ETHICS

The term 'ethics' comes from the Greek word 'ethikos' derived from 'ethos' which means custom or habit. Roman political lawyer Cicero used the term ' moralis' as a Latin equivalent of 'ethikos'. Ethics is considered as a philosophical science that deals with righteousness and wrongness of human actions.Ethics refers to the most important values and beliefs of an individual or society. These beliefs shape the character of the people, teaching them what is good ad bad.In other words, ethics implies knowledge of these basic principles and the responsibility to make appropriate the appropriate choice when necessary.

Some of the universally accepted ethical principles are: honesty, integrity, fulfilling commitments, abiding by the agreements in both letter and spirit,being fair and open-minded and willing to admit mistakes, being caring and compassionate, having respect for human dignity, responsible pursuit of excellence and being accountable for one's own decisions and their consequences .

Ethics is more of a standard which shows the rules and policies as to how one should act. It contains what we " ought to do ".

Necessity of Ethics

The world community calls for a global approach to basic ethics and social problems. Lack of ethical values is a major factor behind downfall of many industries and companies. Engineers / professionals have moral responsibility for society, health and welfare of people. All these when they are concerned with ethics.

What affects ethics?
(1)Greed
(2)Fear
(3)Pressure

The following are the seven social issues Mahatma Gandhi pointed out while insisting on values and ethics.

Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Knowledge without character
Commerce without morality
Science without humanity
Religion without sacrifice
Politics without principles

Only when people follow ethics, day today life can be faced without difficulties.

MORALS

Morals means principles of right and wrong .Morals relate to duty or obligations . It pertains to those actions of right and wrong, virtues and vices.

Morals also mean manners or conduct of men as social being in relation to each other. One can perform Dharma or actions by adopting morals.

Human beings can have happiness by happiness by physical satisfaction (by the pleasures ,satisfaction of hunger etc) or psychological or mental happiness by enjoying music or art form.Service aiming at welfare of society is another form of happiness or satisfaction.

Morality relates to human conduct.

Most of the human beings have acquired moral principles.Moral principles imply that human beings and animals are to be treated with respect and dignity. Morality guides in understanding human nature, tradition and society . It determines one's place in society and universe.

Morality also guides human beings in aspirations, ideals, and values.

A morally good person will have values like honesty, empathy, truthfulness, humbleness, loyalty, efficiency, and love for others.

Moral principles are against telling lies, misleading others, using violence etc.

Based on values, moral standards develop.

For eg. when you make a product, see that the product is harmful or not.

When we do work, see that the work is safe or not.

When we deal with a person, we should be fair and not be biased.

We should not interfere in the domain of others.

All these are based on morally based values.

Morality is something one feels intuitively, that comes from within. It is personal.

While ethics contains what we " ought to do ", morality is what we do...focused on what " is ".

HUMAN VALUES

Human values are the good qualities of human beings.Values reflect one's character or conduct.Human values make a person great.Eg. Kindness, caring, concern for others,, honesty, truthfulness, integrity, trustworthiness, humbleness, self - respect ,selflessness, sincerity, empathy,v sympathy, character, smiling, generosity, courtesy, gratitude, sacrifice, being friendly etc..

Values help individuals in their mode of conduct, approach and attitude when they deal with people of different caliber in society. A person with values will always have a " win " situation under any circumstances.

***Classification of values

1. Personal- Related to self

2. Social.   - Related to society

3.Cultural. - Related to culture

Institutional- Related to organisation

Another classification

- Nationalistic values like secularism,democracy, freedom

- Human values like kindness,honesty,truth

Scientific values like discoveries,invention, engineering, technology

- Moral values like virtues,not being greedy or jealous , tolerance.

Human values are related to individuals

They are the same for all people all over the world irrespective of religion, nation,gender or creed.
They are related to morality and justice .
For peaceful, happy and comfortable life, values like accommodative, service,endurance,absence of pride or egoism are helpful.

INTEGRITY

Integrity means " soundness of moral character ". Moral in wider meaning is " being concerned with the principles of doing right or wrong things '. Hence integrity includes honesty , loyalty, honour, incorruptibility, righteousness, uprightness and similar virtues. Integrity reveals a person's state of mind, attitude and behaviour.
To acquire leadership quality or skill, integrity is required. The society is more concerned about an individual in a leadership position whether he is a person of integrity or not. If a person lacks integrity, no amount of knowledge and skills in dealing with people can shape him into a good leader.

Academic Integrity

Professional integrity is important in a person's career. People respect people with personal ans professional integrity. This is acquired through academic integrity. Courses on Professional Ethics help young minds to cultivate academic integrity.
For an engineer, professional integrity is key factor for any kind of challenge and additional responsibility. He will be honest, truthful, trustworthy. He will be consistent in professional conduct, in moral ways and uphold human values. An engineer, as a professional, consultant, practising engineer or manager should be a person of integrity in discharging his duties and responsibilities to the society.

WORK ETHICS

Ethics is a set of moral principles. Work ethics is a characteristic attitude of a group of persons or workers towards morality of work. Work ethics is, being personally accountable and responsible for the work that one does. It is based on a belief that work has a great value.
Work ethics includes good habits, good attitudes,good manners, good appearance and good behaviour we use in relationships with other people. It includes honesty,reliability,being on time and dependability . These qualities of workers influence how one gets along with other people.
Work ethics is influenced by the way in which he is brought up in younger days. It is also influenced by family, friends and environment.
It is important for workers to have good work ethics. Without it business or industries will be in struggle.
Workers work in a team, they are not supposed to harm others. It is the responsibility of workers to ensure that none's right, privacy or freedom are affected. Employees (workers) should avoid argument with employers. They should not blame co- workers.

SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is a method of learning, by which students learn from their past services rendered to their communities. Young people identify community needs and plan service activities. They apply academic skills to solve problems like hunger, pollution and illiteracy. They take active role in service learning projects also. After rendering services to the society, they assess the impact of the project on the community. Thus young people develop leadership skills.

By identifying the needs of the community,students understand the beneficiaries of the projects. It strengthens the relation between young people and the larger community. Service learning plays an integral role in the learning process of a student.

For service learning, young people and the community act as partners. Partnerships may be related to business, community based organisations, social service agencies and other groups that share the benefits of the projects. This helps people to come together and bridge racial and cultural gaps.

Each project needs careful planning, preparations of participants, implementation and finally evaluation of projects.

CIVIC VIRTUES

'Civic' relates to society and the environment. ' Virtue' means good quality. Hence civic virtues means the good habits and and qualities that one person has to follow when he/ she moves in the society and deals with the environment. Some examples of civic virtues are caring, sharing, respect for others,living peacefully and letting others live peacefully.

Some habits like yawning, sneezing, relaxing the body by bending backwards, snoring and spitting are to be avoided in front of others in a gathering. A person who is conscious of these habits is said to have 'civic sense ' or ' civic manners '. These habits are called ' civic virtues '. These civic virtues are to be cultivated by a person to become a person of pleasing personality.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Treating people with respect makes this world a better and nicer place to live in. For that all you to do is ' treat people the way you like others to treat you '.

Some ideas to respect others are :

- Don't insult people or make fun of them.
- When you speak, listen to others.
- Value the opinion of other people.
- Consider the likes and dislikes of other people.
- Avoid teasing or harassing people.
- It is not good to talk about people behind their back.
- Have respect to the feelings of other people.
- Do not compel anyone to do something he / she does not want to do.

To make life peaceful and interesting among many languages, cultures, races and backgrounds we have to respect each other. Then only we can achieve ' unity in diversity ' . For this

- we have to learn something from other people
- we have to appreciate the culture and background of other people
- we should not have prejudices and racist attitudes

Engineers and professionals require this ' respect for others ' to be successful in their professions.

LIVING PEACEFULLY

To live peacefully, one requires ' peace of mind '. For peaceful life, individuals will have to follow the following principles in their lives.
Believe in God
Home has to be made a place of friendliness, refreshment and peace
One has to be patient and considerate to others
Removal of social injustice should be our aim
Work towards reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations
One has to behave in a loving way towards all men and women
A caring and loving attitude towards others
One has to be conscious of his/ her dairy living
Any form of exploitation and oppression should be discouraged
A simple life should be followed
Any form of violence should be avoided.
" Living peacefully " is possible by adopting these principles.

CARING

Caring means extending help to people when they are in distress and hope that you will be able to help them. If you are not able to help them, at least find out who can help them. At least listen to them when they share their feelings and problems. This gives them tremendous relief. By sympathising with them, we can express our caring nature.
All professionals, whether a teacher, a police officer, a doctor, an engineer or an employer should give the impression that they care for the people whom they are dealing with. This leads people to trust them in their job and goodwill and gratitude will be developed towards them.
A caring person will be a nice person, showing responsible and responsive attitude. Caring does not cost anything.
Engineers should adopt " caring " attitude towards people to justify their positions. It will boost the efficiency and productivity of a company / organisation.

SHARING

The character of "sharing " is very important to a man's morale. A superior officer of an organisation should share working conditions with the subordinates and insist that they should do it with their lower level employees.
The human value of sharing implies sharing of feelings, ideas, thoughts and also materials, resources and profits. Sharing of joy increases happiness of persons involved. Sharing of sorrow decreases the intensity of mental agony of people. Sharing of available resources is the basic concept of mankind's happy living on earth. Thus sharing is mutually beneficial.
In work situations, people of different cadres like Managing Directors, engineers, managers, supervisors and workers have to follow ' sharing ' roles. By sharing ideas or concepts, new profitable designs or ventures will come out.
When we share our materials of comfort with relatives, guests, neighbours, friends or co-workers, human values will be boosted.

HONESTY

Honesty is a real and genuine human value. It is not fake and fictions. An honest person will be sincere and will possess integrity. He will have the reputation of trustworthy.
If a person does not keep up commitments, he becomes dishonest.Honesty implies openness, reliability and frankness. It shows respect for self and others. An honest person does not believe in telling lies. Dishonest persons deceive themselves. An honest friend will be truthful, firm and committed.

COURAGE

Courage is the state of mind that enables a person to face danger, fear or difficult circumstances with confidence and bravery. Courage means doing what needs to be done.

CO - OPERATION

The attitude of individuals to co- ordinate with a team of persons is known as " co - operation ". The individuals constitute a team. By co-operation of individuals and the organisation where they are working,team spirit is developed; team work results in better production and profits for an organisation.
Co-operation May be in the form of a good idea, a good suggestion, a form of assistance or even physical work. Non interference in other's work is also a form of. O- operation.
Commitment to company's goals is also co-operation.

COMMITMENT

Commitment is a quality. Making a commitment involves dedicating yourself to something, like a person or a cause. Before you make a commitment, think carefully. A commitment obligates you to do something.
When our value system is clear, it becomes easier to make decisions and commitments.
Examples
- One can not make a commitment to his/ her country by selling secrets to other countries.
- One can not be committed to his/ her friend by revealing to others what he/ she told you in confidence
- One can't keep a commitment to his / her job by doing as little as possible.
Unkept commitments will result in dishonest behaviour. Unkept commitments also lead to depression, loss of business,high stress level, broken homes,poor relationships, u fulfilled life etc.
Between parent and child, student and teacher, employer and employee, husband and wife,things will work only when they are committed with each other. "Our strongest relationships are tied together with the quality of commitment.
Commitment involves
Dependability, Reliability, Caring, Empathy, A sense of duty, Sincerity, Character, Integrity, Loyalty etc . Commitment is not a legal contract but character, integrity and empathy.it means surrendering one's personal wants for another person's needs. Commitment acts as a glue which bonds relationships. Commitment means sacrificing fun and willingness to accept sorrow. A Commitment means putting the other person's needs ahead of one's own.

For example
Commitment to a customer means giving a good service
Commitment to patriotism means sacrifice
Commitment to job means integrity
Commitment to society means responsibility

EMPATHY

Empathy means putting oneself in the position or situation of someone else and thinking as the latter and taking suitable action. It you want to empathise someone,put yourself in his or her position and look at things as seen by him or by her and then come to conclusion based on values. " Empathy is , I feel how you feel ". Those who empathise others will ask themselves this question, " How would I feel if someone treated me that way?
As a proverb says, " Do to others what you want others to do,to you. Don't do to others what you don't want others to do, to you . " This is the basic concept of empathy.

Both empathy and sympathy are important. But of the two, empathy is more significant as you have to realise the problems, difficulties, feelings and emotions of other persons by imagining yourself as if you are in their position. Empathy helps to realise one's role and come to a reasonable decision for the problem based on morals and ethics.
Empathy with customers, employees, employers ,family members improves relationships. It generates understanding,loyalty,peace of mind and higher productivity .
Empathy makes engineers and other professionals to be morally responsible and morally concerned in dealing with the people.

SELF CONFIDENCE

Self confidence is an attitude of an individual to have positive views of himself and his situation. Those who have self confidence believe in their own abilities. He / she believes that he/she will be able to do what they wish, plan and expect.
Having self confidence does not mean that one will be able to do everything. People who are not self confident depend on others in order to feel good about themselves. They avoid taking risks because they fear failure. They generally do not expect to be successful. On the contrary, people who have self confidence take risks because they generally trust in their own abilities.
Self confidence may not cover all aspects of a persons life; A Person quite confident in academics, athletics or artistic talents may not be confident in personal appearance, social relationships etc.
Development of self confidence depends on many factors: attitude of parents towards children in their early years have a crucial role in this aspect. If parents encourage children's move towards self reliance,and love their children when they make mistakes, children will develop self confidence. A person's self confidence is also influenced by friends. The influence of society is another important factor moulding self confidence in a person.

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

Social expectation is an internalized social norm for individuals and organisations, thus for society as a whole, about what people should do. Society expects certain behavioural patterns or responsibilities to be adopted by people in certain situations . Eg. regarding public behaviour ,the expectations are:

Greet a person when you meet him

Make direct eye contact with the person you are speaking with.

When we go to the movies, wait in line to purchase tickets

Turn off your mobile phones while attending a function.

Our society's expectations control us, how we interact and perform with others around us. We are pressured at times by our friends, relatives too because we want to be accepted. Hence we have an endless cycle of expectations that we ensue everyday. We do not need someone to tell us how to dress or behave, but we observed how others performed. We then notice how we begin to behave or dress like the others did.