

Professional Ethics in Students through Yoga

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ABSTRACT

Every individual in the world are born with certain personal ethics and inherit professional ethics from the outside world. But it is up to every human being as to how they inculcate the knowledge and learn from the experiences in their lifespan. Apart from personal ethics, Professional ethics are equally important as far as today's social life is concerned. It was disappointing to realize that many people lack good professional ethics and there have been attempts made to eliminate the indiscipline that results from it. Hence, we have tried to use one of the many theoretically successful methods to curb this problem. As professional ethics can only be inculcated through practice, starting at an early stage would help inculcate more professional ethics in an individual. Since engineering is one of the professional courses, beginning at the college level would result in a well defined individual by the time he/she graduates.

This study basically concentrates on the use of Yoga and meditation that will help an individual clear his mind and understand the various principles they ought to follow in their professional life. Since this is a study on whether yoga would help develop professional ethics, we have used simple meditation techniques which include breathing exercises and postures (asanas) for relieving the agitated minds of entry level engineers.

Keywords: *yoga, professional ethics.*

INTRODUCTION

As observed in everyday life, [3] a person's character and mindset is always judged based on the moral, humanitarian and personal ethics he/she follows. Moreover, if the person is subject to being educated or working in a professional institution, he/she is also judged based on the professional ethics of that person. Not moving away from the subject, professional ethics of a student is bound to be set right if the student is to live a life without the regret of not following self-conscience.

It is also noticed that students in today's world are greatly affected by the mixed cultures and practices followed by their colleagues and friends. And this involvement has equal number of drawbacks as the benefits of national and international integration.

REASONS FOR LACK OF ETHICS

The reasons for lack of or weak ethics with respect to education can be various aspects that drive the person's mind to execute unacceptable actions.

Few of them are ambiguous situations where a student is forced to go against self-conscience in order to avoid possibilities of failure.

Another reason can be the student's personal background which makes them habitual to maintaining and practicing bad ethics.

Sometimes a student loses track due to improper or insufficient value education and ends up following bad ethics due to curiosity of knowing the result. Students also follow bad professional ethics such as cheating, [1] lying, and seeking shortcuts in obtaining their professional goals.

Not realizing that doing so makes them a prey to insufficient qualities such as loyalty, confidentiality, honesty, fairness and clear judgment.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

In order to overcome this common indiscipline in the society, many ways have been experimented and practiced that ultimately holds the goal of developing good professional ethics in an individual [2].

The study done here is based on the implementation of yoga for attempting to redirect the mindset of individuals with

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respect to fair judgment while building up their professional attitude and skills in parallel.

WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is a word derived from the Sanskrit word that means discipline or union.

The earlier definition of yoga meant as a practice to manipulate your mental conscience in order to oppose your physical practice.

There are several types of yoga that include hatha yoga, jnana yoga (also known as meditational yoga), karma yoga, kundalini yoga, bhakti yoga, etc, Which are irrelevant to the scope of this paper.[5]

The point to this discussion is that, Yoga is a way of knowledge through which one can study, explore and unlock the various powers, and abilities yet unexplored within oneself.

HOW CAN YOGA HELP?

[4]Yoga teaches us to know ourselves apart from what we are on the outside. It teaches us to contact our inner being, which is blurred by outer actions and pursuits. Yoga acts as a key to unlock our real self and explore our spiritual conscience in this regard. We don't ultimately need to do anything to be happy, being selfless and self-conscious will ultimately lead us to uniting our physical and spiritual conscience.

This ancient art of using your mind to control your mind has helped millions of people not only of Indian origin, but people from all corners of the world. The benefits of yoga are basically 3 types. Physical, mental and spiritual. As mentioned earlier, physical benefits are attained through the Asanas, mental advantages are obtained by the practice of meditation while the spiritual part is fed through chanting or also called as bhakti yoga.

The type of yoga we require for obtaining our goal is the meditative methods. It involves in clearing the mind to make space for clear and wise thoughts. It helps an individual to think straight and judge the difference between right and wrong and also consider the consequences of misjudgment of decisions. This is a key aspect in every human being that is required in order to learn and practice good personal as well as professional ethics.

IDEALOGY IMPLEMENTED

The institution had implemented a mandatory course on yoga and meditation that was used to invoke the spiritual conscience and learn to control the mind in order to synchronize with the spirit. This initiative aimed at providing individuals the idea and motivation to awaken ones self-conscience and teach it to overpower the primary thoughts that eventually lead to unacceptable moral values in professional fields.

In the study, it was also observed that if a theoretical subject is included as part of professional education, the amount of ideas taught to them would be barely be practiced.

However, if its fundamentals were taught in the first year itself, and were put to practice till the end of the course, the

development of different ethics relevant to every profession would be developed therefore making an individual engineered not only from the outside, but also from inside. Thus, the end result would be professional individuals trained not only in the technical field but also prosper with more understanding and have a more biased attitude towards the field they specialize in. After the survey, based on the feedback given by a number of students who gave their opinion on this method as to how it would benefit/counteract with the current mindset of the students, a vast majority of the students also concluded that as long as they are kept aware of these ethics, they will eventually follow them in a conscious or subconscious manner. Secondly, if it is taught as a subject, they would learn it only for the sake of grades in academics and would forget about it the next semester.

When the idea of practicing it as a mandatory supplementary routine throughout the entire course, they agreed to higher chances of being influenced by it which would become nothing but a habit. This habit once carried outside the campus would usher them to great achievements and recognize them as men and women of just!

FEEDBACK RESPONSES

A set of questions were asked to 100 students of the first year to visualize how well do they accept and understand the idea of yoga being practiced.

Based on the survey and the feedbacks obtained from the students, the conclusion was made.

Some of the Questions asked in the questionnaire were as follows:-

- Yoga increases ability to handle stressful situations
- Meditation generates inner peace and self-control
- Yoga evaluates personal values and life goals
- Meditation controls psychological pressure
- Yoga establishes a positive & open approach towards life
- Yoga promotes mental clarity and emotional balance

The questionnaire had 5 options ranging from definitely agreeing to disagreeing with the statements made above.

Out of the 100 students, more than 70% students favored towards agreeing to the above said statements.

This again indicates that the students were well aware of the advantages of meditation. But when the statement “I currently practise yoga regularly” was made in the questionnaire, almost 80% of the students did not agree to it. That is, they accepted to not practice meditation in spite of being aware of its advantages.

There could be various reasons to not being able to meditate on a regular basis such as, lack of free time, disinterest in the art, lack of patience, lack of knowledge to the methodology to meditation, etc.

Getting to a point that states that they do not practice the development of good ethics by themselves. But would need a small push to start practicing meditation.

This can be done by either reminding them at home, or by making them dedicate a small amount of their time in the

institution itself.

One cannot guarantee the regular practice of meditation at home. However, practicing it in the institution not only self-motivates, but also motivates others to do the same. As mentioned earlier, “that students in today’s world are greatly affected by the mixed cultures and practices followed by their colleagues and friends”. If meditation is practiced by at least 50% of all the students, the other 50% are bound to follow, which will be sufficient for enhancing professional ethics.

THE CONCEPT PUT TO PRACTICE

The practice to the theory had three steps.

- 1) Clear all types of possible distractions so that the mind is able to let in the positivity attained through yoga.
- 2) Relax the agitated mind so that the person is focused.
- 3) Practice meditation that helps in realizing one’s own presence and completely realize the happiness obtained in maintaining peace and following the right paths.

As we all know, In order to mould the mind in the right way, we must first clear all the sources of distraction so that the mind stays open. Hence we practiced the sessions in large halls or in the college park where there would be no distractions. Secondly we would ask the students to put away all their electronic gadgets such as cell phones, etc which have become a student’s common addiction. Every class had to attend one session every day. Each session lasted for one hour which was divided into two phases.

The first phase lasted for about 15 to 20 minutes where simple stretching and breathing exercises were practiced to relax the mind and clear it of all thoughts and keep the mind stable and focused. We would gradually shift to the second phase where meditation techniques such as surya bhedan, inner trakata, nadi shodhana(alternate nostril breathing) and deep breathing[6] which focused on removing bad thoughts and vibes from the mind were practiced.

OBSERVATIONS MADE

There were two types of observations made during the study.

Observations made on a daily basis:

- Post session observations showed that the students seemed a lot more calm and happy to attend classes.
- Another interesting observation was, after a few days of practice, the students were less interested in using their cell phones and distracting themselves during class.
- They seemed more focused in class than before.
- They also began to attend class on a more regular basis.

All these facts were a banner indicating that the technique was working and hence we should continue the same for the rest of the semester.

Observations at the end of the semester:

- The overall behavior of the students in class was improved.
- They showed more interest in learning than wasting time on uncreative topics.
- During the internal tests, the students were more keen on scoring grades through their own efforts. ie: the number of students bringing chits, copying, coaxing friends to help them in answering, etc had reduced to a great extent.

This was the result we expected at the beginning of the study which was working.

CONCLUSION

The survey shows that although the idea is not readily accepted to be practiced regularly, they understand the benefits that yoga favors in all aspects. Therefore it is advisable to serve the purpose of enhancing good professional ethics through the practice of yoga as it is the easiest, most acceptable and possibly the only correct way to bring up discipline and values in an individual. However, the study has proved that practicing simple meditation techniques in the right way can also help change a person’s mindset towards the way of living and make him/her more calm and focused which results in growing good professional as well as personal ethics by the time they graduate.

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