



SHAPING THE MIND TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE MORAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In a world which is primarily split between a few haves and majority of have-nots, tensions, diversities, self-centered vision, violence, terrorism and consumerism are creating a dreadful scenario of a bleeding world and blood splattered humanity. Many schools have been searching the reasons of depreciation in moral values and they have been working for developing good moral values among the students. The lack in moral values and the unhealthy attitudes of students is the main reason of having problems in several schools. They have been realizing the importance of moral education in school. Moral Values are the worthy ideals or principles that one follows to distinguish the right from the wrong. These ideals or virtues are considered worthy in building up the character of an individual. Moral responsibility is intimately related to our reactions to one another. Dealing with values and moral issues is recognized as integral part of teachers' roles. Teacher has an important role in inculcating moral values in students. Schools therefore can play a bigger role as a child spends most active part of his day in school. Also, it has been seen that children are more compliant to the rules and regulations of the school than the society. In recent years, schools across the country have adopted several skill-development and classroom strategies that are related to character formation. How we live our life is the ultimate choice we make.

KEYWORDS: Moral Education, Moral Responsibility, Moral Values, Current Approaches, Inculcation of moral values and Teachers Role.

1.1 Introduction:

Over the past fifty years a number of approaches to moral education have been tried, with varying success. Individual's morals may derive from society and government, religion, or self. Issues of morality touch an individual's most fundamental beliefs. In a world which is primarily split between a few haves and majority of have-nots, tensions, diversities, self-centered vision, violence, terrorism and consumerism are creating a dreadful scenario of a bleeding world and a blood splattered humanity. India is badly in need of Value Based Education and Teaching System which inculcates values among the young students that they need to imbibe and embalm within them. In this chaotic atmosphere, value-based education is the only hope for synthesizing the moral fabric of an individual and generating a culture of peace in the society. The true meaning of education is harmonious development of head, heart and hand i.e., enlightenment of mind, compassion and dignity of labor. Moral and spiritual training is an essential part of education. One of intentions of the global education systems is to inculcate moral values in order to prepare useful, responsible and moral upright individuals in the society. Harish (2011), for instance, indicates that exclusion of moral teaching from the education system is a big contribution towards moral degradation in India and that lack of moral education as a part of curriculum is the biggest flaw that can be seen in the existing educational systems in the country. According to Friedrich Nietzsche 'Morality is the herd-instinct in the individual'.

Many schools have been searching the reasons of reduction in moral values and they have been working for developing good moral values among the students. However moral values are integrated part of the education and it is great emphasized in almost all countries. However it is a big problem of many schools that students are morally not perfect and they behave irresponsible. It is a big problem for schools to deal such students. The lack in moral values and the unhealthy attitudes of students is the main reason of having problems in several schools. They have been realizing the importance of moral education in school. Now many schools need to work on improvement of student's morality.

1.2 Main Objectives of the study:

The following questions will guide this paper

- I. What Moral Responsibilities are and the role of the school?
- II. What are the current approaches on moral education? And
- III. Importance of inculcation of moral values and teachers role.

1.3 Moral Responsibility and Role of School:

People want to know who is responsible for certain actions and who is accountable for the consequences of those actions. It is important to note that as early as Aristotle, moral responsibility was viewed as originating with the moral agent (decision maker), and grew out of an ability to reason (an awareness of action and consequences) and a willingness to act free from external compulsion. For Aristotle, a decision is a particular kind of desire resulting from a thought, one that expresses the agent's conception of what is good. As Australian ethicist Will Barret points out, Moral responsibility assumes a capacity for making rational decisions, which in turn justifies holding moral agents accountable for their actions. Given that moral agency entails responsibility, in that autonomous ratio-

nal agents are in principle capable of responding to moral reasons, accountability is a necessary feature of morality.² Responsibility, then, is composed of a duty to discharge not only the functional obligations of role, but also the moral obligations.

Aristotle (trans. 1962) wrote about the development of excellence, stating that to become excellent at any craft, including becoming virtuous, we have to exercise (practice) those behaviors. He stated: "We become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage. Hence, it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes...all the difference" (1962, pp. 34-35).

The term "moral responsibility" refers to the duty that individuals and groups have to act in accordance with the moral principles that are important to their social communities and to humanity at large. Peter Strawson pointed out in a seminal essay "Responsibility and the Reactive Sentiments", moral responsibility is intimately related to our reactions to one another.

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School can play a bigger role as a child spends most active part of his day in school. Also, it has been seen that children are more compliant to the rules and regulations of the school than the society. So, school can mould his thoughts to a greater extent than the society. The moral development of students does not depend primarily on explicit character education efforts but on the maturity and ethical capacities of the adults with whom they interact—especially parents, but also teachers, coaches, and other community adults. Parents and a supportive home environment play a crucial role in shaping attitudes that produce good behavior in schools. It is an established fact that the quality of teaching has a direct influence on the quality of students' behavior and vice versa. School personnel should consider themselves responsible at all times for the behavior of students within sight or sound of them and should respond promptly and firmly to any instances of unacceptable behavior.

1.4 Current Approaches to Moral Education:

Efforts are made in public education which addresses the moral domain which currently march under the flag of character education. Further, since these conscious efforts addresses issues of character formation which tend to be relatively recent, and that they are often called character education programs. The term program suggests initiatives that replace an activity and they are added to the school's curriculum.

- **The infusion approach:** an infusion approach to character education aims to restore the formation of students' characters to a central place in schooling. The foundation of the infusion approach is the recovery, recasting, or creation of a school's mission statement, and reflects the priority located on the development of good character. It tells administrators that teachers and staff should be hired with good character as a criterion; it lays emphasis on teachers and staff to be hired with good character as a criterion; not only that the

character of the students need to be stressed but also their own characters are also on display; it stresses that athletics should be seen through the lens of sportsmanship rather than winning and losing; and it tells students that their efforts and difficulties, their successes and disappointments are all part of a superior process, the formation of their characters.

Teachers and administrators dedicated to an infusion approach use the language of qualities and speak of good and poor behavior and of right and wrong. Words such as responsibility, respect, honesty, and perseverance are part of the working vocabulary of adults and students.

- **Other approaches:** This approach is a conscious effort to give students opportunities, guidance, and practice at being moral actors. It is based on the Greek philosopher Aristotle's concept of character formation (e.g., a man becomes virtuous by performing virtuous deeds; brave by doing brave deeds), many schools have comprehensive programs of service learning. Initially the kindergarten children are given small tasks such as straightening the desks and chairs. Later they move on to training younger students and finally work up to more challenging service activities in the final years of high school. Besides assignment, the school provides training, guidance, and problem-solving support to students as they come upon problems and difficulties.

In recent years, schools across the country have adopted several skill-development and classroom strategies that are related to character formation. Among the more widespread are teaching mediation and conflict-resolution skills, where students are given direct teaching concerning about how to deal with disagreements and possible fights among fellow students. Many advocates of cooperative learning stresses upon instructing students about the added benefits of the habits of helping others and forming friendship among students with whom they do not mix.

1.5 Role of educational institutions in inculcating values:

"Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each."

- Plato, Greek Philosopher

The process of acquiring values begins at birth. Values develop through life and evolve from life experiences. They are formed by combining: intellect, will, emotions and spiritual needs. A teacher must succeed in conveying the larger ideals of service to the community, virtues of tolerance and respect for all faiths, importance of character, integrity and discipline and the value of humanism to his pupil. Apart from teachers and schools, parents must play an active role in teaching moral values to their children. Peers at school diffuse boldness about cheating, lying, stealing, and consideration for others. Though there are rules and regulations, the educational institutions infuse the value education to the children in an informal way. They play a major role in developing ethical behaviour in children.

A UNESCO report on education for the 21st century entitled Learning. The Treasure Within also pleads for an education which is 'rooted in culture and committed to progress'. Developing a harmonious and integrated personality would just not be possible if the system does not inculcate values embedded in the culture, heritage and traditions. Indian heritage, culture and values need to be thoroughly studied, analyzed and incorporated comprehensively in the educational system right from the pre-primary stage to higher education.

Values are virtues, ideals and qualities on which actions and beliefs are based. Values are guiding principles that shape our world outlook, attitudes and conduct. Values however are either innate or acquired. They are formed by combining: intellect, will, emotions and spiritual needs. Innate values are our inborn divine virtues such as love, peace, happiness, mercy and compassion as well as the positive moral qualities such as respect, humility, tolerance, responsibility, cooperation, honesty and simplicity. The process of acquiring values begins at birth. Values develop through life and evolve from life experiences. Hansen (2001) argues that moral values described as 'notions of good & bad, better & worst' (p. 828) can be expressed in any action a teacher undertakes, for example in what curricular content they focus on, who they pay attention to, where they stand while talking with students, and so on (p. 826), with or without teachers being aware of such expressions.

Ethics or Morals are a study of human behavior as an outcome of beliefs about what is right or wrong, or good or bad, insofar as that behavior is useful or effective. In a sense, morals are the study of what is thought to be right and what is generally done by a group, society, or a culture. It is the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behavior and choices. Moral Values are the worthy ideals or principles that one follows to distinguish the right from the wrong. These ideals or virtues are considered worthy in building up the character of an individual. Moral Value refers to the good virtues such as honesty, integrity, truthfulness, compassion, helpfulness, love, respectfulness, hard-work, etc. Thus examples of honesty and truthfulness in school and colleges are more effective than precepts or moral preaching. Students are very sensitive. They fast copy their teachers. The teachers should always behave properly and set an exam-

ple. The students look at them as their ideal.

The moral education can be taught at educational institutions. Our curriculum may include the study of life biographies of great personalities who followed the right path in life. Dealing with values and moral issues is recognized as integral part of teachers' roles. Teachers are role models in schools and colleges and so the learners look up to them for many things. Every teacher of any subject has its role in inculcating morality among students. Teacher has an important role in inculcating moral values in students. Moral values are absorbed from various sources. The institute is the place which teaches a person a lot regarding moral values and ethics.

In school, children are members of a small society that exerts a tremendous influence on their moral development. Teachers serve as role model to students in school; they play a major role in inculcating their ethical behavior. Schools have a moral ethos embodied in rules, rewards and punishments, dress codes, honor codes, student government, relationships, styles of teaching, extracurricular emphases, and art etc. Schools communicate to children what they expected from them, what is normal, what is right and wrong. Schools through their ethos, socialize children into patterns of moral behavior. Textbooks often explore moral issues. The curriculum is often morally loaded by virtue. A school's rituals, traditions, rules, and procedures have an impact on students' sense of what is right and wrong and what is desired and undesired behavior. The children should be encouraged to be accountable for their own actions and should learn to respect and treat others kindly.

Moral thinking occurs within context. Through the use of stories, pictures and games, moral issues emerge in contexts where the personality and background of the characters and their situations matter. Elementary school pupils' moral thinking revolves around issues that are real to them. Teachers can use different plays and such activities to demonstrate various moral education lessons. Cultural activities can play a great role in this. Beside cultural activities there are many interesting activities for providing moral education lesson like daily prayer where teachers can arrange a daily activity as "The quote of the day"; where students say nice thoughts. The teacher should appreciate the children for developing pro-social behaviour, especially for any specific action they have done to help others.

1.6 Concluding Remarks:

The greatest challenge the world is facing today is the crisis of confidence and character, mental and moral decay and break down of rich traditions. The root cause of all these is fear, hatred, greed, prejudice, intolerance and violence.

To be a moral person every belief and thought should be strong and determined. We must have the courage to do right and fight for the right. How we live our life is the ultimate choice we make. Parents, especially the most loving, must encourage their children to become their own persons. Philosophical inquiry can support both the parents and their children in this endeavor. It appears that moral and ethical issues, including character education, are slowly becoming part of the teacher education programs. As said by Aristotle, Moral excellence comes about as a habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts and brave by doing brave acts. It's now up to the profession to ensure broader and deeper implementation.

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