

PALLAVI ENGINEERING COLLEGE

HANDBOOK

ON

HUMAN VALUES

AND

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Introduction

Education is the prime agency of developing people who in turn develop the society. If the education is right, the resulting society will be harmonious and fearless; otherwise it is just a crowd or even a battlefield where man's greatest fear is the inhuman conduct of others towards him. The purpose of education is to enable the students to live a responsible and happy life - in harmony with family, society and nature. Is our current education providing it? Clearly, in the hurry to provide livelihood training, it seems to be missing its basic purpose. We are producing engineers who do not assimilate the basic ethics of professional and personal life.

Ethics is the foundation of human relationships. The purpose and role of ethics has always been the preservation of the human being as a person, human dignity, and the conditions for leading a good life. Most of the engineering is performed by profit-making organizations operating within a complex structure of societal and regulatory constraints. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life of people and the services provided by engineers are required to take into consideration the safety, health and welfare of the public.

Relevance:

The world is going through a rapid transition. Globalization is a process which is bringing the world closer economically. However, there is also increasing deprivation and conflicts within societies. Globalization is also resulting in several conflict points around the world. The issue of climate change and damage to nature is also staring at us in the face! India is both a beneficiary and a victim of the effects of globalization. India is developing rapidly, but unless we are careful this development can come at the cost of lack of regard for families and the underprivileged. There is also a disregard for an ethical society; as a result one sees rampant corruption in life. The drive for garnering physical facilities has become the sole goal of the young people, who are driven by their parents and peers to work within a competitive paradigm. The result is an intense pressure on young people to perform at the cost of everything else, whereby the very purpose of life and living itself tend to get neglected. There is greater strife in family wherein relationships are weakening. Disregard for underprivileged is an outcome of the overall scenario. So also disregard for ethical life.

All these societal transformations present the educational sector and especially education professionals with new challenges. The development of a knowledge-based society and the globalization process are creating new social and individual needs in the areas of culture, scientific and technological development, social cohesion, education, the position and the role of an individual as a citizen as well as in the area of an individual's personal and moral development.

Education, given its importance in knowledge production, transfer and in preparing an individual for further life and work, has gained considerable prominence along with science as one of the fundamental pillars of societal development. Within such a framework ethics education has a significant role in forming an ethically mature human beings.

Objectives:

- a. To help the students appreciate the essential complementarity between 'VALUES' and 'SKILLS' to ensure sustained happiness and prosperity which are the core aspirations of all human beings?
- b. To facilitate the development of a Holistic perspective among students towards life, profession and happiness, based on a correct understanding of the Human reality and the rest of existence. Such a holistic perspective forms the basis of Value based living in a natural way.
- c. To highlight plausible implications of such a Holistic understanding in terms of ethical human conduct, trustful and mutually satisfying human behaviour and mutually enriching interaction with Nature.
- d. To create an awareness on Engineering Ethics and Human Values.
- e. To understand social responsibility of an engineer.
- f. To appreciate ethical dilemma while discharging duties in professional life.

Outcomes:

- It ensures students sustained happiness through identifying the essentials of human values and skills.
- It facilitates a correct understanding between profession and happiness
- It helps students understand practically the importance of trust, mutually satisfying human behavior and enriching interaction with nature.
- Ability to develop appropriate technologies and management patterns to create harmony in professional and personal life.
- The core aspiration of every human being is prosperity and sustained happiness. This can be achieved only by appreciating the essences of values and Skills and this course enables to achieve these values.

- It facilitates holistic growth by imparting holistic perspective forms which is the basis of value based living in a natural way facilitating holistic perception of harmony at all levels of existence.
- It enhances the idea of self-exploration and self-realization, identifying the „I “with the Body .i.e Sanyam and swasthya.
- It strengthens technological methods both at the level of individual and at the level of society for harmony and eco-friendly systems of humanity.

How to achieve this?

In our educational institutions, the manifest problems range from self-centeredness, acute competitiveness and insensitivity towards 4 others - to indiscipline and violence in various forms, addiction to drugs etc. and in the extreme cases, depression and apathy towards life itself leading to suicides. Many students, who enjoyed learning and creativity in schools, lose interest in academics rapidly after joining higher profession institutions. They are carried away more by the peer pressure rather than by their own natural acceptance. Their self-confidence also dwindles and they usually find it difficult to manage themselves.

Students, and Teachers, are under tremendous peer pressure. Being with the in-crowd is a priority, and many have adopted a life style of sleeping late, waking up late, eating out, branded clothing, dating, watching movies, TV, electronic gaming and internet chatting. This promotes casualness, a non-serious attitude towards work and life and it shows up as lack of hard work in studies, and later at work. And the hostel environment promotes this.

A result of this is the production of graduates who tend to join into a blind race for wealth, position and jobs. Even so, a very high percentage of graduates are not job-ready and/or do not find employment. Often it leads to misuse of the skills; and confusion and wealth that breeds chaos in family, problems in society, and imbalance in nature. . The mindset of the students today indicates an increasing trend towards mutual mistrust, strife, terrorism, crimes and corruption etc. in the society of the next few years if we continue with the same recipe. Human beings’ conduct is largely decided by their education.

Character education is also a relatively specific form of ethics education, focusing primarily on character development, e.g. development of moral virtues, habits and other aspects of character, which then translates into morally right action. Especially in the past it has been the primary form of ethics education, using role-models and exemplars as a key tool. In modernity it started slowly to lose its appeal and relevance, primarily due to secularization and focus on rules of conduct.

Sometimes citizenship education is the framework, which also encompasses aspects of ethics education. Citizenship education is primarily focused on development and promotion of active citizenship, i.e. encouraging individuals to play a better part in democratic society. “Pupils are expected to learn in three areas: knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens; developing the skills of enquiry and communication; developing skills of participation and responsible action”

Moral education is often focused on learning about belief systems, value systems and practices of other traditions and viewpoints, to explore them and develop understanding and respect of them, particularly from the perspective of how they affect action and how they can peacefully coexist. Nord and Haynes (2015) state that moral education encompasses two major aspects. The first is “moral socialization”, which means training and nurturing in children key norms, values and virtues, which are dominantly recognized in the society as enabling flourishing and good life. The second aspect concerns developing intellectual resources, skills and competencies, which enable for well informed and responsible moral judgments, decisions and actions. One purpose of moral education is to help make children virtuous, honest, responsible, and compassionate. Another is to make mature students informed and reflective about important and controversial moral issues.

In today’s education system students are nurtured in a spirit of excessive competition and are trained right from the beginning to relate to aggressive competition and facts detached from contexts. The individualistic idea of excellence is promoted at the cost of emotional and relational skills. Young learners hardly understand why they are in school, why they are studying different subjects and how their schooling will be helpful to them. Their understanding is limited to learning about the subjects. They hardly know how they should live their lives, commit themselves to the welfare of the country, and care about the environment other social and moral issues. They are not clear as to what sort of persons they hope to become when they complete their school education. Education of this kind turns children into machines. Such a perspective defeats the very purpose of education - the wholesome development of personality including ethical development which is fundamental for making responsible decision making in case of moral conflicts.

Activities:

1. A field trip/ visit to **any place in the town, village or district** (in which the college is located) That is **associated with a person of noble ideals**. The person need not be famous. He/She could be a philanthropist/ educationist/ social worker.

2. A visit to the **Gram Panchayat / Mandal Parishad Office / Zilla Parishad Office / Municipal Corporation or any local governing body**. (Talk to some of the officials and find out about various aspects related to the functioning of that institution - meet members of the public - reason for visit - e-governance or paper files)
3. A visit to a **local government school** (strength of classes—mid-day meals –whether provided—whether more girls or boys (if co-ed)—reasons for drop outs— talk with teachers, students)
4. A visit to a **cyber café** (talk to owner and users— how often users visit— primary purpose – is it to check email, jobs, surfing— social networking—their opinion about need for government control—parental supervision)
5. A visit to an **old age home/ vrudhashram** (how many inmates—why are they staying there—where are their children—voluntary choice or forced—are they happy—facilities)
6. A visit to a **Hotel** (how big—items served—hygiene— whether small children being employed—talk to owner / waiters / cleaners — pay — living conditions)
7. A visit to a **Raitu Bazaar / Sabji Mnadi** (how big—variety of vegetables—cost—from where brought—profits—problems)
8. A visit to an **Industry** (what is being manufactured—number of workers—safety precautions—working conditions—pay protection)
9. **Invite elders of the locality** (including parents) to give talks about social evils like dowry, caste system, gender discrimination and also about the generation gap/ need to take care of elders/ duties as a member of society.
10. Set aside half a day for **cleaning the premises** of the college and **planting a few saplings**. The saplings should be taken care of and watered every day by the students themselves.

Conclusion:

The mark of an educated person, wrote Plato in *The Republic*, is the willingness to use one's knowledge and skills to solve the problems of society. Education must empower individuals with a proactive social conscience. Society is the empowering context for individuals. No one can become fully human or attain dignity and fulfilment outside the web of relationships and responsibilities presupposed in society. True education equips individuals to live creatively, responsibly, and with peace in a society and become agents of change for a better society.
