DEVELOPING VALUE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES BASED ON MAJOR MORAL DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Ramandeep Singh[*]
Dr. Vijay Phogat[**]

ABSTRACT

Moral development is a concern since the beginning of the civilisation. It is an important part of the socialization process. The term refers to the way people learn what society considered to be good and bad, which is important for a smoothly functioning society. Due to increase in crime and violence, there is resurgence in need of value education at all levels of education, be it school or higher education. However, for developing effective value education programmes, we need to understand how moral development take place. Notions of moral development have evolved over the centuries. There are various approaches and theories, both traditional and contemporary, which explain moral development. In this article, different philosophical underpinnings about moral development, some of which are virtue ethics of Aristotle, empiricist's position on moral education, ontological and the rationalist ethics of Kant, Dewey ethics, philosophical tradition based on developing relationships of mutual respect, Kohlberg and Piaget moral development theories are discussed. In the next part of this paper, it is discussed that how the value education programmes can be developed based on the understandings of these moral development theories.

Keywords: *Moral Development, Moral Education, Value Education, Moral Development Theories, Value Education Programmes.*

_____

Introduction

In the service of a cringing spirit of indiscriminate tolerance and value neutrality, the moral sensibilities have been left largely unattended in today's schooling. Schools have failed to address one of the fundamental need of today's youth and society. Moral education has been side-lined as a school subject and in some cases completely ignored from school curricula. But, by blocking out the sound of the morals, schools proceed to trivialise what is most conducive to and constitutive of human flourishing.

It remains to ask how radical changes would have to be enacted to the school system if education for well-being, became an explicit, overarching concern. Thus there is need to such a change that would call for a radically new 'vision' and a substantially changed curriculum in which we would abandon outdated practices of academic rigour, traditional subject-based learning and over dependence on examination. If we really want schools to become 'seedbeds of human flourishing', we need to remodel the whole schooling processes. There is, also a value gap – a gap in the value layer – in today's education in Western liberal democracies and based on that, in developing countries like India also. It has something to do with the post-enlightenment erosion of the traditional sources of ethics in teleology and religion, but even more to do with the deeply misguided fact-value distinction, the fact that educational institutions in the West have typically refrained from trying to fill the value gap by engaging in the development of young people's moral characters and aspiring to create better, wiser and happier people. Let us not forget that education for character has historically been one of the school's most fundamental missions. The 'demoralisation' of the school is a fairly recent aberration from that historical tradition.

[*]   Research Scholar, Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.
[**]   Government College of Education, Sector 20, Chandigarh, India.

The positivist adherence to rigid fact value distinction has led to decline in school role in moral development of children. This neglect of moral domains has adverse effects on society. Today many social, cultural, environmental problems are man-made which are raised from unethical behaviour. While historically educational institutes were functioned to develop complete human being in which moral, intellectual development was given equal consideration. Thus there are many approaches to value education because of its age old practices in different forms in educational settings. Thus, there is need to evaluate each of these traditions of value education and then develop a sound and comprehensive value education framework based on merits of each of these traditions and theories.

In this article initially I will present the three major framework of moral development from viewpoint of different traditions and theories. Then I will discuss some other minor frameworks or theories of moral development and along with it major value education programmes based on these theories. Moral development theories refer to viewpoints which provide directions with respect to decision - making on what is right and what is wrong. Different ethical theories emphasise different decision rules in determining what constitutes morality and what constitute immorality. It reviews major philosophical positions that espouse key arguments surrounding the question of whether it is possible to educate children to be moral or not. Normative ethics is the branch of ethics that studies ethical action. Basically, normative ethics attempts to determine which actions are right and wrong, or which character traits are good and bad. Historically moral development and value education can be divided into two major traditions- character education based on virtue ethics and development of moral reasoning based on Kohlberg approach. However recently there is third major paradigm which is on rise which is character education based on emotions and caring. Thus these constitute major three traditions and paradigms along which value education programmes are designed to be implemented in schools. As each traditions view moral development in unique way there is also distinct form of value education espoused be these traditions. In this article I will try to present value education framework based on each of these traditions.

Major Theories of Moral Development

In broader terms the debates over moral and character education can be divided along three dimensions.

- **The Virtues Ethics**

Based on Aristotle's description of best people, he emphasised moral education based on development of virtues. It has great practical appeal because he worked with society at hand. Virtue ethics focus on character and the development of qualities and dispositions in persons that enable them to choose good and right actions and to live good, worthwhile and happy lives. Aristotle was deeply concerned with virtue and the identification of exemplars. His Ethics is devoted almost entirely to a sophisticated analysis of the good life and the virtues required and nurtured by it. Children, he said, should be taught to behave virtuously. The virtues identified in the very best citizens were to be inculcated at appropriate ages in children. Aristotle emphasised the nurturing of morally appropriate behaviour in the young. Because virtue is central to the good life as Aristotle described it, and because virtuous persons, persons of good character, exhibit virtues in every aspect of their lives, children should be trained to respond virtuously to life's demands. One becomes virtuous, Aristotle held, by behaving virtuously. Moral education, the pursuit of virtue, inner excellence, was to be gained through practice and contemplation. It is distinguished from other theories of moral development as one broad distinction is between those who view character formation and morality as centred on the cultivation of virtues and those who argue that morality is ultimately a function of judgments made in context. The former, who often trace their ideas within Western culture back to Aristotle, emphasise the importance of early dispositional formation and the influence of the social group. Often these virtue-based approaches to character education incorporate an emphasis on the attachment to groups and the role of society in forming the young. Recently David Carr has focused on developing virtues as moral education as talked by Aristotle. But a major concern for critics of virtue ethics is the possible relativism of such ethics. Ethical/moral relativism is the doctrine that moral values, including conceptions of the good and the right, are relative to particular societies or communities. What is good in one society may be a matter of indifference or even evil in another.

Value Education based on Virtue Ethics

Aristotelian virtue theory has exerted a powerful influence on moral education during the last quarter of a century. So pervasive has this influence been that one of most followed approach in value education is Lawrence Kohlberg's develop-mentalism, which is Aristotelian in origin. So this explanation of moral developmentalism emphasised on character education. In this approach, character education is aim of education and virtues are taught explicitly in schools and classrooms. This approach was followed from ancient to medieval times and recently there is resurge of interest in it. So there is explicit teaching of values and virtues which needs to be followed in life.

- **Rationalist Ethics**

The other major traditions is development of reasoning. It is deontology approach to ethics which is based on consequences of ethics. So actions be governed by independently determined rules, duties, and obligations. Those who emphasise the role of reason and judgment draw their philosophical arguments from rationalist ethics with its emphasis on autonomous justification for moral actions based on principles of justice or fairness. The focus is upon the development of moral reasoning drawing from the seminal work of Piaget, and the Socratic approach to education. The influential philosopher Immanuel Kant is strongly associated with deontological theory. The moral law, or categorical imperative (an absolute requirement), is regarded as a product of reason, through which we make free and autonomous decisions about how to act in any given situation.

It was this argument that led him to assert that obedience to a law, which we prescribe to ourselves, is liberty. This is because reason has prescribed the moral law, it has not been imposed by cultural norms. Therefore, for Kant, an act is only moral if it is done for its own sake, out of pure reason, and not, for example, out of habit or deference. Kant has been both revered and reviled as the philosopher who elevated individual human rationality over all forms of authority in ethics. His categorical imperative puts ethics on a logical base: So act that you can (logically) will that your decision be made law; that is, act in a way that you can, without contradiction, insist that all others in similar situations should also act. From this basic principle, Kant deduced several absolute rules for human conduct, including his well-known prohibition of lying.

The aim of education is the development of autonomous moral character thereby creating a moral society and potentially perfecting the human race.

Rational moral education has contributed a great deal also to the cognitive-developmental tradition, which owns much to the works of its best known representatives, Piaget and Kohlberg.

Some of Critics of Kantianism challenge the universalizability criterion that is at the heart of Kantianism. They object that absolute principles cannot be derived from the categorical imperative. Most of us prefer to be the recipients of acts done out of love, care, or inclination rather than duty. Those things that are done out of love are often considered not to be moral matters at all, and a considerable literature has been devoted to the problem of separating moral issues from other issues of value .

Value Education based on Relational Ethics

Kant appears to advocate a pedagogy that develops understanding and autonomy, based initially on nurturing capacities in the child, then introducing discipline and instructions. Thus development of reasoning and thinking is prerequisite for moral development. In this approach it is assumed that by developing reasoning alone, moral development can take place. So to take ethical decisions one require only thinking skills. This approach has major influence on modern schooling. It is understood that by developing reasoning through traditional subject based approach, prevalent in modern schooling, moral development will naturally follow intellectual development. One of most followed approach of character education is of Kohlberg approach of moral development. Kohlberg combined Piaget developmentalism and Kant's deontological theory and gave stages of moral development based on development of reasoning.

In reaction to the values clarification movement, which was too heavily weighted toward feelings, schools began to embrace Kohlberg's conceptualisation of moral development because of its highly rational approach. His model delineated six stages divided into two levels. At the first level, called pre-conventional thinking, children make their decisions based on fear of punishment or desire for reward. The third level, post- conventional thinking, reaches its peak in "according one's behaviour with universal- ethical principles such as justice and respect for the dignity of individuals"

As a classroom method of character education, Kohlberg's model relied heavily upon a series of dramatic ethical dilemmas that students would reason their way through. His method was dependent on the notion that there is an overarching standard of right and wrong; contemporary character educators do view this as an improvement over the misguided theory that undergirded values clarification.

- **Role of Emotions**

A third broad dimension is the degree to which educators place an emphasis upon the role of emotion. Traditional and developmental approaches address in different ways the role of emotion in moral and character development. At its heart, educators within this tradition argue that schools should focus on developing positive relationships, caring, respect and mutuality within a community. As another alternative approach, the feminist thinkers Nodding and Gilligan advocate the ethic of care. Ethic of care

is also called relational ethic, because morality is seen to take place in relation to someone. It de-emphasizes the morality of rules, which is seen to be deficient in its ethical strength, and calls instead for empathy, "a natural affective response to the other."

To illustrate the philosophical tradition, the work of Montessori, Buber, Nodding and is described below.

- **Montessori**: Maria Montessori challenged pedagogical thought that drew distinctions between the worlds of home, school and community. For there to be peace in society, she argued that children needed to be educated in a process where home school and society were seen as continuous. Montessori wanted each school to represent the ideal family; the school environment to be safe, secure, loving, encouraging the development of right character. The emphasis was to be on individualised learning that encouraged each child to care for others.

- **Martin Buber**: He translated this philosophy into the school setting by maintaining that at the heart of the teaching process is the key, most decisive, relationship of teacher and pupil. The teacher must gain the trust of students and be able to be empathetic to them. Buber expected a great deal from teachers and saw them as more than facilitators of knowledge transfer. Buber's influence on the affective dimensions of education can be seen in the current work of educational philosophers, such as Nell Nodding, whose work is comprehensively featured next.

- **Nodding**: She criticises the current form of liberal education for the contemporary focus on a narrow curriculum, based largely on verbal and mathematical achievement, and argues that it cripples many whose talents and abilities lie elsewhere.

Nodding argues that if we want our children to be kind, moderate and nurturing then the general focus of the teacher should be to promote the concept of care, which would enable teachers to address the unique talents, abilities and interests of children. She argues that, in the future, students need to develop the capacity to care for (respect) the self, intimate others, distant others, the living environment, the world of objects and ideas.

For the philosopher, Nell Nodding, models of moral education, shaped by care ethics, are process orientated, involving 'modelling, dialogue, practice and confirmation'. Care ethics are based on the view that every human being hopes for a positive response from other human beings.

Care theorists seek to avoid a universalising care response and work for practice to recognise people's different needs, desired outcomes and values. They place a great deal of emphasis on listening and receptive attention and on the development of both self-understanding and empathy.

Value Education based on Caring Theme

In care ethics and moral development, values that need to be developed are focused on care ethics. It develop through modelling in which teacher as role model act in a way that shows concern for caring in his daily life. By seeing teachers caring attitude student develop caring attitude within themselves. Also modelling only cannot be enough to develop caring individual, there need a constant dialogue with teachers. A dialogue is a two way process in which both participants gain through interactions. Then through practice and confirmation, caring attitude is consolidated by confirming a caring attitude of student. Thus value education programme based on caring is in which whole of the school environment is remodelled with caring as main theme. Thus it includes remodelling curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning processes based on caring as major theme.

Some other Positions of Normative Ethics

- **An Empiricist's Position on Moral Education**

The empiricist, John Locke identified values with appropriate behaviours and habits, arising from training and conditioning (Smith, 2001). As an empiricist (deriving knowledge from experience alone), he considered that the mind of an individual might be likened to be a blank sheet (tabularasa) on which experience is written. He thought that children should be taught rules and that these should be practised so that they became intrinsic habits. The significance of the empirical view of moral development is that it supported a form of education that largely ignores the innate dispositions of the child. Instead, it seeks to instil civilised behaviour, based on a set of rules that enables the child to adopt moral behaviour. B.F.Skinner further developed this empirical view of education in the twentieth century, which led to the development of pedagogy based on behaviour modification.

- **Value Education:** According to empiricist, moral development can be done through conditioning of mind through outside instructions. Thus moral development approach of empiricist's is based on external instructions and conditioning and values are taught directly. In this approach child is seen as passive rather than active agent of moral development.

- **Rousseau's Idealism**

In contrast to both Kant and Wesley is the romantic notion of childhood espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). He wanted to demonstrate that an individual could be educated to be autonomous in a corrupt society. He write his thoughts on education, in a book which is called Emile. Rousseau argued against the acquisition of a moral vocabulary before the age of reason because he believed that the child could not grasp the concept of being moral until puberty. Rousseau's heuristic approach to education was to ensure that the child became autonomous and master of one self.

- **Value education:** Rousseau advocated moral education based on child centeredness. He believed that nature has everything through which children can learn, by interacting with the nature. Thus he espoused value education programme based on child centeredness. He was against any form of indoctrination and believe in independence of child, where he himself can learn by interacting through his environment.

- **Consequentialists: Utilitarianism**

For utilitarians, happiness is the greatest and most obvious human good, and an ethic should guide us toward producing as much happiness as possible. In its simplest form, utilitarianism seeks the "greatest good for the greatest number." Instead of defining the duty of ethical agents in terms of doing what is right (determined by Kant's logical process), utilitarians define the right in terms of optimising ratio of happiness to pain.

- **Value education:** Utilitarianism basic idea is that we should actively and explicitly teach about morality. At the college level, many programs now include required courses in ethics, and the motivation for such courses is often, at least implicitly, utilitarian.

- **Pragmatic ethics**

Dewey's pragmatic ethics is, like utilitarianism, consequentialist; that is, an act is judged ethically acceptable or unacceptable according to the consequences it produces. Dewey differed with utilitarians, however, on several important issues. First, he thought it was an error to posit one greatest good, even one as obvious and desirable as happiness. Human beings desire a host of goods, and at any given time, happiness may not be the immediate good sought. . Third, Dewey put much more emphasis on the responsibility of individuals and institutions than is usual in utilitarianism. For Dewey, the primary criterion of ethical behaviour is willingness to accept responsibility for the full range of anticipated outcomes. A moral agent, like a problem solver in any domain, must explore the full range of possibilities and ask whether he or she is willing to take responsibility for each outcome. In this, Dewey closely resembles existentialist thinkers. But Dewey also insists on a public test. Thus Dewey's conception of moral deliberation is consistent with his pragmatism. First, Dewey believes that moral inquiry is the same as intelligent inquiry; both are meant to serve human interests. Second, Dewey believes that there is no single universal principle that could apply in every moral problem; the general principle only exists in the continual investigation. Third, Dewey insists that moral judgment depends on the problematic situations. We have to understand the situation in order to decide among the many possible actions.

Dewey's ethics object that Dewey makes no distinction between fact and value or between moral values and no moral values. This approach, which is judged so powerful in many situations, may not be adequate for moral problems.

Value Education based on Pragmatic Ethics

Value clarification approach to value education has roots in Dewey's pragmatic ethics. The Values Clarification program reflects some of Dewey's ideas: It makes no distinction between valuing in the moral domain and other domains; it emphasises the process rather than the content of valuing; and it insists that values are manifested in action--that is, it is illogical to say that we value something if that 'something' plays no role in how we live our lives.

However there is lot of criticism of value clarification approach to moral development and education. Critics argued that should there be no distinction between the moral domain and others? Can we teach valuing as a mere process--must there not be content, specific values to be taught? Are there

no stable, universal principles to guide moral action? Thus value education based on pragmatic ethics is not dependent on any absolute principle. Here motive is to explore all values in conflict and rationally choose one of the value which finds suitable in particular situation.

Conclusion

I believe character education and Kohlberg's moral development are valuable theories which enhance moral education in school. Character education focuses on teaching core values, while Kohlberg's moral development emphasises moral cognition development through moral dilemma discussion. Those two approaches have their own merits and defects. When applying both these theories from framework of Dewey's concept of moral inquiry and moral deliberation could help those two approaches become more effective. Following Dewey's concept of moral inquiry, character education programs would realise that each value needs to be evaluated in a specific situation and that teachers could not simply teach certain core values. They also need to teach students the process of moral inquiry and to assess each value in a particular situation.

Following Dewey's concept of moral deliberation, Kohlberg's moral development needs to realise that the process of moral judgment involves reason and feeling, self and relationship, concept and context. According to Dewey, moral deliberation is not tied to a sequence of moral stages, the deliberation process leads to a moral wisdom which could help students to deal with a moral conflict in a specific situation.

At the same time we need to incorporate relational ethics theories and give due importance to role of emotions in moral decision making. Moral development is not function of only cognitive development but emotions play a vital role. So value education programmes should also focus on inculcating emotional intelligence for effective moral decision making. Also we need to maintain balance when deciding whether values to be taught explicitly which is espoused by empiricist and naturalist approach which emphasis child develop their own values and should be set completely free. It is important to understand that moral development is complex process and any single approach cannot gives us required results. We need to follow blend of these approaches while deciding our schooling experiences such as curriculum, school subjects and mode of evaluation. We need to teach values explicitly as espoused by virtues ethicist. Also we should focus on development of moral reasoning and thinking which is emphasised by Kant and Kohlberg theories. However we need to incorporate latest findings of relational ethics and focus on development of caring individual and emotion development also for moral development. Thus only blend of these approaches can produce an effective value education programme. So while planning value education programmes we need to incorporate all positive elements of all the theories and traditions described in this article.

References

1.   Barrow, R. (2007). *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy and Moral Education.* New York:

2.   Routledge.

3.   Lovat, T., Dally, K., Clement, N., & Toomey, R. (2011). Values Pedagogy and Teacher Education: Re-conceiving the Foundations. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(7), p. 31-44.

4.   Nucci, L.P., & Narvaez, D. (2014). *Handbook of moral and character education*. New York: Routledge.

5.   Nodding, N. (2015). *Philosophy of education*. Routledge.

6.   Silay, N. (2013). A Survey of Values Education and its Connection with Character Education.

7.   *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2, p. 131-138.

❖◆❖