



## Moral Judgement of Elementary School Students in Sikkim

Mr. Uday Modak

Assistant Professor, Bhavan's Tripura College of Teacher Education (BTCET)  
Narasingarh, Agartala, Tripura, udaymodak8116@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The word moral comes from the Latin word 'Mors', which means custom or practice or a way of accomplishing things. Therefore, it has come to mean 'belonging to manners and conduct of men' or 'pertaining to right and wrong, good in conduct'. Morality is the conformity to the moral code of social group. It is the internalization of a set of values, virtues, and ideas sanctioned by the society which becomes an integral part of the individual self through the process of development. It is considered a sum total of an individual's way of behaving which is judged in terms of ethical rightness or wrongness. Hence the ability to make moral judgement plays an important facet of the total development of the child. Moral judgement involves the cognitive capacity and insight to see the relationship between the abstract principle and concrete cases and judge the situations as right or wrong, keeping in view the knowledge of moral standards.

The theory which most directly inspired the research on moral judgement has been that of Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget(1928, 1932) who endeavoured to interpret the child's concept of moral rules. He attempted to test children's moral judgement towards intentional and unintentional wrong-doing and described six types of moral thoughts which appeared in children of different age groups. More recently, studies on moral judgement have been conducted by Kohlberg(1968), in which he asked the children to judge the morality of conduct as described in the stories.

**Key Words:** Moral, Moral judgement, Morality, Values.

### 1.0 Introduction:

The Latin term "Mors," which denotes a habit, practice, or method of doing something, is where the word "moral" originates. Consequently, it has evolved to signify "pertaining to right and wrong, good in conduct" or "belonging to manners and conduct of men." Adherence to the moral code of a social group is the definition of morality. Through the course of growth, it is the internalisation of a set of moral principles, qualities, and concepts that are accepted by society and constitute an essential component of the human self. It is seen as the culmination of a person's behaviour, assessed for ethical correctness or incorrectness. Therefore, a child's capacity for moral judgement plays a crucial role in their overall development. Moral judgement requires the ability to think clearly and insightfully in order to relate an abstract concept to real-world events and determine whether a given scenario is acceptable or wrong based on moral norms.

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Various educational commissions and committees around the nation have conveyed their profound concern over the diminishing values in human endeavours and underscored the need of delivering education that is centred around values. "The growing concern over erosion of essential values has brought to focus the need for readjustment in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of moral and social values," according to the National Policy on Education (1986), is a clear statement. "A serious defect in the school curriculum is the absence of provision for education in social, moral, and spiritual values," said the instruction Commission of 1964–1966. For most Indians, religion serves as a powerful source of motivation and is closely linked to the development of moral principles and character. A national system of education related to life needs and aspirations of the people cannot afford to ignore this purposeful force". Thus concerns are being expressed to inculcate right moral values in our present generation.

### 1.1 Review of Related Literature:

**Tirri (1993)** In her study of the moral concerns and orientations of Finnish boys and girls in the sixth and ninth grades (N = 100 and N = 94), the author discovered that there are differences in the primary moral orientations of boys and girls when it comes to resolving moral issues. It was evident that the girls were more empathic and cared for. The females' analysis of the disputes' significance within a larger life context set them apart from the guys.

**Baek (2002)** carried out a research to see how the pupils' age and culture affected their moral thinking. Using Kohlberg's moral problems from Form A, 128 Korean and British youngsters between the ages of 7 and 16 were individually questioned. The study found that as children grew older, they were able to make moral decisions in a mature way, but in terms of culture, Kohlberg's system was found to be useful for examining the general moral stage of British children but inadequate for fully understanding the moral reasoning of Korean children.

**Edwards (2006)** conducted an experiment to find out how seven hundred youngsters, half boys and half girls, aged seven to fifteen, learned to identify moral ideas, how they made moral judgements, and what factors affected their acquisition. The samples said that attending church on a regular basis with family members had had a significant impact on their development of moral notions.

**Farhat (2008)** The Socio-moral Reflection Measure-Short Form (SRM-SF; Gibbs, Basinger & Fuller, 1992) was used to examine the moral thinking of 37 Nigerian children aged 10 to 11 years old. The youngsters from Nigeria performed much worse on the SRM-SF, according to the findings. The reason for this outcome was attributed to the "moral atmosphere" in Nigeria, which is characterised by a higher dependence on blind faith in religious doctrines or outside authority.

**Mohanty (2008)** centred on how primary school students' moral judgement develops in connection to their home environment, family's socioeconomic situation, and IQ levels. According to the research, children's moral assessments varied significantly depending on their gender, the kind of school they attended (religious or not), and their living situation. A strong positive correlation between the intelligence variable and the development of moral judgement was discovered.

**Gupta and Puja (2010)** conducted a research to examine the pre-adolescents' (9–11 years old) capacity for moral judgement in Yamunanager, Haryana's public schools. There were 200 youngsters in their sample; 100 belonged to the 8–9 age group and 100 to the 10–11 age group. The gender ratio was likewise maintained.

The moral judgement capacity of the two groups differed significantly, with older children (10–11 years old) scoring better than younger ones (8–9 years old). The findings indicated that the development of moral judgement capacity is dependent upon maturity, but maturity alone is not adequate. The child's capacity for moral judgement was mostly unaffected by gender.

**Kalsoom et al. (2012)** We out a research with the primary goals of comparing the prevalence of teenage boys and girls with right orientation and responsibility orientation and examining the moral thinking of adolescent boys and girls with regard to responsibility orientation vs justice orientation. Using a random selection approach, 40 boys and 40 girls made up the study's sample. The scale that Baker and Role (2002) created was applied. The study's primary findings indicated that while teenage females were equivalent to boys in terms of justice orientation, they were more care oriented. . It was also inferred that religion is the most important factor which influence the moral judgment and justice oriented approach of boys and girls.

## 1.2 Major Findings of the Reviews:

- Religion has been found to be a major influence on the moral decision of the children.
- With regard to gender difference, it was found that girls are more care oriented than boys who are more justice oriented.
- The girls differed from the boys in their reflection on the meanings of the conflicts in a broader context of life.
- Type of school (run by religious/non-religious organisations) also influenced the moral judgement ability of the students.

## 1.3 Rationale of the Study

In its 1972 report, the International Commission for the Development of Education for UNESCO appropriately titled it "Learning to be," illustrating global efforts or a resurgence of interest in an educational approach that leads "to be"—that is, to become a better person. "Sa-vidya-ya-vimuktaya," or learning or education that liberates or causes one to be freed, was the ancient Indian notion of education. highlights "to be" or "to be a liberated person" as a result. Unfortunately in modern age, education got influenced by materialistic and outward ideas, resulting into degeneration of age old good values. This calls for the immediate need for understanding how moral development of the children takes place so that accordingly appropriate value education can be provided and help them become 'liberated persons'.

It is essential to instill values in young students and to reinforce them via curriculum and school procedures. Value development via education has received significant attention in the "National Curriculum Framework for School Education" (NCF), which was released by NCERT in 2000 and 2005, respectively, covering the whole schooling years, from elementary to upper secondary.

The children at elementary stage are most receptive. This is the crucial period when ability to make right judgment can be inculcated in them by schools, teachers and most importantly parents and this fact emphasizes the need for studying the moral decision making ability of the children. A synoptic review of the above mentioned studies such as by Tiri (1993) Edwards (2006), Farhat (2008), Mohanty (2008) Gupta and Puja, (2010), Kalsoom et al. (2012), revealed that gender, type of school and religious affiliation influence the moral decision abilities of the children. Hence, the investigator in the present study aims to explore moral judgement ability of elementary school students through the following research questions:

- Are students of Sikkim at elementary level able to make moral judgement adequately?
- Is there any difference in ability of moral judgement due to gender, type of school and religious affiliation variations?

In order to find answers to the above questions the present study is being undertaken and will be entitled as below:

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem:**

**‘Moral Judgement of Elementary School Students in Sikkim’.**

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study:**

- To study the moral judgement of elementary school students of Sikkim and categorize them under differential levels of ability to make moral decisions.
- To find significant difference in the moral judgement of elementary school students of Sikkim in relation to gender, and type of management variations.

#### **1.6 Statement of Hypotheses:**

**HO1:** The scores of elementary school students of Sikkim on Moral judgement will not be normally distributed.

**HO2:** There will be no statistically significant difference in the ability of moral judgement of elementary school students in relation to gender variation.

**HO3:** There will be no statistically significant difference in the ability of moral judgement of elementary school students in relation to type of school management variation.

#### **1.7 Operational definition of the Terms used:**

**Moral Judgement:** The ability to assess situations and moral dilemmas as right or wrong while considering the fourteen cardinal values that are central to Indian culture are as follows: "ahimsa, duty, respect, betrayal of faith, purity, forgiveness, greed, anger, virtue, lie, revenge, stealing, truth, and sin."(Verma and Sinha, 2005).

**Elementary School Students:** Elementary school students here refer to the children studying in class VI to VIII from the four schools in Sikkim.

**Type of School Management:** It refers to the general schools being run by govt. and other schools being managed by some religious groups.

#### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study:**

The study will be delimited to finding moral judgment ability of one hundred students from only four schools of Gangtok, Sikkim due to time constraint.

#### **2.0 Methodology and Procedure:**

##### **2.1 Research Design:**

The present study aims to investigate moral judgement of elementary school students. It will be a descriptive study using survey design.

##### **2.2 Sample:**

The population of the study will include all the students of classes VI to VIII studying in different schools of Gangtok town of Sikkim. A sample of 100 students will be selected out of this total population using random sampling technique.

##### **2.3 Tool to be used:**

**Moral Judgement Test (Late Durganand Sinha and Dr. Meera Verma, 2005):** The test is developed by Sinha and Verma (2005) and standardized on Indian sample. This test was created using the framework of a general intelligence exam, and it includes questions on morality, logic, discrimination, and analogies. The test, which the child administers themselves, consists of fifty items on which the student must make moral decisions, group statements with moral contexts, determine the relationships between words that have moral connotations, assess a particular action, apply logic to moral dilemmas, and choose the correct definitions of moral values. Using the Spearman-Brown method, the split half reliability for the test was determined to be .93.

## **2.4 Techniques of Data-Analysis:**

2 A technique called a questionnaire will be used to gather data. The scores will be interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics in connection to the given goals and hypotheses.

## **2.5 Procedure:**

- Problem will be selected.
- Related reviews from previous studies will be collected.
- Sample will be selected using appropriate sampling techniques.
- Tool will be administered on the sample and data will be collected.
- Scoring as per manual will be done and a data sheet will be prepared.
- Data will be organized in tables and graphs.
- Appropriate statistical analysis as per objectives and hypotheses will be adopted.
- Interpretation and discussion of the findings will be done in the light of previous studies.
- Results of the study will be reported with implications for teachers, educationists, policy planners. Recommendations for further study for future researchers will also be given at the end.

## **3.0 Results and Discussions:**

The relevant statistical methods listed below will be used to arrange the data and conduct the analysis. The main conclusions will be presented in accordance with the goals and theories developed for the research. We'll conduct an interpretation of the results. The study's findings will be examined in light of other academics' earlier research.

### **3.1 Data Organisation**

The data collected will be scored and organised in tables, and figures according to variables considered for the study.

### **3.2 Statistical Analysis:**

In accordance with the stated aims and developed hypotheses, both descriptive and inferential measurements would be used. For every variable, percentile scores, measures of variance, and descriptive measures of central tendency will be computed. To determine if there are any significant differences between gender and the kind of school variation, a "t" test would be used.

## **4.0 Summary and Conclusion:**

A summary and conclusions of the findings will be provided at the end. As a consequence of the current investigation, recommendations and implications for future action will be made. One may argue that the topic of the "Moral Judgement of Elementary School students in Sikkim" above is important and valuable.

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