

UCS1704 – Management and Ethical Practices

**UNIT – III
Kohlberg's & Gilligan's Theory**

Semester – VII

Dr. G. Raghuraman, Associate Professor/CSE



OUTLINE

- Senses of Engineering Ethics
- Variety of moral issues
- Types of inquiry
- Moral dilemmas
- Moral Autonomy
- Kohlberg's theory & Gilligan's theory
- Consensus and Controversy
- Professions and Professionalism
- Professional Ideals and Virtues and Uses of Ethical Theories.

KOHLBERG'S THEORY

- Moral Autonomy is based on the psychology of moral development.
- The first psychological theory was developed by **Jean Piaget**
- On the basis of Piaget's theory, **Lawrence Kohlberg** developed three main levels of moral development
- Which is based on the kinds of reasoning and motivation adopted by individuals with regard to moral questions.

STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Pre-conventional Level:

- It is nothing but self-centered attitude.
- In this level, right conduct is very essential for an individual which directly benefits him
- According to this level, individuals are motivated by their willingness to avoid punishment, or by their desire to satisfy their own needs
- This level is related to the moral development of children and some adults who never want to go beyond a certain limit.

STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Conventional Level:

- As per this level the rules and norms of one's family or group or society has been accepted as the final standard of morality.
- When individuals are under this level, always want to satisfy others and also to meet the expectations of the society and not their self interest.
- No adult tries to go beyond this level.

STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Post- Conventional Level:

- This level is said to be attained when an individual recognizes the right and the wrong on the basis of a set of principles which governing rights and the general good which are not based on self- interest or social conventions.
- These individuals are called “**autonomous**”, because they only think for themselves and also they do not agree that customs are always correct.
- They want to live by general principles which are universally applied to all people.

Lawrence Kohlberg

- Kohlberg's theory of moral development is very much related to the goals of studying ethics at college level
- Moral responsibility comes out of the foundation of early moral training given by an individual's parents and culture.
- As per Kohlberg's view only few people would reach the post conventional level

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

- Each level is based on the degree to which a person conforms to conventional standards of society
- Each level has two stages that represent different degrees of sophistication in moral reasoning.

Kohlberg's Levels and Stages of Moral Development

I. Preconventional Level

Moral reasoning is guided by external consequences. No internalization of values or rules.

Stage 1: Punishment and Obedience

"Right" is obeying the rules simply to avoid punishment because others have power over you and can punish you.

Stage 2: Mutual Benefit

"Right" is an even or fair exchange, so that both parties benefit. Moral reasoning guided by a sense of "fair play."

II. Conventional Level

Moral reasoning is guided by conformity to social roles, rules, and expectations that the person has learned and internalized.

Stage 3: Interpersonal Expectations

"Right" is being a "good" person by conforming to social expectations, such as showing concern for others and following rules set by others so as to win their approval. For example, behaving like a "good" child, student, citizen, spouse, friend, or employee.

Stage 4: Law and Order

"Right" is helping maintain social order by doing one's duty, obeying laws simply because they are laws, and showing respect for authorities simply because they are authorities.

III. Postconventional Level

Moral reasoning is guided by internalized legal and moral principles that protect the rights of all members of society.

Stage 5: Legal Principles

"Right" is helping protect the basic rights of all members of society by upholding legalistic principles that promote the values of fairness, justice, equality, and democracy.

Stage 6: Universal Moral Principles

"Right" is determined by self-chosen ethical principles that underscore the person's profound respect for ideals such as the sanctity of human life, nonviolence, equality, and human dignity. If these moral principles conflict with democratically determined laws, the person's self-chosen moral principles would take precedence, such as the conscientious objector who refuses to be drafted because of moral principles against war.

SOURCES: Based on Kohlberg (1981) and Colby & others (1983).

Criticisms of Kohlberg's theory

- **Research has not supported** Kohlberg's belief that the development of abstract thinking in adolescence invariably leads people to the formation of idealistic moral principles
- Some cross-cultural psychologists argue that Kohlberg's stories and scoring system reflect a **Western emphasis on individual rights, harm, and justice that is not shared in many cultures.**
- **Kohlberg's early research was conducted** entirely with male subjects, yet it became the basis for a theory applied to both males and females.

GILLIGAN'S THEORY



**Carol Gilligan's
Theory of Moral Development**

GILLIGAN'S THEORY

Pre-conventional Level

- This is the same as Kohlberg's first level in that the person is preoccupied with self centered reasoning, caring for the needs and desires of self.

Conventional

- Here the thinking is opposite in that, one is preoccupied with not hurting others and a willingness to sacrifice one's own interests in order to help or nurture others (or retain friendship).

Post-conventional Level

- Achieved through context-oriented reasoning, rather than by applying abstract rules ranked in a hierarchy of importance. Here the individual becomes able to strike a reasoned balance between caring about other people and pursuing one's own self-interest while exercising one's rights.

Carol Gilligan's Model

- Feels Kohlberg's model is based on an **ethic of individual rights and justice**, which is a more common perspective for **males**
- Gilligan's model of **women's** moral development is based on an **ethic of care and responsibility**.
- However, when subjects are carefully matched, there do **not** seem to be systematic gender differences in moral reasoning