

The Indian Perspective of Ethics

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Abstract:

Every country has its own culture and character based on the social, political and economic environment in which it operates. From that culture springs forth the national ethos, which prescribes a code of conduct for its citizens and creates the context for business ethics and values in that society. Indian ethos and wisdom –a legacy and heritage from its hoary past – envisaged a socialistic pattern of society, with an accent on redistribution-ism. It has always been a champion of renunciation and rectitude, rather than accumulation and aggrandizement. Mahatma Gandhi-ji once said that it was difficult, but not impossible; to be an honest businessman; but it was impossible to be honest, and also, amass wealth. He advocated a simple and self-sustaining lifestyle based on the dictum that while there was always adequate means to meet the needs of everyone, it was not enough to meet the greed of a few. The terms 'values', 'ethics', 'integrity' and 'conduct' are often used interchangeably and uncertain language is one of the barriers to establishing a widely understood framework for ethics.

Introduction

Before we venture to talk about ethics some key terms and nomenclature that is used in describing these concepts should be clarified:

- Ethics – what ought to be; the ideals of what is just, good and proper;
- Value – the commonly held beliefs that guide judgment about what is good and proper, and from which ethical principles drive;
- Integrity – normally one of the key ethical value; but also used in the current Departmental Performance Assessment as synonymous with a departmental framework for ethics.
 - Codes of conduct- the rules that translate ideals and values into everyday practices; and
 - Conduct – the actual behavior and action of public servants.

Purushartha

“Purusha” means either God or a human being. “Artha” means an object or objective. “Purusharthas” means objectives of a human being. “Purusha” does not mean male in the physical sense, but any soul in its differentiate aspects. So the “Purusharthas” are applicable to both men and women equally.

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- 1) Dharma (Righteousness)
- 2) Artha (Wealth)
- 3) Kama (Desire) and
- 4) Moksha(Salvation or Liberation)

Human life without purpose would be meaningless. One needs to have an end or purpose in his life towards which our actions can be directed. Dharma, Artha, Kama & Moksha are the aims or goals of human life which man ought to strive for attaining it throughout his life and in all births.

1) Dharma

The term dharma' (Sanskrit:dharma, pali dhamma), is an Indian spiritual and religious term, that means one's righteous duty or any virtuous path in the common sense of the term. In the text of the Rigveda, the word appears as an n-stem, dharman-, with a range of meaning encompassing "something established of firm" (in the literal sense of prods or poles), figuratively "sustainer, supporter" (of deities), and semantically similar to the Greek ethos ("fixed decree, statute, law").

It is used in most or all philosophies and religions of Indian origin -sometimes summarized under the umbrella term of Dharmic faiths-including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. It is difficult to provide a single concise definition for dharma, as the word has a long and varied history and straddles a complex set of meaning and interpretations.

Dharma means duty, faith, religion, righteousness, justice, morality Dharma means attainment of certain ends. According to one school of Hinduism, "Dharma" is an obligatory duty as prescribed by the Vedas to be performed by an individual in accordance with the rules prescribed for the caste to which he or she belongs. In a wider sense, "Dharma" is the secret glue, the binding force, which upholds and regulates this entire creation just as the gravitational force controls and holds the entire material universe as one piece. It is the divine constitution that defines our role and responsibilities, our social and moral order, our purpose and goals and the reward and punishments that are appropriate for our actions. The most fundamental aspect of "Dharma" is the performance of one's duty, appropriate to the situation. As an individual; as a member of society and of an organization, as a citizen of a nation, and as a member of the international community.

Dharma in Business

It's increasingly felt that in the absence of "Dharma" business management is becoming dull and less effective just like a body without soul. "Dharma" must constitute the foundation of all activities – planning, organizing, producing and marketing. Without the presence of "Dharma", managerial activities will be practically like a body without soul, a near corpse. Every organization and institution must, therefore, built a culture that represents the embodiment of "Dharma" in every aspect of its functioning and its relationship – production, pricing, marketing, workers consumers, shareholders, the community in general and the government. Eg. An IAS

officer has got lots of riches, money, & pleasure in his life, but this are to be acquired by performing his duty with sincerity & honesty, and not with bribery, corruption or other malpractices, then only it will add meaning to his life.

2) Artha

“Artha” means attainment of riches, worldly, prosperity, advantage, profit and wealth. Hinduism recognizes the importance of material wealth for the overall happiness and well being of an individual. Today everyone need money to meet their needs of life like basic necessities, education, for luxuries of life, for name & fame etc.,

It is one of the “Dharmas” (duties) of a person in the second stages of life, the householder stage, and during this a person must accumulate as much wealth as possible, without being greedy, to help and support his family. A householder requires wealth, because he has to perform many duties to uphold Dharma and take of wealth but to uphold “Dharma” and help the members of his family and society achieve their goals.

3) Kama

“Kama” is desire for pleasure. It can be sensuous pleasure, emotional pleasure or mental pleasure getting through satisfaction of work, urge for sexual pleasure etc. Kama means enjoyment of appropriate objects by five sense of hearing, feeling seeing, tasting and smelling assisted by the mine together with the soul. All that man does is inspired by kama (to get happiness).

As we can see the right way to fulfill one’s desire is by performing one’s obligatory duties in the right manner but not by neglecting them so that the way of the “Dharma” also becomes the way of fulfillment of desires. It means Artha (Wealth) is means to attain Kama (Pleasure of life)

4) Moksha

“Moksha” means getting rid off or release of liberation or salvation. It is highest end of life attainable only by individual himself with the help of guidance of dharma. Dharma is common regulator whereas moksha is common aim of human life.

Moksha actually means absence of Moha. Human being has attachment with the desire for sense objects. A person achieves liberation when he overcomes his desire for sense objects by detachment, self –control, surrender to God offering of one’s action to God. There are many paths to salvation ad all of them lead to God. The main paths are path knowledge, of action, of devotion and off renunciation.

Business Ethos Principles Practiced by Indian Companies

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Indian companies are guided by certain rules of conduct in the form of ethical and moral standards. Some of the business ethos principles, practiced by Indian companies are listed below.

1. **Principle of `sacrifice`** An individual is trained by the principle of `sacrifice` through the process of `give and take` policy. A person, who is willing to sacrifice part of his bread or effort, commands a superior place In the organization.
2. **Principle of `harmony`** ` An individual is trained in such a way that to avoid conflicts and friction one should be guided by certain set of moral conducts and principles.
3. **Principles of ` non-violence`** this principle protects an organization from strike and lockouts and unnecessary avoidable conflicts.
4. **Principles of `reward`** the one who performs well are encourages to do so. This implies that the activities of individuals need to be monitored and encouragement in the form of `rewards` may cultivate the spirit of higher productivity among groups.
5. **Principles of `Justice`** The one who works hard is `rewarded` and the one who fails to do so is `punished`. This is essence the principles of Justice.
6. **Principles of `taxation`** the one who is taxed more is encouraged to stay fit for a longer period by proper appreciation and encouragement. This principles applies to individuals who are hardworking and productive.
7. **Principles of `Integrity`** An integrated mind more productive. Groups are encouraged to stay united in order to reap the benefits of division of labour.
8. **Principles of `Polygamy`** This is nothing but the wedding of two different cultures by absorption or takeover.

How values are formed

Values are formed through the process of efforts. Such efforts never go in vain. The following point throws valuable insights on formation of values, from an organizational perspective.

- 1) **Efforts and values.** Efforts undertaken in order to enrich productivity among labourers by the process of experimentation, never go in vain. Efforts are milestones and the frequency with which on labours the more, the values in an organization grows, in the same proportion.
- 2) **Vision and values** The vision of the entrepreneur generally tallies with the organizational goals. Vision acts as foundation stone and pillar for enriching values in each and every organization.
- 3) **Dedication and values** A dedicated mind is God` a workshop. Values are formed through dedicated efforts.
- 4) **Morality and values** The more an organization concentrates on morality or ethics, the more it brings fertility to the `tree` called values.

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- 5) Ethics and values Ethics are guided by certain moral principles. An ethical organization has got values and hence it thrives for a longer period. Such organizations generally have an infinite existence.

Work Ethics

Work Ethics is a set of values based on the moral qualities of hard work and attentiveness. It is also a belief in moral benefit of work and its ability to enhance character. An example would be the Protestant work ethics or Chinese work ethics. A work ethics may include being reliable, having initiative or maintaining social skills. Workers Exhibiting a good work ethics in theory (and ideally in practice) should be selected for better positions, more responsibility and ultimately promotion. Workers who fail to exhibit a good work ethics may be regarded as failing to provide fair value for the wage the employer is paying them and should not be promoted or placed in positions of greater responsibility.

The So-called work ethics is generally constructed to be a good and impressive thing. It fancies itself a high quality, but like most double-edged swords, It must be handle with care.

An ethic, by definition, is a set of moral principles. The word derives from the Greek ethos— which in turn is “the characteristics spirit or attitudes of a community, people, or system.”Applying work as modifies, suggests that the work ethics is a characteristic attitude of a group toward. what constitutes the morality of work. This can, unfortunately, be taken to boundaries.

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