

Professional Ethics and Responsibilities of Teachers: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract: Teachers are the backbone of society. It is needless to say that teachers are friends, philosophers, and guides. This article primarily addresses the professional ethics and responsibilities of teachers. Teachers must have some professional ethics and responsibilities towards students as well as society. From another viewpoint, professional ethics and good knowledge are important qualities and status of the teaching profession. It is the teachers who understand their own professional ethics and responsibilities and how this is to be expressed in their teaching. The primary job of teachers is to help guide students' character and behaviour. Not only a teachers' responsibilities lie in preparing students for life, maintaining discipline, establishing a healthy and supportive environment, but also respecting all learners equally. Another important thing is that teachers should have a positive attitude towards their professional ethics and responsibilities. Teachers should provide that kind of education which brings holistic development in students. Professional ethics help teachers to be honest, fair, respectful, trustworthy and responsible in their work. Teachers also have some important responsibilities towards society, institution, administration, and parents as they build future citizens. Teachers are not shaping academic outcomes but also developing values, inclusivity, acceptance, attitudes and social behaviours of learners.

Key Words: Teacher, Professional Ethics, Responsibilities, Education.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Needless to say, teachers play an important role as front liners in every education system. Their role is not only providing knowledge or imparting information but also providing good quality education that brings changes in their behaviour. There is no doubt that teaching is universally acknowledged as a noble profession because it plays a pivotal role in shaping intellectual, physical, emotional, mental and moral development of learners. Professional ethics confers to the moral principles, standards, and code of conduct that state teachers' behaviour. It also states that teachers support integrity, preserve the dignity of the profession and act in the best interest of pupils. On another side the responsibilities of teachers expand beyond classroom instruction. Teachers are bound to establish an amicable and inclusive learning environment, respecting various cultures and individual diversity, fostering creativity and the ability to frame critical thinking, and nurturing values, such as respect, tolerance, cooperation and social responsibilities. It also includes collaborating with parents of learners, colleagues, administration and engaging in continuous professional development for the sake of learners. Teachers have a duty not only to teach students but also to be committed to society. In this way, professional ethics and responsibilities of teachers are indispensable to understanding how ethical teaching practices mould learner outcomes and build a progressive society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

It's essential to review of related literature. A relevant literature study or review increases the knowledge of the present researcher and helps to understand the background of such kind of study.

Paschal (2023) emphasised that teachers have massive responsibilities as they are the inspiration, role models and motivators for thousands of learners both inside and outside the classroom. Students learn from a teacher's conduct, actions, sense of discipline, values and ethics. Therefore, teachers' responsibility is not only to equip the learners with

knowledge, skills and latest technological innovations but also to build their moral character. Teachers with profound knowledge of professional ethics have always enhanced the all-round development of the learners

UNESCO and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) have studied teacher codes of conduct and noted that, when effectively implemented, these codes promote integrity, fairness, and trust (UNESCO-IIEP, 2021)

National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has articulated a *Code of Professional Ethics* that outlines teachers' responsibilities toward students, colleagues, parents, and society (NCTE, 2010)

Rawat, Karkare & Yadav (2015) emphasised that teachers always attempt to set up the best ethical example possible so that the learners can develop the highest ethical standards. In fact, teachers are responsible and accountable for maintaining the dignity and integrity of the profession.

Campbell (2003) emphasised the concept of "ethical knowledge," which suggests that teachers should use their moral understanding in everyday decision-making. This perspective portrays professional ethics as not just adhering to rules; instead, it embodies a commitment to fairness, integrity, and the overall development of students.

Socket (1993) conceptualised teacher professionalism as rooted in four moral dimensions—community, knowledge, accountability, and ideals—emphasising that teaching is fundamentally a moral practice.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To explore the professional ethics of teachers
- To explore the importance of the professional ethics of teachers
- To analyse the responsibilities of teachers

4. METHODOLOGY: The present study is qualitative in nature.

5. SOURCES OF DATA:

The study has been conducted with the help of various journals, articles, documents of NEP 2020, NCTE, UGC, NPST, etc.

6. SOME IMPORTANT TERMS:

- Who is a Teacher?

A person whose job is to teach, especially in a school, college or university.

- What is Ethics?

Ethics is the philosophical study of moral phenomena. Also called moral philosophy, which governs behaviour, focusing on what is right and wrong, and how people should act. (Wikipedia)

- What is Profession?

Any work that needs special training or a particular skill, often one that is respected because it involves a high level of education (Cambridge Dictionary)

- What is Professional Ethics?

Rules of acceptable conduct that members of a given profession are expected to follow. (APA Dictionary of Psychology)

- What is Responsibility?

The state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one's power, control, or management. (Dictionary.com)

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

It is needless to say that teachers are the creators of future citizens. The professional ethics and responsibilities of a teacher hold immense significance in the field of education and society at large, as well as the nation. Teachers not only provide academic knowledge but also instil values, personality, and leadership skills, attitude, etc. Their teaching

rigorously contributes to individual growth, societal development, and better performance of the institution. Teachers, through their teaching, bring change in society.

8. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF TEACHERS:

In every profession, ethics are essential. The teaching profession is a noble profession. There are some professional ethics for teachers. Here are some key aspects:

Teachers towards Students

- A teacher should be an ideal person for the learners.
- Should be unbiased. Treat all pupils with love and affection.
- Provide equal opportunity to all students irrespective of their caste, creed, colour, religion, gender, economic status, disability, language and place of birth.
- A teacher should help and guide students in their teaching learning process, build various skills among them for future citizens.
- Teachers should create a safe, inclusive and motivating learning environment for students.
- Simplify students' physical, mental, social, intellectual, emotional, and moral development.
- Teachers should respect the human rights and dignity of the students.
- A teacher should inculcate human values that are enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Commitments towards the Profession and Colleagues

- A teacher should have professional knowledge, competence, and maintain his/her performance.
- Keep in touch with continuous learning and professional development.
- Teachers should respect their teaching profession diligently.
- A teacher should abstain from misbehaviour, exploitation.
- Teachers should be aware of their profession as it has a high impact on society.
- A teacher should always respect his or her colleagues.
- Take part in sharing knowledge, resources, opinions and best practices for collective improvement for their teaching as well as for the betterment of students and institutions.
- A teacher should always abstain from biased caste, creed, colour, religion, and gender in their profession.
- Maintain an amicable attitude towards their colleagues, non-teaching staff.
- Teachers should cooperate with the administration for the betterment of the institution.

Obligations to Parents, Community and Society

- Set up an amicable relationship with parents/guardians in the interest of the holistic development of students.
- Teachers should keep regular communication with parents/guardians.
- Acknowledge the role of families and communities in the field of education.
- Respect the opinions or views of parents/guardians for the sake of their children's education and also regarding the improvement of the institution.
- Develop cultural harmony, social responsibility, and promote values of citizenship.
- Remain unbiased to every parent/guardian belonging to various strata of society.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS:

Teachers have a huge responsibility. Here are some key aspects:

Responsibilities towards Pupils

- Teachers should prepare learning designs, teaching learning materials and use various teaching methods according to the classroom situation.
- Impart knowledge and skills to learners.
- A teacher should complete the assigned syllabus and practicum-related work on time.
- Encourage students to participate in curricular and cocurricular activities.

- Teachers should monitor students' overall learning and performance through various assignments and evaluations.
- Provide remedial classes for the needy students and identify their problems.
- A teacher should always look after the students for their holistic development.
- Teachers should guide students for their individual support and provide suggestions for their academic career as well as their future progress.

Responsibilities towards the Profession and Colleagues

- Teachers should maintain a positive attitude in their profession and perform their duty minutely.
- A teacher should engage himself/herself continuously to enhance their own skills.
- A teacher should help or cooperate with other staff in their academic and non-academic matter.
- Should build a cohesive and supportive institutional environment.

Responsibilities towards Parents, Community and Society

- Teachers should be involved regularly with guardians through meetings and other various ways to discuss student progress and provide their opinions if necessary.
- A teacher should promote social awareness, cultural understanding and community service through various activities.
- A teacher should take responsibility to bring change in society for the sake of their learners.

10. CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE TEACHERS BY UGC:

There are some codes of professional ethics for university and college teachers by UGC. Below is the summary of this. These are the following :(SOURCE: UGC)

Teachers and their Responsibilities:

Teachers must have some responsibilities towards students, parents, colleagues, authorities, community, society, and nation, such as professional development, sound communication, amicable relationships and community service.

Teachers and Students:

Teachers should inculcate national ideals among students and respect the rights and dignity of the students in expressing his/her opinion regardless of their caste, religion. Teachers should encourage students to develop their personality and to improve their attainments and at the same time contribute to community welfare.

Teachers and Colleagues:

Teachers should keep a good relationship with their colleagues and also discuss their professional betterment for the sake of the institution. Teachers should also respect their colleagues.

Teachers and Authorities:

Teachers should cooperate with the authorities for the betterment of the institutions, keeping in view the interest and in conformity with the dignity of the profession and also for future progress.

Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff:

Teachers should respect the non-teaching staff as colleagues and equal partners in a cooperative undertaking, within every educational institution.

Teachers and Guardians:

Teachers should keep regular communication with the guardians of students for the betterment of students as well as the institution.

Teachers and Society

Teachers, through various activities, participate in removing social problems and strengthening the community's moral and intellectual life.

11. NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS (NPST):

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has created a comprehensive guiding document to establish a well-designed common set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) that aligns with all the objectives of NEP 2020. National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), as envisaged in Para 5.20 of NEP 2020, aims for equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners. (Source NPST)

National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) Framework

NPST Guiding Document 2023 has identified three Standards of Competencies for professional development of teachers.

Standard 1: Core Values & Ethics - Core values and ethics play a crucial role in the teaching profession. They provide as guiding principles that shape professional development of teachers' values, such as commitment to integrity, professionalism, honesty, respect, trust, and mutual understanding within the classroom, and help the teachers to continuously refine their pedagogical skills and lifelong learning. By upholding these core values and ethics, teachers create a foundation of equity and inclusivity.

Standard 2: Knowledge & Practice - The domain of teacher knowledge and practice is extensive, encompassing subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge, understanding of educational aims and systems, learning theory, and specific learner contexts. It involves skills and dispositions for engaging students inclusively, planning and teaching effectively, assessing and reflecting, as well as designing learning experiences across various settings like classrooms, libraries, and playgrounds to support holistic student development.

Standard 3: Professional Growth & Development – This standard outlines the expectations for teachers to enhance their professional knowledge and skills at each career stage through Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Teachers should value their professional identity and strive for growth. Competency, as defined in this document, encompasses knowledge, dispositions, and capabilities.

Teacher profile has also been prepared for the development of expertise in teaching, which has been divided into different levels- Proficient, Advanced and Expert.

Proficient Teacher: At this career stage, a teacher is expected to be professionally independent, demonstrating essential teaching skills. A Proficient Teacher organizes curricular content, selects meaningful resources, and meets inclusive curricular objectives while caring for students' well-being. They recognize the need for individualized learning, engage with parents and school management, and promote democratic values and practices.

Advanced Teacher: At this career stage, an Advanced Teacher is expected to exemplify high teaching standards and best practices. They take on a peer leadership role for proficient teachers and will be observed and trained by senior staff. The Advanced Teacher is adept at applying and adapting strategies to meet diverse student needs, reflecting on the teaching context to innovate and solve problems. They are resourceful in strategising for immediate and long-term educational goals, collaborating with various stakeholders in the school and community.

Expert Teacher: At this level, teachers are expected to excel as mentors and leaders, helping colleagues enhance their competencies and leading professional development programs. They consistently demonstrate high performance in teaching, collaborate effectively, and mentor others to advance their careers. The Expert Teacher will guide peers in skill acquisition and evidence development for the next career stage while fostering learning communities to improve overall teaching practices.

12. DISCUSSION:

It is very clear that teachers are not only human beings, but they also have a huge responsibility towards pupils, society and community. They help to fulfil students' dreams. They build the future of the nation. It is obvious that teaching is a noble profession. A teacher should maintain his/her professional ethics for the sake of students. A teacher is not a house

of knowledge and supplier of information; he/she is more than a friend, philosopher and guide. Proper education is needed for every student, and this major task is taken on by teachers. Proper education needs proper guidance. So, it may be stated that a teacher's job is not only to teach the student in the classroom, but also to help them bring out their inner potential and also assist them to identify their own capabilities. A teacher contributes to the holistic development of their students.

13. CONCLUSION:

So far as education is concerned, professional ethics and responsibilities of teachers form the foundation of effective teaching and meaningful education. A nation cannot think of its progress without a teacher. A teacher is not only a provider of knowledge and information but also a philosopher, guide, mentor, facilitator and role model whose influence shapes the intellectual, emotional, moral and holistic development of learners. By adhering to ethical principles such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect, teachers ensure that learning takes place in an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment which welcomes every learner. At the same time, their responsibilities extend beyond the classroom to society for the progress of the nation, where they contribute to nurturing responsible citizens and promoting social harmony without bias.

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