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Publication Type	Local publication
Publisher (Journal name, issue no., page no etc.)	Mandalay University Research Journal, Vol.9
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Citation	
Issue Date	2018

## The Role of Ethics in Administration

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### Abstract

Ethics give the administration guidelines for integrity in civic service operation. Administrative ethics denotes the professional codes of morality in civil service. Ethical norms are the foundation of public administration organizations and it distinguish the trust or the distrust that public will develop towards them. The aim of this paper is to show how administration can be related to ethics. The research question of this paper is "Why can it be said that ethics plays the vital role in administration?" To solve the question, descriptive and evaluative method will be used. As a result, ethics provides accountability between the public and the administration. That is why, it can be seen that ethics and administration are mutually interrelated. This paper will contribute the role of ethics in administration.

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### Introduction

Ethics differentiate human being from other living beings. Man has intellect. By using intellect, man can choose his / her actions such as deciding 'right or wrong', 'good or bad'. 'justice or injustice', 'is or ought' and so on. So ethics or moral philosophy is essential for human beings. In administrative ethics, a subfield of ethics, moral attribute such as sense of responsibility, sense of social duty or being devoted to one's social duty are essential for public administrator or civil servants. So morality is a primary for personal management and the moral characters of civil servants. Moral characters are of special values for not only administration but also society.

Nowadays, global social transformations are happening very quickly in any aspect of society. The changes of society, economy, and lifestyle are accompanied by social tension and conflict. The role of moral sections in the regulation of public relations is becoming more and more important for modern day society. So, the role of legal, political and other regulatory instruments becomes more important for civil servants and the government.

Thus, it may be assumed that public administration development depends, to some extent, on the staff of governmental institutions, on the personal and professional features of civil servants.

The aim of the survey is to present moral culture in the area of public administration and the role of moral factors in duty performance of those employed in the sphere of public administration.

### Nature of Ethics

The word ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos*. The Greek term for the particular character or disposition of a person, society or culture. Ethics studies the moral or morality. So it is necessary to know what moral is. In the history of philosophy, the word moral comes from the *Latin* word '*mores*', which means customs, social rules, inhibitions from

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the society and so on. Ethics defines the ethical terms such as good, evil, right, wrong, justice, duty, responsibility and so on.

In general, one makes determinations about an act by general norms such as 'Taking the life of other living beings is wrong', 'One should never tell a lie'. Some standards may be codified in civil or criminal law, in such case each and every one in society is needed to observe them. Thus morality means principles or standards of behaviour based on deciding what is right and what is wrong. Morality is not static. It is developed stage by stage. Since ethics critically studies the moral or morality, they are closely related to each other. In daily life, moral becomes more developed when they have been critically discussed by ethics. Because ethics critically examine and evaluate morals.

The main problem of ethics is 'What are the criteria by which one can judge human action as good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust?' Ethics critically studies the rules of good conduct. Besides, it is interested in how man ought to behave in order to live a good life?'

Traditionally, field of ethics is divided into three main parts: meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. Meta-ethics is the investigation of the nature of ethical statements. It involves such a question as: 'Are ethical claims capable of being true or false?' So it may be said that meta-ethics studies the nature of ethical sentences and attitudes. It also investigates where our ethical principles come from and what they mean. Normative ethics bridges the gap between meta-ethics and applied ethics. It is the attempt to arrive at practical moral standards that tell us how to distinguish between right and wrong, and how to live moral lives. And then one aspect of normative ethics is theory of conduct and another aspect is theory of value. Applied ethics uses normative ethics to special controversial issues in practical life. Most of the ethical problems bear directly on public policy. For instance, some questions of applied ethics are like 'Do animals have right?', 'Is euthanasia ever moral?' and so on.

There are some branches of applied ethics such as: business ethics, medical ethics, bioethics, media ethics, environmental ethics, administrative ethics and so on. Each branch characterizes the common issues and problems that arise in the ethical codes of the professions and define their common responsibility to the public. The line of distinction between meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics are often blurry. In the history of philosophy, philosophers have developed a number of competing systems to explain how to choose what is best for both individuals and for society. Assumptions about ethical underpinnings of human behaviors are reflected in every social science, including anthropology, economic, political science, sociology, law, criminology, psychology and also administration. In fact administrative ethics is a kind of applied ethics.

### **What Administrative Ethics Is.**

Administrative ethics has been a topic of sustained interest at least since the founding of public Administration Review in 1940. It has been concerned both to practitioners and scholars since the founding era of the United State. Through the 1990s the field of study continued to develop rapidly, as reflected in the literature produced, treatment in conferences and the creation of new institutions. Empirical research on administrative ethics has expanded but still the area of the field of study needs more develop.

Administrative ethics denotes the professional codes of morality in civil services. And then it constitutes the moral fibre of civil servants and regulates the conduct and behaviour of different categories of civil servants. In the context of the development, role of administration and its impact on the society, the civil servants are expected to set up high moral standards not only for themselves but also for the society. Thus first of all, the ethics of public administrator or civil servant is expressed in this paper.

Ethics of public administrator begins with duty. Duty entails not only internalized standards but also the responsibilities to take actions such as making proposals, investigating problems, to advance the public good. In this respect, public administrative ethics is mainly grounded on duty. It means that a person who seeks the positions in the government or nonprofit organizations are commonly motivated by a sense of duty to serve, sometimes called the public service motivation. They want to help others, to benefit the society, or to serve the public interest.

In society, public administrators should be honest, simple, independent, and committed to do their best and they should demonstrate integrity. These are assumed as virtues. And then they should act fairly and equally and they do any action, observing the law and following the direction set by the leaders and their organizations. These facts are regarded as principles. After that public administrators should try to get the greatest good for the greatest people. Here it may be assumed as a beneficial consequence. But all these components are mainly based on sense of duty. Thus it may be said that all aspects of administrative ethics is grounded on philosophical traditions of virtue, principle and consequence. These are integrally related to the conception of duty. That is why, the concept of duty is central to administrative ethics.

Regarding to the ethical conduct of civil servants, some argue that morality and administration cannot be separated. Thus morally good administrators should have the following attributes:

- Sense of responsibility
- Skills in communication and personal administration
- Ability to cultivate and utilize institutional resources
- Willingness to be engaged in problem solving
- Readiness to work with others as a team
- Personal confidence to initiate new ideas
- Preference to public needs, interests and sensitivities rather than reasoning the use of raw bureaucratic power.

Besides, concerning the civil service, civil service, being a profession in the modern state, has developed a code of morality which consists of traditions, precedents and standards which have to be kept up by the civil servants.

Moreover, civil service ethics is a set of principles, norms and rules of behaviours, moral values and moral requirements. These facts are applicable to individuals who perform as professional managers in the field of public administration. Nowadays, morality is essential, during a time of profound change in all fields of society, including personal moral values.

Moral norms and moral value are very significant for the employees communicating with each other in daily life. Moreover, the moral prestige of civil servants, senior and top managers as well as the quality of the moral and psychological atmosphere are important for an effective government.

In the history of thought, there are many definitions of administrative ethics. But, generally, it is focused on the governmental employees who set up ethical standards. Civil service ethics is considered as 'a set of moral standards and requirements for those in public administration to aim their professional activity at the attainment of common wealth and effective use of moral values.

The major aim of civil service ethics is to keep the essence and content of professional activities that are socially approved. Its tasks are to regulate employee relations by means of norms, behaviours and actions and to form an ethical component in the consciousness of public administration employees.

So, in this sense, it may be regarded that civil service ethics is essentially based on moral norms or standards. These are approved by society, in its role as an important regulator of collective activities, which are closely related with public administration. Administrative ethics studies all moral aspects of public administration employees and senior manager's activities. It consists of three basic components such as value, standards or norms and behaviour.

After that, an ethical analysis of civil service problems allows us to develop recommendations and to provide professional administrators with the necessary ethical knowledge. In practical life, civil service ethics is a system of ethical knowledge and practical recommendations for professional managers in the field of administration. It is generalization of moral experience in the field of management. From this point of view, ethics is an essential component of an employee's competence. Experience demonstrates that employee especially top officials take a great interest in the practical recommendations, behavior standards and ethical codes that promote the effective growth of a career.

Being a special type of professional activity, the civil service is characterized by a unique set of ideals and values that have arisen as a result of professional principles and the development of behaviour standards.

In this respect, there are several ways to determine ethical requirements for civil servants. First, they reflect the concepts and aims of the civil services as well as special tasks of different governmental institutions. Second, these standards are influenced by a conception of an ideal public administration model accepted in society. So it may be regarded that the source of administrative ethics is a civil society.

Moreover, the standards and values in public administration are not often created by public officials themselves. Most frequently these are created by political bodies, and public administration is only a medium or agency for their implementation. The task of administrative ethics is to make a clear distinction between right and wrong, standards and values. According to Van Wart, there are five major sources of value. These are individual value, professional value, organizational value, legal value and public interest value.

### **Function of Administrative Ethics**

The task of administrative ethics is participation in the function of relationship between the government and its citizens. So the basic tasks of state is 'to serve the society, state and citizens, to put into practice the fundamental law of its country, to extend conditions for civil society development, to stimulate self-government development by means of professional management methods, to develop and support their activities by means of both law and those moral principles and values. These are essential for public consciousness. According to above facts, administrative ethics should treat the following functions:

- to participate in the regulation of the relationship between government and citizen

- to promote public and state concerns in government activities as much as possible
- to provide public administration staff with certain behavioral standards based on morality

Here, the aims of administrative ethics are to define ethical criteria for every public servant, and to impose responsibility for his / her professional activities. With regard to moral responsibility, the moral responsibility of civil servant is increasing: many have power and right to apply compulsory measures. They should use these rights rationally. It is well known that any managerial process is more successful if the participants of the process perform their tasks, believing that this performance is vital, and when they realize their global task.

The responsibility of top government official is extremely important. They should build a type of complete and effective decisions. Public opinion evaluates their action from the point of view of material and moral results, as well as examining the influence of these actions on public morality. In this respect, government officials should possess both the ability to effectively guide production process and devote themselves to high moral standards.

Administrative ethics should assist effective governmental performance. Thus a civil servant should realize his / her responsibilities. The state welfare is developed by efficient civil service performance. It can achieve political, social and economic goals of the state.

The basic condition of effective public administration is fulfilled when the public has a positive perception of civil servants. Nowadays, the public's moral evaluation of government machinery is based upon its effectiveness in providing security (i.e. social and economic) and the personal features of civil servants.

Civil servant duties presuppose that the civil servants possess features like neutrality, competency, impartiality, succession and transparency. Here, one cannot neglect the negative aspects of moral transformation. It is the consequence of political, social and economic instability. So most of the people are lose values such as finding the essence of life in socially significant work, serving society and the state and so on. Moreover, some people hope to develop their qualities and to promote personal wealth by seeking new chances. Thus the management of administrative institutions assumed that it is impossible to evaluate the political, moral, social and professional characters of a person with personal measure of his / her spiritual and cultural level. In general, culture and spirituality must be taken into account in recruiting personnel. So it may be regarded that the key features of civil servants are having a high level of competency as well as personal features, civic attitudes, high morality and the ability to serve his / her country, to follow the law, and to keep national and international moral and spiritual values.

Thus it may be regarded that there are various contributions of the scholar to the development of full-fledged field of study within public administration. And then there are many differences in emphasis on the ethics of public administration. Nevertheless, most of the scholars tended to view the means of achieving ethical conduct.

According to D.B. Eaton,

"The criteria of civil service must be based on character and competence as an advance in justice and liberty. So civil service was not merely a method of conducting public business, but a test of the expression of the justice and moral tone of the nation,"<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the responsibility, Goodnow said that 'responsibility was the only

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<sup>2</sup> Terry LCooper. (2001). *Handbook of Administrative Ethics.2nd*, New York : Marcel Dekker. p-2

concept employed from which one might infer administrative ethics.<sup>3</sup>

In the principle of public administration, Willoughby also said that efficiency and the quest for generic scientific principles are the means of ethical public administration.<sup>4</sup>

And then the current approaches to ethics training have been compared to seeing the Eiffel Tower, which can best be understood from three perspectives.

First of all, to grasp the intricate engineering of the tower, it must be viewed closely in order to study the nuts and bolts of its foundation. In term of ethics training, this means that some advocates believe that public managers must understand the legal basis of their conduct and comply with binding regulations.

Second, to comprehend the breath and scope of the monument, the tower must be viewed from the top in order to appreciate its panoramic splendor. Similarly, some proponents believe that to be effective, ethics training must impart lofty ethical standards and a moral reasoning process that inspires administrators to do good.

Third, the tower needs to be viewed from a distance in order to gain a holistic view of how it fits into its surroundings. Some supporters assert that the entire organization must provide a context in which individual ethics are fostered. They claim without a holistic perspective, individual ethical conduct is otherwise problematical.<sup>5</sup>

Although there are different opinions of different scholars, most of them are attempting to contribute to the following main themes of administrative ethics:

- It seem clear that public administrative ethics is a relatively new, but robust, expanding and promising field of study, showing signs of maturation during the' last decades.
- To be of any real value to the field of public administration, one must be able to engage practitioners in discussion about conduct, as it ought to be.
- It is also important to maintain a stream of articles on ethics for administrative ethics.
- The role of discretion or discretionary judgment is important for administrative ethics.
- Administrative ethics also includes 'the virtue of loyalty, honesty, enthusiasm, humility, and all the other attributes of character and conduct which contribute to effective and satisfactory service.'

So it may be said that administrative ethics is an understanding of duty that contains both ideological and professional elements, subordination of personal interests to those of the citizenry, and an obligation to the role of the public.

### **Conclusion**

Ethics or moral philosophy is an exceedingly difficult topic to explore owing to many facets of any issue in philosophy. According to H. George Frederickson and Jeremy David Walling, "Ethics will search for right and wrong while administration must get the job done.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p-3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p-5

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p-60

Ethics is abstract while the practices of administration are irremediably concrete"<sup>6</sup>

In the history of thought, most of the early philosophers accepted ethics as the concept related to individuals. However, in modern day, ethics is recognized as a moral distance between individuals and the institution with which they interact.

The framework of modern day administrative ethics suggests that an ethical public administrator will confront a variety of issues requiring the use of administrative discretion in one or more area of public administration. Here, to apply discretion in a responsible manner, a public administrator should understand his/ her role in an organization, the goals and objectives of the organization, and the ethical dilemmas potentially arising in each area.

So, after the study of administrative ethics, it may be assumed that knowledge of value

- moral standards
- context and

behavior are basic categories of administrative ethics .

Values are any object or quality desirable as a means or ends themselves such as life, justice, equality, honesty, efficiency and freedom.

Moral standard or norms are defined as principles of right action binding upon members of a group and serving to guide, control or regulate proper and acceptable behaviour.

Context is a powerful determinant of behaviour. Ethical standards and behaviour are always in context.

Behaviour is the most difficult part of ethics to research, to measure and to explain.

These categories are the most vital factors for both ethics and administration. There is a general agreement on the importance and the effectiveness of ethics education. So ethics is absolutely required for public administration. To be ethical an administrator needs be able to independently be engaged in the process of reasonably examining and questioning the standards by which administrative decisions are made, at least to the extent that the decisions are legitimately made at that level of the organization. The contents of the standards may change over time as social values are better understood. An administrator should be ready to adapt decision standards to these changes, always reflecting a commitment to the core values of our society and the recognition of the goals of the organization. The administrator will be accountable personally, professionally, and within the organization for the decisions made and for the ethical standards which inform those decisions.

That is why, it may be regarded that ethics is a world of moral, philosophy and value whereas administration is a world of decision and action. Ethics will seek for right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice and so on while administration must get the job done. This paper suggests one way to bring ethics to practice and practice to ethics. In this sense, it may be regarded that ethics and administration are mutually interrelated and ethics is the very core of adequate and effective for administration. The lack of importance of ethical values and principles cause society to continue on the downward trend. So it may be said that ethics plays the vital role in administration.

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<sup>6</sup> J.Michalel Martinez. (2008). Administrative Ethics in the Twenty-First Century, New York : Peter Lang p-254

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