

Towards Promoting Honesty and Integrity among Students: Reflections and Innovation across School Context

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Abstract: In present day society, there is enormous pressure on the students to perform well in terms of academic achievement. The cases of plagiarism, fake-information and unfair practices are on increase due to the high dependence on technology and social media not only for education but also for managing everyday life. Hence, the role of school is very important towards promoting honesty and integrity through value-based educational practices. Honesty in schools helps to build trust, academic integrity, responsible behaviour and positive relationships. It promotes self-confidence, responsibility and ethical sensitivity in the everyday lives of learners. Schools, therefore, need to actively construct environments where honesty and integrity are practiced and valued. Based on the qualitative data collected through interviews and observation in government and private schools in rural and urban areas, this paper explores the importance of honesty in schools. It also discusses the role of teachers, school culture and classroom practices in encouraging honest behavior in students. The paper also highlights the value of honesty can be promoted not only through content transaction but also through everyday practices such as addressing the issue in morning assembly, enacting skits and dramas. Positive role modelling by school leadership and teachers also hugely influences students to practice honesty in their school life.

Key Words: Honesty; Value Education; School Culture; Integrity, Curricular Practices

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I. Introduction

In present day society, there is enormous pressure on the students to perform well in terms of academic achievement. The cases of plagiarism, fake-information and unfair practices are on increase due to the high dependence on technology and social media not only for education but also for managing everyday life. (UNESCO, 2021). The main problem school students also encounter is a lack of understanding and application of moral principles, such as accountability and honesty, in their day-to-day lives (Anggraini & Rosyidi, 2022). Numerous examples of dishonest behavior and a lack of responsibility in the home and school settings demonstrate this (Ekowati, Restian, & Yayuk, 2020; Larasati & Ma'ruf, 2023). This issue is largely caused by the inadequate incorporation of moral principles into everyday instruction in schools. Students are unable to fully internalize concepts like honesty and accountability because character education, which includes these qualities, is sometimes simply taught theoretically without sufficient practical application. Hence, the role of school is very important towards promoting honesty through value-based educational practices.

Honesty in education impacts students' academic behavior, social interactions, emotional development, and civic responsibility. Schools are also expected to

produce ethical citizens who demonstrate truthfulness, integrity, accountability and fairness in their actions. Psychologists, educators, philosophers, and specialists in moral development have examined the development of honesty in children and adolescents, the influence of school culture on ethical behavior, and the effects of cheating, plagiarism, lying, and manipulation on educational achievement.

Schools are not only sites of academic learning but sites where values are lived, practiced and internalized. Students learn honesty not from books or moral science lessons but through interaction with teachers, peers, parents and the larger school culture.

II. Literature Review

Honesty is one of the key aspects of successful school communities, which increases trust and builds strong interpersonal relationships that are vital in learning and belonging (Greater Good Science Center, 2025). It is characterized by the truthfulness of both verbal and non-verbal communication, keeping promises, and upholding academic integrity through independent work and proper crediting of others. The construct serves as a balancing force against the inherent childhood tendencies toward imagination, communication, and training, which cause the world they receive to begin manifesting itself as early as the preschool years due to continued cognitive and social

growth (Greater Good Science Center, 2025). When applied to education, the value of honesty help students to uphold the attributes of ethical citizenship in social, economic, and political settings and to enhance character through a culture of fairness and trust toward others (Suud et al., 2019).

Caganan (2025) discussed the various methods to encourage ethical and honest behaviour among students in educational institutions (schools and colleges). These techniques are based on student campaigns to educate others through rallies, role play, drama, celebration of honesty weeks, recognition of honest deeds on campus, sharing of these stories, taking the pledge and so on. These types of programs are useless if students do not actively participate in campaigns that promote awareness, good attitudes and contribute to the creation of a culture of academic integrity in their institutions. The study also identified several challenges faced by these student-led efforts, including rejection by peers, lack of sufficient support from teachers, and difficulties in sustaining these initiatives over time. The author has discussed some strategies to overcome these barriers such as strong institutional values to promote honesty and academic integrity among students, motivating students through formal recognition and a continuous evaluation mechanism to ensure the long-term success of these campaigns in institutions. Therefore, the promotion of academic integrity and honesty through student campaigns is an effective technique in schools and higher education institutions across the globe.

Kapur (2024) demonstrates the importance of academic honesty as a critical component of meaningful learning in higher education, especially in Indian universities. Academic honesty is the practice of giving correct citations to the sources you cite and acknowledging the work of others and avoiding plagiarism.

The paper addresses that students, need to focus on internalising academic honesty as a key principle to maintain the credibility of their academic work and meet the expectations of the institution. The paper points out the essential features of academic honesty like ethical ideals, institutional policies, and the aspects that prove its usefulness in achieving educational goals. Therefore, it is important to embed academic honesty in the curriculum and pedagogy to provide an effective learning environment that promotes academic integrity and success.

Fathia and Hariri (2022) studied the role of anti-corruption education in instilling the value of honesty among school children. Qualitative, descriptive-analytic design was applied to the study to investigate the forms, causes and barriers of anti-corruption education in school context. The authors identified two main strategies, one is to establish an honesty canteen and the other is to incorporate anti-corruption issues in Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PKN) lectures.

These tactics are intended to give students daily opportunities to demonstrate integrity, responsibility and honesty. Also, highlighting the plethora of supporting variables that buttress the efficacy of such activities such as the reinforcement of the principles of academic integrity and honesty, role modelling, religious-based activities and active engagement by learners. These results emphasise the need for routine anti-corruption education in schools, especially involving practical activities like the honesty canteen, to instill honesty as a core value in students' everyday lives.

The activity of the 'honesty canteen' has a significant influence on students' knowledge of anti-corruption values (Fajar, Sopii, & Halimah, 2022). The quantitative analysis revealed a high correlation coefficient ($r = 0.895$) which suggested a strong relationship between the honesty-canteen intervention (X) and students' understanding of anti-corruption ideals (Y). The regression research reveals that the honesty-canteen model accounts for 80% of the variance of students' knowledge. Finally, we conclude that the honesty canteen activity has a positive effect on students' internalisation of anti-corruption values.

Allgaier et al. (2015) examined how well high-school students' behaviour could be predicted from their honesty-humility, and the relation of the behaviour to a multitude of features of the students' school environment. The study assessed the honesty-humility of 307 upper-division high school students using a self-report method, and subsequently had them complete vignettes based on real-life school settings to measure prosocial and antisocial behaviours. It was found that people with higher honesty-humility scores reported lower levels of antisocial and higher levels of prosocial behaviour than people with lower scores. Further, the research indicated that adolescents with lower levels of honesty-humility are more susceptible to situational influences toward antisocial behaviour.

Research by Hidayat (2024) on the honesty canteen program, which was created as a model of character education in elementary school for the development of students' personal integrity and honesty. This research was conducted with qualitative case study method to State Elementary School. The data of the present study was collected through observation and in-depth interviews and analysed through the Miles and Huberman approach which includes data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Honesty canteens were found to be a tool for commerce, but also a means of instruction for experience in this study, where honest behaviour was instilled in the pupils through routines, spontaneous actions, examples and conditioning strategies. The honesty canteen applies the self-service principles and actively involves the students to enable the students to practise honesty in their daily life. The program has been shown to be effective at promoting honesty among participants but a number of barriers to effective implementation were identified. Like children

being honest to different degrees, families having different economic experiences, and not being able to have the resources to run the program. The results of this study show that the honesty canteen is a very practical and cost-effective way to provide excellent character education and at the same time strengthen one's integrity through direct experiences and involvement in the community.

Appiah, S. et al. (2022). Students' Knowledge and Understanding of the Importance of Honesty at Assin Manso Senior High School in the Central Region of Ghana. A qualitative methodology was used in the study to assess 40 SRC members from all courses. Data were collected through interview guides. Data were analysed using IPA and theme interpretation approaches. The findings revealed that students believed that honesty was a sign of loyalty to their friends, while dishonesty was an expression against the group spirit. The researchers found that pupils associate honesty with a "we feeling" or a sense of unity. They recommended that school administrators promote students who obey school rules and that parents and teachers educate children about moral values so that they could recognise the benefits of honesty for themselves and their families, schools, and communities."

Awan et al. (2021) explored the impact of school management on honesty, accountability, and courage in secondary school learners. The researchers stressed the importance of character development as an integral part of education as it helps teachers to develop their students' value systems and behavioural qualities needed in daily life. This research used descriptive method and data collection was done by survey. There were three closed ended surveys of nine statements each. The sample size was 118 principals, 303 teachers of Class X and 375 pupils of Class X selected through stratified random sampling technique. It was revealed that the methods of school management have a great influence on the formation of honesty, responsibility and courage in secondary school students. Educational institutions and instructional methods are very important in advancement of the students' moral and character development and school management practices impact on the development of honesty, responsibility and courage at the secondary school level.

Kadir et al. (2015) studied the change of students' social behaviour due to character education, i.e. the value of honesty. The current study used a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach to provide a structured and objective description of students' behavioural changes associated with the values of honesty in the school setting. Data was collected through students' observations and interviews with teachers, students and parents, who acted as informants. It was proved the importance of teachers in the introduction of honesty principles into the learning process and the increase of pupils' self-confidence.

They also are role models to pupils, in the setting of the school. Furthermore there is no question that the children are changing their behaviour in positive ways such as developing excellent attitudes, having noble personalities, having right manners and being able to establish better relationships with teachers and classmates. They will also engage in less deviant behaviour such as cheating. Parents were recognised as backing teachers' efforts to promote honesty and good behaviour both at school and at home.

NEP 2020 acknowledges the teacher as the key agent of educational transformation and emphasises that the teacher's professional conduct must be consistent with the constitutional values, empathy, fairness and ethical responsibility (MoE, 2020). The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 similarly points out that values are passed on through the ethos of the classroom where respectful relationships, trust, justice and democratic participation are lived realities and not abstract ideas (NCERT, 2023). Teachers who admit their own mistakes, who encourage students to admit their mistakes without fear of humiliation, who prevent academic dishonesty and who reward truthful behaviour create psychologically safe learning environments in which integrity is valued over mere performance. These classrooms build trust between one another and help students to make honesty an internal commitment to themselves, rather than simply following external rules. Therefore, the teacher's daily behaviour is an important part of the hidden curriculum, reinforcing the ethical messages transmitted through textbooks and contributing significantly to the formation of honest, responsible and ethically aware citizens (Bandura, 1977; Lickona, 1991).

III. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate how values are fostered and enacted in Indian schools. This is a part of research undertaken at the national level in India to explore how value education are practices in the school based on the recommendations of National Education Policy, 2020. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate as the study aimed to explore participants' lived experiences, perceptions and everyday practices rather than to measure predefined variables or test hypotheses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Honesty and integrity are socially constructed, contextually enacted values embedded in school culture, classroom interactions, and institutional practices. Thus, qualitative inquiry offered a rich exploration of how these values are interpreted, experienced and transmitted through curricular and co-curricular processes in varied school settings.

The attempt was also made to explore similarities and contextual differences across various geographical

regions of India. It allowed for a holistic understanding of the embeddedness of values in school life while retaining the uniqueness of each educational context (Yin, 2018).

Study Setting and Sample

The study was conducted in five states of India, covering different geographical regions of the country to ensure regional diversity and capture varied socio-cultural contexts. One state was chosen from each of the five regions (Punjab from North, Andhra Pradesh from South, Odisha from East, Gujarat from West and Assam from North-East India) based on the implementation of NEP, 2020. Four schools in each selected state were included in the study, for a total sample of twenty schools.

Schools were selected in consultations with states and district education officials to represent both school management and geographical location. Two government schools in rural areas and two private schools in urban areas were selected from each state. This sampling strategy allowed for comparisons across diverse educational settings, while also recognising the diversity of schooling experiences in India.

Participants

The study employed a multi-stakeholder lens, encompassing students, teachers, school heads and parents. Initially, a brief value-based questionnaire was administered to all the students of one section in each of the selected classes for the collection of data. The questionnaire was a first screening tool in order to identify students who had different perspectives and experiences with regards to honesty and integrity in school life. The response from open-ended questionnaires were also used for analysis.

Based on the students' responses, five students from each educational stage were selected to be interviewed in depth. The sampling was done as per the developmental structure suggested in the National Education Policy (2020). Accordingly five students from class II representing the Foundational Stage, five students from class V representing the Preparatory Stage, five students from class VII representing the Middle Stage and five students from class IX representing the Secondary Stage were chosen. In each school, twenty students were interviewed, reflecting the different stages of development.

The class teachers of the selected classes, the head teacher or principal of each school and the parents of the selected students were also interviewed to get multiple perspectives on school practices. By engaging these diverse stakeholder groups, we were able to triangulate perspectives and gain a holistic understanding of how honesty and integrity are fostered through formal curriculum and everyday school experiences.

Gathering data

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to describe their experiences, but also having enough flexibility to explore emerging themes. Separate interview schedules were developed for students, teachers, school heads and parents. The interview protocols looked at participants' perceptions of honesty and integrity, school practices that promote ethical behaviour, classroom experiences, the role of textbooks and stories, teacher practices, morning assemblies, school celebrations, peer interactions and family-school collaboration in value development.

Student interviews explored children's understanding of honesty, situations where they acted truthfully, experiences of moral dilemmas and the influence of teachers, textbooks, assemblies and peers. The interviews with teachers explored pedagogical strategies, classroom practices, assessment processes, role modelling and the incorporation of values into teaching-learning processes. The interviews with the school heads focused on institutional policies, school ethos, and themes of assemblies, celebrations and initiatives that promote ethical behaviour. Parent interviews explored the perceived impact of school experiences on children's value development, and the link between home and school in reinforcing honesty and integrity.

Documentary evidence, such as school assembly themes, celebration schedules, classroom displays and textbook narratives mentioned by interview participants, was analysed to contextualise interview findings.

Data Analysis

Participants consented to recording interviews, which were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic narrative analysis. Narrative inquiry and thematic coding were used in the analysis to understand how participants made sense of honesty and integrity through lived experiences (Riessman, 2008). Participants' stories were analysed as meaningful accounts located in their school contexts and not as fragmenting narratives of isolated statements.

The analysis was conducted according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. First, the interview transcripts were read several times to get familiar with the data. Meaningful portions of the text were then descriptively coded to capture recurring practices, experiences and perceptions related to honesty and integrity. Next, similar codes were grouped into broader categories and these categories were reviewed and refined into overarching themes.

The analysis generated five major themes: (i) the promotion of honesty and integrity through morning assemblies and school prayers; (ii) the celebration of national days, value-based events and co-curricular activities; (iii) pedagogic transactions and classroom practices adopted by teachers; (iv) positive role modelling by teachers and the influence of the hidden

curriculum; and (v) stories, biographies and narrative pedagogy embedded within school textbooks. These themes reflected the multiple ways in which students experienced ethical values within the school ecosystem.

Triangulation was used among students, teachers, school heads and parents to increase the credibility of the findings and to compare the perspectives of the stakeholder groups. Emergent themes were constantly compared within and across schools and regions to identify common patterns and contextual variations in the practice of honesty and integrity.

Availability

The study employed several qualitative quality assurance strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We enhanced credibility through prolonged engagement with participants, triangulation of different stakeholder perspectives, and across different school settings. We provided detailed descriptions of the research settings and participants to improve transferability so that readers could make their own judgements about the applicability of findings to similar educational settings. To ensure dependability, the research process, coding procedures and analytical decisions were documented throughout the study. Confirmability was established through the systematic recording of field notes, coding logs, and researcher reflections, thus reducing subjective bias in the interpretation process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were applied at all stages of the study. Before the data collection, the researchers took permission from the concerned educational authorities and the school heads. Teachers, school heads and parents were asked for written informed consent. Parental consent and assent were obtained from children prior to interviews with students. All participation was voluntary and participants were advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

The research process was carried out in a confidential and anonymous manner. During transcription and reporting, pseudonyms were used for the names of states, schools, participants, and any identifying information. Audio recordings and interview transcripts were kept secure and only used for research purposes. Special care was taken in interviewing young children to ensure that questions were developmentally appropriate, non-threatening, and asked in a supportive environment. The study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for educational research, viz. respect for the participants, confidentiality of information, and responsible reporting of findings.

Honesty is one of the foundational pillars of value education in schools. It shapes both the academic and administrative practices by imbibing the moral values among all stakeholders of the entire school ecosystem. It fostered the values of sharing, openness, accepting one's own fault, authenticity, sincerity, and so on. So, as students, we should follow moral values to be good citizens of our nation. Therefore, school has a crucial role to promote the value of honesty among the learners through various means such as during morning assembly, through dramas, showing motivational videos, telling moral stories, role modeling, etc. NEP, 2020 also emphasizes public self-disclosure with transparency to ensure accountability and responsibility among the stakeholders of the school personnel. "Transparent public self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability." (NEP, 2020, p. 31).

4.1. Curriculum, Textbooks and Stories

Stories and narratives are one of the most potent means of value education, as they simultaneously stimulate the emotions, imagination and reasoning of children. Jerome Bruner, an educational theorist, has proposed that humans naturally make sense of the world through stories (Bruner, 1996). Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) demonstrated that moral reasoning develops when learners are presented with situations that have ethical dilemmas and are asked to discuss alternative actions. Textbooks in the Indian context use stories as occasions for reflective dialogue rather than as vehicles for prescribing moral rules. Children identify with the characters, experience their conflicts, analyse the consequences of different actions and gradually internalise values through personal reflection and classroom discussion. This method of teaching is well in consonance with recommendations of NEP, 2020 which promotes experiential learning, critical thinking and ethical decision making instead of rote learning. Language textbooks offer some of the richest opportunities for developing honesty and integrity. Stories, biographies, poems and folktales introduce children to characters faced with difficult moral choices. A common anecdote is from Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, in which he relates an incident from his childhood when, during a class inspection, Gandhi misspelt a word and his teacher subtly indicated that he should copy the correct spelling from a fellow student. Although he knows his answer will be wrong, Gandhi doesn't want to cheat. The story does not glorify academic success but celebrates moral courage. It proves that integrity means staying truthful even when dishonesty seems easier or more rewarding. After this story, discussions in class often lead students to think about such things as whether they would have cheated in a similar situation, why honesty might require personal sacrifice at times, and whether success obtained through dishonest means can be considered success at all. This type of reflective questioning

IV. Analysis

transforms the story from a straightforward moral anecdote into an opportunity for ethical reasoning. In many schools, it was found that developing the habits of the use of age-appropriate strategies like storytelling in assemblies and reading storybooks among foundational stage learners, introduction to the folktale among middle stage learners, and the dramatized reenactments among younger learners all build trust and character using resonant narrative structures. The narratives below are from a government school in Gujarat, which shows how honesty is taught to students, where 'ईमानदारी' storytelling and moral models are among the key strategies used.

"The Milkman and the Monkey" is a well-known moral story about a dishonest milkman who dilutes his milk to increase profits, but is met with retribution when a monkey steals his money. The milkman learns that dishonesty does not pay when the monkey splits the money equally between what was properly his and what he obtained illegally. The moral of the story is **"Ill-gotten wealth never prospers."** Money obtained by fraud and dishonest means will always find a way to get away from you and provide you with no lasting advantages. So, the above moral tale promotes the value of honesty and integrity among the learners through storytelling in the classroom. Some schools in Assam, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh promote the values of honesty and integrity among learners in various ways, such as during morning assemblies, by giving real-life examples, narrating moral stories, delivering speeches or presentations on moral stories, and showing videos of great leaders in our country. These efforts aim to inculcate the values of good character, good behaviour, being a good human, and being a good citizen.

"The teacher recited to us a story of 'milkman and the monkey' to teach us why honesty and integrity are important. Even in the assembly, they tell us about being honest. The teacher gave us one storybook, which I read. A thief stole the villagers' money and was eventually apprehended and punished." (Shruti Chirag Bhai Labana, Class 5, Student, GUGM School, Gujarat)

"Our teacher is telling moral stories and giving real-life examples. It creates good character and good behaviour." (Mira Debnath, Student 5, AUGM School, Assam)

"My teachers usually tell us stories from 'Bushy Aai Xadhu,' which contain moral values and wisdom." (Abhinsh Guwala, Student, class 9, AUGM School, Assam)

"They told us incidents about what happened to them when they were young, like us, and narrated some stories. They also told us stories from the epics Mahabharata and Ramacharitmanas. (Liprun Gogoi, Student, Class 7, ARPM School, Assam)

"We were often told the story about 'Strength in Unity' by Mrinmay Baideo in our class." (Ms.

Himashree Phukan, Student, Class 9, ARGM School, Assam)

"Teachers often talk about motivational stories/even real-life stories to make us understand the importance of honesty." (Dhurv Joguram Chunchi, Student, class 9, GUGS School, Gujarat)

"To develop honesty and integrity, we teach them, through stories, how to avoid lying and help each other; together, as a team, we can win." (Swapna Nayak, PRT Maths, OUPM School, Odisha)

Dramas are also another platform to inculcate the values of honesty and integrity. Some government schools in the urban areas of Gujarat instil values of honesty and integrity by staging various dramas and highlighting examples of great historical figures, thereby adopting an inclusive approach that strengthens a culture of trust among school communities.

"नाटक के माध्यम से, अच्छे लोगों के उदाहरण देकर, पुरानी ऐतिहासिक बातों के जरिए बताएंगे।" (Patel Chandrika ban, Asst. Teacher (5-A), GUGM School, Gujarat)

"We prepare drama in which we motivate them to be honest." (Mamata Behera, TGT Arts Teacher, OUGM School, Odisha)

"Through dramas they taught us about honesty and integrity and addressed this issue in the assembly" (Puthawala Utsavi Chirag, Student, class 7, GRPM School, Gujarat)

There is a government school in the urban areas of Gujarat where a box labelled "Khoya paya" is kept to promote the value of honesty among learners. If any students lost some things and another student found those things, then they kept them in the 'khoya paya' box. So, practicing these kinds of initiatives in the school is worthwhile for learners to develop the values of honesty and integrity.

The story of "Ram Dukan" (Ram's Shop) in the Gujarat SCERT textbooks teaches the value of honesty by showing how integrity can foster long-lasting trust and personal respect. It teaches that honesty, even in the face of temptation or personal loss, is rewarded with a clear conscience and a good social reputation over short-term gain.

"राम दुकान, खोया-पाया, कहानियाँ कोई बताकर हमें पाठ दिए जाते हैं।" (दिप दिनेशभाई रबारी, Class 7, Student, GUGM School, Gujarat)

"Kuch kho jane par ham khoj te hain or usse de dete hain or else we deposit it in the office room" (Nilesh Dey, Student, Class 9, AUGM School, Assam)

4.2. Teachers and Positive Role Modelling in Class

The impact of textbook stories, however, rests heavily on how they are used in the classroom. The teacher's role is to facilitate the transformation of stories into opportunities for ethical learning through open discussion, respectful disagreement,

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appreciation of truthful behaviour and modelling integrity in their own professional conduct. Teachers who demonstrate fairness in assessment, admit their mistakes, keep their promises, and relate to students with respect, reinforce the messages embedded in the stories of the textbooks. Conversely, the value education outcomes may remain superficial if classroom practices reward only examination performance and ignore ethical behaviour. NEP 2020 thus emphasises that curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and school culture should work in tandem to develop ethical dispositions.

One of the most potent mechanisms for fostering honesty and integrity in schools is positive role modelling by teachers. This is in line with social learning theory, which states that children learn values not only through direct teaching, but also by imitating the behaviour of important adults (Bandura, 1977). Students see teachers' reactions to ethical issues all the time in the classroom – owning up to mistakes, being clear about grading, being fair to all learners, respecting confidentiality, keeping promises, and matching words with actions. Because they provide real examples of ethical behaviour in the daily life of the school these behaviours are more effective in communicating integrity than direct moral instruction.

The phenomenon of teacher modelling and parental follow-up aligns with the principle of social learning theory, which states that values are most easily learned rather than transferred; children learn honesty from trusted adults. Role modeling is also another important factor in inculcating the value of education among the learners. If teachers act with honesty and integrity, it will impact students' behaviour. Because learners followed their teachers as role models. So, teachers should be ideal role models for their learners, not only in pedagogical transactions but also in terms of honesty. This development, referred to as individualized habit development, demonstrates a systematic approach to fostering a culture of trust and promoting ethical development at all levels within the school.

“यदि हम चाहते हैं कि हमारे छात्र ईमानदार हों, तो सबसे पहले हमें अपने काम में ईमानदार होना चाहिए क्योंकि बच्चा हमेशा अपने शिक्षक का अनुसरण करता है। उदाहरण के लिए, यदि मैं कक्षा में सक्रिय रहता हूँ, काम ठीक से हो रहा है, गतिविधियाँ चल रही हैं और बच्चे पर नज़र रखी जा रही है, तो बच्चा भी अपने काम के प्रति ईमानदार होगा।” (Ms. Richa Verma, Teacher, PUPM School, Punjab)

“I told teachers that we have to emphasize on role modelling. If we do as teachers, then students will imbibe these values.” (Chirag Joshi, Principal, GUGM School, Gujarat)

“Be truthful; be honest with yourself and others about your work and progress. Take responsibility—acknowledge your mistakes and learn from them.

(Jayanti Mohapatra, Assistant Teacher, ORPM School, Odisha)

“When some of our classmates would tell lies to teachers. If they told the truth honestly, she would not scold them. But when they tell lies, she will give punishment. (J. Sri Tanuja, Student, Class 7, APUPM School, Andhra Pradesh)

“By seeing their changing attitude each day in the classroom. We do regular follow-up with their parents. Students develop honesty and integrity when we are honest. So we try to give moral values to students.” (Lipsa Patalsingh, TGT, PCM, Teacher, OUGM School, Odisha)

“In assembly, sometimes they get some students ready to play a role. One time in assembly, a student played the role of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and on a bagless day, our class teacher shared with us the story of ‘Maa Durga,’ about how she kills ‘Mohishashur.’” (Singh Mudit Prakashkuman, Student, Class 5, GRPM School, Gujarat)

“My teachers share their experiences so that we will learn from them, and they gave us some books of biographies of different people so that we will learn from them. They also share their past faults and regrets so that we won't repeat them.” (M. Deeksha Tapasya, Student, class 9, APUPM School, Andhra Pradesh)

Various training programs for teachers and parents are also organized to develop personnel who can address the various issues in schools, such as those related to students, teachers, parents, and other staff; to foster the values of sincerity, honesty, and integrity; and to ensure commitment to assigned work in a timely manner.

Some schools in Gujarat promote the values of honesty and integrity among school personnel by emphasising their importance, ensuring that they develop sincerity, integrity, and commitment through morning assemblies, leading by example, and timely completion of tasks and adherence to school rules, etc.

“Every month we have training for teachers and parents (twice a year).” (Saileshbhai Patel, Principal, GRGM School, Gujarat)

“We conduct teacher meeting training, review, and tell them to attune to school ethics and values.” (Dr. Satyabrata Minaketan, Principal, OUPM School, Odisha)

“We write and send notes to the parents. Teachers do meetings weekly, standard-wise. We kept students as monitors; they told us what was going on in the classes.” (Prakash Kumar B, Jani, Headmaster, GUGS School, Gujarat)

“Completing things and tasks on time, teachers following rules, and meetings where they provide their input, also. In addition to this, we track attendance over a period of three months. If an employee does not take any half-days, does not arrive late, and is not absent during this time, they will receive a cash

reward.” (Chitra Pillai, Principal, GRPM School, Gujarat)

“We give time-to-time reminders before the deadline. Some teachers are not technically sound, and I try to tell them individually.” (Rupali Senapati, Headmistress, OUGM School, Odisha).

4.3. Morning Assembly and Everyday School Practices

Honesty and integrity are built not only by textbooks and classroom teaching, but by the wider ethos and daily practice of the school. The NEP 2020 views schools as ethical learning communities where values are imbibed through institutional culture, interpersonal relationships and participatory activities rather than taught only through formal lessons (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020). NCFSE, 2023 also advocates a whole-school approach where assemblies, celebrations, clubs, co-curricular programmes, student leadership and community engagement are integrated as spaces for value formation (NCERT, 2023). These experiences make up the hidden curriculum and allow students to practise honesty and integrity in real social settings.

Morning assembly plays a crucial role in imbuing the value of education among the learners. In the morning assembly, the learners take oaths during the prayer and speech about some great men and freedom fighters in our country. They also learned about various morality-based stories, and through storytelling, the learners became more proactive about honesty and integrity; this will also reflect in their behaviours. So, storytelling is one of the techniques for teaching honesty, exposing both the realities of the practical classroom and the cultural appeal. Almost all government and private schools in urban and rural areas across five states in the country promote the values of honesty and integrity through morning assemblies, storytelling, sharing real-life experiences, etc., among learners.

“During morning assembly, we have added role-play, storytelling, etc., every day. In the CPX class, they are involved in a few activities based on honesty and integrity. They are also writing where they show honesty and where they did not (monthly).” (Ronali Goelhayat, PRT Science, OUPM School, Odisha)

“Usually, during morning assembly, we have a special activity every day in which students narrate stories based on ‘honesty’ and ‘integrity.’ Teachers also draw on real-life experiences to help students understand the above two values. Reinforcement is given to the students if they show honesty and follow integrity.” (Suchismita Bal, TGT English Teacher, ORGM School, Odisha).

“Narrating moral stories and addressing them during morning assemblies are also sources of developing honesty and integrity. But apart from these activities, if your students have qualities like 1. speaking the truth even in difficult situations. 2. Their mode of talking and languages. 3. Respect for all. 4.

Moral language and selfishness, etc. (Geetanjali Palatasingh, Teacher, ORPM School, Odisha)

To ensure students' honesty and integrity, I can use storytelling and address issues during morning assemblies. During moving-assistant time, I can discuss the importance of honesty and integrity using real-world examples and experiences. (Sudhansubala Sahoo, Teacher, OUGM School, Odisha)

“Narrating moral stories and addressing the topic during morning assemblies.” (Pinki Saikia, ICT Teacher, ARGM School, Assam)

“They give us a speech in assemblies, where our Marry ma'am teaches us how to be honest, say the truth, and how to maintain the classroom clean, etc., by giving some examples like giving thoughts meaning of slokas, etc.” (Saloni Rao, Student, class 7, GRPM School, Gujarat)

In a private school in an urban area in Punjab, the teacher fosters the value of honesty by giving the moral values like ‘honesty is the best policy.’ In class 2, without blaming any student for stealing a pencil, she said that you did not take the pencil, but the pencil went to you anyway. The best person is one who can accept it and realize the value of being honest in life. The teacher also told the story of Krishna and Sudama to imbibe the value of honesty among the learners. In the story of Lord Krishna and Sudama, we learn the values of honesty, like true relationships and personal integrity, being based on authentic vulnerability, transparency, and sincerity rather than showing wealth or the status quo. As Sudama visited Krishna's house without hiding his extreme poverty, he neither pretended to be wealthy nor successful. Sudama never explicitly asked the lord Krishna for material wealth; rather, Krishna understood the pure intention of his best friend, Sudama, and rewarded him anyway. So the moral of the story is that learners should learn to accept their circumstances without telling lies to their peers, and students should see that honesty brings natural rewards without any manipulation.

“Honesty is the best policy. In class 2, I tell that it is not that you stole the pencil but pencil also goes to you. The best person is the one who accepts that, and then people realize. I also tell the Krishna & Sudama story.” (Seema Mehta, Teacher, PUPM School, Punjab).

Some schools are given moral tasks and organize various activities for students every Saturday to imbue the values of honesty and integrity among learners. In that activity, the learners were shown videos of great personalities, and after watching them, they were asked questions about what motivates them. Multimedia provides scalability; a single story or video can reach an entire school every day, reaching as many students as possible without advanced resources. Some government and private schools in urban and rural areas in Odisha, Gujarat, and Assam promote the

values of honesty and integrity among learners through multimedia stories and assemblies.

"Addressing during school assembly and giving moral tasks on every Saturday, they complete tasks that are given to them." (Babula Behera, in charge Principal, ORGM School, Odisha)

We organize activities every Saturday where students watch videos of great personalities and answer questions about what motivates them. (Bijay Meher, TGT Social Studies, OUPM School, Odisha)

"Our teachers narrate stories, give speeches during morning assembly, show us videos on the projector in morning assembly and in our class to develop honesty and integrity among students." (Prastuti Saikia, Student, Class 9, ARPM School, Assam)

Some private schools in Gujarat promote the value of honesty during assembly by having students perform activities such as taking a pledge, reciting a shloka, and giving public speeches in roll number-wise. As a result, all students have the opportunity to participate in these activities during the morning assembly.

"In assembly, my teacher gave a performance of the pledge, shlok, and public speaking, giving roll number-wise, and I also got a chance." (Ansh Sengar, Student, class 9, GRPM School, Gujarat)

"During the school assembly, they always have a thought of the day and speeches, which I think are motivational." (Vaishnavi, Student, class 9, APUPM School, Andhra Pradesh)

Students and teachers can relate to the stories told, which enhances the process of value education that is already rich. Students often tell stories about returning money they found, admitting to an honest mistake, choosing not to cheat on a test, admitting they didn't do their homework or standing up for a classmate who chooses to tell the truth even when it's hard to do so because of what others might say or do. These peer stories show that integrity can be practiced in everyday school life and serve as relatable examples for other learners. Similarly, teachers share their professional and personal experiences on ethical dilemmas such as admitting a mistake in teaching, correcting an unfair evaluation, resisting favouritism or making decisions based on fairness rather than convenience. These true stories humanise values by demonstrating that honesty often requires courage, reflection and accountability. When teachers and students share such experiences openly in the classroom and in assemblies, they help create a culture of trust in which ethical behaviour is recognised, valued and reinforced collectively.

Narratives shared by students and teachers further enrich the process of value education by making honesty personally meaningful. Students often tell stories about returning money they found, admitting to an honest mistake, choosing not to cheat on a test,

admitting they didn't do their homework or standing up for a classmate who chooses to tell the truth even when it's hard to do so because of what others might say or do. These peer stories show that integrity can be practiced in everyday school life and serve as relatable examples for other learners. Similarly, teachers share their professional and personal experiences on ethical dilemmas such as admitting a mistake in teaching, correcting an unfair evaluation, resisting favouritism or making decisions based on fairness rather than convenience. These true stories humanise values by demonstrating that honesty often requires courage, reflection and accountability. When teachers and students share such experiences openly in the classroom and in assemblies, they help create a culture of trust in which ethical behaviour is recognised, valued and reinforced collectively.

Thus, honesty and integrity are very important in inculcating the value of education among learners in the school. Generally, in the morning assembly, various activities like taking oaths during the prayer, showing motivational videos, storytelling, particularly moral stories, through dramas; giving speeches on the great freedom fighters and leaders of our country, and so on are the means of raising honesty among learners.

V. Conclusion

School practices including classroom transactions and day to day practices construe honesty and integrity as developmental dispositions that emerge through sustained engagement with meaningful narratives, reflective discussion, authentic experiences and ethical role models. Stories of Mahatma Gandhi, milkman, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and many contemporary classroom situations help children to face moral dilemmas similar to real life situations. Through inquiry-based pedagogy and teacher facilitation these stories help students to move beyond rote memorisation of moral lessons towards the development of ethical judgement, empathy and responsible decision-making. Curriculum and textbooks thus do not only serve as repositories of knowledge but also as powerful tools to foster honesty, integrity and constitutional values in future citizens in conformity with the vision of NEP 2020 and the NCF-SE 2023.

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