

## PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*Ethics is the theoretical basis for practicing morality in daily life. Ethics guide us to follow ideal and justified life style in the society. It means Ethics are a set of standards set by society which help an individual and evaluate the morality of his commitments and actions. An ethical analysis will lead an individual to think critically what is to be done and what is not to be done. Ethics are an indispensable instrument for the ideal society. 'Ethics' word has been derived from the ancient Greek word "ethikos" that means related to one's character.' Ethikos' originated from the root word ethos, which means "character or moral nature." Ethics and morals are similar in the way they discriminate between right and wrong. They ensure wellness of the society. Immanuel Kant appropriately remarked "Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do."*



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The concept of ethics in practical life has been different in different human societies and is changing from time to time even though there are certain ethical principles which are absolute and universal. The scope of ethics originating in simple forms with the ushering in of the first human societies in certain parts of the world has now extended to the whole world, which is tending to become one family. Individuals or social groups can no longer function in isolation. While ethical standards have gone low all over the world, we in India feel the pinch much more because of some events which have happened in this country particularly after independence. While there is a huge demand of ethical and moral education, there seem to be different opinions regarding how it should be imparted.

No child is born moral or immoral but it can be trained and educated. . Human society, the family, the school and other social agencies make an individual, what he is.

“Give me one thousand mothers, I shall give you a great nation. - Napoleon Bonaparte

We can likewise say “Give us thousands of good academics and we would be able to create a healthy and successful society of good human beings.” The goal of education is said to be 'to put thinking heads on rising shoulders'. The goal of moral education must be to enable students to think and decide about moral issues and not to be fanatic, blind or dogmatic.

Every profession, in order to regulate its terms, conditions and norms and quality of service rendered, has its own professional ethics, i.e. different from general ethics. In the term professional ethics, the word ‘ethics’ adds to the professional obligation that a professional abides by. Many institutions, generally, have a code of conduct but not professional ethics. A code of conduct is simply a sophisticated version of do’s and don’ts, while professional ethics give a certain set of broad principles which are derived from a spectrum of values. Like other professions, the teaching profession has gradually evolved a code of conduct and professional ethics.

Being a teacher is an essentially ethical activity. Ethical, since the teacher has to act according to a set of moral principles and also due to the fact that teacher is expected to employ strategies which develop a method and use resources to encourage the ethical education of people.

#### **Components of Professional Ethics:**

- Role and responsibility of a school teacher
- Functions and duties of a teacher
- To follow the norms of teaching and teacher council
- To follow the values, beliefs and ideals of a teacher
- To follow the terms and conditions of teaching profession

#### **Symptoms of Teaching Professional Ethics:**

Teaching Professional Ethics is theoretical as well as behavioural symptom:

- Teaching communication reaches up to the minds of students or teaches their minds.
- An effective teacher teaches his subject content with humour in a pleasant way.
- The role of teacher is like a cloud raining uniformly. He imparts his knowledge equally.
- The teacher communication is comprehensible to the students.
- The teacher teaches with great confidence in class.
- The teacher tries to provide a new direction.
- The teacher converts the destructive tendency into constructive capacity of students.
- The teacher develops good culture and good habits among students.

- He provides latest and up to date knowledge to his students.
- He develops spiritual and emotional intelligence of his students.
- Teacher develops the knowledge and wisdom of the students.
- Teacher develops the power of judgment and taking self-decision.
- Teacher remains student throughout his life.
- He is an ideal role model for his students as well as the society.

**Factors affecting Professional Ethics:**

- Job security
- Mode of payment
- Working hours
- Over control on the workers
- Lack of provision for annual increment and provident funds
- Authoritarian climate of school organisation

The teacher has to be an example for his students and the society and the value system he holds should be clear, precise and ethical. He should cultivate honesty not only when he stands to gain by it, but also, when he has to lose. He must exemplify the dignity of labour and professional commitment, however tiring the circumstances may be. The motivating words of Christopher Penczak can be applied here “The only way to truly be protected at all times is to claim your personal power with the highest code of ethics and responsibility. If you are centered in this type of power, the power of the universe supports you, and no one and nothing can defeat you.” An ideal teacher should be self-dependent and should not take others help for small tasks. One great example in our history is about Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, He was a great Sanskrit scholar, writer, educationist social reformer and philanthropist. He composed several books to elevate the moral standard of the citizens and set an example by leading an exemplary life during his professional life. He worked endlessly to transform society. An example from his life would be enough to understand his simplicity and honesty, once he was going to deliver a lecture at a village in Bengal. His train arrived its destination and an officer was also travelling by the the same train and was looking for a coolie to carry his luggage. He tried to make him understand that he should carry his luggage himself but that officer was not agree as it was against dignity for him because he was an educated person according to officer. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar did not disclose his identity and carried the bag of the officer. He got stunned when he found Ishwar Chandra was present to deliver lecture. The officer realized

his mistake and asked for an apology. Then the great Scholar told the officer that there is no harm in doing one's own work. The officer was highly impressed by him and it was a lesson to a person by an ocean of knowledge.

The teacher should be conscious of his accountability to his profession of teaching by being accountable for effective teaching and effective learning of the students. He will be a sheet anchor to society amidst the social change. The profession of teaching reflects a high degree of academic excellence. The personal development of a teacher is the core of professionalization and forms the base for professional ethics. The concept of professional ethics of a teacher can be summed up in the words of Rabindranath Tagore- "In our ideal life, we must touch all men and all times through the manifestations of the truth which is eternal and universal."

Teachers who consider their jobs as their profession work only for pay check. They work only for their own sake. But, our cultural heritage proves that true teachers are those who work with a sense of self- fulfilment and self- realisation. Professor George Herbert Palmer once appropriately remarked, "If Harvard does not pay me to teach, I would gladly pay Harvard for the privilege of teaching." This should be the professional value of an ideal teacher. As a professional person he should not work with pecuniary motives, but, with a sense of education for the cause of education. He must follow a code of ethics and maintain high professional standard.

The teacher should take a pledge to follow the code of ethics which may bring credit to the entire profession. The following code may be suggested:

- Towards students — The relation between a teacher and a student is like that of a parent and a child.
  - First, he must know the child well and discover his abilities, interests, aptitudes, likes and dislikes. He may have to come down to the level of the child to understand him.
  - Second, he must respect the child. As Zakir Hussain once opined, "The teacher's task is not to dictate or dominate, his is to help and serve, to understand and shape the child."
  - Third, he must bear a democratic attitude and shun the presently prevailing egotism, false dignity and vanity. Even he should be prepared to accept defeat from his students.

- Fourth, his behaviour should be exemplary. He must act as their model.
- Fifth principle is 'justice'. He must be free from prejudices.
- The Sixth principle is tact. The teacher is expected to deal with the most difficult situations through common sense and tact.
- Towards profession - the idea of teaching is structured around two poles:
  - The profession demands specific professional characteristic and imposes a type of behaviour;
  - Teaching takes place in transformation of the pupil and is expected to refer to values of an ethical nature.
- Towards society — Teachers must acknowledge the changing nature of society and recognise their role in providing appropriate educational responses to cater for identified needs of students. He must exemplify the dignity of labour and professional commitment, however tiring the circumstances may be all around.
- Towards nation — 'Ethics, politics and pedagogy are strictly connected' as Plato has stated. Education is a global preparation of an individual for citizenship, and indirectly, as constructor of civic cohesion, teachers are real political instruments. The saying, 'as the teacher, so the taught' and as the school, so the students.'
- This is something that can't be disputed. Teacher's responsibility in this national task is tremendous. They can make a modest beginning by helping and guiding students and to instil in them a sense of punctuality and duty. Many of these elementary qualities can be inculcated by the teachers themselves through personal example. Teachers have the capacity to transform a country into a strong nation.

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