

Ethics

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Teachings of Moral Thinkers and Philosophers

Swamy Vivekanand explains: This world is like a dog's curly tail, and people have been striving to straighten it out for hundreds of years. But when they let it go, it curls up again. How could it be otherwise? So we should always remember the instance of the curly tail of the dog. We need not worry or make ourselves sleepless about the world. It will go on without each of us. Our worries will not help it. But when we stop worrying about the world, then alone will we be able to work well. It is the level-headed man, the calm man of good judgement and cool nerves, of great sympathy and love, who does good work and so does good to himself. The one who is complaining all the time is foolish and has no sympathy. He can never straighten out the world, nor can he improve himself.

We have to keep in mind Plato's injunction: "The punishment suffered by the wise who refuse to take part in government, is to suffer under the government of bad men" Good governance must be founded on moral virtues ensuring stability and harmony.

Confucius described righteousness as the foundation of good governance and peace. The art of good governance simply lies in making things right and putting them in their right place. Confucius's prescription for good governance is ideally suited for a country like India where many of our present day players in governance do not adhere to any principle and ensure only their own interests.

Confucius emphasizes the righteousness for life and character building. This is in conformity with Dharma or righteousness as taught by all religions in the world and preached in Buddhism very predominantly in its fourth noble truth. He also emphasizes that man himself must become righteous and then only there shall be righteousness in the world. This is comparable with what Gandhiji said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world".

Lessons from Great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators

Nolan Committee on Ethics in Public Life

1. Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of public interest They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits.
2. Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

3. Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

United Nations Convention against Corruption

Subject to the fundamental principles of its domestic legal system,

1. Each State Party shall promote integrity, honesty and responsibility among its public officials.
2. Each State Party shall apply codes of conduct for public functionaries.
3. Each State Party shall learn from the relevant initiatives of international organizations.
4. Each State Party shall establish measures to facilitate the reporting by public officials of acts of corruption to appropriate authorities.
5. Each State Party shall establish measures requiring public officials to disclose to appropriate authorities their outside activities, employment, investments, assets and substantial gifts from which a conflict of interest may arise.
6. Each State Party shall take disciplinary action against public officials who violate the codes established.

Human Actions

Essence of Ethics in Human Actions

Determinants of Ethics in Human Actions

Consequences of Ethics in Human Actions

Dimension of Ethics

Ethics in Private and Public Relationships

every holder of public office is accountable ultimately to the people. Such accountability is enforced through a system of laws and rules, which the elected representatives of the people enact in their legislatures. Ethics provides the basis for the creation of such laws and rules

Any framework of ethical behaviour must include the following elements:

- a. Codifying ethical norms and practices.
- b. Disclosing personal interest to avoid conflict between public interest and personal gain.
- c. Creating a mechanism for enforcing the relevant codes.
- d. Providing norms for qualifying and disqualifying a public functionary from office.

Role of Family in Ethics Building

Role of Society in Ethics Building

Role of Education in Ethics Building