

## Professional Ethics: A Component of Professional Development of The Teachers

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### Abstract:

*Professional Ethics is a means to address the wide spread misconduct of the teachers observed in the present schooling system, which can be defined as a set of moral conduct and values of the teachers towards their own students, schools, colleagues, community and profession. It is also an essential component of professional development of teachers in addition to mastery of content knowledge, pedagogical competencies, professional and organisational skills. Professional Ethics can be inculcated in the teachers in the dimensions like subject matter, welfare of the students, relationship with colleagues, students, authority, guardians and community. Code of professional Ethics includes obligation towards students, parents, community and towards their own profession. Strategies like pre-service and in- service training, participation in seminars, conferences and workshops and doing professional courses can be followed to promote ethical values in them. Appropriate reinforcement should be given to the teachers having high moral standard and a controlling mechanism should be followed to reign over the law breakers.*

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Destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms and the teachers are the leaders of their classrooms (Kothari commission 1964-66). Hence teachers are the real destiny makers of the nation for which teaching has been considered as one of the noblest professions in the world since time immemorial. It is rather a sacred service than a profession. Teachers play a pivotal role in every educational system in the world. Their role is not only disseminating knowledge or imparting information but also creating a suitable learning environment, so that all students reach their full potential. They are the role model within themselves for their students who consciously or subconsciously, emulate their behaviour. The relationship between teachers and students has been very important and sensitive one since early Vedic period to till date, which has built a strong foundation, mutual respect and trust with highest ethical standards within them as well as other members like parents, the administrators and other professionals. Therefore, the teacher's have to play a significant role with high moral standards not only for their students and colleagues but also for their schools and the community as a whole, which gives rise to the concept of professional ethics of the teachers.

### I. THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Ethics is defined as a moral philosophy or code of moral conduct practised by a person or group of persons. Basically it is a science of information between the right and wrong. It governs a person's behaviour and dealing with values relating to human conduct with respect to the rightness or wrongness of certain action and to the goodness and badness of the motives of such action (Sinha, 2009). On the other hand professional ethics is a field of applied ethics whose purpose is to define, clarify and criticize professional work and its typical values. It encompasses the personal, organisational and corporate standards of behaviour expected of the

professionals. Professions are characterised sociologically by means of their member. Their service ideal can be understood with reference to value that define the goals of their work, e.g. a Teacher's primary goal is all round development of personality of all students and a Doctor's primary goal is to promote health. Professional ethics can also be understood from the point of view of its service ideal and its related values. Thus professional ethics are the set of broad principles, derived from a spectrum of values, which are arrived at after deep philosophical reflection on the nature and role of the profession (Saxena and Dargan, 2008).

Accordingly, professional ethics of the teachers can be deduced as a set of moral conduct and values of the teacher towards their own students, schools, colleagues, community and professions. Jayamma and Sumangala, 2012 define it as 'a set of dignified principles put into practice by them. They are the valuable tactics that are exhibited and enforced by teachers in relation to the students, colleagues, community and to oneself, to produce a profound effect on strategy of education'. Conduct and character development should be integral part of teaching profession, which can be cultivated through both pre-service and in-service training programme. In this regard IGNOU, 2009 states that the profession of teaching reflects a high degree of academic excellence, repertoire of teaching skills and practical wisdom on one hand and a well-integrated value system on the other, both being oriented towards altruistic service. Thus professional ethics of a teacher is the core of professionalization and forms the base for professional development.

### II. IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN THE LIGHT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHERS

Professional development is a range of learning activities through which professionals improves and broadens their

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knowledge, skills and attitudes and develops their personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional duties (UNICEF, 2014). On the basis of this definition it can be deduced that professional development includes mastery over content knowledge, pedagogical skills, professional competencies, organisation competencies and professional ethics. Hence development professional ethics is an essential component of professional development of teachers. A teacher is known by his professionalism with unparalleled commitment and higher standard of values. He is an embodiment of morality and symbol of sacredness. "Professionalism of teacher has two aspects e.g. knowledge and ethics. So far as knowledge aspects of professionalism is concerned, a professional man is required to have mastery over his subject matter and exercise control over the development and of organised body of knowledge. As regards the ethical aspects of professionalism, a professional person is expected primarily to meet the best interest of the clients whom he serves by dispensing his acquired knowledge and skills with devotion, commitment and with missionary zeal." (Das, 2000). Thus the teacher has to develop professionalism as part of his continuous professional development.

Keeping in view the sacredness of the teaching profession a significant number of teachers have excelled in the profession by exhibiting their exemplary conduct towards their students, colleagues and community. In spite of it the teaching community has been defamed in the contemporary society owing to some teachers having no professionalism within them. There has been a wide spread violation of professional ethics by those teachers when they receive bribe from the students, use the students for their personal purposes, exploit them physically and mentally, discriminate them in the name of caste, creed, class, race, religion and gender. With regards to these allegation made against our teachers, National Policy on Education 1986, stated that "the growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculums in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values". Further the Policy goes forward to assert that teachers' associations must play a significant role in upholding professional integrity, enhancing the dignity of the teachers and in curbing professional misconduct. National level associations of teachers could prepare a Code of Professional Ethics for teachers and to see to its observance.

In this connection National Education Association, 1975 states "the educators recognise the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct". In order to protect the rights of students, to sustain the moral standard of teaching profession and to make the human relationship in the school sacred, worthy, fruitful and productive there is an urgent need of inculcating a well-defined code of professional ethics within them. Hence professional ethics, if inculcated can help the teachers to inspire the teachers to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession, to develop a strong sense of commitment and dedication towards the profession, to

guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching professions, to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession, to make the teachers accountable to their students and community, to accelerate their professional development, to honour the right of the children in the schools, to protect the students from wide spread exploitation, to develop their pedagogical beliefs and competencies, to develop professional and organisational skills to create a sustainable academic atmosphere in the school, to develop interpersonal relationship among the students and colleagues and to maintain the quality of education.

#### **Dimensions of Professional Ethics:**

Professional Ethics can be inculcated in the teachers in the following dimensions.

**Dedication to the subject matter:** In order to keep self-alive and up to date, a teacher is required to acquire new knowledge. This is required to enhance his competence in teaching which is, by and large, contingent upon knowledge of the subject matter and skill in communication. Thus for the survival and growth in teaching profession, its practitioners must be well equipped in the recent trends.

#### **Dedication to the welfare of the students:**

The teacher dedicated himself to the welfare of his students, should truthfully disseminate his expert service solely for the benefit of his students. His interest should be the interest of the students whom he serves. As such, his material comfort and personal interests must be subordinated to the students.

#### **High service motive:**

In teaching, to succeed, a teacher has to be devoted to his work and remain ever ready to help his students. His motivation should emanate from the feeling that he is serving for the cause of upliftment of humanity. Such a service motive is necessary for a teacher to realise himself. Thus if a teacher is propelled by his motive is necessary for a teacher to realise himself. Thus if a teacher is propelled by this motive rather than by socio-economic condition, then teaching would soon attain the status of a recognised profession.

#### **Relation of the teachers and students:**

Maintaining good interpersonal relations with students is considered as a professional role of the teacher. The interaction between the teacher and students should be healthy and congenial. For instance, in the areas of intellectual, cultural, sports and games, the interaction is supposed to be productive, understanding the students, their home backgrounds and dealing with them in an appropriate, but different manner is also expected from the teachers. A judicious blend of both will pay dividends.

#### **Relation of the teacher and his colleagues:**

A sound relationship needs to be established between teacher and his colleagues. Because it would open the door of sharing each one's knowledge and experience which subsequently would contribute in developing mutual confidence among the colleagues. Each must owe a duty to the other to maintain a high level of professional ethics.

#### **Relations of the teacher and the authority:**

For development and betterment of the institution, teacher should cooperate with the authorities in the areas of formation of policies, rules and regulations. Authorities on

the other hand, are also expected not to intervene unnecessarily in the areas in which the teacher enjoys his academic freedom and autonomy.

#### **Relation of the teacher and the guardians:**

Maintenance of regular contact with guardians of the students by the teachers would certainly help mutual exchange of ideas and for the academic benefit of the students and the institutions as well.

#### **Relation of the teacher and the society:**

A sound relation between teacher and society would help the teacher to create awareness in the society of the educational programme being offered. Also the teacher could make parents realize the importance of girl's education, population education and environmental awareness etc.

#### **Code of Professional Ethics of the Teachers:**

In order to inculcate the professional Ethics in teacher there should be a well articulated set of code of ethics. In this regards NCTE (National council for Teacher Education) has prepared a code of professional ethics for school teachers in the context of RTE Act 2009 in consultation with various professional organisations of teachers and other stake holders of education, which is mentioned in the following:-

##### **A. Obligation towards students:**

- Treat all students with love and affection
- Respects the value of being just and impartial to all students irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex, economic status, disability, language and place of birth.
- Facilitates students' physical, social, intellectual, emotional and moral development.
- Respects basic human dignity of the child in all aspects of school life.
- Makes planned and systematic efforts to facilitate the child to actualize his potential and talent.
- Transacts the curriculum in conformity with the values enshrined in the constitution of India.
- Adapts his teaching to the individual needs of students.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the information concerning students and dispenses such information only to those who are legitimately entitled to it.
- Refrains from subjecting any child to fear, trauma, anxiety, physical punishment, sexual abuse and mental and emotional harassment.
- Keeps a dignified demeanour commensurate with the expectations from a teacher as a role model.

##### **B. Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society:**

- Establishes a relationship of trust with parents in the interest of all round development of students.
- Desists from doing anything which is derogatory to the respect of the child or his parents.
- Strives to develop respect for the composite culture of India among students.
- Keeps the country uppermost in mind, refrains from taking part in such activities as may spread feelings of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious or linguistic groups.

##### **C. Obligation towards the Profession and Colleagues:**

- ✓ Strives for his continuous professional development.
- ✓ Creates a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among colleagues and stakeholders
- ✓ Takes pride in the teaching profession and treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity
- ✓ Refrains from accepting any gift or favour that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions
- ✓ Refrains from making unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues or higher authorities
- ✓ Avoids making derogatory statement about colleagues, especially in the presence of pupils, other teachers, officials or parents
- ✓ Respects the professional standing and opinions of his colleagues
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality of information concerning colleagues and dispenses such information only when authorised to do so.

### **III. STRATEGIES OF PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF TEACHERS**

In order to promote professional ethics in the teachers the following strategies are to be followed:-

- All the teacher should be oriented about their code of ethics
- Ethical elements should be imbibed in both the pre-service and in-service training programme of the teachers
- They should be encouraged to be professionally competent and ethically conscious
- All the teachers should be encouraged to be professionally competent. They should continuously participate in seminars, symposia and workshop with illustrations of unethical behaviour of live examples and their profound effects on society being depicted with suggestions of strategies to be followed so as to how to resolve them.
- District level and state level committee should be formulated to resolve the controversial issues related to professional ethics and the violator of ethics should be punished.
- Ethics consultant officers should be set up as a part of Internal Quality Assessment in each institution. All teachers would be informed that experts will be available to advice on ethics.
- Reinforcements should be provided to a teacher who maintains 'no flaw' throughout the year in relationship to students, colleagues and superiors, prizes be instituted and awarded by eminent spiritual personalities.
- Workshop should be organized on inculcation of work ethics like commitment, self-discipline, loyalty and work value of teachers in collaboration of well established spiritual centres.

- Raining programme on dealing with moral dilemmas, moral code of conduct, ethical values should be conducted for teachers to highlight the significance of professional ethics since teachers serve as role models to students.
- Teachers should identify the distinction between facts and values through live examples of day to day functioning of institution.
- Individual relativism and issues of superiority and inferiority should be sorted out through mutual dialogue.
- Prejudices relating to professional ethics of the teachers should be countered with patience and perseverance. In this regard, the heads of the institutions should be visionary leaders of future.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Professional Ethics is a necessary condition of the professionalism of the teacher. Success of the teaching profession significantly depends on it. Ethical education serves as a mainstream in the harmonious development of human personality as a deriving factor in character formation. Hence it is the responsibility of all concerned with teacher education programme to highlights the importance of ethical standards of teachers and inculcate it in them through various strategies mentioned earlier since education along with ethics brings out vital changes in personality of the teachers and leads to peace and harmony in the community. Thus successful inculcation of ethical values can go win back the trust of the students and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession.

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