Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City: A Critical Study

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Abstract

We have all heard the oft repeated quote, "Education is all-round development". The education system of old indeed seemed to lay stress on an individual's overall/all-round development- personal, social and specially the moral. In ancient times, education was equated with sound morality. An educated person was expected to be, among many things, a person of good and sound moral character. In fact, to achieve this objective of education, the curriculum of old was infused with activities and content that could cater to the moral development aspects of an individual. The modern system of education too, in its own right incorporates and instills many moral values in to its system. As such, the present study is a modest undertaking to systematically survey, and to compare whether there are any differences in the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl city with regard to their gender.

Keywords: Moral values, Middle school students, Gender

Introduction:

Moral values are the principles by which we define something(s) as right and wrong. They involve the internalization of a set of values which emanate from the self, the family, community, religion, government, or any other entity that impacts the thoughts of the individual. It is basically the sum total of an individual's way of behaving that is often judged through an individual's ethical beliefs.

The psychologist's concept of moral behavior is much like the layman's psychoanalysts' concept of conscience or moral character (Donelson, 1973). The word 'MORAL' is derived from the Latin word 'MOS' which means custom, practice or rule, a way of accomplishing things.

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Morality is inferred from a person's intrinsically motivated resistance to temptation and from his guilt feelings that follow acts of transgression when he understands and also accepts prevailing standards of morality of the specific society (Kohlberg, 1963). Piaget (1968) was the first psychologist who interpreted the child's concept of moral values or values. Moral values play an important role in shaping personality development of the children. Freud considered super-ego as the moral commander of the personality and emphasized its observing, judging and punishing aspects. According to him, Super-ego is the ethical arm of personality that consists of conscience and ego ideal. He also explored an effective dimension of morality and also threw light on the dark corners of personality out of which morality grows. Kolhberg (1963) also described general structure and forms of moral thought. Generally, we consider the word moral as good and right conduct of the children or person.

NCERT (1987) in its resource material part-1 stated that every society wants to inculcate in its children's knowledge skills and certain qualities which may help them become good citizens which is called character education or value education. This includes Rastriya Panchaseel namely

a) Cleanliness b) Truthfulness c) Hardwork d) Equality and e) Cooperation

The Programme of Action NPE (1992) also emphasised value education as an integral part of school curriculum. It highlighted the values drawn from national goals, universal perception, ethical considerations and character building. It stressed the role of education in combating obscurantism, religious fanaticism, exploitation and injustice as well as the inculcation of values.

Rationale of the Study:

Moral value plays an important role in our life. Moral values are related to, but not indistinguishable with, moral behavior: it is possible to know the right thing to do, but not actually do it. It is also not the same as knowledge of social conventions, which are capricious customs needed for the smooth operation of society. Social conventions do have moral elements to them, but primarily, they have practical purposes. Moral values are standard accepted principles of life; it is concerned with the principles of right and wrong behavior and the goodness and badness of human character. It provides a structure for life. The moral value of courage gives everyone the determination to face anything that impedes the progress throughout life. Throughout history, morally responsible individuals have been known to be better respected in society too. However, sound moral values are not something that can be inculcated overnight. Besides, years may be required before a person may be said to be morally responsible. Therefore, there is a need not only to inculcate moral values at a tender age, but care must also be taken to assess what kinds of moral behaviors students are engaged in so that better and more meaningful measures may be adopted.

Positive moral values are important because they allow one to have an overall feeling of peace and joy. It can give meaning and purpose to life. Moral values are generally shared values. If we did have values in common, it would be exceedingly difficult to agree on anyone

course of action. School going children also need to have good moral values in their everyday living. Therefore, there is a need to know the status of moral values among the school going students and this study is a modest attempt to find out just how much emphasis is needed to study the moral values among the middle school students.

The Education Commission (1964-66) states that a serious defect in the school curriculum is the absence of provision for education in social, moral and spiritual values. In the life of majority of Indians, religion is a great motivating force and is intimately bound up with the formation of character and the inculcation of ethical values. A national system of education that is related to life needs and aspirations of the people cannot afford to ignore this purposeful force.

Statement of the Problem:

The problem of the present study is stated as, *"Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City: A Critical Study"*

Objectives of the Study:

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1.   To find out the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City.

2.   To compare the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City with regards to their gender.

3.   To offer suggestions in the light of the findings of the study.

Hypothesis of the Study:

In connection to the second objective of the study the following null hypothesis was formulated for empirical testing:

1.   There is no significant difference in the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City with regards to their gender.

Operational Definition of Keywords:

Different words have their different connotations according to their place of reference. In the present study, the words which are used in the title of the topic have the following operational meaning.

Morality: Morality may be defined as "the doctrine of right and wrong in human conduct."

Moral Values: Moral values are those traits against which people measure right and wrong and the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behavior and choices. Individual's moral may derive from society and government, religion or self. For the present

study, moral value is the score obtained from the Moral Value Scale developed by Alpana Sen Gupta and Arun Kumar Singh.

Middle School Students: Middle school students are students of Aizawl city who are studying in classes 7 and 8.

Gender: Gender means both male and female Middle School Students of Aizawl City.

Method of Study:

The main objective of the present study is to study the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City as such status survey method was followed.

Population and Sample:

The population of the present study includes all middle school students in Aizawl City. The sample of the study comprised of 100 students out of which 50 were males and 50 were females selected from Government Comprehensive Model School.

Tool Used:

For the present study, 'Moral Values Scale (MVS)' developed by Alpana Sen Gupta and Arun Kumar Singh in 1998 was used for collecting the data.

Collection of Data:

The investigators personally went to the school to collect data from the students of Government Comprehensive Model School. The selected students of class VII and VIII were given the questionnaire of moral values scale and they were asked to tick their preference in the test booklet. Before administering the test, the instructions given in the test booklet was read and explained to the subjects by the investigators. Having made sure that the subjects had understood the instruction and procedure for answering the test booklet; the actual administration of the test was started. After completing the test, the investigators collected those booklets and carefully checked each of the answer sheets. After that, the scoring of the test was done according to the manual and the score was then tabulated. The tabulated data was then analysed and interpreted according to the norms given in the manual.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data:

The present chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the middle school students in Aizawl City. The responses obtained from the subjects were scored by following the standard scoring procedures. The scores were classified, tabulated and analysed in accordance with the norms provided in the manual. Standard statistical methods were employed for analysis of data. The findings of the study are presented as follows with the objectives of the study accordingly.

Objective No. 1: *To find out the moral values of the middle school students in Aizawl City.*

The following table shows the number and percentage of moral values of all respondents which is categorized under three levels.

Table No.I

Moral Values of Middle School Students in Aizawl City

Description	No. of Students	%
HIGH	28	28
MEDIUM	44	44
LOW	28	28

The above table shows that majority i.e.44% of the middle school students in Aizawl City are categorized as having medium moral value and the percentage of the students who have high moral value is 28%. And again the percentage of the students who have low moral value is 28%. Thus, it can be interpreted that majority of the middle school students in Aizawl City have medium moral value.

Objective No. 2: *To compare the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City with regards to their gender.*

Hypothesis No. 1: *There is no significant difference in the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City with regards to their gender.*

The moral value of the students was compared on the basis of their gender. For this comparison, the Mean, Standard Deviation and the 't' value was calculated by using statistical methods and the significant level was also tested at .01 and .05 levels. The following table shows the results of the comparison.

Table No. II

Comparison of Moral Value of Middle School Students in Aizawl City with regards to their Gender

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. Level
Male Vs. Female	50	24.89	5.9	1.03	NS
	50	23.88	3.6		

*NS= Not Significant

Looking at the above table, it is seen that the mean of males is found to be greater than the mean of females, but the difference is not very high and the obtained t-value i.e. 1.03 is not significant at any level. Therefore, the hypothesis- '*There is no significant difference in the moral values of middle school students in Aizawl City with regards to their gender*'cannot be rejected. Thus, it can be interpreted that middle school students in Aizawl City do not differ significantly in their moral values with reference to their gender.

Major Findings of the Study:

- It was found that majority of the middle school students in Aizawl City have medium moral values.

- The study found that middle school students in Aizawl City do not differ significantly in their moral values with reference to their gender.

Suggestion:

- The parents of the school going students should create awareness in their children about the importance of moral values in our everyday life including our learning system.

- The teacher should talk about the importance of morality to the students and they should also teach about good morals in school.

- The education department should include moral science as one of the school subject at each and every level at the school.

- Moral assessments of students should be made a mandatory aspect of the overall assessments of students.

- Teachers should acquaint students about contextual scenarios where moral values may be upheld by students.

Conclusion:

From the analyses of the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that, in general, the moral value of the middle school students is good and normal. However, moral value or morality is not something that is transient. Therefore, parents and teachers alike have the pressing responsibility to take care of and nurture the moral values of the students. Students should be made aware of the importance of keeping their moral values in line with the natural human moral code. Yes, students can be taught about moral values theoretically, but if teachers make conscious efforts to inculcate in children at a very young age moral values such as respect, honesty, compassion, hard work, kindness, gratitude, sharing, cooperation, responsibility and generosity etc., it would, no doubt, go a long way in shaping their later adult lives. It would help them to become strong, undeterred and responsible individuals in the society and society as a whole is undoubtedly bound to greatly benefit from it as such.

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