

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of International Association for Education in Ethics**  
**Conference Theme: Curricular innovations in ethics education**  
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**Keynote address 4: Bioethics education for enhancing critical thinking of  
medical professionals**

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**Abstract:**

As a medical professional who strayed into the territories of social sciences and humanities, I have been teaching bioethics to medical professionals as well as social scientists since 1999. In relation to healthcare, bioethics, for me, brought a promise to change not just conduct of health professionals, but in the process, also, to reshape the healthcare system with the concerns of patients and people at the centre-stage. For such changes, the methodology of teaching and training health care professionals must stimulate learning that informs and changes the action. Medical education in India does not make serious attempt to inculcate such critical thinking among the healthcare professionals. In bioethics classes, initially, they look for simple checklists that could be learned by heart and used to make their action ethical rather than exploring the context, understanding the value deliberation with patients and people and arriving at the reasoned plan of action.

In the backdrop of such situation, the presentation would describe different methods used for bioethics teaching and learning to inculcate critical thinking. The most challenging aspect is the contextual real case studies from India, cases that could ruffle the feathers of complacent healthcare leaders and institutions. It would argue that while learning about the broad principles, theories and national / international guidelines is important, they would not in themselves stimulate critical thinking – understanding as well as action – unless they are rigorously learned through the fearless appreciation of concrete context.