter, it is just beyond that. Teacher has a wider role in the educational course of action, they should give stress in bringing out the potentialities from the learners and nurture it accordingly. The teaching is regarded as a noble and righteous profession, since it contributes in nation building by creating good quality human resources, responsible citizens, socialized individuals and creative personalities. Hence, this profession requires a lot of commitment, dedication and sincerity towards their institution and

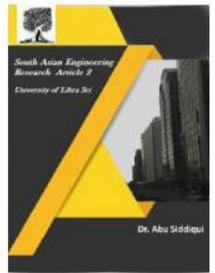


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learners. So, if they do not have the knowledge of professional ethics, it will become a barrier in the development of institution, learners, society and nation as a whole. It will undeniably affects the overall performance of the students.

A Professional code of ethics is a guiding principle aimed to assist professionals conduct work with commitment, dedication, sincerity, honesty and with integrity. A professional should follow the specific principles of their profession and do their duties as per the requirements of the profession. The professional ethics deals with the principles and values that the professional should implement to create a conducive atmosphere in the workplace. Professional knowledge and skills is a key element that every professional should acquire to do their services with determination and commitment. Every profession has its main aims and objectives. To fulfill those aims and objectives, the professional should follow the professional code of ethics. Professional ethics provides the assistance to the professionals in order to do their work meaningfully.

The professional code of ethics for teachers is purposely designed to protect the rights of the students, all the students. Therefore, to put in nutshell, professional code of ethics plays a pivotal role in developing the personality and behaviour of the teachers. It will facilitate and guide the teachers towards successful and meaningful teaching. If the teachers properly implement the code of ethics in the teaching profession,

it unquestionably fosters the development of school, children, society, community and nation as a whole.

Importance of Professional Ethics for teachers:

The teachers play a crucial and significant role in the educational process to impart education and bring about desirable changes in the behaviour of the students. As having massive responsibility upon his shoulder, the teacher should realise and understand his profession. To fulfill the aims and objectives of teaching is solely dependent upon teacher's ability, teaching aptitude, content knowledge, and pedagogy and most important is the professional ethics. The teachers should be unbiased while teaching and evaluating students. Buber (1970) suggests that teacher-student relationships ought to be characterized by a principle of reciprocity. Since, communication is a key element in the teaching learning process, teachers must emphasize on creating reverential relationship with students. The absence of professional ethics in teachers will impact the development of students. The teachers should be the role model, inspiration, motivator and leader for the students. It is a fact that the students follow the footsteps of their teacher directly or indirectly. The teacher should possess a good behaviour and positive attitude towards their profession and students. The fundamental role of the teacher is to solve the problems, issues and barriers of students that come along in their developmental process. The teachers must have a clear cut vision to foster the

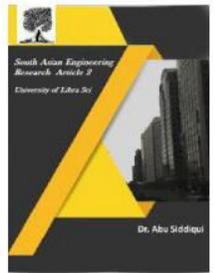


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potentialities of the students. Many of teachers in practical situations face the problem of adjustment in schools. There could be many factors and reasons associated with it like – Interest, Aptitude, Values, Ethics and Discipline which eventually makes them uncomfortable at the workplace or school. The first and foremost important quality that the teacher should possess is the professional ethics. If they fail to understand and implement it, then they might not be satisfied with their profession and plus it will hamper the performance of students. To make character education successful, we need well-trained teachers. Again, teachers are role models. Teachers play an important role in children's character formation. Teachers provide children with a basic but essential moral education. So, teachers should focus on providing the right path and guidance to students to make them well-behaved individuals, and inculcate good attitudes within them (Benninga, 2003).

If the teacher must inculcate the fundamental professional ethics and values within before entering into teaching profession, it will be good. The significant professional code of ethics for teachers that will assist the teachers to educate the students efficiently and effectively are:-

1. Responsibilities

The teachers should always be aware of his/her roles and responsibilities. He or she should actively provide his or her service to institution and student with satisfaction. They should provide maximum opportunities to students

to excel in diverse aspects of development.

Active professionalism is required in teaching profession. They cannot remain inactive or passive in the educational process. That is their fundamental duty for which they are being employed with expectations to serve the institution and students.

2. Definite vision

The teachers should have definite vision. For that they need to be precise about their actions in their educational process. They should work on strategies of planning and implementation of it effectively. In order to meet the demands and requirements of students, proper professionalism should be showcased by the teacher.

3. Never discuss about Religion, uncomfortable topics where co-workers feel bad

One's faith is a personal thing, and many people are sensitive about it. There is no need to be secretive about your religion—by all means, it's perfectly fine to mention things you do to celebrate it—but realize that not everyone worships the same way.

4. Religion

While religion seems to be discussed everywhere, from the campaign trail to the sports field to the awards ceremony stage, it is a topic about which you should tread very lightly in the workplace. Do not discuss your religious beliefs in depth

5. Politics

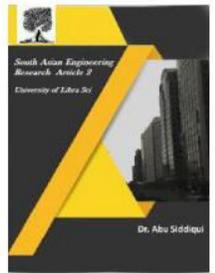


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Politics is probably a more volatile topic than any other. It causes tempers and has ended relationships, even between close friends and family. Given the amount of time you spend at work, and the need to get along and work side-by-side with your colleagues, having conversations about it is not worth it.

While you may feel very strongly about your party or the candidate you support, or you may have an intensely unfavorable opinion of the opposition, do not try to win your coworkers over to your side. It will be a futile effort that will merely cause hard feelings between you and them.

6. Problems

Discussing family problems, problems with higher officials, or other kind of difficulties may distract you from doing your job. Even if you know these issues won't affect your work, they don't affect but avoid discussing.

When supervisors or managers are candid about their problems, their subordinates may see this as a weak spot they can exploit.

7. Health Problems

Health issues both mental and physical should not be discussed. If help is required from friends nothing to be ashamed of, don't dwell on them too much at work. It should be noticed that what to be discussed and extent of the topic.

8. Career Aspirations

Aim of seeking higher position in the organization should not be discussed.

Absence of Professional Ethics

The absence of professional ethics in teachers will impact the development of

students. The teachers should be the role model, inspiration, motivator and leader for the students. It is a fact that the students follow the footsteps of their teachers directly or indirectly. The teacher should possess a good behaviour and positive attitude towards their profession and students. The fundamental role of the teacher is to solve the problems, issues and barriers of students that come along in their developmental process. The teachers must have a clear cut vision to foster the potentialities of the students. Many of teachers in practical situations face the problem of adjustment in schools. There could be many factors and reasons associated with it like – Interest, Aptitude, Values, Ethics and Discipline which eventually makes them uncomfortable at the workplace or school. The first and foremost important quality that the teacher should possess is the professional ethics. If they fails to understand and implement it, then they might not be satisfied with their profession and plus it will hamper the performance of students. To make character education successful, we need well-trained teachers. Again, teachers are role models. Teachers play important role in children's character formation.

Teachers provide students with a basic moral education. So, teachers should focus on providing the right path and guidance to students to make them well behaved individuals, and inculcate good attitude within them.

Education opens the doors of the mind, cleanses the soul and helps in self-realization. Colleges and Universities are the

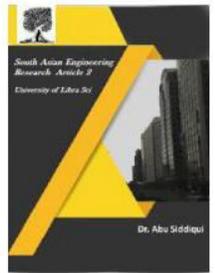


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custodians of knowledge. These institutions create and disseminate knowledge within a particular society and they are also the gateway to power, significantly affecting the quality of economic and social life throughout the world.

Therefore, these institutions have moral responsibilities to maintain the wellbeing of that society. Majority of the crimes are committed by students coming out of schools and colleges and by well educated people. In majority of the education institutions, there is a significant lapse on the concept of human development and nation building process. This lapse has resulted in the decline of values among students. It is therefore, required to identify the major causes of this decline in ethical values i.e. corruption, bribery, murder, rape, scams etc. The best way to address this issue is to impart value based ethical education incorporated in the academic curriculum, just the way it was being practiced in the ancient times where the education system was value-based and education would help in the improvement of human character and recognition of purity.

In ancient India, the instructions of a teacher (guru) to a student (disciple) would start as follows: Let your conduct be marked by right action, including study and teaching of the scriptures; by truthfulness in word, deed and thought; by self-denial and the practice of austerity; by poise and self-control; by performance of the everyday duties of life with a cheerful heart and in unattached mind. ... Deviate not from the path of good. Revere greatness." In Taxila,

later in Nalanda, Fès, Rabat and Al-Azhar, still later in Paris and Oxford, instruction emphasised moral and ethical values.

This was because formal education, although available to a restricted few, was organised around religious institutions. Education was thought to be a cultural good for individual moral development and was to have very little to do with economic wellbeing or material progress. Education had to provide principally the codes of behaviour, as exemplified in the instructions above, initiation to the value system and an understanding of the ultimate objective of life in terms of spirituality. The ultimate goal of the whole process of education was to unravel the 'truth', to manifest "the perfection already in man", to combine knowledge with compassion and efficiency with moral excellence. Ethical dilemmas arise when one's own ethical standards conflict with those who have some other entity. Aristotle was one of the first great philosophers to study the subject. 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.

CONCLUSION:

Teachers at all levels of education should focus on imparting quality education. It is the prime duty of the teacher to bring optimum development among the students. Teachers' should show an equal level of dignity to his profession, institution, students, colleagues and parents. Teachers'

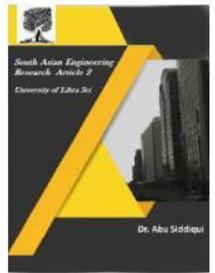


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should specially stress on developing the professional ethics within them. Teachers should take the liability of teaching profession seriously and perform their duties efficiently. Therefore, for successful teaching, the knowledge of professional ethics and its implementation is very essential for teachers.

It has been quoted that the true philosophy of education lies in the combination of Virtues, Values and Validity of human life. It implies that there is need to understand the criteria that can help in development of human beings.

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