

Write up on Session- 8B

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- **Environmental degradation and current civilization from the points of view of act vs rule utilitarianism :**

The main principle of utilitarianism is the idea of “greatest happiness for the greatest number of people”. An action is acceptable if it has a tendency to cause happiness or pleasure and wrong if it tends to produce pain—not just for those who take part of the action but also for everyone else affected by it—according to utilitarianism, a tradition in ethical norms that originated with the English philosophers and economists Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill in the late 18th and 19th centuries. A kind of utilitarianism, or consequentialism, holds that decisions should be made according to the consequences of their acts.

Egoism is the belief that each person should only continue as per their own self-interest even at the cost of others, and any ethical theory that defines some actions as right or wrong despite their consequences are in contrast to utilitarianism. The utilitarian argues that it is believed for the right thing to be done from an incomplete cause, in contrast to ethical theories that argue that an action's rightness or wrongness relies on the representative's intention.

But when the term utilitarianism comes, the demand for pleasure and pain gets more precise on the basis of betterment of a large number of people. According to Mill, "utilitarianism" is an idea that a particular "theory of life" serves as the "foundation of morals." His idea of existence was monistic, according to which there is only one fundamentally useful thing—pleasure. He claimed that as people have a natural tendency to find pleasure and avoid pain, society should aim to maximize overall happiness by encouraging and increasing activities that bring about

pleasure and decreases actions that cause pain. Therefore, Mill believed that some types or kinds of pleasure are more important than others due to their essential properties, compared to a version of hedonism that shows pleasure or happiness as a consistent fact in any circumstances.

On the other hand, all action should be encouraged towards seeking pleasure and avoiding pain: “Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do” (Bentham, HUM 103 Booklet, Page 103) . According to Bentham, the idea of the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the best answer since it includes both the happiness of one person and the happiness of a large group of people.

Theories of utilitarianism can be applied on the issue of Environmental damages and our modern lifestyle from the perspective of act vs rule utilitarianism. According to the idea of act utilitarianism, every action is balanced against its ability to provide the maximum happiness. According to this perspective, environmental degradation is morally wrong since it results in suffering for both non-human creatures and humans. Act utilitarianism would force us to take part in individual environmental preservation efforts including lowering our carbon footprint, recycling, and energy conservation.

On the contrary, rule utilitarianism judges the impact of acts based on how well they follow the rules or values that benefit society as a whole. Rule utilitarianism would take a broader approach to environmental damage, taking into account both societal influences and individual acts that

result in harm to the environment. This may involve rules that encourage protecting the environment or the structure of our economic system, which places more importance on benefit than ecological.

In this context of environmental damages and our modern lifestyle, utilitarianism would consider the effect of huge organizations on the environment and society. These organizations frequently prioritize benefits over natural security, driving to actions such as cutting down the trees at a huge rate, contamination, and devastation of living space of all living beings, not only humans. Act utilitarianism emphasizes the significance of personal activities and empowers us to consider the effect of our choices on the environment and society. This will be empowering for people, because it recognizes the part we all play in making a better economic future. Moreover, act utilitarianism can be challenging in action as well, because it requires us to always measure the potential consequences of our activities and make hard choices.

To sum up, as per the theories of utilitarianism and my thoughts on the issue of environmental damages and our modern lifestyle, I think act utilitarianism indicates the value of one's acts and motivates individuals to make decisions that benefit the environment and our well-being. So, we should consider and be concerned about the consequences of our actions. Thus, the rule utilitarianism method is more standard, including the impact of laws on the environment and society. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages and may be used in harmony to achieve a society that is more fair and sustainable. Finally, it is ultimately up to each individual to decide how we can best help to a brighter future for ourselves and others in the future.