

Moral values in ethics

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Abstract: Ethics deals with some moral principles that control one's behavior or actions. Ethics is known as moral philosophy because it judges human actions as 'Right' or 'Wrong', 'Good' or 'Bad' in ethical manner. Objective of this paper is to explore the following:

- Definition of ethics related with individual assessment of values.
- Relation between the concepts of ethical values and morality from ethical perspective.
- Compare different ethical theories in context of ethical values.

Ethics is defined as the normative science. It deals with voluntary human actions only. Voluntary action is an action which includes some conscious process in order to act. Ethics is an individual assessment of values such as right, wrong, good, bad etc. Ethics judges one's action to be right or wrong, good or bad in certain criteria. In ethics there is a relation between morality and ethical values. Ethical values are to be considered as the outcome of certain human action. Every human action is related with some intentions or consequences. In ethics, value refers to or denotes the degree of importance of an action which includes some moral values. There are different types of values such as ethical values, social values, political values, aesthetic values etc. Both ethics and morality deal with some principles in order to judge the human action. Morality can be described as rules or principles by which one's action is guided. It is a system for guiding one's conduct and principles for evaluating those rules. In ethics there are different theories such as teleological theory, deontological theory etc. Each of these theories discusses whether human action is guided by intentions or by consequences.

Key Words: Value, Morality, Right, Wrong, Intention, Consequences.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Ethics is a study of rightness and wrongness of human conduct. In ethics conduct means purposive action that is related with the choice and will of human behavior. It is the study of supreme ideal of human action and involves with some purpose of human life. It is a normative science because it concerns with laws which regulate human life and not with the actual facts of human life or human actions. Normative science seeks to determine norms, ideals and standards and is also concerned with the ideals of truth. The main aim of ethics is to explore norms, ideals and values of human behavior. It judges the moral value of human conduct. It gives systematic explanation of rightness and wrongness of voluntary actions of humans based on some criteria or ideals. It is a value-oriented study related with one's action.

2. DEFINITION OF ETHICS:

In ethics there is a close relation between the term "ethics" and "morality". Generally, these two terms are interchangeable, but there are few differences between the two. Morality is a normative standard by which human actions can be justified whether it is 'good' or 'bad', whereas ethics is a standard of 'good' and 'bad'. Morality is a guiding principle through which one can determine an action to be right or wrong. So, ethics is the philosophical study of morality. Ethics deals with some moral values to interpret the rightness and wrongness of human behavior. It is a study based on observation, classification, and explanation of human action with reference to an ideal. It is not concerned with the judgements of facts. Instead, it is concerned with the judgements of value. This is the reason that ethics is called normative science. It discusses the nature, motives, intentions and consequences of voluntary human action. It is a study that is mainly concerned about the principle of moral conduct regarding virtue of human behavior. It is a branch of knowledge that governs rightness and wrongness of human behavior as well as profession, group or organization. The word 'Ethics' is derived from the Greek term 'Ethos' which means custom. So, ethics is related to values and virtues of human conduct.

There are mainly three types of ethics: Meta -Ethics, Normative-Ethics, Applied-Ethics. Meta -ethics is concerned about ethical properties, attitudes and judgements of human conduct and its function is to define vague concepts of various human activities in ethical term. Normative ethics deals with the standard or norms by which one's action can be judged to be right or wrong. It deals with the criteria of moral virtues. Applied ethics is concerned about the practical side of human life. It analyses some specific ethical issues and cases in a professional as well as practical

field. It makes a bridge between theory and practice. So, ethics is such a branch of study which judges in every aspects of human conduct in a normative manner. Ethical principles are applicable to judge the moral aspects of human conduct. So, ethics and morals both are inter connected and this is the reason that ethics is known as the principles of moral conduct regarding the virtue of human behavior. Ethics cannot be considered as positive science because it does not explain any events or actions. Rather ethics does an evaluation of the events and actions. Hence it can be considered as normative science. As normative science, ethics can be considered as both theoretical and practical. Ethics evaluates different moral attributes of human behavior based on ideal moral criteria.

3. ETHICAL VALUES AND MORALITY - DIFFERENT THEORIES :

Ethics is a study of morality which includes moral obligations of human actions. Moral obligation is related with moral values. In this context, the ethical aspect of teleological theory has to be analyzed. This theory is concerned with the consequences of one's action. According to this theory, every human action is based on certain goal. If the outcome of an action is good then that action is to be considered as morally good. This theory holds that rightness of an action is determined by the number of good consequences they produce. The word "teleology" is derived from the Greek word "telos" that refers to an end of an action. This theory says that an action is justified by its end that depends on person's own conception. Utilitarianism is an example of teleological theory of ethics that states an action to be right if it produces greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people. It implies consequences of action. This is an ethical approach that an action can be judged morally based on the effect. Teleological theory is often referred to as "consequentialist" theory.

According to Deontological theory, morality is a matter of duty. Virtue of an action doesn't depend on its consequences. Actions are right or wrong in themselves. This theory says that morality of an action depends on the nature of an action and the will of agents rather than the effect that comes as an outcome from that action. This theory emphasizes on the moral obligations and motives. According to this theory ethical value of an action is dependent on the agent's good will. Goodwill does not depend on any condition. It is intrinsically valuable. Immanuel Kant is the proponent of this deontological theory of ethics. This theory is a category of normative ethical theory which is concerned with certain rules or duties and holds that morality is a matter of duty. It focuses on duties and principles and holds that moral worth of an action is attributed only if it is done for the sake of duty.

Ethical value is also defined in various ways based on pleasure and desire of individuals. Ethics deals with moral values that includes different traits of human behavior such as desire, pleasure etc. Fulfillment of desires and pleasures are not intrinsically valuable. Individuals have deep spiritual cravings and self-realization that are fulfilled based on their intrinsic values. That is why Kant said that moral values are to be determined and judged by Categorical Imperative of individuals which is an intuitive power of an individual. If an action is driven by the Categorical Imperative, then it is adjudged as morally good. If an action is done by an individual based on their own self-interest, that is not an example of showing moral goodness. Whether an action will be morally good depends on good will or rational will of the individual who is doing that action.

According to Hobbes, there is no general "Good" and it is related to personal desire. Here the opinions of Hobbes regarding the definition of moral ethics differ with that of Kant. The interpretation of moral values done by Hobbes is subjective – it depends on the person who is doing the action to decide whether the action is good or bad. He says that if an action is good for one individual it does not signify that the action will be good for all individuals. In this context, John Dewey says that "Good" is an objective of reflective desire. He says that there has to be a method for improving one individual's value judgements. The value judgements have to be put into practice and it has to be measured whether satisfactory results are being obtained. An iterative approach can be followed for obtaining better outcomes from actions.

4. CONCLUSION:

Ethical value may be treated as positive or negative. Ethical values are guided by moral principles. Ethics are an individual's concept of right and wrong, a framework of moral principles, and the rules of behavior that are recognized in human actions. So, ethics comprises the principles, values and standards to guide conduct of individuals but not everyone share the same understanding of right and wrong. There are different views regarding the definition of attributes of ethics such as "Good", "Bad", "Right", "Wrong". Ethics is not fully theory oriented and has a practical approach that a person has to follow for leading a life with moral integrity.

5. RESULT :

Main aim of ethics is to identify the truth of human actions. It arouses one's inner self and affects the individual's thinking and guides the person to perform activities aligned with moral principles. For this reason, Socrates says "Knowledge is virtue". It means knowledge is revealed through moral actions. Ethics guides people to understand what is "Good" and what is "Bad". It provides the insight that is required for understanding and differentiating between

“Right” and “Wrong”. Although ethics may not directly make a person moral, but it surely provides some guiding principles that if followed will help the person to lead a life that has moral integrity.

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