

# Teaching Ethical Behaviour: Conversational Analysis in Perspective

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**Abstract**—In the past researchers have questioned the effectiveness of ethics training in higher education. Also, there are observations that support the view that ethical behaviour (range of actions)/ethical decision making models used in the past make use of vignettes to explain ethical behaviour. The understanding remains in the perspective that these vignettes play a limited role in determining individual intentions and not actions. Some authors have also agreed that there are possibilities of differences in one's intentions and actions. This paper makes an attempt to fill those gaps by evaluating real actions rather than intentions. In a way this study suggests the use of an experiential methodology to explore Berlo's model of communication as an action along with orchestration of various principles. To this endeavor, an attempt was made to use conversational analysis in the pursuance of evaluating ethical decision making behaviour among students and middle level managers. The process was repeated six times with the set of an average of 15 participants. Similarities have been observed in the behaviour of students and middle level managers that calls for understanding that both the groups of individuals have no cognizance of their actual actions. The deliberations derived out of conversation were taken a step forward for meta-ethical evaluations to portray a clear picture of ethical behaviour among participants. This study provides insights for understanding demonstrated unconscious human behaviour which may fortuitously be termed both ethical and unethical.

**Keywords**—Berlo's action model of communication, Conversational Analysis, Ethical behaviour, Ethical decision making, experiential learning, Intentions and Actions.

## I. INTRODUCTION

OVER the years, researchers have presented the need to teach ethics in higher education [1]-[8]. Ethics pertains to problems that individuals have in terms of differentiating what is good and what is bad in different situations of life [9]. Individuals seek good and bad differentials and often remain confused with their approach to comprehend the problems of ethics. In living one's life, they carry their belief, and their

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belief makes them what they are [10]. In presenting their beliefs to others, some individuals may possibly remain duty bound [11] to value prescriptions sought on the basis of religion [12], or others may be backed up by their spirituality [13], while some may be bound limitlessly or with limits to their desires [14], some individuals care for others [15] while others give value to virtues of characters involved in an Aristotelian way [16]. Individuals possibly have reasons for their ethicality, reasons for the choices they make, and, reasons for the conduct of their actions. However, what remains important in all of this, is that each individual has their own set of values [15], [17] which possibly affect the way they think and feel, observe and act [18]. For sure, these issues bring emotional and cognitive tumultuousness in the lives of individuals. Butler's ethical theory (conscience theory of ethics) also suggests that individuals have self-consciousness and reflective thinking abilities, where their conscience acts as a benchmark of their ethicality [19].

Having troubled with such a tumultuousness of conscience, individuals remain in their journey of the personal quest [20]. They seek their solace among those whom they believe [20]. In his endeavor of making individuals self-reliant, Kopp presented the view that the duty of teachers' remains in making attempts where they can bring solace to their pupils by making them self-reliant. Similar to the views of Kopp, Sims [21] advocated that teaching initiatives in ethics should make individuals self-reliant where they should be in the position to make self-reflections. Sims encouraged the view that learners in the quest of comprehending good and bad should listen effectively to all, with the aim of enriching the self, and remain open to accepting [21]:

- i. reality no matter how challenging it would be,
- ii. understand and absorb others point of view,
- iii. others' thought and feeling processes,
- iv. other possible ways of interpretations, implications and expressions
- v. that there are possibilities of valuing things differently
- vi. and reflecting back on realized convolutions, and
- vii. involving proactively to be evolved as a more mature human being.

Good or bad, the ethical discussions remain stationed at the philosophical or at the practicalities of life. They are backed up by duties or by desires, valued by care or self-interest, resolved by debates or self-realizations, and determined by psychometric methods or by observations. Each individual has his or her own logic of reality and each reality has its own dimensions. The relativity in ethics (meta-ethics) is a central question that needs to be answered [22]. The epicure to

comprehend ethics and morality, whether in the form of absolute truth, and subjective or relative truth, is still on the cards [23]-[26]. Lost in its eminence, basics, elements, language and the possibilities of goodness, the communications in ethics remain to be stationed on what one values. The only absolute that remains to be understood (willingly or unwillingly) is to accept the existence of dissonances that crop out of such communications. In this pursuance, what remains important is how truth has been deciphered or how one has engaged in the process of deciding means and/or ends, intent and/or action, and/ or taking actions based on personal moral convictions?

Thanks to the Journal of Business Ethics that filled an expedient review of the literature on ethical decision-making from the period of 1961-2011 [27]-[29]. These reviews provided the platform to work upon ethical behaviour. Ethical behaviour has always been a matter of concern [30]. Researchers in the past have been engaged in understanding how individuals illustrate their ethical behaviour. Their approaches to comprehend ethical behaviour have ranged from several qualitative to quantitative techniques, all aspiring or destined to be proximal around realities. Based on the understanding, it was observed that the approaches used in the past were limited mainly to perceptual and intention checks [31]-[39] and often ends up presenting espoused behaviour rather than real one. Leveraging the emotional connect that a student may develop along with the characters in the films and to understand realities of students, use of films like Philadelphia, Save the Tiger [8] and The Constant Gardener [40] look attractive but possibly may not justify the real actions of participants. These studies [31]-[39] often put up questions to respondents as to what they would do in a given situation. This *prima facie* is more an intent rather than an action, as it is not necessary that an individual would end up doing what one intends. In certain studies, authors have agreed that there are possibilities of differences in one's intentions and actions [41]. Hence, the need to explore real actions taken by individuals rather than intentions was felt. The research in this field continues to haunt righteousness related to absolutism or at least those experiences that are proximal to real facts, the truth, and reality.

## II. PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE

Based on propositions presented by [21] and also considering the fact that in the past researchers have questioned the effectiveness of ethics training in higher education, the need for reconnoitering the issue was felt. Researcher worked upon a method that may help in presenting reflections as learning of ethical behaviour. In this endeavor, contributions and methods of traditional gurus in such accomplishments of realizations were considered to be important [20]. Kopp presented the contributions of traditional gurus, and modern psychotherapists who help their pupils with the initiation of new experiences of understanding behaviour of self that may possibly be used in comprehending issues pertaining to ethical behaviour [20]. It was understood that despite each guru differ in their respective working approach, their contribution to the development of their acolytes remains

a matter of significance. These gurus bestowed on their disciples a facilitation through which disciples realize their hidden potentials, hidden self-behaviour and how such behaviour impacts others. While explaining the role of gurus in the past, Kopp also suggested the use of means such as stories in the accomplishment of all such endeavours [20].

In the pursuance of this, the mechanism that may work in classroom situations was worked upon. This mechanism enabled the reflections on ethical behaviour (actions) of the participants. The *modus operandi* remained in presenting the reflections via making observations on how participants recognize, comprehend, distinguish, accept, or reject the perspectives of others, and live and experience the feedback given at the end of the group task. In order to explore these issues, following principles were orchestrated:

- a) Berlo's action model of communication [42], indicative of the understanding that communication is an action. Also, Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson's axiom that *one cannot not communicate* [43] has also been considered while ascertaining communication in the process.
- b) Berne's Transactional Analysis [44] that presents elaborations on how one may use ego-states in social interactions.
- c) Tuckman and Jensen five-phase model of group formation [45] that explains forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The emphasis remains in having an understanding of the process regarding how arrangements of actions are engendered. Participants remain engaged in interpreting their perceptions and issues within their own social worlds and converting them into their actions using their own words and gestures.
- d) Thomas-Kilmann model of conflict [46] explaining actions to either be competing, collaborating, avoiding, compromising or accommodating in order to come to consensus. These modes were decided using their higher or lower levels of assertiveness and cooperation in their communication (action).
- e) Koan exercise [20] that has been traditionally used by Zen masters and that enables the adherent to solve a given problem by confronting the problems on their own or by being enlightened from within.
- f) Rest model that demonstrated ethical behaviour (action) as a reverberation of certain psychological sub-processes that individuals go through. These sub-processes include the ability to diagnose the manifestation of an ethical issue, evaluate the pros and cons that arise out of an ethical issue, remain motivated to pursue the issues of ethics, and sustain ethical character [47], and
- g) Harvey Sacks's conversational analysis [48] that attempts to bare the inferred cognitive and emotional capabilities of individuals. As Sims has advocated the importance of conversations in teaching business ethics [21], an attempt to explore the foundation of this work was made.

Table I presents various fundamentals, imperative in the understanding of ethical decision-making adapted from the work of Rest.

III. METHODOLOGY

Based on certain studies [31]-[39], an understanding remains with the view that the potential of vignettes in the past has been explored limitedly evaluating the intentions and not the actions of individuals. While some authors have agreed that there are gaps in one’s intentions and actions, it is indeed required that these gaps be filled while evaluating ethical behaviour [41]. Hence, in this endeavor, an attempt was made to address these gaps by assessing real actions other than intentions.

The idea was to make participants aware of the truth regarding what they do without realizing their actions and how their actions impact others. Hence in the pursuance of these objectives of filling gaps, experiments were conducted using Sekaran’s Narmada River Story [49]. Permission from the source of publication was taken to pursue this work. Details of the vignette are presented in the Appendix.

Based on the Rest model, Johnson [50] suggested various measures for improving ethical behaviour (Table I). Hence observations were made broadly around these themes.

TABLE I  
MEASURES FOR IMPROVING ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Ethical Sensing and Intensity	Ethical Judgment	Ethical Motivation	Ethical Character
↑Active listening	↑Knowledge on ethics		
↑Empathy	Building ethical environment	↓Self Interest	Maintaining integrity
↑Humility	Foster ethical reasoning	↓Hypocrisy	Building reverence for others and learning self-sacrifice.
↑Openness to others point of view	↑Openness to others point of view	Managing emotions	Building competence
Giving space to each other		Instituting policies and procedures	
↑Establishing social consensus			

TABLE II  
OBSERVATIONS ON THE BASIS OF CHARACTERS IN THE VIGNETTE

SN	Participants justifying most offending character	Acting juxtaposed to their reason of discussion
1.	Ashok/Pradeep Patel	Flew in a rage
2.	Roshna	Compromised
3.	Vishnu	Remained Silent
4.	Lakshman/Vishnu	Took advantage of the situation

The primary analysis revolved around comprehension of communication that happened in the process of human interactions. As the objective of the study was to fill up the gaps between intentions and actions, thematic analysis of conversations [51] and actions undertaken by each participant were evaluated. Furthermore, the observations were made on two basis:

1. **On the basis of self-actions of participants in the conversations (Context Analysis):** In the process of being defensive for the side taken, how participants interacted and ended up presenting self-actions.

2. **On the basis of actions of Characters in the vignette (Content Analysis):** Participants defending specific characters were acting juxtaposed to the role of the character. Table II presents the details:

Considering the Tuckman and Jensen model [45], the methodology was divided into five phases (A-E). These are described as follows:

A. Forming

The participants were told to pick the most offending character out of six characters (one female and five males) presented in the vignette. Participants making similar choices were grouped together. The result of this group formation has been presented in Table III.

TABLE III  
RESULT OF GROUP FORMATION PROCESS

Particulars	Executives			Students		
	E1	E2	E3	S1	S2	S3
No. of participants	09	17	18	23	13	10
No. of groups formed	05	05	06	05	04	05
<b>Group Distribution</b>						
Ashok	02	03	04	08	04	03
Yadhav	01	Nil	01	01	01	01
Lakshman	02	03	04	06	04	03
Vishnu	Nil	04	02	04	Nil	Nil
Pradeep Patel	02	03	02	03	Nil	01
Roshna	02	04	04	00	04	02

E1, E2, E3 & S1, S2 & S3 represent processes with executives and students respectively.

Considering the ethical issues of the right of participant’s information, prior permission to observe them was taken from the participants, and they were explained the difference between judgment and observation. For this purpose, they were told to observe the person sitting next to them and participants’ responses were collected. Certain examples of participants’ responses are:

- 1) He is very sincere.
- 2) He is very intelligent.
- 3) He seems to have come from a decent background.

Participants were explained that their responses were not observations, but were more a perception or judgment and hence the differences were cleared. They were also explained that the observation has to be made by watching things and not by perceiving.

At this stage a psychological contracting [9] was done with the participants that covered the following aspects:

- a) Participants shall allow the researcher to make observations and record the session.
- b) After the group adjourning participants shall not:
  - a. discuss anything about the happenings outside the classroom.
  - b. share their learning with anyone outside the classroom. They may, however, use the learning for their personal enhancements.
  - c. The observations taken in the classroom shall be used for research work. However the researcher shall not disclose the real identities of the participants and the name of their organizations (in case of executives) at any point in time.

### B. Storming

These groups were given time (10 minutes) to discuss among themselves the reasons for their choice of most offending character. Also, each group was given instructions to select one person among themselves to be a leader who would represent the point of view of the group and convince members of other groups to join their group.

### C. Norming

The target was attached to each group for maximizing their patronship by convincing others to join their group. It was also instructed that after the completion of each presentation by each leader, members of other groups may question the leader presenting, and seek responses to their queries. These instructions were given initially and were not repeated during the process. However, when participants wanted clarification (during the process), Koan exercise was used [20]. Koan exercise has been traditionally used by Zen masters that enable the adherent to solve a given problem by confronting the problems on their own or by being enlightened from within [20]. An enigma has been presented below to explain process in Koan exercise [20]:

**Member (not a leader) checking with researcher:** *Can I also speak?*

**Researcher to member:** *How do one know? One should know when to speak and what to speak.*

### D. Performing

The house was made open to discussion. The discussion continued from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours. While participants were performing, observations were made broadly on the basis of learning of the above framework of theories. In the pursuit of finding answers to questions depicted in Fig. 1, observations were made keeping in mind:

- What is a participant saying? vis-à-vis
- What is a participant doing?
- Are there any expressions of dissonance?
- Are there any observable behavioural patterns occurring in the conversations?
- Is there any possible scope for individuals to work on personal or professional values?

### E. Adjourning

Before the group adjourned, feedback on observations was given, and the psychological contracting was reminded. The repetition of the psychological contract was done to ensure initiated promises. The feedback cyphers several dissonances that were observed.

### F. Sampling Method

The group process (Forming to Adjourning) was repeated six times with the set of an average of 15 participants (thrice with the students and thrice with middle level executives) on different dates participating in Management Development Programmes conducted at the National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE), Mumbai. It was purposive sampling depending on the availability of groups (Table III).

### G. Data Analysis

Communication tracks were developed through video recording. All proceedings were noted down with the help of assistants were undertaken. The scripts were written and yielded the transcripts of six processes. The conversations were in English but usually ended up in Hindi (national language). Essentially during times of conflicts or high pressure; participants were found to be automatically switching their mode of conversation to Hindi. These conversations were later translated into English. Individuals used vernacular tones while speaking and were beyond the comprehension of software. Moreover, it was different individuals in the groups communicating hence it was difficult to comprehend communication through software. All transcriptions were hence done manually with the help of teaching assistants.

-----Ego-States -----			
Ability to diagnose manifestation of ethical issue	Evaluate pros and cons arisen out of ethical issue	Remain engaged in value propositions	Sustaining ethical dispositions
How individual behaviour impacts others?	How individuals resolve right against wrongs?	How individual sticks on what they valued?	Which virtues individual used in sustaining his/her ethical dispositions?
Whether they ascertain probable actions? and	How individuals value each probability?	How integral individual remains with their own intents?	
<b>Forming –Storming—Norming—Performing-- Adjourning</b>			

Fig. 1 Fundamentals imperative in understanding of ethical decision making

### H. Face Validity

Face Validity [52] was conducted for the use of the Narmada River Story from experts pre-process and participant's post processes. They were asked for feedback, specifically if they thought that the vignette was a good one. After having positive responses from both the groups, it was believed that the vignette had a sound face validity. Where 90.90% executive participants gave us positive response (i.e. 40 out of 44), 82.60% student participants gave the positive response (i.e. 38 out of 46). Also, all the three experts gave us positive response on the use of vignette.

## IV. OBSERVATIONS

Table IV presents the observations on the basis of self-actions of participants in the conversations in the six processes. Table V present the observations on the basis of actions of characters in the six processes. These observations were made on the basis of common themes generated during the conversations:

### 1) Dissonance between Thoughts and Actions

Teams valuing Roshna as the most offending character because she compromised on her value by kissing another

man, ended up compromising thrice (in different processes) with other teams for generating the majority.

Similar cases were observed with all the teams (both students and executives) choosing Ashok to be the most offending character. They chose Ashok because he flew into a rage when Roshna told him the truth that she kissed another man to reach him. According to the group, Ashok failed in understanding Roshna's affectionate intentions. Incidentally, the group members also flew into a rage while discussing this issue with other group members. They did not see the rage within themselves (and one Ashok within). The group members failed in comprehending their own actions vis-à-vis actions of Ashok. The control on excitement (feelings) was perhaps essential for both i.e. Ashok and the group members.

TABLE IV  
OBSERVATIONS ON THE BASIS OF SELF-ACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS IN  
THE CONVERSATION

SN	Observations	E1	E2	E3	S1	S2	S3
1.	Dissonance of Thoughts and actions	+	+	+	+	+	+
2.	Dissonance of Intentions and actions	+	+	+	+	+	+
3.	Dissonance of competition and collaboration	+	+	+	+	+	+
4.	Personal Values Vs. Group Values	+	+	+	+	+	+
5.	Dissonance in expression of Self	+	+	+	+	+	+
6.	Closed Attitude towards others	+	+	+	+	+	+
7.	Gender specific issues	+	+	+	+	+	+
8.	Impact of group size	+	+	+	+	+	+
9.	Authority Compliances	+	+	+	+	+	+

Similarly certain members in the Vishnu group remained silent just like the dispositions of Vishnu narrated in the vignette. During the feedback session, they were made to realize that they seemed to have defeated the purpose of their struggle and were asked a question- *How right is it to preach something that you do not practice?* The question was a clear mirror that had shown a dissonance in thoughts and actions of the groups.

Juxtaposed to dissonance in thoughts and actions as discussed above, there were a few cases where no dissonance was observed. Teams opting for Roshna (for her compromise) did not compromise in two different processes to make collaboration, indicative of the fact that they were believing in what they were meaning.

TABLE V  
OBSERVATIONS ON THE BASIS OF ACTIONS OF CHARACTER

SN	Observations	E1	E2	E3	S1	S2	S3
1.	Flew into rage like Ashok/ Pradeep Patel	+	+	+	+	+	+
2.	Compromised liked Roshna	+	-	+	-	-	+
3.	Remained Silent like Vishnu	-	-	+	+	-	-
4.	Taking advantage of opportunities like Lakshman/ Yadhav	+	+	+	+	+	+

## 2) Dissonance of Intentions and Actions

In almost all the six processes, it was observed that the group members exceeded their limit of just being members and ended up eating the conversation space of their own leader while having negotiations with other group members (barring

a few cases where certain members within respective groups remained silent). While presenting the feedback towards the end of the process each time, members expressed that their reason for coming into the conversation was to help their own leader. Hence they chose to step into the conversation.

These members were asked to check with their respective leaders whether the help of group members or the interventions of group members were required in those moments. All group leaders denied the need for members' help or intervention.

Members of these groups were then asked the question that- *"By entering into the conversational space whom did they satisfy? Their own leader, self or other leaders or members of other groups"*. They were reminded of the school of thought that brings forth the psychological egoism (hypothesis that altruism and utilitarianism are the forms of egoism) [53].

Members were also told to check with their leaders that- *"how their leader felt when they intervened without his/her consent of help or intervention"*? Based on this a proposition of member's distrust on the capability of leader was put forward, which was accepted quite a bit later after discussion.

Members were also asked the question that-*Do they consider themselves to be more effective than their leaders in dealing with such issues?*

## 3) Dissonance between Competition over Collaboration

The issues of competition over collaboration on account of egoism/self-centrism were found to surface in all the six processes. Despite the fact that participants acknowledged prior to the beginning of the exercise, their understandings on appreciating the self of others to achieve mutual understandings and effective interpersonal relations, they were perceived to be blocked by their own ego. This blockage enhanced their assertiveness towards each other while reducing possibilities of cooperation. This has led them to be competitive. For sure, given the opportunity, most of the participants preferred to be collaborative rather than competing. However, in the present state of satisfying self, they valued competition over collaboration [54].

When members were questioned on the aforementioned issues post the session, they presented their defensiveness based on their understanding that the groups were doing the given job i.e. trying to maximize the patron ship in their respective groups.

While the discussions proceeded, participants were presented five possibilities presented by Kilmann that includes competition, collaboration, avoidance, accommodation and compromise to solve the problems [45]. With reference to this, participants were told that they could have picked collaboration over competition. One of the groups presented their reluctance stating that justice to characters is more important than collaboration. As they did not agree with the remaining groups collaborating, they did not wish to collaborate to get consensus. The following question was posed to the group to comprehend- *How good is it to pick collaboration over competition or vice versa?*

#### 4) *Dissonance between Personal and Group Values*

The issues pertaining to compromise and collaboration were taken to the premise of personal values conflicts over organizational values.

- a) **Shifting of individuals from one group to another:** Individuals from one group shifted to others without having discussion with other members of their own groups. Out of six processes, such incidences were observed four times (twice in each case of students and executives). Such issues of shifting were presented as issues that carry the value of trust-distrust among members of one group.
- b) **Shifting of the group as a whole:** There were three incidences (twice among executives and once among students) where the group as a whole shifted to another group towards the extreme end of communication. These groups valued compromising and collaborating for the sake of bringing a unitized solution to the problem.
- c) **Shifting of group as a whole but retaliations from members:** There was also an observation where the retaliations of the members from complete group shift was observed. This has happened only once in the case of students.

These gaps in personal and group values also presented cognitive-emotional dissonances where from abstract thought processes individuals were okay joining other groups while were reluctant on emotional ground in joining others. Individuals in such a scenario for most of the time ended up being diplomatic. For example one of the participant said, *"I am okay with collaborating and my decision depends on the decision of rest of the groups"*.

Being aware of the fact that the process in that time was depictive of a hung parliament, the whole group was not in the position to decide, and such communication portrayed a depiction of playing a politically safe game.

Earlier similar dissonance of willingness to shift (despite having theoretical understandings on intricacies of communication such as adult-adult transaction) was reported [54]. Similar findings were observed in this perspective where individuals were keen on shifting from a competitive to a collaborative mode of transactions but were stuck by a belief of self-image. Questions like *"what will others say?"* stopped them from making shifts from competition to collaboration.

The following questions was posed to the group to comprehend- *How good is it to compromise on personal values over values for organization or vice versa?*

#### 5) *Dissonance in Expression of Self*

The group leaders while presenting the group perspectives presented their views as "I" rather than we. Though the basic fact remains that group leaders discussed all presented propositions in respective groups but while making presentations ended up making statements as *"I think so...."*, *"In my view Lakshman is the culprit who has...."* and so on. Such observations were made in almost all the six processes wherein more than one group leader had used "I" instead of "we".

The presentation of collaborative work with an expression of *"I think"* was challenged during the feedback- *How good is that to use "I" when you express work in collaboration?* This possibly represents the inherent subconscious attitude of the speaker-the way these speakers possibly might have been working in their lives.

#### 6) *Closed Attitude towards Others*

In all the six processes, it was observed that participants spent the majority of their times (more than 97% of time) in making complementary transactions and crossed transactions [43]. These complementary transactions were parent ego-state to parent ego-state or child ego-state to child ego-state while the cross transactions were found to be in child ego-state to parent ego-state or parent ego-state to child ego-state. According to Berne, these complementary transactions yield no end to discussion unless they are in adult ego-state to adult ego-state [43]. In such incidences, individuals were found to be wasting resources such as time in attacking others rather than attacking problems. Participants remained closed in the initial period of communication until their compromised opinions have shown their closed attitude in understanding the perspectives of others.

While cases of adjacency pair (question-answer, complaint-denial) and broken record responses (power struggle by repeating same lines over and over) [55] were also observed, this also presented an opportunity to bring to the house individual's understanding of self-belief and several thought processes.

For sure, group members agreed that while in conversation, they were not listening and were closed to the views of each other. Hence they failed in comprehending each other's perspective. This failure also obstructed and adversely impacted their possibilities of self-development or gaining insights from others in the process. The following question was posed to the group to comprehend-*How good is it to remain closed or how good is it to be open towards each other?*

#### 7) *Gender Specific Issues*

All six groups that considered Ashok to be the most offending character on account of his rage and inability to understand Roshna's intention were found to be considering one sided intentions. Ashok's action of beating Roshna perhaps were also indicative of his intentions of possessiveness or care towards Roshna. The members of this group who were equally considering intentions of Roshna's kissing another man to cross the river and not calling her to be most offending were presented the view – *How good is it to view one side of the problem? Were they discounting Roshna on account of being a woman or were they being over stringent about Ashok being a man? Do your values differ for different genders? Or on grounds of humanity should they be equal?*

One more find was that the participants calling Roshna to be most offending reiterated the point that it was mentioned at the end:

*".....and there was a smile on her face" [49]*

These participants were questioned-“*How good is it to stereotype a woman in the role of giver? Isn't it that participants have been expecting something very specific from the role of women?*”

Hence the question pertaining to equal justice to both were brought to the attention of the group.

#### 8) Impact of Group Size

It was found that the bigger groups initiated forcing smaller groups and essentially single entity units (choice handed by single individual) to join the bigger group. It was found that the larger groups were forcing smaller groups for example in cases of E3, S1 and S2 processes of executives and students, groups of Ashok and Lakshman clan were found to be forcing Yadhav to join them.

For sure, the objectives for each group was to convince others to maximize patrons in their respective groups, and what was observed was that the behaviour demonstrated by larger groups. They exerted themselves, showed their so called strength (of being more in numbers) to smaller groups, and did not give space to the smaller groups to put forward their point of view. This also presented the state of mind of those who were more in number considering themselves to be more powerful or above in hierarchy and considering self-superior than smaller groups.

The following question was posed to the group to comprehend-*How good is it to coerce others by considering self with more strength? How good is it to create such hierarchies in your mind consciously or unconsciously?*

#### 9) Authority Compliance

The members in the process of realization of their actions asked faculty (*seemingly considered to be authority compliance in the pursuance of understanding right or wrong*) again and again in all the six processes. The intention behind asking question to faculty was to check the correctness of their actions. This situation was related to bring forth the following perspectives-*Do one think faculty (authority) is always correct? Aren't they stereotyping faculty in their role? Does faculty know everything? Can't one use their own potential to guide one-self?*

The last question gave them strength to make decisions for self, making them know their own potential.

### V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the research in this field continues to haunt righteousness related to absolutism, it may be ascertained that the potential of vignettes may also possibly be used in facilitating and evaluating real behaviour/actions other than espoused behaviour/intentions. The dissonance and questions ascended out of conversation were taken a step forward for meta-ethical evaluations to portray a clear picture of nature of ethical statements, attitudes, values (priorities) and judgments presented by the participants. For sure, individuals reacted the way they believed in things and that appears to be the only truth in the given scenario. What more was needed was that individuals need to work on self and work on related

endeavours. Hence the study also blends certain basic principles of psychotherapy in the process of evaluation of ethical behaviour. This remains to be one of the necessary agendas of learning and teaching and of facilitating ethics. Nevertheless the following questions were brought for comprehension of members in various groups:

- *How right is it to preach something that one does not practice?*
- *What is more superior-intention or action?*
- *By entering in the conversational space of others whom did one satisfy? Self/Others?*
- *Should one care for feelings of others or take them for granted?*
- *Should one consider self to be more effective/superior than their leaders in dealing with such issues?*
- *How good is it to pick collaboration over competition or vice versa?*
- *How good it is to compromise on personal values over values for the organization or vice versa?*
- *How good it is to remain closed or how good is it to be open towards each other?*
- *How good is that to use “I” when you work in collaboration?*
- *How good is that to view one side of the problem? Is it good to discriminate on account of gender?*
- *How good is it to coerce others by considering self with more strength? How good is it to create such hierarchies in one's mind consciously or unconsciously?*
- *Do one think faculty (authority) is always correct? Aren't you stereotyping faculty in his or her role? Does s/he know everything?*
- *Can't one use his/her own potential to guide self?*

Where on one hand the process in the study brings the question of not considering self to be overpowered on the others, it also brings the questions of searching the good or bad for self. In a way where it might dismay self, on the other hand probably bestow a comfort to one to be more self-reliant, depending on involvement of individuals. Hence it tries to present to one in balancing self and take the path to find good and bad of own (value priorities) and for own.

For sure, the participants were left with these questions to struggle and work upon. The agenda of the session was to make them realize what individuals don't realize or overlook in the process of living their lives. The exercise presented to members plausibly will allow them to think divergently and convergently making them more able to use their skills, knowledge, attitude, wisdoms [49]. Being in the lines of learning from the state of art work of Kopp, an attempt was made to couple certain principles of psychotherapy in learning ethical behaviour and make learners search for their own Guru within. Hence the potential of using vignettes from merely intention checking to action checking was demonstrated.

In all these endeavours involved in the process, whether individuals sense these smaller yet important issues, make judgments, remain motivated, or portray some character is inherently studied. The study presented the potential use of the vignette beyond intention checking and goes into spaces

where real actions were observed and live feedback on processes were presented. The study makes an attempt to work on questions raised by researchers in the past on the effectiveness of ethics training in higher education. The studies use communication as a significant tool and as an action to present Berlo's model of communication. Similarities in the behaviour of students and executives suggest the need of bringing interventions at both the levels and that makes the job of the ethics fraternity more important. The study concludes on the lines, that each individual has good and bad of his/her own. The meta-ethical perspectives remain in how one thinks and how one feels about the given situation in the given time. Hence the study provides insights for understanding demonstrated unconscious human behaviour which may fortuitously be termed both ethical and unethical.

#### V. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

The study presented is simply based on face validity of the vignette. No content validity was performed. Though further iterations of data analysis may yield more interesting results. The study was restricted with Indian participants with their value of high context communication and typical attitude of how Indians would react in a given scenario. Introspections in an international scenario need to be looked at and researcher look forward to international collaborations in this regard. Further interviews with different participants would be an attempt to bring in an impetus on questions raised in the study. Also, it will be interesting to study what individual value in the given scenario and why do they value what they value.

#### APPENDIX

##### A. *Comprehension of Sekaran's Narmada River Story*

Narmada River Story is based on the story of a girl Roshna who loved her cousin Ashok. Due to torrential rains poured in there was a flood in the river Narmada. As her cousin whom she loved stays on the other side of the river, she was desperate to go and meet her cousin and his family. On her way, she finds a ferryman, Yadhav, who was carrying food for his special friends. Though Roshna agreed to pay him ten times the real ferry charges, Yadhav did not agree and asked her for more amount. As she had no money to travel, she sat dejected on the river shore. Her college mate Lakshman passes through the river shore where Roshna was sitting dejected. As Lakshman's father owns a ferry, she asks for a favour to Lakshman to drop her on the other side of the river. On this request, Lakshman tells her to allow her to kiss her once and tells her that he himself loved Roshna so much. Roshna felt embarrassed and saw their other friend Vishnu who tells them that this is none of his business, and they should set their issue out on their own. Roshna agreed and allowed Lakshman to kiss her and fulfil his promise to drop her. All her way to Ashok's house, Roshna kept on crying and tells Lakshman, not to see her again during her life. When she reaches Ashok's house, she started crying even more profusely. On an insistence from Ashok, she tells him everything that happened to her. Ashok falls into a rage and begins beating her badly.

Suddenly Ashok's father Pradeep Patel enters the house and sees Ashok beating the girl, with the poor girl weeping loudly. Ashok's father removes his belt and starts beating Ashok. Roshna moves out of Ashok's house with the feeling of derision and retaliation. As the sun was setting, she smiled for the first time since the ceaseless drizzle poured in.

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