Ethics, Morals, and Virtues

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Ethics

- Derived from the word 'ethos'
- Codes of conduct or moral principles
- Teaches well disciplined behavior and how to act according to the situation

morals + values = ethics

Ethics

- Rules of right conduct
- Social system: External
- Dependent on other definitions
- Governed by professional and legal guidelines
- Generally uniform

Morality

- Principles or habits with respect to right or wrong
- Individual: Internal
- Changes according to persons
- Different in different culture

Values

- Principles that reflect one's judgements of what is important in life
- Promote well being
- Prioritised according to the need level

Integrity

- Character trait that reflects a person's degree of honesty, adherence to moral principle

- Types:
  - Professional Integrity
  - Political Integrity
  - Academic Integrity
  - Integrity in Daily Transactions

Work Ethics

- Integrity and Loyalty
- Professionalism
- Respect and Care
- Cooperation
- Fairness
- Trustworthiness

Service Learning

- Structured learning approach that incorporates community service along with formal instruction and explicit learning

- Through service learning a student understands:

    - Understand the relevance and the context in which service is provided.
    - Reflect on the experience the service offers and its impact on academics
    - Develop social awareness and civic skills
    - Address the concerns of the society

Civic Virtues

- Moral duties or standards of righteous behaviour of an individual as a responsible member of the community and an integral part of the environment

  - Civic Knowledge
  - Self Restraint
  - Self Assertion
  - Self Reliance

Important Civic Virtues

- Respect for others
- Living peacefully
- Caring and sharing
- Honesty
- Courage
    - As part of duty
    - To face physical challenges
    - In social context
    - Intellectual courage

- Valuing time
- Cooperation
- Commitment
    - Affective Commitment
    - Continuance Commitment
    - Normative Commitment
- Empathy
- Confidence
- Spirituality

Ethical Theories

- Attempt to analyze people's response in situations demanding moral judgment

- To recommend right conduct

- Judgmental reasoning is called for

Major Fields of Ethics

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

Descriptive Ethics

- Tries to describe ethical phenomena
- Also called Comparative Ethics
- Empirical research into the moral beliefs of people
- Deal with developments of morals
- Does not prescribe right or wrong action

Normative Ethics

- Concerned with how people ought to act

- Prescribes rules of behavior

- Try to determine basic moral standards

- Two basic schools of thought:
  - Deontological Theories
  - Teleological Theories

Deontological Theories

- Deontology- the study of the nature of duty and obligation
- Proposes: Morality of an action solely depend on the quality of the action

- Immanuel Kant and *'categorical imperative'*
- An unconditional demand to perform a certain action

     "Thou shalt no lie"

- Purely based on rational thinking

Teleological Theories

- Teleology- the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than by postulated causes
- Concerned with *being good* rather than the rightness of action

Applied Ethics

- Deal with practical application of *normative ethical theories*

- Right course of action

- Examples:
  - Business ethics
  - Bio ethics
  - Professional ethics

Meta Ethics

- Abstract way of probing into nature of morality

- Deal with questions like:

  - *What is the meaning of right?*
  - *What is the need to become virtuous?*
  - *What is meant by a moral value?*

Engineering Ethics

- The study of the moral issues and decisions confronting individuals and organizations engaged in engineering, and

- The study of related questions about moral ideals, character, policies, and relationships of people and corporations involved in technological activity

Senses of Engineering Ethics

- As synonymous with morality in Engineering (Normative)
- As an enquiry into desirable ethical practices in Engineering (Normative)
- As followed by specific individuals or groups without recommending right action (Descriptive)

Variety of Moral Issues

- Micro Issues
  - Refers to moral implications of decisions and practices by individual engineer as well as organizations while pursuing their objectives

- Macro Issues
  - Global
  - Affect the entire humanity

Moral Issues Related to Engineering

- Concerning safety

- Concerning environment

- Concerning product safety

- Concerning transparency about possible hazard

- Concerning exploitation of scarce resources

Moral Dilemmas

- Situations in which two or more moral situations come together and the professional feels difficulty to select the best out of them

- Selecting more options to a certain action is not possible

Moral Autonomy

- Capacity to think rationally and decide what is right instead of simply following a set of rules

Types of Enquiries

- **Normative Enquiries**
  - Deals with what ought to be done?
  - Identifying the values and practices that are morally right.
- **Conceptual Enquiries**
  - Throw light into the meaning of concepts, values, principles.
- **Factual**
  - Provide information regarding moral practices of an engineer.
  - Regarding facts about a moral problem.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

- Proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg

- Stage theory of moral development

- Identified six stages in the gradual progression of individuals' concept of right and wrong

The Six Stages Grouped into Three Levels

- Level I   -   **Pre-conventional**
  - Stage 1   -   Obedience and Punishment
  - Stage 2   -   Individualism and Exchange
- Level II   -   **Conventional**
  - Stage 1   -   Good boy – Good girl
  - Stage 2   -   Law and Social Order
- Level III   -   **Post-conventional**
  - Stage 1   -   Social Contract
  - stage 2   -   Universal Ethical Principles

Pre-conventional Morality

- Stage 1 – Obedience and Punishment
  - First level of moral thinking.
  - Children assume, they should obey the rules
  - Identify parents, teachers as authority figures
  - Right and wrong is determined by what gets punished
- Stage 2 – Individualism and Exchange
  - Children are *naively egotistical* (self-centred).
  - Actions are judged on the basis of how they serve individual needs
  - Think that they are generous, but self-absorbed

Conventional Morality

- Stage 3 – Good boy-Good girl Orientation
  - When entering teenage, approval of peers take as important
  - Emphasis is on *nice behavior* and *conformity*
  - Good intentions, sympathy, love and trust for others
  - Ability to think from somebody else's perspective
- Stage 4 – Law and Social Order
  - Concerned with society as a whole
  - Emphasis on maintaining social order, following the law, do one's duty, respect authority, etc.
  - Written law is of paramount importance

Post-conventional Morality

- Stage 5 – Social Contract
  - Acknowledge the importance of maintaining social order, but not at the cost of individual rights
  - Understand rigid law must be changed for welfare of people
  - Value differing opinion, contrasting beliefs, diverse values
- Stage 6 – Universal Ethical Principles
  - Highest stage of moral reasoning
  - Based on conscience, abstract reasoning, and evolved sense of justice
  - Very few people reach at this stage
  - Importance to dignity and value of humanity

Gilligan's Theory

- Proposed by Carol Gilligan

- A student of Kohlberg

- Founded on the inadequacy of Kolhberg's theory to explain female psychology of moral development

Gilligan's Theory

- Proposed a theory based on *care* and *contextual reasoning*
- Argued that moral sense of women revolve around care and compassion
- That women give more importance to relationship than men
- Proposes three stages:
    1. Orientation to Individual Survival
    2. Goodness of Self Sacrifice
    3. Morality of Non-violence

Consensus and Controversy

- Consensus – agreement
- Controversy – disagreement

- Different people, different opinions and viewpoints
- If all individuals come to a consensus, there is little room for controversy

Models of Professional Roles

- **Saviour**
  - Assume the role of a redeemer
  - Destined to save the society from poverty and ill-health through technological development

- **Guardian**
  - Guide and regulate the technological advancement
  - Nurturing best interest and welfare of the common man

- **Bureaucratic Servant**
  - To come up with concrete engineering solutions/products at a pace decided by the management

Models of Professional Roles

- **Social Servant**
  - Looks up to the society as his master
  - Listens to the aspirations of the society and fulfills them
- **Social Enabler and Catalyst**
  - Assists the management to make informed decisions based on the best interests of the society
  - Help the society to understand its needs
- **Game Player**
  - Motivated economic and technological challenges at any given time
  - Gets excited by the profession, derives satisfaction from winning in a competitive role

Stages of Group Formation

- Stage 1   -   Forming
- Stage 2   -   Storming
- Stage 3   -   Norming
- Stage 4   -   Performing
- Stage 5   -   Adjourning