

# Utilitarianism

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# Utilitarianism

- The world is for man. (God created the world for man).
- What is there in nature is to be used by man for his betterment.
- Utility is the key word, anything is good if it is useful.
- Anything is right if it produced the desirable result.

# Pleasure

- Bentham talked about pleasure as the value.
- Anything that increases pleasure is good.
- The opposite of pleasure is pain.
- Anything that reduces pain also is good.
- The Aim of man should be reducing the pain and increasing the pleasure according to Bentham.
- A calculus to measure pleasure was tried.

# J. S. Mill

- Mill found that pleasure is limited in several ways.
- It depends on sense organs and there is a duration within which one can enjoy pleasure.
- If the sense organs get fatigue, instead of pleasure, one starts experiencing pain.
- Sense organs need rest to function normally.
- There is beginning and end of pleasant experience.

# Happiness

- Happiness is qualitatively different from pleasure.
- Mill spoke about happiness as the goal of man.
- Of course, misery or pain is negative value, but happiness is positive value.
- Happiness is intellectual and is durable.
- There is no diminishing of happiness.

# Happiness Varies

- Happiness is not the same for all.
- Security gives happiness to some.
- Basic needs give satisfaction to many. They are food, shelter, clothing, medicine and entertainment.
- Some enjoy films, some others enjoy sports.
- Some enjoy intellectual challenges, some others want to avoid them.

# Goal of Society

- Maximize the happiness of the maximum number.
- An action of the government is right if it maximizes the happiness of maximum number and minimizes the misery of many.
- An action of the government is wrong if it leads to more unhappiness than happiness.
- Thus, immediate goal is to meet all the basic needs and then the luxury of other things.

# Act and Rule Utilitarianism

- Judging each action and similar actions again and again is a waste of time and waste of resource.
- We need to generalize types of actions.
- Telling truth is good, helping the needy is good, being kind to others is good etc., we can generalize such things.
- A virtuous man would be a good man for Utilitarian as well.



# Rule-Utilitarianism

- Most of the routine acts must be performed based on virtues.
- If overall advantage is there, then one should accept a rule.
- Exceptions do not deny the virtue of the rule.
- If there are contradictory rules, one needs to resolve them after considering utilitarian principle.

# Act-Utilitarianism

- Important actions need to be assessed independently.
- Construction of dams, changing the constitution, granting fundamental rights, etc., require the opinion of the majority because they have notable consequences.
- A novel and revolutionary act requires evaluation.
- We need to judge the consequences of each action, but we can process them very fast if they are familiar.

# Limitations

- No accurate measurement of happiness or pleasure is possible or reduction in pain is possible.
- We need to judge the proposed action before it starts having consequences.
- There will be marginalized individuals always.
- Majority rule would have its own problems.
- Neither rule, nor act utilitarian approach is perfect.