

Moral Values in Modern Education

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ABSTRACT:

Schools have long been seen as institutions for preparing children for life, both academically and as moral agents in society. In order to become capable, moral citizens, children need to be provided with opportunities to learn moral values. However, little is known about how teachers enact social and moral values programs in the classroom. The aim of this article is to investigate the moral education of the child with a critical attention paid to the allocation of responsibility.

The paper tried to answer the question: 'Who gives the child his moral education, is it a collective responsibility or the sole responsibility of an institution?' The answer is that It's not only teachers in schools that can impart moral education to the children, but the parents also equally play a great role in making the children aware of the importance of leading life ethically. This is a conceptual paper discuss the importance of moral education and its necessity in the present day competitive global world.

INTRODUCTION:

Today Education has become just a nine-letter word as a superior term in the dictionary. More over Education system became a business where it is treated like any other profession. The problem is also with us. It is we who make the society. If we improve ourselves, we can improve our society. No one is born as criminal or as spoilt person. It's the environment that is deviating the child from taking the right path. Good teachers can bring the change with good Education imparted to the students. Education is the combination of literacy and moral values. Students are the future of our Nation. We are taught moral lessons at home and in school such as love fellow human beings, respect elders, wrong things should not be done, never speak lies, love your country, don't be jealous etc. But nowadays everywhere crime flourishes as well as corruption at all levels of society.

Old people are sent out of home and treated badly. People are unaware of the truth. Jealousy has become the overall base of life. In olden days we used to have "Gurukul" type of Education system in India. The students of gurukul lived a life of tutelage and learnt everything taught by their guru with love and also by putting in lot of hard work. In the gurukul every student was treated equally irrespective of caste and economical status. The students are supposed to leave their homes and their loved ones and come and live at the gurukul Ashram for years to learn the lessons of life from the guru. At the end of the training the students emerged as responsible individuals who were well learned and capable of undertaking any challenge in life. We can explain it in the same way as mud beautifully molded as water jug by the potter.

We can further apply it to our own lives. Our physical body makers are our parents. But our life makers are our gurus (teachers) who give us a particular turn, shape to our life, just like a potter. The most important assets of a nation are the citizens themselves. If the citizens are healthy, patriotic, honest, and sincere, the nation will progress at a much faster pace. For this reason, it is very essential to have moral education in schools and colleges. To impart moral education to students, there can be many ways – telling stories, preaching, group discussions, Yoga, and Meditation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To explain the teachers, parents and student's understanding and perceptions of the aims of education and schooling.
2. To develop an understanding of parents, teachers and students interpretation of morality and moral education.
3. In this study it was focused on curriculum-oriented approaches to moral education with the deliberate aim of enhancing students' pro-social and moral development.

CONCEPT OF MORALITY:

Philosophers and psychologist have variously defined the concept of morality but in common terms it can be interpreted that it is people or society's view of what is perceived to be the highest good. Such a view is based on a set of principles, ideas and norms that are used to distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong'. Though the notion what is 'good' and what constitutes happiness has a definite cultural bias, morality generally refers to attitudes and predispositions that foster respect, responsibility, integrity and honesty. Lickona (1996) argue that respect and responsibility are the two core components of morality from which any other principle derives. The term respect includes two aspects, that is respect of oneself and respect for others (their beliefs, opinions and culture). Responsibility involves an acceptance for one's own life and deeds and the commitment to the welfare of the society generally through an active participation in the socio-economic, political, cultural activities of the community.

Morality is viewed as the "system of rules that regulate the social interactions and social relationships of individuals within societies and is based on concepts of welfare (harm), trust, justice (comparative treatment and distribution) and rights" (Smetana 1999). This is how humans determine their actions based on their cognitive abilities to interpret a social situation. Issues of reasoning, problem solving skills, self-control and adaptability are components in exhibiting key components of the moral process.

CONCEPT OF MORAL EDUCATIONS:

Moral education has always been a perennial aim of education. Moral education is whatever schools do to influence how students think, feel, and act regarding issues of right and wrong. The function of school, it was believed, was not only to make people smart but also to make them good. The return of moral education to the limelight is attributable to the fact that modern societies increasingly have to deal with disturbing trends both within schools, and in the wider society. The term moral value is ambiguous and requires some definitions. It signifies the specific values that particular cultures generally hold in regard. Such value varies among cultures; during World War II, Japanese who loved his homeland was likely to be hostile to Americans, and vice versa.

Values conflict among nationals and ethnic lines are common although most cultures treat the characteristics we call "patriotism" as a moral value and treat "treason" with opprobrium. In sum common "moral values" are the vital common beliefs that shape human relations to each culture. Often these values –as in the Ten Commandments-have what is popularly called a religious base. Whether their base is religious, traditional, or secular, such values are expected to be widely affirmed under most circumstances.

Thus, moral is defined as right conduct, not only in our immediate social relations, but also in our dealings with our fellow citizens and with the whole of human race. It is based upon the possession of clear ideals as to what actions are right and what are wrong and the determination of our conduct by a constant reference to those ideals. In other word, each society defines for itself what is right or wrong. Therefore, moral is defined as right conducts as guided by or defined by the respective society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

All of the sources that were reviewed agree that morality can be taught in schools. The key questions are whether it should be, how it should be, and whether it will ultimately be effective. This section will review the conflicting arguments in the literature regarding the role of morality education in schools.

According to Frankena (1973) and Armon (1984, 1993), moral values can be divided into five categories, the deontic, teleological, aretaic, intrinsic, and extrinsic. Deontic values are concerned with the moral right—issues of justice, fairness, rights, and responsibilities. Most educational institutions have structures in place that explicitly address issues that involve the moral right, at least in terms of the obligations and rights of students, faculty, and staff.

Teleological values relate to issues of moral good, or concern over the welfare of others. These are often not explicitly addressed within American schools, though services such as school lunch programs, student counseling, and immunization drives are expressions of the moral good. Aretaic values involve judgments about the moral worth of individuals and institutions.

They include motives and character qualities such as generosity, empathy, and loyalty and are often characterized as motivators for moral action. Historically, educators have emphasized the development of moral character. Intrinsic values are those ends valued for their inherent numeral good. They include such qualities as autonomy, consciousness, intelligence, and knowledge. Their advancement is viewed as the advancement of persons. Finally, extrinsic values are those means that have the potential to produce well, such as money, art, education, and travel, though they embody no inherent good.

Lawrence Kohlberg (1975) built on Piaget's early work regarding children's construction of morality. Using a method similar to Piaget's stages of child development, Kohlberg suggested a theory of moral reasoning based on three levels and six stages, whereby children progress through preconvention (based on personal needs and others' rules), conventional (based on others' approval, expectations, or values), and post-conventional moral reasoning (based on social contracts and individual principles).

Kohlberg's theory has been the basis for a number of programs aimed at moral education. His ideas, coming on the heels of the social justice movement, led to moral development becoming "a major topic in psychological textbooks and found its way into the school in many guises, such as 'value clarification' curriculums" (Elkind, 2001, p. 12). Like Piaget's work, Kohlberg's theory is often used as a basis of argument for morality education in schools. Cummings & Harlow (2000) speak for many cognitive development lists when they say: "Piaget's constructivist theory of the development of moral reasoning holds promise as a foundation for formal education". The Pageant model of moral education includes teaching core values, but goes beyond this to encourage children to question authority and to promote the dialogue and interaction that will help them discover mutual respect and autonomy (Cummings & Harlow, 2000).

Piaget's views are widely used to argue for morality education in public schools. Eisenberg (1999) focused his dissertation research "The search for integrity: A leadership impact study" on integrity. He considered integrity to be a unique individual characteristic because it is one of the few personality variables required of every person. Integrity is an ethical value that plays

a fundamental role in leadership and integrates other values such as trust, honesty, truthfulness, rightness, role modeling, the value of wholeness, and others. Eisenberg goes even further when he says that in any organization, integrity is necessary from each member of the organization, independent of the position, hierarchy, status or title. With these divergent views as expressed by various authors, an attempt was made to look at the roles of each of these agents in the moral development of the child.

Role of the Schools in Moral Education of the Child:

Schools are strategically placed to make children and youth with learning experiences which relate, as far as possible, to the challenges of their everyday lives and by so doing play their appropriate role as exemplars of values and moral action. For this to be possible, schools must act out of a fundamental understanding of the multiplicity of factors, which influence the development of children and youth. They must focus on working with all social action groups with viable programmes, which cater to children and youth and this should include parents and community groups. School rules and regulations, teaching and other staff relationships must be infused with democratic principles and the quality of the physical environment must be shaped deliberately to continually and consistently provide opportunities that support and reinforce the adoption of positive values within the school, the family and the nation. 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.

Role of the Teachers in Moral Education of the Child:

The school has been identified as a vehicle of "direct instruction" (Pekausky 1998), it is a social institution in which is embedded a rich of norms, customs and ways of thinking of which the teacher is a conveyer. It is both logical and essential that for schools to perform their roles creditably, teachers of the colleges be able to produce a reliable cadre of students who are competent as persons and as professionals to implement Morals and Value Education. A graduate teacher trainee should be able to:

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

Apart from parents who have been referred to as the moral teachers, schoolteachers are also very influential and significant adults in the lives of children starting from the pre-school years. Teachers help children to understand character traits and values, they also model desirable character traits in the students both within the school setting and in the larger society.

Young children often idealize their teachers, watch them closely and also try to emulate their behaviors. In other words, teachers are models to the students. Young people may view their teachers as authorities on subjects and seek their advice on many issues related to character and values.

Teachers can help by maintaining long-term relationship with students and using children's literature in the classrooms that emphasizes positive values and heroic action. Teachers also reference the moral lessons that the children must have been taught at home. Teachers are directly involved in teaching behaviors that are right and correct those that are wrong to students in school.

They also function as role models to student. This does not imply that all teachers are good role models to students and that all teachers teach good morals, yet the fact remains that teachers have very important roles to play in the moral development of the child.

Role of Curriculum in Moral Education of the Child:

Curriculum design is a specialized aspect of curriculum development dealing with the preparation of curriculum plans and materials for use potentially by any students or teachers of a given description. In most studies on teaching strategies for curriculum-oriented moral education we found the following elements: problem-based learning, working in groups, discussions, and using subject topics incorporating moral issues, dilemmas and values.

Frequently, a problem-based instructional design is chosen. What has been learnt must be meaningful in the context of students' personal objectives and they must be able to connect the learning content with their prior knowledge. Many morals and values education curricula have tended to change by accretion with units of the curriculum centered on specific values or principles.

In a situation where there is obviously an overloading of the curriculum in schools, teachers find themselves constantly trying to keep up with new knowledge or the reinterpretation of old ones, and the even more difficult situation of trying to find connections between seemingly separate and specialized bits and pieces of knowledge. The design of the curriculum reflects the concepts outlined in the conceptual framework and implications for the roles of schools, families, NGOs, and teachers. It also attempts to respond to the concerns about the degree of effectiveness of traditional approaches to the teaching of morals and values. To do this effectively, there is a deliberate shift away in this document away from the traditional approaches to the organization of the curriculum.

Role of the Parents in Moral Education of the Child:

Parents provide the most constant and visible models of behaviors associated with character development, they also help by identifying other models of the character traits they want their children to develop and by raising appropriate character-related issues in discussions of daily events. Parents also assist by exposure to examples of behaviors that negate their own views of positive values and virtues.

The approach used by parents has the greatest impact on how the child and parents yields a more productive environment to receive information pertaining to the moral issues. The yielding to moral teaching is based primarily on the reactionary process of the care given through the level of affect presented by the adult. This in turn brings the moral and social message to the child in a more concrete fashion. As with anything in the developmental life span, too much or not enough of something can create adverse or opposite effects which may not be the intervention of the caregiver.

Therefore, the level of moral development within the adult contributes to the internalization of the moral concept. There is also an important cognitive component to parents' interaction with their children that may facilitate children's moral development. Parents' communication with their children is one aspect of children's social experiences that may be used in the construction of moral knowledge. By explaining the reasons for rules and responding appropriately to moral violation, parents can facilitate moral development by stimulating children to think reflectively about their actions.

The Role of Religious Institutions in the Moral Development of the Child:

Historically, moral teachings have been central to all religions. For instance, historically speaking, since the time of the Bible, moral teachings have been central to Judaism. The same goes for the Islamic religion. Religious institutions have a way of imparting moral lessons in their adherents and this is no more news to many in our country today. In fact, the present focus is both of national and international organization to the exploration of involving and using religious leaders in the campaign against the hydra-headed monster called HIV/AIDS because it is believed that the religious leaders exercise a significant level of control/influence on many people's thought process and decision making further confirms the importance and relevance of the religious organization in the moral development of the child.

CONCLUSION:

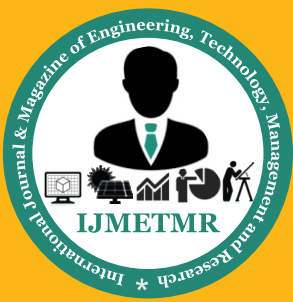
The present study clearly established that the school has a definite and inevitable role to play in providing moral education in a multicultural society.

However, this role has constantly evolved over time and the manner in which moral education was carried out previously no longer caters to the expectations and aspirations of all stakeholders. With rapid technological, economic and cultural change, schools will have to develop a variety of means to morally stimulate adolescents and make them committed to moral action. The success of our nation's endeavor to educate our young people in the democratic tradition that respects and nurtures the cultural diversity we have inherited hinges precariously on our ability to transmit this rich moral heritage and our common moral solutions to the future generation.

It requires of us adults to display the imagination, resourcefulness and creativity to stimulate young people into the ongoing process of moral action and reflection. Our schools have thus to be restructured afresh, its partnership with parents, inspectors, nongovernmental organizations revived and our traditional and teacher centered approach reconsidered in a bid to ensure currency and relevance in our moral education programmes.

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