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The Role of Family in Imparting Moral Values

Dr. Sachin Namdeo Gadekar
Associate Professor of English
AES' Tuljaram Chaturchand College (Autonomous),
Baramati-413102,
Dist.-Pune, MS. India
[Email.-sachingadekarenglish@gmail.com](mailto:sachingadekarenglish@gmail.com)

In the 21 century, the education system in India is undergoing rapid changes. New approaches, methodologies, tools and techniques have been incorporated in the curriculum. Simultaneously, it has been facing several challenges. The process of globalisation has made it easy as well as complicated. The present paper deals with the role of family in developing moral capabilities among children. Family, along with school and religious institutions is one of the significant tools to impart moral values among children from the early phase of life. Values can be cultivated through various ways. The present paper aims to study the ways and methods of imparting moral values among children and more particularly by the family. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the role of family in developing moral capabilities among children. And the second part emphasizes on the role and ways by which the familial system could inculcate and sow the seeds of morality at the early stage of childhood. Family can work as a catalyst along with school and society. It can have a long lasting impact on the minds and growth of children.

One of the main objectives of education is to teach various values. It is accepted that the holistic education has three kinds including material or physical, human or intellectual and moral or spiritual. This paper focuses on the third kind of education that is moral or spiritual. Morality or spirituality are the umbrella terms but in a broader sense they include perfection in terms of values, character, qualities and most significantly virtues which are useful for bringing unity and harmony among humankind. Along with material and intellectual development children strive for moral and spiritual excellence. These abilities are useful for personal and social development.

However, morality is defined differently as a set of social rules, beliefs, traditions, customs, practices in the proper and acceptable form. It is an ability of recognising the distinction between good and evil or right and wrong. It also refers to the respect and obedience to the rules of right conduct or behaviour which are intended to produce morally good results. The list of moral values include love, sharing, honesty, patriotism, loyalty, truthfulness, unity, respect, help needy and so forth. The healthy and peaceful society can be encouraged by these moral values.

It is universally accepted that the main purpose of education is exploring and enhancing inequalities among students that perpetually could lead to the benefits of all humankind. Learning is the process and in this process, students should meet effectively the challenges in their career and also real life situations. Though it is a continuous process that should be nurtured at the proper stage of students' life and in this process the major roles are played by the family, school and then society. Here, I intend only to focus on the preliminary phase in the life of the child. In this stage, the emphasis is on value-based social and cultural aspects. According to the 21st century Report of the International Commission on Education submitted to UNESCO, Jacques Delors (1996) opines:

In current confronting many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attend freedom and social justice. As it concludes its work, the commission affirms its belief that education has a fundamental opening role to play in personal and social development. The commission does not see education as a miracle to cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be attained but as one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of Human Development and thereby to reduce poverty exclusion, ignorance, operation and war. (The Compass 16)

It is not only the case that certain moral values should be learnt from the religious institutions or school. They are also not enough and adequate due to the plurality of ideas and codes. Moral values and virtues are so deeply rooted in our culture that society plays a pivotal role. Children after school spend most of their fruitful and significant time at home. The learning of moral values can be shaped at home. The learning process can be carried out systematically and episodically. Couple of moral values in a general sense do's and don'ts of social living can be strengthened at home. Family plays a significant role in controlling the physical and psychological discipline imposed on children as an external or internal moral code. The psychological atmosphere and relationship with others are shaped by family or at home. The size, number of family members and also context influence the moral learning. Here, I am not going to mean the nuclear or joint family. Both type of families has their advantages and disadvantages. My focus is on the role of family in inculcating moral values.

Family becomes a bedrock for inculcating values among children. The cultural values can be easily transmitted to children. The child can learn the norms of society and also consequences after its violation of social or legal norms. They are also acquainted at school or society. It has been proved by various experiments that family plays significant role in the early years in children's cognitive development. Other factors like family background, and

early childhood education also influence the learning process. Parents have an immense moral influence on children like teacher. The environment where they are born and brought up also influence their life. The mutual understanding between father and mother, or siblings love and care for each other shape their mental makeup. The aspirations of parents strongly reflect in them.

The Child Development Project founded in the late 1970 also observed that home and classroom are the important formative contexts for the moral development of children. Like teacher parents' also guide children and help them to understand the complex activities and concepts and also support them for collaborative or pro-social skills with their peers. Family provides a good platform for teaching learning values. The study can enrich them to know the difference between right and wrong. The foundation of life is laid down at home. Children can learn various arts and crafts at home with the assistance of parents.

Among parents, the role of mother is very significant. Mother is a good trainer of a child from infancy. Her qualities and values and also imperfection may reflect or influence child's life and subsequently mankind in future. So, mother who gives birth to a child, rears, nurture and help to grow must be well acquainted with an emotional development and the progress of her child. Simultaneously, father too has important obligations in upbringing of children through their good character. Their own gestures influence the mind of children. They teach children possibilities. Moreover, the representatives of the society shall provide the means for their overall development. Parents are ready to do anything to make their children successful. But if appropriate methods are not used, their judgements and lessons often send their children wrong messages. Rather every action sends some kind of message such as "you are a developing person and I am interested in your development" on the other hand, how children respond to this messages also shape their future.

Parents supportive and self-esteem boosting messages to their children encourage confidence and achievement. But it should be linked to success and failure. The performance should be seen as a reflection of character. The praise by parents about children's confidence does not work permanently. It may have an opposite effect. Failures may discourage them. So, they should be taught how to face challenges, enjoy efforts and keep learning in life. Though parents want the best for their children, they should do it by fostering their interest and learning. They should set some helpful ideas for their children and work for expanding their knowledge, ways of thinking and exploring the world that could contribute to society. Youth have the capacities to contribute largely in shaping the society. Their energy, talent and capacities can be channelized for building a better society. Their strength, brilliant motives, determination, tenacity, lofty purpose and moral character are the main pillars of advancing society. In this youthful stage, if they could find answer to the basic questions of life and inculcate values, they can reach to their destination of truth and healthy society.

Thus, family can contribute in developing abilities, skills and healthy attitude among children, who could grow intellectually and spiritually and also contribute to the betterment of society. In building children's abilities, family play a significant role. They shape their abilities including communication, imagination, collaboration, promotion of equality, uprightness and also building the environment of unity in a more creative and disciplined manner. Moral capabilities can be strengthened by the family.

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