Diminishing Ethics, Morals and Human Values in Education: A challenge To Sustaining Quality In Education

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Abstract

We are defined by our core ethical values—our integrity, our sense of justice and compassion, and the degree to which we respect the dignity and worth of every member of the human family, especially the most vulnerable among us. Today’s youth faces the challenge of building healthy relationships and a life of noble purpose in a culture that is often unsupportive of the highest values of the human spirit. A question is raised whether school or college education should impact students to be tolerant and receptive to serving the society ethically and morally. The causes of deteriorating ethical values among students is the outcome of lack of inter-personal relationship among student and teacher, higher importance to materialistic achievement, competition, pressures of curriculum completion and evaluation, indifference towards environmental and societal issues, minimum exposure to practical learning, commercial forms of tutoring and many more. Students are found not to perceive link between education and ethical values.

When we do our work well—whether teaching a lesson, repairing a car, caring for the sick, or parenting a child—someone typically benefits.

The liability of imbibing ethics, morals and human values among India’s youth can be fostered through quality teaching, philosophical thinking, study, temperament and research in Indian education system. The paper reviews research on the diminishing ethical and moral values challenging human development and achievement. It also suggests practices that teachers and colleges can use to sustain quality by improving human values.

Keywords- Diminishing, ethics, morals, human values, challenge, quality, education
Introduction:

The most important human endeavor, is striving for morality”; Albert Einstein

The world is influenced by contextual shifts within the higher education environment.

The aim of education should not limit itself to producing intellectual individuals contributing to economic development of self and the organization where they work but also self-realizations of ethics, morals and values. Graduates are entering a world of employment that is characterized by greater uncertainty, speed, risk, complexity and interdisciplinary working. This makes them more vulnerable. They are far from judging differences in what is good or bad or what is positive and what is negative. It is the quality of our work by which we are judged or receive acclamation. Success is temporary if it is on an unethical platform. The question which is worth pondering—whether the level of higher education and the timing of completion of degree finds any change in his/her ethical, moral and human values.

Due to various changes such as modernization, industrialization, urbanization, privatization, globalization as well as influence of western culture accompanied many problems and evils in Indian society that cause declining ethical values in Indian education system (Pathania, 2011). Education of an ethical nature is focused on implementing a series of moral habits and certain ethical virtues.

Current factors influencing the ethics, morals and values of teaching include:

- The internationalization of higher education
- The increasingly broadening scope of education and greater diversity of student profiles
- The rapid changes in technology, which can quickly make program content and Pedagogies obsolete
- The demand for greater civic engagement of graduates and regional development of higher education
- The increased pressures of global competition, economic efficiency
- The need to produce a skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century

Education will need to prepare students for entry to such an environment and equip them with appropriate skills and knowledge need for nurturing ethics, morals, values and attributes to thrive
in it. There is a strong drive to build and create knowledge together with an understanding of working life and reformulate the concept of knowledge in learning situations.

To determine what is ethically good for the individual and for the society, he said, it is necessary to posses three virtues of practical wisdom: temperance, courage and justice (Pabla, 2011).

Values are the guiding principles of life that contribute to the all round development of an individual. Values also add a good quality to the life and it should also contribute to the welfare of family, the community and the nation (Pathania, 2011).

Everyone gives at least lip service to a common core of general ethical principles. Unfortunately, mere verbal agreement on ethical principles will not accomplish important ethical ends nor change the world for the better. Ethical principles mean something only when manifested in behavior.

Do we find ethical, moral and human values around us to learn from? The answer to this is “No”. The reason is the events we observe and come across in our daily life:

- Lawyers defending hit and run cases of celebrity and also hunting of extinct species;
- Doctors indulging in organ transplant and making money;
- Teacher molesting and abusing students;
- Businessman involved in 3G spectrum scandal, adulteration, hedging, price rise etc;
- Politicians remaining indifferent to the needs of the society, environmental degradation issues or waste management;
- Deficiency of services by service providers;
- Betting practices in sports.

It is our very own educational system producing lawyers, engineers, doctors, businessman etc. We can see this kind of unethical behavior practically everywhere around us. The blame is on the educational fraternity who failed to teach that education is not only a way of earning but it also helps to develop human personality with skills, values, morals and enhancement of different attributes of man. So education is a vital means for the potentialities of a human being to emerge in a positive direction so that a man can live in society with full of dignity (Bordoloi, 2011).

Teaching of ethics, morals and values in education cannot bring about an overnight transformation in ideologies and practices. It should be a continuous path of action during the entire student life. Ethics in education if not practiced is not only harmful but has a devastating effect on the quality of educated youth in India. We sow seeds of destruction
for the society and the country as a whole. Ethics, morals and values in education is a multi-level endeavor which requires immense understanding of the student-teacher, student-student, teacher-teacher environment and their interactions within the loop. Also the learning environment at home influences these students. They are constantly subjected to contrasting events in college, at home and in their surroundings with their peers. This leaves them perplexed as to what is the ethical line of action or behavior. Ethics, morals and values are well nourished in well-adapted learning environments and student support services. They are essential at the discipline level and across the institution.

Ethics, morals and values are the foundational bricks in character building. Character building can be achieved through character education. It must result in revolutionizing Values through character education. This consecutively should successfully be able to develop students’ performance values such as effort, diligence, and perseverance in order to promote academic learning, the outcome of academic learning should foster an ethic of excellence, and develop the skills needed to act upon ethical values.

The ultimate basis for ethics is clear: Much human behavior has consequences for the welfare of others. We are capable of acting toward others in such a way as to increase or decrease the quality of their lives and helping or harming. What is more, we are theoretically capable of understanding when we are doing the one and when the other. This is so because we have the capacity to put ourselves imaginatively in the place Of others and recognize how we would be affected if someone were to act toward us as we are acting toward others.

For teachers the demand from coming generation is very high and challenging. They have to prepare themselves for managing youth who are-

- More aggressive
- Better informed
- Less of informal education and higher qualification
- Less cultured society
- More demanding

The centrality of education to the human community aspires, “All life must be worked at, protected, planted, replanted, fashioned, and cooked for, coaxed, diapered, formed, and sustained. Work is the way we tend the world.”
What kind of ethics, morals and human values in character will young people need to meet the challenges they face in college and beyond—and how can schools help them develop it while meeting their own set of challenges?

**Review of Literature:**

Lieberman and Nissen (2008, p. 3), ethics is “the study of moral principles concerning ’rightful’ conduct based on our most deeply held values”.

Julian Huxley (1964), “Self actualized persons are individuals who transcend their organic individuality in conscious participation.” According to Huxley, education should be humanized to redeem our society from the evil effect of widespread corruption, selfishness, exploitation, authoritarianism and nepotism.

Charles Morries (1956) talks of “the preferential behavior in values which in other words means a choice between the good and bad”.

Cattell (1965) defines values, “By values we mean the social, artistic, moral and other standards which the individual would like others and himself to follow.”

**Causes of ethical deterioration in education system in India:**

- **Lack of inter-personal relationship among teacher and student:** It fails to create a sense of understanding, helpful-friendly behavior, developing individual relationship with the student and lack of meaningful opportunities to achieve expectations of employment and academic achievement.

- **Higher importance to materialistic achievement:** We do remember our childhood stories of Panchtantra, Ramayana and many other ethics and epics teaching us the importance of the human values; but technological advancement into the field of education has brought about a drastic deterioration in humanitarian behaviors and human values.

- **Competition:** leads to high stress and anxiety, especially in younger students who aren't equipped to handle the pressure.

- **Pressures of curriculum completion and evaluation:** The complex and active nature of a curriculum 'is' rather than 'does'. Too much emphasis is placed on high stakes test
along with unrealistic expectations by teachers as well as of students. The way, in which accountability measures occur, impacts teachers and students ethically as well as morally.

- **Indifference towards environmental and societal issues:** There have not been many studies that explore factors which influence apathy or indifference about the environmental issues, especially among youths. At the macro level, when since childhood or youth people possess no environmental concern; it is likely that if they become political leaders, they will produce political policies that neglect environmental issues.

- **Minimum exposure to practical learning:** Students are not provided with experiences of applying their knowledge and conceptual understanding to real-world problems or situations, field placements, clinical experiences, research and service-learning projects, impede learning.

- **Ill-effects of commercial tutoring:** Parents are ready to invest large sums in order to give their children the best preparation for and facilitate access to a higher level of studies and to the best schools of education. Cramming is often to the detriment of creative learning and does not lead to the expected increase in human development.

**Best Practices in incorporating ethical, moral and human values in students through educational endeavor**

Valuable insights into achieving high educational standards conducive to developing ethics, morals and human values through enhanced quality are cited below-

- Learning engagements have general utility in learning precepts at the apprentice level of skill learning. They may be valuable in maintaining and strengthening ethical commitment through either positive or negative instances. From learning perspective such events may be valuable since learning from critical reflection of one’s own error is an important part of developing ethical skill.

- The oppositional relationship between ethical knowledge and codes of conduct or contracts (whether sectoral or situational) argues for the need for education to raise awareness of that relationship of its consequences for human action and of how to work with those consequences in an ethically informed manner. This would evolve guided practice in events involving such opposition and structured reflections on practice and actions in those events.

- Ethical commitment seems to be most vulnerable through diminution or loss through gradual and progressive erosion of ethical commitment in one's cultural contexts whether actual or virtual. Radical erosion is more likely to be experienced as negative- providing an oppositional strengthening of individual commitment in the face of such erosion.
• Community services
• There is a need for focused attention on professional ethics and value education
• **Create a safe and supportive learning community** - caring, respect, sense of belonging, and high level of connectedness among student-teacher around shared core values
• **Create a culture of excellence**. Where all students, given enough time and support, are seen as capable of high-quality work. When students enter a culture that demands and supports excellence, they will do their best work in order to fit in.
• Students capable of excellence may discover new self image with a new notion of possibility of achieving the desired.
• Paths of excellence in ethical, moral and human values can be achieved through co-curricular activities and Collaborative learning
• Teacher should emphasize students to work on well designed project based learning
• Foster in both, faculty and students, a “growth mindset” that emphasizes the importance of effort. Confidence building to face challenges
• Maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment.
• Every educational institution should aim to achieve year-end evaluation outcomes at 100 percent.
• A teacher has to prove a far better role as a mentor than tutor of coaching classes.
• Retentioneering dropouts successfully.
• Helping students for placement.

**Sensitizing youth towards their ethical, moral and human values in association to issues concerning not only India but also globally. They are:**

- Environment protection
- Gender Issues and acceptance
- Crime Prevention
- Transcultural communication
- Managing effects of scientific discoveries with minimum side effects
- Preparing from technology becoming obsolete
- Biasness of media delivery and information transfer
- Misleading Advertisements
- Extinction of rare species
- Depletion of non-renewable resources
- Destruction or changes on mother Earth
- Massive Industrialization
- Enthusing child on learning
- Making education student centric while not compromising on quality
- Making education versatile in terms of making student appreciate technology and the vastness of human learning and expression
- There is a need for promoting continuing programs
- Sensitize children with problems in the surrounding environment they live
A call for frequent changes in syllabus to pace with fast changing times.
- It is important to include value orientation, ethics and morals through practical study.
- Education and educator should be well informed
- Help students to explore possibilities of life
- They should learn to be critical
- Students need to study the past, how well organized roots of the society prevailed to teach them to value what they have
- It is important to teach students to transcend their life’s limitation

Suggestions:
- Develop thinking dispositions in all members of the college: Each and every stakeholder should have an open-minded, curious, Meta cognitive (reflecting on thinking), strategic, skeptical, and seeking truth and understanding.
- Discussion, modeling, observation, practice, and reflection: Coaching students in conflict resolution and teaching them to “think before acting” provide further opportunities for nurturing these intellectual dispositions.
- Assign work that matters: Creating a culture of thinking and a culture of excellence using one important pedagogical practice is assigning work that matters—work that inspires students because it is challenging, meaningful, affects others, and is therefore intrinsically rewarding.
- Provide models of excellence: If we want students to aspire to excellence, they must see what excellence looks like. What makes a particular drawing, science project, or piece of writing so good? What was the process of achieving such high quality? What mistakes and revisions were likely parts of the process?
- Develop a culture that encourages feedback and revision: Group feedback sessions, comments and suggestions from their peers and the teacher, supportive group critique, provide scope to revise and improve their work guided by norms of respect and care, functions as an ethical learning community where they not only pursue their own best work but also strive to bring out each other’s best work.
❖ **Prepare students to make public presentations of their work:** Students work harder to do their best when they know their work will be presented to an audience beyond the classroom helping students prepare their work for the public eye.

❖ **Use rubrics to help students take responsibility for their learning:** students learn to self-assess, set goals, and in general take responsibility for their learning. Personal and social responsibility standards should be integrated into classroom instruction and students’ report cards.

❖ **Encourage mastery learning:** Mastery learning requires all students to achieve a certain level of mastery of a given concept or skill. Immense perseverance is needed by the students to redo the assignments again till reaches perfection without help.

**Conclusion:**

There is nothing that one cannot improve. It needs changes periodically. However, a more holistic approach needs to be taken by teachers and educators. The destination of quality education has to necessarily advance in ethics, morals and human values catering to a larger group. The last line of defence are not even parents as role models but on the shoulders of teachers to save students improvement of human character and recognition of their inner purity or the whole system will go rot. Students should comprehend that success is a self-measure. Coming generation will need to understand and assess the role of science and technology, religion, literature, humanities, social sciences, History, environmental sciences etc in the development of ethics, morals and human values. Throughout history, and in cultures around the world, education rightly conceived has had two great goals: to help students become smart and to help them become good. They need character for both. They need moral character in order to behave ethically, strive for social justice, and live and work in society.

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