

Imperativeness of ‘Moral Values’

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Abstract: *The word ‘Morality’ has been derived from the Latin word ‘mores’ which means “manners”. According to social scientists Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2006) the term ‘morality’ is “an accepted code of human conduct in a society”. Morality further connotes “having laws that will regulate dealings of men who choose to abide by certain laws because they know it is good sense to do so” (Uyanga and Amingo; 2010). Values are linked to beliefs and attitudes and guide human behavior (Rennie, 2007). With the rapid growth of technology, society is advancing in more than one field. As per a researcher Witz (1996) prior to the nineteenth century, science practices were centered on moral and religious values along with an appreciation of philosophical and metaphysical aspects of science education. At that time, societal activities were both supportive of, as well as supported by science practices. The positive side was that it enabled the science to work such that it influenced individual moral and spiritual evolution, besides fostering morals and higher values. Contrastingly, in the present society ethical and moral values seem to be at a state of rapid deterioration. The present scenario of our global society irrespective of various educational reforms showcases various cases of moral misconducts. In the academic setting students’ unrest; higher level of intolerance; immoral activities; licentious lifestyle-all constitutes the present status of degraded form of value system. It is indeed the direst need of the hour to relook at the debilitating status of moral values among individuals. Therefore, the present study endeavors to re-look at the importance of moral values.*

Keywords: Moral values, education, society.

1. Concept of Moral Values

The word ‘Morality’ is derived from the Latin word ‘mores’ which means “manners”. According to social scientists Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2006) the term ‘morality’ is “an accepted code of human conduct in a society”. Morality further connotes “having laws that will regulate dealings of men who choose to abide by certain laws because they know it is good sense to do so” (Uyanga and Amingo; 2010). With the rapid growth of technology, society is advancing in more than one field. As per a researcher Witz (1996) prior to the nineteenth century, science practices were centered on moral and religious values along with an appreciation of philosophical and metaphysical aspects of science education. At that time, societal activities were both supportive of, as well as supported by science practices. The positive side was that it enabled science to work such that it influenced individual moral and spiritual evolution, besides fostering morals and higher values. Contrastingly, the present society ethical and moral values seem to be at a state of complete deterioration. The present scenario of our global society irrespective of various educational reforms and empirical endeavors are cumbersome to serious cases of moral misconducts. Instances of immoral practices and illegitimate actions are found to take place across the globe. According to Arthur and Carr, (2013), “The technological ramifications are contributing to the complexities and stark changes in the societal structure where religion and spirituality are increasingly becoming marginalized.”

A very interesting study cited by Kiemer et al. (2015) explained that in the recent years’ technological advancements has enhanced complexities in the social life. The updated globalized world is unable to create space for the inclusion of preaching moral and ethical values. However, it is not good to be oblivious of the fact the morals, values and character education even in scene education stands out to be imperative. No society can thrive on solely on scientific development without having moral values embedded in it. As per Hans (2004) moral education

aims at promoting students’ moral development and character formation. The theoretical framework of moral education is supported by moral philosophy, moral psychology and moral educational practices. Curriculum construction without the inclusion of moral education remains incomplete in itself.

1) Morals, Ethics and Character Formation

Sometimes moral and ethics are interlinked with each other. However they convey different meanings. Bu speaking from the standpoint of similarity they both are essential for the holistic character development of an individual. As per Mohanan (2002), the term *ethics* refer to “set of societal codes of conduct, typically approved by an institution or profession”. Whereas, *morality* “as a matter of the deeper values and general principles (rather than codes of conduct) ”.

Inculcation of moral values and following ethical codes are undoubtedly attributes of an upright character of a human being. Reflecting on the same, development of moral character has been an intriguing subject of study since time immemorial. As per the research conducted by Kraut (2001) Aristotle theorized three levels of moral character development: an ethics of fear, an ethics of shame, an ethics of wisdom. Purpel and Ryan (1976) too found out that great philosophers, psychologists and educators like John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, and John Dewey and other ancient stalwarts like Confucius, Plato, and Aristotle development of moral character as the primary purpose of education. Therefore, it could be said that development of moral character is next to impossible without education. Education system, be it anywhere across the world, shoulders the onus of imbibing moral yardsticks within individuals. .

As per Damon (1988) there are six ways in which social scientists have defined an educated and moral mind has an:-

- 1) An evaluative orientation that distinguishes good and bad and prescribes good

- 2) A sense of obligation toward standards of a social collective;
- 3) A sense of responsibility for acting out of concern for others;
- 4) A concern for the rights of others
- 5) A commitment to honesty in interpersonal relationships
- 6) A state of mind that causes negative emotional reactions to immoral acts

2) Moral Sensitivity and Moral Distress

Moral Sensitivity (MS) is generally referred to as moral awareness or ethical sensitivity. It is commonly defined as the ability to recognize moral issues when they arise in practice (Jordan 2007; Weaver 2007). In the following years, Jordan (2009) elaborated on the concept of 'Moral Sensitivity' and opined that *MS* is thought to incorporate both the ability to recognize moral issues in a morally ambiguous situation and the ascription of importance to these same issues. It was found that Rest (1996) that *MS* was the most necessary precursor of moral decision making and moral action.

Sometimes, it is to be found that individuals also suffer from Moral Distress (MD). As per the definition provided by Campbell and his colleagues (2016) MD is "One or more negative self-directed emotions or attitudes that arise in response to one's perceived involvement in a situation that one perceives to be morally undesirable."

'Moral Sensitivity' and 'Moral Distress' are found almost in every individual. Depending on perception of a particular situation/circumstance an individual acts accordingly. One who is morally sensitive is most likely to face moral distress. Some situations might demand logical considerations more than moral thinking and vice versa. Thus, arises the psychology of moral reasoning.

However, Narvaez (2001) outlined few tenets that would help one to be morally sensitive and avoid moral distress. The tenets are as follows:

- Reading and expressing emotions
- Taking perspective of others
- Caring by connecting to others
- Working with interpretations and options
- Identifying consequences of actions and options

3) Need for Teaching Moral Education in Educational Institutions

According to Pekauskys (1998), an school or any seat for learning acts as a vehicle of —direct instructionl. Especially, a school is a social institution in which is embedded a rich of norms, customs and ways of thinking of which the teacher is a conveyer. As per Pekauskys (1998) the role of school is also to provide an environment, which challenges the moral reasoning of children, and force them to see contradictions in their reasoning. Teachers play the most active and impressive role in inculcating the moral values into their students. In accordance with the above statement, Kaur (2015) said that teachers have to:-

- 1) Appreciate the importance of understanding the factors and contexts which are influencing the behaviour, choices, lifestyles, health and welfare of children and young people and their families;

- 2) Help children and young people to acquire and practice specific skills that support positive values;
- 3) Apply principles that forge bonds and linkages between school, home and the community as a means of effective social control;
- 4) Implement appropriate evaluation strategies, and with others, as necessary, to monitor progress made by children and young people towards acquiring positive values;
- 5) Develop a standard of personal life practices which will help maintain his or her positive self-image in order to serve as a role model to students.

2. Conclusion

Re-looking once again back to the essentiality of moral values today, it is an imperative to establish means that can foster promotion and practice of moral values. In this fast technologically developing world, where machines are given higher priority than men, humanity seems to be fast degenerating. As per Steven Pinker (Canadian-born American cognitive psychologist) Morality is not just any old topic in psychology but close our conception of the meaning of life. Moral goodness is what gives each of us the sense that we are worthy human being.

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