

Innovations, Ethics and Values

Dr. Vinay Sharma*

Ethics is a relative term which can be seen with an absolute perspective while being referred to along with the values which are actually universal in character.

I do not wish to demonstrate ethics and describe values here but want to project the tangible realization of ethics and values through innovations in the functionalities we belong to in our work life.

Before projecting the role of innovations in experiencing ethics and demonstrating values with my individual understanding, I prefer to put forth some key aspects through terms of reference which would be supportive of the arguments throughout this article.

The first key word is imperfection. We humans though live with imperfections search for perfections all the way, especially in others and specifically with reference to the social structures we live with.

We must try to remember a simple saying that “NO ONE IS PERFECT”. If people cannot be perfect, situations can not be perfect too. Therefore, why to search for perfection? Formats, regulations, structures, construction and measurement scales are facilitations to assist not to rule and not to rule the human’s

lives at all.

The second key word is non-denial. Because of the reason that we usually are driven by measurement criteria and structures whether, social, psychological or based on reasoning we deny things, people and situations. We tend to search for reasons and logic in everything we do, everyone we meet and all the spheres of life and when we are unable to find instances close to the benchmarks we follow we tend to deny things, we even tend to deny people and relationships. Remember defining things and generating nomenclature and classification is also measurement. It does not mean that we should not name anything but, furthering the nomenclature beyond limits kills the fundamental beauty of a situation, a person, work, cause or even relationship.

Let me demonstrate this with some relevant instances. For example, how does a person defines a Guru or a teacher? One who teaches the subject, extends the knowledge in much larger terms. Another example could be when we meet someone. We tend to give a name to the relationship. If we are working together we say we are colleagues. Then we tend to describe that relationship as, for example departmental colleagues and after a stage we get perplexed

*The author is Associate Professor, IIT, Roorkee, e-mail: vinnu871@gmail.com

on further differentiation.

In organizational culture there is a popular term called ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’, which is a specific task based activity nowadays but the question is that which corporate should be or should not be socially responsible? Here comes innovation. All the people if tend to believe in values with the fundamental orientation, ethics merges with values. How? Let’s see.

Humans are born with some inbuilt skill and they further that skill or add to that skill with the help education dependent knowledge or otherwise. But the point of concern is that while earning our living and justifying our jobs, how we may tend to use our knowledge for others of humans at large.

For example Mansukhbhai Raghavjibhai Prajapati is a famous rural innovator known for his earthen clay based functional products like: Mitticool, Non Stick Clay Tawa, Low cost water. Slingshot is a water purification device created by inventor Dean Kamen, who has invented so many other useful products also.

Dr. Devi Shetty has innovated upon Health Care delivery model and has reached to the masses.

Salman Khan of <https://www.khanacademy.org> has created a platform for learning for all.

Husk Power Systems is trying to provide low cost energy solutions.

Anand Kumar is a mathematician and a columnist for various national and international mathematical journals and magazines. He is best known for his Super 30 programme, which he started in Patna, Bihar in 2002, and which

coaches economically backward students for IIT-JEE, the entrance examination for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

Verghese Kurien was a renowned Indian social entrepreneur and is best known as the “Father of the White Revolution”, for his ‘billion-litre idea’ (Operation Flood) - the world’s largest agricultural development programme. This transformed India from a milk-deficient nation to the world’s largest milk producer.

Padma Shri Iadav “Molai” Payeng is an environmental activist and forestry worker from Jorhat, India. Over the course of several decades, he planted and tended trees on a sandbar of the river Brahmaputra turning it into a forest reserve.

The forest, called Molai forest after him, is located near Kokilamukh of Jorhat, Assam, and encompasses an area of about 1,360 acres.

Daripalli Ramaiah of Khammam district presently in Telangana State, “Chettla Ramaiah”, has planted more than 10 million trees.

Abdul Kareem, 66, of Parappa, Kasargod, Kerala, had a liking to ‘Kavu’, the sacred forests of Kerala, right from his childhood. He would frequently visit his wife’s house in Puliyankulam village and it was during such visits that he noticed the barren hillside land nearby and started planting a forest which now is called as Kareem’s Forest by Kerala Tourism Department.

Shubhendu Sharma left his high paying job as an engineer to plant trees for the rest of his life. He uses the unique Miyawaki methodology to grow saplings. He has successfully created 33 forests across India in two years.

The list of innovators who have made a difference to the lives of people is endless. The important factor is how one gets inspired by these instances.

But the question remains how is innovation finally associated with demonstrate that if we get associated with the cause of serving humans, considering the fact that humans are born for humans and the rest of the world we tend to get associated with values, because of the prime reason that the values have their origin in the non-denial or acceptance of the fact that we live for others and because of others. Subsequently we tend to innovate and do whatever we can to make others happy and for the better of people's lives.

An example would justifiably establish the context here. Remember the story of Robinson Crusoe, a castaway who spends thirty years on a remote tropical island and the related movie called 'Castaway' where a person had to stay alone on an island and the stages, situations and trauma he had to face.

Try and imagine that if we had to live all by ourselves and suddenly we would realize that we won't be able to.

Therefore, think discuss and emphasize upon to converge your experiences, thoughts and lives towards innovation led values or values led innovations and this is ethics.



Ethics of Sustainable Development

The problem of sustainable development has arisen since the beginning of industrialization, simply because private profits and profiteering have completely ignored the externalities that the pursuit of narrow and short term objectives have imposed on the environment and our natural resources.

In an elevation of ethical behaviour in the corporate sector this can ensure greater alignment with social goals and higher responsibility to society, then private capital would also be employed in a far more sustainable manner. It could then approximate Gandhiji's vision of trusteeship and would certainly eliminate the kind of economic distress that the world has seen, which was the direct outcome of unethical actions by the captains of some private corporations serving their own narrow private interests at the cost of social propriety and society's interests. A concerted effort to bring Gandhian messages into the hearts and minds of decision makers would not only help to create a movement towards sustainable development in its widest sense, but also then give us clean air in our homes and surroundings, clean water in our rivers and lakes, rich forest cover and biodiversity across this entire land and stable climate. Absence or the decline in degradation in all of these would clearly erode human welfare and go against every healthy measure of the human condition.

R.K.Pachauri

-Gandhian Ecology and the Path of Sustainable Development

- *'Timeless Inspirator - Reliving Gandhi'*