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Implications of the Holistic Understanding – a
Look at Professional Ethics

The right understanding gained through self-exploration also enables us to identify the definitiveness of human conduct which may also be called the **ethical human conduct**. It is the same for all human beings. So we are also able to understand the universality of ethical human conduct which is in consonance with the universal human values. Accordingly, all debates and confusion about what is ethical for one may not be ethical for others etc. also lose their base. Let us now understand the salient features of this definite human conduct i.e. the ethical human conduct.

Each one of us wants to have a definite conduct but presently we may not be able to ensure that. This is because we are presently living on the basis of our pre-conditionings or assumptions which are not in consonance with the truth or the right understanding. But, this situation neither gives satisfaction to us nor to others. We do see the human beings struggling to find out what the right conduct is and in the process, exhibiting a wide variety of attributes. We also see people debating endlessly about what they consider to be ethical. But **unless we have the right understanding, we are not able to identify the definitiveness of ethical human conduct**. It can be understood in terms of the following:

1. Values (Mulya)
2. Policy (Niti)
3. Character (Charitra)

1. **Values (Mulya):** Competence of living in accordance with universal human values or the participation of a unit in the larger order- its natural characteristics or svabhava. Values are a part of our ethical conduct. They are the natural outcome of realization and right understanding, which are always definite. Values need not to be imposed through fear, greed or blind belief. The values of a human being can be enumerated as thirty, which are listed below:

a). **Values in self (Jivan Mulya):** The values are :

- i. **Happiness (Sukha):** Definiteness of expectation (selecting/ tasting) based on definiteness of thought manifests as happiness.
- ii. **Peace (Shanti):** Definiteness of thought based on definiteness of desire manifests as peace.
- iii. **Satisfaction (Santosh):** Definiteness of desire based on understanding manifests as satisfaction.
- iv. **Bliss (Ananda):** Understanding based on realization manifests as bliss.

b). **Values in Human – Human Relationship (Sambandh Mulya):** The values are :

- i. **Established Value (Sthapit Mulya):** The established values are in self or I and manifest as expressed values in behaviour with other humans. The expressed values are nine.
- ii. **Expressed Value (Shisht Mulya):** The way of expression of established values in behaviour is called expressed value. For example, if we have the feeling of trust established in us, it gets

expressed as complementariness in behaviour with others. The expressed values are also nine.

We will show them in the table below:

	Established – Values	Expressed – Values	
1	Visvasa (Trust)	Saujanyata (Complementariness)	10
2	Sammana (Respect)	Sauhardra (Compliance)	11
3	Sneha (Affection)	Nistha (Commitment)	12
4	Mamta (Care)	Udarata (Generosity)	13
5	Vatsalya (Guidance)	Sahajata (Spontaneity)	14
6	Shraddha (Reverence)	Pujyata (Obedience)	15

7	Gaurava (Glory)	Saralata (Ease)	16
8	Kritagyata (Gratitude)	Saumyata (Self-Restraint)	17
9	Prema (Love)	Ananyata (Unanimity)	18

What we need to have is the established value; the expressed value is a natural outcome.

c). **Values of a Human Being in its Participation in Universal Human Order (Manav Mulya):** The values are :

- i. **Perseverance (Dhirata):** Being asured that the all-encompassing solution is to understand and live in harmony at all four levels.
- ii. **Bravery (Veerta):** Being assured that the all encompassing solution is to understand and live in harmony at all four levels, and I am ready to help the other getting assured of it.
- iii. **Generosity (Udarta):** Being assured that the all encompassing solution is to understand and live in harmony at all four levels and I am ready to help the other getting assured of it, and I am also ready to invest my self, body and wealth to help the other getting assured of it.
- iv. **Kindness (Daya):** If a person has the ability but does not have the means to fulfill his or her needs, the participation in relation to make available the means to fulfill th needs is known as kindness.
- v. **Beneficence (Kripa):** If a person has the means to fulfill his or her needs, but does not have the ability (competence) to utilise it, the participation in relation to imbibe the ability in him/ her, is beneficence.
- vi. **Compassion (Karuna):** If a person neither has the abiliy nor have the means to fulfill his/her needs, tha participation in relation to make available the body is compassion.

d). **Values of Human Being in the Interaction with the Rest of the Nature (Vastu Mulya):** The vastu mulya is the participation of the human being with the rest of the nature. It is further chategoriized as:

- i. **Utility Value (Upyogita Mulya):** The participation of human being in ensuring the role of physical facility in nurture, protection and providing means for the body.
- ii. **Artistic value (kala mulya):** The participation of a human being in ensuring the role of physical facility to help and preserve its utility. Proper preparation and presentation is the artistic value. We must note that if a thing has utility value then only we think about the artistic value.

2. Policy (Niti):

Having been convinced about the values and about the inherent harmony in the existence, Iam able to develop an ethical sense in all my pursuits. I always think, behave and work towards nurturing this harmony. It leads us to adopt policies conducive to human welfare-conducive to enrichment, protection and right utilization of mind, body and wealth. This is an outcome of the definiteness of my desire, thought and expectation (selection) as guided by right understanding. In other words, the decision (plan, program, implementation, results, evaluation) about the enrichment, protection and right utilization of the resources (self, body and wealth – mana, tana and dhana). The policy have three parts:

- a) **Economic Policy (Artha Niti):** The policy for enrichment of wealth
- b) **Political Policy (Rajya Niti):** The policy of protection of body and wealth
- c) **Policy for Universal Human Order (Dharma Niti):** The policy for right utilization of mind, body and wealth.

3. Character (Charitra):

The definiteness of my desire, thought and selection gives definiteness to my living. Definiteness of character is the outcome of the definiteness of my behaviour and work. This can be mainly characterised in terms of the following:

- a) Chastity in conjugal relationship i.e. chastity in husband – wife relationship (sva nari, sva purusa).
- b) Rightful production, acquisition and utilization of wealth (sva dhana)
- c) Kindness in behaviour and work (dayapurna vyavahar and karya)

This definitiveness of human conduct in terms of values, policies and character is termed as ethics. The ethics in the living of an individual can be imbibed only through inculcation of values, policies and character, and this is possible through the process of ensuring right understanding through self-exploration.

In other words ethics (also known as moral philosophy) is a branch of philosophy that addresses questions about morality – that is, concepts such as good vs. bad, noble vs. ignoble, right vs. wrong, and matters of justice, love, peace and virtue.

A human being with ethical human conduct coupled with requisite professional skills only can be a good professional, namely, a good engineer, a good manager, a good teacher and researcher, a good technocrat, etc.

- Ethical conduct implies that it is naturally acceptable to me and does not give rise to conflict within.
- Ethical conduct implies that it is in consonance with the right understanding of the reality – the underlying harmony at all levels.
- Ethical conduct implies that it leads to mutual fulfillment with other people and mutual enrichment with rest of nature.

Thus, the ethical conduct is self – satisfying, people friendly, eco-friendly and universal.

Identification of svatva leading to svatantrata and svarajya

We are exploring our svatva and in the process of self-verification and living accordingly, we are attaining svatantrata and svarajya. Having discussed the content of right understanding, we can see how we explored our svatva (our natural acceptance) at different levels of our living and how the dialogue that started in us helped us getting rid of our preconceived notions, our dilemmas, contradictions and compulsions, either external or internal. Having explored our svatva, we are able to live accordingly and this way, we become svatantra. The more, we attain this self-organized state, we are able to live in harmony with others and also we are able to help others attain this state. This leads to our participation in svarajya. It is a natural process. It leads by itself, without any external force.

From here we get an important message: the effort towards ensuring orderliness in the society is possible and is sustained by ensuring orderliness in ourselves. Every mechanism to bring order in the society needs to be based on this. This is an important implication of right understanding when we go to make policies for nations and the world.

Development of human consciousness

Having gone through the self exploration, we can see how it helps us to initiate the development process of our consciousness. Accordingly it affects a change in one's goals, priorities and selection criteria. In animal consciousness we give all the weightage to physical facilities, to the maximization of sensory pleasures, to accumulation of wealth. Our criteria of evolution are primarily body centric, targeted towards maximization of comforts and sensory pleasures. As indicated earlier, this propensity proves to be a misery trap for human beings causing multifarious problems within us as

well as in outside world as we are experiencing now a days. As we transform to the human consciousness, we are able to base our thoughts and activities on right understanding, give relationship a higher priority than

physical facilities, identifying our physical needs and ensure it through avartansila production, enriching rest of the nature as well.

Implication of value based living

Value based living means to live on the basis of values. Why should we have a value based living because it give us following benifits:

1. **At the level of the individual** – happiness, peace, contentment and bliss in the self, perseverance, bravery and generosity in living of the individual. This value based living of the individual would reduce the feeling of financial in security which is caused by ill health.
2. **At the level of the family** - mutual fulfillment in relationships, prosperity in the family, sustenance of joint families, family as the building block of societal order in place of law enforcing bodies, respect for all without differntiation on the basis of age, gender, caste, race, money, post, creed, etc.
3. **At the level of the society** – when we start giving higher priority to relationship over the physical facilities the society becomes fearless, holistic systems for education, health, justice, production, exchange and storage, harmony between nations, world growing as a family.
4. **At the level of nature** – co-existence of all units in nature, earth getting more and more suited for sustenance of all entities on the globe, balance of seasons, proper development. This will help to reduce the problems like pollution, over exploitation of resources etc.

Vision for the Holistic Alternative: Basis for Humanistic Education and Humanistic Constitution

The right understanding prepares us for moving towards the ‘holistic alternative’ (universal human order, svarajya) which will be sustainable as well as conductive to fulfil the basic human aspirations for all human beings. It will be a mode of living which is self satisfying, people friendly and eco friendly. Then all human ingenuity, all the knowledge and skills available can be harnessed to actulize such a model of living.

The primary step to move towards the holistic alternative is to develop the right understanding among human beings and the commitment to live accordingly and then to develop the requisite skills and know how to implement the right understanding in real life.

Professional ethics in the light of right understanding

Professional ethics means to develop professional competence with ethical human conduct. Ethical human conduct means definitiveness of human conduct. Ethical human conduct is the foundation of professional ethics. The only effective way to ensure professional ethics is through correct appraisal and systematic development of ethical competence in the professional (the human being). Profession is a significant domain of human acitivity targeted towards participating in the larger order which includes the society and nature around. Thus, it is a meaningful participation for each one in one or more of the five domains of human endeavour needed for a harmonious society. Of this, one important domain happens to be in the form of production and production related activities. It also make available the necessary physical facilities (livelihood) for oneself and one’s family. Here, one has to interact with other human beings as well as the living and non-living entities of rest of nature. Through professional education, one acquires the specific skills and knowledge in order to make this contribution in the larger order. Ethical conduct of profession implies the right utilization of one’s professional skills towards the fulfilment of comprehensive human goal and thus, meaningfully participate in the larger order.

Professional ethics may be difined as a form of applied ethics that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment.

Professional ethics concerns the moral issues that arise because of the specialist knowledge that professinals attain, and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to

the public.

However, to be able to achieve this, it is essential to develop the value competence or the ethical competence in the human beings along with the requisite skills. It may be easily appreciated that a significant implication of the right understanding is to develop this ethical competence and thereby facilitate professional ethics.

Profession – in the light of comprehensive human goal

As mentioned earlier, any profession is a channel for participation by human beings in the larger order in pursuance of comprehensive human goal. In the process, one is able to contribute towards the livelihood of one's family and also participate in the larger order constituting the society and the nature around. All these activities do require a certain degree of skill and are expected to be performed in consonance with the comprehensive human goal. Then only, these will be conducive to the sustained welfare of the individual as well as the society. The excellence or the success of any professional activity is to be judged from this comprehensive point of view only and not in terms of just wealth generation. Accordingly, the profession is not only a means of earning one's livelihood but a means of one's evolution by appropriate participation in the larger order. It is an important activity to authenticate one's understanding, whereby interact with other human beings and with rest of nature in a mutually fulfilling manner. Thus, profession is a 'service'.

Ensuring competence in professional ethics

Why a person act unethically? It is primarily because of lack of correct understanding about happiness and prosperity. If a person views happiness in terms of maximization of sensory enjoyment and prosperity in terms of accumulation of physical facilities, then the motivation naturally becomes that of wealth maximization. In this pursuit, all other considerations become secondary. Therefore, it leads to more and more unethical practices as these seem to cater well to the above tends to make people adhere to this wrong notion firmly. In this context, the ethical considerations are considered to be too idealistic to follow in real life.

The development of ethical competence is a long term process to be achieved through appropriate value education. As profession is only a subset of the life activities, the competence in profession will only be the manifestation of one's right understanding. The salient features characterizing this competence can be summarized as follows:

Competence in professional ethics

1. **Clarity about comprehensive human goal:** samadhan – samridhi – abhay – sah-astitva, and its fulfillment through universal human order.
2. **Confidence in oneself:** based on the right understanding of oneself and the rest of existence.
3. **Mutually fulfilling behaviour:** clarity and confidence in ethical human conduct and its correlation with sustained personal as well as collective happiness and prosperity.
4. **Mutually enriching interaction with nature:** self-sufficiency in fulfillment of physical needs; ability to assess the needs for physical facilities for the family and their fulfillment through production systems ensuring harmony in the nature. In the light of the above, one acquires the ability to identify and develop appropriate (people-friendly and eco-friendly) technologies, production systems etc.

Issues in professional ethics

The unethical practices are rapidly increasing and their impact is also becoming far-reaching. Corruption in multifarious manifestations is afflicting all the professions like a virus. Similarly, other unethical practices are also proliferating and getting out of control. It appears as if human ingenuity

is

being increasingly harnessed to devise newer and subtler ways to thwart the ethical conduct of profession, to twist the laws and to beat the system.

As a result of this ‘epidemic’ of unethical practices, we are frequently coming across serious scams, major economic offences and kickbacks in large scale purchases. Lapses on the part of big organizations in ethical conduct of profession have led to large scale disasters, such as Bhopal Gas Tragedy, the Chernobyl Disaster, etc. endangering public life and prosperity, and causing serious degradation to environment.

This menace becomes even more serious as unethical politics are adopted collectively by large industries, cartels, multinational corporations and even national governments. We are also quite familiar how misleading propaganda, advertisements using sex-appeal, the influence of show business ad celebrities are being employed to influence the public mind for promoting all types of products which are not quite conducive to human welfare. We may enlist some salient categories of these unethical practices as follows:

- ⇒ Corruption in multiple forms and at various levels.
 - ⇒ Tax evasion, misappropriation and misuse of public funds.
 - ⇒ Misleading propaganda, unethical advertisements and sale promotion.
 - ⇒ Cut-throat competition.
 - ⇒ Exploiting the weakness of consumers through various enticements
 - ⇒ Adulteration and spurious production
 - ⇒ Endangering the health and safety of public at large.
 - ⇒ Hoarding and over-charging etc.
- the list could be much longer.

The holistic criteria for evaluation

The modern technologies and systems are all human inventions in response to the needs visualized under the influence of the prevailing worldview. There are three broad criteria to guide the development of such technologies and systems, they are:

1. Catering to appropriate needs of lifestyles
2. People friendly
3. Eco friendly.

In addition, these have to promote local self-sufficiency and optimal utilization of local resources and expertise.

In accordance to the above general considerations, the specific criteria for judging the appropriateness of technologies, production systems and management models may be identified as follows:

Criteria for technologies

1. Catering to real human needs
2. Compatible with natural systems and cycles
3. Facilitating effective utilization of human body, animals, plants and materials
4. Safe, user-friendly and conducive to health
5. Promoting the use of renewable energy resources
6. Low cost and energy efficient
7. Promoting decentralization
8. Enhancing human interaction and cooperation
9. Durability and life cycle recyclability of products etc.

For production systems

1. Optimal utilization of local resources and expertise
2. Economic viability and sustainability
3. Priority for local consumption
4. Decentralized systems capable of meaningful employment of people in the community
5. Facilitating production by masses and not mass production in a centralized mode
6. Ensuring requisite quality of production
7. Using people friendly and eco friendly technologies
8. Safe and conducive to health of persons involved in production as well as others
9. Promoting individual creativity and sense of accomplishment

For management models

1. The whole unit working as a well knit family
2. Cooperative and motivational
3. Ensuring correct appraisal of human labour
4. Effectively integrating individual competencies and complementarity
5. Targeting employer – employee as well as consumer satisfaction and not profit maximisation.

To sum up we can say

- ✓ Profession implies meaningful participation in the larger order including society and nature in pursuance of comprehensive human goal and in the process also making available the necessary physical facilities for one's family.
- ✓ Developing ethical competence in the individuals (professionals) is the only effective way to ensure professional ethics.
- ✓ The increase of unethical practices in various professions, the contradictions and dilemmas are primarily due to the prevailing worldview focusing on profit maximization. These can only be resolved through right understanding.