CHAPTER ONE
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INTRODUCTORY : NEED AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The world today is experiencing a moral crisis.

Moral values are learnt and in the learning of morals also a development of sequence is identified. Every boy or girl passes through punishment, relation and contract phases in moral development. "Moral immaturity" is the main cause for the moral crisis that the nation is experiencing today. How matured are our students in their moral development? Do many of the present day students stop at the punishment phase?

Commissions and committees have recommended the introduction of moral education in schools and colleges. Yes, we are "preaching" morality; yet the moral crisis is widening and deepening. What could be the reason for this?

Our moral education takes for granted that our students have reached the "universal ethics level". We may be preaching something but they may not be ready for or matured enough to grasp the moral education that we offer them.

Moral education like any other education has to start from where the students are. Very often we assume that our students are at a particular level in the development sequence and plan and implement our moral education programmes to suit that particular level. But most students are still at lower level and as such are not benefitted from the educational programmes.

For any educational programme to be effective we have to start from the particular level or stage in which the students are. A knowledge of the entry behaviour of students is an essential prerequisite for any effective teaching.
1.2. VALUES IN HUMAN LIFE

Values refer to what we regard as important rather than what we know about something. Each individual develops his own system of values and these are specially important in relation to morals and character. Spranger (1928) had presented six main types of values - (1) the theoretical - individuals who regard the theories and knowledge as the important thing; (2) the aesthetic - One who places high premium on beauty as in art; (3) The economic - One who cherishes things because of their material value; (4) the social - One who is influenced largely by social prestige and social factors (5) the political - the individual who has a strong desire to control or to have power and (6) the religious - the person who finds joy and satisfaction in his relationships with the whole life's experiences and purposes for living. These values have been modified and organised into measurable tests and research has been conducted dealing with the importance of values.

Man is certainly influenced and directed by the various values in life which he accepts for himself. His behaviour is understood better if we consider these values as characteristics of his entire social life and not as separate drives by themselves. In his striving to acquire wealth his behaviour will certainly express his economic, moral and religious values. So also his desire for companionship and group membership is influenced by his values. Even his striving for power and prestige will be characterised by his sense of values. Boas (1957) states that human nature and human behaviour should be understood only against the structure and functions of the world of values.

Berkowits (1964) claims that "moral values are evaluations of action believed by members of a given society to be right". This definition takes a stand on morality without justifying it.
But Kohlberg (1958) believes that truly moral thought are more or less valid and movement from some of these systems to others can represent a developmental sequence in distinctive moral thought. Selection of a concrete event or person for development study should and did depend on the value importance or value relevance of the event or person. Some value norms are needed to guide inquiry into the event's or the person's development and the actual moral development follows some specifically identifiable stages.

1.3. MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

In the moral evolution of a child one can trace different stages. In certain respects development of children proceeds quantitatively. The traits responsibility, altruism, independence and rationality for example, emerge in childhood and slowly grow and mature. The different stages of morality may not only be clearly defined and easily recognised, but also located in a fixed sequence.

A young child is clearly controlled by authoritarian considerations while an adolescent is capable of applying personal moral principles. These two moralities are not only clearly distinct but can be located one at the beginning and the other at the end of a process of moral maturation.

There is an interplay between the quantitative and qualitative elements which makes it difficult to analyse this development in detail but one may trace moral growth through a series of sequential, qualitatively different stages and also along a line of growth marked by quantitatively increasing stability and complexity.

Behind moral behaviour, consistent though it may appear to be lies a pattern of sequential development which preserves continuity of conduct as the child grows.
Piaget views moral development as the result of a process involving the development of cognitive processes in conjunction with experiences of role taking in the peer group, allowing the movement from moral realism to autonomy. In connection with the sense of justice Piaget concludes that "though naturally capable of being reinforced by the precepts and practical example of adult it is largely independent of these influences and requires nothing more for its development than the mutual respect and solidarity which holds among children themselves. It is often at the expense of the adult and not because of him that the notions of the just and unjust find their way into youthful mind".

Kohlberg extends it to the next point and finds that the cognitive developmental approach to moral development involves the stimulation of natural moral development through the universal stages. Children have their own way of thinking and consequently moral education must be based on a knowledge of their stages of development. Kohlberg's research evidence indicates that the child generates his own level of thinking and changes gradually. The task of the teacher is to facilitate the process of change.

This scheme of moral development is apparent as children grow from childhood to adolescence. These are clearly defined stages in this process. Specific kinds of control are indigenous to each stage and these controls can be interpreted in terms of moral sanctions. Teachers should not only come to expect different kinds of morality from different age groups of children but must clearly accommodate their attempts at moral education to the developmental level of these children in our infant, junior and secondary schools respectively.

1.4. VALUE CRISIS

People in general consider the word "moral" to mean "proper" or good or right conduct. Morality is the conformity to the moral code of the social group. It is considered as the sum total of an individual's way of behaving which is judged in terms of ethical rightness or wrongness.
The world today is experiencing a value crisis. There is no consensus about the values to be observed and the concern for the self seems to be the supreme value being advocated and observed by many. It is not self sacrifice but selfishness, not spiritual wisdom but material wealth, not culture but civilisation, not the welfare of all but "my" welfare at the cost of others, these are the morals of the day. It is not the individual alone but the society at large has changed the values much to the detriment of the society and to the individuals. The humanistic values change yielding place to "animal" values. The warning put forth by a few "social minded" people remains as a cry in the wilderness that reaches none, or only very few if at all it reaches any. One has to catch people young to inculcate in them good value system.

1.5. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Commissions and committees have recommended the introduction of moral education in our schools. The New Education Policy approved by the Government of India (1986) also has stressed the "Value Education". It is said that growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society had brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values.

It is said that in a culturally plural society education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism. Apart from this combative role, value education has a profound positive content, based on our heritage, national goals, universal perceptions. It should lay primary emphasis on these aspects.

There seems to be a close association between cognitive
and moral development of students. We could identify different stages in moral development as in cognitive development. Social development of an individual will also influence his moral development. To understand the moral development of an individual and the stage at which one functions morally and to help one develop morally - these are the main foci of any study on moral values. The moral crises we are now experiencing indicate that the moral development in our students and in the adults is something far from satisfactory. There is today an imperative need to "straighten" the moral development of our students. It is but now crooked in many ways in many people. We need to know where our students are in their moral development and how "crooked" their growthline in the moral sphere to help them straighten their rugged growth and to increase the level or lift the stage from which they can function. There is therefore need to study the stages of moral development of students in high schools. The present study is an attempt to study the stage at which the students function morally. Hence the present study.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Morality is the conformity to the moral code of the social group. It is the internalisation of a set of virtues, ideas and values sanctioned by society, which become an integral part of the individual self through the process of development. It is considered as the 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 fact of the total development of the child. Moral judgement involves the cognitive capacity and insight to see the relationship between an abstract principle and concrete cases and judge the situations as right or wrong keeping in view of the moral standards.

Freud (1933) conceived of the super ego as the main agent in this process. By describing the super ego as a moral aim of
personality with its two sub-systems, conscience and ego ideal he explored the effective dimensions of morality and threw light on the dark corners out of which morality grows. The theory which inspired the research on moral judgement has been that of the Swiss Psychologist, Piaget (1928, 1932) who endeavoured to interpret the child's concept of moral rules. He attempted to test children's moral judgement toward intentional and unintentional wrong doing and described six types of moral thoughts which appeared in children of different age groups. More recently studies have been conducted by Kohlberg (1968) in which he asked the children to judge the morality of conduct described in stories. His study present a topological scheme describing general structure and forms of moral thought.

The present study adopts Kohlberg's stories to identify the stage at which students function morally. The personality and sociability of the students are also studied and the relations that these variables reveal with moral development of the students are also studied. The study looks at three different developmental dimensions of students, personality, the social and the moral, and studies the relationship among them. The close association between cognitive and moral developments has been established by many researchers. The main focus of the study therefore is on the moral development of the high school students and their personality characteristics and sociability.