
UNIT 1 INTERNATIONAL ETHICS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

In reading and studying this you will be able to achieve following objectives:

- to have a better understanding of international ethics
- to define international ethics
- to analyse international cases and issues using the international ethics ideas presented here
- to develop your own philosophy of international ethics by discussing the various issues briefly outlined here
- to contribute to the building up of international community and good international relations between people of different countries
- to know and identify the approaches taken by different authors when they discuss international issues, the strengths and weaknesses of those approaches and the fruitfulness of a particular approach.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

International ethics refers to the good that international interactions, exchanges, relations can bring to our planet earth and to all life forms and which can be harmed by unfriendly, hostile, uncooperative behaviours. Aware that the harms that one country can do to another and to the international space and relations, international ethics offers insights into how nations and other entities treat other nations and its people. International ethics is a good which can be harmed and also knowledge of international ethics provides us with insights to assess the good and harms, the rights and wrongs, which can occur in the international space. For example, the UN has been promoting various principles of friendly and cooperative and peace related humanitarian international actions by all the member countries. This community of nations which stands to

respect other nations and their interests, is itself harmed by the dominant nations willing to impose their interests and will on other poorer nations and poorer nations unwilling to cooperate without being treated as equals. Various agencies of the UN by their presence and action in various countries, promote certain universal principles that transcend the boundaries of individual nations and the ethical principles pursued by individual nations. International ethic is not simply an ethic of some dominant country, it is not simply an ethic of a powerful country having obligations towards others because of the power they have over others.

International ethics may be fruitfully defined as that which enables one to participate more actively in shaping and building good international community. The vision of international community that every country has and reality of an international community provides us with food for thought on what ought to be the nature and purpose of investing in international relations to build an international community. The challenges of international conflicts have to be addressed with courage to embark upon studying what international community promotes and builds, whether perpetual peace and justice provide the much needed foundation on the basis of which it can thrive and flourish. What would be necessary for the existence of such an international community of peace and justice between nations and people?

1.2 INTERNATIONAL SPACES OVER TIME

Nations and multinational organizations were the first ones to cross the boundaries of national domestic spheres to trade or interact with other nations and organizations. Every nation had its own focus, as nations adopted the production methods, technologies, political systems and legal systems from other nations, similar problems began to appear in almost every country. These were not regarded as shared problems that required joint action by all those affected by it. Each country was largely responsible for problems occurring within it guided and directed by its own governments, culture, politics, legal systems, institutions, etc. But overtime today we see more and more interconnectedness between people and nations, we see greater interdependence and greater shared responsibilities which have emerged and their number has increased and which call on nations and other multinational organizations having presence in more than one country to act jointly. In many spheres international joint action becomes necessary. International ethics may be seen as responding to this need for international action. International ethics guides international relations and resolution of international conflicts. International ethics guides the international environmental effort to fight against ozone depletion, global warming, etc which are common shared problems and which require actions from many nations who are major contributors to forces generating such problems.

International spaces have been filled with governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations having ownership and /or control over issues and aspects that are central to life. There have been democratic governmental organizations and non-democratic governmental organizations interacting and operating in that space. There have been for profit business corporations (MNCs, TNCs, etc) and not-for-profit non-governmental organizations operating in the international space.

International spaces are filled with goods and services that are global commons, global public goods and services, collective goods and services that are owned or controlled by more than one individual organization, that are central to human life. These spaces are low on individual

collective power over nature and the social world, but are high on coalition (of) collective powers. Who is excluded from the international space and who is included in the international space and the reasons and rationality of those exclusions and /or inclusions have a bearing on the expanding nature of the international space and the quality of international relations existing and those continue to be built in it.

Recognizing the power that human collectives have over nature and economic and social goods and services in the international spaces, it is easier to see how different organizations may be working at counter purposes, and / or competitive purposes. It is also easy to see how and why harms may be done by one against another and without any hope of international justice except those which are accepted as human rights. Many issues which have deep ethical implications are present in international spaces that we create or in which we participate in many different ways. International spheres / relations can easily thrive in a global system renewed constantly by greater levels of and sensitivity to international ethics.

1.3 SIZE OF THE NATION AND THE ECONOMY

The size of the nation in terms of population appears less of an influencing factor as the population is contained by migration policies inhibiting or prohibiting international movements in search of economic opportunities. This may be challenged in the future years. Nations with older generations and less younger generations will experience an imbalance of the need for labour. So also nations with younger generations and less older generations will also experience an imbalance. International policies favour movement of talented and highly capable populations. Countries gain an advantage in inviting them and having them as part of their populations. Various levels of cultural exchanges also take place as people carry their culture with them and learn other people's language and culture as well. International understanding develops and grows. People move across national boundaries and their international overseas interaction and experience provides a dimension to international relations guided by international ethics.

The size of the economy is even more influential driver of international influence and relations. As international trade increases this sphere of international relations grows, interdependence increases, institutions that facilitate this growth and maturity provide the international ethical guidance necessary for growth and maturity of international relations. Particularly nations which have large export sectors or large import sectors are dependent on other economies for survival and growth and are vulnerable to developments in the international sphere.

For example, in August 2010, the Press was full of news about China becoming the second largest economy overtaking the Japanese economy which becomes the third largest. The USA remains by far the single largest economy, but it is already feeling the heat of Chinese military might and is revising its international strategy. The rise of China was only a matter of time, but the size of its economy may not mean much for some time as China has large inequalities in incomes. The Chinese influence in the global economy and in international relations between nations will be on the rise and will find its rightful place in time as it competes with the USA for supremacy. Chinese economy is about four times larger than that of India and has been growing at a faster pace than India's. In international relations China is more influential than India and China will likely to continue to lead India well into most of the 21st century.

China is a very distant second place economic and military might to USA, a superpower no doubt with the highest population on earth. India not even in the top 20 countries yet, and its economic size is less than that of a state like California, in USA, is likely to overtake China in about 2040 as the most populated country and possibly also likely to compete for third place in economic strength by then. It is likely that USA will do everything in its power to see that China does not come near to its strength while pursuing friendly relations and cooperative relations with China. China is also likely to do everything in its power to see that India does not come near to its strength while pursuing more friendly and cooperative relations with India than they were possible until recently. There are other countries such as Brazil, South Africa, Russia, etc. who are also growing economies having credible influence on world affairs. A combination of countries like the BRIC is expected to outgrow the size of the developed countries by the 2050. It is likely that we see more changes in the world order. If the international ethics pursued by dominant nations so far continues to hold or gets imposed then we would likely to see new superpowers overshadowing and overtaking the influence of existing ones. If this is not to happen, then there will be “new ethics” projects floated by various interested parties and groups. It is good to have an idea of the entire ethics project that underlies various offerings of international ethics pursuits. The size of the economy and the size of the international exchanges (trade and other interactions) define the space for international relations. Something which is good for two or more countries increases their strategic interdependence on each other, and strengthens them against outside competitive challenges and threats.

1.4 COMPETITION BETWEEN NATIONS

Nations compete in the international space and national advantages are the drivers of the space of international ethics and what happens to it. National disadvantages will work against the expanded role of that nation, while national advantages are likely to facilitate its expansion. It is easier to grasp the international problems and the ethical issues associated with international problems when keeping the picture of various nations competing with one another for (natural) resources, competing for markets, competing for investments, competing for talents, competing for technology and education. Even competition for health and related services is not far behind. Nations have been ranked on the basis of how competitive they are and how they are enhancing their competitive edge for the long term future. Nations that do not show potential for competitiveness appear to be left behind, partly due to its own policies and political interests.

Dominant nations, their strategies appear to be the ones that are meeting any kind of success. Other nations are not so fortunate. The measure of success of a nation in international and global space is indicated by several indices such as “the freedom index”, “human development index”, “happiness index”, “the human capital index”, “the natural capital index”, “the standard of living index” etc. These aspects along with other indices such as “poverty index”, “the inequality index”, “sustainability index” etc., give a fairly good idea of competitiveness of a country compared to others. The wide differences between nations are causes for concern and it is also a driver as nations take actions domestic and international actions which are aimed at achieving improved ranking and positions compared to others. Nevertheless competition is everywhere and nations have begun to learn from each other and are competing to be better nations with better governments.

1.5 COMPETING FOR ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM ADVANTAGES

The impact of human activity primarily in terms of how they live and what economic activities they carry out in nature have been critically assessed by scientific establishments and which have been incorporated into national and international action and policy. Mitigating the effects of environmental and economic changes is necessary due to such impacts of human activity. Nations are competing for ecological system advantages by doing what they believe will help the environment to preserve its natural capacity and vitality and which will secure for nations an ecological and economic advantage.

Philosophical reflection on the natural environment has truly become international and global along with its counter parts the social, cultural, economic and political philosophical reflection. Various insights are available from each of these fields for critical reflection on what harms human beings are doing through the activities they carry out, through various operations and the consequences of such activities.

Almost every nation has made vision plans for long term future envisaging the changes necessary say for 2020 or say for 2050 or say for 2100 etc which have domestic and international implications and effects. That is governments have learnt to project what the countries stand for and what the countries aim to achieve in the future in the international arena which go well beyond their terms in office. Such measures of “good will” are to be examined for what they are. International ethics has this task to accomplish. Are such vision plans which have serious implications and effects for life on this planet earth normative in any sense and what is the normative structure that follows and emerges from them? All such vision plans by various countries are drivers of international and global ethics, they are fundamental claims and promises which are meant to be realized and fulfilled.

Economic and social advantages are sought in terms of social equity within and between generations within a nation and across international boundaries. Ecological systems concerns offer advantages to various nations for their social and human wellbeing. Environmental or Ecological ethics claims that the only way humanity can survive is by having a new concept of eco-system ethics

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1. Explain the insights of realism, idealism, constructivism, and cosmopolitanism

2. How do you understand International Law?

1.6 INTERDEPENDENCE, COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

In the shadows of dominant countries, other nations have evolved certain international cooperation and collaboration agreements for a variety of reasons. We are used to seeing one country (a super power) having a dominant role in international relations between nations. International cooperation and collaboration are a measure of countries interdependence with other nations. Such international cooperation provides a measure of international order between them.

It is simpler to conceive of international ethics in the context of cooperation and collaboration as these are based on recognition of their mutual interests in each other. What one country has done to the people of another country, what one group has done to another group provides the general field for international ethics. There may be several fields in which international cooperation has worked well and thus provides the basis for further cooperation and collaboration. Turning hostile relations and atmosphere of distrust between nations and their establishments can be turned into cooperation which can ensure some level of international peace between people. Interdependence between nations through cooperation and collaboration, can provide the basis for a “law of peace” to be established for relations between people. International relations can be guided by the law of peace.

1.7 DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING

A small piece of every nation is in every other nation through its diplomatic presence and is immune from the domestic laws of the country in which it is present. Diplomatic initiatives are always available for nations to resolve their differences and come to agreements that ensure peace and security and also to further their rights and interests and to share duties and responsibilities. The movement of people can be facilitated by the diplomatic presence and provides another driver for international relations and international ethics which guides it. Each country may have its own interests in another country and or in promoting ties with other countries. In each country recognizing the other, there is the “international law of peace”, even though it may not resolve all conflicts between nations. A rule of reason can prevail under such circumstances.

1.8 DEFENCE AND MILITARY ENTERPRISE

Every country may be seen as using the power it has to achieve its global interests. International ethics can also be regarded as the use of power by one country against another country to achieve its global goals and protecting its national interests. When aggressively pursued it may lead to certain conflicts. Military involvement and military strengths, strategies and calculations may drive in part international presence, international relations, and influence international ethics through its (propaganda) media.

International conflict and wars are still a possibility and it may even be influenced by the defence related establishments which have international reach and influence. Countries choosing to live side by side by the “law of war” cannot easily be persuaded to give up war or preparations for long term uncertain wars. International conventions on “international law of war” may be binding only when international community scrutinizes and insists on it. For example, the recent

news flash about “China-Pakistan Nuclear Deal” provides a competitive nuclear flash point counter to “USA-India Nuclear Deal” making the region more vulnerable to military presence in the Himalayas or border regions, and thus putting a counter weight to world peace and security and international relations.

1.9 THE POVERTY AND WEALTH OF NATIONS

Nations in search of having more wealth, have to reckon with poverty which hinders them from being active and responsible international actors involved and participating in emerging international issues. Poverty may be a domestic issue, but casts a deep shadow over what a country can do internationally or how inviting a country is for the rest of the world. Reduction in poverty would be welcomed internationally. “International law of justice” may be invoked to have nations pledge to reduce and remove poverty wherever it is found, through responsible joint actions. The UN framework on Millennium Development Goals calls on nations to reduce poverty to half by 2015 and continue to reduce poverty around the world. Recognizing that the poor of world have a share in the world in which they live and that they have a share in the domestic and international economic and social development is an important aspect of our increasingly global world.

Poverty measures, poverty indices, are available to guide policy. What happens to the world’s poor is certainly a driver of international ethics. Several international NGOs operating in this field to remove poverty have frameworks for making decisions and choices which offers another field of international ethics and can drive the values of global solidarity and justice.

In international ethics one would like to see richer nations helping poorer nations. One would also like to see relations between them be transformed into win-win relations for both and more beneficial to least advantaged nations.

1.10 THE INEQUALITY OF NATIONS

There are various dimensions that one can compare nations and their strengths, the wellbeing of their population etc. We are in an unequal world and facts point out to a world growing in inequalities. Inequalities point to certain conflicts which may be domestic in origin or international, but they are indicators of disturbing trends. In an unequal world, expectations of equity, international equity are high. In other words, demands of justice may require that we prefer a more equitable world to a less equitable world brought about by international action. It would possibly imply that any international action must aim at benefiting the least advantaged nations more than that would be expected for a most advantaged nation. Otherwise, it would appear there would not be an incentive for less advantaged or least advantaged nations to participate in international actions. In cases of such failures, only those international actions which are powered by dominant nations will be carried through creating and endorsing a more divided world with even a greater possibility of future conflict. International ethics has to guide and deal with how international power is used (or else it is likely to be abused). International inequalities imply that some nations have international power while others do not have. There may have been even historical injustices involved in the rise and fall of nations and their international power. It is important to see international ethical sensitivities harnessing international power for international growth and development, peace and security etc

1.11 FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Freedom of speech involves religion or world religions, the world press or international press and media, the education sectors, the cultural expressions, exchanges and products. Religions are influential actors in international relations and international peace and security. The international press provides scrutiny though it may also need to scrutinize its ways gathering and spreading “news”, interpreting it to propagate its own agendas and selling of its own ideas. The international press is an actor and can blow the whistle on nations and their covert or overt activities, revealing uncomfortable or unpalatable truths to the international publics. Scrutiny of international relations, international power etc are welcome and may be guided by rules of international media ethics which would be part of international ethics as well. The cultural exchanges provide a mutual appreciation of different culture and cultural differences and a welcome richness of diversity and social inclusion rather than the rampant social exclusion and discrimination. The education sectors provide the foundation for true sustainable societies and a better world for everyone. The future of the world is driven by what happens to the education sector which spans internationally as people move to countries to gain access to education they desire for their future well being.

1.12 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Another driver for international ethics and international actions or actions with international implications and impacts is the international and global flow of information. Underlying such actions and activities are the issues of technology, particularly information technology and to what use information and information technology is put internationally and nationally by individuals and countries. Information can confer advantages, so various international gatekeepers can control the flow of information and thus the advantages or disadvantages or create destruction of informational advantages. Information technologies and their use also may be directed by ideas of international ethics.

Information technologies not only regulate the availability and flow of information, they also make it easier for nations and people to communicate conveniently, easily, without any government or individuals interfering in their “private” conversations. Of course this may threaten some as it is possible to carry out “suspicious activity” from the supposedly safe borders of another country against some other country. Information technology has blessings and also dangers for any country because any country and individual can be reached potentially from anywhere and anytime. To what use such power is put is not entirely determined by national domains. If nations can use their power so also individuals can use technology against certain countries and states to counter such powers. Such games may be going on which are harmful. Information has “flat” world to deal with, as is well explained by “the world is flat”. The ethics of this “flat” world is also a driver of the international ethics and international and global developments.

1.13 SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AGENDAS AND PROJECTS

Science has been a driver of international and global developments. Every country has its community of scientific advisers to offer best science advice to their governments and these are in constant international and global contact with their counter parts in exchanging ideas and scientific research trends and information that could be strategically employed. International ethics may be influenced and driven by developments in the scientific research fields. Different research fields have different contexts and so research ethics may be more contextual and

international ethics then follows various contextual offerings and multidimensional. This is not just a matter of its scope but also of the very nature of international ethics that it is constantly challenged by international and global research in various contexts.

Our scientists in every field have made critical progress in scientific discoveries and through filtered policies both domestic and international and through educational interchange and exchange, some benefits are offered to humanity as a whole. But scientific theories are still being fundamentally challenged and new (revolutionary) theories that have ripple effect internationally and globally drive scientific progress and educational progress in every country. International ethics may have also a lot to do with new and current “epistemologies” that are bound to shape the thinking of present and future generations. The question of discovery of “scientific truths” or “scientific laws” may be also a matter influenced in some respects by ideas on international ethics.

1.14 POWER AND INTERNATIONAL ETHICS

At various times the world attention, gets itself focused on the most powerful nation, both domestically and internationally, a nation that is willing to impose its powerful will on the world, taking into task any nation that challenged its authority and its interests. Many wars and conflicts are indeed triggered by the unilateral moves of dominant nations against other nations that threatened its global interests. What powerful nations have done to other nations cannot be forgotten. International ethics is influenced by various philosophies of international and national power and how this power is played out.

There are beliefs in some quarters that power does not follow any rules and this reasoning (thought faulty) is extended to apply to international spaces and relations. In its so called “anarchy” nature, this belief in power, particularly power not following any rules tilts the global balance in favour of powerful nations and entities and is unfavourable to less powerful nations and entities. What prevails is simply the anarchy of a dominant power imposing its will at will on other nations and entities. Under such assumptions, naturally, justice follows national boundaries without any space for international or global justice.

In contrast to “anarchy” nature of power, that is, power which does not follow any rules, we can have alternative belief that, yes there is international power, but that power follows certain rules which provide an international order which is qualitatively different from the previous case of anarchy. Power that follows rules of international order is better than power that does not. Some philosophical questions may still be raised: Why power and why follow rules if one has power. International humility and patience are indeed rare, true. But the question can still be asked regarding the dynamism of (dominant state) power.

1.15 PHILOSOPHY OF INTERNATIONAL ETHICS

Realism focuses on a single reality, international power. It is the power that one nation has to influence another nation directing and shaping its destiny in the direction it desires namely into a kind of tacit servitude of serving and protecting its interests at the cost of the other. In the international realm, realism holds that the only thing that really matters is power – what power a country has. Nothing else matters – morality, ethics, law, and political systems, legal systems, cultural systems – are all irrelevant. The argument appears to be that in international sphere

human nature is such that no one can be trusted each seeks to dominate the other. Either one country will dominate the other or the other will try to dominate the first, so it is better to be the dominating or dominant country. The realist approach to international sphere or international relations is simply to deny any role for common or shared ethics, and create an ethically neutral zone or an ethics free zone which can be filled by the power of one who is dominant.

Obviously others will perceive realist conception of international space, international relations based solely on the principle of power as quite unjust. There is nothing in realist conception or in realism that prevents someone from making an ethical assessment of the power motivation and the dominant actions of the dominant country and be able to withstand such pressure and claim it to be unethical or unjust. For many people, the attempt to control other people and direct their destinies in the international sphere is repugnant and demoralizing. The old saying may be invoked implicitly, that power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. When power is the sole basis of international relations and international action, assessments will be coloured by such perceptions.

Realism conceives the international sphere as a space where “anarchy” prevails and there are no rules. Why would anyone follow rules made externally or made by another? What binding power those rules have that are not made internally? Is a country free if it follows the rules made by another? This claim that there are no binding rules in the international sphere that international relations are committed to follow appears questionable. What if there were agreements between international parties, would those agreements be binding and if so would the rules on the basis of which such agreements made appear to hold. As a test case, consider “human rights” or “human dignity”. Do these rules hold in the international sphere and in international relations? Who will enforce them if they hold? Who will hold another accountable for their violations? Thus in realist conceptions, if power is the only thing that works in international relations, then human rights violations or human dignity violations will continue to occur and there will be no one to stop them except a power greater than itself. Thus the realist position or realism tends towards a preference for war as the ultimate way to resolve international conflicts to bring about international order by imposing the order of the winners of the conflict. Realism sentiments within Nations may make it rational to pursue power, create power distance and dominance over its neighbours and at the same time seek to balance power by aligning sufficient number of states for a country to counter the power influence of those nations opposed or against it. In this way realism, in thought, word and deed, creates and spawns a world fundamentally divided into two. There will be no unipolar world for sure, the fact that one exists after the collapse of the Soviet Union is only a temporary phase, somewhat illusory. The world soon responds by restoring and creating balance of power. What exists, through the realist conception is only a multiplicity of different bipolar worlds and their coalitions. Such a world where balancing power exists certainly will not rule out world wars or wars in general.

Pursuing realism and realist policies will be detrimental to our common world with its common vision of a humane future for everyone. Realism is incapable of enabling such an achievement. Realism as a field is necessary ingredient for creation of a superpower and a relative independence or servitude as the case may be for others in relation to it. Since currently only one country still retains the status of a superpower, and others are expected to follow its lead, the silent dreams of many others to be superpowers of the 21st century are just fantasy illusions. The

power flows have rules. Realism contradicts in so far as it conceives of power in terms of “anarchy”, without any rules. Philosophy hopefully uncovers and lays bare the rules that power follows to exert its control and its direction.

Realism is a theory of balance of power that maintains the power balance in the world. All we can expect is that the most powerful nation on earth will have no one to challenge its power and so there will be peace. This is just a conventional thinking. Deeper reality shows, its power is already being challenged, the name and form of war has changed, shadows overcast over many relations have not disappeared, they remain. There is no real peace.

Realism does well in terms of trade as trade terms are set by the powerful against the weak to reflect the power imbalance and the power advantages. That’s how the world works perhaps, but it is hardly a philosophy for what ought to be, it is hardly a philosophy of normative considerations. There will be some international sphere, limited and defined by trade relations and by wars. International ethics then, in so far realism is concerned is just the field of international trade wars and international war and peace and the necessity of having some kind of “international justice” dictated and dominated by the rule of the powerful, the dominant country in the relation.

Idealism and International Ethics

Idealism focuses on “common interests” between nations, and not necessarily at the power or power distance or at power balance. It seeks to build the international sphere on the basis of idealist values that are of common interests to nations participating in any international issues and problems. Idealism built on common interests appears to be stronger in power than unilateral power of realism and hence can have the potential to replace realism in thought, word and deed and as a philosophical thought. Idealism has the potential to create more lasting hopes of peace and of a growing international sphere where mutual interests and common concerns are addressed more earnestly in the true spirit of pursuing what can be regarded as human purposes of human flourishing. Thus the rise of idealism holds out a promise, even though conflicts remain.

Idealism points to trade interests between nations as common interests and as platforms to build better, growing and mutually beneficial international relations. The rise of international and global market place and the growing interdependence between nations are shown to be aiding and being supported by idealism. Human beings and humanity as a whole is capable of displaying high levels of idealism. In idealism, the international system, international order and the international sphere follow rules, laws and institutions. In idealism, thus ethics, morality, laws, legal systems, international institutions all have a central place. Thus idealism contrasts sharply with realism which emphasized only power. The world becomes less dramatic and less dangerous, even though conflicts are far from removed.

International treaties, the UN organizations and the system, have a central role and supports idealism and idealist thinking endorses it. These provide international ethics guidance, even though it is voluntary, it has rational force of assent and appeal to conscience to be accepted and guided by it. All different institutions of the UN may not have the same force, but in their respective contexts, the values and beliefs expressed and communicated do hold respect.

Idealism may hold out the “olive branch”, a symbol of the covenant between God and Man by offering the best humanity has to offer collectively for the world and for the future of the world for its future generations. Idealism is a movement towards peace and peace initiatives and strategies, as opposed to outright power play in wars or through wars. International sphere includes more than power and politics. It challenges the dominant views of realism which holds that war is a necessary consequence or necessary evil too easily justifiable by the powerful. Idealism does not rule out the possibility of war, but holds out an “olive branch” to those who can see reason and faith.

Constructivism and International Ethics

Constructivism focuses on things like foreign policy, diplomatic initiatives, etc to shape international relations and the international sphere where a country has credible influence. In these things the focus is on domestic politics and how it shapes foreign policy with what goals in mind. It is more pragmatic with domestic political regimes as seats of international action and initiators of international action and its implementation. Every nation and every state create a sense of national identity in various ways and nurture it through historical and cultural celebrations and means. Thus national identity is constructed and it in turn is said to influence the way the nations interact. Basically constructivism allows for influence of national identities and its constructions on the international sphere. A flavour or dimension is added through identity politics into international sphere and relations. International sphere can also be a place where various identities can melt into more humane understanding between people in and through the ‘give and take’ of identity respects and exchanges.

Constructivism shows that nations resist any threat to their identities, nationalism, national sovereignty that are perceived. They need not be real at all. This works against attempts to make the world a better place or to change world systems or world order. All such attempts by other nations, however rational they may be, will be resisted if national identity is not respected. All desires to transform the world by any nation are sacrificed at the altar of identity, politics, and constructivism of other nations. Constructivism gives more power to individual nations through its focus on national identity (rather than national interest), which is politically a more powerful instrument to having less to do with other nations in the international sphere than with what furthers and promotes its own identity. In the 21st century there is rise of identity politics and political power arising out of it harnessed by interested parties for their own advantage. What happens in the international sphere and international relations is far from certain.

National identities based on religious domains span across countries and will be able to define international relations. Religious “fault lines” of conflict may open up and trigger problems not only in the international sphere but within a nation itself as a result. It will spread the fire of violence and anger rather than the sparks of peace and humane relations. Identity tensions will be strongly felt and whatever feeds identity tensions and forms them is far from allowing people to be truly free and open in shaping the one world destiny of all of human kind. We may be unconsciously constructively pursuing the “Huntington Dream” of an international conflict based on the identity politics of world religions. Cultural identities may not all be good, but they are to be respected even when critically assessed for their role in shaping international spaces, international sphere and international freedoms.

Cosmopolitanism and International Ethics

Cosmopolitanism shares something in common with idealism, namely, do the right thing. The right thing to be done is to behave as you would want others to behave. Behave in ways that you think others should behave. It focuses on how we interact in a global community. What is relevant is the global community since we interact with people in other countries. It holds that since we interact with other countries, we have a moral duty to treat people of that country morally as moral people. Hence the prescription in cosmopolitanism is to “do the right thing”. Cosmopolitanism thus empowers international ethics and the development of “global values and ethics” fully.

Cosmopolitanism argues for following morally lawful behaviour. Where rules and laws do not exist, it would require that we come together and negotiate the rules and laws that are ethical to follow and follow them in our relations with people of other countries and in our interactions with people of other countries. Cosmopolitanism is able to welcome people of all origins and identities without any discrimination or treatment of them as means to some ends. It will give importance to people, their freedom and rights rather than sovereignty of nation states. Some may even use it to argue for a world government which overrides national interests and boundaries. It is certainly capable of universality in thought, word and deed, although we may not yet see the development of such possibilities today.

Cosmopolitanism focuses on the international community as having an important and in some cases decisive role on determining what a country or nation should or should not do morally. Such developments may be resisted by nations who feel they are at the receiving end of world opinion or world politics and which prefer their national identity and sovereignty sentiments.

Constrained Choices and International Ethics

International ethics guides our choices in the international sphere, but evidently our choices are constrained rather than free. The choices may be constrained by the necessity of pleasing the domestic political support and widening the support for the ruling party or coalition. The choices may be constrained by the identity politics. The choices may be constrained by power equations and balances. Many practical constraints may also be present, surely economic constraints and national interest constraint will not be missing when choices have to be made. Some have argued for preference given for national interests when it is a choice of national interests versus global interests. It means that governments are expected to value the welfare of their citizens more than that of others. While accepting in general that a country’s goals must be defended as morally right thing to do, a country’s goals and interests are several and may be in conflict within themselves without any clarity and more confusion that the general acceptance that it is moral to defend a country’s goals becomes meaningless. It has no normative force.

It is no doubt that morality implies choice between two or more alternative states of action. It is sometimes argued that if the practical necessities or constraints are such that they concern the survival or extinction of a state or its identity, any such constraints make morality or ethics, or law or political systems, irrelevant. Obviously as in the case of realism, that is the premise of a threat experienced by a power from another stronger or super power. In the end, ethics and morality considered as constraints or as practical constraints really means that ethics and ethical goals and objectives are not pursued to start with. The objective is something else. In such cases

agreeing to such international ethics is to begin with a failure. Ethics must reflect as a central concern to be pursued as a basis for all other international action.

Equality of Life and International Ethics

Every life may be considered as having equal moral weight. In this belief, valid if one holds such beliefs, it is the global interest that count as much as domestic interests. No preference is given by governments or by anybody else to the welfare of citizens of that country. There are no differentiating factors recognized by such governments that distinguish between the welfare of its citizens and those belonging to another country. Everyone has equal rights. Everyone is treated equally in equal respects. In such cases and in the context of such beliefs of equality of life, it becomes meaningful to make sacrifices for others. People rarely sacrifice themselves for their own near and dear ones. But people sacrificing themselves for others in the international space are truly worthy examples of human greatness and the greatness to which human spirit can rise.

Respect for life of the unborn in the international sphere implies that countries do not push their own agendas under the guise of controlling rising populations in their own and other countries. Respect for life should guide international ethics, in thought, word and deed. When that day comes when we respect the right to life of the unborn, it will be truly a day of universal peace. If you have to make decision about which world you want to live in, without knowing what position you will be in, you would choose a world that protects the weakest of the weak, the least advantaged. Such a world is full of meaning of life and in such a world equality of life will be an accepted principle. Such a world would accord the unborn right to life, in the principle of equality of all life.

Economic, Social and Environmental Frameworks and International Ethics

Though context may differ, there are a number of frameworks available for making decisions concerning international actions which have economic, social, and environmental consequences and impacts over future generations. There is a gap between any system of global and international values and international ethics on the ground, because of the widening gap in ground realities between nations and international organizations due to levels of difficult conflict. The frameworks are evolved to provide a way out of the conflict and they are useful to deal with a number of conflicting ideas on international ethics.

The framework provided under UN by its various UN agencies, for example, the framework of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the framework of Universal Declaration of Human Genome and Human Rights, the various international declarations and conventions do provide the necessary framework for cooperative and collaborative international action necessary to solve international problems. Essentially universal value based frameworks are most helpful as they provide space for all participants to make their representation and contribution. There are several global institutions concerned with the global economic order, others with the global information order, still others with the global environmental regimes or order, etc. Each of them offers frameworks within which its members are expected to make their choices and decisions and those choices are respected and supported by virtue of the frameworks agreed upon.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1. Analyse the relation between peace and justice.

2. What are the Environmental concerns of the nations today?

1.16 LET US SUM UP

The study of international ethics makes clear the normative structures, the approaches, and the frameworks available for making decisions and choices ethically in the international and global sphere. These help resolve some of the major international problems, issues, and provide insight into international conflicts. There is much understanding of “international crises”, “shared problems” requiring international cooperation and joint action. The technical details of securing international cooperation are also available though not included in this paper. Our world is so much better if we have a growing international community of persons. International ethics directs us in the direction of building an international community in which every other community can actively and fruitfully participate and flourish. International regimes may be assessed and evaluated in terms of the international ethics they employ in solving international problems. In a way international ethics will continue to evolve and there will likely to be more narratives added to the story of international ethics.

1.17 KEY WORDS

Human Rights : Universal understanding of every human being having fundamentally certain rights.

International Law : The legislative regulation applicable for all the nations of the world.

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UNIT 2 BIOETHICS

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Moral pluralism
- 2.3 Social dimensions
- 2.4 Core and Other Ethical Considerations Respect for Persons
- 2.5 Minimizing Harms While Maximizing Benefits
- 2.6 Let us sum up
- 2.7 Key words
- 2.8 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Students will

- Understand that ethical inquiry uses a set of concepts and skills aimed at analyzing challenging situations and making decisions about the best course of action;
- Distinguish ethical questions from scientific and legal questions and from questions of personal preference, custom, or habit;
- Apply important ethical considerations, such as respect for persons, minimizing harms while maximizing benefits, and fairness, in analysing bioethical problems; and
- Recognize that while there can usually be several answers or approaches to an ethical question, it is important to present a strong, well-reasoned argument for one's position.
- Ethics seeks to determine what a person should do, or the best course of action, and provides reasons why. It also helps people decide how to behave and treat one another, and what kinds of communities would be good to live in.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethics is the activity of deciding what one should do, as an individual and a member of a community. Members of a democratic society must offer each other reasons that show why one way of dealing with a problem is better than another. Ethics is the activity of offering reasons to support a decision about what one should do. Bioethics is a subfield of ethics that explores ethical questions related to the life sciences. Bioethical analysis helps people make decisions about their behavior and about policy questions that governments, organizations, and communities must face when they consider how best to use new biomedical knowledge and innovations.

Since the 1970s, the field of bioethics has grown considerably. While it is true that bioethics today includes medical ethics issues, its originality lies in the fact that it goes much further than the various professional codes of ethics concerned. It entails reflection on societal changes and even on global balances brought about by scientific and technological developments. To the already difficult question posed by life sciences – How far can we go? – other queries must be added concerning the relationship between ethics, science and freedom.

The word 'bioethics' is the intersection of ethical issues and life sciences. In tandem, the investigations of biology, scientific technology and ethical issues combine to form a new science

called 'bioethics'. For this multidisciplinary science, Van Rensselaer Potter in 1971 coined the term 'bioethics' stating that it is 'biology combined with diverse humanistic knowledge forging a science that sets a system of medical and environmental priorities for acceptable survival.'

Bioethics is considered useful in promoting critical thinking. It allows greater accessibility to the content through connectivity rather than stand-alone units. It engages the content and process of real-life situations (present and future) where decisions have real consequences, seldom with risk-free outcomes. Finally, it promotes a focusing framework that places the biology in a fully integrated form. Faced with new ethical challenges emerging as a result of technological developments in modern medicine, bioethics seeks ways in which people in societies can work together under the provision of medical care and research. The field is supposed to provide an insight into the issues of moral community, and into how society understands political authority and its appropriate exercise. Bioethics also involves social philosophy because the basic concepts of health care (concepts like 'health' and 'disease') are socially constructed categories.

Finally, bioethics connection to social philosophy is cemented by the fact that central questions in clinical medicine – questions concerning the allocation of resources, for instance – are those of social philosophy and ethics. Thomas Kuhn has tried to sketch a different, deeper and richer conception of bioethics that can emerge from a historical analysis. The moral world of medicine sketched here is one of continual debate, of reformers and reactionaries, of revolutions and reactions, of progress and regress. It is a world that philosophers have played a pivotal role in shaping, and that they can shape best if they understand the historical contexts in which their ideas have proven influential and successful. Bioethics is a multidisciplinary field which emerged to address the normative ethical issues in medical practice, research and policy. However, it can be stipulated that bioethics is distinct from traditional 'medical ethics' which was primarily concerned with the conduct of physicians. The emergence of bioethics, as distinct from traditional medical ethics, was due in part to medical advances and the realization of the important roles of non-physicians in the ethical choices present in medicine. The ethics of the guild was no longer adequate to address the ethical questions involved in medical practice and research. For example, industrialized and developing countries which pursue globalization and privatization of their economies can view the contemporary questions concerning managed care as one instance of controversy about the authority of health care resources and patient care. However, these questions raise, in turn, more fundamental questions about how medicine and health are understood within a society.

Bioethics is a complex and potentially revealing subject for empirical investigation. Discussions of bioethics can sometimes make it seem as if there was no ethical reflection before the emergence of the field. As a social movement, bioethics developed in the mid-twentieth century as a critical discourse, a response to felt inhumanities in the system of health care and biomedical research. As a response to specific abuses, bioethics has remained practice oriented; society expects bioethics to solve or at least ameliorate visible problems. But Callahan asserts that bioethics is 'less wayward and more establishmentarian', and finds that four developments were important: the opening up of once-closed professions to public scrutiny, which happened strikingly with medicine; a fresh burst of liberal individualism, putting autonomy at the top of the moral mountain; the brilliant array of technological developments in biomedicine, ranging from the pill and safe abortions to control the beginning of life to dialysis and organ transplantation to

hold off the end of life; and the renewed interest within philosophy and theology in normative ethics, pushing to one side the positivism and cultural relativism that seemed for a time in the 1940s and 1950s to have spelled the end of ethics as a useful venture.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1 What are the advantages of Bioethics?

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2. Explain some contributions made by Bioethics to medicine.

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2.2 MORAL PLURALISM

While the emergence of medical knowledge and technology was essential for the development of bioethics, it does not by itself explain the emergence of the field. To understand other elements that contributed to the field's emergence, it is important to recall that traditional medical ethics had relied on two sources of moral guidance. One was the tradition of professional physician's ethics, the other was the teachings of the theological ethics. Furthermore, there have been extensive theological reflections on ethics and medicine in many religious traditions. In the past there has been no shortage of ethical reflections regarding medicine. This being the case, one might ask why there was a need to develop this new area of ethical reflection that has been named bioethics. Why not rely on the various traditions of medical ethics that already existed?

The claim is that traditional medical ethics is really 'physician ethics' and that bioethics emerged as a result of the recognition that there are other people besides physicians who are involved in medical decision making. This means that the field of bioethics emerged as a response to social dimensions of medicine and health care. Why were these sources no longer able to guide medicine once it reached its modern scientific phase? To understand why neither of these sources is sufficient for contemporary medicine, one must take into account the phenomenon of 'moral pluralism', according to which people not only hold different moral values, views on topics (e.g. abortion), but work out different moral frameworks and with different moral methodologies.

As it has been mentioned traditional medical ethics had been focused on physician ethics. The development of scientific medicine gave patients so-called choices and options concerning courses of treatments to be pursued or refused. If a physician and patient share the same moral value and way of thinking, such choices may not be all that problematic. However, when patients and physicians hold different views, the understanding of medical ethics must not be seen as reflecting the judgment of the physician alone. Determining what is in the patient's best interest cannot be done solely by the physician. The physician may speak in the medically best interests of the patient, but not necessarily the overall best interests of the patient. To make judgment concerning the patient's best interests, the patient needs to be involved. Furthermore, in secular societies there are likely to be different religious views that shape people's judgments about what is morally appropriate. This is why procedures like informed consent have come to play such a central role in both clinical and research ethics, such procedures allow people to exercise judgment about what is in their best interest.

2.3 SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

Bioethics has emerged as a result of several developments and complexity in medicine and society; two in particular stand out. First, the development of medical knowledge and technology created 'choices' in medical care. Second, the moral pluralism and multi-culturalism in societies led to the existence of different moral voices and views. This, in turn, meant that there would be differing views on appropriate medical care. Bioethics arose as a way to help people from different moral views navigate these choices and cooperate together. The field provides a window into the social and cultural settings of medical practices and as such provides a way to understand a society. It can help a society or culture examine basic questions of health, disease, sickness and death. It can also enlighten the way a society thinks about moral authority and how it is exercised. There are other reasons beyond those that emerge when one considers the development of bioethics as a research field, to conceive bioethics as a form of social philosophy. One such additional reason is the nature of medicine itself. That is why physicians and health care workers apply scientific and medical knowledge that has been discovered in the laboratory. There is little, if any, acknowledgement that science, especially medical science, is not value-free. Medical science is embedded in values of the society or culture. The scientific norms of medicine, such as health and disease, are often influenced by the social and moral values involved in their specification. If medicine is a social construction, then bioethics should be thought of as a form of social philosophy.

The term 'social construction' has multiple meanings and should be used with caution; philosopher Ian Hacking has pointed out that the term suffers from over use and is incoherent. Given the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the term, one might ask what value it will have for understanding medicine. The term 'social construction' is helpful because it recognizes that the practice and goals of medicine are contextualized and specified by the society's values. The specification of meaning of key medical concepts like 'health' disease, and 'standard of care' is socially influenced by many instances. While there are universal elements in medicine, such as healing and health, there are many local elements involved in specification of universals. It is in this sense that one can speak of medicine as social construction. How one can understand and practice medicine will depend largely on what one assumes about the nature of medicine and the nature of knowledge. There is a common perception that medicine is applied science and that philosophy of medicine is about models of explanations.

However, to think of medicine as a science, or as a scientific one, needs the articulation of the assumptions that one holds about the different models of science. Medical knowledge is scientific in that it is statistically based, empirical, verifiable and generalized. A scientific model alone, however, does not capture our experience or expectations about medical practice, for such a model does not appreciate sufficiently how medicine acts as a social structure and set of practices within a given society. The relationship between the values of a society and its medical practices can be discerned by examining how the concepts of medicine such as the concept of disease, are specified in that society.

2.4 CORE AND OTHER ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Respect for persons means not treating someone as a means to an end or goal. For example, even if one person's organs could help five people live, it would be an ethical violation of respect for persons to kill that one person and distribute the organs to save the five who need them. Respect for persons is also often a matter of not interfering with a person's ability to make and carry out decisions. In some cases, it is also a matter of enabling a person to make choices or supporting them in the choices they make. Respect means more than just listening to another person; it means hearing and attempting to understand what other people are trying to say. It also means not belittling or making fun of thoughts or feelings or perspectives that other people hold.

2.5 MINIMIZING HARMS WHILE MAXIMIZING BENEFITS

This core ethical consideration focuses on trying to promote positive consequences by balancing harms (or burdens) and benefits. In doing so, one must consider which actions would do the least harm and provide the most benefit. This emphasis is central to the ethical approach known as *utilitarianism*. The root word in utilitarianism is *utility*, which refers to the positive uses (benefits or utilities) that will come about as a consequence of choosing one path over another. Harms and benefits come in a variety of types, including physical, emotional, economic, and social, to name a few. Utilitarians consider all types of harms and benefits in their ethical deliberations. "First of all, do no harm" is a familiar expression of minimizing harms when practicing medicine. Even if physicians cannot help a patient directly, they should try to avoid actions that cause harm. "Do no harm" is sometimes referred to as *non maleficence*. A closely related concept, *beneficence* ("Do good"), stresses acting in the best interest of others and being of benefit to them.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Explain the phenomenon of 'moral pluralism'

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2. Explain the term 'social construction'

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3. What is utilitarianism?

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

“Talking about bioethics in today’s world seems an illusion... a fairy tale or at least, a matter that is drawn up from the imaginaries of the different disciplines or knowledge. A theoretical and practical reality imposed every day that should be nurtured as a discipline or set of knowledge related to life and health but at the same time, as a series of rules and ethical commitments of citizens which lead to the control and supervision of human behavior. From them, personal autonomy and human rights such as life are not injured by anyone who inhabits this planet.

The concept of quality of life can never be a measure to judge and compare the value of life in anyway. This comparison could bring errors ignoring the values lies on which human life is based upon. Because of this very reason, judging and ranking the value of life becomes an utopian idea. This attempt to compare the value of life would eventually discriminate people who have lost intellectual ability, people who are considered to be useless or people who seem to not have ability to enjoy their lives. It is pretty obvious that when people make ethical decisions guided by the utility and pleasure or when the meaning of life cannot be found in painful situations, or consider life as meaningless and full of suffering, or people when do not contribute to society they would consider the ending life as justifiable.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Social construction: The term ‘social construction’ has multiple meanings and should be used with caution; philosopher Ian Hacking has pointed out that the term suffers from overuse and is incoherent. The term ‘social construction’ is helpful because it recognizes that the practice and goals of medicine are contextualized and specified by the society’s values.

Moral pluralism: The phenomenon of ‘moral pluralism’, according to which people not only hold different moral values, views on topics (e.g. abortion), but work out different moral frameworks and with different moral methodologies.

Global ethics : "Global ethics," a discipline representing a link between biology, ecology, medicine and human values in order to attain the survival of both human beings and other animal species.

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UNIT 3 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Environmental Ethics: Meaning
- 3.3 The modern construction of environmental ethics
- 3.4 Environmental ethics and sustainable development
- 3.5 Environmentalism and pacifism
- 3.6 Ecosystems: The Land Ethic
- 3.7 Environmental Ethics: Descriptive, Normative and Critical
- 3.8 Environmental Ethics: Why and How?
- 3.9 Let us Sum up
- 3.10 Key Words
- 3.11 Further readings and references

3.0 OBJECTIVES

One of the main objectives of studying the Environmental Ethics is to know in depth that our existence is impossible if the nature does not exist. There is a flow of energy that seeps out from us to the environment and vice versa. This energy form a connecting link between us and the nature which is indispensable. Study of the environment and all its components is nothing but the relationship that we humans share with the nature. So I would say that by studying Environmental Ethics we establish a link, a relationship with the nature and our concern for the environment becomes stronger. Thus we are urged to do something that would stop the exploitation of the environment.

Environmental ethics has been described as having a conscience or moral that reflects one's commitment and responsibility toward the environment as well as present and future generations of people. In essence it refers to human societies living in harmony with the natural world on which they depend for survival and well being. Human beings are a part of the society and so are the other living beings. When we talk about the philosophical principle that guides our life, we often ignore the fact that even plants and animals are a part of our lives. They are an integral part of the environment and hence have a right to be considered a part of the human life.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Adjusting the relationship between humans and nature is one of the most fundamental issues we face and must deal with today. With the increasing deterioration of ecological systems on which human beings rely and the aggravation of the environmental crisis, human beings have realized that we cannot rely on economic and judicial methods alone to solve the problems of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances; we must also appeal to human beings' limitless internal ethical resources. Only after we have adopted an appropriate attitude towards nature and have established a new ethical relationship between human beings and nature will we be able to love and respect nature automatically as well as conscientiously; and only with the guidance of such love and respect can we successfully deal with the issues of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: MEANING

Environmental ethics is a new sub-discipline of philosophy that deals with the ethical problems surrounding environmental protection. It aims to provide ethical justification and moral motivation for the cause of global environmental protection. There are several distinctive features of environmental ethics that deserve our attention.

First, environmental ethics is extended. Traditional ethics mainly concerns intra-human duties, especially duties among contemporaries. Environmental ethics extends the scope of ethical concerns beyond one's community and nation to include not only all people everywhere, but also animals and the whole of nature – the biosphere – both now and beyond the imminent future to include future generations. Second, environmental ethics is interdisciplinary. There are many overlapping concerns and areas of consensus among environmental ethics, environmental politics, environmental economics, environmental sciences and environmental literature, for example. The distinctive perspectives and methodologies of these disciplines provide important inspiration for environmental ethics, and environmental ethics offers value foundations for these disciplines. They reinforce, influence and support each other.

Third, environmental ethics is plural. From the moment it was born, environmental ethics has been an area in which different ideas and perspectives compete with each other. Anthropocentrism, animal liberation/rights theory, biocentrism and ecocentrism all provide unique and, in some sense, reasonable ethical justifications for environmental protection. Their approaches are different, but their goals are by and large the same, and they have reached this consensus: it is everyone's duty to protect the environment. The basic ideas of environmental ethics also find support from, and are embodied in, various well-established cultural traditions. The pluralism of theories and multicultural perspectives is critical for environmental ethics to retain its vitality. Fourth, environmental ethics is global. Ecological crisis is a global issue. Environmental pollution does not respect national boundaries. No country can deal with this issue alone. To cope with the global environmental crisis, human beings must reach some value consensus and cooperate with each other at the personal, national, regional, multinational and global levels. Global environmental protection depends on global governance. An environmental ethic is, therefore, typically a global ethic with a global perspective.

Fifth, environmental ethics is revolutionary. At the level of ideas, environmental ethics challenges the dominant and deep-rooted anthropocentrism of modern mainstream ethics and extends the object of our duty to future generations and non-human beings. At the practical level, environmental ethics forcefully critiques the materialism, hedonism and consumerism accompanying modern capitalism, and calls instead for a 'green lifestyle' that is harmonious with nature. It searches for an economic arrangement that is sensitive to Earth's limits and to concerns for quality of life. In the political arena, it advocates a more equitable international economic and political order that is based on the principles of democracy, global justice and universal human rights. It argues for pacifism and against an arms race. In short, as the theoretical representation of a newly emerging moral idea and value orientation, environmental ethics is the fullest extension of human ethics. It calls on us to think and act locally as well as globally. It calls for a new, deeper moral consciousness.

3.3 THE MODERN CONSTRUCTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

We are cutting down forests for making our homes. We are continuing with an excessive consumption of natural resources. Their excessive use is resulting in their depletion, risking the life of our future generations. Is this ethical? This is the issue that environmental ethics takes up. Scientists like Rachel Carson and the environmentalists who led philosophers to consider the philosophical aspect of environmental problems, pioneered in the development of environmental ethics as a branch of environmental philosophy.

The Earth Day celebration of 1970 was also one of the factors, which led to the development of environmental ethics as a separate field of study. Today, environmental ethics is one of the major concerns of mankind. When industrial processes lead to destruction of resources, is it not the industry's responsibility to restore the depleted resources? Moreover, can a restored environment make up for the originally natural one? Mining processes hamper the ecology of certain areas; they may result in the disruption of plant and animal life in those areas. Slash and burn techniques are used for clearing the land for agriculture.

Most of the human activities lead to environmental pollution. The overly increasing human population is increasing the human demand for resources like food and shelter. As the population is exceeding the carrying capacity of our planet, natural environments are being used for human inhabitation. Thus human beings are disturbing the balance in the nature. The harm we, as human beings, are causing to the nature, is coming back to us by resulting in a polluted environment. The depletion of natural resources is endangering our future generations. The imbalance in nature that we have caused is going to disrupt our life as well. But environmental ethics brings about the fact that all the life forms on Earth have a right to live. By destroying the nature, we are depriving these life forms of their right to live. We are going against the true ethical and moral values by disturbing the balance in nature. We are being unethical in treating the plant and animal life forms, which co-exist in society.

Human beings have certain duties towards their fellow beings. On similar lines, we have a set of duties towards our environment. Environmental ethics says that we should base our behavior on a set of ethical values that guide our approach towards the other living beings in nature. Environmental ethics is about including the rights of non-human animals in our ethical and moral values. Even if the human race is considered the primary concern of society, animals and plants are in no way less important. They have a right to get their fair share of existence. We, the human beings, along with the other forms of life make up our society. We all are a part of the food chain and thus closely associated with each other. We, together form our environment. The environment is not the property of the humans alone. Humans exist because of all other non-living elements of the environment. Therefore conservation of natural resources is not only the need of the day or time but also our prime duty.

Does the Earth exist for the benefit of humanity alone? Do humans have any ethical obligations with respect to the natural world? Have we the right to take all the Earth's resources for our own use? Do we have a responsibility to be good stewards over the Earth? Do other species have an intrinsic right to exist? Do trees have legal standing? What do various religions have to say about humanity's relationship to the rest of the living world? These are some of the questions addressed in the study of environmental ethics.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is Environmental Ethics?

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2. What are the distinctive features of environmental ethics?

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3. What is green life style?

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3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Although there is disagreement over the meaning of sustainable development, most countries have accepted sustainable development as their basic policy. The overlapping areas of consensus between sustainable development and environmental ethics are obvious: the need for environmental justice among the present generation (especially to eliminate absolute poverty), the need to care for future generations and the need to live harmoniously with nature. Only once human society gets on track with regard to achieving sustainable development can we deal successfully with the challenges of global warming, diminishing biodiversity and world hunger.

3.5 ENVIRONMENTALISM AND PACIFISM

The last thing human beings should do is expend huge amounts of resources on studying and making weapons of mass destruction. Environmental security, does not come from hegemonic militant power, but from a just and peaceful international order. As war is a massive violation of humans' right to life, and causes massive destruction of the environment, avoidance of war should be the primary concern of environmental ethics. Democratic countries should apply their domestic political principles to relations with other countries and allow themselves to be subject to the authority of the UN. The policy that might is right, which prevailed in colonial times, must be condemned and abandoned. The UN and its Member States must aim to construct and strengthen the international legal and judicial system and to arbitrate any disputes among its Member States through this system to avoid military conflict. Only a peaceful international order can foster co-operation among countries in dealing with the global environmental crisis. The close connection between environmental protection and peace must be recognized. All countries have a responsibility to spend more money on environmental programmes rather than on military programmes.

3.6 ECOSYSTEMS: THE LAND ETHIC

Aldo Leopold, a forester-ecologist, wildlife manager, professor, conservationist, author, and prophet of environmental ethics, claimed, famously: A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.' 'That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics' (Leopold 1969: 224-5, viii-ix). In a holistic ethic, this ecosystemic level in which all organisms are embedded also counts morally-in some respects more than any of the component organisms, because the systemic processes have generated, continue to support, and integrate tens of thousands of member organisms. The appropriate unit for moral concern is the fundamental unit of development and survival. That, we were just saying, is species lines. But a species is what it is where it is, encircled by an ecology.

A land ethic might seem a naturalistic ethic, but people are living on this land, and so nature and culture soon mix. Trying to map the human environments, we are valuing three main territories: the urban, the rural and the wild - all three of which are necessary if we are to be three-dimensional persons. Nature is much present in the hybrid habitats of rural landscapes; we need an ethic for agro-ecosystems. Wildlife can extensively remain on landscapes put to multiple use; and so we need an ethic of wildlife management. We need an ethic for forests and farmlands, for the countryside. Nature is present in, and a support of, our cities as well. A land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for the community as such". Nature means everything in our environment - the soil, the climate, and all living things.

Is Christianity to blame for the destruction of the natural environment? How do different religions approach our relationship with the natural world? The world was not created solely for man's use, but exists apart from humans, complete in its own right. "A numerous class of men are painfully astonished whenever they find anything, living or dead, in all God's universe, which they cannot eat or render in some way what they call useful to themselves".

Environmental ethics is also concerned with the issue of responsible personal conduct with respect to natural landscapes, resources, species, and non-human organisms. Conduct with respect to persons is, of course, the direct concern of moral philosophy as such. "Moral responsibility" normally implies knowledge, capacity, choice, and value significance. That is to say, if a person is morally responsible to do something, then he (a) knows of this requirement, (b) is capable of performing it, (c) can freely choose whether or not to do it, and (d) the performance thereof affects the welfare and/or liberty of other beings. Because one's response to these requirements reflects upon his value as a person, we say that this response has "moral significance. We know that we can cause massive and permanent damage to natural landscapes, resources and ecosystems. Not only do we know that we can cause these insults, we also know how we can cause them, and how we can prevent or remedy them. Knowing all this exacts a moral obligation to act with care, foresight and, at times, with forbearance and constraint. In our dealings with the natural environment, we are, in short, called upon to reflect, act, or perhaps to refrain from acting, in a manner which testifies to our worth as persons and as a culture -- in a word, to respond morally. One of the most serious problems with the environmental movement today is that its moral position is badly articulated and defended -- it is more "felt" than thought through.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. What is sustainable development?

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2. How do we foster pacifism?

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3. Explain Land ethics.

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3.7 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: DESCRIPTIVE, NORMATIVE AND CRITICAL

Moral philosophers have found it useful to distinguish three "levels" of study in their discipline. The first "level," "descriptive ethics," consists of accounts of what people and/or their cultures do, in fact, value. Imagine, for example, a hypothetical public opinion survey reporting that 55% of Californians favor extraordinary and costly measures to protect and preserve their northern forests, that 30% oppose such measures, and that 15% are undecided. Since the survey reports the moral opinions of the sample population without offering a moral judgment of these beliefs, the poll is an exercise in descriptive ethics. Similarly, an anthropological report that such and such a tribe values head hunting describes the values of that tribe. Descriptive ethics, then, can be regarded as a specialized type of social science.

The second level, normative ethics (also called "prescriptive ethics") deals with moral issues in the conventional sense of that term -- that is, with questions of right or wrong, duties and rights, justice and injustice, virtue and wickedness, and so forth. On this level of ethical discourse, judgments are made and defended concerning the moral value of acts, motives and policies, or of the persons or communities responsible for these acts, motives or policies. Also, in particular cases, recommendations are made as to the morally "best" course of action or conduct. Thus a normative response to the hypothetical poll on the Northland forests might be "how dreadful that our fellow citizens should care so little about their biotic legacy." Or, on the other hand, "I am glad to see that our citizens are at last coming to their moral senses and recognizing that human

beings are more important than a bunch of trees." Similarly, one might normatively condemn the practice of head hunting accurately described by the anthropologist.

The philosopher, accustomed as he is to "ask the next question," is not content simply to hear a normative opinion. He insists upon a clear and precise statement of the meanings of the concepts employed in the opinion. When the philosopher seeks to clarify the meaning of normative terms or to examine the structure, grounds and justification of normative arguments, he is engaging in the activity of critical ethics, or "metaethics." He is thus, in a sense, an intellectual spectator of the normative judgment. It is the task of the critical moral philosopher to take account of the logic, language and methodology of normative discourse and argument. Thus, if a moralist condemns capital punishment as "unjust" or head hunting as "barbaric," the meta-ethical philosopher will ask the meaning of "justice" and "barbarism" in these contexts. He will also inquire as to the nature and soundness of the arguments offered in defense of these normative (i.e, moral) claims.

A failure to discriminate among these levels of ethical inquiry can lead to considerable confusion and error. For instance, a failure to distinguish between descriptive and normative ethics can draw one into a naive cultural relativism or even a subjective relativism. Failure to distinguish normative ethics from critical ethics can lead to hasty moral conclusions. For example, if we affirm (metaethically) that future generations can meaningfully be said to "have rights," it does not follow that they (normatively) have a right to share the company of snail darters or to find the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in a natural state. Furthermore, if someone (normatively) argues that dumping nuclear wastes in the ocean is "inherently unjust," we should neither accept nor reject his claim until we have (metaethically) determined what he means by "inherently unjust" and have examined the structure of his argument and the premises and point of view from which it is argued.

Let us now apply these three levels of ethical inquiry to environmental ethics. First, descriptive environmental ethics is not a significant problem in environmental ethics for the simple reason that, strictly speaking, "descriptive ethics" isn't really a part of moral philosophy at all. Rather, because it is "descriptive," it is really a type of social science. If we ask "what do 'the American people' think of their national parks? Do they believe the parks to be 'valuable'? Worth the cost of their preservation?" If we judge the environmental values of most Americans to be "deplorable" (a normative judgment) and thus feel moved to "do something about it," we might attempt to change these attitudes. And so we would enter the fields of environmental education and moral education. And what teaching methods most effectively produce the attitude we approve of?

Normative ethics deals directly with the "nerve" of morality; namely, the question "what should we do?" or example, such issues as: What is the optimum use of this canyon, or forest, or desert? How should we treat this natural area? Use it up? Protect it? Preserve it intact? What "good" is a "useless" endangered species? How much effort and cost should we devote to protecting it? What damage to the environment and what risk to future generations is acceptable in return for the development of synthetic fuels and nuclear power?

Critical ethics ("metaethics") is concerned with the meanings of ethical concepts and with the justification of normative claims. Thus environmental metaethics brings to policy and legislative debate such questions as these: Upon what unstated moral assumptions are these contending positions based (e.g., the positions of the "developer" and the "preservationist")? We are now prepared to clarify a crucial distinction: "Environmental Ethics" is to be identified in this Introduction, as a metaethical term designating any ethical position that expresses a viewpoint concerning man's responsibility to nature. "Ecological morality," on the other hand, identifies the particular normative environmental ethics of such writers as Aldo Leopold, who view man as a part of the natural community with duties of respect and forbearance toward that community.

3.8 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: WHY AND WHY NOW?

Why? Because we can't sit this one out. "Not to decide" about issues of environmental ethics is "to decide" -- in favor of the status quo, and in favor of "business as usual." But our poor, battered, plundered and polluted planet can not long endure a continuation of "business as usual." We have, in the past couple of centuries, achieved a cleverness that has far overshot our wisdom. The explosive growth of scientific knowledge, followed shortly by a parallel growth in technical ingenuity, has created an "explosive growth" in moral problems -- some unprecedented in human history.

Ethics is a very ancient human preoccupation (older, perhaps, than philosophy itself). And yet, environmental ethics is very new. In view of the recent dramatic growth in knowledge and technology, it is not difficult to see why this is so. Ethics deals with the realm of imaginable human conduct that falls between the impossible and the inevitable -- that is, within the area of human capacity and choice. And now, even within our own lifetime (and ever more so with each year), we have acquired capabilities and thus face choices that have never been faced before in the course of human history -- indeed, we now face many capabilities and choices never contemplated or even imagined before. These include choices of birth, life, and death for our species and others; choices that are rapidly changing the living landscape forever.

When the ecosystem was not understood, or even recognized or appreciated as a system; when the earth and its wilderness were believed to be too vast to be damaged by voluntary human choice; at such a time, there was no environmental ethics. But in our own time we have revalidated the myth of Genesis, for in our own time, with knowledge has come power, and with both knowledge and power, we have lost our innocence. This knowledge and this power are due, of course, to the scientific revolution. And therein resides a puzzle and a paradox: The scientists, steadfastly and correctly, claim that their content and methodology are "value neutral." In the narrow sense, they are right. As methodology, science is properly value-free and should be value-free (an evaluative reflection, you will notice). But this "properly value-free" methodology has opened up a bewildering array of capacities and choices to us evaluating creatures. And we are not equipped with the ethical insights and the moral restraints that are necessary to deal wisely and appropriately with these choices. Yet the choices are before us and we can not evade them. "Not to decide is to decide."

The issues of environmental ethics are momentous, live and forced (to borrow William James' terms); that is to say, these issues involve moral choices of enormous importance that we can make and, even more, that we must make. Our moral responsibility to nature and to the future is

of unprecedented significance and urgency, and it is a responsibility that we can not escape. In our heretofore careless and capricious hands lies the fate of our natural environment, our brother species, and the generations that will succeed us. Therein lies our inalienable, dreadful challenge --- and our awesome responsibility.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1. Distinguish three "levels of environmental ethics."

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2. What is "Ecological morality"?

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3. Why has environmental ethics become an important issue of human concern?

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3.9 LET US SUM UP

Environmental ethics is theory and practice about appropriate concern for, values in, and duties regarding the natural world. By classical accounts, ethics is people relating to people in justice and love. Environmental ethics starts with human concerns for a quality environment, and some think this shapes the ethic from start to finish. Others hold that, beyond inter-human concerns, values are at stake when humans relate to animals, plants, species and ecosystems.

Humans deliberately and extensively rebuild the spontaneous natural environment and make the rural and urban environments in which they reside. We care about the quality of life in these hybrids of nature and culture. Ethics arises to protect various goods within our cultures: this, historically, has been its principal arena. As philosophers frequently model this, ethics is a feature of the human social contract. People arrange a society where they and the others with whom they live do not (or ought not) lie, steal, kill. This is right, and one reason it is right is that

people must co-operate to survive; and the more they reliably co-operate the more they flourish. One way of envisioning this is the so-called original position, where one enters into contract, figuring out what is best for a person on average, oblivious to the specific circumstances of one's time and place. This is where a sense of universality, or at least pan-culturalism, in morality has a plausible rational basis.

The four most critical issues that humans currently face are peace, population, development and environment. All are interrelated. Human desires for maximum development drive population increases, escalate exploitation of the environment and fuel the forces of war. Those who exploit persons will typically exploit nature as readily -animals, plants, species, ecosystems and the Earth itself. Eco-feminists have found this to be especially true where both women and nature are together exploited. The interests of environmental ethics done from perspectives of political ecology, sustainable development, bioregionalism, ecojustice, from an ethics of stewardship, or human virtues in caring, or a sense of place -all these tend to be humanistic and to recognize that nature and culture have entwined destinies.

3.10 KEY WORDS

Environmental Ethics : new sub-discipline of philosophy that deals with the ethical problems surrounding environmental protection. It aims to provide ethical justification and moral motivation for the cause of global environmental protection.

Pacifism : Peaceful international order to foster cooperation among countries in dealing with the global environmental crisis.

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UNIT 4 MEDIA ETHICS

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit highlights the nature, role and important aspects Media Ethics. Before that one should know the nature and the role of Media Ethics. Hence this chapter with varied sections on Media Ethics aims to bring out this aspect.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The opinions, attitude, and conduct of persons depend upon the information available to them and upon the images and feeling tones impressed upon them. Most of our knowledge of contemporary events comes to us from the newspaper, the radio, television and movies. Our emotions and attitudes also are formed to large extent by the media. Those who control our means of mass communication not only report current events and history of the world help to make history. We cannot think correctly and clearly about either domestic or world affairs unless we obtain accurate information. If the sources and the channels of information are tainted or distorted, all people are in a serious danger of being led astray. The democratic way of life depends upon the existence of free agencies of mass media, as the public is kept informed and alert.

Media ethics is concerned about the question of what is right or wrong, good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable about the means and ways that the media collects and presents information and news. It is also about the normative and prescriptive nature of guiding and controlling the practical aspect of media with ethical principles. Relevance of these principles are always discussed, at times contested also by journalists and audiences depending on the specific situations and context. The impact that media has on the audience is always comes under the purview of media ethics. (Melisande 2009)

4.2 CODE OF ETHICS FOR MEDIA

The importance and inevitability of media is expressed in the following saying, “If journalism at one time seemed to be an appendix to culture, today, by contrast, culture finds itself at the mercy of journalism. It is part of a world dominated by journalism. The mass media decide who will be known and to what degree and according to which interpretation.” (Milan Kundera 1984) Media

is that influential that it is not exaggeration to say that journalists make daily decisions for people. There is always a tension between the public's right to know the truth and an individual's claim to privacy. Those decisions are grounded in ethical decision-making tools that may include a formal Code of Ethics. Media ethics tries to prevent any monopoly over information diffusion; upholds pluralism instead of the uniform gloss over media content that is typically brought on by authoritarian regimes; maintains objectivity by providing different sides of an issue, which empowers audiences to formulate their own judgments and increases levels of truthfulness in reporting. (Melisande 2009)

The following codes are formulated to regularise the media in general.

Responsibility: The right of a newspaper to attract and hold readers is restricted by nothing but considerations of public welfare. A journalist who uses his power for any selfish or otherwise unworthy motive is not trustworthy. We shall elaborate on this elsewhere. **Freedom of the Press:** Freedom of the press is guarded as a vital right of media. It is the unquestionable right to discuss whatever is not explicitly forbidden by law including the wisdom of any restrictive statute. **Independence:** Freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital. **Sincerity, Truthfulness, Accuracy:** These enable media have a good rapport with the reader. **Impartiality:** news reports and expression of opinion are expected to be free from bias of any kind. **Fairplay:** question of private rights and public interest distinguished from public curiosity, is discussed in fairplay of the media. We would further the discussion on it in the later section. Secondly, it is the privilege as well as the duty, of media to make prompt and complete correction of its own serious mistakes of fact.

4.3 BEING ETHICAL IN PRINT MEDIA

The daily print media is the basic means for the day-by-day dissemination of the news. It is the gate way of elaborate information of the world and its events. It has greater influence on the society. It furnishes news or information regarding the events of the contemporary world, with an interpretation and comments upon these events. Newspapers can 'head-line' some items of news or opinions and make them seem very important, and they can suppress items or omit them entirely. They advertise for business and other establishments, acting as a sales medium. They furnish entertainment of various types, from comic strips to puzzles. They provide miscellaneous information which it is difficult to classify under any of the above headings. The ethical training of the correspondents, reporters and the editors tells upon the type of presentation in a particular media. The vision, viewpoint and ideology - be it social, economic and political - of a specific media guides their way of presentation. They are the inarticulate major premises that necessarily colour the reports they make. Much news is gathered and dispatched by great news-gathering agencies, or press associations.

Print media is under severe criticism from time to time. Three major criticisms are usually levelled against the newspaper today. They are as follows: It is said that the press, while claiming to be an objective agent for the dissemination of news, is in reality a group of business corporations run in the interest of profits for the owners or the stockholders. Due to this business link with mere profit motive, print media is subject to financial pressure and is controlled by a small group. Eventually it tries to serve their social, political and economic interests. It is claimed that newspapers are subject to additional pressure from major advertisers. In order to please the advertiser owing to huge revenue from them, most of the times, print media may

indulge in distortion and improper slanting of the news. Most newspapers are frankly partisan in politics. When economic issues are involved, newspapers with few exceptions serve the interests of the dominant groups.

Media ethics demands social responsibility with public interest. In the words of Owens-Ibie serving the public interest would mean “the mass media are expected to inform the citizenry of what goes on in the government, which, in a way, keeps rulers in check. Also, the media should be reporting on and promoting discussion of ideas, opinions and truths toward the end of social refinement; acting as a nation’s ‘bulletin board’ for information and mirroring the society and its peoples just the way they are, thus exposing the heroes and the villains.” (Owens-Ibie, 1994)

In order to regularise the print media towards serving the larger interest of people rather than few influential and powerful groups, certain ethical guidelines are emphasized. Legislative action is suggested to check the monopoly in the handling the information. As individuals, we should widen our range or variety of reading and check items or articles that arouse our suspicion. Both public and private bureaus of information and investigation should be developed and supported. We might establish a few endowed newspapers on a non-profit basis, with different sections of the paper assigned to different interest groups.

4.4 ETHICAL NORMS FOR AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA

Broadcasting is comparatively a recent phenomenon in the modern world. The development of radio and television has been rapid and has gained tremendous power. Listening and seeing are the important aspects of society. Certain ethical issues are raised in broadcasting. The power of owning number of stations and the authority to give them licences to do so remain with the state. This limit and control of broadcasting sometimes become a coercive and manipulative by certain group of people who are favored with the privilege of using the available air waves or channels. The regulative code is that it has with the responsibility for the common good of all. News reporting also is ethically expected to be factual and objective. Programs relating to controversial public issues are needed to give fair representation to both sides of issues beyond certain bias and particular standpoint. Children’s programs are to be educative rather than mere entertaining. The pedagogical input reflects basic human values like respect for parents, law and order, clean living, high morals, fair play and ethically right behavior.

The ethical codes on audio-visual media specify things that are forbidden and be avoided such as attacks on religious sentiments, profanity, obscenity and vulgarity; material of an extreme nature which might create undesirable emotional reaction among people. The advertising of hard liquor, fortune telling, occultism must be avoided. Since much discussion has centered on the subject of crime, violence and sex in broadcasts, it is interesting to note what the codes emphasize in the fields. The radio code says that broadcasters should avoid technique and methods of crime presented in such manner as to encourage imitation or to make the commitment of crime attractive. The television code urges respect for the sanctity of marriage and shows concern that illicit sex relations are not treated as commendable.

In a section headed ‘Responsibility toward children’ the television code says: “The education of children involves giving them a sense of the world at large. Crime, violence and sex are a part of the world. They will be called up to meet and a certain amount of proper presentation of such is

helpful in orienting the child to his social responsibility". However, violence and illicit sex shall not be presented in attractive manner, not to an extent that it may make a child to believe that they play a greater part in life than they do. They should not be presented without indications of the resultant retribution and punishment. The television code points out that television makes available the finest programs of Information, Education, Culture and Entertainment. It is a valuable means of augmenting the educational and cultural influences of Schools, Institutions of higher learning devoted to education and culture. Whether we agree or not programs of excellence in these areas are commendable. On the other hand, one such study on these programmes has indicated that some parents complain of 'too much violence' and a lack of educational and religious programs. The study found that children's programme are of full violence either directly or indirectly. Some educators have warned the possible dangers to health, character and education which may result if a child spends two or more hours a day in watching Television. Others think that these dangers have been exaggerated and blame the parents, who indirectly encourage their children watching television as it keeps the children busy and "out of trouble".

Efforts to regulate radio broadcasting have been undertaken by the government. Broadcasting stations are licensed to serve the public and not for the purpose of furthering the private or group interest of individuals. Benefits derived by advertisers were to be incidental and entirely secondary. The broadcasting system was to be a kind of community mouthpiece for keeping the people informed, stimulating discussion and presenting music, drama and athletics for the entertainment of the public. The ethical standards of the radio and television industries appear to be the generally accepted standards of society. The industry tries to follow the law of the land. A certain amount of idealism is offset by the drive for profits and the desire to do the things which lead in this direction regardless of public welfare.

Concept of public interest is in the heart of media ethics and highlights the crucial role of communications sector in shaping the formation of public opinion and civil society movements. In short, field of communications is a determinant factor in framing the path of society's development. (Melisande 2009)

4.5 FREEDOM OF PRESS AND RIGHT OF PRIVACY

Many journalists believe, as witnessed particularly in India during the last couple of years, that the public's right to know and the need to expose vice and corruption are superior to all other concerns. Most of the time it turns out to be focusing more on privacy of people which is turned out to be 'newsworthy' item in their media career. People in public life are vulnerable when their private lives become a spotlight for the media. The growth in mass media size, profile and influence together with technological change or otherwise called 'information revolution,' made the privacy of people so fragile. Privacy is one of the fundamental freedoms of people and it is essential to liberty and human dignity. Media justifies such interference in privacy of people arguing that it is in the public interest. Privacy is not just a concern over personal information and the dangers of 'surveillance society.' It is more than the mere maintenance of one's 'data protection,' or confidentiality of any information.

In using the personal information of people and facts about events in an individual's life media has a greater responsibility. Even though there are strangely few odd persons who try to seek a

high profile and public recognition, to further their own interests or some cause or philosophy they support through publicly going with personal details. The balance between individual's right to privacy and public's right to know, is often unsteady. Ethical issues and choices arise out of it. The public's right to know is one of the guiding principles of journalists. They believe strongly that if officials are allowed to act in secrecy, miscarriages of justice and corruption may result. Is it an unobstructed right to know everything? Is the public's right to know always in 'the public interest'? Do journalists understand 'the public interest' to mean the public 'good', in the classic sense, or the public's curiosity? If we assume the public is always curious about the private details of other's lives (or pictures of their experiences), does that make it right to 'print everything you know'? Is the public always curious or are they often offended by the information or photographs put before them, and are the media therefore out of step with the very audience they claim to serve? These are the serious concerns in media ethics. Simple check before a journalist when deciding whether to print or broadcast a piece of information or a picture: Is it true? Is it fair? And is it necessary? (Gail Hulnick "Defining the Line Between the Public's Right to Know and the Individual's Right to Privacy")

4.6 REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR MALADIES IN MASS MEDIA

The maladies in mass media are problematic as they affect entire society directly and indirectly. For example, certain advertisements on tobacco-related materials are undoubtedly detrimental to the healthy life of people, particularly younger generation who are future pillars of the nation. The avoidance of this type of advertisement in Radio, Television and Newspaper is recommended. In smoking it is wrongly projected that freshness comes after having that smoke. When such ideology is inflicted on the minds of people, they are made to believe. Avoiding such advertisement would enable us to take care of people in any society. The mass media has an obligation to the society to show right things, right thought, right guidelines, and right behaviour.

Where ever the suppression of fact is necessary, the mass media has a duty to do it immediately. For instance reporting of sensitive communal riots and tensions might be suppressed if it would accelerate further riots and tensions in other parts of the world. Suppression of personal misbehaviour of particular individual, for which one is duly punished, is recommended with exaggerating it to be the important news item. Reporting the individual's wrong doing as belong to particular community, state, religion, or country, is unwarranted. Equality before law guarantees that wrong doer will be punished without any discrimination or preference.

Whenever an exaggeration of fact is necessary, the mass media has to do it for the welfare of people. It might alert people and enable them to protect them as early as possible. For example, news about the death of 1000 persons in road accident duet to violation of wearing helmet could possibly be exaggerated so as to create awareness among people to protect themselves. It depends upon the context that the mass media has to work carefully without any delay.

4.7 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MEDIA

Media ethics is given a broader concept of social responsibility. In presenting the facts and news around the globe, the Media is expected to have certain responsibility inherent within or imposed

upon, namely responsibility towards the society to which it serves. The question of social responsibility comes to be highlighted whenever there are certain controversies that are reported without foreseeing the consequences that would follow. Every one is entitled to have information. When the information is passed on media personnel have their own perspective to present. In certain cases, the presentation of certain facts may have negative impact. Hence, there comes the question of social responsibility. Defining social responsibility and regulating the aspects of it are to be carefully figured out. One may talk of theoretical grounding of the concept of social responsibility. Yet the concrete reality of practical journalism may have particular difficulties in the applications of these theoretical values. To bring about a more comprehensive understanding of social responsibility is a challenging task. Formulation of media laws are to be effective and should have a potential to result in improving the role of media. (Melisande 2009)

Accountability in the media is often defined in terms of producing records like evidence to support what has been reported. The journalist is accountable in the sense he or she is held liable for the consequences of the reporting. The liability is both in ethical and legal in nature. Responsibility for the act of reporting is on the journalist.

There is a distinction between accountability and responsibility, “Whereas accountability often is referred to as the manifestation of claims to responsibility, the latter is the acknowledged obligation for action or behavior within frameworks of roles and morals” (Plaisance, 2000). Responsibility is in this sense the obligation for proper custody, care and safekeeping of one’s audience. In social responsibility the interest of the society is given a top priority. From the Commission on the Freedom of the Press or the Hutchins Commission the following five guidelines are briefly given for A Free and Responsible Press. These principles, though valid, are lacking in precision.

- a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning;
- a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism;
- the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society;
- the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society;
- full access to the day’s intelligence.

Social responsibility is an obligation of the media to provide trustworthy and relevant news and information as well as opportunities for diverse voices to be heard in the public arena. It is to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide. (Siebert et al. *Social Responsibility Theory*, 1956)

4.8 ETHICS IN PRODUCING AND SCREENING OF MOVIES

Like the newspaper, the radio and television, the movies also have great power in society, especially in India. It has an impact of good or evil in the individual lives of persons, in social relationships and in the relations between nations. Numerous studies have indicated the great influence of movies, especially upon the thinking and conduct of youth. These pictures serve to set the pattern for mannerisms, styles, fashions, for ways of courtship and lovemaking and for personal adornment. They stimulate emotions and allow them to be in fantasy and in daydreaming as well as to indulge in overt behavior. They help to create ideas of right and wrong and to mould desires and ambitions. During the early development of the movie industry, there

were some scandals within the industry and considerable criticism of the type of pictures shown. This led to the emergence of censorship. The censorship legislation has a set of codes for movies with production code for distributors and producers. While a producer cannot be compelled to produce pictures in accordance with the code regulations, the code has had a beneficial effect.

In some of the larger cities the censorship boards have each year eliminated from the films brought before them several thousand scenes which they considered detrimental. Censorship as imposing certain legislative codes of conduct and screening has a clear foundation on ethical principles. It ultimately brings in improvements and high-quality films. Even though it may be argued that censorship curtails the freedom of speech, the effective use of it has shown desired results in film industry. Prohibition of obscene, lewd, and filthy scenes and forbidding the importation of any film that is immoral or obscene have done good to the society. Motion pictures are included in the list of articles that may be prohibited on the grounds of immorality or indecency from the channels of interstate commerce or circulation through the mails. The fairly widespread criticism naturally has been a matter of concern to the motion-picture industry. Besides, making some amendments in its code and adopting "an advertising code," the industry has taken steps to clean house from within and to enforce the provisions of the code. Now many theatres will not show a film unless it has been given the seal of approval of the censor board. The code of the industry states, No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil, or sin. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented. Law, natural or human shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

4.9 MEDIA ETHICS: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Habermas' theories of communicative action and discourse ethics have indirect impact in media ethics. Ethics in the public space is discussed here. Habermas reminds us of the urgent need to protect and insulate the public discourse and its dialectics. Discourse is always collaborative or collective and bears an impact upon the receiving of a piece of communication. The author of any discourse is made responsible for its impact. Habermas' discourse ethics in Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action provide a convenient framework for making this point: he borrows the universalisation principle from Kant's moral theory, extending the notion of categorical imperative to include all those affected by a norm as its participants (Hoenisch, 2000). Any communication involves both the listener and the speaker. The journalist who is communicating is intrinsically linked to his listeners. The fundamental principle of media's obligation to fulfill public interest is this relationship.

Everyone in this world is born to live comfortable life. When basic comforts are deprived people tend to forget the ethical codes and conduct in life. It would also never mean that poor are unethical. To live peacefully the basic amenities must be fulfilled. Similarly living a good life needs to be ethical by all means. Speaking of mass media one can vouch that it has done a good service so far to the people. No doubt, we have been benefited by them. It serves as a powerful tool in keeping up the democratic spirit.

Crimes against the Law: These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

1. Murder

- a. The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.
 - b. Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.
 - c. Revenge in modern times shall not be justified.
2. Methods of crime should not be explicitly presented.
 3. Illegal drug traffic must never be presented.

Sex: The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing. Adultery and Illicit Sex, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated or justified, or presented attractively.

Scenes of Passion: These should not be introduced except where they are definitely essential to the plot. Excessive and lustful kissing, embraces, suggestive posture and gestures are not to be shown. In general, passion should be treated in such manner as not to stimulate the lower and baser emotions.

Vulgarity: The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil subjects should be guided always by the dictates of good taste and a proper regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

Obscenity: Obscenity in word, gesture, reference, song, joke, or by suggestion (even when likely to be understood only by part of the audience) is forbidden.

Profanity: Pointed profanity and every other profane or vulgar expression, however used, is forbidden.

The code itself is a fairly commendable statement of objectives. Unfortunately, it has not been effectively implemented or enforced. It has been used at times, furthermore, to bar criticism of our social order, as well as to curb the indecent. Motion pictures are controlled by a huge industry which has money-making as its chief aim. With near-monopolistic control by a few companies, free competition has been definitely limited. In recent years the government has forced the separation of theatre ownership from production and distribution and has prohibited “block booking”, “blind selling,” and various monopolistic tactics. Film may now be individually rented. Thus exhibitors cannot legally be forced to accept or to choose. Higher standards of motion-picture entertainment may be brought about by increased public demand. In this connection, as with broadcasting, we might encourage more critical reviews and use of film Estimate Service. Today there are a number of excellent Estimate Services carried by several magazines which give reviews and estimates of films and enable one to pick what he wishes to see. We might also empower the State Department to preview films to be shipped abroad and to prohibit shipment if the picture misrepresents the country or is likely to undermine good will and stir up resentment toward us.

A study of the choice of people of various ages led to the conclusion that the recipe for a “good movie” was “a lot of action with some plot and not too much love”. Pictures not considered suitable were those, in which glorification of war, mediocrity, over sentimentality, uncalled-for drinking, unnecessary brutality or killing, passionate love scenes, undue sympathy for immoral or criminal behaviour, superficiality. The motion-picture industry can be a great force for raising

standards and for lowering them. There is a moral obligation upon everyone to see that the films to which they and their dependents are exposed are elevating, not degrading.

4.10 LET US SUM UP

The goods and services distributed by mass media, are probably the most important consumer commodities purchased in the contemporary world. The emotional and mental aspirations are satisfied and fed with these information. Media power to determine what the people read, hear and see or what they want or should have, must not be left entirely to the judgment of a small group of men with a large financial interest in the decision. It has to be ethical oriented. Only by freedom and conflict of ideas can truth in the long run be found. Unless the press, the broadcasting stations, and motion pictures are free channels for information and discussion, there can be little freedom of thought or of expression. Discourse in the public space is fed with facts and news by mass media.

In our discussion of the newspaper, radio and television broadcasting and the movies, we have made some specific suggestions for possible improvement with ethical principles. In the long run, however, the solution may rest with the education, the public schools, the colleges and the Universities. They can help to raise a new generation of young people with higher ethical codes, tastes and expectations. The public must be taught to be discerning and critical of what it reads, hears and sees. Respect for the privacy of individuals, even of those of public figures, is to be upheld with due honour. Privacy could never be tampered in terms of public curiosity which might turn out to be an excuse for mass media to cross their limits. Media ethics regulates life, events and their reporting. The role of mass media could never be undermined as it becomes so essential in contemporary world to bring about healthier society, Nation, Country and the World.

4.11 KEY WORDS

Public interest : dissemination of information about events and news in the world is done with the motive and interest of people who have right to know. It is to be always distinguished from public curiosity to know everything, even sometime private life of persons.

Social responsibility : obligation of mass media to people it serves.

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