Let us now understand what do we mean by profession and professionalism. The words Profession and Professionalism are often referred in the moral issues.

Profession

Profession means a job or an occupation, that helps a person earn his living. The main criteria of a profession involves the following.

- **Advanced expertise** – The criteria of a profession is to have sound knowledge in both technical aspects and liberal arts as well. In general, continuing education and updating knowledge are also important.
- **Self-regulation** – An organization that provides a profession, plays a major role in setting standards for the admission to the profession, drafting codes of ethics, enforcing the standards of conduct and representing the profession before the public and the government.
- **Public good** – Any occupation serves some public good by maintaining high ethical standards throughout a profession. This is a part of professional ethics where each occupation is intended to serve for the welfare of the public, directly or indirectly to a certain extent.

Professionals

A person who is paid for getting onvolved in a particular profession in order to earn a living as well as to satisfy the laws of that profession can be understood as a Professional. The definition of a professional is given differently by different experts in the field. Let us see the following definitions –

- *Only consulting engineers who are basically independent and have freedom from coercion can be called as professionals.* – **Robert L. Whitelaw**
- Professionals have to meet the expectations of clients and employers. Professional restrains are to be imposed by only laws and government regulations and not by personal conscience. – **Samuel Florman**
- *Engineers are professionals when they attain standards of achievement in education, job performance or creativity in engineering and accept the most basic moral responsibilities to the public as well as employers, clients, colleagues and subordinates.* - **Mike martin and Ronald Schinzinger**

Models of Professional Engineers

An engineer who is a professional, has some tasks to perform by which he acts as any of the following, which can be termed as Models of Professional Engineers.

- **Savior** – A person who saves someone or something from any danger is called a Savior. An engineer who saves a group of people or a company from a technical danger can also be called a **Savior**. The Y2K problem that created problems for computers

and computer networks around the world was solved by engineers who were the saviors.

- **Guardian** – A person who knows the direction towards a better future is known to be the Guardian for the same. An engineer who knows the direction in which there is scope for the technology to develop can also be called a **Guardian**. This engineer provides the organization with innovative ideas for technological development.
- **Bureaucratic Servant** – A person who is loyal and can solve problems when they occur using his own skills, is a Bureaucratic servant. An engineer who can be a loyal person to the organization and also the one who solves the technical problems the company encounters, using his special skills can be termed as a **Bureaucratic servant**. The company relies on his decision-making capability for the future growth.
- **Social Servant** – A person who works for the benefit of the society without any selfish interest and does not work on any business grounds, is called a Social servant. An engineer who receives a task as part of the governments concern for the society considering the directives laid by the society and accomplishes the assigned tasks can be termed as a **Social Servant**. He knows what the society needs.
- **Social Enabler or Catalyst** – A person who makes the society understand its welfare and works towards the benefits of the people in it, is a Social Enabler. An engineer who plays a vital role in a company and helps company along with society to understand their needs and supports their decisions in work can be termed as a **Social Enabler or Catalyst**. This person quickens the procedure and helps maintain good environment in the company.
- **Game Player** – A person who plays a game according to the rules given is a Game player in general. An engineer who acts as neither a servant nor a master, but provides his services and plans his works according to the economic game rules in a given time, can be termed as a **Game player**. He is smart enough to handle the economic conditions of the company.

Professionalism

Professionalism covers comprehensively all areas of practice of a particular profession. It requires skills and responsibilities involved in engineering profession. Professionalism implies a certain set of attitudes.

The art of **Professionalism** can be understood as the practice of doing the right thing, not because how one feels but regardless of how one feels. Professionals make a profession of the specific kind of activity and conduct to which they commit themselves and to which they can be expected to conform. Moral ideals specify virtue, i.e., desirable feature of character. Virtues are desirable ways of relating to other individuals, groups and organizations. Virtues involve motives, attitudes and emotions.

According to Aristotle, virtues are the **acquired habits that enable us to engage effectively in rational activities that defines us as human beings.**

Professional Ideals and Virtues

The virtues represent excellence in core moral behavior. The essentials for any professional to excel in the profession are behavior, skills and knowledge. The behavior shows the moral ideology of the professional.

The moral ideals specify the virtue, i.e., the desirable character traits that talk a lot about the **motives, attitude** and **emotions** of an individual.

- Public spirited virtues
- Proficiency virtues
- Team work virtues
- Self-governance virtues

The virtues mentioned above show the professional responsibility of an individual. Hence, the professionalism that comes in with these virtues is called **Responsible Professionalism**. Let us now understand each virtue in detail.

Public-spirited Virtues

An engineer should focus on the good of the clients and the public at large, which means no harm should be done intentionally. The code of professional conduct in the field of engineering includes avoiding harm and protecting, as well promoting the public safety, health and welfare.

Maintaining a sense of community with faith and hope within the society and being generous by extending time, talent and money to professional societies and communities, an engineer can maintain the public-spirited virtue. Finally, justice within corporations, government and economic practices becomes an essential virtue that an engineer should always possess.

Proficiency Virtues

These refer to the virtues followed in the profession according to the talent and intellect of an engineer. The moral values that include this virtue are competence and diligence. The **competence** is being successful in the job being done and the **diligence** is taking care and having alertness to dangers in the job. Creativity should also be present in accomplishing the assigned task.

Teamwork Virtues

These virtues represent the coordination among team members which means working successfully with other professionals. These include cooperative nature along with loyalty and respect towards their organization, which makes the engineers motivate the team professionals to work towards their valuable goals.

Self-governance Virtues

These virtues are concerned with moral responsibilities which represent integrity and self-respect of the person. The integrity actually means the moral integrity which refers to the actions, attitude and emotions of the person concerned during his professional period.

The self-governance virtues center on commitment, courage, self-discipline, perseverance, self-respect and integrity. The truthfulness and trustworthiness which represent his honesty are the crucial moral values to be kept up by a professional.