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Ethics and Education (E&E) - A Psychological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Today, India is passing through great crises in almost all spheres of life. Social living in today's changing trends, which is marked by tremendous scientific and technological advancement, has resulting in an explosion of aspiration for achieving material goals. Globalization has brought an upheaval in the economic scenario worldwide. These, in turn, have brought about corresponding massive erosion in human's moral, spiritual and ethical values.

The challenge of education is to make students more humane; more compassionate, more just, in a word, function as better human-beings. The need today is to have students who will act with courage and responsibility. Education without culture and value is a vehicle without brake. There is a need to prepare future citizens of multi-dimensional capabilities with wisdom and knowledge and the essential importance of ethics and values for spreading the value system in the society. The present paper is an attempt to develop a new model of Psychological strategies to put ethics in action for positive student character formation.

Keywords: Ethics, Education, Psychology, Student

Introduction:

Ethics is a body of principles or standards of human conduct that govern the behavior of individuals and groups. Ethics arise not simply from human nature itself making it a natural body of laws from which man's laws follow. It is more and more the case that what is done or decided in one part of the world has its impact on others. In this connection, ethics becomes an increasingly important issue in global decision making.

Ethics is often defined, at least in part, as acting to prevent a substantial harm to

others when an individual or group has an opportunity to do so for their own benefit. Velasquez (2002) puts it this way, "Moral standards deal with matters that we think can seriously injure or seriously benefit human beings". Beauchamp (1982) states, "Moral judgments function to condemn human plans or activities that make things 'go badly' (for others); and morality functions to limit selfish actions that cause harm to others."

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Regarding the need for an organization to take an active role in the promulgation and formalization of its ethics, the possibility and viability of such practices was examined in a recent study where Emiliani (2005) stated, 'White papers,' and other forms of guidance are generally intended to inform sellers of challenges and opportunities, discourage the use of reverse auctions or clarify domains of appropriate use, or eliminate abuse by market makers, buyers, and sellers depending upon the perspective of the trade group'' (Emiliani, 2005). In addition, it is important to emphasize that the consideration of ethics in current business management practices is especially critical because practitioners are constantly faced with decisions affecting (directly or indirectly) the marketing function, and each of these encounters renders ethical considerations in decision making all the more important and practical.

According to a publication by PR Newswire (2006), many Americans place a higher value on a corporation's ethical reputation than on its financial performance or the costs of its products. The study found only 15 percent out of 2000 survey respondents (consist of U.S. adults) said they would purchase stock in a company that had performed well financially but made bad ethical decisions. Half of respondents who owned stock in

some organizations had already at some point decided not to purchase stock in a company because they knew of questionable ethical actions by the company's management or employees.

The debate of ethical practices continues today in virtually all facets of our daily lives. One poll by Fineman (1994) shows that 76% of adults surveyed, believe that the United States is in moral and spiritual decline. Private sector executives have increasingly focused attention on the ethics of both supervisors and employees. Many business schools have begun to include ethics courses in requirements for management/administration degrees. More and more, honesty and fairness have become pertinent to government officials.

Ethics in Education:

Education undoubtedly is one of the most powerful agencies molding the character and in determining the future of individuals and nations. Thus the whole realm of education is centered on the development of the moral aspect of man.

Plato emphasized that educational effort should aim at the promotion of virtue. Herbert declared that the whole work of education, which is a long and complex training, should focus on one particular thing that could be summed up in the concept "Morality". Mahatma Gandhi

states, "Education of heart, or Moral Education is the prime function to provide. If we succeed in building character of the individual, society will take care of itself". According to Bertrand Russel , "the chief aim of education is the "formation of character."

The University Education Commission (1964-66) summarizes the Indian concept of education as follows; "Education according to Indian tradition is not merely a means of earning a living; nor is it only a nursery of thought or a school for citizenship. It is the initiation into a life of spirit, a training of human souls in pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue."

Today there is deterioration of values in the society. The values have been neglected not only at the social level but at the national level also. In the educational programmes, only mental developments have been stressed. In the modern age, the aim of education is all round development of personality. In the present educational system, provision has been made for intellectual education by giving importance to intellectual development. Thus to be successful in life, important human qualities along with intellectual development should be the aim of value education. Value education is the positive effort towards bringing about a synthesis of different values in a human being.

It is the teachers' role to foster human values through his teaching in the classroom and follow those values. To the youth of today, the classroom messages are love, safety, security, belonging and warmth. Einstein remarked once: "try not to become a man of success but try to become a man of values."

A Psychological Model of Ethics in Education:

Becoming and remaining an ethical teacher is not a simple task. Although there are aspiration principles and guidelines for ethical teaching, there are few absolute rules. Some ethical issues are codified legally (e.g., confidentiality, sexual harassment, discrimination) or are set by institutional policy (e.g., rules with respect to student-teacher dating, academic dishonesty). However, faculty often faces many ethically ambiguous situations. Spiegel and Pope (1991) surveyed faculty asking them to rate whether a variety of different teaching-related behaviors were ethical. Both studies found a lack of consensus for most of the listed behaviors. For example, although most ethical codes include guidelines emphasizing subject matter competence whereas Tabachnick et al. reported almost 30% of respondents rated teaching material they haven't mastered as ethical. These results highlight the fact that perceptions of particular

ethical (or unethical) behaviors vary widely among faculty.

On the basis of various researches, it has been observed that various psychological objectives are fulfilled by following ethics in education:

- **Fulfillment of Morality:** The teacher, through instruction, is to impart higher ideas to the child with which the latter would control his lower impulses. The ethical or moral aim is supreme in as much as it can be reconciled to all aims-provided “morality” is taken in a wider sense.
- **Social Accomplishment:** According to McElhiney and Smith designed, character education consists of, first, in developing proper attitudes and second, in developing responses. This is a broad task: the enriching of students in the finer task, which includes enriching of students in the finer social manners and social cultures. It includes a development in the making of a satisfactory and satisfying social adjustment and the more important task of enriching life in those spiritual qualities, manners and ones responses in the face of moral situations which arise from day to day processes of character development.
- **Positive Behavioral patterns.** Character has to do with one’s attitudes toward badness or goodness. Character is an inner quality of the personality but it is manifested by outward sign which is

called overt acts or conduct. Character is just one quality of the personality having to do with morality. By personality we mean all there is of an individual. Character lies in the field of the attitudes and reactions which this personality possesses. These attitudes and reactions are both intellectual and emotional. These are the ways one thinks, feels and responds when facing some reality of life whether philosophical or personal.

- **Spiritual orientation:** Bhatia & Bhatia (1986) quote Mahatma Gandhi – “Fundamental principles of ethics are common to all religion. Through religion alone the feet of youth can be set “on the road to ultimate values”. Religion has been interpreted in many ways. It is given a supernatural, a social or a moral interpretation. In simple words; religion stands for the spiritual values of the life and for the relation of the human personality to the Divine. Religious education will give every learner a faith that will keep his eyes fixed on a goal, which will stimulate action, thought and a feeling of faith in God. While it is important to include the scientific temper in boys and girls, it is also essential to make them aware of the need to develop as a human being and to develop the spiritual side. This is vital since the control of science and technology at the rate of which

it is expanding requires this balance to be maintained.

- **Holistic Approach:** Gandhi said, one cannot be truly human and civilized unless one looks upon not only all fellow-men but all creation with the eyes of a friend. According to Fanning, education in environmental matters teaches responsible conduct by individuals in protecting and improving the environment in its full human dimension. Environmental education is intended to promote among citizens the awareness and understanding of the environment, our relationship to it, and the concern and responsible action necessary to assure our survival and to improve the quality of life.

Conclusion: Value education is the positive effort towards bringing about a synthesis of different values in a human being. It is the teachers' role to foster human values through his teaching in the classroom and follow those values. To the youth of today, the classroom messages are love, safety, security, belonging and warmth. Einstein remarked once: "try not to become a man of success but try to become a man of values." Thus to be successful in life, important human qualities along with intellectual development should be the aim of value education.

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