



The Role of Professional Ethics in Teacher Education in The Light of NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

Ethics or grounding principles are integral parts of each and every profession. Professional ethics can be defined as the optimum standards of behaviour. Teachers, as professionals, are engaged in one of the ethically most demanding occupations which is education of a whole generation. The combination of knowledge, skill and competence makes a teacher effective in his/her subject or classroom situation but the integration of professional ethics with all these qualities, can make a teacher an ideal one. Maintaining professional ethics can make a teacher a successful leader and motivator and in this process, the learners can also find a role model who inspires them throughout their lives.

In the contemporary world, degradation of professional ethics has created various problems in the educational institutions and also in the society and the teaching-learning process is most affected. The consequences are mirrored in teacher absenteeism, irregularities during examinations, lack of communication between teachers and learners etc. Teachers are not only professionals, they bear some moral roles and responsibilities which make them distinct from any other professionals. Hence, professional ethics should be an integral part of contemporary teacher education programmes so that the teachers learn about the expected behaviours and norms which they have to follow for a life-time as the proverb says, once a teacher always a teacher. NEP 2020 specially emphasized on Teacher Education as it prepares school teachers who shape the future generations of the country. It aimed to develop a pedagogy which is more flexible, holistic and integrated to enable the learners to be ethical and rational. The present study seeks to explore the meaning of professional ethics, its role and importance in teacher education programmes specifically as reflected in NEP 2020.

Keywords : *Professional Ethics, Teacher Education, NEP 2020*

INTRODUCTION

Ethics or grounding principles are integral parts of each and every profession. Professional ethics are the moral values intrigued with each profession and it can be defined as the optimum standards of behaviour. Teachers, as professionals, are engaged in one of the most ethically demanding professions i.e. the education of the next

generation. Their behaviour and decisions, as an individual, may directly or indirectly impact the lives of many young people and the society at large. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers should constantly reflect on their activities and commitments to ensure that they exhibit the best ethical example possible. On the other hand, setting up such example on a daily basis requires a level of emotional engagement and commitment which only an ethical teacher can abide by. In order to make teachers ethically aware, the pre-service teacher education programmes should include the study of professional ethics in the curriculum.

This National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is the very first education policy of India in the 21st century and it emphasized on professional standards of teachers at all levels where professional ethics and values occupy an essential place.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teachers are the makers of all other professionals. Teachers have massive responsibilities as they are the inspiration, role models and motivators for thousands of learners both inside and outside the classroom (Green, 2010; Paschal, 2023). Students learn from a teacher's conduct, actions, sense of discipline, values and ethics. Therefore, teachers' responsibility is not only to equip the learners with knowledge, skills and latest technological innovations but also to build their moral character. Teachers with profound knowledge on professional ethics have always enhanced the all-round development of the learners (Boon, 2011; Paschal, 2023). Professional ethics guide teachers to act ethically in demanding situations (Paschal, 2023). Professional ethics develop ethical awareness, accountability and compassion among the teachers (Paschal, 2023). Therefore, the teachers feel a sense of commitment towards their profession as well as the students. According to Rawat, Karkare & Yadav (2015), teachers always attempt to set up the best ethical example possible so that the learners can develop highest ethical standards. In fact, teachers are responsible and accountable to maintain the dignity and integrity of the profession (Rawat, Karkare & Yadav, 2015). Before entering in this ethically demanding profession, the aspirants should be well versed with the work ethics a teacher (Sherpa, 2018). Lack of professional ethics in teachers has resulted in various unfortunate events and raised ethical issues in the contemporary world (Paschal, 2023).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research work are as follows –

To know the importance of professional ethics in teacher education.

To recognize the consequences of lack of professional ethics among teachers.

To acknowledge the suggestions and recommendations of NEP 2020 on professional ethics and teacher education.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is qualitative in nature and has been conducted with the help of journals, articles, NEP 2020, preliminary draft of NPST etc. Descriptive analytic method has been used for the study.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND TEACHERS

Teachers, as professionals, are engaged in the process of making all other professions happen. Teachers have massive responsibilities as they are the inspiration, role models and motivators for thousands of students. In the school settings and even at the society level, teachers are highly trusted and considered to be role models in school and in the community (Paschal & Mkulu, 2020). From this notable standing point, teachers are the key element to ensure that learners are equipped with relevant skills, knowledge, values and attitudes. Professional ethics can strengthen student-teacher relationship. All the teachers are obliged to foster virtues such as integrity, persistence, responsibility, cooperation, loyalty, commitment and respect for everyone. Teachers should always stay away from conflict between their professional work and personal interests. The teachers should be impartial and must not discriminate any student on the basis of gender, race, caste, religion, language or any other criterion. The teachers must abide by the rules and regulations of the educational institutions and in this process the learners can also learn discipline and responsibility. Teachers should demonstrate respect for spiritual and cultural values, diversity, social justice, freedom, democracy and the environment. Teachers should uphold human dignity and promote equality. teachers should emphasize on integrity through their professional commitments, responsibilities and actions.

However, teaching as a profession goes beyond meeting these formal characteristics or criteria. It also includes emotions that are at the heart of teaching. The combination of the formal criteria & informal requirements, along with changing student learning needs has led to the evolution of teaching profession and the role of a teacher.

WHY TEACHER EDUCATION IS CONCERNED?

Completion of teachers' training programme is compulsory for all the teachers engaged in school education whether in primary or elementary or secondary or higher secondary schools. Consequently, there is no denying of the fact that teacher education programme is an absolute pre-requisite for all the teachers. If teachers are to become ethically aware then the pre-service teacher education programme is the most important place for the inclusion of ethical content and commitments required in the teaching profession. The teacher must inculcate the fundamental professional ethics and values within them before entering into teaching profession. Hence, teacher education programme should not only include necessary pedagogical approaches but also the ethics and human and Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice which make teachers distinct from other professionals.

As teacher educators are preparing teachers of tomorrow, there is a need for them to demonstrate professional ethics to inculcate values in the society at large. NEP 2020 recommended that the teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy. And secondly, preparation of professionals must involve an education in the ethics, an education in the discipline,

RESULTS OF LACK OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Teacher Absenteeism: Teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious causes of ethical declining of education which greatly reduces the overall effectiveness of the institute, reduces students' achievements, damages the institute's reputation and induces student absenteeism.

Biased Attitude towards Learners: lack of professional ethics makes teachers biased or partial towards some learners while others are deprived from teachers' attention during classes.

Unfair Assessment: Lack of professional ethics can affect the assessment process as teachers sometimes grade the students based on their personal relationships, biased attitude etc.

Lack of Teacher-Student Relationship: Teacher-student relationship is one of the most sacred relationships which is based on love, respect and trust. Teachers who lack ethical behavior and commitments, cannot be trusted by the students. Thus, the teacher-student relationship cannot bloom.

Use of Abusive Languages: In some cases, it has also been found that teachers use abusive languages towards the students which is unethical.

NEP 2020 ON TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

NEP 2020 aims at producing engaged, productive and contributing citizens capable of rational thinking and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound moral and ethical values. That is why NEP 2020 believes that the teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system because they truly shape our next generation of citizens or the future of our country.

Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of schoolteachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values and development of practice under the best mentors. All teacher education programmes should also emphasize the practice of the Fundamental Duties (Article 51A) of the Indian Constitution along with other Constitutional provisions while teaching any subject or performing any activity.

Based on the recommendations of NEP 2020 on teacher education and training, a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, (NCFTE 2022) is drafted to guide all teacher education, pre-service and in-

service programmes of teachers working in academic, vocational and special education streams. The policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of the institutions must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties and Constitutional values and a conscious awareness of one’s roles and responsibilities in a changing world.

As per the recommendations of NEP 2020, a common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) was to be developed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) by 2022. NPST ensures that all students at all levels of school education are taught by passionate, motivated, highly qualified, professionally trained and well-equipped teachers.



Source: NPST Preliminary Draft

NPST has divided the teachers into four categories according to their performance criteria and has delimited their duties on different standards. Standard I which is core ethics and values has been divided into 2 domains of i. Constitutional values and ii. Professional ethics and values. Based on performance criteria, the teachers are divided into four categories of Beginner teacher, Proficient teacher, Expert teacher and Lead teacher. In the following table, we can see that the role of different level teachers has been explained lucidly about how they should behave and how they can inculcate professional ethics and values among the students.

Table 1 : Standard I – Core Ethics and Values

Domain	Performance Criteria			
	Beginner Teacher Level	Proficient Teacher Level	Expert Teacher Level	Lead Teacher Level
Constitutional Values	Demonstrate knowledge of the constitutional values	Embrace & practice constitutional values of the nation	Encourage students & peers to respect constitutional values	Promote the importance of constitutional values in the wider community
Professional ethics & values (like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, etiquette, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of	Recognise the importance of upholding professional ethics and values	Illustrate practices and apply ethics and values in professional relations and teaching practice	Employ personal and professional strengths to uphold ethical standards and promote positive values among students	Determine & model exemplary ethical standards and values by exercising sound judgements

service, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice)			and colleagues	
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Source: NPST preliminary Draft

CONCLUSION

Teaching is considered one of the most noble professions globally and is associated with social progress. With the evolution in the education system and changing role of teachers, enhancing teacher quality becomes of utmost importance for long-term and sustainable nation-building. With changing times, a teacher's role has transformed from that of a knowledge provider to a facilitator and a mentor. They are the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values that need to be imparted to the students in order to make engaged, productive and contributing citizens.

A profession is defined in its shared knowledge and expertise and its shared commitment to defend its standards of practice. A profession's ethical commitment to protecting its standards is exercised in the interests of its members and society in general. The professional teaching standards highlight the improvements to be made in the profession of teaching to contribute to the country's progress. As the demographics and the needs of society changed over time, the role, the method, and the structure of teaching kept on evolving. It has led to the continuous evolution of the education system and teacher education.

The major problem in teacher education programme in India is the un-relatedness of the theoretical discourses at the training college and classroom realities (Rawat, Karkare & Yadav; 2015). In order to prepare the teachers for real classroom situation, it is imperative to reintroduce value-based education, spiritual education and ethical education in the teacher education curriculum which should deal with decrease in human values, ethical values, rational thinking in the education system. Therefore, for successful teaching, the knowledge of professional ethics and its implementation is very essential for teachers.

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