CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN TEACHING CURRICULUM: A STRATEGY TO INCULCATE VALUES AND MORALS AMONG TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT
Teacher education should prepare the future teachers for the ethical challenges of their profession which is not easy in a versatile and changing reality. Evidence suggests that professional ethics is currently a neglected topic in India. Professional ethics is not meant to be a burden but an important source of inspiration in the teacher’s work. It could direct the relation between the teacher and other people and the teacher’s attitude towards work and his/her duties. The purpose of defining some ethical principles and studying them together is to make people conscious of the special ethical nature that is or should have been an integral part of the teacher’s work. The principles are meant to encourage professional sensitivity, identity, responsibility and empowerment, to give teachers courage and confidence in their choices when guiding pupils in their orientations and decisions. The Code of Professional Ethics for teachers provides a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Increased awareness of the ethical principles governing the teaching profession is essential to ensure ‘professionalism’ among teachers.

Recently there has been a sudden increase in the teacher education institution in various states of India that has no doubt lead to wealth of educational options in remote areas for all; however it has also resulted in dilution of quality, infrastructure, human resource etc, along with an absence of professional ethics. Several professionals like doctors and lawyers have very old codes of ethics. These professionals’ role in the society and the basic values of their tasks has been clear to promote and cherish health and to safeguard justice. Teaching is an old craft but it has not necessarily been included in the group of professions, which demand special expertise, autonomy and action according to the joint basic value basis. Teachers’ actions have been controlled by law, but in some countries codes of ethics have been drafted. It is thus requirement of present times to have a code of conduct that recognizes teaching as a profession in line with other professions such as law and medicine. The code of conduct in short, provides a set of principles which will assist teachers to solve ethical dilemmas and guide them in their everyday conduct and also encourages the highest standards of action in all teachers, in their relationships with students, parents and colleagues, by setting out clear statements of expectation. The Code of professional ethics mainly focuses on the following three main spokes of the teaching learning process: Obligations towards Students, Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society and Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues. Ethics of teaching is necessary as a subject included in education of teachers which enables them to identify properly problems of their profession and find possible ways of solution of moral problems. Other reason for ethics of teaching is to bring teachers to knowledge how to teach pupil to evaluate their own behaviour, to distinguish good or bad manners, right or wrong behaviour etc. Ethics of teaching works also with analysis of moral problems of teaching and tries to find solutions and give instruction for solution of real moral problems that can exist in daily practice of the teaching profession. It is also often resulting in formulation of codes of ethics for teachers, for the teaching profession.
INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a pivotal role as front liners in every education system. Their role is not simply that of disseminating knowledge or imparting information, it goes far beyond as their role is to create a stimulating learning environment to ensure that all students reach their full potential.

They are role models within themselves for their students who, consciously or subconsciously, emulate their behaviour. They instil values and morals that influence the lives of their students. Also, their responsibility is to understand the needs of their students even outside the school and the responsibility to nurture and to cherish. The relationship between teacher and a student is a very important and sensitive one. It must be built on strong foundations, stemming from mutual respect and trust as well as on the highest of ethical standards. Thus, it is universally felt that like all other professions, the teaching profession should also have its own Code of Professional Ethics which indeed is a prerequisite to ensure its dignity and integrity. Several professionals like doctors and lawyers have very old codes of ethics. These professionals’ role in the society and the basic values of their tasks has been clear to promote and cherish health and to safeguard justice. Teaching is an old craft but it has not necessarily been included in the group of professions, which demand special expertise, autonomy and action according to the joint basic value basis. Teachers’ actions have been controlled by law, but in some countries codes of ethics have been drafted. It is thus requirement of present times to have a code of conduct that recognizes teaching as a profession in line with other professions such as law and medicine. All professionals are proud to have a Professional Code of Ethics and Practice which is a most important identifying feature of their profession. This Code of Ethics and Practice was drawn up by educators for educators and contains the commitments that a professional has towards the students / pupils and their parents / guardians / careers as well as to other members of the profession. The Code of Professional Ethics for teachers provides a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Increased awareness of the ethical principles governing the teaching profession is essential to ensure ‘professionalism’ among teachers. The Code sets out the key principles of good conduct and practice for teachers. It is intended to guide teachers’ practice judgments and decisions and inform parents, and the community of these standards. It also informs members of the community of the standards expected of teachers. It is not, however, a definitive or exhaustive guide. Neither should it be read as a blueprint to be followed unreflectively by teachers. The Code is intended to encourage teachers to adopt an informed approach to their teaching and its contexts and to reflect on the good and correct practices as professional teachers. It is also significant that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 entrusts teachers with some professional responsibilities to be internalized by them in the performance of their duties. Accordingly, it is considered necessary that the Code of professional Ethics be evolved and adopted by the teaching community. A teacher shall endeavour to be a role model and shall act within the community in a manner which enhances the prestige of the profession.

Importance & need of ethics in teaching curriculum

Taking into account modern problems of education and upbringing, it is necessary to consider ethics of teaching as an inevitable subject in education of future teachers and their additional education; this subject would solve problems of the teaching profession that are more and more discussed in the present time. With start of democracy many ethical and moral problems seem to appear more often; they need solution and must not be ignored because neglecting could have great consequences. Ethics of teaching is necessary as a subject included in education of teachers which enables them to identify properly problems of their profession and find possible ways of solution of moral problems. Other reason for ethics of teaching is to bring teachers to knowledge how to teach pupil to evaluate their own behaviour, to distinguish good or bad manners, right or wrong behaviour etc. The importance and need of professional ethics in teaching curriculum may be explained by the following six key principles:
To maintain trust in the profession

Members of the Teaching Profession shall:

- Base their relationship with students on mutual trust and respect;
- Have regard to the safety and wellbeing of students under their responsibility;
- Respect the uniqueness and diversity of the learning community they are part of;
- Work in a collaborative manner with colleagues and other professionals;
- Develop and maintain good relationships with parents and guardians;
- Act with honesty, integrity and fairness;
- Be sensitive to the need for confidentiality where appropriate;
- Take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their professional practice;
- Uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession; and
- Create learning experiences which engage, motivate and challenge students in an inclusive setting with a lifelong learning perspective.

To maintain professional relationships with students

- Maintain professional boundaries whilst in school and out of school, avoid improper physical contact, avoid inappropriate communication via any form of media and avoid inappropriate relationships with students. The members of the teaching profession are duty bound to maintain a professional distance;
- Refrain from taking advantage of professional relationships with students for their own personal benefit, including by giving private lessons to students from the classes they teach or who are under their administrative responsibility, against payment, whether monetary or in kind;
- Conduct pastoral interventions with students professionally, and behave in keeping with their unique position of trust and status as role models;
- Follow behavior management and safe schools policies and guidelines as directed by the relevant school, college and education authorities;
- Act appropriately towards students exercising care in their language, gestures and attitudes, ensuring that they do not act in such a manner that is embarrassing or disparaging and ensuring that they do not use abusive language or offensive names or make inappropriate remarks; and
- Act with a professional attitude and behaviour at all times.

To respect the uniqueness and diversity of students

Members of the Teaching Profession shall:

- Demonstrate respect for diversity, maintain fairness and promote equality irrespective of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, age, language or different needs or abilities;
- Maintain an up to date knowledge and understanding of, implement and comply with, current child protection procedures;
- Maintain an up to date knowledge of guidelines issued nationally;
To work in a collaborative manner with colleagues, parents and guardians

Members of the Teaching Profession shall:

- Work in a collegiate and cooperative manner with colleagues and other professionals who work in multidisciplinary teams officially recognized by the education authorities;
- Respect, support and collaborate with colleagues both in matters concerning the education of students as well as in maintaining relations with colleagues in the highest standards of professional courtesy;
- Be prepared to help junior colleagues and those in training and induction in all possible ways;
- Respect the authority of senior professional colleagues while retaining the right to express professional opinion and dissent;
- Not reprimand, censure, rebuke or criticize any colleague, or any other member of the teaching profession, in the presence of students or in public;
- Refrain from making public statements which bring the profession into disrepute;
- Develop and maintain good relationships between home and school, respecting the role that parents, guardians and careers have in students’ education;
- Engage and work positively with parents, as far as possible, in an open and respectful way;
- Ensure that their communications with parents, students and colleagues comply with those policies and procedures issued at school or college level, as well as those educational policies and procedures issued at national level;
- Demonstrate respect for diversity when dealing with colleagues, parents, guardians or careers in their capacity as partners in the educative process; and
- Make every effort to encourage parents, guardians and careers to interest themselves actively in the education and welfare of children in their care.

To act with honesty and integrity

Members of the Teaching Profession shall:

- Comply with policies and procedures issued at school, college or national education level, regarding to the use of property, facilities, finances and ICT in their educational setting;
- Conduct assessment and examination related tasks with integrity and in compliance with official regulations and procedures;
- Represent themselves, their experience, professional position and qualifications honestly;
- Only disclose confidential information within the parameters allowed by legislation;
- Be mindful of their position as a role model to students; and
- Both in their personal and professional life, be mindful of their behavior and attitude, being that these may have an impact on the profession they represent.

To keep their professional knowledge and practice up to date

Members of the Teaching Profession shall:

- Maintain high standards of practice in relation to teaching and learning, classroom management, planning, monitoring, assessment and reporting;
Keep their professional knowledge and skills updated throughout their teaching career;

Keep updated their knowledge of relevant guidelines and educational developments in their teaching post and role and in relation to teaching in general;

Reflect upon and evaluate their practice as part of their continuing professional development;

Be open and respond positively to constructive feedback regarding their teaching practices; and

Seek support, advice and guidance where necessary.

**Code for professional ethics drafted by different organisations**

**Code developed by Victorian institute of teaching**

The code framed by Victorian institute of teaching can serve as guidelines to develop similar code of conducts suitable to our local needs. The code of conduct stated as follows:

- Encourages the highest standards of action in all teachers, in their relationships with students, parents and colleagues, by setting out clear statements of expectation.
- Provides a set of principles which will assist teachers to solve ethical dilemmas and guide them in their everyday conduct.
- Provides a public statement about how those who work as teachers will behave and how the profession expects to be viewed and ultimately judged.
- Promotes public confidence in the teaching profession.

**Code developed by national council for teacher education**

National Council for Teacher Education has come out with guidelines of code of professional ethics for teachers in December 2010 which are framed keeping in mind the following considerations:

- Recognizing that every child has an inherent potential and talent;
- Recognizing that education should be directed to the all-round development of the human personality;
- Recognizing the need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity, viz., democracy, social justice and secularism;
- Recognizing the need to promote through education the concept of composite culture of India and a sense of national identity;
- Recognizing that teachers, being an integral part of the social milieu, share the needs and aspirations of the people;
- Recognizing the need to enhance self-esteem of teachers;
- Recognizing the need to organize teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialized skills and dedication are pre-requisites;
- Recognizing that the community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers’ professionalism; and
- Recognizing the need for self-direction and self-discipline among members of the teaching community,
This Code of Ethics for Educators was developed by the distinguished AAE Advisory Board and by the Executive Committee of AAE. It contains four basic principles relating to the rights of students and educators. The professional educator strives to create a learning environment that nurtures the potential of all students. The professional educator acts with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. The professional educator responsibly accepts that every child has a right to an uninterrupted education free from strikes or any other work stoppage tactics.

- Principle I: Ethical conduct toward students
- Principle II: Ethical conduct toward practices and performance
- Principle III: Ethical conduct toward professional colleagues
- Principle IV: Ethical conduct toward parents and community

Basic principles as listed for teachers in Tasmania

Members of the teaching profession of Tasmania are committed to the principles of:

Dignity, Respect, Integrity, Empathy and Justice

- Teachers honour the Principle of Dignity by upholding the intrinsic worth of all persons, including self, students, colleagues and parents.
- Teachers honour the Principle of Respect by having due regard for the feelings, rights and traditions of all persons and by developing relationships that are based on mutual respect and trust.
- Teachers honour the Principle of Integrity by acting impartially and responsibly and by being honest, trustworthy and accountable with regard to the obligations that concern the profession.
- Teachers honour the Principle of Empathy by being aware of the feelings and perspectives of others and by being open-minded and responding compassionately.
- Teachers honour the Principle of Justice by being fair and reasonable and committed to the wellbeing of individuals, the community and the common good.

Challenges and constraints in the implementation of professional ethics in teaching curriculum

In the implementation of the Code of Professional Ethics, there were a number of challenges especially in India and other developed countries. According to S.Sreedhara Swamy (1992), “Formulation of a code of professional ethics for teachers and voluntarily enforcing it on the members is one area which has been almost completely neglected by the professional organizations of teachers in the country”.

- Can ethics training / education be self-paced or does it require facilitation and / or team learning?
- If the workplace is the focus of ethics training how does the employer ensure consistency in approach to ethics training?
- Is ethics training a process of learning the prevailing (and system sanctioned) codes of behavior? How can the requirement for ethics training be reconciled with best practice in professional learning?
- Is ethics training more effective following periods of experience in the workplace? E.g. extended practicum or internship?
- Is it possible to train people in ethical conduct?
Is the use of case studies an effective strategy in ethics training
Should ethics training be delivered as part of pre-service training rather than during the induction phase?

CONCLUSION
Among all profession “Teaching” is the most important one as it creates all other professions. Teachers play a pivotal role in every education system; they are the role models for their students who emulate their behavior; they instill values and morals that influence the lives of their students; they should develop appropriate ethics and moral values among them so that they can inculcate the same values among their students. It is thus a requirement of present times to have a code of conduct that recognizes teaching as a profession in line with other professions such as law and medicine. Thus, teacher education should definitely include Code of Professional Ethics and in the curriculum as this implementation will enhance the power, prestige and status of the teacher in particular and of the teaching profession as a whole.

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