

SECTION

4

ETHICS AND HUMAN
VALUES



Ethics And Human Development

Ethics and Human Value

INTRODUCTION

Dear reader, the Ghanaian society, like any other society, relies on planned shared values and norms to function very well and ethical conduct serves as the foundation of this agenda. Fostering trust, cooperation, and social harmony among members requires ethics and ethical behaviour. Whether in education, business, governance, or interpersonal relationships, keeping ethical standards is important for building a society where justice, fairness, and respect exist. However, there seems to be a rise of unethical behaviours such as laziness, lying, theft, discrimination, greed, sexual harassment etc. among Ghanaians, especially the youth which is causing a lot of developmental challenges to the individuals and the country. There is therefore the need to study this concept by exploring real-life examples, engaging in thought-provoking discussions, and reflecting on our values and actions to develop our own lives and contribute to the greater good of our beloved Ghana.

At the end of the section, you will be able to

- Examine the place of ethics and ethical behaviour in the development of the individual and the Ghanaian society
- Analyse the consequences of unethical behaviour

Key Ideas

- Ethics refers to the principles that guide our decisions and actions.
- It separates what is right from what is wrong.
- It is a guide that helps us to know the right thing to do and how to treat others well.
- It forms the basis of our moral life.
- Ethical behaviour refers to actions that side with ethical principles.
- Ethics and ethical behaviours promote peace and development within the individual and the country as a whole

THE PLACE OF ETHICS AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY

Meaning of Ethics

Dear reader, imagine you are playing a game with your friends and in this game, there are rules that everyone agrees to follow so that the game is fair and fun for everyone. If all of you decide to follow the rules, the game will be fair and fun but, if one decides not to follow the rules, the game will not be fair and fun and may lead to conflict. Well, think of ethics like the rules of the game. They are like a guide that helps us know the right thing to do and how to treat others well. What then is ethics?

Ethics is all about being good, fair, and honest in everything we do, whether it is playing a game, doing schoolwork, or interacting with people. It is about making choices that are kind and respectful to others and us.

For example, if you find a lost wallet with money inside, what would you do? Keeping the money for yourself might seem tempting, but it would not be the right thing to do. Instead, returning the wallet to its owner would be the ethical choice because it is fair and honest.

Ethics helps us understand the costs of our actions. When we make good choices based on ethical values, it usually leads to positive results, like building trust with others and feeling good about ourselves. But when we make bad choices, it can hurt others and even ourselves eventually. So, simply put, ethics is like a set of rules that teach us to be good people and make the world a better place for all. It is about doing what is right, even when no one is watching. Examples of ethical attitudes include;

1. **Respect for human dignity.** This attitude means treating others with honour and respect, regardless of their status or background.
2. **Honesty.** This means telling the truth and being transparent in one's actions and motives.
3. **Responsibility.** This means taking ownership of one's actions and being willing to accept the consequences that come with them.
4. **Fairness.** This is ensuring that everyone is treated equally and without bias or discrimination.
5. **Compassion.** This is showing empathy and understanding towards others in need or suffering.
6. **Integrity.** This means upholding a moral code and sticking to one's principles even when faced with temptation or pressure to do otherwise.
7. **Loyalty.** This means remaining committed to one's obligations and responsibilities to individuals, organisations, or causes.

8. **Humility.** This is acknowledging one's limitations and being open to learning from others to improve oneself.
9. **Collaboration.** This is working together with others to achieve common goals and valuing the contributions of each team member.

Ethical Behaviour

Our dear reader, how would people know you are respectful, truthful, or hardworking? Yes, unless they see it, and they can only see it when you demonstrate or show it to them continuously. Hence, the act of showing an ethical attitude in you for others to see and testify is what we refer to as ethical behaviour. Let us now try to explain it, but, before we go on, we want you to take your pen and paper and write your definition of ethical behaviour.

Activity 4.1:

What is your definition of ethical behaviour?

Ethical behaviour refers to actions that one shows to people which side with ethical principles. It involves making choices that are morally right and just. It is full of honesty, fairness, and equity in interpersonal, professional, and academic relationships in every activity.

It is the way we act and make decisions based on what we believe is right or wrong. It is about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching because it aligns with our values and principles.

Activity 4.2:

Think about the scenarios on the chart below. What would be the ethical thing to do? Discuss with the learners around you and fill in the chart with your responses.

Scenario	Ethical Behaviour
Your friends are fighting	
There is money on the table in the classroom during break time	
There is no invigilator in the room during an examination	
You are the table lead serving food in the dining hall	

Activity 4.2:

Feedback as a class: did you produce similar responses? What are the challenges for us acting ethically? What might be stopping us in each scenario?

Scenario	Challenges preventing people from behaving ethically in this scenario
Your friends are fighting	
There is money on the table in the classroom during break time	
There is no invigilator in the room during an examination	
You are the table lead serving food in the dining hall	

In everyday life, ethical behaviour guides how we interact with others, how we handle conflicts, and how we make decisions. It is important because it helps to build trust and positive relationships with others, and it contributes to a more just and respectful society overall.

Examples of **Ethical Behaviour** in the Workplace include:

1. **Obedying Company Rules:** Following workplace policies, such as punctuality, appropriate dressing and language, among others.
2. **Effective Communication:** Clear and respectful way to express thoughts, ideas and feelings with colleagues and clients.

3. **Taking Responsibility:** Acknowledging mistakes and working to rectify them.
4. **Accountability:** Being answerable for our actions and decisions.
5. **Professionalism:** Maintaining a high standard of conduct and work quality.
6. **Trust:** Honouring commitments and gaining confidence with others.

Activity 4.3

Discuss – why might ethical behaviour in the workplace help the economy of Ghana grow?

Notes from discussion

Activity 4.4

Match the following statements with their appropriate ethical attitudes

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Going to school regularly | honesty |
| 2. Following instructions all the time | responsible |
| 3. Fulfilling your promises all the time | loyalty |
| 4. Performing your duty always | accountability |
| 5. Showing commitment to your country. | punctual |
| 6. | obedience |

The place of ethics and ethical behaviour in the development of the individual

Dear reader ethics and ethical behaviour play important roles in shaping the life of the individual. Below are some of the ways ethics promote personal development.

Character Building

Ethics help an individual to build a good character. Following the ethical principles in life, the individual builds integrity, which is the foundation of a strong character. Integrity involves being honest and having strong moral principles that help the individual to know and do what is right always.

Good Decision Making

Ethics teaches people how to make informed decisions in life. This is because, before the individual arrives at a decision, the individual considers the ethical effects of the decision by weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the decision. Therefore, the individual always makes the right decisions for his or her personal development.

Professional Development

Ethics is important for professional development. It helps people follow professional norms of behaviour, establish professional boundaries, and sustain ethical standards in their industries. This enables the individual to acquire the positive attitude and values needed to become a good leader.

Promote Emotional Well-Being:

Behaving ethically leads to a sense of self-respect and higher self-esteem. Knowing that one has made the right choices boosts personal satisfaction and emotional well-being. This reduces the feelings of guilt and regret that come from making poor moral choices. This contributes to overall mental health.

Foundation of Personal Integrity

Ethics provide the basis for personal integrity. Individuals with integrity are honest and truthful in their dealings. Being honest with ourselves and with other people is essential to trust each other and to have an open, honest communication style. This helps the individual to gain respect from the people around him or her.

Social Responsibility

Ethics encourage individuals to think about how their activities affect others and the society. It instils in the individual the love for others, caring for the natural environment and thinking of humankind. Therefore, any decision taken by the individual takes into the interest of the public.

Personal Growth and Self-Improvement

Ethical behaviour helps the individual to become committed to personal growth and development. The individual develops a commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement and allows him/herself to open feedback, learn from mistakes, and be motivated for personal growth. As a result of this, ethical principles help in setting personal goals that are both useful to the individual and other members of the society, leading to stable and complete development.

Activity 4.5

1. Pick any three (3) of the above ethical behaviours and describe how they will help you to achieve your goal in life.

2. Complete the table below with your friend in the class on how ethics and ethical behaviour can help with Personal Development on the following: Moral development, Personal integrity, professional development, and Social Responsibility.

Moral development	Personal integrity	Professional Development	Social responsibility

The Place of Ethics and Ethical Behaviour in the Development the Ghanaian Society

Dear reader, can you imagine what Ghana will be, if there are no ethical behaviour among its citizens? Bad, we believe is your answer. This makes ethics very crucial to Ghana's development. Below are some of the roles of ethics in the Ghanaian society.

Ethical means doing the right thing and being fair, kind, and honest. When we behave ethically, we make our community a better place. "There is a special word, Ubuntu, which means caring for each other like a big family. This reminds us that we are all connected and that everyone's happiness is important."

The presence of ethics in the Ghanaian Society will also help us to promote justice, equality, and the rule of law. If the Ghanaian society, is sticking to these principles of governance the country will make giant strides in fighting corruption, promote accountability, and guaranteed that every citizen has fair access to opportunities and resources.

Ethical leadership is key for the development of Ghana. Being a good leader means being honest, fair, and caring, and transparent. The qualities, such as integrity, transparency promote trust in our leaders. This trust will help leaders make better decisions for the country and start projects that benefit everyone, leading to more effective governance and sustainable development.

Ethical conduct will help Ghana gain respect in the world. Once, the country is doing the right thing in business, respecting people's rights, and taking care of the environment, the country will attract more investors, build strong partnerships with other countries that will positively impact the development of our country.

Ethics will play a crucial role in shaping the fabric of Ghanaian society. They will form the foundation of social norms, laws and institutions which influence interactions between individuals and the functioning of communities. Therefore, if Ghanaians adopt ethical behaviours in all our dealings, the Ghanaian society will be devoid of immoral acts to promote peace and development.

Finally ethical behaviour will promote unity and stability among Ghanaians. By promoting trust, cooperation and mutual respect among members of society unity will be achieved. In Ghana, communal values such as hospitality, respect, patience,

forgiveness emphasises the connection between individuals and the importance of collective well-being.

Activity 4.6

1. Read the following story and answer the questions below: The Story of Ubuntu



Anthropologist proposed a game to the kids in an african tribe. He put a basket of fruit near a tree and told the kids that the first one to find the fruits would win them all. When he told them to run, they all took each others hands and ran together, then sat together, enjoying their fruits. When he asked them why they ran like that as one could've taken all the fruits for one's self, they said: "ubuntu, how can one of us be happy and all the other ones are sad?"

Ubuntu is summed up as “I am what I am because of who we all are.”

- a. Why did the children run together?
 - b. what ethical value(s) was shown by the children
 - c. Write the moral lesson(s) you have learnt from the Ubuntu story.
2. Read the story below and answer the questions:

Long ago, Ananse, the clever spider, was eager to know everything. He wanted to be the wisest creature in the world. So, he set about collecting all the wisdom that existed. He went from village to village, and every time he found some wisdom, he placed it into a large, gourd-like pot.

When he had gathered what he believed to be all the wisdom in the world, he decided to hide it where no one else could access it. He thought, “If I am the only one with wisdom, people will look up to me and treat me with the utmost respect.”

Ananse decided to hide the pot at the top of a tall tree. He tied the pot in front of him and attempted to climb the tree, but every time he tried, the pot would get in the way, and he would slip down. His son, Ntikuma, was observing from afar and noticed his father's struggle.

Ntikuma approached Ananse and suggested, “Father, why don't you tie the pot on your back instead? That way, you can climb more easily.”

Ananse was taken aback by his son's advice. He realised that despite his possession of all the wisdom, he had not considered such a simple solution. His son's suggestion worked, and Ananse was able to climb the tree with ease. However, as he climbed, the pot slipped and fell, breaking into pieces. The wisdom within scattered everywhere.

The people of the world saw the scattered wisdom and eagerly picked it up. Everyone got a little piece of Ananse's collected wisdom.

- a.** What is the unethical behaviour displayed by Ananse?
- b.** What ethical behaviour did Ananse learn?
- c.** How can this message help modern Ghanaians?

Optional activity: turn another Ananse story into a play and present to the class: what ethics and lessons can we learn from these stories? How can they help us form a stronger society?

CONSEQUENCES OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Dear reader, before discussing the effects of unethical behaviour, remember if you have ever insulted someone, stolen someone's item, spread false information about someone, maltreated an individual or told lies against someone etc.

If you have ever done any or all of the above before, you have behaved unethically towards the person. Similarly, if someone has ever done any of the above to you, the person has also behaved unethically.

What then, is the meaning of unethical behaviour? It is any type of behaviour which is not morally correct. These types of behaviours have a lot of negative effects on individuals, organisations and society as a whole. We are going to discuss some of these effects in detail, starting with the effects on individuals, organisation and society.





Fig. 4.1: Pictures of unethical behaviours.

Individual Effects.

The following are some of the effects of unethical behaviour on an individual:

1. Legal troubles

Unethical behaviours may lead to the violation of laws or regulations of the society. Once the individual violates or breaks laws such as stealing, fighting, bullying etc., the individual is arrested and punished. Some may be sued at the law courts and tried, leading to imprisonment, fines or both.



Fig. 4.2: A picture of showing both female and male prisoners

2. Loss of respect

Unethical behaviours tarnish an individual's fame or esteem. For example, every person is born with some dignity or respect. However, if you are caught or arrested by the police for stealing, people will no longer respect you. In this case, your image is tarnished. Also, the trust that people have in you is eroded thereby affecting personal and professional relationships.



Fig. 4.3: A picture of suspected armed robbers in handcuffs

3. Emotional effect

Unethical behaviours can have emotional effects on the individual. When an individual is known to behave unethically, people in their communities and at times family members try to avoid them. They always point accusing fingers at them which makes them become worried and depressed. Usually, guilt, shame and stress from their unethical behaviours affect their mental and emotional well-being.

4. Loneliness

Unethical behaviours bring about loneliness. In our African society, there are norms, values and attitudes that have been established to check the lifestyles of the people to promote peace, unity and progress. Therefore, anyone who acts opposite to these values, norms and attitudes is seen as oppositional and does not allow a harmonious society to flourish. As a result, people may not want to associate with those who demonstrate unethical behaviours and may find themselves isolated.

Activity 4.7

In Madam Millicent's class, there's an important social studies test coming up. The students are feeling the pressure to perform well. However, some students have been discussing ways to cheat during the test and you overheard them.

How can you encourage ethical behaviour among these students to maintain a fair learning environment? Discuss with the other learners around you and come up with some ideas to feedback to the class.

Activity 4.8

If a student is caught stealing some provisions from a friend's chop box and suspended for two weeks by the school authorities, discuss the immediate effects

on this student, when he or she returns to the school? How might people react to him or her and why?

Activity 4.9

‘Had I known is always last.’ Discuss with your friends: what does this mean?

Read the scenario below and then choose roles and role play the situation including the phrase ‘*Had I known is always last*’.

Afia has not been listening in lessons at school and instead has been talking to her friend Ama rather than paying attention to her teachers. Afia is a very clever student so does not think that she needs to study more at home. Ama feels bad about talking in the lessons and has gone to the teacher to apologise and ask for some extra notes to help her study for the end of term test. A few weeks later, it is time for the test. Afia is embarrassed that she hasn’t studied and tries to pressure Ama into helping her the night before. Ama does not, as she must focus on her work. Instead, Afia tries to cheat the next day and is caught by the teacher and fails the test. Ama does very well in the test and wins an academic prize.

Once you have role-played, discuss the following questions:

1. What sort of behaviours were the girls showing?
2. What were the impacts of their behaviours?
3. What did Ama do that was admirable?
4. What should Afia learn for next time?

Organisational Effects of Unethical Behaviour [H3]

Dear reader, can you identify any business or company, school or credit union in your community that has collapsed? Can you share with your friend the reason(s) that led to the collapse? Good! Was it because of laziness or pilfering? Absenteeism or stealing? We believe you have now seen how unethical behaviour within organisations can have negative consequences. Let us explore some of these effects.

1. Loss of trust

Trust is important for healthy social interactions, effective collaboration, and successful business relationships. However, unethical actions destroy the trust between stakeholders and the organisation involved. When this happens, the organisation may lose confidence in investors, the public and loyal customers. This in the end will lead to the collapse of the organisation.

2. Low productivity

Unethical behaviours bring about a decrease in the amount of goods and services to be produced by the organisation. When workers in an organisation show

unethical behaviours such as laziness at work, lateness to work and absenteeism, it will affect the level of productivity. Also, discrimination and cheating reduce workers' morale and work input which leads to low productivity.

3. Financial Loss

Unethical behaviours bring about financial losses to the organisation. When people in an organisation engage in fraud, embezzlement, pilfering, lateness and other unethical business practices the organisation loses a lot of money that may affect the operations of the organisation which may finally lead to the collapse of the organisation.

Finally, because of unethical behaviour, organisations face legal penalties and this damages the good name of the organisation. We have seen on television or heard on the radio how some businesses or organisations that use fake materials in production or how some sell fake products out of greed have been exposed.

Activity 4.10

Read the scenario below and answer the questions that follow:

At a factory which has a canteen, the catering staff have been caught taking food supplies meant for workers and selling them outside the factory. This behaviour not only affects the factory financially but also impacts on the well-being of the workers who rely on nutritious meals during the day.

- a. How might this act affect the business?
- b. What steps could the business owners take to address it?

Societal Effects

Dear reader, our country has not developed as much as similar countries after 67 years of political independence and do you know that unethical behaviour is one of the reasons for this failure? Yes! It is one of the reasons why we have not grown as much as we could have done as a country. Unethical behaviour can have a wide range of social impacts, which are important for learners like you to understand. Below are five key societal effects of unethical behaviour:

1. Destruction of social fabric

Unethical behaviour, such as lying, cheating, or stealing, can destroy the trust within a community or society. This can set a bad example, especially for younger individuals. When the youth see their leaders engaging in dishonest acts without facing the punishments for it, they may be tempted to imitate these behaviours. This can create a culture of dishonesty and misconduct, making it difficult to uphold ethical standards thereby destroying the good name of the society.

2. Increased Conflict and Tension in the society

Unethical actions such as disrespect, discrimination, corruption may lead to tensions and conflicts between people in a society like Ghana. For example, if one group is sidelined in leadership positions or one political party cheats in an election, or one ethnic group disrespects the other, it can create bitterness and suspicion raising tensions in that society. Again, unethical business practices can lead to disputes and legal battles.

3. Environmental Degradation

Unethical practices, such as illegal logging, illegal mining (galamsey), and industrial pollution, directly degrade natural environments. Companies or individuals who are interested in profit more than protecting the environment may engage in activities that lead to deforestation, soil erosion, water contamination, and air pollution. This degradation can lead to the loss of biodiversity, the destruction of habitats, and loss of human lives.



Fig. 4.4: Human activities that destroy the natural environment.

4. Undermining Social Structures and Institutions

Ethical behaviour is important for the proper functioning of social structures and institutions. Unethical actions can weaken these structures, leading to a loss of honour and competence. For example, if corruption is common in government institutions, it can lead to a lack of public trust in those institutions, reducing their effectiveness in serving the community.

5. Poor healthcare delivery in the society

Unethical behaviours in the healthcare system such as falsifying medical records, taking bribes, increasing medical claims, reusing medical equipment that are supposed to be thrown away may increase the risks of infections, medical errors, and inadequate treatment. This in the end will lead to poor treatment of illness and its related problems.



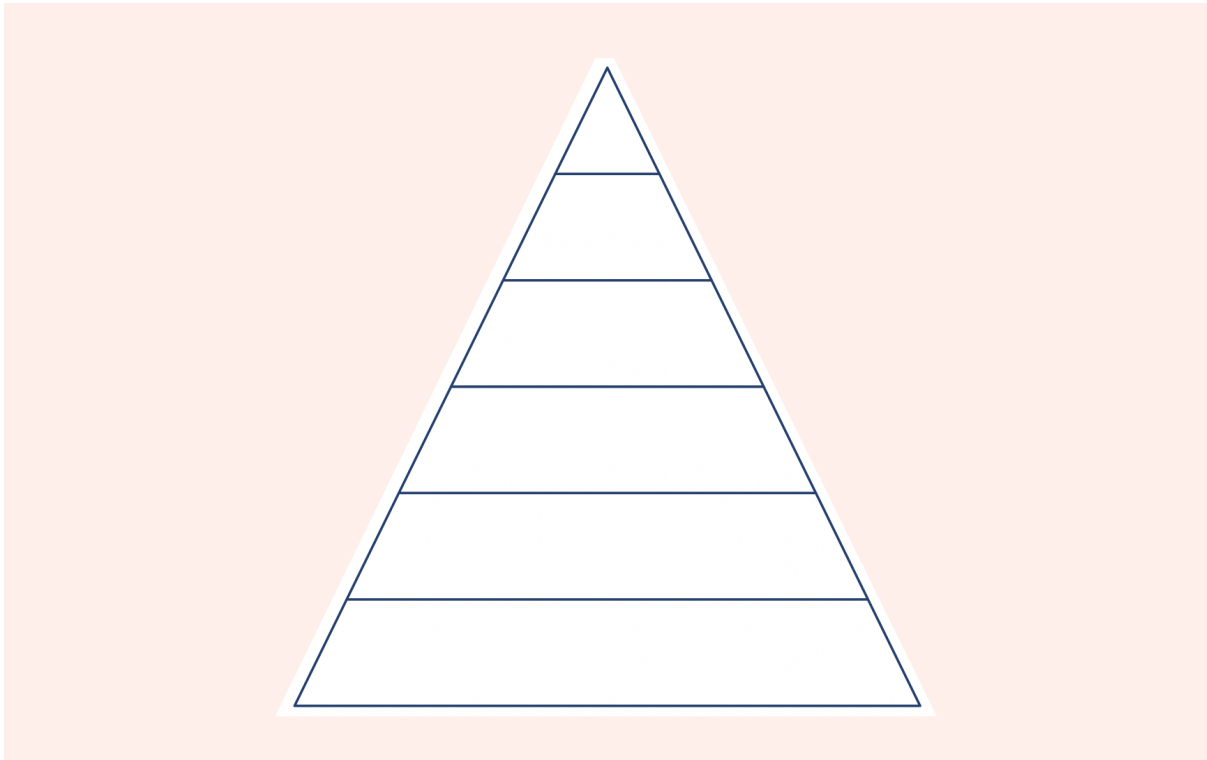
Fig. 4.5: Poor healthcare delivery in Ghana due to unethical behaviour

6. Creation of class divisions

Unethical behaviour can deeply divide society. Since few rich people in the society benefit from these unethical behaviours at the expense of the many poor, it worsens the existing inequalities. For example, corrupt practices allow the rich individuals and businesses to gain unfair advantages, while the poor groups continue to suffer from lack of opportunities and resources which create a sharp division. Also, unfair practices based on race, gender, religion, or other characteristics are unethical behaviours that can create deep societal divisions.

Activity 4.11

Use the template below and work with your elbow partner to rank the social consequences of unethical behaviour in terms of the importance of their impact. Put the most important at the top and the least important at the bottom. To really stretch yourself, add notes around the diagram to explain your thinking.



Long term Effects of Unethical Behaviour

Dear reader, when a country or a society fails to control unethical behaviours, it may have a long-term effect on that society or country. Below are some of them:

1. Cultural Decline

The general approval of unethical behaviour destroys cultural values and norms. As time goes on, the moral and ethical standards of a society can become diluted making what was once considered wrong become acceptable in a society. When people see unethical behaviour going unpunished, they may begin to think it is acceptable. This can create a cycle where more and more people engage in unethical actions, believing it is just the way things are done. For example, parents paying bribes for their wards to get admission into Grade A schools instead of telling them to study hard is gaining root in the Ghanaian society.

2. Economic Impact

In a culture where unethical behaviour is common, economic growth can be restricted. Corruption, fraud, and dishonesty may drive investors away. This may lead to the closure of some businesses and companies. This in the end may lead to low productivity, high unemployment rate and the creation of an unstable uneven economic situations.

3. Inequality and Injustice

Unethical behaviour often leads to unfair advantages for some and disadvantages for others. This can increase inequality and create a sense of injustice, leading to social unrest and conflict. If a student cheats, he or she might get a better

grade than someone who studied honestly. This is unfair because the cheater gets rewards without putting in the effort.

4. Poor Leadership and Governance

When leaders engage in or tolerate unethical behaviour, it weakens their authority and integrity. This can lead to poor governance, corruption, and ineffective policies, which can have long-term negative effects on a country or organisation.

5. Loss of Global Respect

Unethical behaviour can make a community or country develop a poor name internationally. This can affect everything from tourism to international relations and trade as other cultures and countries may be suspicious of engaging with a society known for unethical behaviours.

6. Lower Quality of Life

When unethical behaviour is common, it can lead to a poor quality of life. This is because, services may be unreliable, public systems may fail, and there can be a general sense of hopelessness and unhappiness among the people.



Fig. 4.6: Some children in a filthy environment.

Activity 4.12

In pairs or small groups, create a presentation on the long-term effects of unethical behaviour on Ghana as a whole. If you have access to the internet, use this to research specific examples from recent Ghanaian history to support your ideas or use local issues that you already know about. To challenge yourselves, try to propose solutions to these problems. Use the space below to plan your ideas.

Activity 4.13

In your neighbourhood, there's a growing problem with littering. People throw rubbish on the streets, in public parks, and even near water bodies. This behaviour not only harms the environment but also reflects poorly on our community.

- a.** Discuss with your elbow partner: what types of unethical behaviour and impacts have been shown in this example?
- b.** How would you encourage your classmates and neighbours to adopt responsible waste disposal practices?

Review Questions

1. Discuss with your friend any three (3) ethical behaviours expected of us as individuals to be honest.
2. Explain four ethical attitudes and values that can help Ghana wins her fight against Galamsey
3. You have been selected as a peace ambassador for general elections in the country. What four ethical behaviours will you promote among Ghanaians to ensure peaceful elections?
4. Select five ethical behaviours you will adopt for life and give reasons for your selection
5. If a business organisation is established in your community and at the close of work every day, some of the employees steal some of the products, discuss any four ways by which this unethical behaviour would affect the organisation.
6. Explain what constitutes unethical behaviour and its societal effects.
7. What is the difference between ethical and unethical behaviour?
8. Discuss any of the four ways in which ethical behaviour would contribute to individual development.
9. Discuss any three long-term effects of unethical behaviour.

EXTENDED READING

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