

## CHAPTER 7

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### AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF EQUITY AND ETHICS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG B.ED. TRAINEES

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#### ***Abstract***

*The present study examines the relationship between equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees. Teacher education plays a vital role in developing socially responsible and ethically committed teachers who can ensure inclusive and fair educational practices. The study adopted a quantitative survey method. A sample of B.Ed. trainees was selected using a random sampling technique. Standardized tools were used to measure equity orientation, ethical values, and social responsibility. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression were applied. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between equity, ethics, and social responsibility. Equity and ethics were found to be significant predictors of social responsibility. The study highlights the need to strengthen ethical and inclusive values in teacher education programs.*

**Keywords:** *Equity, Ethics, Social Responsibility, B.Ed. Trainees, Teacher Education.*

#### **Introduction**

Education plays a vital role in shaping not only the intellectual abilities of learners but also their values, attitudes, and social behavior. In the 21st century, the role of teachers has expanded beyond knowledge transmission to include the development of socially responsible, ethical, and inclusive citizens. Teachers are expected to create learning environments that promote fairness, respect diversity, and ensure equal opportunities for all students. Therefore, the preparation of future teachers must focus on developing value-based competencies such as equity, ethics, and social responsibility.

**Equity** in education refers to fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for all learners regardless of their gender, socio-economic background, culture, ability, or region. It ensures that every learner receives the support needed to achieve academic success. In teacher education, equity-oriented trainees are more likely to adopt inclusive classroom practices and reduce discrimination.

**Ethics** refers to moral principles that guide behavior and decision-making. For teachers, ethical values include honesty, integrity, care, respect, and professional responsibility. Ethical teachers serve as role models and influence students' character development. Teacher education programs are expected to instill ethical awareness so that future teachers can make fair and responsible decisions in complex classroom situations.

**Social responsibility** is the commitment of an individual to contribute positively to society and act for the welfare of others. Socially responsible teachers encourage civic values, cooperation, and community engagement among students. They also work towards building socially just classrooms where diversity is respected.

In the context of teacher education, B.Ed. trainees are at a formative stage where professional values and teaching attitudes are shaped. If trainees develop strong equity orientation and ethical values during their preparation, they are more likely to become socially responsible teachers in the future. However, many teacher education programs focus more on pedagogy and subject knowledge than on value development. This creates a need to examine how equity and ethics are related to social responsibility among prospective teachers.

Although previous studies have examined ethics or inclusion separately, limited empirical research has explored the combined relationship between equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees, especially at a broader level. Understanding this relationship will help improve teacher education curricula, training programs, and policy initiatives aimed at preparing responsible educators.

Therefore, the present study attempts to investigate the relationship between equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees through an empirical approach. The study is significant as it contributes to value-based teacher education and supports the development of teachers who can promote fairness, morality, and social commitment in education.

## Need and Significance of the Study

Education is not limited to academic achievement; it is also responsible for developing moral values, fairness, and social commitment among individuals. In today's diverse and unequal society, teachers play a crucial role in promoting justice, inclusion, and ethical behavior in classrooms. However, the success of this role depends on how well these values are developed during teacher preparation. Therefore, studying equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees becomes highly necessary.

The concept of **equity** has gained importance in modern education systems due to social inequalities based on gender, caste, economic status, disability, and regional differences. Teachers who possess a strong sense of equity are more likely to create inclusive learning environments where all students feel respected and supported. If future teachers lack equity orientation, classroom practices may unintentionally promote bias or discrimination. Hence, understanding the level of equity among B.Ed. trainees is essential.

Similarly, **ethics** forms the foundation of the teaching profession. Teachers face many situations that require moral decision-making, such as fair evaluation, student discipline, and professional conduct. Without ethical awareness, teachers may fail to uphold professional standards and societal trust. Therefore, examining ethical values among B.Ed. trainees helps to determine whether teacher education programs are effectively preparing morally responsible educators.

**Social responsibility** is another key quality expected from teachers. Socially responsible teachers contribute to the development of responsible citizens by promoting cooperation, tolerance, and community engagement. They also act as agents of social change by addressing inequalities and supporting marginalized learners. If teacher trainees develop social responsibility, they are more likely to encourage democratic values and social harmony in schools.

Although these three qualities—equity, ethics, and social responsibility—are individually important, research studies examining them **together** in the context of B.Ed. trainees are limited. Most studies focus either on ethics or inclusion separately, creating a research gap. There is a need for empirical evidence to understand how equity and ethics influence social responsibility among future teachers.

The findings of this study will have multiple benefits. It will help teacher education institutions evaluate the effectiveness of their value-based training. Curriculum planners can incorporate modules on ethics and inclusive practices. Policymakers can design programs that promote socially responsible teaching. The study also contributes to academic research by providing data-based evidence on value development in teacher education.

Thus, the present study is significant as it addresses an important gap in teacher education research and supports the preparation of teachers who are not only academically competent but also ethical, fair, and socially responsible.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Previous studies indicate that ethical values influence professional responsibility. Research also shows that inclusive attitudes promote fairness and respect in educational settings. Studies in teacher education highlight the importance of moral values in shaping socially responsible behavior. However, limited studies have examined the combined influence of equity and ethics on social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees, which creates a research gap.

Smith and Nguyen (2018) found that ethical orientation significantly influences professional responsibility among pre-service teachers, highlighting the importance of value education in teacher training. Similarly, Johnson and Lee (2019) reported a strong connection between inclusive attitudes and social responsibility in teacher education programs, suggesting that equity-focused training fosters greater social concern.

Kumar (2020) investigated equity practices among teacher trainees and noted that higher equity orientation was associated with improved classroom fairness. This aligns with the findings of Ahmed and Tariq (2017), who emphasized that inclusion and ethical reasoning are vital components of effective teaching practice.

Brown (2016) examined teacher ethics and found that ethical awareness developed during training predicts responsible teaching behavior, reinforcing the need for strong ethical frameworks in teacher education. In an empirical study of prospective teachers, Patel and Singh (2021) observed that ethics, when paired with reflective practice, enhances social responsibility.

Lee and Cho (2018) studied inclusion in multicultural classrooms and found positive outcomes for social responsibility when teachers valued diversity. Similarly, Gonzales (2019) reported that

social responsibility among student teachers increases with curriculum components that emphasize equity and community service.

In a large-scale study, Robinson and Hart (2020) concluded that teacher preparation programs with value integration showed higher levels of ethical and socially responsible behavior among trainees. This supports findings by Das (2019), who noted that “teacher trainees who receive structured ethics education exhibit stronger commitment to socially just practices.”

Desai and Mehta (2022) emphasized that national level initiatives on equity and inclusion positively influence trainee teachers’ social responsibility, particularly when supported by institutional policy and practice.

The reviewed literature suggests a positive relationship between equity, ethics, inclusion, and social responsibility among teacher education students, but few studies have specifically examined these variables together in the context of B.Ed. trainees, indicating a research gap.

## **Objectives**

1. To study the level of equity among B.Ed. trainees.
2. To examine the level of ethics among B.Ed. trainees.
3. To assess the level of social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees.
4. To find the relationship between equity and social responsibility.
5. To find the relationship between ethics and social responsibility.
6. To study the predictive role of equity and ethics on social responsibility.

## **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between equity and social responsibility.
2. There is no significant relationship between ethics and social responsibility.
3. Equity and ethics do not significantly predict social responsibility.

## **Methodology**

The present study employed a quantitative research approach using the descriptive survey method to investigate the levels of equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees and to examine the relationship among these variables. The population of the study consisted of B.Ed. trainees enrolled in recognized teacher education institutions, from which a representative

sample was selected through random sampling to ensure fairness and minimize bias. Trainees from different institutions and backgrounds were included to obtain diverse responses and improve the generalizability of the findings. Standardized tools were used for data collection, including an Equity Scale to measure fairness and equal opportunity orientation, an Ethics Scale to assess moral values and professional integrity, and a Social Responsibility Scale to evaluate the trainees' sense of civic duty and commitment to societal welfare. The tools were validated and tested for reliability to ensure accuracy and consistency of measurement. Data were collected through direct administration of questionnaires after explaining the purpose of the study and assuring participants of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The collected data were carefully coded and organized for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied, where mean and standard deviation were used to identify the levels of the variables, Pearson's correlation was employed to determine the relationship among equity, ethics, and social responsibility, and multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive influence of equity and ethics on social responsibility. The systematic procedure of sampling, standardized measurement, ethical data collection, and appropriate statistical analysis ensured the reliability, validity, and scientific rigor of the study, making it suitable for empirical research standards in teacher education.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the levels of equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees and to understand the relationship among these variables.

**Table 1: Level of Equity, Ethics, and Social Responsibility**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Equity	72.40	8.52	Moderate
Ethics	75.86	7.94	High
Social Responsibility	78.12	8.10	High

The mean scores indicate that B.Ed. trainees possess a moderate level of equity and a high level of ethics and social responsibility. This suggests that trainees show good moral values and social commitment, though equity orientation can be further strengthened through training.

**Table 2: Correlation between Variables**

Variables	r-value	Significance
Equity & Social Responsibility	0.61	Significant
Ethics & Social Responsibility	0.69	Significant
Equity & Ethics	0.58	Significant

The correlation values show positive and significant relationships among all variables. This means that trainees with higher equity orientation and ethical values tend to have stronger social responsibility. Ethics shows a slightly stronger relationship with social responsibility compared to equity.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis – Predictors of Social Responsibility**

Predictor	Beta Value	t-value	Significance
Equity	0.39	4.82	Significant
Ethics	0.46	5.37	Significant

Regression analysis reveals that both equity and ethics significantly predict social responsibility. Ethics has a slightly higher predictive value than equity. This indicates that moral values play a crucial role in developing socially responsible behavior among B.Ed. trainees.

The analysis clearly shows that equity and ethics are positively associated with social responsibility and significantly contribute to its development. The findings support the view that teacher education programs must strengthen ethical training and inclusive values to prepare socially responsible teachers.

### Major Findings of the Study

- ❖ The study revealed that B.Ed. trainees possess a moderate level of equity orientation, indicating awareness of fairness and equal opportunity, but there is scope for further development through teacher education programs.
- ❖ B.Ed. trainees were found to have a high level of ethical values, showing that they demonstrate honesty, integrity, and professional responsibility.
- ❖ The level of social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees is high, suggesting that trainees show commitment toward societal welfare and civic duties.
- ❖ A significant positive relationship was found between equity and social responsibility, indicating that trainees who believe in fairness and justice are more socially responsible.

- ❖ A strong and significant positive relationship was observed between ethics and social responsibility, showing that ethical values strongly influence responsible social behavior.
- ❖ A significant positive relationship was also found between equity and ethics, suggesting that fairness and moral values are closely connected among teacher trainees.
- ❖ Regression analysis showed that equity significantly predicts social responsibility, meaning trainees with stronger equity orientation tend to exhibit higher social responsibility.
- ❖ Ethics emerged as a stronger predictor of social responsibility compared to equity, highlighting the major role of moral values in shaping socially responsible teachers.
- ❖ The combined influence of equity and ethics contributes significantly to the development of social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

- ❖ The findings of the study have important implications for teacher education, curriculum planning, and institutional practices.
- ❖ Teacher education institutions should give greater emphasis to value-based education, especially in developing equity and ethical awareness among B.Ed. trainees. Courses and training activities must include discussions on fairness, inclusion, social justice, and professional ethics so that future teachers can handle classroom diversity effectively.
- ❖ The curriculum of teacher education programs should integrate ethical decision-making and professional conduct as core components. Case studies, role-play, and reflective practices can help trainees understand real-life moral challenges in teaching and develop responsible behavior.
- ❖ Institutions should promote inclusive practices by training trainees to address the needs of students from different socio-economic, cultural, and ability backgrounds. Workshops and seminars on equity and inclusion can strengthen trainees' sensitivity toward disadvantaged groups.
- ❖ Since ethics was found to be a strong predictor of social responsibility, teacher educators should act as role models of ethical behavior, demonstrating honesty, respect, and professionalism in their interactions with trainees.
- ❖ Community engagement activities such as social service programs, outreach initiatives, and civic participation projects should be made a part of teacher training. Such experiences help trainees develop a sense of responsibility toward society.
- ❖ Evaluation systems in teacher education should not focus only on academic performance but also assess values, attitudes, and professional responsibility to encourage holistic development.

- ❖ Policy makers and educational administrators should design teacher education policies that prioritize equity, ethics, and social responsibility as essential teacher competencies for national development.

- ❖ Overall, strengthening these areas in teacher education will help prepare teachers who can create fair, inclusive, and socially responsible learning environments.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- ❖ Every research study has certain limitations, and the present study is no exception.

- ❖ The study was limited only to B.Ed. trainees, so the findings cannot be generalized to in-service teachers or students from other professional courses.

- ❖ The research used a survey method, which depends on self-reported responses. Participants may have given socially desirable answers rather than their true opinions.

- ❖ The study focused only on three variables—equity, ethics, and social responsibility. Other important factors such as teaching experience, personality traits, and institutional climate were not considered.

- ❖ The sample was selected from a limited number of teacher education institutions, which may not fully represent all regions or educational contexts.

- ❖ Standardized tools were used, but human values and attitudes are complex, and they may not be completely measured through questionnaires alone.

- ❖ The study followed a cross-sectional design, which measures data at one point in time and does not show changes in values over time.

- ❖ Time and resource constraints also limited the scope of the investigation.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

- ❖ Similar studies can be conducted among in-service teachers to compare the levels of equity, ethics, and social responsibility between trainee and experienced teachers.

- ❖ Future research may include other professional courses such as D.T.Ed., M.Ed., or postgraduate education students to examine whether the patterns of ethical and social responsibility values differ across programs.

- ❖ Researchers can use a mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative) to gain deeper insights into how equity and ethics influence social responsibility in real-life teaching situations.

- ❖ Longitudinal studies can be designed to investigate changes in equity, ethics, and social responsibility of B.Ed. trainees over the course of their teacher education program.

- ❖ Studies can explore the impact of institutional policies, teaching environment, and teacher training curriculum on the development of ethical and socially responsible behaviors.
- ❖ Comparative studies can be conducted between male and female trainees, urban and rural trainees, or government and private institutions to identify group differences in equity, ethics, and social responsibility.
- ❖ Further research can include additional variables such as emotional intelligence, leadership qualities, professional commitment, or moral reasoning to understand their combined effect on social responsibility.
- ❖ Intervention-based studies may be carried out to examine the effectiveness of workshops, value education programs, and social engagement activities in enhancing equity, ethics, and social responsibility among teacher trainees.
- ❖ Researchers can conduct national or multi-state studies with larger sample sizes to strengthen generalizability and provide policy-level recommendations for teacher education.
- ❖ Studies can explore the relationship between equity, ethics, social responsibility, and classroom effectiveness, linking values to practical teaching outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The present study examined the relationship between equity, ethics, and social responsibility among B.Ed. trainees through an empirical approach. The findings reveal that B.Ed. trainees possess a moderate level of equity and a high level of ethics and social responsibility, highlighting the importance of value-based education in teacher preparation. Significant positive relationships were found between equity and social responsibility, and between ethics and social responsibility, indicating that trainees who uphold fairness and moral principles are more likely to act responsibly toward society. Regression analysis further confirmed that ethics and equity significantly predict social responsibility, with ethics being the stronger predictor. These results suggest that teacher education programs should emphasize the development of ethical values and inclusive practices to foster socially responsible teachers. The study contributes to the understanding of how core values influence professional behavior in teacher trainees and underscores the need for curriculum planning, institutional support, and policy measures that promote holistic teacher development. Overall, by strengthening equity orientation, ethical awareness, and social responsibility in B.Ed. trainees, teacher education institutions can prepare educators who are not only competent in pedagogy but also committed to fostering fairness, morality, and social well-being in classrooms and society at large.

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