

# Human Values *and* Professional Ethics

M.L. Sharma



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# ***Human Values and Professional Ethics***

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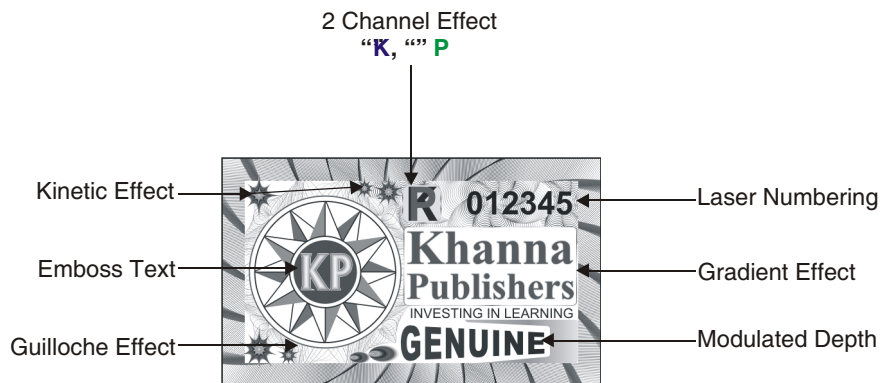
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## *Preface*

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*Excess of knowledge and power, without Values make human beings devils-  
said Swami Vivekananda*

**Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**, an Indian philosopher, academic, statesman, and a former President of India, put it succinctly; “Education is not only imparting information or training of skills. It has to give the educated a proper sense of values.”

There has been a rapid progress in increasing the literacy rate in the world but the quality of education has not improved rather it has declined. The number of educated people has reached at a high level, but the character building has not kept pace with the time. There is a plethora of educational institutions including professional and technical education institutes. We have today, classroom based, correspondence based, and online/offline based medium of imparting education across all streams of courses. In addition to regular educational institutions, we also have mushrooming of countless coaching centres across the country, to enhance the educational performance of students. Is it all adding up to producing students with strong values of character and a commitment to serve the society morally and ethically? Degrees are available for all, but the dignity has gone down. We are witnessing corruption everywhere around, cheating, exploitation, discrimination and a race for large scale accumulation of wealth with all fair and unfair means. Seems, values have been given a go by. Therefore, a great need for imparting Value-Based Education in our institutions.

Education should make every individual capable physically, mentally, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Universal ideals of “love, peace, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, co-existence and non-violence” should be inculcated in all students. These values are truly indispensable to develop a humane society.

Engineering products and applications are essential to everyday activities in our life. These include housing, transportations, communications, and other industrial processes. In order to safeguard life, health and property, and to promote public welfare, the practice of engineering is treated as a learned profession, and its practitioners shall be held accountable by high professional standards in keeping with the ethics and practices of other learned professions. Today, the engineering profession is regulated in all the leading industrial countries by a set of established regulations. In order to establish and maintain a high standard of integrity, skills, and practice in the profession of engineering,

Rules of Professional Conduct (Code of Ethics) are enacted. All persons licensed or certified under such provisions, are charged with having knowledge of the existence of the Code of Ethics, and are deemed to be familiar with their several provisions and to understand them.

The basic moral rules specify the acts or course of actions required, forbidden or permitted. These concepts need to be made clear, understood and acquired by engineering students, thus becoming an integral part of their developing professional character before they embark on their career as responsible engineers. Although some moral demands on professional engineers are adequately expressed in rules of conduct that specify what acts are permissible, obligatory, or prohibited, there is more to acting responsibly than following the rules. A good engineer not only checks plans and designs before approving them, but also must exercise judgment and discretion to provide a design or product that is safe and of high quality and environment friendly.

Recently, the engineering ethics has attracted increasing interest, as a result of the attention that the media has given to cases such as the Challenger disaster, the Kansas City Hyatt-Regency Hotel walkways collapse, the Exxon oil spill, Chernobyl Nuclear leak, and Union Carbide accident in Bhopal (India). As a response to this concern, a new discipline, engineering ethics, is emerging. The need to introduce engineering ethics at an early stage to engineering students is deemed essential.

The importance of teaching engineering ethics at the undergraduate level is to improve the students' awareness of the challenging task of tackling ethical problems in the real work field.

To introduce the basic human values and the concept of professional ethics in engineering students, besides the technical skills they are learning, an attempt has been made in this book to attract their attention to various moral and ethical dilemmas they are likely to face during their professional careers, the type of unethical practices being practiced in the system today, as also various redressal mechanisms available to safeguard against such practices, This will at least open up their imagination to study this subject further and to equip them to become a socially responsible professional.

This book has been attempted to correlate the subject with ground realities as present today in our country, to make it relatable to day to day issues encountered by various citizens in their lives and professionals in their careers. This book does not claim to be an end in all but only a beginning to make students aware of moral and ethical issues they are likely to come across in their practical life after leaving their institutions.

Lot of material available on the internet, on various web sites of Government of India, United Nations and other organizations, associations and different books available on various relevant subjects have been referred. We are grateful

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to all the authors and organizations that have placed useful information on the internet.

We are highly grateful to Shri R.K. Jain, a renowned author of several engineering books and a couple of lifestyle books to have motivated us to attempt this book and for providing his able guidance and various salient inputs in the process. We are also thankful to M/s Khanna Publishers for having agreed to undertake publishing of this book, which we believe will encourage engineering students to evolve into morally and ethically correct professionals.

— **Er. M.L. Sharma**

— **Neelam Sharma**

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## **SECTION-A : HUMAN VALUES**



# *Understanding the Need, Basic Guidelines, Content and Process for Value Education*

*Value Based Education is the real need of the hour. As we see how the Society is diminishing in case of values day by day, it is necessary to develop the programs for inculcating values in the society.*

*Imbibing the qualities of good conduct, self-confidence and high values would help students earn a significant place in society. Education without values is like a flower without fragrance. Students should realize that character building is equally important as career building.*

*Education should make every individual capable physically, mentally, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Universal ideals of “love, peace, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, co-existence and non-violence” should be inculcated in all students. These values are truly indispensable to develop a humane society.*

*There is a popular misconception that values are “better caught than taught”. In reality, however, values are both “caught and taught.” Today’s generation is not going to catch the values without teaching. We have to teach the values to this generation before they are caught by the bombarding of the new technological devices, information explosion and also by the media.*

*Mere desire or aspiration to progress in life is not enough; success should be based on values and for that, value-based education must be imparted in educational institutions today, so that the students may emerge as good leaders in their chosen fields.*

*We will attempt to understand the concept of value education and its need, in the present context, in this chapter through the following topics:*

## **1.1 Value Education - Explained**

## **1.2 Need for Value Education**

## **1.3 Basic Guidelines of Value Education**

## **1.4 Relationship of Values and Skills**

## **1.5 Morals, Ethics and Legal**

- **Distinction**
- **Relationship**

**Definitions:**

**Values:** What is a value? Value is one by which men live, for which, they are willing to sacrifice comforts, facilities and even lives to preserve their values. *Simply, an individual's accepted standards of right or wrong is called 'Values'*

Describing the dominant characteristics of the Raghu Kul, *Swami Tulsi Das* writes - "*Raghu Kul Reet Sada Chali – aaie, Pran Jaay Par Vachan na Jaai*" This is the highest value according to Indian Philosophy.

**International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1968) defines values as** "*a set of principles whereby a conduct is directed and regulated as a guide for individual or social groups*"

**Value Education:** The process by which people give moral values to each other. Value education can take place at home, as well as, in schools, colleges, universities including technical and professional institutions or any organization aiming to impart such values.

**Skills:** Ability to do something well (expertise). An ability to perform an action with pre-determined results...

**Morals:** What is considered right or wrong by a society.

**Ethics:** a structured system of principles that govern appropriate conduct for a group, including activities such as professional ethics, compassion, commitment, cooperation.

**Legal or Laws:** System of rules that a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and may enforce by imposition of penalties.

**1.1. VALUE EDUCATION EXPLAINED:**

**Swami Vivekananda** said," *Values are the very core of our behavior, the motive force of our lives.*"

Character oriented education that instils basic values and ethnic values in one's *psyche* (the human soul, mind, or spirit) is called '*Value Based Education*'. The subject that enables us to understand '*what is valuable*' for human happiness is called Value Education. Value Education is important to help everyone in improving the value system that one holds and puts it to use. Once, one has understood the values in life one can examine and control the various choices one makes in one's life.

*Values are the beliefs about what is right, what is wrong and what is important in life.* These values are gained from different sources. Value Education is important to give these for any individual. The good values have to be inculcated in the individual's mind right from their childhood. The educational institutions play a major role in giving value education to the students.

Values are the principles or standards of an individual's behavior and can help him/her to judge what is important in their life. They reflect ones' attitudes, choices, decisions, judgments, relationships, dreams and vision towards their life and surrounding environment. Hence, educating each and every individual about the values, right from their childhood is really important. An individual learns different values from different sources like family, relatives, friends, teachers, community, religion, traditions, customs, books, environment, great personalities and many other sources.

**Value education** is a process of teaching and learning about the ideals that a society considers them to be important. Value education can take place in different forms, but the main aim of providing it to students in their educational institutions is to make them understand the importance of good values; use and reflect them in their behavior and attitudes; and finally contribute to the society through their good responsibility and ethics.

In simpler terms, *Value education* can be defined as the process by which people give moral values to others. It can be seen an activity taken place in an institution or organization in which people are assisted or helped by others, who are elder or have more experience or have authority over the people. This activity of value education is used to make an individual better and it is important to assess the result of it in order to see the long-term wellbeing of an individual and others.

*Value Education* enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly and also helps to remove our confusions and contradictions and bring harmony in us at all levels. It also enables us to put the technological innovations to right use. Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behavior and actions. Once we know what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor for our actions. We also need to understand the universality of various human values, because only then we can have a definite and common program for Value Education. Then only we can be assured of a happy and harmonious human society.

## 1.2 NEED FOR VALUE EDUCATION

**Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam** felt:

*“The two most important life-goals I would like every youth to have: one, increase the amount of time that you have at your disposal, two, increase what you can achieve in the time available.”*

*The education system should be able to lead to the transformation from ‘what can you do for me’ to ‘what can I do for you.’*

*The Education is an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment. Real education enhances the dignity of a human being and increases his/her self-respect and universal brotherhood in its true sense becomes the sheet anchor of education.”*

*Dr. Kalam also believed that 'the right kind of education on moral values will upgrade the Society and the Country. After every child is nurtured during the early years with love and affection and when he reaches a school going age, he needs a value-based education.....'*

**Mahatma Gandhi**, too, recognized the importance of building character. He believed the education system of his time was flawed (*little has changed in this regard*). Real education, he argued, had to draw out the best from young people. Mahatma Gandhi observed, *"The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated."*

Academic success, while important, cannot be the end goal of our education system. Education must pursue a grander goal; an education for human prosperity. Such an education will ideally give equal weightage to both knowledge acquisition and developing pro-social aptitudes with an end goal of giving the individual the opportunity to, as **Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen** advocates, *"lead a life she or he has reason to value."*

**Dr. C. M. Yogi**, Founder-Society for Value Education (SVE), a thinker and a great social worker, has nicely compared Education with the Value-Based-Education in his paper presented in a Workshop organized by "Save the Children and Curriculum Development Centre on 29th December, 2009"

Education opens up our mind, but Value-Based Education (VBE) gives us purity of heart too; education provides us with skills, but VBE provides us sincerity too; education extends our relationship with the world, but VBE links us with our own family members too. Education makes our living better, but VBE makes our life better too; education teaches us to compete with others, but VBE encourages us to be complete too; education makes us a good professional, but VBE makes us a whole human too; education takes us to the top, but VBE takes the whole society to the top. Education gives us capacity of better learning, but VBE gives us the tool for a deeper understanding too; education gives us Anna (food) but VBE provides us Ananda (happiness) too; education may bring limitations but VBE is for liberation. After all, right education means- *"Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye"*. It means that knowledge is what helps us to attain liberation.

This distinction between 'Education' and 'Value Based Education' can be better illustrated in a table:

<i>Education</i>	<i>Value Based Education</i>
opens up our mind	gives us purity of heart too
provides us with skills	provides us sincerity too
extends our relationship with the world	links us with our own family members too
makes our living better	makes our life better too
teaches us to compete with others	encourages us to be complete too
makes us a good professional	makes us a whole human too
takes us to the top	takes the whole society to the top
gives us capacity of better learning	gives us the tool for a deeper understanding too
gives us Anna	provides us Ananda too
may bring limitations	is for liberation

*Dr. Yogi* further, opines, “Education is not only for news but also for views; it is not only for information but also for inspiration; it is not only educating but also enlightening. It is quite an integrated process. An educated person should have all kind of qualities. Education should make every individual capable physically, mentally, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Therefore, some universal ideals of “love, peace, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, co-existence and non-violence” should be accepted by all worldwide. These values are truly indispensable, devoid of which, our society cannot sustain itself and people will forget humanity. And, we can easily imagine the future ahead and foresee what our future will be like. *No matter what our religious beliefs are, what our practices are, but there are ultimate goals which one has to achieve in life. Everyone always aspires to love, peace and happiness, and that includes a spiritually balanced life. Even a person who may not be spiritual should also believe and practice the ideals of love, peace, tolerance and service.*

Through value-based education we can flourish the eternal truth like “*Sarva Dharma Sam Bhava*”. *Equal respect towards all the great world religions and faiths is the dire need of the today’s world. This will help eliminate all forms of discriminations prevailing in our society. Value-based education provides a strong foundation for getting rid of century-old discriminations based on language, caste, gender, class, region and religion. The society will then be harmonious.*”

In India Value Based Education is the real need of the hour. As we see, how the Society is diminishing in case of values day by day. It is necessary to develop the programs for inculcating values in the society. Today’s Indian youths are little bit confused because of the excessive use of the new technological devices, information explosion and all-round violent news by the press & media. To inculcate the value system in their confused minds and make them value-oriented-powerful leaders, educational institutions should take the initiative to impart Value Based Spiritual Knowledge to this new generation.

One effective way of challenging the present value crisis would be evolving a comprehensive scheme of value education in educational institutions starting

school level to universities and professional institutions. S. Radhakrishnan, an Indian philosopher, academic, statesman, and a former President of India, put it succinctly; *“Education is not only imparting information or training of skills. It has to give the educated a proper sense of values.”*

Imbibing the qualities of good conduct, self-confidence and high values would help students earn a significant place in society. Education without values is like a flower without fragrance. Mere desire or aspiration to progress in life is not enough; success should be based on values. And, for that value-based education must be imparted in today’s institutions.

The subject that enables us to understand ‘what is valuable’ for human happiness is called Value Education. The present education system has become largely skill-based. The prime emphasis is on science and technology. However, science and technology can only help to provide the means to achieve what is considered valuable. It is not within the domain of science and technology to provide the competence of deciding what really is valuable. Value Education is a crucial missing link in the present education system. Because of this deficiency, serious crisis at the individual, societal and environmental level are manifesting. Imparting value education in professional and technical institutions, say engineering, management, law, medicine etc., therefore, becomes very essential.

On the modern approach to life and values, **Jawahar Lal Nehru** said, *“The modern mind is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. It is governed by the practical idealism for social betterment. It has discarded to a large extent the philosophic approach of ancients, their search for ultimate reality, as well as the emotionalism and mysticism of the medieval period. **Humanity is its God and social service its religion.**”*

The part of education that concerns imparting an understanding of one’s purposeful participation in the larger order and thus ensuring it in living, is called Value Education and its implications are:

- **Correct identification of our aspirations and goal:** The subject of ‘Value Education’ (VE) enables us to understand our needs and visualize our goals correctly and also indicate the direction for their fulfilment. It helps us to distinguish between materialistic success, sensuous pleasures and real happiness and prosperity. It also helps to remove our confusions and contradictions in our thinking and bring harmony at all levels.

- **Understanding universal human values to fulfil our aspirations in continuity:** Values form the basis for all our thoughts, behaviors and actions. Once we know what is valuable to us, these values become the basis, the anchor for our actions. We also need to understand the universality of various human values, because only then we can have a definite and common program for value education. Then only we can be assured of a happy and harmonious human society.

• **Complementarity of values and skills:** To fulfil our aspirations both values and skills are necessary. When we identify and set the right goals and proceed in right direction, this is known as value domain, the domain of wisdom, and when we learn and practice to actualize this goal, to develop the techniques to make this happen in real life, in various dimensions of human endeavor (struggle), this is known as domain of skills. Hence, there is an essential complementarity between values and skills for the success of any human endeavor.

• **Evaluation of our beliefs:** Each one of us believes in certain things and we base our values on these beliefs, which may or may not be true in reality. These beliefs come to us from what we read, see, hear, what our parents tell us, our friends talk about, what the magazines talk of, what we see from TV etc. Value Education helps us to evaluate our beliefs and assumed values.

• **Technology and human values:** The present education system has become largely skill-based. The prime emphasis is on science and technology. However, science and technology can only help to provide the means to achieve what is considered valuable. It is not within the scope of science and technology to provide the competence of deciding what really is valuable.

Students pursuing professional degrees often lack purpose beyond individual career ambitions. Classrooms largely deliver information to students, occasionally impart skills, but rarely help students to discover their purpose. These individuals end up lacking conviction in their abilities to apply their skills in the real world, an aspect of learning overlooked by most educational institutions. Within these confines, students often try to replicate other's career trajectory and fail to introspect where, and more importantly why they should apply their skills.

Psychologists have found through their research and studies that youth with a purposeful life are in a state of flourishing, an optimum state of wellbeing beyond material happiness. Youth development should not simply involve imparting only skills for employment, *for example*; teaching technical skills to meet the requirement of industry. This approach often leads people to adopt institutional goals as their own and limits one's ability to think for themselves. Instead, youth development should encourage individuals to think logically and cognitively and empower them to flourish by helping them attain their purpose which ultimately fuels desire to use their skills. It would also enable the youth to recognize and channelize their potential towards social development.

Value-education would facilitate youth to transition into socially motivated citizens, and encourage them to lead a purposeful life. It would also provide them an opportunity to realize their values, role models and a social mission beyond the narrow confines of a secure career and lifestyle.

Value-education helps finding a purpose beyond the self, which has been found common defining trait of change makers worldwide. The flourishing individuals aimed for glorious pursuits rather than materialistic ambitions and

found a higher meaning to their journey by leading a purposeful life, examples; Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela...

As issues of basic survival persist for a large portion of Indian society, India needs the force of fervent leaders and young minds to solve the toughest and most complex social changes, besides machines and artificial intelligence.

### 1.3 BASIC GUIDELINES FOR VALUE EDUCATION

We now know that the subject that enables us to understand 'what is valuable' for human happiness is called value education. In order to qualify for any course on value education, the following guidelines for the content of the course are important:

- **Universal:** It needs to be applicable to all the human beings irrespective of cast, creed, nationalities, religion, etc., and should be valid for all times and regions. It should not change from place to place or person to person.

- **Rational:** It has to appeal to human reasoning. It has to be amenable to reasoning and not based on dogmas or blind beliefs. It should be able to be explained based on logic.

- **Natural and verifiable:** It has to be naturally acceptable to all the human being and it should give a feeling of assurance to them that if they live on the basis of such values it will lead to their happiness. It needs to be experientially verifiable, and not based on dogmas, beliefs or assumptions.

- **All encompassing:** Value Education is aimed at transforming our consciousness and living. Hence, it needs to cover all the dimensions (thought, behavior, work and realization) and it should be true at all levels (individual, family, society, nature and existence) of human life and profession.

- **Leading to harmony:** The Value-education ultimately is targeted to promote harmony within the individual, among human beings and with nature.

### 1.4. RELATIONSHIP OF VALUES AND SKILLS

When we try to fulfil our relationship with other human beings or with any other entity in the rest of nature that defines our participation with the larger order and constitutes the domain of human values. Values mean importance or participation and skills mean qualities, training, and capabilities. Skills (technology, management, accounts, medicine, etc.) are necessary in our life. Skills are only a means to achieve a particular purpose in an effective and efficient manner. It is not within the scope of technology, management, medicines to decide the purpose. The purpose is decided by our values. To fulfil our aspirations both values and skills are necessary. When we identify and set the right goals and proceed in right direction, this is known as value domain, the domain of wisdom. Basically, we must know what really is useful to achieve human happiness, the happiness to all and for all the time.

# Human Values and Professional Ethics

## About the Book:

This book “Human Value and Professional Ethics” has been attempted to correlate the subject with ground realities at present today in our country to make it relatable to day-to-day issues encountered by various citizens in their lives and professionals in their careers. This book does not claim to be an end in all but only a beginning to make students aware of moral and ethical issues they are likely to come across in their practical life after leaving their institutions.

The basic human values and the concept of professional ethics in engineering students, besides the technical skills they are learning an attempt has been made in this book to attract their attention to various moral and ethical dilemmas they are likely to face during their professional careers, the type of unethical practices being practiced in the system today as also various redressal mechanism available to safe guard against such practices.

Professional ethics help us to establish and maintain a high standard of integrity skills and practice in the profession of engineering and also having knowledge of the existence of the code of ethics, deemed to be familiar with their several provision and to understand them.

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