

Importance of Moral Education for Social Stability



Dr. M. Abdul Momin

We know that education is a fundamental human right. At present, around 78% of people in our society have access to education. But is this education helping to improve our moral character? The answer is very few. This is precisely why unethical activities are steadily increasing in our society, leading to social instability. From achieving near-universal primary school enrolment to emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, the nation's progress has been inspiring. Yet, amid this advancement, one essential element of nation-building often remains overlooked moral education.

When schools focus almost exclusively on grades, exams, and job readiness, the human values that bind society together risk fading away. The result is evident around us: rising intolerance, social media aggression, corruption in public life, and a growing disconnect between personal success and social responsibility. For Bangladesh, a country built on the ideals of humanity, justice, and collective progress, moral education is not optional; it is essential for sustaining social stability.

Let me talk about the meaning of moral education in our context! Moral education, in the simplest sense, means teaching individuals to understand right from wrong and to act with integrity, empathy, and respect. It goes beyond religious instruction and formal civics lessons; it's about cultivating conscience, compassion, and community-mindedness. In Bangladesh's context, moral education must be rooted in our own cultural and social realities. The values of honesty, respect for elders, care for the poor, and responsibility toward the environment have deep roots in Bengali culture and the teachings of all major religions practised here. These values need not be "imported" from elsewhere; they already exist within our heritage; we only need to reinvigorate them in education and daily life.

Now I should focus on why social stability depends on moral education! Social stability grows out of mutual respect, cooperation, and trust – the very qualities that moral education seeks to build. When citizens are guided by ethics rather than self-interest, societies experience less conflict and more cohesion. Unfortunately, Bangladesh today faces several moral challenges that threaten this stability. From road rage and cyberbullying to corruption scandals and social intolerance, we often see behaviour that reflects moral weakness rather than moral strength. When ethical foundations weaken, even strong institutions struggle to function effectively.

Consider the issue of corruption. Bangladesh has made progress in governance and digital transparency, yet corruption still costs the nation dearly. No law, however strict, can fully prevent it unless people are guided by an internal moral compass. A morally educated citizen will refrain from bribery not out of fear of punishment, but out of respect for justice and fairness.

Similarly, the rise of online harassment, rumour-spreading, and hate speech on social media shows a deficit not of intelligence, but of moral responsibility. In a digital age, teaching young people empathy, critical thinking, and digital ethics is as important as teaching them coding or mathematics.

The roles of families, schools, and teachers are crucial for inducing morality in the teens. Moral education must begin at home. Parents are a child's first teachers, and children learn more from what adults do than what they say. When they see honesty, kindness, and patience modelled in everyday life, they internalise these values naturally. However, families today face new challenges. Urban lifestyles, work pressure, and digital distractions have reduced family interaction. Many children spend more time with screens than with parents or grandparents. As a result, schools must shoulder a greater share of responsibility for moral education.

In Bangladesh, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) includes elements of moral and values education within subjects like Bangla, religion, and social studies. But in practice, these lessons often remain textbook-based rather than experiential. Students memorise moral stories for exams but seldom get opportunities to practise morality through real-life engagement like helping the poor, caring for the environment, or resolving conflicts peacefully.

Teachers are central to this process. They influence students not only through lectures but also through their behaviour, fairness, and compassion. A teacher who treats all students equally or admits mistakes models powerful moral lessons. That is why teacher training programmes must also emphasise ethics and emotional intelligence, not just academic skills.

Moral education in the digital age is easy to develop and disseminate. Bangladesh's young generation, the largest demographic group in the country, spends much of its time online. Platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube shape their values as much as textbooks do. While digital connectivity has opened new worlds of learning, it has also made moral guidance more urgent than ever. Cyberbullying, misinformation, and online hate are growing concerns. Without ethical awareness, technology becomes a tool for division rather than connection. Schools should therefore integrate digital ethics into moral education, teaching students how to behave responsibly online, how to respect privacy, and how to verify information before sharing it. Initiatives like the ICT Division's "Digital Literacy" programmes could be expanded to include modules on digital morality, emphasising empathy,

respect, and truthfulness in online spaces.

We should focus on education for character, not just for careers! Bangladesh's education system has been highly successful in expanding access, but it still struggles to balance academic excellence with character formation. The culture of private coaching, GPA competition, and exam obsession often leaves little room for reflection or empathy. We must ask ourselves: are we preparing our young people only to get jobs, or also to become good human beings?

Our intellectuals repeatedly highlighted the need for "value-based education" alongside science and technology. Similarly, education experts like Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury have long argued that without moral and civic education, intellectual progress remains incomplete. As he once noted, "Education must create citizens, not just workers." To achieve that vision, schools and universities should promote volunteerism, social work, and community engagement as integral parts of learning. Programmes like BRAC's adolescent development clubs or the Scouts' community service projects demonstrate how moral education can be lived, not merely taught.

Creating a moral society is a collective responsibility. Moral education cannot succeed through schools alone. Religious institutions, media, and local communities all have vital roles to play. Friday sermons, television dramas, and social campaigns can reinforce positive values like honesty, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Media, in particular, has immense influence. When TV and online platforms glorify unethical behaviour or sensationalise negativity, young minds receive distorted messages. Responsible media can instead highlight examples of integrity, kindness, and courage, inspiring imitation of the good rather than the glamorous.

Bangladesh's journey from poverty to progress is one of the most inspiring stories of our time. But economic growth alone cannot guarantee peace or justice. For that, we need moral growth. Social stability depends not only on strong institutions but also on morally conscious citizens, people who tell the truth even when no one is watching, who respect others even when they disagree, and who act with integrity even under pressure.

As we dream of becoming a smart Bangladesh by 2041, let us remember: true "smartness" lies not only in digital skills or artificial intelligence but in moral intelligence, the wisdom to use knowledge for the greater good. If we fail to teach our children moral values, we risk building a prosperous yet fragile society. But if we nurture morality alongside intellect, Bangladesh can emerge not only as a strong nation but also as a humane one, stable, compassionate, and truly enlightened.

The writer is a Senior Communication Officer, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI). He can be reached at smmomin80@gmail.com