

# Ethical Integrity, Leadership And Administration - Past To Present A Historical Approach From Indian Perspective

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## Abstract

*“We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly”.* **Aristotle.**

In the proposed study an attempt has been made to study the role of ethical integrity and leadership from an Indian perspective. It will also try to project the values of Indian administration and culture. A country is great by the character of its people, not by the number. India's pride is the great philosophers and administrators she has produced. However, remember those who taught them that no material wealth is greater than moral virtue. The cultivation of moral and ethical values, both at personal and social levels is a must for a better country. Values provide a standard of reference and judgment for our thought, feeling and action and this has been the tradition in India for centuries.

Ethical integrity is the foundation that supports our culture. In fact, our entire nation is built around the morals and rules framed traditionally in course of time. The development of a country lies in methods that we follow in administration as well as inspires the unity and diversity of the country. Most people would agree that leaders need ethics. There is disagreement on the kind of ethics leaders need but not about the fact that leadership requires ethics. This paper argues around the above statement. Leaders need ethics, but do ethics necessarily call for leadership? How ethical is the concept of leadership really? In this paper we argue for ethics, rather than requiring leadership, Firstly we examine some concepts, questions and challenges of leadership ethics. Further the paper explores and advocates with examples a conception of ethical integrity and leadership. A true leadership stands for not power, dominance, social superiority, or anything suggestive of snobbery. Leadership is influence on people, not power over them.

**Keywords:** 1. Ethical Integrity, 2. Leadership, 3. Societal values, 4. Political values, 5. Secularism

## 1 Introduction

### Administration in Ancient India

The discipline of public administration is as old as the civilization itself. In the Indian context, Indian administration is one of the oldest administrative systems in the world. The history of ancient Indian administration begins from the Harappan times and continued up to the beginning of the first millennium till the establishment of the Mughal administration. The Indian Judicial and Administration system, many of

whose features are found even in the modern days, offers a good field of research. Its findings can certainly enrich our field of administration helping us further towards the goal of ideal justice through human agencies<sup>1</sup>.

In the earlier times, village administration gained precedence over administration of the state. The Gandhian concept of village administration is rooted in the Vedic times. The epics Ramayana and Mahabharata make a mention of administrative officers and their relevant departments. But a detailed mention of the administration of the State is found in Kautilya's Arthashastra. In ancient India, the empires were divided into provinces, provinces into districts and districts into villages and urban and rural centres.

The modern principles of the Administration had their roots in ancient Indian Administration. For example, the principle of hierarchy had been given a practical shape and coordination was very much present between the departments Ancient Indian administration is by and large, considered synonymous with Kautilya's - the most celebrated figure of Indian administrative history. His celebrated work Arthashastra is the most important work on public administration in ancient India. Kautilya is said to have lived somewhere between the fourth and third century B.C. and Arthashastra, the oldest text on public administration of the world was written sometime between 321 and 300 B.C.

In Ancient India, the different branches of knowledge were grouped under four heads, namely, Philosophy, the Vedas, Economics, and Politics. Politics was regarded as a very important if not the most important subject of study. The Mahabharata (Great Indian Epic describes about Politics) says, "When the Science of Politics is neglected, the three Vedas as well as all virtues decline."

The method of study pursued in ancient times was somewhat different from that generally adopted at the present day. Politics was treated more as an art than as a science in other words as guidance. Chanakya says, "Anviksiki (Philosophy), Trayi (the Vedas), Vartta (Economics), and Dandaniti (the Science of Government) are the four sciences." Arthashastra, The Mahabharata, the Kamandakiniti, and the Sukraniti follow Chanakya's classification, and use almost identical words. According to the school of the Manavas there are only three sciences the Vedas, Economics, and Politics, the school of Brihaspati reduces the sciences to two, namely, Economics and Politics, while that of Usanas regards the Science of Government as the only science, all other branches of knowledge being dependent on it.

Our sources of information regarding the systems of administration which prevailed in India in the ancient times and the political ideas and ideals which moulded and shaped those systems are the Vedas, the Hindu Epics, the Smritis, the Puranas, the religious books of the Buddhists and the Jainas, historical and dramatic literature, accounts of foreign travelers, epigraphic records, and lastly, a few treatises which deal especially with the Politics / Administration.

Arthashastra is the highest kind of wisdom. We find here emphasis on utility of time and the need for subordination of ethical principles to considerations of expediency. The political doctrine preached in this book, namely, that the end justifies the means, marks a notable departure from the high moral standard of earlier times. It strikes us as a curious coincidence that Chanakya, the greatest political philosopher with

ethical values, was the contemporary of Aristotle, and the most eminent political theorist of Ancient Greece to compare.

The king despite having faith on religious and political concepts did not make the state theocratic. It was the king's duty to promote goodness and religiousness by extending equal patronage to all religious. The customary laws that were enforced approved by the social conscience.<sup>2</sup>

## 2 Ethical values in Education

According to Father of Indian Nation M.K.Gandhi "If wealth is lost nothing is lost, If health is lost something is lost, If character is lost everything is lost" Best of all things is character. "

The meaning of value education is an endless belief that a specific mode of conduct or state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct. The Importance of Values and Morals are the code we live by in a civil and just society. Ethics is not a mere matter of subjective opinion. Its propositions are not specific to particular individuals but apply equally to all. They have a degree of generality or universality, which can make it a systematic study.<sup>3</sup>

The teachers are repositories of the nation's culture and lead the nation to greater heights. The influence of quality teacher is not confined to a particular time, region or state, but it extends to the whole world. Greek teachers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle on the west, and Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Sarvepally Radhakrishnan in India have worldwide impact. From the beginning with schools in India, this whole concept of good behaviour got crystallised in *dharm*, or the set of duties every person has to perform. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Lord Krishna says "*swadharme nidhanamshreya paradharmo bhayapaha*". Doing one's own duty is the most desirable and if one cannot perform duty, death is a better option. This inculcation of values in the educational system is possible. This, in turn, would mean referring to the sources of tradition which will involve a reference to some religion. *Bhagavad-Gita* how important and relevant in today's context they are eternal spring of wisdom required for developing right judgment, emotional balance, strength and for discovering the ultimate destination of human values.<sup>4</sup>

Moral values are as important as education. Students are the future of our nation. The importance of life should not be taught, but should be trained. We want to have the training through which we develop the feelings of Nationalism and cultivate moral values in our lives. Besides Education, we should be deeply involved in such works through which we develop feelings of love and brotherhood. It is the responsibility of our parents and teachers to make future builders of the Nation. Education includes all-round development of a person, so I think social, ethical and moral values should be included in our school's programme. Well Educated with moral values in the education people can build a good society and a healthy Nation. We can remove the present evils of our society by constantly helping each other. Then our Country will become a dream land and a dream destination.

### 3 Societal values

A society is not the same as a “nation” or “state.” It is more than a political idea: it is more than a “civil government.” It is about how people build a consensus around competing ways of life. It is about how social institutions and subcultures emerge in a social order, about how organizations battle and about how people develop their lives together. It is about how social systems are constructed and markets change in this process of conflict and consensus.<sup>5</sup>

Societal values the degree of corruption in any organisation or society depends on three factors. The first is the individual sense of values. The second is the value cherished by society and the third, of course, is the system of governance. So far as the first issue is concerned, today our society is in a flux. Thanks to modernisation and the tremendous impact of satellite television and the media and the policy of liberalisation, we are seeing the vigorous growth of the consumer culture.

In India, traditionally, the ascetic who gives up things is honoured. Today, the models before the younger generation are those who earn money by means fair or foul and have tons of it to splurge. Lifestyle has become very important. This consumerist culture is probably strengthening the philosophy of "get on, get honour and get honest". Can we afford to give up our consumerist culture? What we can do is to at least see that certain basic values like integrity, honesty are inculcated in the educational system. In any society, values, by and large, are inculcated by the parents. They, in turn, are influenced by tradition and religion. After all, religion is nothing but crystallised tradition that upholds the ethical codes of conduct which is in the interest of society.

### 4 Values in Administration

Discussions on public service values and duties reflect a mixture of institutional arrangements (such as accountability), instrumental values (like efficacy) fundamental or ontological values (like honesty, fairness etc.). One forceful view has been that the basic core of tenets that together define the moral foundation of public administration are honour, benevolence and justice. These three imperatives taken together constitute the moral foundation of public administration.<sup>6</sup>

In the matter of Ethical values in administration and politics, firstly we should notice that our political leaders are social role models. How they conduct their public affairs how they behave sets the tone for the citizenry. Our political leaders, as is the case with public figures in the entertainment world, validate public behavior; whatever they do, we citizens are entitled to emulate. Far more significant, our elected officials are moral agents, too they stand for issues, make decisions, and formulate policies that deal with matters of good and bad. And Public administrators are expected to develop and implement programmes that further social change, equity and justice.<sup>7</sup>

So, what set of values may we apply to the behavior of our elected officials, Just as we need criteria to evaluate the reasons, motives, and conduct of our military wars, it is also essential to have moral expectations about our politicians. How do we hold them accountable? Is it enough that they abstain from violating the

laws they have sworn to uphold? What about their behavior throughout the course of their terms in office as well as when they run for office? The Constitution, lest we forget, does not decree a specific code of ethics for our politicians such is our role. This section offers criteria of ethical politics that, we hope, might lead to an improvement in the moral climate in national, state, and local politics.

The philosophical approach is perhaps the oldest approach to the public administration as of all other social sciences. An example of this approach is found in *Shanti Parva* of the Mahabharata, other well-known examples being Plato's *Republic*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Treatise on Civil Government*, etc. The philosophical approach is wide ranging, taking within its purview all aspects of administrative activities. Its goal is to find out and enunciate the principles or 'ideals.'<sup>8</sup>

### 5 Ethical Values in The Leadership

Leader is an example to follow, so leadership in its form has certain well-marked characteristics.<sup>9</sup> The social and political correctness seem a cultural imposition that would inhibit one's personality or even be socially and politically repressive. The servant leadership is positively correlated to leadership integrity, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour while it is negatively correlated to cynicism towards one's own work. The factorial structure of servant leadership found support, and the survey showed satisfactory psychometric properties and reliability. Servant leadership expressed by leaders positively associated with leadership integrity, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour, and negatively associated for cynicism.

Ethics has to do with the study of right and wrong, of good and bad. Whenever men concern themselves with understanding their own duties or privileges with appreciating the obligation or rights of other, there ethics is. Public administrators/Political leaders are self-conscious trustees of the Public Interest.

In the world of today we need such men in public service. The administrators have to exhibit an "integration of universal values, such as wisdom and reverence, honesty and integrity, devotion to human interests as well as those traditions which are favoured in the cultural stream of a particular civilization. Administrators have to develop a sense of mission, an understanding of inter-relations and a compelling sense of overall objectives and values."<sup>10</sup>

The world is undergoing globalization at a fast rate in manufacturing, transport and communication, services and lifestyles. The process has gathered its own momentum, but there is a need to intervene it to protect both human and environmental interests. On the one hand we are in the process of the making of a universal man, poets like Rabindranath Tagore holding the prospects of a better mutual understanding and peace.

Ethical politics is the process of generalisation of the experiences of alliance politics, which recognises that, despite itself, participation in alliances is a relation which reciprocally modifies all the 'parties' (agents) engaged in collaborative political action, and actively promotes that process towards the development of a

new subjectivity. Ethical Politics and Theory have proposed above that the “golden rule” of ethics ought to be further modified as “What we do is decided by you and me,”

## 6 The Concept of the Secular State in India

When the word ‘*Secular*’ was borrowed from the West and placed in the preamble of our Constitution by the founding members of modern India, the message they wanted to send out to the world and the value system they wanted to instill among Indians in a nutshell was that India will have no state religion; all the people in this ancient country are equal in the eyes of the government and the law thus shall live in peace and harmony.

But what our modern leaders did was nothing unique or exemplary by adding secularism to India’s constitution but rather made the concept of secularism redundant and betrayed the basic knowledge and essence that constituted India’s ethos since time immemorial. India always followed the great tradition of ‘*Sarva dharma sambhava*’ i.e. all religions are harmonious with each other and lead to God and thus one can follow the path he or she chooses. Tolerance and harmony is a weave through Indian philosophy, culture and society since ages.

Born out of the great *Hindu Vedic Dharmic* tradition, between 200 BC and 300 CE, Buddhism swept through the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent catching the imagination of the rulers and the people alike. India from a 100% Hindu nation became a Buddhist majority nation and remained so for nearly 500 years. Many Emperors and Kings converted to Buddhism and so did the vast majority of the subjects but never did the converted rulers or their subjects persecute followers of the old faith i.e. *Sanatana Dharma* or Hinduism, as we know it popularly.

The Gupta’s, who were Hindus, reined greater part of India from 320 CE to 550 CE. They not only ushered in India’s golden age but also presided over a golden Hindu renaissance. Being staunch Hindus they gave impetus to Vedic Hinduism but also continued to patronize Buddhism by donating and supporting various Buddhist monasteries and universities. The state supported and promoted all denomination of faiths with an even hand.

Even during the period of Islamic invasion and occupation starting earnestly in 1200 CE many Hindu kings during these very disturbing times continued to maintain *Dharmic equanimity* and promoted religious tolerance and equality. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jain or Zoroastrian; one can find people of all here in India. India is a secular state and every citizen enjoys an equal right of choosing and following a particular religion. More than three fourth of Indian population belongs to Hindu religion and you can find Hindu pilgrimages in every part of the country. The great division’s sets own ethical task, as every Psychiatrist know and as every men of the world observes. It sets it both historically and psychologically.

## 7 Conclusion

Ethics and honest leadership define a nation’s psyche. Being a traditional society, Indians expect integrity in administration and governance. They expect the political class to be upright honest and inspire the future

generations. A fundamental aspect of moral values is its inclusive dimension. As opposed to individual morality, it will become obvious to the people that there is no logically compelling reason for any single ideological group in politics to claim a monopoly over morality and integrity. Moral values will be in contention always among social, political, and religious groups, either through the sensible and civilized presentation of facts and reason, through passionate disputes, or through violence and war. Today, an examination of moral issues is critical for citizens who wish to gain an increased understanding of the role of values in politics. Most people would agree that leaders need ethics. There is disagreement with the kind of ethics leaders need to possess, but not about the fact that leadership requires ethics. This depends on what kind of administrative and political culture a country has.

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