

"Postulates for Maintaining Ethical Standards in Higher Education"**Dr. Anant L. Zandekar**

M.A., Ph.D

Associate Professor,
Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Law
And Academic Council Member,
Dept. of P.G. Studies and Research
in History and Archaeology,
Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevara University,
Ballari.

Smith (2003) suggests that one of the best ways researchers can avoid and resolve ethical dilemmas is to know both what their ethical obligations are and what resources are available to them. "Researchers can help themselves make ethical issues salient by reminding themselves of the basic underpinnings of research and professional ethics," as per Bullock and Smith (2003). Based on the forgoing, the following postulates are noteworthy:

Reliability and Integrity Research project must be honest and diligent work of the scholar. This applies to the methods employed for the project (what you did), data collection, analysis of results, and whether it has been previously published. One should not make up any data, including extrapolating unreasonably from some of their results, or do anything which could be construed as trying to mislead anyone. It is better to undersell than over-exaggerate your findings. When working with others, one should always keep to any agreements, and act sincerely.

Objectivity

One should focus to avoid bias in any aspect of their research, including design, data analysis, interpretation, and peer review. For example, researcher should never recommend as a peer reviewer someone he know, or who he has worked with, and he should try to ensure that no groups are inadvertently excluded from your research. This also means that there is a need to disclose any personal or financial interests that may affect the research proposal

Genuineness

Researcher should always be prepared to share data and results, along with any new tools that have been developed, when he/she publishes his findings. This helps to further knowledge and advance science. One should also be open to the criticism and new ideas. Work must be reviewed carefully and critically to ensure that the results are credible. It becomes curial to keep full records of your research. If you are asked to act as a peer reviewer, you should take the time to do the job effectively and fully.

Respect for Intellectual Property

One should never plagiarize, or copy, other people's work and try to pass it off as their own. Scholars ought to seek permission before using other people's tools or methods, unpublished data or results. Not doing so is plagiarism. Obviously, one needs to respect copyrights and patents, together with other forms of intellectual property, and always acknowledge contributions to the present research. If in doubt, acknowledge, to circumvent any risk of charge of plagiarism. There is need to show respect for anything data/suggestion/idea that has been provided in confidence. Caution should be taken to follow guidelines on protection of sensitive information such as patient records.

Novelty in Publication

Publication should be done to advance the state of research and knowledge, and not just to advance the career. This means that one should not publish anything that is not new, or that duplicates someone else's work.

Protection of Subjects: Human/Animal

If research involves people, researcher should make sure that he/she minimizes any possible physical harm to the subject, and maximizes the benefits both to participants and other people.

Thus, the researcher should not expose people to more tests than are strictly necessary to fulfill the research aims. One should always respect human/animal rights, including the right to privacy and autonomy. For Humans, the researcher may need to take particular care in the case of vulnerable groups, which include, but are not limited to, children, older people, and those with learning difficulties. Sometimes, researchers may need to take special care in the manner in which they ask individuals to participate in their research, when dealing with a sensitive and fragile segment of group and are seeking personal data.

Agreement for Consent

Researchers must consider whether respondents are competent to give consent and free to volunteer it. In the case of minor (anyone under the age of 18), the consent of parents/guardian must be secure and, if possible and appropriate, the children's assent should also be sought. According to the Indian constitution, children under 18 cannot provide consent as being minors; therefore their parents or legitimate guardians must give consent on their behalf. Children may volunteer their participation for the research project at ground level but this should be done only after due written consent. Audio clipping of conversation with respondent should only be recorded if prior consent is given by them and they fully understand the manner recording will be used. If the researcher plans to use the same setting of recording for the new experiment, he would again require a fresh written consent of the participant giving him the detail description about new study. However, when recording from electronic mass media devices such as television and radio are deployed for the non-profit research, one need to ascertain if a prior consent of the produce/publisher is needed.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Researchers, with authorization from the respondent about their personal details need to exercise due caution that this data in any form (textual, audio or video records) does not accidentally allow them to be accessible. Confidentiality needs to be maintained sensu-stricto, where researcher need to protect the identity of the participant; Anonymity is when the scholar himself is not aware about the particulars of the people being involved in the process of research for example; web survey, questionnaire. If the names of individuals are traceable (for instance, by appealing them to undersign), the study will no longer be qualified as an anonymous study.

The Informed Consent Form is used to ascertain the participants that personal or identification information will be not disclosed and only gross outcomes will be print, or in some cases their assent is taken to identify them with some specific traits (e.g. gender, organization).

Ethically, the respondents should be clearly informed what amount of their personal data will used and what could be the outcomes. The research ethics review process need to consider both the nature of the assurances given to participants and the steps taken by researchers to honors these commitments.

Concerns of Ethics for Teachers in the Academic Structure

The growth and development of youth is the teacher's responsibility, Though the key role of a teacher is to gather knowledge and disseminate the same to his/her students. For this, they need to create a congenial and amicable environment so that stipulated growth and development of the student occurs. The challenging task for the teacher is to accommodate the diversity of pupils as invariably they belong to a varied demography. Thus, it becomes obligatory for the teacher to recognize the desideratum of human growth and development. Such elements are the key indicator for a teacher to direct his effort towards making his/her students conforming to professional competence with an ethical temper. Training to teachers has to be a continuing process so that the teachers are at the cutting edge of their profession and are updated on the contemporary narratives on ethical practices.

"The professional development of a teacher is achieved by exercising the ethical qualities in the specific professional practices of the educational task of teaching' (Sandoval & Rodríguez-Sedano, 2010).

Teachers are held in high esteem for their being synonymous with the ideal code of conduct. Implicitly therefore, a teacher's conduct serves as a catalyst for the change in the society. Under any circumstances, the personal lives of teacher and the conduct in the educational premises should not be at variance. They should provide ample scope for the holistic development of students. The fundamental duty of the teacher is to render their active role in the inculcation of character formation of their students. Sincere efforts are needed for the subjugation of personal interest to societal interest for common good. Further, during evaluation process bias of any kind should be avoided.

Ceaseless endeavor is needed by the teachers to keep themselves on the cutting edge of their profession. Only then that they can enthuse the students on the nuances of science but inculcate in them the spirit of enquiry. Teachers who do not update themselves cease to attract students. Empathy remains the key to generate confidence in the students and then only a teacher can help students to deal with conflicts within and around. Core constitutional values and human dignity are to be suffused in the students by their mentors. Therefore, personality traits of a teacher are compassion, secularism, democratic outlook, uprightness, euphony, and prudence, impeccable and critical analysis.

In pursuance of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1986, 1992), a Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers was jointly developed by the NCERT and the All India Federation of Primary and Secondary School Teacher's Organizations. The preamble to the code provides the resolve of the country's teachers to uphold their professional integrity, strive to enhance the dignity of the profession and to take suitable measures to curb professional misconduct. The professional obligations of a teacher relating to the following are included in the code:

1. Teacher in relation to the pupils,
2. Teacher in relation to parents and guardians,
3. Teacher in relation to the society and the nation,
4. Teacher in relation to profession, colleagues and professional organizations, and
5. Teacher in relation to the management and administration. Thirty principles related to these areas of a teacher's work serve as guidelines for the teachers' conduct. The primary source of these principles is the spirit of the constitution of our republic.

According to UGC report of the task force on code of professional ethics for university and college teachers (1988) whosoever adopts teaching as a profession assumes the obligation to conduct him-/her-self in accordance with the ideals of the profession. A teacher is constantly under the scrutiny of his students and the society at large. Therefore, every teacher should see that there is no incompatibility between his precepts and practice. The national ideals of education which have already been set forth and which he/she should seek to inculcate among students must be his/her own ideals. The profession further requires that the teachers should be calm, patient and communicative by temperament and amiable in disposition.

As alluded to elsewhere in the book, it is worth reiterating that the teacher should:

1. Adhere to a responsible pattern of conduct and demeanour expected of them by the community;
2. Manage their private affairs in a manner consistent with the dignity of the profession;
3. Seek to make professional growth continuous through study and research;
4. Express free and frank opinion by participation at professional meetings, seminars, conferences etc. towards the contribution of knowledge;

5. Maintain active membership of professional organizations and strive to improve education and profession through them;
6. Perform their duties in the form of teaching, tutorial, practical and seminar work conscientiously and with dedication;
7. Co-operate and assist in carrying out functions relating to the educational responsibilities of the college and the university such as: assisting in appraising applications for admission, advising and counselling students as well as assisting in the conduct of university and college examinations, including supervision, invigilation and evaluation, and
8. Participate in extension, co-curricular and extracurricular activities including community service.

Societal values change and seek constant changes/upgradation with time. After the mid-Nineties, economics and industrial goods and services became the fulcrum of development, memorizing facts and rules became the key to professions. In the present times of an economy, that is based on novel skills; brisk technological change; mass cultural adoption of technology; necessitate that the curriculum keeps pace with these trends. A continuing refinement in the curriculum alone can serve the needs of the society and it will be unethical, not to change it.

Another aspect that merits a conscious decision is the evaluation and prioritizing of measuring competence in understanding vs. score in examination in terms of clarity of concepts. A nation with more than a billion of assorted population cannot be evaluated only on a solitary number scale and numbers in a written examination can never be the yardstick for intelligence/competence. Skills such as critical analysis, problem solving, communication, cooperation, digital literacy and creativity covering the whole occupation structure is now a mandate for 21st century. Today in the era of globalization, ample opportunities and privileges are available to the people with knowledge, skills, and capabilities to pursue their livelihoods. Educational institutes need to develop such curriculum which makes students internationally competent. And, changes in the curricula are continually required to ensure that the education system is able to achieve its set intent. Another facet for ethics is the attitude of the teachers towards changes in the curricula. Such changes pose a challenge before the teachers to keep themselves globally competitive.

Embracing advance curriculum demands allegiance and persistence from all the stakeholders. Teachers need to constantly develop new pedagogies and kept abreast with 21st century skills and evaluations procedures and lead by example.

Conclusion

In the forgoing, different aspects of ethics in higher education have been discussed. It is inferred that the primary task of education is to mold future

generations in competent human beings with high cognitive skills with a value system. Since, higher education is the forum that provides academic leadership to the country, it is imperative that ethical consideration should be placed high so that country attains appropriate ethical standards. Therefore, all personnel in higher education should be motivated and trained towards ethical dimensions of education as well. Research ethics needs careful nurturing. Besides laboratory research, ethical aspects of human behavior needs equal emphasis. These call for training of all in areas of humanities, history and social sciences. These will ensure that students and teachers get skilled to understand and appreciate the nuances and value of ethics in all dimensions.

Apart from research ethics there are several other ethical issues that need to be addressed specially in Indian higher education context. Such issues are discussed below and we follow Singh (2018).

Corruption: The major cause of ethical deterioration in education system is rapidly spreading corruption. Corruption in education can include, bribes and illegal fees for admission and examination; academic fraud, withholding teacher salaries or paying them at sub-par level, preferential promotion and placement, teacher absenteeism and illegal practices in the textbook preparation and procurement, meal provision and infrastructure.

Privatization of educational institutions is another major cause for the declining ethical values in education system. The private institutes are unable to produce a complete 'human capital' with ethical standards.

Teacher's absenteeism is another cause of concern. Teachers are the role models of students and in most rural communities, they are the most educated and respected personalities. Teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious causes of ethical declining of education.

Absence of value education in Curriculum: Value education is included in the primary education curriculum but at adult stages, which are the most sensitive stages to build the character of the youth, the curriculum finds no space for value education.

Often the educator's pedagogy is not appropriate and contemporary. To add to this the manner of evaluation stresses on routine remembrance, the rote method. The accumulation or presentation of data is not enough to decide the criteria for quality education.

Guru (teacher) and *Shishya* (taught) bonding based on mutual trust has been compromised. The basic tenets of this tradition are that a student should learn to respect teacher and a teacher should selflessly teach his student do not exist in general.

In the present digital era, there is wide opportunity to make students aware of the moral values and ethical values. It is time appropriate to take necessary actions to explicitly inculcate moral and ethical values in their curriculum and have a practice of formal and informal discussions on daily routine in all aspects from personal to career.

The following suggestions can be implemented:

- Include moral and ethical values in the curriculum.
- Provide value orientation in the curriculum.
- Demystify excessive focus on materialism and money.
- Teach innovatively.
- Conduct programmes on values such as Personal Values, Social Values, Cultural Values, Spiritual Values, National values, Family values, Universal Values.
- Council students based on their individual persona.
- Develop community oriented activities and discuss social issues and their solutions.
- Moral science be introduced as a subject even at the higher education levels.
- Teacher is provided appropriate respect by the society in terms of facilities and remuneration and in turn they should serve as inspirers and guiding person.
- Training in social conduct, inculcate the values in daily life, control of emotions, compassion leading to responsible, socially acceptable citizen be a part of curriculum.

To achieve the above, a strong intervention is needed so that the entire system of higher education may also carry cultural, ethical components. Necessary pre-service and in-service intervention at university level may help. While preparing the students, mere focus to cognitive domain should be accompanied by balanced view of the value system. Gandhi advocated development of heart along with nurturing a mind that is full of cognitive abilities. A higher education system with such a wholesome template is the need.