

Ethical Values and Professional Ethics an Empirical Study

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Abstract- Ethics is defined as the study of individual and collective moral awareness, judgment, character and conduct. Professionally accepted standards of personal and professional behaviour, values and guiding principles. Ethics deal with “what that ought to be”. Codes of professional ethics are often established by professional organizations to help to guide members in performing their job functions according to sound and consistent ethical principles. The philosophy of having professional ethics is to make the persons performing in such jobs to follow the sound, uniform ethical conduct. Some of the important components of professional ethics that professional organizations necessarily include in their code of conduct are integrity, honesty, transparency, respectfulness towards the job, confidentiality, objectivity etc. Values are inborn within individuals – embedded in individuals. Values differ amongst individuals. Individual values do change temporarily due to external influences/forces. Values reflect a person’s sense of right or wrong. Values lay the foundation in understanding people’s attitude and motivation. Values are what we, as a profession, judge to be right. The main purpose of this research paper is to explore importance of ethical values and professional ethics in today’s globalized world of high competition and to create awareness about concept and essence of ethical values and professional ethics for sustainable progress this globalized world.

Keywords: Professional, Professional Ethics, Ethical Values, Globalization, Ethics, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Recent global corporate scandals have done long-lasting damage to the reputations of some of our most important civic institutions and professionals. 21st century has opened many corporate ethical scandals that have harmed millions of employees and investors and sent shock waves to the professional world. Employees, investors, and community members – no

longer trust or respect many institutions as much as they once did. Increased transparency and connectivity have enabled greater access to previously private information. The way to thrive in this era of increased public scrutiny. “Doing what’s right” represents a sustainable way to create competitive advantage. The path to operationalizing ethical capitalism requires formalizing an introduction to professional ethics, grounded in a code of ethics, not just at the top, but throughout the organization. Ethical leadership fosters and sustains enduring corporate cultures that self-govern around corporate values and set forth a code of conduct that meets the highest standards. Now the time has come that managers, CEO’s, MD’s and owners of professional organizations will have to rethink about professional ethics which include honesty and respect for company assets; no compromise with quality and competence; embracement of diversity and respect of dignity of fellow employees; respect of customers needs and values; and so on. These traits help in making the professional sustainable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word “ethics” is derived from the Greek *ethos*, meaning “customary” or “conventional.” Ethics is built on good work practices & what is right; it provides general guidelines on good behavior/conduct of individuals, group, and organization as a whole. Ethics determine what is right or wrong and choosing what is right. Ethics governs the behavior and conduct of individuals/groups in the workplace. Ethics is one of the hallmarks of a well run Company. Ethics can reassure investors/stakeholders about the Company’s approach to its non financial risks. Ethics also help to protect/enhance Corporate / professional reputation, ex: corporate image/branding. To be ethical in the sense of ethos is to conform to what is typically done,

to obey the conventions and rules of one's society and religion. Ethics involves a discipline that examines good or bad practices within the context of a moral duty. Moral conduct is behavior that is right or wrong. Professional ethics include practices and behaviors that are good or bad. Thus Ethics is defined as 'a theory or a system of moral values: 'an ethic of service is at war with a craving for gain'. Ethics also defined as 'the branch of philosophy that tries to determine the good and right thing to do; choices regarding right & wrong. Ethics: 'the system of beliefs and rules used to judge human action', Example: 'he is a very honorable person who always acts accordingly to his ethics'. *Ethics* defines as "moral principle that governs or influences a person's behavior". Thus ethics a benchmark of human behavior. The conduct of human beings is influenced either by the emotions of life or the actions people perform in different situations. The coordination of action and emotions generates ethics. The Ethics of Gita is a perfectionist. It arranges for and organizes the proper development of all aspects of man. In it devotion is also assimilated in knowledge and action. Extreme important is the quality of self submission (atmasamarpana) in the Gita. All sins are destroyed if man takes refuge with God after relinquishing everything. Satya is accessible only after purification to one who has faith in knowledge.

NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Professional ethics are accepted standards of personal and business behaviour, values and guiding principles. Codes of professional ethics are established by professional organizations to help to guide members in performing their job functions according to sound and consistent ethical principles. Professional ethics is set up by the expert members of such profession or professional organizations. The philosophy of having professional ethics is to make the persons performing in such jobs to follow the sound, uniform ethical conduct. Professional organizations necessarily include components like integrity, honesty, transparency, respectfulness towards the job, confidentiality, objectivity etc. in their code of conduct.

Ethical Values

Values are inborn within individuals – embedded in individuals. Values differ amongst individuals.

Individual values do change temporarily due largely to external influences/forces. Individuals have different sets of values. Values reflect a person's sense of right or wrong. Values lay the foundation in understanding people's attitude and motivation. Values exert major influence on the behavior of an individual/group. Values serves as general guidelines in all situations. Values are said to be the cause and Ethics as effect. If one operates in a given instance from a Value emotion within the outward action will tend to be Ethical. Values are those beliefs or standards that incline us to act or to choose in one way rather than another. A company's core values are those beliefs and principles that provide the ultimate guide in the company's decision-making. Value is defined as a concept that describes the beliefs of an individual or culture. 'A set of *values* may be placed into the notion of a *value* system'. Values are those things that really matter to each of us, the ideas and beliefs we hold as special. Caring for others, for example, is a value. The word "values" can sometimes be interpreted with having only to do with "touchy-feely" type things like feelings. However, the idea of values, when it comes to management strategy, it relates much more to practical matters. There is a huge correlation between correct value alignment and success. Values can be defined as those things that are important to or valued by someone. That someone can be an individual or, collectively, an organization. One place where values are important is in relation to vision. One of the imperatives for organizational vision is that it must be based on and consistent with the organization's core values. Values are what we, as a profession, judge to be right. They are more than words-they are the moral, ethical, and professional attributes of character. Values are the embodiment of what an organization stands for, and should be the basis for the behavior of its members. Ethical values serve the ends of human well-being; The well-being promoted by ethical values is not personal and selfish well-being; No one person's well-being is to be counted as more worthy or valuable than any other's; Ethical values promote human well-being in an impartial way.

Need

In this world of competition and globalization the challenge is to manage the professional ethics and ethical values in an appropriate and standardized way. To survive in today's tough competitive professional

environment and to introduce sustainability in our professional, ethical values and professional ethics is mandatory to apply in practical form. Today, value is about prioritizing individual and operational values for the workplace and establishing codes of value and codes of conduct that ensures that employee behaviors and the internal systems are aligned with those values which in turn affects the performance of the organization. Key leadership with appropriate values establishes the moral compass that guides the organization through the complexities of what is right and wrong and how management and staff are therefore expected to behave. Values provide the basis for judgment about what is important for the organization to succeed in its core professional. Values are traits or qualities that are considered worthwhile; they represent an individual's highest priorities and deeply held driving forces. The need of the study arises for the purpose to make an appropriate balance between the ethical values in professional with the profits of its concerned institute.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify reasons why the study of ethics is important.
2. To explain the nature and meaning of professional ethics.
3. To identify the status of professional ethics and ethical values.
4. To realize the contribution of professional ethics and ethical values in sustainable development.
5. To create awareness about professional ethics and ethical values for the benefit of industry and the stake holders.
6. To study how professional ethics and ethical values and standards to improve productivity, profitability and quality in an organization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology used during the study conducted in this research paper is based upon primary data as well as secondary data. To conduct this study, exploratory qualitative approach was in practice. Theoretical frame work was developed from the literature, data collected from the multiple sources of evidence in addition to books, news papers, journals, websites and other professional magazines. A survey

was conducted at Bengaluru between April and Mid May 2022 based on refined questionnaire. Employees of the organizations were also contacted to make this paper more real and worthy.

Research Limitations

Getting information from respondents becomes difficult as we had to interview individuals who had been quite busy to give their proper thought to the questions. Indifferent attitude of some respondents could have affected the final findings.

Ethical Values for Professional Success

Ethics is based on a set of moral and ethical values. These values must be absolute - that is, you must take them seriously enough to over-ride any human rationalization, weakness, ego, or personal faults. When all else fails, you will always look back to these core values to guide you. Unfortunately, life is not that easy and there's always disagreement about what values should reign supreme.

Honesty

The old adage, "honesty is the best policy" is true today more than ever. It's not just lip service. Employee manuals from most scandalized corporations are likely to contain slogans touting its commitment to honesty.

Integrity

Integrity connotes strength and stability. It means taking the high road by practicing the highest ethical standards. Demonstrating integrity shows completeness and soundness in your character and in your organization.

Responsibility

Blaming others, claiming victimhood, or passing the buck may solve short-term crises, but refusal to take responsibility erodes respect and cohesion in an organization. Ethical people take responsibility for their actions.

Quality

Quality should be more than making the best product, but should extend to every aspect of your work. A person who recognizes quality and strives for it daily has a profound sense of self-respect, pride in accomplishment, and attentiveness that affects everything.

Trust

There's no free ride. Trust is hard to earn and even harder to get back after you've lost it. Everyone who comes in contact with you or your company must have trust and confidence in how you do professional.

Respect

Respect is more than a feeling, but a demonstration of honor, value, and reverence for something or someone. We respect the laws, the people we work with, the company and its assets, and ourselves.

Teamwork

Employees together make a team. It is a professional necessity to work openly and supportively in teams whether formal or informal.

Leadership

Managers and executives should uphold the ethical standards for the entire organization. A leader is out front providing an example that others will follow.

Corporate Citizenship

A foundational principle for every company should be to provide a safe workplace, to protect the environment, and to become good citizens in the community.

Shareholder Value

Without profitability, there is no company. Every employee should understand how they fit into the profitability picture. Everyone's common goal should be to build a strong, profitable company that will last.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

In this research paper we have discussed empirical study of Public, Private and MNC's namely Cadbury, Nestle, Sail, Maruti, ONGC, Wipro, Reliance, Infosys, Canon, Johnson & Johnson, Ford Motor Company, and IBM. We have also recorded the Ethical Values of Managers who are in-charge of decision making. We have discussed and compared ethical values for Indian Managers with Western Managers. Indian Managers are moving away from the concept of values and ethics. The lure for maximizing profit is deviating them from the value based managerial behaviour. There is a need for Indian Managers today both in Private and Public sectors to develop a set of values

and believes that will help them attain the ultimate goals of profits and survival and growth. They need to develop Optimum utilization of resources; attitude towards work. Managers have to develop the visionary perspective in their work i.e. work commitment and vision. Visionary Managers must have a long term vision it must be practical, dynamic and capable of translating dreams into reality. The Managers of Indian companies develop values namely; move from the state of inertia to the state of righteous action, state of faithlessness to the state of faith and self-confidence, unethical actions to ethical actions, untruth to truth.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results of the study are as follows:

- This Research has shown that consumers give preference to companies that adopt CSR practices.
- 97 % of the respondents believed ethics and compliance programs are essential for corporate governance.
- 91% of respondents have developed codes of ethics beyond those required.
- 92% included statements concerning the company's obligation to its stakeholders.
- 75% would switch to a company with strong CSR practices, if price and quality are equal to non-CSR competitors.
- 70% reported they would give a CSR company the "benefit of the doubt" if the company were subjected to negative publicity.
- 55% observed at least one type of misconduct in the workplace,

Types of misconduct most observed by employees were including:

- 21% abusive behavior,
- 19% lying,
- 18% employee interests over organizational interests.
- 16% violations of safety regulations.
- 16% misreporting,
- 12% discrimination among employees,
- 11% stealing or theft.
- 9% sexual harassment.
- 69% organizations implement ethics training.

- 65% can seek ethics advice.
- 55% observed misconduct.

Reasons Why Employees Do Not Report Observed Misconduct:

- 18% do not know who to contact;
- 24% do not care they feel;
- 39% fears no Anonymity;
- 46% fear Retaliation; and
- 59% think there is no corrective action.

KEY FINDINGS

Ethical Values and Professional Ethics help to improve productivity, profitability, quality, public image and brand value of an organization. Ethical Values and Professional Ethics are very effective to achieve sustainable development of an organization. There is limited attention to ethical values and professional ethics in India. Professional environment in India is not favorable for professional ethics and ethical values. There is utmost need to educate the employees as well as Managers and even some of the owners, CEOs and MDs also about professional ethics and ethical values. Professionals must maintain the highest standards of behavior for the benefit of industry. The best way of promoting high standards of professional practices is through self regulation through ethical values.

SUGGESTIONS

The real test of these values comes from the resulting action. It takes a concerted, company-wide effort, beyond inserting these words in an employee manual, to make it happen. Management must lead by example. Good ethics should be most noticeable at the top. Every employee must be accountable to the same rules. A corporate values or ethics initiative must be “sold” and “marketed” aggressively throughout a company. Every forum and medium should be used to spread the good message. Of course, it will only be credible if the company is practicing what it preaches. Training must be provided to get everyone on the same footings. It’s easy to ignore a motivational speech or pass by a poster, but spending time learning about the issues will have a lasting impact. The ethics fervor should extend to the next generation of employees.

The longer it lasts, the more ingrained the principles will become. Despite failings of some, there is plenty of room at the table for good ethics and profitable professional to reside. Together they can lay the cornerstone for a secure and prosperous society.

CONCLUSIONS

Lastly in this paper, we conclude that Ethical values and Professional ethics act as a vital tool for removing unethical practices and various scandals that are occurring frequently in this hi-tech world of competition and globalization. Apprehension is that such practices are creeping into general ways of life including administration which are bound to prove detrimental to our social life. There is great need to educate the Employees, Managers, Administrators, CEOs, MDs and even owners of the professional organizations regarding ethical values and professional ethics along with technical and corporate trainings so as to make customer and consumers delighted. Thus, leading to professional sustenance and to survive in today’s globalized world.

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