

## **Moral Values and Pre-Service Teacher Education Programme: Perspectives and Strategies**

***Ruchi Arora***

*Assistant Professor*

*Guru Ram Dass College of Education*

*GGSIPIU*

### **Abstract**

*Moral values are interlocked in all facets of teaching – school ethos, curriculum, teacher’s conduct etc. So it is not worthwhile to contemplate whether or not teachers should teach values. As education is a value – suffused pursuit, working with values is fundamental to the very nature of teaching. The role that teachers are anticipated to play in the lives of their learners has undergone a remarkable change in contemporary years. But their role as moral guides is definitely eternal. Since historic times, schools have considered character development part of their mission. Moreover, education has been viewed for a long time as a powerful instrument through which learners learn to become responsible, moral people. So it becomes crucial to make student – teachers aware of the fact that values are immersed in education and education plays an important role in the moral development of the students. Not only this they need to be made aware of, how they themselves, as reflective practitioners can thoughtfully create moral – based practices in education. Hence, it becomes important for teacher education to equip student – teachers with the skills necessary for their role as moral educators. This paper presents a detailed examination of following perspectives on moral values in teacher education – “minimalist” perspective and “maximalist” perspective. The paper concludes with an understanding that a deliberate programmatic instructional focus is required to train student-teachers for their role as moral guides and in the end some ways in which pre – service teacher education could be reshaped to provide an overt focus on values and morals are explored.*

**Key Words:** Moral Values, Pre – service teacher education, Perspectives.

### **Introduction**

“Value orientation is an over-arching and comprehensive area that needs conscious integration with general education at each stage including adult education, teacher education, and also technical and management education. Education has little meaning without development, nurture and internalization of values”.

(Subramanian Committee NEP Report – ‘National Policy on Education 2016’)

The role that teachers are anticipated to play in the lives of their learners has undergone a remarkable change in contemporary years. But their role as moral guides is definitely eternal. Since historic times, schools have considered character development part of their mission. Moreover, education has been viewed for a long time as a powerful instrument through which learners learn to become responsible, moral people.

Values are submerged in the school ethos, curriculum and the conduct of the teacher. Values are interwoven in discourses, in curriculum materials and in educational practices in school. Values can be taught overtly, but generally values remain concealed and do their work and impact the identity development of learners (**Veugelers 2008**).

Moral values are values that indicate ideas about the worthy life. There is a constant discourse about which values constitute the worthy life. Moral values are quite conceptual but become meaningful in concrete practices and narratives. Because moral values are so abstract and can have different interpretations, they should be studied in their context (**Veugelers 2008**). As moral values are vital for human development, education cannot fail to provide focus to them. Even if education does not provide overt attention to moral values, the values always do their work covertly through the hidden curriculum.

Many scholars clearly mention that moral education is an integral part of teacher's roles and there is a growing body of work that indicates teachers play an important role in moral education and moral development of students. Moreover, this role has intensified in today's increasingly complex globalized world where the erosion of values is adversely impacting human life in practically every sector of activity. In other words, when teachers enter classrooms, they become moral agents in the lives of the students in those classrooms. Many scholars agree that teaching is inherently, perhaps primarily, a moral enterprise. This implies that teachers need to develop an awareness of the moral significance and moral meanings of routines, policies, rituals and of the practices of the classroom and the school. Not only this, the teacher is a role model, inculcator of moral values and is expected to lead a value-based life.

**Lovat & Toomey (2007)** found a close relationship between values education and overall teaching effectiveness. Toomey has named this relationship as a 'double-helix' effect. The use of this term is an attempt to explain that the two factors – values education and quality teaching amalgamate to produce desired educational outcomes. In other words, teaching that is undertaken with warmth, consideration and acceptance and that focuses on nurturing values has been asserted to produce positive learning outcomes. Lovat & Toomey stated that for education to be productive, it must strive for developing whole, responsible and moral person, and pre-service teacher education must overtly concentrate on values education, values development and the significance of reflection.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the whole pursuit of education is completely linked with the development of moral values. Devoid of the potential to develop moral values,

education loses its essence. In other words, the role of schools and teachers as agents of moral education is indispensable. Hence, in order to meet the goal of providing complete education, pre-service teachers must be trained in the areas of values education and moral development. The contemporary classrooms demands teachers with advanced moral reasoning skills who are able to model caring, meaningful and appropriate interactions with learners. Not only this, it demands teachers who are aware of their own moral and values bases and who are willing to accept moral issues arising in their classroom. Hence, training of student-teachers for the moral nature of their work should be interwoven throughout all aspects of a teaching degree so that pre-service teachers are able to discover the ways in which they exhibit their own values, and the ways in which they can form the values and moral development of their future students. In such a way pre-service teachers can be potent agents of change that they desire to be for their students.

### **Preparation of Student-Teachers as Moral Educators: Perspectives**

From the foregoing, it seems that moral values are interwoven in school and classroom life. Moreover, inculcating values and character formation is fundamental to schools and an inevitable aspect of the teacher's role. Consequently, pre-service teachers must be trained for their role as moral guides. Now the question arises, how does teacher education curriculum prepare student-teachers for their role as moral educators? Two alternative perspectives are presented accordingly:

#### **A) Minimalist Perspective**

According to this perspective there is no need to create 'specialist' units that examine values and morals. In other words, it does not require vivid revision of the curriculum. Nor does it require any specialized instructional strategies. Rather, this perspective argues that character development is integral to best practice instruction. In other words, effective teaching leads to character development. Hence, teacher educators need only ensure that student-teachers are trained to be skillful and good teachers. In that way teacher educators can be confident that the moral formation of learners is in proficient hands (Narvaez & Lapsley 2008).

Following are the important features of this perspective:-

- Teacher education should state clearly the linkage between instructional practice and student character development. Student teachers should be made aware that best practice instruction or effective teaching not only promote achievement and academic learning but also shape moral character development of the students.
- Teacher education should make explicit the linkage between caring school climate and student character formation. A caring relationship, first in the home and then at school, not only promote higher attendance and academic performance but also lays the foundation for social and emotional bonding and promote positive character formation. A child who is cared for will less likely engage in bullying, misconduct,

drug use and delinquency and will more likely engage as a responsible, prosocial and caring citizen.

- Teacher education should make explicit that harsh, critical and unfair teachers tend to have students who not only act irresponsibly with respect to school rules and academic goals resulting in lower academically-focused and achieving students but also tend to have students who report disengagement, discipline problems, bullying, drug use, delinquency, mistrust etc.
- Teacher education should make explicit that teachers who are warm, accepting and supportive of students and who pay attention to students' needs and who have positive attitudes about students are more likely to foster not only student achievement but are also more likely to foster ethical and prosocial behaviour among students.
- Teacher education should make explicit that teachers who model respectful behaviour, autonomy to students, opportunities to interact, collaborate, discuss and help others are not only more likely associated with academically focussed and achieving students but are also more likely associated with students who pursued prosocial goals, displayed conflict resolution skills, took responsibility and showed a commitment to concern, trust and respect for others.
- Teacher education should make explicit the linkage between social and emotional skills and student character development. Student-teachers should be made aware that classroom teaching that address social and emotional competencies not only pave the way for better academic outcomes but is also effective in moral character development.
- Last but not the least, teacher education should make explicit the moral purpose of education thereby making apparent student-teachers' future role as moral guides. Not only this, it should also nurture the required pedagogical skills in the student-teachers and should also nurture the disposition to remain committed to their duty as moral educators.

### **B) Maximalist Perspective**

According to this perspective, instructional best practice is essential but that is not enough to prepare student-teachers for their duty as moral educators. Instead, a more deliberate programmatic instructional focus is required to train student-teachers for their role as moral guides (Narvaez & Lapsley 2008).

Following are the important features of this perspective:-

- In today's modern contemporary world, young people receive very little guidance for moral citizenship and there are often very few positive role models. So it becomes

crucial for teacher education curriculum to equip student-teachers with the skills necessary for their role as moral educators.

- Teacher education curriculum should explicitly nurture ethical skills and self regulation skills such as ethical sensitivity, ethical focus, ethical judgment and ethical action.
- Teacher education curriculum should explicitly provide opportunities to student-teachers to hone their ethical and self regulation skills to high levels of expertise. These opportunities can be in the form of direct instruction, role modeling, expert demonstration, thinking aloud, practice sessions etc.

Teacher education curriculum and teacher educators should have high expectations on the part of student-teachers for their role as moral educators. In brief, following are the some ways in which pre – service teacher education could be reshaped to provide an overt focus on values and morals:-

### **Reflection**

By encouraging student – teachers to reflect on their morals, hidden beliefs, teaching behaviour, routines, rituals, discourses, educational practices, actions etc. Moreover, student – teachers should be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, inquiry their methods and professional behaviour and to expand their competences.

### **Modeling and Internalization**

By making student – teachers learn about national and one’s own cultural heritage and stories in which strong moral characters are expressed. Moreover, student – teachers should be taught about good moral people and should be encouraged to get involved in existing cultural practices. Not only this, teacher educators should set a good moral example so as to create good moral behaviour in student – teachers.

### **Sensitization**

Teacher educators should be encouraged to include moral sensitivity in their regulae classroom discussions. They should encourage student – teachers to position themselves, give meaning to their experienes and engage themselves in many situations that focus on moral dilemmas and moral concerns.

### **Discourse and Participation**

Dialogical learning, learning by experience, action research, activity oriented learning etc. should give attention to moral values, moral knowledge and moral judgment. Student – teachers should be encouraged to challenge their ideas and values and to reconstruct their own beliefs so as to develop dialogic competences and an active action – oriented participation in society.

### **Teaching for moral goals**

Teacher educators should be encouraged to use the concepts teaching for changing the world, and teaching for social justice. Moreover, they should attempt to create democratic classrooms and should encorage their student – teachers to engage themselves in social enquiry in and outside the school thereby creating a better and more just world.

## Conclusion

Moral values are interlocked in all facets of teaching – school ethos, curriculum, teacher’s conduct etc. So it is not worthwhile to contemplate whether or not teachers should teach values. As education is a value – suffused pursuit, working with values is fundamental to the very nature of teaching. So it becomes crucial to make student – teachers aware of the fact that values are immersed in education and education plays an important role in the moral development of the students. Not only this, they need to be made aware of, how they themselves as reflective practitioners can thoughtfully create moral – based practices in education. Hence, it becomes crucial for teacher education to equip student – teachers with the skills necessary for their role as moral educators.

## References

- Barrow, R. (1992). *Is teaching an essentially moral enterprise?* Teaching and Teacher Education, 8(1), 105-108.
- Buzzelli, C., & Johnston, B. (2001). *Authority, power, and morality in classroom discourse.* Teaching and Teacher Education, 17(8), 873-884.
- Dutt. N.K. (1986). Values: The foundation of meaningful life. In Ruhela, S.P. *Human values and Education.* New Delhi: Sterling publisher private Ltd.
- Lovat, T. & Toomey, R. (2007). *Values education and quality teaching : The double helix effect.* Sydney : David Barlow Publishing.
- Lovat, T. (2006). *Values education : the missing link in quality teaching.* Keynote address at the Values Education National Forum, May 2006.
- Mergler, A. (2008). *Making The Implicit Explicit: Values and Morals In Queensland Teacher Education.* Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 33(4).
- Narvaez, D. & Lapsley, D. K. (2008). *Teaching moral character: Two alternatives for Teacher Education.* The Teacher Educator, 43, 156-172.
- Sarangi (1994). *Moral Education in schools- Bases and Implications.* New Delhi: Deep and Deep publications.
- Singh and Singh (1986). *Effectiveness of value classification strategies in value orientation of B.Ed students,* Report of ERIC Funded Research Project, NCERT.
- Subramanian Committee NEP Report – ‘National Policy on Education 2016’. Retrieved from <http://www.nuepa.org/NEW/download/NEP2016/ReportNEP.pdf>
- Veugelers, W. (2008). *Moral Values in Teacher Education.* Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium on Moral and Democratic Education, Greece.
- Veugelers, W. and Vedder, P. (2003). *Values and teaching.* Teachers and Teaching. 9(4), 377-390.