

Youth and moral values in a changing society

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Abstract

Values may be defined as the guiding principles which play an important role in our day-to-day decisions. Moreover, these are the standards for determining different levels of goodness or desirability and which are generally loaded with different affective thoughts about ideas, objects, behavior, etc. People become more and more rich by their degrees concerning various fields but simultaneously, losing values and ethics, etc. because of our existing family system, education system, and media system. Historical evidences defend that we were rich in our culture, heritage & traditions, still our education system at any level is unable to cherish or enhance it. Youth power is considered the driving force and power engine to a nation or society, if it moves in a positive direction. Presently, youth is diverted through different immoral activities, which do not only influence the present Indian society but also stimulate the future generations. Therefore, it is imperative and a duty of everybody to find out the solution of this crucial problem to establish India in the world of peace and harmony that is very much dependent on the hands of the young generation.

This research paper explains the concept of Youth and moral values along with the factors affecting moral values in present youth and the ways to stop the degradation of moral values and its methods to reduce the moral degradation in youth. It has been stated rightly that the future of any nation rests on the shoulders of youths of today.

Keywords: youth and moral values

Introduction

"What is wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it. Right is right if no one else is doing it"

- WILLIAM PENN

We all humans are fundamentally social beings which bear responsibilities to each other that cannot be ignored and vice-versa. In Vedic and post-Vedic period, the gurukul system was responsible to impart education and to inculcate values in pupils. In that education system, the guru or teacher and student were firmly and closely bound to each other. The student stayed with their teacher at his home, studied there in the lap of nature in realistic situations. Their teacher taught everything which the student wanted to learn and beneficial to them, from holy languages to the Holy Scriptures and from Armory to Axiology.

Across the history of modern civilizations in the world, peoples have gathered in groups based on common beliefs, desires, and expectations. Social structures formed within these populations and gave rise to nation states providing a place of refuge (protection) to people with common expectations, tradition, and value. Values are the principles we use to define that which is right, good, and just.

The concept of youth

Youths are the engine room or power house of the societies. They are highly energetic, excessively ambitious who desire to change things or situations overnight; as quickly as possible and in the shortest possible time frame and are always willing to go the extra miles if needed to achieve anything. What they believe in and hold onto. Youths have a tendency to be idealistic as a result of the values passed into them at earlier ages by role models in the society, an

eagerness to live to these role models. They are the pillars, pathfinders and torchbearers of any developmental process and activities in society and major determinants of the extent of growth and development in any society. Having these characteristics, youth can be helped by present day leaders to reduce to the barest minimum their frustrations and anxiety in society by putting relevant measures in place to motivate them and also positively harness their strength and vigor for positive change and development in society.

The concept of moral values

Morality originating from the Latin word 'moralitas' refers to "manner, character, proper behavior" which differentiates intentions, decisions and actions between good and bad. These are acceptable standards of general conduct or behavior when judged by an average person or the society at large. Morality plays a healthy synthesis between people, cooperate each other in a harmonic manner, understand the right or wrong differentiation makes a value based society. Moral values as the essential values determine individual's perception of morality and moral consciousness in society. These also stand as the standards of good and evil, govern an individual's behavior and choices. Society, government, religion, educational institute, family and self are the sources of morals. Moral values include truthfulness, patience, obedience, honesty, integrity, hard work, responsibility, respect, tolerance, loyalty, public spiritedness, freedom, justice, fairness, equality, respect for human life and dignity of persons. Whenever these moral values being derived from society and government, they, according to necessity, may become as the laws and morals of the society. School, family, society, culture and social values etc usually affect these morals.

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.

Development of moral values reduce social problems like unrest, social erosion, crime, separatism, class conflict, isolation, lack of wellbeing and after all collective distance. Youths are actually very idealistic as they are taught right from childhood to value “unchanging” ideals such as justice, fairness and equality; brought up in a culture that promotes ideals and “idea of permanence”.

There is an intense relationship among youth and moral values. To make youths more accountable and responsible, it is necessary to make them morally sound. Today, youths abuse and scold their parents and elders, comment, insult and give sarcastic comments on others. It’s all, because they lack of moral values in them. On the one hand, Modernization makes a person learn more and more but on the other part, it is also responsible in declining moral values and making people especially more materialistic by nature. Youth as a responsible citizen of a nation, with full of moral values can perform his duty in a responsible way and reduce many social evils like cheating, black marketing, fraud & forgery, manipulation, adulteration, money laundering etc. A youth should help the needy or helpless. According to Anadi (2008), “moral dispositions of its members are responsible for the social prosperity”. “Whenever a man give up the state of solitude from his life and entered the life of community, his life become meaningful only in relation to society. His activities become useful only when they share the vision of society (Enemuo & Nzulumike; 2009).”

Values of the past and present

Society is always dynamic not stationary. As society’s changes from simple form to complex modern societies, along with that people, values, trends, activities, traditions, customs and even architecture also change. With the development of societies, values continuously changes according to the changing world scenario, which has brought in an increased wave of moral depravity and moral negligence in present day societies. Some appreciated and upheld moral values of the past include: Truthfulness, Tolerance, Cooperation, peace, honesty, hard work and functionalism, Respect for human life, Dignity of persons, unity and integrity.

Almost all the contemporary societies have witnessed fall in moral values and an increased interest in pleasure, comfort and amusement. Moral decline results in indiscipline at all levels in societies and its consequential effects are observed in lack of accountability to our work, our readiness to fraud, cheat and misuse, lack of self-esteem and respect for human life and involving in corruption. Values by youth held and pursued today include: dishonesty, disrespectful to life, intolerance, lack of cooperation, disrespect to others, profit oriented relationships, abuse of human dignity, loss of pride in hard work, an increased interest in the pursuit of injustice and other crimes all with the aim to acquire maximum wealth. In the modern world, people feel honor in telling lies, in involving in fraud activities and in unfair means. They usually found involved in many criminal activities. Lacking integrity in inter-communication and have barefaced abuse of the laws and of human rights is the order of the day.

Degradation of moral values in youth

Regarding responsible behavior from youth there is always high level of expectation by every human being, society and institution from all over the world, but in contemporary scenario, it has been observed that immoral and antisocial behaviour is increasing everyday among them. Being an integral part of society every human is considered as a matter of great concern because decrease in moral values among school children and youths greatly obstruct the social fabrication and society both. Following are some responsible factors 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. **Rise of maturity:** With the rising of maturity level, the sense of shame and atonement is increasing on finding himself committing anything wrong. As such, situation is repeating youth feels dejected in his environment and become the victim of solitude, unhappy life and inferiority complex and keeps himself apart from the realities of life.
6. **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, quarreling, sex abuse, substance abuse etc.
7. **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

and emotions and start revolting in the form of immoral behavior.

8. **Parental behavior:** Parental behavior 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.
9. **Inappropriate Educational polity and Governance:** Especially in Indian education system, there are flaws in the educational polity and governance, administration and management. These flaws should be removed.
10. **Dirty Policies:** Most of the political parties have a tendency to capture youth to strengthen and developed their structure. All the political parties have been fulfilling their own interest by involving them into different movements with the assurance of employment and numerous greed and promises. Being inspired by those, the youth is being adversely affected and the society is being polluted by an unstable situation.
11. **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.

Moral values for youth in a changing society

In modern world, societies going through the developmental process encounters rapidly with latest developmental trends. It is very important for youths to hold on to moral values taught them in their childhood. In as much as societies continue to change, there are certain principles that genuinely focused societies want to strictly adhere to. Youths are being faced with unusual problems in their societies that tend to challenge their moral position, they are surrounded with people who are immoral. Society tends to favor those who can do almost anything to attain power and money and even celebrates corruption in several ways. Notwithstanding this, youths have the internal power, which enable them to bring about the societies they want. In as much as they continue to observe such sad practices, they can choose to make a positive impact in society by the way they live. Still, the world celebrating great personalities of great values who held on and continue to hold on to values that are unquestionable and true. There are many youths in India and abroad are who have dared to face the challenges and fought for the greater causes and hence change the world. Some such youths are Shahid-e-aazam Sardar Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru, Sukhdev, Ashfaak ulla, the Late South African President, Nelson Mandela, the young Pakistani youth, Malala Yousafzai. Life always presents choices; man is always a product of his choices. What you choose can make or mar you. A total man with knowledge, competence (skills) and right attitude can leave lasting legacies for the future of any society. Moral

values of the past can still be practiced by youths in present modern societies and with this they (youths) can determine the type of change that occurs in society and not just be swept off their feet and be victims of the changes that are bound to occur in a changing world. Youths of today can make a difference in their societies by standing out of the crowd and upholding moral values in a morally bankrupt society.

Methods to reduce the moral degradation in youth

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 Polity and Governance:** 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 and instructions:** 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. **External as well Internal Cooperation:** Every society needs internal as well external cooperation from different types of agencies or organizations. It is need of the hour that different NGOs and social associations voluntarily must have strengthen to youth to bring stability among them. Proper planning should be introduced and implemented according to the potentialities of youth.

Conclusion

Youths are the determinants of the level of development in every society in all the ages. Youths are the major workforce of any society with the help of which all the societies get the position of self-sustained. Youth must be self-acquaint with the knowledge of their importance and worth in the society and they must act as the purveyors of the destiny and progress of society. Youths must be committed to imbibe and uphold the moral values throughout their lives because these values will always shape their thoughts and actions. 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 behavior. Youths can be the agents of social change by accepting to live by moral codes and conduct.

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