

Declining Moral Values Among Youth: An Emerging Issue

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Abstract

Morals are the acceptable standard of general conduct or behaviour when judged by an average person or the society at large. Our society once said to be the essence of culture, morality, and character, is today continuously degenerating and deteriorating in terms of ethics, morals and values. The result is that we are seeing an increasing change in the behaviour of individuals especially among youth. The influences of mass media, science and technology, modernization, globalization etc. are the prime factors for the degeneration of the youth in our society and corrupting the mind of a large number of youngsters. Young generation is the driving force of a nation. But now a day youth is adversely diverted through different immoral activities like smoking, drinking, delivering abusing words, quarrelling, sex abuse etc. today's youth generation would be future citizen of India. Declining moral values among youth is an important contemporary issue in India. The study attempts to find out the causes of degradation of moral values and its consequences in our society. The study also attempts to find the causes, consequences remedial actions to encounter the problem.

Keynotes: Moral values, Moral Judgment, Immoral Activities, Young Generation, Character

Introduction

“What is wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it. Right is right if no one else is doing it”
- WILLIAM PENN

Today we are living in a materialistic world where the standard of living has risen but at the same time standard of life is waning unabatedly. The erosion of moral values in our society has become a very disturbing phenomenon. Moral values are those set of standards by which we recognize between right or wrong. These values can come from self, family, community, religion, government or any other agency that influences the thoughts of an individual. Society today is marked by violence, greed, theft, drug addiction and especially the crimes against women are increasing. Discipline today is lacking among the young children. They do not obey the elders and often disrespect them. In modern era, ethical and moral values are degenerating as people are becoming more and more self centred. As societal norms shifts and cultural dynamics evolve,

concerns arise about the critical ethical compass guiding the younger generation. Youth are the future of India. The future of a country depends on values received by students during their study period. They are expected to have moral values so that he/she can face harsh times in life. The declining of moral values is a critical social issue that warrants close examination.

Objective Of The Study

Objectives of the paper is:

1. To understand the concept of moral values among Indian youths,
2. Secondly to understand the factors affecting diminishing the moral values,
3. Thirdly, to know the consequences of moral values.
4. Lastly to find the remedies to reduce the diminishing of moral values among Indian youngsters.

Methodology

The study is qualitative based, various secondary information have been collected from various publications, reports, books, journals, internet and website are also consulted for the purpose.

The Concept Of Moral Values

Morality is derived from the Latin word *mores* which means “manners” or “morals”. In the words of Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2006); morality is “an accepted code of human conduct in a society”. Morality entails “having laws that will regulate dealings of men who can choose to abide by these laws because they know it is good sense to do so” (Uyanga and Amingo; 2010). Being moral or being morally conscious means adopting standards or principles to guide ones’ actions and conduct in society. Moral education is a programme of study which teaches the pupil about behaving in accordance with what is good while rejecting the bad. It is a holistic approach to stimulate character building and moral development (Okoh; 2003). Moral education should lead youths to develop from a stage of anomie; often characterized by pre-morality to a stage where an individual is not forced to be moral and is personally convinced on standards that ought to guide his/her conduct in society. Moral values are taught in moral education as certain acceptable, valuable and cherished qualities that are worthwhile in developing a sound character. Osaat (2004) in Ekpiwre (2008) defines values as “things considered worthwhile, desirable, right and good and thus craved for and applied on a daily basis to enhance existence by the people”. Values determine people’s identity and cultural continuity. Moral values are essential values that determine individuals perception of morality and moral consciousness in society. Moral values include truthfulness,

patience, obedience, honesty, integrity, hard work, responsibility, respect, tolerance, loyalty, public spiritedness, freedom, respect for human life and dignity of persons. Others include justice, fairness and equality. Moral values are taught to be imbibed by members of the society to enhance character development and promote good moral upbringing and moral health in individuals. As Amingo (2003) argues “moral health is manifested in individuals when a person becomes capable of understanding the principles of moral conduct and is committed to behaving morally in his dealings with others”. Principles of moral conduct can only be effectively understood and practiced when moral values are strongly adhered to by individuals in a given society.

Indian values unquestionably have undergone many modifications and shifting, people have been applying the values according to their suitability and ease. However, in the old Indian society people were more eager to follow and give importance to their values and culture but now in the modern times values are somewhere losing their importance. In the modern times when firm waves of modernization, westernization, industrialization and urbanization have impacted the lives of the people, the effect of the Indian values seem to have been dimmed in that. The great Indian values seem to have been replaced by selfish-motives, individualistic thoughts and egoistic drives of the human beings. The young generation of the country seems to have no faith and trust in the old established moral and cultural values their mindsets are structured in such a way that praises only the western values and it is the only right thing. Even the old generation of our Indian society feels helpless in reforming the so called westernized mind-sets, thus some of them have accepted this fact and some are still struggling with their young ones to convince them about the importance of the Indian values. Youth tries to display this as a generation gap but actually it is gap between values followed by them is Indian and Western. The young generation of today seem to have been influenced by the fascinating picture of the western values which are apparently hallow and unsuitable for our society even it is only glamorized, still the young generation gives more importance to those values since they believe that western values administer more freedom, flexibility, self-promotion, newness and confidence to them. For instance, the young generation feels more comfortable in waving a simple hand or uttering a simple ‘Hi’ or even a slang “hey what’s up’ for greeting someone instead of following our cultural value of greeting with folded hands and bowing down the head with respect and saying the meaningful word; ‘Pranaam’ or ‘Namaste’. The young generation have not at all tried to understand the essence of own values and blindly following the foreign values even they feel shame in following our

traditional values. Our ideals are so meaningful and have been aimed for the welfare of the human beings only, which intend to bring harmony and affection among the people of our country. But blaming the youth alone would not be acceptable over here, they have adopted the ways which they have seen in face of them they have many mediums through which they have learnt the western values but here we are losing one important aspect of this scenario and that is that it might be possible that we being the elders, parents and the guardian have not properly introduced our Indian values to our young generation, it might also be possible that we have not guided them properly and taught about the great implications of our own values! There might have be something missing in the process of their rearing that has resulted in the lack of faith of the youth in the Indian values. In simple that this situation is result of stoppage of our guidance, parenting and teaching may the education system in which we did not inculcate our value system in them. Role of media is also not supportive in this whole issue as media represents glamorous image of western to Indian who attract them since the stage of learning. Now a day's internet is also promoting in the same line as facebook, whatsapp, twitter and instagram like social platforms also publicizing western values. Thus, we should also consider the other part of this scenario.

Declining Of Moral Value Among Today Youths

The moral deterioration of youth in our society is at present a blazing issue. The root of this issue is not a recent phenomena, its trace can be indented in the society of the past, the magnitude of which has spread over largely in recent days. The expression of this sort of degradation is being reflected in different undesirable aspects of the society. Although it is considered that youth power is the driving force of a nation, the instances of which may be cited from vigorous movement of the past. But the youth of now-a day is adversely diverted which does not only influence the society but also it stimulates the coming generation of our civilization. Consequently, we have to face an alarming and more violent situation in the coming decades.

Moral values are certainly decreasing and there are plenty of examples to illustrate it. Now you will no more see that bonding between individuals and this has eventually led to the void of misunderstandings and distrust now if you are a good and simple person you will be treated as bait or the mice of the experiment. Everything now has become materialistic and you should expect a situation where morals are nil and ethics have been sent off to the bottom of the ocean.

Factors Responsible For Declining In Moral Values Among Youths

1. **Peer-Group Influence:** It is the influence of their peers, which plays a vital role in developing their concept of morality. They pass more time with them, discuss with them frankly and seek their advice. They scrutinize and evaluate matters relating to morality practiced in their homes and found conflicting views. They readily accept views of peer group.
2. **Childhood Control:** During adolescence child started to become self-ruled. These rules and regulations may be sometimes very flexible and vice-versa based on reactions towards his childhood environment.
3. **Changes In Moral Principles And Increase In Social Contacts:** Outside home the environment is changed. In this changed environment, a child learns a lot while making adjustments with these different situations. During this process of adjustment, there is change in the moral principles of child.
4. **Gender Based Morality Specifications By Society:** Double and sub standards of morality set by society based on gender is also the cause of degradation of moral values among youth. Some activities supports the social system for such degradation i.e. Going to market alone, laughing in public places task specification for boys etc.
5. **Willingness Of Self-Exposition Or Identification:** During adolescence youth develop the capability to analyzing the issues and situations, developing their own view points, rationalizing the things, questioning the status quo, revolting and struggling for their personality development. Willingness of self-exposition or identification usually takes a youth or child towards crime and anti-social and immoral behaviour like eve teasing, commenting on girls, elopement, delivering abusing words, smoking, drinking, quarrelling, sex abuse, substance abuse etc.
6. **Nuclear Family And Materialistic Attitude Towards Life:** In the family of working husband and wife children does not have sufficient time to stay with their parents and hence felt alone. Their feelings and emotions rested passive and remained as neglected child. In spite of sharing time with parents children start wasting their time in watching TV, staying with peer group, reading and watching porn or bad literature etc. to share feelings
7. **Parental Behaviour:** Parental behaviour definitely affects the child's personality and character in both ways i.e. positive, negative and also responsible for developing moral values. Now a day, the control of parents over their children has been decreasing. As a result, external forces are diverting the youths and they engage themselves in night club, rocking, unwanted discussions and so many objectionable relationships. This sort of isolation, lack of

love and affection from family has been endangering and spoiling their lives resulting unrest and agitation. On the other hand, if parents have very strict control and stern punishments during childhood prove harmful to the child may develop feeling of revolt as a result of reactions.

8. Socialization

Socialization bears a great effect on the personality of an individual, if a child has been properly socialized it reflects on his behaviour. If parents inculcate good moral and ethical values among children that is predominant on his actions and activities, but unfortunately it has been observed that parents in the contemporary society are not taking active role in socializing ethical and moral values among children.

9. Influence Of Technology

Scientific technology has having both positive as well as negative influence on the personality development of youth, depends upon its usage. Mobile, internet, influences and affect the moral and ethical behaviour of youth, and on the basis of observation it has been analyses these are having most negative influence on the behaviour of youth, result in decline of ethical values. Over the years, the rapid evolution of technology in various forms has significantly influenced the way people live and interact. These new technologies have become a mainstay for how people, particularly youth communicate and are entertained. Technology affords young people many benefits: the ability to talk to people worldwide, to more easily and regularly communicate with family and peers, but also the negative side is that we also find decline in ethical and moral values among youth.

10. Other Stimulating Factors: A number of stimulating factors such as unhappy life, influence of entertainment means, undesirable films, porn sites on internet, sexual urge, obscene novels, heroism, desire to get rich quickly, drug abuse etc. hasten moral degeneration among youth.

Consequences Of Moral Diminishing Among Indian Youths

The moral degradation in our society has reached such a level that calls for concern. Youth in India is getting increasingly inclined towards violence, social evils and lack of respect towards elder and teachers which can break down social harmony as well as national integration, kidnapping, murdered, robbery and crisis have become a serious matter in India. They engage in all sorts of anti-social behaviour injuries to the society. Moral values are found in the religion, culture and traditions, yet our youths, for a reason or the other are not the religious. They consider culture outdated and our traditions barbaric. The creative mind of

youth is diverted towards unsocial activities such as smoking in public places, misconduct in classes, drug addiction, misbehaviour in household and juvenile delinquency to name of few. Social values are uprooted by commencing anti-social activities so regional movement, conflict, bias, enmity etc. take leading role over all down fall of the society. The alarming percentage of criminality and anti-social behavior increase in India with the change in social structure and individual motives. Invention of new modes of scam and frauds are being emerged which denotes that youth are tending to get more interested into easy way of attending wealth, power and fame etc. giving least consideration to human values. It promotes identity crisis and relationship with individuals or group who already perceived the association as morally deficient.

Remedies To Reduce Moral Degradation Among Indian Youths

- 1. Government Control Over Media:** All the governments of states and centre should have control over media agencies and operators who publish indecent acts in their concerned publications. It must be ensure that only useful and appropriate type of news and actions will be broadcast and publish, which eventually reduces the moral decay.
- 2. Reform In Educational System:** Every educational system should have the provision of compulsory moral and ethnic classes for all the students. Education should not merely be exam oriented but also practical with continuous education and evaluation with the help of appropriate teaching methods.
- 3. Staying With Values Of Past:** Children should practice and learn rituals, tradition, religion and activities as well as modernization should be simultaneously maintained.
- 4. Responsibility Of Society Members:** Every member of society i.e. Teachers, parents, politicians etc. should act as a role model and live respectable life to inculcate moral values in children.
- 5. Improvement In Social Structure:** According to the change in time and social situation, there should be definite change in social structure so that the children from their childhood feel belongingness with everything within the society.
- 6. Ideological Change:** In every society, all Social and political organizations must concentrate on the development of value based moral character of the society and accordingly common people must be accountable for such development. These organizations should concentrate on their positive activities to direct youth in positive direction.

7. Reform In Curriculum: The ideologies like Nationalism, International Brotherhood, Freedom, Equality, Justice, Patriotism, Value Based Education should be incorporated in the existing curriculum as compulsory matter at all stage of education.

8. Economical Reforms: There are certain factors of economic concern, which are to be taken care of seriously. These are Economic stability, employment and anti-depressive, peaceful atmosphere and essential infrastructure. There should be complete employability of education provided at each level to the younger generation of society.

9. NGOs Role: Every society needs cooperation from different types of agencies or organizations. It is need of the hour that different NGOs and social associations voluntarily must have strengthened to youth to bring stability among them. Proper planning should be introduced and implemented according to the potentialities of youth.

Conclusion

Youths must be committed to imbibing moral values and upholding them through life as these values will shape the ways they think, speak and even act. Moral standards can rise in contemporary societies if the zeal of youths brings about the restoration of moral values. To uphold moral values, youths must be disciplined and resist immoral behaviour that will eventually culminate in loss of moral compass. Socialization is one of the important means through which we make our child to understand the significance and relevance of social and ethical values. Parents have to take the responsibility of inculcating good moral and ethical values among children, so that they can understand the implications of the values for the smooth functioning of society. Also youth have to make the mind to understand that scientific technology should be utilized in the constructive way so that our values are not going to be effected. Educational institution also has to take active role in educating the students to analyze the importance of moral and ethical values, introducing subjects related to ethics and morality.

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