



WWJMRD 2019; 5(1): 1-6
www.wwjmr.com
International Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal
Refereed Journal
Indexed Journal
Impact Factor MJIF: 4.25
E-ISSN: 2454-6615

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Teaching Practices of Moral Education in Public and Private Schools of Nepal

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Abstract

Moral education teaches civilization, moral values and norms of society to students. Moral education supports students to socialize from the very beginning of their life. The main aim of this study was to identify the teaching practices of moral education in the public and private schools of Nepal. The study was conducted in the three geographical locations: Himalayan, Mid-hill and Terai regions of Nepal. The study followed cross-sectional design. There were altogether 600 respondents (540 students and 60 teachers). Equal numbers of respondents were selected from both public and private schools). Selection was done using cluster random sampling technique. Majority of the respondents of both type of schools reported that the teachers used mix method (combination of lecture and practical methods) of teaching in moral education classes. Region wise analysis of responses showed that teachers of Himalayan region used mix method more than the teachers of other two regions. Students also reported that teachers used to share moral story in the classes as an approach of teaching. Beside that there are practices of providing knowledge of Yoga and meditation by outside agencies, particularly in public schools. Moreover, there were the practices of giving moral values related instructions to students by teachers during leisure time. From these findings, it can be concluded that there is a changing trend in teaching practices of moral values. In this context, if we want to install stable moral behavior in students, all the stakeholders of education have to show moral behavior in every aspects of their life.

Keywords: Basic level, Moral education, Nepal, Private, Public school, Teaching practice

1. Introduction

Schools have long been seen as institutions for preparing children for life, both academically and socially. In order to become capable moral citizens, children need to be provided with opportunities to learn moral values (Halstead & Pike, 2006). Teaching for moral values, or moral pedagogy, refers to teaching practices that aim to develop moral awareness, reasoning, understanding, and behaviors in children (Johansson, et al., 2011). The importance of teaching of values education is increasing internationally in the UK (Halstead & Pike, 2006; Hawkes, 2008), United States (Leonard, 2007; Cooley, 2008) and Canada (Darling, 2002) because 'the public and its representatives continue to be concerned about how young citizens act in society and what they learn in school about morality' (Cooley, 2008, p. 189). Moral values play an important role in every aspect of an individual's life. It is necessary for the holistic growth of an individual. Moral values involve "social education which covers the way the individual deals with other members of the community" (Sarangi, 1996). According to Piaget's theory of moral judgment, adolescence is the phase where the transition from heteronomous to autonomous morality takes place. During this transition period, the role of educators becomes crucial, as most of the learning in that phase occurs at school (Vaishnavi, Subikshalakshmi, & Lopamudra, 2016). The growing political, social and scientific attention that is being devoted to the moral aspects of teaching has implications for teacher education (Willemse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008). Impact of moral education depends upon the types and in-depth of content set in curricula and teaching practices and techniques of teacher. Considering the value of moral behavior in human life, Nepal, as elsewhere, has

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provisioned Moral Education curriculum in grades 6 to 8 since long. But the moral behavior of children/students and that of the general mass has not improved. There are reports of indiscipline of students in schools and there are reports of rapes, murder, corruptions, vandalism, unrest, and many other unethical events happening in the society. Moral behaviors such as honesty, truthfulness, respect, humanity, kindness, accountability and the like are decreasing day by day. People who are concerned about wellbeing of the society have questioned about the importance and value of education system prevailing in Nepal. They have demanded to emphasize more on moral education. But, researches have shown that providing moral content through lecture method can have little impact in the behavior of the students. Approaches that are helpful in changing skills and behavior/attitude must be used if moral behaviors are to be installed in students. But there are little evidences on how moral lessons are taught in school? Are the moral lessons taught in a way they are to be taught? More specifically, this study tried to identify the teaching practice of moral education in basic level public and private schools of Nepal raising the following questions:

1. Which method(s) of teaching is/are used by teachers to deliver the lesson of moral education?
2. Do the teachers teach all contents of moral education curriculum or text book?

3. Do teachers share additional information/knowledge of moral education other than the curriculum or text book?
4. Do teachers talk about the yoga or meditation in classroom teaching?
5. Do the students discuss with teachers about the moral education in leisure time also?

2. Materials & Methods

The study was conducted in the public and private schools covering the three geographical regions: Himalayan, Mid Hill and Terai (plain). From each geographical region one district was selected following the convenience sampling procedure. The sampled districts were: Dolakha from Himalayan, Kavrepalanchok from Mid-Hill and Chitawan from Terai (plain). Six schools (two from each selected districts i.e. one each from public and private schools) were selected for the study using cluster random sampling technique. The study was based on the cross-sectional research design, and followed descriptive approach of analysis. There were altogether 600 respondents selected out of which 60 were teachers who were currently teaching moral education subject and those who taught the subject one to more year(s) in the past five years' time. Such teachers were from Social Studies and Nepali subjects. The remaining 540 respondents were the students studying in grades 7, 8 and 9. Equal numbers of respondents were selected from the public and private schools.

Table 1: presents the sample of respondents with respect to different categories.

| Region/district | School type | | Gender | | Student and teacher | | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|--------|---------------------|---------|-------|
| | Public | Private | Male | Female | Student | Teacher | |
| Himalayan (Dolakha) | 100 | 100 | 108 | 92 | 180 | 20 | 200 |
| Mid-hill (Kavrepalanchok) | 100 | 100 | 86 | 114 | 180 | 20 | 200 |
| Plain (Terai) (Chitawan) | 100 | 100 | 106 | 94 | 180 | 20 | 200 |
| Total | 300 | 300 | 300 | 300 | 540 | 60 | 600 |

Separate structured survey questionnaires were used to collect the data from students and teachers both. The structured survey questionnaires were first developed in English language and then translated into Nepali language to make understandable to the respondents. The questionnaires were pre-tested to ensure its reliability and validity. In addition, the researcher observed classes to know the teaching practice of moral education wherever possible. Some moral characters are abstract which refer to internal state of human behavior so it cannot be directly observable. Learning of student through moral education must be indirectly observed through their daily behavior, social relationship, communication skill, social support and learning outcomes.

After finalization of the questionnaires the researcher visited the each selected school for data collection. Before responding the actual questionnaire, respondents were requested to fill their demographic information such as type of school, region, and gender. After the data collection process was complete in all sample schools, the information received were entered into Microsoft excel to generate required tables. Tables were generated converting the frequency into percentage of each category of respondents.

3. Results & Discussions

The study was focused to explore the teaching practices of moral education in public and private schools located in the different geographical regions of Nepal. Moral education is

an important subject to develop in students the moral values, duties and responsibilities towards the family, society and nation. This subject is important for the teachers also to develop moral behaviors in their teaching profession. This study explored the teaching practices of moral education with respect to school types, geographical region, gender and teachers and students' perspectives.

3.1 Teaching methods used by teachers to deliver the lessons of moral education

Teaching practices are basically based on either lecture method or practical method but to make effective teaching learning, teachers use the mix of both teaching methods. The lecture method contains the one-way delivery of teacher in specific topic. It is the teacher-centered method and is also known as traditional method of teaching. In Nepalese schools' teachers are found to use lecture method of teaching to give content knowledge to students. Some schools and teachers prefer to teach by using the practical method. When teachers teach using practical method they use the moral games, tell the moral story, give the project work related to social activities, take the student to different public places like old age home, orphans homes, shelter of street children, as well as historical and cultural places. These activities provide practical knowledge to the students and they learn about the norms and values of society and their responsibilities towards the society.

The data presented in the Table 2 shows the method used by teachers to deliver the lessons of moral education.

Table 2: Teaching methods used by teachers to deliver the lessons of moral education

| | Types of school | | Region | | | Gender | | Types of Respondent | | Total |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|---------|--------|
| | Public | Private | Himalayan | Mid Hill | Terai | Male | Female | Student | Teacher | |
| Lecture Method | 10.3% | 19.7% | 8.0% | 22.5% | 14.5% | 15.7% | 14.3% | 14.6% | 18.3% | 15.0% |
| Practical Method | 27.3% | 13.7% | 12.0% | 19.5% | 30.0% | 21.3% | 19.7% | 21.7% | 10.0% | 20.5% |
| Both | 62.3% | 66.7% | 80.0% | 58.0% | 55.5% | 63.0% | 66.0% | 63.7% | 71.7% | 64.5% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Field Survey, 2018

As reported by participants (teachers and students both), more than 60% of the teachers, in both types of schools, use mix method of teaching- a combination of both lecture and practical methods (Table 2). In terms of the use of single method of teaching, public school participants reported that teachers used practical method (27.3%) more than the lecture method (10.3%). The situation was quite opposite in private schools. Private school participants reported that higher percentage (about 20%) of the teachers used lecture method compared to practical method (about 14%). The reason may be that the public school teachers had got more training opportunities than the private school teachers.

Regions wise distribution of participant responses showed that the use of mix method of teaching was higher (80%) in Himalayan region than in Mid-hill (58%) and Terai (55.5%) regions. The reason for less use of mix method in Mid-hill and Terai regions than in Himalayan region might be due to high number of students in the class in these two regions. However, participants of all three regions reported that majority of the teachers used mix method of teaching. Gender wise analyses of the responses of participants indicate that there was not much variation. Sixty-three percent of the male participants reported that teachers used mix method where as 66% of the female participants said so.

The separate analyses of teachers and students' responses show some interesting result. Seventy-one and half percent of the teachers reported that they used mix method of teaching whereas this number was only 63.7% on the part of student responses. This implies that teachers have over estimation of the mix method of teaching than that of students. But, the percentage of students who reported that the teachers used practical method was higher (21.7%) than that of teachers (10%).

In overall, as reported by participants, it can be said that most of the lessons of moral education were taught using mix-method of teaching i.e. a combination of lecture and practical methods. Table 2 also shows that 20% of the participants reported that teachers used purely practical methods followed by 15% lecture method only.

3.2 Coverage of contents of moral value education

There is standard curriculum of moral education prescribed for the basic education especially for grades 6-8. Teachers have to follow the curriculum to teach. It is expected that each teacher should teach the entire contents of the subject before the final examination. In this context, the participants of this study were asked 'whether teachers teach the entire contents of moral education subject'. The responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Coverage of contents of moral value education

| | Type of school | | Region | | | Gender | | Types of respondent | | Total |
|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|---------|--------|
| | Public | Private | Himalayan | Mid Hill | Terai | Male | Female | Student | Teacher | |
| Yes | 93.3% | 81.0% | 88.5% | 78.5% | 94.5% | 89.3% | 85.0% | 87.0% | 88.3% | 87.2% |
| No | 6.7% | 19.0% | 11.5% | 21.5% | 5.5% | 10.7% | 15.0% | 13.0% | 11.7% | 12.8% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Most of the respondents of both types of schools (93.3 % public and 81.0% private) reported that the teachers covered the entire contents of moral education subject. This implies that less than one tenth of public schools and less than one fifth of the private school teachers did not complete the entire course. The region wise responses of the participants indicated that the highest percentage teachers of Terai region (94.5%) taught the entire contents moral education followed by teachers of Himalayan (88.5%) and Mid-Hill (78.5) regions (Table 3). This implies that the practice of covering the entire contents of moral education was found highest in the sample district of Terai region than in Himalayan and Mid Hill sample districts. Similarly, in terms of gender, 89.3% of the male and 85.0% of female reported that teacher taught all the contents of moral education subject. This shows that there was no big difference in opinion of male and female respondents. Separate analyses of teacher and student responses also confirmed the gender wise result. More than 85% of the students and teachers both reported that

teachers had covered all contents of moral education subject during teaching learning process.

In totality, Table 3 shows that more than 85% of the respondents reported that the teachers taught all the contents of moral education prescribed for the students. This showed that the teaching practice of teachers was found better in both types of schools on the basis of coverage of content. But the coverage of contents should not be the only criteria for judging the success of teaching moral values. The success of moral value education lies in how far students could bring moral behavior in their real life situations.

3.3 Sharing the additional information/knowledge/example of moral value education by teachers

One instructional strategy that teachers can use to help students construct meaning and one that plays a central role in the learning of moral values is the use of examples. In order to help students develop moral behavior, the teacher must select examples that enable students to construct

accurate meaning and is helpful to lead towards behavior change. Table 4 shows the responses of teachers and students when asked whether the teachers share additional

information/knowledge/examples apart from the text book information on the moral values.

Table4: Sharing the additional information/knowledge/examples of moral value education by teacher

| | Type of school | | Region | | | Gender | | types of respondent | | Total |
|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|---------|--------|
| | Public | Private | Himalayan | Mid Hill | Terai | Male | Female | Student | Teacher | |
| Yes | 95.0% | 88.7% | 93.0% | 84.5% | 98.0% | 92.3% | 91.3% | 91.9% | 91.7% | 91.8% |
| No | 5.0% | 11.3% | 7.0% | 15.5% | 2.0% | 7.7% | 8.7% | 8.1% | 8.3% | 8.2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Field Survey, 2018

In terms of school types, 95% of public school and 88.7% of private school respondents said that the teachers shared the additional information/knowledge/examples of moral values to students during classroom teaching learning process. This showed that most of the teachers of both types of schools use additional information or examples or teachers went beyond the text book while teaching moral lessons. Comparatively, higher percentage of public school teachers used more information, knowledge or examples than the private school teachers while teaching moral lessons.

The region wise analyses of the results indicated that the activity of giving additional information/knowledge/examples by teachers was reported highest in Terai region district schools (98%) followed by Himalayan region (93.0%) and Mid-Hill (84.5%) districts (Table 4). The data shows that, like in public and private school responses, most of the teachers (more than 80%) used additional information/knowledge/examples in all three regions. Likewise, separate analyses in terms of gender, and students and teacher responses indicated that most of the teachers (more than 90%) teachers went beyond the textbook learning material of moral value education. In general, the practice of teaching moral lessons by using additional information or knowledge and or examples was

reported by most of the respondents (91.8%). Less than 10% of the respondents reported that teachers taught the textbook contents only.

Use of additional information during class teaching was also observed during class observation. One teachers was found telling story of practical life in the classes, roles and responsibilities of students, and one teacher was found telling about the value of honesty, ethic of life.

The overall scenario indicated that teachers went go beyond the textbook while teaching moral lessons in the schools. This can be interpreted as a good sign of improvement in the teaching and learning process of moral education lessons.

3.4 Teaching of yoga or meditation in classroom

Yoga and meditation both are essential in maintaining good physical and mental health of an individual. These two are therapies that heal both body and mind. A person having a sound mind and good health can also understand the importance of moral education and try to achieve good morals to maintain the society. In this context, the study explored the status of teaching Yoga and meditation in the public and private schools of Nepal. Table 5 shows the responses participants in this respect.

Table 5: Teaching of yoga or meditation in the classroom

| | Type of school | | Region | | | Gender | | respondent type | | Total |
|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| | Public | Private | Himalayan | Mid Hill | Terai | Male | Female | Student | Teacher | |
| Yes | 79.7% | 58.0% | 69.0% | 65.0% | 72.5% | 73.0% | 64.7% | 71.1% | 48.3% | 68.8% |
| No | 20.3% | 42.0% | 31.0% | 35.0% | 27.5% | 27.0% | 35.3% | 28.9% | 51.7% | 31.2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The data analyzed in terms of school types showed that 79.7% of public schools and 58.0% of private schools respondents reported that teachers taught about meditation or yoga in the classroom. This indicates that the teaching of yoga and or meditation was found better in sampled public schools than the private schools. In this regard, some Head Teachers of public schools reported that they were getting technical support from non-governmental organizations to promote the moral value education of schools. Time to time, some public schools had the practice inviting the Yoga and or meditation experts to teach its importance and practice it.

Regions wise distribution of participants responses show that teaching of Yoga and or Meditation was highest in the schools of Terai schools than in the schools of Himalayan (69.0%) and Mid Hill (65.0%) regions. The reasons may be the geographical location because Terai region has easy access of development like road, electricity, drinking water

which directly or indirectly attracts the other organizations to visit the Terai region to support in educational activities of the schools.

The gender wise responses showed that 73.0% of the males and 64.7% of the females reported that there was the practice of providing knowledge about Yoga and or meditation in the schools. The higher percentage of male respondents than that of female respondents regarding the school practices on providing knowledge on Yoga and or meditation indicates some socio-cultural status of the society. The difference in experience of males and females might have affected by the socio-cultural practices of Nepali society because males are given more freedom to participate and practice in any additional social activities than females.

There was significant difference between the students' and teachers' responses regarding their experience of Yoga and or meditation. Only 48% of the teachers reported that there

was practice to provide the knowledge of Yoga and or meditation whereas 71% of the students reported that such practice happened in schools (Table 5). The reason for such difference in the responses of teachers and students might be that the school organized such programs without consulting the moral education teachers. Or, teachers themselves were not aware of the importance of Yoga and meditation for morality development of students. If this is the case, teachers themselves should be first equipped with the knowledge, skill and value of Yoga and meditation Teachers should also understand their roles as facilitators of student self-development. Teachers have a chance to help students develop the attitudes and skills necessary for the journey toward their future. This is true for moral character as well.

In overall, 68.8% of the respondents reported that meditation and Yoga was taught in the classroom or the information about these therapies was given to the student in the school. To make students knowledgeable and skillful

in moral values, schools should run knowledge and practice of Yoga and meditation as a regular program.

3.5 Discussion with teachers about the moral education in leisure time

Each time and movement is important for the personal and professional development. Teacher can use the leisure time to transfer their social and emotional skill to the students. Another best practice among teachers as a way of teaching morals to children is enhancing learners’ social and emotional skill development. Social and emotional skills are crucial to school success. As Kavanaugh (1983) stated, social and emotional learning programs pave the way for better academic learning. Teachers must ensure that their students learn to use their skills independently.

Table 6 represents the responses of the participants to the question: Whether the teachers discuss about moral education in leisure time?

Table 6: Discussion with teachers about the moral education in leisure time

| | Type of school | | Region | | | Gender | | types of respondent | | Total |
|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|---------|--------|
| | Public | Private | Himalayan | Mid Hill | Terai | Male | Female | Student | Teacher | |
| Yes | 67.7% | 52.7% | 48.5% | 57.5% | 74.5% | 60.3% | 60.0% | 57.8% | 81.7% | 60.2% |
| No | 32.3% | 47.3% | 51.5% | 42.5% | 25.5% | 39.7% | 40.0% | 42.2% | 18.3% | 39.8% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table6 shows that the percentage of public school respondents was higher (67.7%) than private school respondents (52.7%) who reported that the teachers used to discuss with students about the moral education in leisure time. This indicated that there was best use of leisure time in public schools than in the private schools to provide moral values to students.

Regarding the practice of discussion about the moral education in leisure time with respect to regions, highest percentage of respondents were found in Terai region(74.5%) followed by Mid Hill (57.5%) and Himalayan (51.5%) (Table 6). This implied that the use of leisure time in the discussion of moral values was far better in Terai region schools than in other two regions’ schools. Gender wise comparison of responses show no substantial differences in responses in the use of leisure time for moral values education. Table 6 shows that around 60% of both the males and the females said that the teachers discussed about moral education in leisure time.

Separate analysis of responses of the students and teachers showed different result with respect to the use of leisure time for moral value education. Most of the teachers (81.7%) reported that they discussed about moral value education whereas only 57.8% students said so. This shows that teachers have over rated their use of leisure time in moral value education. This implies that the students should be more encouraged to participate in such discussion of moral education to enrich their morality.

In overall, 60.2% of the respondents said that the teachers discussed with students about moral education in leisure time. This implies that students and teachers both should be encouraged to participate in the discussion on various issues of moral education during the leisure time.

The researcher also, during his visit to schools, observed teachers preaching students, directly or indirectly, about their duties like how to interact with friends, how to behave

with seniors and juniors, how to behave with parents, and about caring of surrounding environments (waste management, cleanliness of playground, class room, safe drinking water, proper management of books, play-materials).

Conclusion

The study explored the teaching practice of moral education in public and private schools of three geographical regions- Himalayan, Mid Hill & Terai of Nepal. Responses were collected from 540 students and 60 teachers. Equal numbers of respondents were selected from public and private schools. Data were collected with the help of structured questionnaires separate for students and teachers. Data were collected in five areas of teaching practices of moral education. Based on the responses of participants (teacher and students) the following conclusions are drawn:

There is change in the teaching practices of teachers in moral education classes. Teachers of both public and private schools use mix method of teaching (combination of lecture and practical methods) rather than single method like lecture or practical. There is also the tendency of completing all the lessons of moral values by both public and private school teachers. In addition, teachers of both types of schools share additional information, knowledge, and examples with the students in the class. Teachers share such additional information, knowledge and examples through stories and preaching. Such activities are important to enable students to construct accurate meaning about moral values and are helpful to lead towards behavior change and also help to develop the social and emotional skills. Similarly, teachers of both types of schools teach moral values in their leisure time. But this is more in public schools than in private schools. Regarding the teaching and practicing of Yoga and meditation, there is less importance

given compared to other aspects in general. In terms of types of schools, the teaching of Yoga and meditation is more in public schools than in private schools with the support of outside agencies in some schools. This implies that there is need of incorporating Yoga and meditation components in the moral education curriculum of school education.

As the findings of this study are primarily the results of the responses of limited number of teachers and students of three public and three private schools of three locations. Therefore, it will be unfair to generalize the findings at the national level. Similarly, the findings of this study are based on the responses of teachers and students but not on the actual practices of teachers inside the classroom. Researchers have shown that there is always some gap between what people say and do. Hence, this study suggests for extensive study focusing on what actually happens inside the classroom of moral lessons. In addition, teachers are the guardians of civilization so they should be made more responsible to improve the teaching practices of moral education as well as school management should monitor about the class room teaching practices and daily behavior of students to enrich their moral behavior.

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