Impact of Moral Values and Ethics in the lives of college going students of Kolkata

Sukanta Kundu

Lecturer, Heramba Chandra College, Dept of Commerce (Affiliation: University of Calcutta)

ABSTRACT

Morality refers to personal or cultural value codes of conduct or social values. Morality plays a pivotal role in an individual's life as well as in society People learn moral values from family and education. These are the two important institutions from where people learn how to behave in a society. In pre-independence era, it was known that educated persons would display civilized behavior, decency, good manners and ethical conduct and on the other hnd, uneducated persons would display uncivilized behavior and mostly crimes were committed by them. However with a huge expansion of the education system, there is a marked decline in the characters, ethical moral values. Today most of the crimes are committed by students coming out of schools, colleges and well educated families. Education doesn't mean to pursue a degree for economic gain, rather attaining moral values. People are more engaged in diverse society and extensively interacting with social media. Sound and value based education in this context has become very cruicial to prepare youth to live within ethical boundaries. This research work tries to find out the attitude of college going students towards ethical goodness. Survey methodology is selected to conduct a research. The results conclude that moral education must be imparted to all the students to develop ethical practice.

Key words: Morals, Ethics, Value, Attitude, Perception, Character education.

I. INTRODUCTION

People don't live their lives in moral or ethical isolation but grow up within particular traditions. Morals refer to human behavior where morality is the practical activity and ethics describes the theoretical, systematic and rational reflection upon that human behavior.

Now-a-days technology is affecting society in ubiquitous fashion while maintaining its upright position. Humans are highly mesmerized by the technological revolutions which has not only improved global interaction, but has also raised unethical practices. There are various factors which shape human conduct, which include social relations, friend circles, family environment, culture etc.

Moral development has its philosophical basis dated to the Greek Philosophers. It studies about human nature realizing social goodness. The moral development of children begins from their family. When children socialize with their family members, they learn moral values and ethics.

The moral nature of children is based on imitation. They are good observer and follow others. Many external and internal factors may also influence their moral reasoning skills. In the presence of morality, their decisions will be in a proper flow, which can help in maintaining healthy relations with society and adjustments parallel to societal changes. Failing to foster ethical and moral grooming may led to social detachment. The other factors which affect their ethical grooming include socio-economic condition, family issues, cognitive factors.

Kent gave theory based on actions and moral rules. His main focus was on the established rules which one need to follow. This theory was highly criticized and disregarded because of obligations imposed on individuals. Later, Piaget divided cognitive development based on moral development, where he categorized ages for morality. Each level is unique and significant, however the final stage-operational is the highest level individual can attain. He believed that moral development is a develop mental process which is based on cognitive development.

Kohlberg's (1978) hypothesis was based on the previous theories, which highlighted moral reasoning through three levels-

✓ **Pre-conventional level** behaviors which are directed by society and based on social acceptability, whereas individuals follow the directed instructions and perform tasks due to the fear of punishment,

✓ **Conventional level** is directed by society, where human are obliged to follow rules as per set by society,

✓ **Post-Conventional level** include social contract.

From these theories, it is .confirmed that morality is gradually attained through the process of development. Many inter.nal and external factors are involved in influencing moral act. Schools and Colleges are the place where students spend most of their time after home. The educational institutions are responsible to provide ethical training to the students. It makes clear that through social interaction in school and colleges, their moral development is highly influenced and directed.

Society is constantly changing and its impact can be seen from the behavior and attitude of students. Social crimes such as abuses, robbery, killing, use of drugs, bullying and dishonoring parents have increased in the recent years not only in the western countries but also in India. Tbe moral corrosion among youth has also been highlighted by Masath (2013).
In this regard ,it is very crucial to find out, how moral development is shaped among the college going students in Kolkata and how society and educational institutions promote ethical practices and contribute for the moral development of students.

This paper articulates the attitude of college students towards ethical and moral values.

II. REVIEW LITERATURE

Koluckiand Lemish (2011) Children are mostly affected by societal changes. They adapt everything rapidly. They believe in social interaction and learn new things from their surroundings. Their cognitive and social development has always been the focal point of interest for everyone, however their moral development is often ignored.

Weissbourd et al (2013) say that school environment in moral development is very important. The way teacher interact, the background of the classmates, the tactics teachers use to deal with students, the codes and rules, school connectedness, ethics, curriculum, all led in harmonizing moral development.

Dr. Memoona Saeed Lodhi & Dr. Jawaid Ahmed Siddiqui (2014) in their research work, they have shown a clear picture of attitude of students regarding ethics and moral values in Karachi, Pakistan.

Dr. Urmila Yadav (2016) explained the relationship between mor.al values and Indian education system. Her findings were-ethical deterioration in Indian education system, lack of value education in curriculum, corruption in education field etc.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To give an idea about the meaning of moral value and ethics in social life.
2. To analyse the impact of moral values and ethics in the lives of students of Kolkata.
3. To examine the attitude of college going students towards ethical values.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN/APPROACH/METHODOLOGY

This paper is basically based on primary data.
Method of Research: Survey Method.

Population and Sampling:

The population for the present study consists of students pursuing their graduation from different colleges in Kolkata. The sample size of 400 is selected through random sampling from 4 colleges of Kolkata (affiliated to University to Calcutta) (100 students from each colleges). Samples were taken from the following colleges-

✓ Heramba Chandra College,
✓ Kidderpore College,
✓ Acharya Girish Chandra Bose College,
✓ City College of Commerce and Business Administration.

Research Instrument:

The Commitment to Ethical Goodness Scale (Narvaez et al, 2008) has been used to calculate data from the respondents. Three factors are used-

✓ Ethical Identity
✓ Moral Laws of Control
✓ Ethical Self Regulations

Secondary Data: It has been collected from various books, journals, articles and some useful websites..

V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

ETHICS: It describes a generally accepted set of moral principles or values followed by an individual.
MORALS : It describes the goodness or badness or right or wrong of actions.
VALUES: It describes individual or personal standards of what is valuable or important.
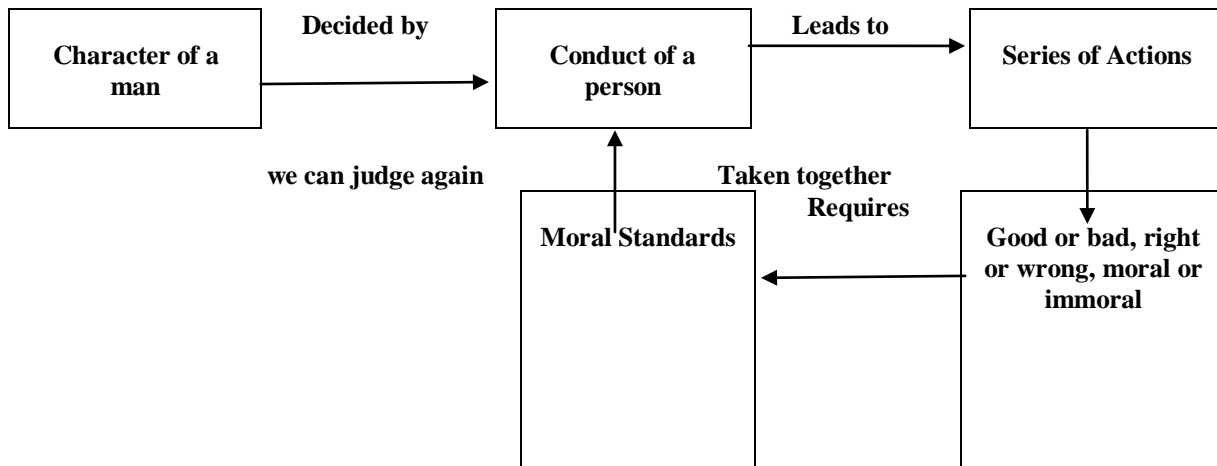
Problems may arise where individuals allow their personal values to interfere with their actions, thereby potentiality bringing their actions into conflict with stated ethical standards.

Ethics and Values may differ from person to person, from culture to culture. They may be blindly followed as traditions instead of conclusions of rational thinking.

Ethics, Values and Morals are few basis which have been laid down to confine the definitions of right behavior. To some extent, right and wrong are based on perceptions. As something that may feel right to one may feel wrong to other person. These ethics, values and morals make the judgment of right and wrong easier by setting few fixed guidelines. Attitude is formed by a person' behavioral and thinking patterns and what ethics, values and morals mean to him/her and what principles he/she lives his/her life by.

VI. THREE KEY BRANCHES OF ETHICS:

✓ **Descriptive Ethics:** It involves describing, characterizing. and studying morality.
✓ **Normative Ethics:** It involves supplying and justifying moral systems.
✓ **Applied Ethics:** Its all about 'how' moral outcomes can be achieved in specific situations.

VII. IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS IN SOCIAL LIFE

Ethics is important to save humanity on the planet i.e to save our planet. Humans are forgetting that they are spoiling everything. The greedy human losing his control, we destroy everything and everyone for the sake of money. Education should not be business, the most important objective of education should be to equip the students with ethical values. Ethics in education might bring the change. What kind of ethics we are talking about here? According to Rushmore Kidder's research, we are talking about the following ethics in education-

✓ Ethics of Justice
✓ Ethics of Critique
✓ Ethics of Care
✓ Ethics of Profession

VIII. MORAL VALUES

Moral values are the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual behavior. Moral values are the criteria for determining good and bad, fair and unfair, just and unjust.

IX. TYPES OF VALUES

- ✓ **UNIVERSAL VALUE:** It has the same value or worth for all or almost all people. Example-Sancity of human life, Peace, human dignity.
- ✓ **INSTRUMENTAL VALUE:** These are values that can be used to get something else. Exampler- Freedom, Knowledge, Progress.
- ✓ **INTRINSIC VALUE:** Something has intrinsic worth simply because of what it is, and not necessarily what it will lead to. Example- Beauty, Artistic expression and happiness.
- ✓ **PREREQUISITE VALUE:** These are values that are necessary before you can get to some bigger goal. Example-Safety, Justice.
- ✓ **OPERATIVE VALUES:** These types of values are the ways that people make judgments on how to live the rest of their lives. They use these values as the overarching and guiding principles which tell them what is always right and wrong. Example-Integrity, Honesty and Loyalty.
- ✓ **PARAMOUNT VALUE:** It is the value which is above all other things. Example-Freedom.

X. MORAL PRINCIPLES

Trustworthiness, Respect, Caring, Fairness, Responsibility, Citizenship.

XI. EDUCATION

Education is not simply imparting knowledge in a particular knowledge in a particular faculty or subject or making one fit for securing jobs or fair well in exams, but at the same time is also a training in logical thinking which helps the coming generations adjust to the ever changing environment. It also means opening the doors of mind, cleansing the soul and realization of the self. Education should aim at making human life better not only through economic upliftment of individual but also through social, moral and spiritual strengthening. Values and morals are inbuilt in human being and education should help in the improvement of human character and recognition of their inner purity, so the essential part of education system should emphasize the values and morals with other development.

XII. DATA ANALYSIS NO. OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO GENDER

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	200	50
Female	200	50
Total	400	100

SHOWING THE RESPONSES ON SCALE

A. Ethical Identity Scale	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Being a good person at school is important to me	254	86	24	36
I respect my professors and always abide by their commands	80	174	64	82
I learnt about ethics in college	144	70	112	74
People at college think I am a good person	88	78	218	16
Being a good person at home is important to me	38	24	254	84
People at home think I am a good person	234	144	18	4
I know what it means to be a good person at home	102	138	118	42
I am a good person at home	238	88	66	8
I am a good person with my friends	264	18	98	20
I agree with most of my friends on what it is to be a good person	32	198	72	98
B. Moral Locus of Control				
It does not matter if you are good or bad	194	G	52	6
I do not mind doing bad sometimes	74	178	86	62
I do what my friends do	240	78	20	62

C. Ethical Self-Regulation				
I have rules for myself that I follow	376	18	2	4
I behave badly	78	94	228	00
Ethics have no value in my life	42	78	214	66
When things go wrong, it's other people's fault	218	164	8	10
I often speak truth	78	156	140	26

SHOWING THE MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF SCALE

Options	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	18	154.1112	99.82448
Agree	18	107.3334	56.91272
Disagree	18	99.6666	81.09326
Strongly Disagree	18	38.8888	32.8148
Valid N (List-wise)	18		

XIII. RESEARCH FINDINGS

✓ Majority of the respondents are positive on greater part of the items of Ethical Identity Scale.
✓ The trend among the respondents for majority of the items in Moral Locus of Control & Ethical Self-Regulation is found to be negative.
✓ Being a good person at school is important for most of the students.
✓ Majority respect their professors and obey their commands, but good number of students don't follow it.
✓ Half of the respondents learnt about ethics in colleges, while the rest half disagreed.
✓ Majority of the students perceived others opinion about their personality as negative at colleges.
✓ Majority of the students do not value being good at home, however majority agreed that they know the importance of being good at home. In addition to that majority of the students also agreed that they are perceived as good by their family members as well as by their own self.
✓ Majority value friendship and are influenced by their friends.
✓ Majority engaged themselves in unethical practices at times.
✓ Majority of them don't care about the attitude of others.
✓ Majority of the students set their own rules to follow.
✓ Majority of the students avoid misbehavior.
✓ Majority value ethics in their lives.
✓ Majority blame others for their faults.
✓ Majority do not speak truth all the time.

XIV. DISCUSSION

✓ Moral development is very important for children since children are energetic and active, self control over various occasions is crucial to judge their adjustability to environment. Their limitations are unbounded and their decisions are often influenced by others. Demotivation can lead them towards negative feeling and unethical practices.
✓ From the table, Section A, it is concluded that majority of the students strongly agree that bit is crucial for them to be good amongst their college friends. It shows that students are possessive about their self-esteem and their rapport among the people involved at college. Self-esteem is very important for them. It comes in children from environment. They learn about self-esteem from school, college and from family. It helps to develop self-control skills, patience, kindness, peace and love. Those children who believe in self-esteem are highly confident, generate positive thinking and take better decisions in life.
✓ Majority of the students agreed that it is wise to obey the command of professors. However a good no. of students also disagree with the same statement. It means that unethical practices prevail among few of the college students and their attitude with professors is not as good as it is expected.
✓ Half of the students learn about ethics in schools, colleges, whereas the rest did not. Moral education is the pillar of ethical grooming. It is often formed as religio Half of the students learn about ethics in schools, colleges, whereas the rest did not. Moral education is the pillar of ethical grooming. It is often formed as religious or character education. Moral education alone is not reaping best products as children are involved in unethical practices these days. The research work also shows this.
✓ From the table, Section B discloses Majority of the students perceive others' opinion about their personality as negative at college. that majority of students have 'don't care.' attitude towards others. It also shows their friend circle highly impact their behavioral pattern.
✓ From the table, Section C discloses that majority follow their rules, Majority don't speak truth whereas majority blames others form wrong act.
✓ All these these three issues reflect presence of unethical practices.

XV. SUGGESTIONS

✓ College can nurture moral and ethical grooming by-

- Prioritizing student professor relationship
- Providing opportunities for students to practice skills
- Providing them leadership role
- Using discipline strategies
- Conducting regular assessment for values
- Dealing with issues intelligently.

✓ Students must also be given chance to have their say.
✓ Students must also be provided with moral education training in schools and colleges.

CONCLUSION

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world"-Nelson Mandela. The declining ethical values in education system will give rise to undisciplined students, unskilled professionals. This trend needs to be addressed if India has to survive as a nation and acquire its due place in the world. Thus the.re is a urgent need to re-introduced value based education in the curriculum dealing speci. fically human values, to redesign the fabric of Indian educational system. An average Indian, whether he is illiterate or educated, morals are the code of conduct stipulated in the sacred and ancient scriptures. Such codes are instilled in a person right from the birth and later fortified by the society and religions. So education should not be a business, rather than it should emphasize on giving the idea and a proper training to all the students on ethical values so that they can be a good citizen of our society**.**

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