

# Professional Ethics: Unit 1 - Part 2 of 2

## Contributions of Moral Thinkers and Philosophers from India and the World

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## Philosophy

- Philosophy is the methodical work of thoughts.
- It tries to understand the meaning and the value of life.
- It is an attempt to understand the ultimate reality.
- Philosophy is the study of the principles which underlie all knowledge.
- Philosophy tries to discover ultimate truth.
- Philosophy is love of knowledge and philosopher is a person who seeks knowledge.



## Philosophy

- In India, philosophy is called '**Darshan**' which means 'Vision' and also the means or instruments of vision.
- Indian philosophy arises out of the urge for the direct realization of ultimate reality.
- We find the seeds of Indian philosophy in the Upanishads, the sacred books of Hindus.



## Modern Moral Philosophy

- Modern moral philosophy is increasingly revolving around 'claims-based' or 'rights-based ethics', which are ethical theories based on the fundamental principle of human rights and other rights or claims of the individual.
- Rights-based theories argue that people have a claim to certain freedoms and rights, like liberal theories which focus on people's claim to freedoms like the freedom of speech, association, religion, etc.
- These modern theories are focusing on people's claim to rights like human rights, civil rights, political rights and social/economic rights.





## Branches of Ethics

- Descriptive Ethics
- Normative Ethics
- Meta-Ethics
- Applied Ethics



## Descriptive Ethics

- Descriptive ethics studies the history and evolution of ethics.
- It gives the record of certain taboos, customs, or conventions.
- For example, it states the history of various institutions like family or marriage.
- Descriptive ethics investigates people's ethical ideals or what actions are condemned in a society.



## Descriptive Ethics cont'd

- It aims to find out people's beliefs about values, which actions are right and wrong and which characteristics of a moral agent are virtuous.
- Descriptive ethics seeks the explanation of actual choices made by moral agents in practice.
- It tries to examine the ethical codes applied by various groups.
- Descriptive Ethics is a value - free approach to ethics.
- It is empirical investigation of people's moral beliefs.



## Normative Ethics

- Normative ethics involves arriving at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct.
- Normative ethics is also called as prescriptive ethics.
- It is the study of ethical theories that prescribe how people ought to act.
- It examines standards for the rightness and wrongness of actions.
- It provides justification for punishing a person who disturbs social and moral order.





## Normative Ethics cont'd

- Normative ethics offer the moral principles to use to resolve difficult moral decisions.
- Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontological ethics, Mill's consequentialism (Utilitarianism) and the Bhagwad Gita's Nishkam Karmayoga are the theories in Normative Ethics
- The Golden Rule is a classic example of a normative principle: "We should do to others what we would want others to do to us".
- Since one would want people to feed him if he was starving, then he should help feed starving people.
- Using this same reasoning, we can theoretically determine whether any possible action is right or wrong.



## Meta Ethics

- Meta ethics is defined as the study of the origin and meaning of ethical concepts.
- In Meta ethics, two issues are prominent:
  - Metaphysical issues concerning whether morality exists independently of humans
  - Psychological issues concerning the underlying mental basis of our moral judgments and conduct
- In other words, Meta ethics is the study of what ethical terms and theories actually refer to.
- it determines the validity of theories advanced in Normative Ethics



## Applied Ethics

- Applied ethics is the branch of ethics which consists of the analysis of specific, controversial moral issues such as abortion, animal rights, or euthanasia.
- Applied ethics deals with the questions such as:
  - Is getting an abortion immoral?
  - Is euthanasia immoral?
  - Is affirmative action right or wrong?
  - What are human rights , and how do we determine them?
  - Do animals have rights as well?



# Theory of Descriptive Ethics - Lawrence Kohlberg

## Development of Moral Reasoning/Consciousness

- Lawrence Kohlberg posed hypothetical dilemmas of various types to 75 boys aged 10 -13-16 and continued to question them periodically for 30 years.
- At the heart of each dilemma was the concept of justice.
- Kohlberg concluded that how people think about moral issues reflects **cognitive development** and that people arrive at moral judgment on their own, rather than merely internalizing standards of parents, teachers or peers.



# Normative Ethics Theories

## Three important normative ethics theories

- Virtue Ethics
- Consequentialism (prominently utilitarianism)
- Deontological Ethics (prominently Kantianism)



## Virtue Ethics

- Virtue ethics focuses on the 'character' of the agent rather than on the formal rules for or the consequences of actions.
- Virtue ethics includes an account of the purpose of human life, or the meaning of life.
- The roots of the Western tradition lie in the work of Plato and Aristotle, but virtues are important also in traditions of Chinese moral philosophy.
- Four Cardinal Virtues were defined as: 1. Prudence/Wisdom, 2. Justice, 3. Fortitude/Courage, and 4. Temperance



## Consequentialism

- This is the ethical theory that most non - religious people think they use every day.
- It bases morality on the consequences of human actions and not on the actions themselves.
- Its emphasis is on the rightness of the 'end' rather than morality of the 'means' employed.
- From a consequentialist standpoint, a morally right action is one that produces a good outcome, or consequence.



# Deontological or Non-consequentialism

## Deontological or Non-consequentialism

- Deontology is concerned with the actions themselves and not with the consequences.
- It looks at the rightness or wrongness of actions themselves, as opposed to the rightness or wrongness of the consequences of those actions.
- It teaches that some acts are right or wrong in themselves, whatever the consequences, and people should act accordingly.





## Ethics in Indian Philosophy

- In Indian view, the obligation of individual is not confined to human society only.
- It is extended to the whole of sentient creation.
- Indian philosophy holds, “Love thy neighbour as thyself and every living being is thy neighbour”.
- Indian view of moral philosophy is different from that of Western Philosophy.
- In Western philosophy ethics is an intellectual enquiry whereas in Indian view, it is the way of life to realize the ultimate reality.



## Indian Schools of Philosophy

Classified into two categories:

- 1 Orthodox (Astika)
- 2 Heterodox (Nastika)



## Orthodox Schools of Indian Philosophy

Classified into six categories:

- 1 Mimansa
- 2 Vedanta
- 3 Sankhya
- 4 Yoga
- 5 Nyaya
- 6 Vaisheshika

These schools accept the authority of the Vedas.



## Heterodox Schools of Indian Philosophy

Classified into three categories:

- 1 The Charvakas
- 2 The Bauddha
- 3 The Jainas

These schools do not accept the authority of the Vedas.



# Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

## Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

All Indian systems of thought whether Orthodox or Heterodox share some common features.

- Indian ethics is the oldest moral philosophy in the history of civilization.
- It is difficult to ascertain the chronology of the Orthodox and the Heterodox schools (except Lord Buddha i.e, 487 BC).
- Every school of Indian Philosophy confirms the endurance of ethical ideals which are unshaken even today.



# Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

## Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

- Indian thinkers suggest some practical means of attaining a life of perfection here in this world.
- The rules of conduct have been practically followed by the Yoga, the Jain and the Buddhist disciples for thousand years.
- The aim of Indian moral philosophy is not only to discuss moral ideals but also to follow the path leading to the moral ideals.



# Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

## Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

- Indian ethics has its strong and deep metaphysical foundation.
- Each school of philosophy, points to metaphysical ideals which are to be actually experienced.
- There is a synthesis of theory and practice of intellectual understanding and direct experience of ultimate reality (Kaivalya, Nirvana, etc.).
- In Indian Ethics, intellectualism and moralism are two wings that help the soul in spiritual flight.



# Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

## Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

- Indian ethical thinkers preach non-violence, love, compassion and good will for all living beings.
- It is not limited to human beings.
- It includes every living beings, plants, birds, and animals, every visible and invisible form of life.





# Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

## Features of Indian Ethics: Orthodox and Heterodox

- Indian thinkers believe in the Law of Karma.
- Law of Karma means that all our actions good or bad produce their proper consequences into the life of an individual, who acts with a desire for fruits thereof.
- It is the law of the conservation of moral values.
- Except Charvakas, all Indian schools accept the Law of Karma.



## Purushartha

The term 'Purushartha' means the goal or the end that every human being (man or woman) ought to seek. The Purusharthavada is a comprehensive Indian theory of human values. Four supreme ends that is Purushartha:

- Dharma (Virtue, accompanies throughout the life)
- Artha (satisfies material needs)
- Kama (satisfies psychological needs)
- Moksha (satisfies spiritual satisfaction)



## Dharma

- The term 'Dharma' is derived from the root 'dhr' meaning to hold together, to sustain, and to nourish.
- Thus 'Dharma' literally means 'That which holds together.'
- It is the basis of harmony in individual life and order in society.
- Dharma as the Supreme End stands for the principles that lead to the harmony in social relationships and integrity of an individual's personality.
- Dharma is given priority over others because all human pursuits have to be compatible with moral values and principles.



# The Idea of Nishkama Karma

## The Idea of Nishkama Karma

- The Bhagwad Gita is the most popular and the most influential religious book of the Hindus.
- Great Indian thinkers like Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhava, Dnyaneshwar, etc. have written illuminating commentaries on the Gita.
- Great national leaders like Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi have drawn inspiration from the Gita.
- The Gita derives its philosophical content chiefly from the Upanishads. It also synthesizes the philosophical elements from Sankhya, Yoga, etc. schools of philosophy.



# The Idea of Nishkama Karma

## The Idea of Nishkama Karma

- The Gita preaches the path of Nishkama Karma, i.e., performing our duties in disinterested way without expecting the fruits of our actions.
- Our duties must be performed without selfish motive.
- We have a right to the performance of our duties but we do not have any right to the rewards of our actions.
- Actions are our sphere, fruits are not our concern.



# The Idea of Nishkama Karma

## The Idea of Nishkama Karma

- The Gita teaching stands, not for renunciation of action but for renunciation in action.
- The Gita does not preach to renounce everything but to renounce the selfish desires.
- The individual should give up any expectation for the rewards.
- The Gita ethics is neither hedonistic nor ascetic. It condemns the wild pursuit of pleasures, as well as suppression of desires.



## Buddhist Ethics

- The Buddhist Ethics is compassionate and humanistic.
- Buddha asked for the cultivation of true love for all creation.
- He tried to enlighten people on the question of sorrow, its origin, its cessation and the path leading true to its cessation.



## Buddhist Ethics

- The core ethical code of Buddhism is known as the five precepts.
- The precepts are not rules or commandments, but 'principles of training', which are undertaken freely and need to be put into practice with intelligence and sensitivity.
- The five precepts are:
  - 1 Not killing or causing harm to other living beings (**love**)
  - 2 Not taking the not-given (**generosity**)
  - 3 Avoiding sexual misconduct (**contentment**)
  - 4 Avoiding false speech (**truthfulness**)
  - 5 Abstaining from drink and drugs (**mindfulness or awareness**)





## Jaina Ethics

- Jaina ethics is directed toward the liberation of the individual.
- Jaina ethics evolved out of the rules for the ascetics, which are encapsulated in the Mahavratas or the five great vows:
  - ① Ahimsa, non-violence
  - ② Satya, truth
  - ③ Asteya, non-stealing
  - ④ Brahmacharya, celibacy
  - ⑤ Aparigraha, non-possession
- These ethics are governed not only through the instrumentality of physical actions, but also through verbal action and thoughts.



## Charvaka Ethics or Lokayatmat

- Among all the schools of Indian Philosophy, Orthodox or Heterodox, the Charvaka School has unique position.
- It advocates Atheism, Materialism, and Hedonism.
- The Charvaka views are always the object of criticism for all other schools of thought.
- The original work of the Charvakas is not available.
- We know the Charvaka view through the criticism of other philosophers.
- The Charvakas accept reality of this empirical world and the physical body as the soul.



## Charvaka Ethics or Lokayatmat

- Hence the Charvakas deny Dharma and Moksha as the supreme ends.
- They accept Kama as the primary goal of life.
- The economic values (Artha) are accepted as means to derive individual pleasures (Kama). Artha is subordinate to Kama as wealth is means to sensuous enjoyment.
- The Charvaka School is the only school in Indian tradition that advocates hedonistic ethics.



## Gandhian Ethics

- Gandhian philosophy is a double-edged weapon.
- Its objective is to transform the individual and society simultaneously, in accordance with the principles of truth and nonviolence.
- He was influenced not only by Tolstoy, Carlyle and Thoreau but also by ethical principles embedded in Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, and Christianity.
- The twin cardinal principles of Gandhi's thought are truth and nonviolence.



## Gandhian Ethics

- Gandhian philosophy is certainly considered as a universal and timeless philosophy.
- According to Gandhi, an action is moral if it is volitional, intentional, universal, practical, selfless, and free from fear and compulsion simultaneously.
- Gandhian ethics cover economic sphere also.
- Gandhi says that everyone should earn his bread with his own hands or through manual labour.
- Exploitation is a form of violence. As men have a right to live, they are entitled to the means of securing food, shelter and clothing.



## Seven Deadly Sins

Mahatma Gandhi said that seven things will destroy us.

- Wealth without work
- Pleasure without conscience
- Knowledge without character
- Commerce (business) without morality (ethics)
- Science without humanity
- Religion without sacrifice
- Politics without principle



# Case Study 1

Within days of flash flood in Uttarakhand, a plane with 150 well-equipped Russian rescue workers was on standby in Moscow to carry out search and rescue missions in the state. The Russian Emergency Situation Ministry chief, Vladimir Andreyevich Puchkov, had on June 21 offered help to India. But, New Delhi sat over the proposal for a week and then declined the offer on June 28 stating that the rescue operations were almost over.

The Russian team has carried out over 70 operations in Russia and 17 international missions, including in China earthquake and the tsunami in Indonesia, It takes pride in their reputation of “saving a life every 12 minutes”.



## Case Study 1 Cont'd

Puchkov in a letter to Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde had proposed assistance by their elite rescue teams, ready to reach India “within a matter of few hours”. Puchkov’s offer was reiterated by Secretary of Russian Security, Council Nikolai Platonovich Patrushev to National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon.

The National Crisis Management Committee led by Cabinet Secretary A K Seth had discussed the Russian offer. Wary of Russia’s offer to step in with advanced technologies, the general consensus was not to allow a foreign country in rescue works. Officials believed that it will lead to bad name for India as lot of inside detail and preparedness of the government will be thrown open to another country.





# Case Study 1 Cont'd

The Russian Ministry for Affairs of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters has 1821 rescue workers and have handled emergency situations in Tajikistan, China, Cuba and Myanmar among others.

They have mobile rescue teams with debris cutters and machines to detect life under slush. The teams have been stationed across Russia at the airports and air force bases. The workers also stock essential items like blankets, beds, tents and food, and are capable of setting up mobile hospitals in just a few hours.



## Case Study 1 Cont'd

This was Russia's first offer to help after Shinde and Puchkov signed a pact in April to create an Indo-Russian commission on emergency situations. At that Puchkov had said, "We should work out a simplified model to provide aid to each other. It is true that our Indian colleagues do not like to ask for aid and we also do not like. However, during large-scale disasters, floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes, specialists' joint efforts help minimize the losses.

According to the commission's mandate, they will inform everyone about the direct threat from catastrophes and help train specialists. Russia and India will exchange info on research studies and plan projects. Moscow will help India set up a centre similar to the National Crisis Management Centre of the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry.



**Question: What should have been the government's stand according to you? Give arguments to justify your stand.**



# Case Study 1 Solution

- **This case can come under the Ethical Concerns and Dilemmas in governance.**
- A disaster often strikes without warning. While it is difficult to predict the disasters, an efficient disaster management policy would certainly mitigate the loss of lives accruing out of it.
- In India, the responsibility to manage disasters lies with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) which operates through National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).
- The recent CAG report has suggested that NDRF, with lack of modern tools and techniques, is unable to undertake post disaster operations.
- Taking these things into consideration coupled with India's inadequate technologies, India should have accepted the offer of Russia.



# Case Study 1 Solution Cont'd

- However, any such attempt would certainly yield a bad reputation for India, which is second populous country in the world. With such huge population it is an irony that India does not have a strong disaster management policy.
- Another concern arises out of security architecture. The recent incident of misuse of technologies by developed countries (through illegal surveillance mechanisms) has created a fear across the world community.
- For instance, if Russia is allowed in DM operations, it may leave behind it some surveillance system or for that matter other such techniques which may be a compromise with national security, in the long run.
- Nevertheless, each and every life is important.



## Case Study 2

Rakesh is a responsible district level officer, who enjoys the trust of his higher officials. Knowing his honesty, the government entrusted him with the responsibility of identifying the beneficiaries under a health care scheme meant for senior citizens.

The criteria to be a beneficiary are the following:

- 1 60 years of age or above.
- 2 Belonging to a reserved community.
- 3 Family income of less than 1 Lakh rupees per annum.
- 4 Post-treatment prognosis is likely to be high to make a positive difference to the quality of life of the beneficiary.



## Case Study 2 Cont'd

One day, an old couple visited Rakesh's office with their application. They have been the residents of a village in his district since their birth. The old man is diagnosed with a rare condition that causes obstruction in the large intestine. As a consequence, he has severe abdominal pain frequently that prevents him from doing any physical labour. The couple has no children to support them. The expert surgeon whom they contacted is willing to do the surgery without charging any fee. However, the couple will have to bear the cost of incidental charges, such as medicines, hospitalization, etc., to the tune of rupees one lakh. The couple fulfils all the criteria except criterion 'b'. However, any financial aid would certainly make a significant difference in their quality of life.

**How should Rakesh respond to the situation?**



# Case Study 2 Solution

- **This is the problem of ethical dilemma.**
- Objectivity and Compassion conflicts
- Try in the following order:
  - ① Seek for the other scheme
  - ② Use discretionary power
  - ③ Use suggestive power
  - ④ NGO/Trust Health service (social service)
  - ⑤ Individual effort to collect money from colleague (if rarest case)

