

# **Ethics and Practical Life**

## **PHI 303**



**University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre  
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development**



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**Vice-Chancellor's Message**

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.



Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka  
Vice-Chancellor

## **Foreword**

As part of its vision of providing education for “Liberty and Development” for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre's provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.



Professor Bayo Okunade

Director

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## Study Session 1: Ethics

### Introduction

The field of ethics, also called moral philosophy, involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. Philosophers today usually divide ethical theories into three general subject areas: meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics.

*Meta-ethics* investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. *Normative ethics* involves a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct and *applied ethics* involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment, or nuclear war.

This study session will be introducing you to the understanding of the subject matter of ethics, by examining its central concern, especially as it relates to morality. As such, at the end of the study session, you will be expected to be able to make a defence of the importance of ethics and ethical reasoning in relation to human actions.

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 1.1 Discuss an Overview of Ethics and Morality
- 1.2 Discuss the distinction between Morality and Ethics
- 1.3 Explain the meaning of Ethics
- 1.4 Briefly discuss the three general types of Ethics

### 1.1 Overview of Morality and Ethics

Regardless of the theory of the origin of man one adopts, we (humans) found ourselves on the face of the earth, and are condemned to a life of action making. That is, humans cannot but act; even inaction, in a loosed sense, is itself an action as one refusing to act. Human actions which can be described as willed or free actions **Carry** the morality question and as such, can be described as good or bad, moral or immoral.

In this regard, the social contract theo**Rists**, especially Thomas Hobbes, for instance, argue that life in the state of nature (that is, society prior to the organized formation of state) is brutish, nasty and short because everyone was equal, not in strength, but in having the right to pursue the satisfaction of their desires at whatever expense, thus it becomes an issue of survival of the fittest.

In such a state, there are neither any law guiding human actions nor any principle of morality.



**Figure 1.1:** A state of Anarchy where man lives a brutish life

**Source:** [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b0/Sebastiaan\\_Vrancx\\_\(studio\)\\_-\\_A\\_landscape\\_with\\_travellers\\_ambushed\\_outside\\_a\\_small\\_town.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b0/Sebastiaan_Vrancx_(studio)_-_A_landscape_with_travellers_ambushed_outside_a_small_town.jpg)

However, as humans began to become more aware of one another and of their environment, they found that they could accomplish more when bonded together than they could when isolated from one another. The notions of “good” and “bad” only came to be appended to actions after many experiences of living together. These ascriptions, however, required sanctions, which were provided by the state through the Leviathan.

Nevertheless, morality does not end with the provision of law or sanctions, it goes beyond that. This is because the law cannot sanction all human acts. For instance, the law does not (in some cases) prohibit the use of humans or embryos in clinical research by scientists, neither does it sanction fornication. Again, we discover that laws in human societies differ.

Above all, the term “**unjust law**” points to the understanding that laws can be immoral. Thus, even though the law sometimes involves morality, the scope of ethics extends beyond mere legal sanctions. This leads us to the question, what is ethics? Before an attempt is made at saying what ethics is, we shall first make a distinction between ethics and morality.

## 1.2 Ethics and Morality

The word ethics derives from the Greek ‘**ethos**’, meaning ‘character’. Morality, on the other hand, is etymologically derived from the Latin ‘**moralis**’, meaning ‘customs’ or ‘manners’. It is important to state here, however, that while some philosophers distinguish between the two, others use these terms interchangeably.

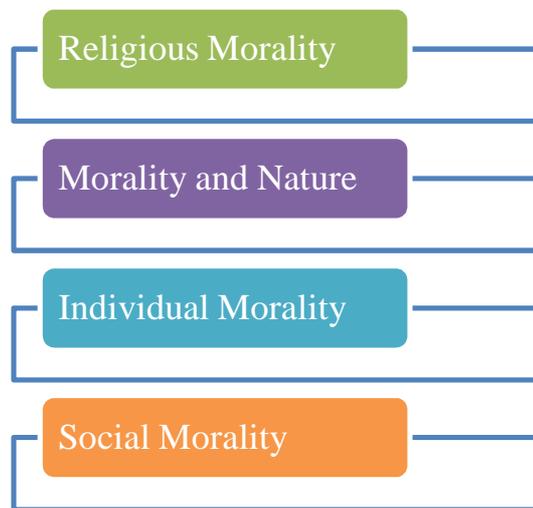
**Box1.1: Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy**

*Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* states that the word ethics is commonly used interchangeably with ‘morality’ and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group, or individual.

A clear point to be made, however, is that issues of morality are discussed in ethics (that is, *morality is contained in ethics*), which (ethics) is one of the main branches of philosophy. When we speak of people as moral or ethical, we usually mean that they are good people, and when we speak of them as being immoral or unethical, we mean that they are bad people.

When we refer to certain human actions as being moral, ethical, immoral and unethical, we mean that they are right or wrong respectively. Thus, moral, ethical, immoral, and unethical essentially mean good, right, bad and wrong, often depending upon whether one is referring to people themselves or to their actions.

Consequent upon the foregoing, morality deals basically with humans and how they relate to other beings, both humans and non-humans. It deals with how human beings treat other beings so as to promote mutual welfare, growth, creativity and meaning; and to strive for what is good over what is bad and what is right over what is wrong. Four kinds of this moral relation can be distinguished as:



**Figure 1.2:** Kinds of Moral Relation

**Source:** SchulPortals Inc. ©

❖ **Religious morality**

This consists of a human being in relationship with a supernatural being or beings. In Jewish and ChRistian religions, for instance, the first three of the Ten Commandments suggests this kind of

morality in the sense that the commandments deal with an individual's relationship with God, not with any other human being. Thus, in violating any of these commandments, a person could be said to act immorally towards God without acting immorally toward anyone else.

❖ **Morality and nature**

Morality and nature deals with a human being in relationship with nature, e.g. animals, trees, planetary bodies, and so on. While some philosophers see nature as being valuable only for the good of humanity, others have come to see it as a good in itself, worthy of moral consideration. This idea largely forms the branch of ethics known as **environmental ethics**.

❖ **Individual morality**

This consists of individuals in relation to themselves and to an individual code of morality, which may or may not be sanctioned by any society or religion. This allows for a higher morality to be found in the individual rather than beyond him or her. This means that a person may or may not perform some particular acts, not because society, law or religion says he or she may or may not, but because he or she thinks it is right or wrong based on his or her own principles of action.

❖ **Social morality**

Finally, social morality concerns human beings in relation with other human beings in the society. That is, it deals with what moral relation exists between individuals as they go about their actions in the society. It is argued that this “is probably the most important aspect of morality, in that it cuts across all of the other aspects and is found in more ethical systems than any of the others.

- If Individual morality consists of individual in relation to themselves and to an individual code of morality and social morality deals with human beings in relation with other human beings in the society while Morality and nature deals with?
  - a) Humans, philosophers and light
  - b) Animal, Planetary bodies and trees
  - c) Human and Trees only
  - d) Planetary bodies and Humans
- (b) Animals, Planetary and tress

On the whole, ethics is the science of human behaviours and conducts. It asks and tries to proffer answers to such questions as

- ❖ What constitutes any person or action being good, bad, right, or wrong, and how do we know?
- ❖ What part does self-interest or the interests of others play in the making of moral decisions and judgments?
- ❖ Should we use principles or rules or laws, or should we let each situation decide our morality?

In answering these questions, several ethical theories have been propounded.

### 1.3 Ethics

Etymologically, ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethika*, which designates “character,” “custom”, “principles” or “standards” of human conduct, sometimes called “morals”, which comes from the Latin *mores*, meaning “customs”, and, by extension, the study of such principles, sometimes called moral philosophy.

As **Jacques Thiroux** puts it, “**ethics**, seems to pertain to the individual character of a person or persons, whereas morality seems to point to the relationships between human beings.

To however attempt a more generally accepted definition, ethics can be seen as ‘the **science of human conduct**’. There are two important elements of this definition, ‘**science**’ and ‘**human conduct**’, which both require explanations.

#### ❖ Science

The sense of ‘science’ used here is not the same as that used in the physical experimental sciences that rely on fixed empirical principles; rather, it involves a broad sense of the word which designates an intellectual enterprise that uses scientific methodology for its rational inquiry to attain truth.

#### ❖ Human conducts

This pertains to the ability of man to make voluntary choices between alternative courses of action because he has decided to choose one alternative rather than the other. From the foregoing, it can be said that ethics as a ‘science of human conduct’ sets out to address by rational inquiry, the problem of how humans ought to act which is different from how they act.

■ Ethics can also be defined as the Science of Human conduct. TRUE or FALSE

TRUE, because ethics is also the science of human conduct

Furthermore, **Paul Richard and L. Elder**, define ethics as “a set of concepts and principles that guide us in determining what behaviour helps or harms sentient creatures. As such, according to Richard and Elder, “most people confuse ethics with behaving in accordance with social conventions, religious beliefs, and the law.

In examining the meaning of ethics, it would be helpful to look at how philosophers have attempted to construe the subject matter. As such, philosophers of different persuasions have their own nuance to the definition according to how it suits their project. In this vein, philosophers have attempted to determine what essentially constitutes the morality of human conduct which includes:

#### ❖ Pythagoras account of Ethics

**Pythagoras** developed the earliest account of ethics which he derived from the Greek mystery religion, Orphism. Pythagoreans opined that “the intellectual nature is superior to the sensual nature and that the best life is one devoted to mental discipline as a result, he founded a semi religious order with rules emphasizing simplicity in speech, dress, and food.

The **Sophist Protagoras** taught that human judgment is subjective, and that a person’s perception is valid only for himself, consequently no objective ethical codes are possible. Other Sophists, such as **Thrasymachus**, believed that might is right.

❖ **The Cynics account**

The Cynics, especially Antisthenes, disparaged pleasure as an evil, if taken as a guide to conduct. They considered all pride a vice, including pride in appearance or cleanliness.

❖ **Plato Account of Ethics**

In his dialogues, Plato maintains that human virtue lies in the fitness of a person to perform that person’s proper function in the world. He taught that man is soul imprisoned in a body and that the human soul has three elements(intellect, will, and emotion) each of which possesses a specific virtue in the person and **Carries** out a specific role.

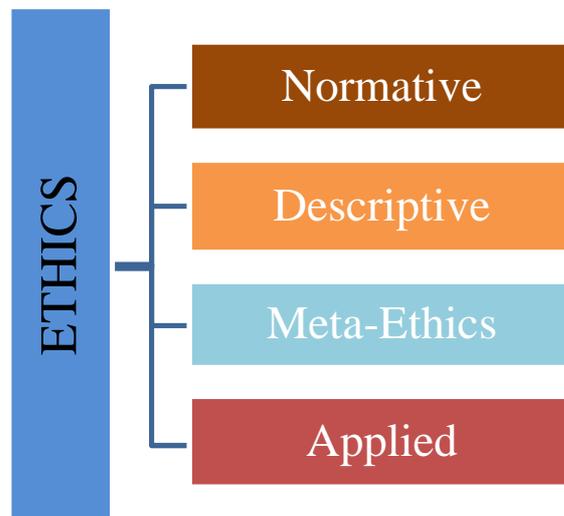
For him, the ultimate virtue is justice which is the harmonious relation of all the other virtues, each part of the soul doing its appropriate task and keeping its proper place. Other philosophers after Plato either took a cue from him or departed from his essential line of thought.

❖ **ARistotle Account of Ethics**

Prominent among the philosophers after Plato is **ARistotle** whose ethics is founded on his metaphysics (different from Plato’s) and whose thesis on ethics is taken seriously till date. As such, **ARistotle** is considered the initial of that brand of moral reasoning referred to as virtue ethics. In a nut shell, virtue ethics emphasizes the cultivation of virtuous character as the basis for morality. In this regard, moral judgments are based on the agent’s character.

## 1.4Types of Ethics

Major areas of study in ethics may be divided into four:



**Figure 1.3:** General Types of Ethics

**Source:** Schulportals Inc. ©

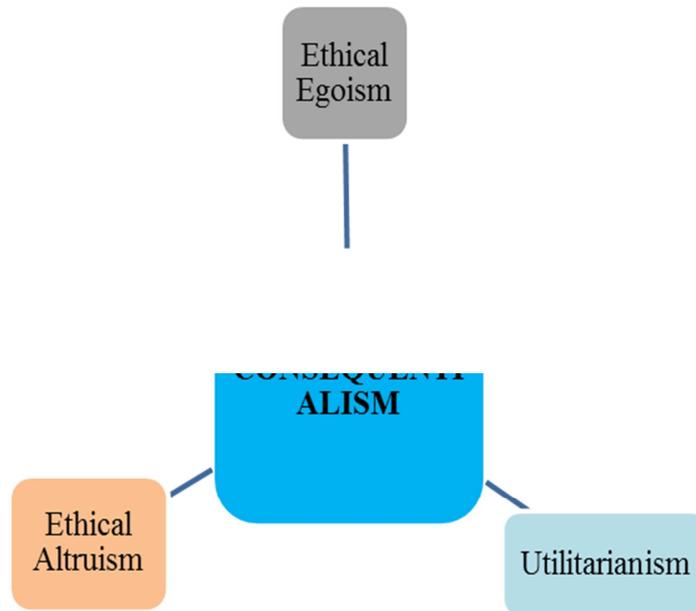
#### ❖ Normative Ethics

This prescribes how we should act. This level of theorizing includes sets of principles that can be used to decide what ought to be done. Alternatively, normative ethics is concerned with the discovering of the things that are intrinsically good, and which principles of obligation are the true fundamental principles of morality.

The basic assumption in normative ethics is that there is only *one* ultimate criterion of moral conduct. There are three dominant approaches to seeking out the foundational principle of moral conduct in normative ethics and they are:

**Deontological theories** reject the idea that rightness or wrongness of an act depends on its consequences, instead they emphasis rules and duty as the bases for morality.

**Consequentialist theories** argue that an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable. According to James Fieser there are three subdivisions of consequentialism; that is, Ethical egoism, Ethical altruism and Utilitarianism.



**Figure 1.4:** James Fieser Subdivisions of Consequentialism

**Source:** Schulportals Inc. ©

**Virtue theories** stress the importance of developing *good habits of character* and places less emphasis on learning rules. It emphasizes the importance of moral education.

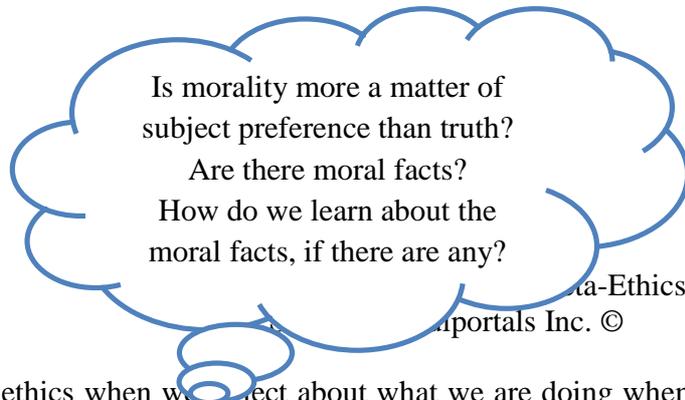
#### ❖ Descriptive ethics

**Descriptive ethics**, sometimes referred to as *comparative ethics* because it derives from observation of choices made by moral agents, is a form of empirical research into the attitudes or ethical actions of people. It tries to answer the question: “What do people believe is right?”

Through what comparative studies of actions recommend, we are able to know how better to live. Consequently, descriptive ethics or theory is not about what one thinks but a description of what is. Example of this approach is Kohlberg’s theory of moral development which describes the different stages of moral development in a person.

#### ❖ Meta-Ethics

**Meta-ethics** can be defined as the study of the origin and meaning of ethical concepts. It is concerned with analysing moral concepts. **Geoff Sayre-McCord** defines meta-ethics as an attempt to understand the metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and psychological, presuppositions and commitments of moral thought, talk, and practice.



We do meta-ethics when we reflect about what we are doing when we make a moral judgment; whether we are simply expressing our emotion or fulfilling what is stated in some legal code.

Meta-ethics came to the fore with **G. E. Moore's** *Principia Ethica* (1903). Part of Moore's concern in the *Principia Ethica*, wherein he developed what he called *the naturalistic fallacy*, was to reject naturalism in ethics.

However, the Scottish philosopher **David Hume** had earlier put forward a similar view on the difference between facts and values. As such, the studies of how we know in ethics are divided into:

❖ **Non-cognitivism**

This is the claim that when we judge something as right or wrong, this may end up to be neither right nor wrong. We may, for example, be only expressing our emotional feelings about these things.

❖ **Cognitivism**

This can then be seen as the claim that when we talk about right and wrong, we are talking about matters of fact. Non-descriptivists and non-cognitivists believe that ethics does not need a specific ontology, since ethical propositions do not defer. This is known as an anti-realist position. Realists on the other hand must explain what kind of entities, properties or states are relevant for ethics, how they have value, and why they guide and motivate our actions.

There is close interrelationship between meta-ethics and normative ethics. Indeed, some scholars suggest that we cannot properly distinguish between meta-ethics and normative ethics because of the two sorts of enquiry are usually **Carried** out simultaneously.

- The claim that when we judge something as right or wrong which may end up to be neither right nor wrong is?
  - a) Non-cognitivism
  - b) Non-descriptivist
  - c) Cognitivism
  - d) Descriptivist
- Non- Cognitivism (a)

However, **H. J. McCloskey** argues that there is a conceptual difference between the two sorts of enquiry. He notes that there are issues often raised concerning their interrelatedness. One of such concerns relates to whether meta-ethics can be developed without resting on normative judgments. He answers that primarily meta-ethics does the work of conceptual analysis of moral concepts while normative ethics has the task of prescribing how one ought to act.

Though the one is conceptually distinct from the other they work together to reach objectivity. For instance, normative ethics usually starts by drawing on the conceptual clarifications made by meta-ethics.

Still on the relation between meta-ethics and normative ethics, it (meta-ethics) can be seen as a field within ethics that seeks to understand the nature of normative ethics. The focus of meta-ethics is on how we understand, know about, and what we mean when we talk about what is right and what is wrong.

### ❖ **Applied Ethics**

Applied ethics is the branch of ethics which consists of the analysis of specific, controversial moral issues such as abortion, animal rights, or euthanasia. In recent years applied ethical issues have been subdivided into convenient groups such as:

- Medical ethics
- Business ethics
- Environmental ethics
- Sexual ethics.

Generally speaking, two features are necessary for an issue to be considered an “applied ethical issue.” First, the issue needs to be controversial in the sense that there are significant groups of people both for and against the issue at hand.

The second requirement for an issue to be an applied ethical issue is that it must be a distinctly moral issue. On any given day, the media presents us with an array of sensitive issues such as affirmative action policies, gays in the military, involuntary commitment of the mentally impaired, capitalistic versus socialistic business practices, public versus private health care systems, or energy conservation. Although all of these issues are controversial and have an important impact on society, they are not all moral issues. Some are only issues of social policy.

The aim of social policy is to help make a given society run efficiently by devising conventions, such as traffic laws, tax laws, and zoning codes. Moral issues, by contrast, concern more universally obligatory practices, such as our duty to avoid lying, and are not confined to individual societies.

### **Summary for Study Session 1**

In this Study Session 1, you have learnt that:

- 1) That the word ethics is “commonly used interchangeably with ‘morality’ and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group, or individual.
- 2) Ethics can be generally seen as ‘the **science of human conduct**’.
- 3) There are four types of Ethics

### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Study Session.

#### **SAQ1.1 (Test Learning Outcomes)**

The term “unjust law” points to the understanding that laws can be immoral. TRUE or FALSE

#### **SAQ 1.2(Tests Learning outcome 1.2)**

Basically Morality deals with .....?

- a) Humans and Animals
- b) Friends, Family and People around
- c) Humans and how they relate to other beings, both humans and non-humans
- d) Only how a Kings and how he relates with his subjects and servants

#### **SAQ 1.3(Tests Learning Outcome 1.3)**

If Ethics is defined as the Science of Human conduct, explain the meaning of “science” in its definition.

#### **SAQ 1.4(Tests Learning Outcome 1.4)**

List the various types of Ethics?

### **Notes on Study Section 1**

#### **SAQ 1.1**

TRUE

#### **SAQ 1.2**

Humans and how they relate to other beings, both humans and non-humans (A)

#### **SAQ 1.3**

The sense of ‘science’ used here is not the same as that used in the physical experimental sciences that rely on fixed empirical principles; rather, it involves a broad sense of the word which designates an intellectual enterprise that uses scientific methodology for its rational inquiry to attain truth.

#### **SAQ1.4**

Normative, Descriptive, Meta-ethics and Applied Ethics

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## Study Session 2: Ethical Theories

### Introduction

The job of ethicists or moral thinkers is understood to be one that is laden with the burden of giving an account and justification of why “such and such” is good or bad, right or wrong. As a result, it is not the concern of ethics as a practical science to assume this task in advance and then attempt to say what ought to be done or how to live, but to engage in the rational examination of human actions.

To view the concern of ethics otherwise, would be to think that the aim of ethics is simply to tell us what we are already supposed to know; and this would not only be unreasonable and unphilosophical, but it will completely miss the point. Rather, it is because we do not know, or are unsure about what we should do or how we should live that we turn to the study ethics in the hope of finding answers.

In this study session you will learn about ethical theories and frameworks which have been employed in analysing human actions with a further understanding of the subject matter of ethics by examining what has been referred as “ethical theories” and understanding of the theories discussed in the course of this study session

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

After you have studied this study session, you should able to:

- 2.1 Explain the meaning of Ethical Theories
- 2.2 Discuss the various types of ethical theories that have guided moral reasoning from the classical era.

### 2.1 Ethical Theories

Ethical theories are processes of reasoning to arrive at a specific conclusion in moral judgement. Ethical theories show how we arrive at affirming ‘the good’ of a particular issue or a particular thing.

They have predominant values which they protect and cherish. And so, as many values as there are, there are ethical theories, so that, ethical theories are distinguished and differentiated by the predominant values they each cherish and protect.

### 2.2 Different Types of Ethical Theories in the Classical Era

There are various dominant ethical theories that have guided moral reasoning from the classical era. These include; Utilitarianism, Deontology and Virtue ethics. These theories are discussed below.



**Figure 2.1:** The types of Ethical theories

**Source:** <http://triangulations.wordpress.com/category/philosophy-religion/ethics/>

### 2.2.1 Utilitarianism

The best known theory of this kind is called Utilitarianism, whose originators were **Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill** in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the title suggests, this theory holds that the one and only exception-less rule of right and wrong in ethics is the *principle of utility*.

#### Box 2.1 Principle of Utility

According to this principle the right act is the one that will result in the greatest good (or happiness) of the greatest number. An act is obligatory if it meets this test.

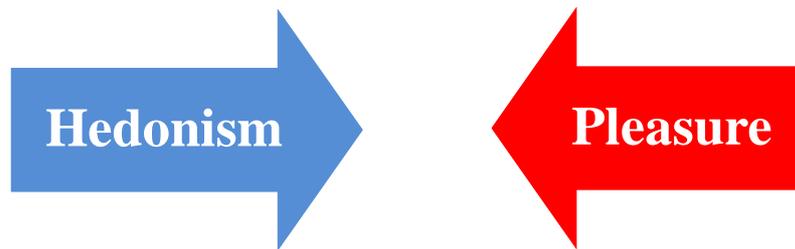
So, looking at the consequences of what is proposed, one should do or avoid what is calculated to bring about the greatest good for the greatest number who will be affected, that is, the greatest amount of welfare. It is understood that this is able to be measured or quantified.

Utilitarianism is still a popular ethical theory today. It focuses on the measuring of welfare, whether this is conceived as happiness, or finances, or public health, or community education, commends itself to many involved in the fields of economics, government, law, health care and industrial relations.

Many find it appealing to make decisions which rest solely on the basis of cost and benefit analyses of situations affecting the community or sections of it. An economist, for example, might make a judgment about the value of a strategy or a politician about the effectiveness of a policy by weighing up the balance of expected benefits to the community over harms that will be brought about in that community. Many thinkers, however, find problems with this, as shall be seen shortly.

#### ❖ Hedonism

Utilitarianism, as a moral theory, derives from another moral theory, Hedonism. Hedonism is a term, which derives from the Greek ‘hedone’, meaning pleasure. This moral theory, hedonism, holds that goodness and badness of acts are determined by pleasure. *Whatever maximizes pleasure is good; whatever, on the other hand, minimizes it (pleasure) is bad.*



**Figure 2.1:** Hedonism derived from Greek ‘hedone’ meaning Pleasure  
**Source:** Schulportals Inc. ©

There are two kinds of hedonism;

1. **Psychological Hedonism** which holds that all human actions are directed towards the search for pleasure.
2. **Ethical Hedonism** which holds that the only thing worth desiring is pleasure for pleasure’s sake.

Thus, the predominant value cherished and protected by hedonism is pleasure. The proponents of hedonism include, **Epicurus**, **Aristippus** and the Utilitarian, **Jeremy Bentham**, who hold that nothing is worth seeking than pleasure. Having seen hedonism, from which the utilitarianism derives, let us take a closer look at Utilitarianism.

Utilitarianism proposes that goodness and badness is determined by **utility and pleasure** and so, that which is good is that which achieves the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people. Hence we see its distinction from the two strands of hedonism, which are individualist and subjectivist. It seeks the greatest pleasure from the greatest number of people.

- Which of the two strands of Hedonism talked about human actions directed towards the search for pleasure
  - a) Psychological Hedonism
  - b) Ethical Hedonism
  - c) Subjective Hedonism
  - d) Capitalist Hedonism
- Psychological Hedonism(a)

Utilitarianism proposes marginalization of pleasure and the minimization of pain. It is a morality of cost and benefit and is based on calculations. It asks ‘what will be the cost if I do this?’ Hence it is a consequentialist theory. Its central proponents are John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham.

For Jeremy Bentham, all is pleasure, pleasure is the only good, and nothing is good that is not pleasurable. For J. S. Mill, there is a hierarchy of pleasure. At the base lies sensual pleasure, then there is imaginative pleasure, then intellectual pleasure, and at the apex, moral pleasure. So for Mill, there is quantitative and qualitative pleasure.

Utilitarianism is further divided into

❖ **Act utilitarianism**

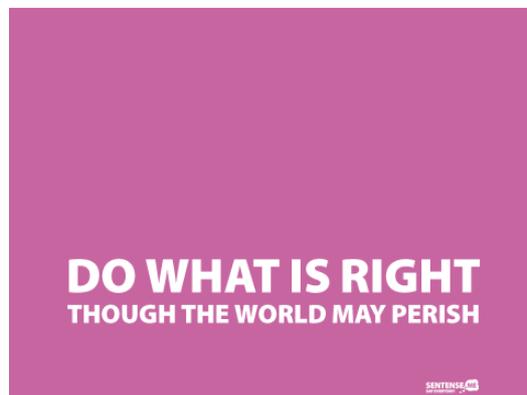
Act utilitarianism holds that an act is good if it is for the greatest good of the greatest number of people. An act is good if it is useful and productive of the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

❖ **Rule utilitarianism**

Rule utilitarianism holds that a rule or policy is good only if it is for the greatest good of the greatest number. Though Utilitarianism is considered altruistic, as it quest the greatest good for the greatest number, its great danger as it seek the common good is when we justify an action to be good just because they are good for the greater number. Also, we may ask if that which is no more useful bad?

### 2.2.2 Deontology

Deontology derives from the Greek words *deon*, meaning ‘duty’ and *logos*, meaning ‘study’ or ‘discourse’. In contemporary moral philosophy, deontology is one of two basic normative theories regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted



**Figure 2.2:** Dentology Theory

**Source:** <http://synapses.co.za/moral-absolutism-deontology-religious-morality/>

In contrast to consequentialist theories, deontological theories judge the morality of choices by criteria different from those that judge our choices based on the states of affairs those choices bring about. In other words, deontologists of all stripes hold that some choices cannot be justified by their effects; that is, no matter how morally good the consequences of our choices are, our actions cannot be justified based on them.

Thus, for deontologists, what makes a choice right is its conformity with a moral norm. Such norms are to be simply obeyed by each moral agent. In this sense, for deontologists, the Right has priority over the Good.

- Deontology is one of two basic normative theories regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted. TRUE or FALSE
- TRUE

If an act is not in accord with the Right, it may not be undertaken, no matter the Good that it might produce (including even a Good consisting of acts in accordance with the Right). In other words, deontology falls within the domain of moral theories that guide and assess our choices of what we 'ought' to do

Furthermore, most deontological theories include two important classes of duties:

1. First there are duties which stem from the social and personal relationships in which we stand to particular people: Parents have duties to children, and children to parents; people have duties in virtue of their jobs and the associations to which they belong
2. The second kind takes the form of general prohibitions or constraints; we should not lie to, cheat, torture or murder anyone, even in the pursuit of good aims.

Thus, while some deontologists, such as W. D. Ross, maintain that one of these duties is a duty to do as much good as possible, others deny that there is such a duty. All agree, however, that there are no occasions when it would be wrong for us to act in a way that would maximize the good, because we would be in breach of some other duty.

The most traditional mode of categorizing deontological theories is to divide them between **agent-centred** and **victim-centred** (or "patient-centred") theories.

#### ❖ Agent Centred Theory

According to agent-centred theories, we each have both permissions and obligations that give us agent-relative reasons for action. An agent-relative reason constitutes an objective reason for some particular agent to do or not to do something, even though it need not constitute such a reason for anyone else.

Thus, an agent-relative *obligation* is an obligation for a particular agent to take some action; and because it is agent-relative, the obligation does not necessarily give anyone else a reason to support that action.

At the heart of agent-centred theories (with their agent-relative reasons) is the idea of agency. The idea is that morality is intensely personal, in the sense that we are each enjoined to keep our own moral house in order. Our categorical obligations are not to focus on how our actions cause or enable other agents to act, but to keep our own agency free of moral taint.

#### ❖ Victim Centred Theory

This is a theory that that, though, they are properly characterized as theories premised on people's rights, the most plausible version, perhaps, posits, as its core, the right against being used only as means for producing good consequences without one's consent.

It is not, for example, a right against being killed, or being killed intentionally. It is a right against being used for others' benefit. More specifically, this version of patient-centred deontological theories proscribes the *using* of another's body, labour, and talent without the latter's consent. . One finds this notion expressed, albeit in different ways, in the works of the so called Right Libertarians.

A third group of theories somewhat orthogonal to the distinction between agent-centred and patient centred deontological theories are

❖ **Contractualist deontological theories**

In this regard, morally wrong acts are those acts that would be forbidden by principles that people in a suitably described social contract would accept, or that would be forbidden only by principles that some people could not reasonably reject.

If any philosopher is regarded as central to deontological moral theories, it is surely **Immanuel Kant**. Indeed, each of the branches of deontological ethics – the agent-centred, the patient-centred, and the contractualist can lay claim to being **Kantian**. The agent centred deontologist can cite **Kant's** locating the moral quality of acts in the principles or maxims on which the agent acts and not primarily in those acts' effects on others.

For **Kant**, the only thing unqualifiedly good is a good will. The patient-centred deontologist can, of course, cite **Kant's** injunction against using others as mere means to one's end. And the contractualist can cite, as **Kant's** contractualist element, **Kant's** insistence that the maxims on which one acts be capable of being willed as a universal law by all rational agents.



**Figure 2.3: Immanuel Kant**

**Source:** <http://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/morality-101/Kantian-duty-based-deontological-ethics>

**Immanuel Kant**, considered a foremost deontologist, thought that there exists one very general ‘perfect’ duty which is absolute, categorical; such that reason alone dictates it to any rational human being. He speaks of this duty as the categorical imperative. For **Kant**, there is, therefore, only a single categorical imperative and it is to “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.

### 2.2.3 Virtue Ethics

Flourishing is taken in this sense to be a good or perhaps the greatest good. Thus given the proper account of flourishing, the argument goes, it should be possible to establish which qualities of character contribute to it, and so are virtues, and which do not, and so are vices. These qualities of character will then provide the key to determining good and bad action.

A lot of debate about virtue ethics has therefore not surprisingly focused on this question of human flourishing, and whether an account can be given of it that will do the job required. . But **ARistotle's** understanding of the relation between flourishing and the virtues is the opposite of this.

**ARistotle** does not argue to the virtues from some prior notion of flourishing, nor does he even attempt to do this.

The **virtues** fall into the definition of *eudaimonia*, but *eudaimonia* does not fall into the definition of the virtues.

#### Box 2.2: Definition of Eudaimonia and Virtue

*Eudaimonia* is defined as activity of soul along with virtue, while the **virtues** are defined as various habits of choice, lying in a mean relative to us, and determined by reason

Referring to the principle that what falls into the definition of a thing is prior to that thing and has to be understood before that thing can be understood, the notion of virtue must be prior to the notion of *eudaimonia* and must be understood before *eudaimonia* can be understood.

That virtue is also said in the Ethics to be what makes those who possess it and their work good only confirms this order of priority. Virtue makes one good in the same way that health makes one healthy, not because it causes goodness, but because it is goodness.

That is why *eudaimonia* is defined by reference to virtue and not vice versa. Virtue and its exercise are what essentially constitute the goodness of *eudaimonia*.

**For Aristotle**, virtue is an excellence (*arête*) that can be divided into two types; intellectual and moral, reflecting the twin elements that make man (in the gender-specific sense) specifically human, that is, his reason and ability to make moral judgments through language: It is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust.

Virtue is the means by which we become fully human because it allows us to fulfil our particular human end, the eudemonic good life. The term *eudemonia* has been translated in different ways, either as “happiness,” “bliss,” or even simply as “well-being”.

The concept relates to **Aristotle’s** teleological belief that something can only be understood and fulfilled once it has reached its natural end. The natural end for an acorn, for example, is to become an oak; for man, it is to achieve eudemonia. The good life can thus be recognized, understood and, most importantly, attained.

- Give three different translation of eudemonia?
- Happiness, Bliss and Well being

**Aristotle’s** virtue theory, therefore, necessarily prioritizes the good over the right, a distinction that remains crucial to virtue ethics today. **Aristotle’s** prioritization of the good allowed him to identify a number of concrete moral virtues courage, temperance, pride, good temper, friendliness, and truthfulness that, as excellences of human character, enable man to live the good life.

Each of these virtues occupies the middle ground between two extreme positions (echoing **Aristotle’s** doctrine of the golden mean) and can be cultivated in man by habitually practicing virtuous actions.

**Aristotle** further states, “Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Intellectual virtues – philosophy, science, art, and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) – relate directly to the soul and can be learned through more formal methods of teaching.

By focusing on persons rather than actions (agent-ethics rather than act-ethics, to use Laird’s distinctions) virtue ethics seeks to give moral worth to the durability of certain dispositions, an element that an attention to the good of a specific act may neglect.

In this light, Lawrence Becker argues that a man should be called virtuous only when he does the right thing for the right motives, and has an enduring disposition to do such things, and has established his disposition through the testing of adversity. For **Aristotle**, the focus in the realm of practical reason is not to know what virtue is, but in order to be good.

Moral virtue, for **Aristotle**, is a state of character rather than a passion or a faculty: “Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do virtues arises in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.

Thus the virtue ethicist defines the kind of person one ought to be and how one ought to live through the vocabularies of the virtues, understood, in the most general terms, as settled, durable dispositions to act or react in particular ways in situations calling for responses of the right sort.

As **Rosalind Hursthouse** emphasized, virtuous persons are more than well intentioned: they have the capacity to translate their dispositions into actions appropriate to specific circumstances. In this light, unlike the person morally bound, the virtuous persons tend to act from inclination rather than against disinclination.

As **Rosalind Hursthouse** emphasized, virtuous persons are more than well intentioned: they have the capacity to translate their dispositions into actions appropriate to specific circumstances. In this light, unlike the person morally bound, the virtuous persons tend to act from inclination rather than against disinclination capacities as well.

In many situations, one cannot determine the best course without being able to imagine oneself in the position of others on the receiving end of one's contemplated acts: or without caring about the consequences of one's actions for them. Taken together, imagination and caring form the basis of the capacity for empathic identification, without which even the best of intentions may prove counterproductive in practice.

## Summary of Study Session 2

In Study Session 2, you have learnt that:

1. Ethical theories are processes of reasoning to arrive at a specific conclusion in moral judgement
2. Utilitarianism, Deontology and Virtue ethics are all types of theories in the classical era
3. These theories are frameworks with which man's actions can be evaluated
4. Utilitarianism emphasizes the usefulness or relevance of a particular action to the greatest number of people.
5. Deontology, it was learnt, lays emphasis on duty for duty sake
6. Virtue ethics, for its part, focuses on the character of the individual who is the agent of the act.

## Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

### SAQ 2.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.1)

Ethical theories are distinguished and differentiated by the predominant values they each cherish and protect. TRUE or FALSE

### SAQ 2.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.2)

- I. List the different types of Ethics in the classical era?
- II. What is the different between the theories discussed?

- III. State the ‘‘Principle of Utility’’ in Utilitarianism
- IV. Deontology is derives from two Greek words. Give the name and meaning of these Greek words?
- V. What is the meaning of Virtue in Virtue theory?

## Notes on Study Section 2

### SAQ 2.1

TRUE

### SAQ 2.2

- I. Deontology, Utilitarianism and Virtue Ethics
- II. **utilitarianism** emphasizes the usefulness or relevance of a particular action to the greatest number of people, **deontology** lays emphasis on duty for duty sake while **virtue** ethics, for its part, focuses on the character of the individual who is the agent of the act
- III. According to this principle the right act is the one that will result in the greatest good (or happiness) of the greatest number. An act is obligatory if it meets this test.
- IV. Two words *deon*, meaning ‘duty’ and *logos*, meaning ‘study’ or ‘discourse’
- V. Virtues are defined as various habits of choice, lying in a mean relative to us, and determined by reason

## Study Session 3: Ethics and Society

### Introduction

The human person has always tried to choose between what is right and what is wrong, good and bad, and also to determine what ‘good’ is and what ‘bad’ is. This has led to the study of morality and ethics even as far back as the ancient period/era in the history of philosophy.

The study of morality and or ethics (used sometimes interchangeably) has been to produce and formulate theories which we are expected to live by and would certainly bring about an ordered society where all can live in peace and harmony and not in chaos and fear.

The respect for others and their properties, the preservation of life and the development of the society and community has in a way given us the reason to seek, create and understand human nature and behaviour.

In this study session you will come to an understanding of the role of ethics in relation to the growth and development of any human society, by examining the relation of ethics to society.

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 3.1 Briefly Discuss an overview of the term Society
- 3.2 Explain Ethics which is known as Moral Philosophy
- 3.3 Discuss the Role of Ethics In the Society

### 3.1 Overview of the term Society

The term “**society**” came from the Latin word *societas*, which in turn was derived from the noun *socius* (“comrade,” “friend,” “ally”; adjectival form *socialis*) used to describe a bond or interaction among parties that are friendly, or at least civil.

Without an article, the term can refer to the entirety of humanity (also: “society in general”, “society at large”, and so on), although those who are unfriendly or uncivil to the remainder of society in this sense may be deemed to be “antisocial”.

**Adam Smith** wrote that a society “may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility without any mutual love or affection, if only they refrain from doing injury to each other.

#### Box 3.1: Definition of Society

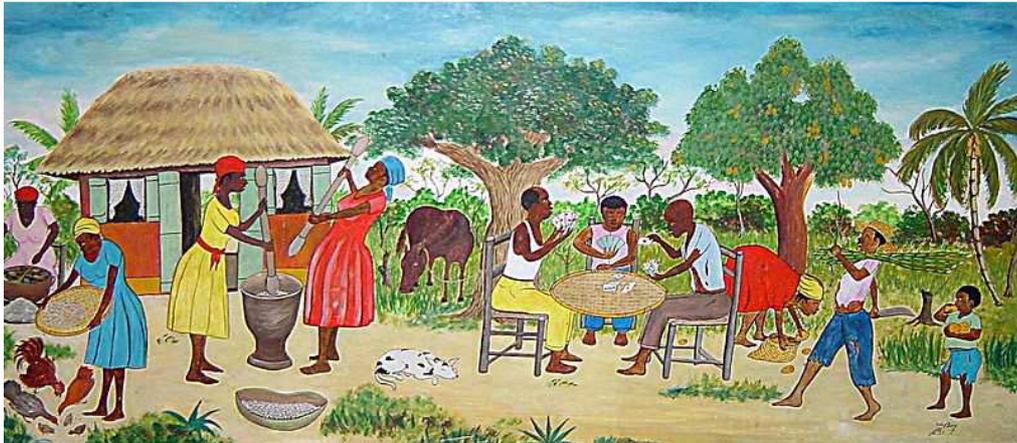
A society is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.

**De-Shalit** advocates that among the three main conditions that must be met before a people/group can be considered as a community namely:

- interaction between people in daily life,
- cultural interaction and
- moral similarity

Hence, Human societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institutions; a given society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its constituent members.

A society can also consist of like-minded people governed by their own norms and values within a dominant, larger society. More broadly, a society may be described as an economics, social, or industrial infrastructure, made up of a varied collection of individuals.



**Figure 3.1:** A description of a Society

**Source:**[http://si.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E0%B6%9C%E0%B7%9C%E0%B6%B1%E0%B7%94%E0%B7%80:Jrchery\\_h\\_a\\_society-1-.jpg](http://si.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E0%B6%9C%E0%B7%9C%E0%B6%B1%E0%B7%94%E0%B7%80:Jrchery_h_a_society-1-.jpg)

Members of a society may be from different ethnic groups. A society can be a particular ethnic group, such as the Saxons; a nation state, such as Bhutan; or a broader cultural group, such as a Western society. The word *society* may also refer to an organized voluntary association of people for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes

### 3.2 Understanding Ethics

**Ethics** (also known as moral philosophy) is that branch of philosophy which addresses questions about morality. The word ‘ethics’ is “commonly used interchangeably with ‘morality’ and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, group, or individual.

The notion of good and evil, right and wrong has a concept that the human person has been trying to grapple down from the period of antiquity to now. The concept of ethics can be viewed from two broad perspective; ethics as a:

#### ❖ **Moral Code of Conduct**

As a moral code of conduct, ethics can be taken to imply well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. In this vein, ethics is said to refer to those standards that impose the reasonable obligations to refrain from rape, stealing, murder, assault, slander, and fraud.

Ethical standards also include those that enjoin virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. And, ethical standards include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury, and the right to privacy. Such standards are adequate standards of ethics because they are supported by consistent and well-founded reasons.

Furthermore, as a code of moral conduct, ethics deals with the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, culture, and so on. For example, we talk of Medical ethics; ChRistian ethics.

#### ❖ **Ethics as a Discipline**

As a discipline, Ethics is said to refer to the study and development of one’s ethical standards. On the basis that a person following his or her feelings may recoil from doing what is right, it has been found necessary that we constantly examine our standards to ensure that they are reasonable and well-founded.

Ethics means the continuous effort at studying our own moral beliefs and our moral conduct, and striving to ensure that we, and the institutions we help to shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based.

Ethics as a discipline of study is the analysis of concepts such as “ought to” and “ought not” “right” and “wrong”, “good” and “bad”, duty, responsibility, etc. it also an inquiry into the nature of morality and moral act. It deals also with ethical theories that help in the determination and classification of moral acts.

■ Ethics as a discipline analysis which concept?

the concept of ought to and ought not, right and wrong, good or bad etc.

### 3.3 Roles of Ethics in the Society

Ethics is quite relevant to the society either as a discipline of study or as a code of moral conduct in the society. There certainly cannot be a society without a set of rules whether it is authoritarian in nature or liberal. The only difference here in is that what society A considers as “good” and “right” may be “wrong” and “bad” in society B or vice-versa.

Furthermore, ethics helps in building our capacity for decisions making. It is therefore not out of place to say that ethics is important to society because it has a large influence on today, as well as the future.

The role ethics plays in building society makes it such that we need to learn about good ethics because they guide our decisions, make us who we are, and determine our future. When actual moral values, rules and duties are subjected to ethical analysis, their relation to basic human interests shared by people, regardless of their cultural setting, is particularly important.



**Figure 3.2** The role of good ethics in a Society

**Source:** Schulportals Inc ©

Moral values may change, and moral reasoning asks whether the practices that are traditionally and factually legitimated by religion, law or politics are indeed worthy of recognition. Indeed, the development of ethics has been characterized by a tendency to revalue and overthrow the moral conventions that have guided the interaction between the sexes, between human beings and animals and between human beings and their environment.

Furthermore, the formulation and study of ethical theories and principles are not meant to restrict us but to help us better understand how well to approach situations and what model a particular person has applied in **Carrying** out a particular action especially in the case of making judgments about actions.

We may not on the spot of **Carrying** out an action begin to wonder what ethical theory or principle that is been applied but having learned this principles and ethical theories, we are conscious of what we are doing and how our actions may benefit us and others or deny us and others that it could be beneficial to us and others or deny us and others.

For instance, Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that believes in the good of many over a few. For example, in politics and governance, the formulation of principles is majority centred as the generality or the population in totality cannot be satisfied, at the same time. It is also believed that the majority is seen as having a dominant voice. It should be noted that this principle is mostly applied in all facet of human existence.

Furthermore, **Immanuel Kant**, in his ethical theory of categorical imperative tells us what we ought, should, or must do. This does not however depend on any prior conditions or subjective wants and wishes, and it contains no qualifications. He expresses the first version of his categorical imperative thus: there is, therefore, only one categorical imperative.

❖ **First version of his categorical imperative**

Act only according to the maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal Law. A **maxim** is a general rule that tells us what we should do and should not do. What **Kant** implies is that we are to decide and use the maxim that establishes our actual moral obligations.

■ A maxim is a general rule that tells us what we should do and should not do. TRUE or FALSE

TRUE

**Kant**'s criteria for universalizing our maxims capture some of our everyday moral institutions. It also shares conformity with the **Golden Rule**: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." **Kant** further advocates, in his categorical imperative, that we treat people as an end and not as a means.



**Figure 3.3:** The golden Rule

**Source:** <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2011/12/the-corruption-of-the-golden-rule/>

❖ **This second version of the categorical imperative**

Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only. What **Kant** is emphasizing here is that each person has intrinsic worth and dignity and that, we should not use people or treat them like objects.

The role, importance and relevance of this to society would be taking existence as service to humanity as against the selfish interest which constitutes into exaltation of the self above others. When applied, there shall be a decline in the rate of harm against the other, and a respect for the human dignity.

In this vein, the multiplicity of crimes and irresponsibility in the society is managed to an extent; we can appreciate this if we can imagine what the case would be if there are no sets of moral codes or conducts.

The question is what would the society be like if there were no such codes? It would probably be chaotic and we would be back in the state of nature as stated by Thomas Hobbes as chaos and violence. The role of ethics in our society is very important because it is the basic beliefs and standards that make everything run smoothly.

**Yet another** role of ethics to the society is viewed from the moral life as a rational being. Man is a social being who cannot be comfortable and fulfilling in isolation. By implication, he needs the company of others. Man in the company of others (society) needs to conform his action with the standards of behaviour dictated by the society. It implies that the growth and development of any society depends largely on moral uprightness

This calls for a moral life which is defined simply as the life that is conducive to the attainment of peaceful communal co-existence. It (moral life) is a life that promotes peace, order, oneness,

solidarity and single purpose. It is only the knowledge of ethics that can make this moral life a reality and subsequently help in building the society.

- It is only the knowledge of ethics that can make a moral life a reality. What attribute makes up the moral life?
  - a) Security, voting and silence
  - b) Promotes Peace, order, oneness, solidarity and single purpose
  - c) Peace, One mind and Democracy
  - d) Peace and Oder

Promotes, peace, order, oneness, solidarity and single purpose(b)

**Ayn Rand** explains, “Ethics is a code of values which guides our choices and actions and determines the purpose and course of our lives.” Our understanding of ethics and moral principles helps in the promotion of life be it ours or that of others for failure to abide by “good” moral standards would not only jeopardize our lives but that of the society in which we inevitably live in.

**Ethics play** a role in the lives of individuals and each individual has an influence on society considering that all people and things around them are affected by their choices whether they be good or bad.

Many people decide early in life if they are going to live their lives in truth or dishonesty. Ethics influences the choices that individuals make and will eventually determine their lives and who they become. Our beliefs, standards, and personalities are formed by the way we interpret what is wrong and right and how we act upon these interpretations.

We know that ethics implies more than abstaining from lying, cheating, and stealing; that it is the knowledge of right from wrong which influences one’s conduct and decisions. The way people choose (wrong or right) affects all those around them, whether they like it or not. Without ethics, any society would become even more corrupt.

Ethics helps in keeping things in order and in peace; and because our decisions have such a great influence, it is our responsibility to our society and those around us to live a life of good ethics. Society is a collation of individuals and these individuals in turn play a key role in the society and subsequently in societal development or otherwise. If society then must develop, the human person must submit to ethical principles.

Ethics help in improving and developing the individual so as to improve and develop the society. Ethics is also at the service of the human person as such, it is not abstract in its instructions as to how the human person ought to behave, dishing our ethical standards and principles that in turn will help create a peaceful communal existence. The relevance or role of ethics cuts across all spheres of life.

Ethics as a discipline of study and a code of moral conduct are relevant to societal development since they are centred upon the human person. This does not imply that with ethics we shall attain a best society but rather, with ethics as a discipline of study and a code of moral conduct, society shall become a better place for all to live. Ethics is therefore a required condition for the development of a nation.

Finally, being ethical is not the same as doing “whatever society accepts”. In any society, most people accept standards that are, in fact, ethical. But standards of behaviour in society can deviate from what is ethical. An entire society can become ethically corrupt. Nazi Germany is a good example of a morally corrupt society.

Ethics is a systematic and critical analysis of morality, of the moral factors that guide human conduct in a particular society or practice. Moreover, if being ethical were doing "whatever society accepts," then to find out what is ethical, one would have to find out what society accepts.

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#### Case study 1.1: an example of ethical issue

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To decide what I should think about abortion, for example, I would have to take a survey of American society and then conform my beliefs to whatever society accepts. But no one ever tries to decide an ethical issue by doing a survey. Further, the lack of social consensus on many issues makes it impossible to equate ethics with whatever society accepts. Some people accept abortion but many others do not.

If being ethical were doing whatever society accepts, one would have to find an agreement on issues which does not, in fact, exist

### Summary of Study Session 3

In Study Session 2, you have learnt that:

1. A society is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.
2. Human societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institutions
3. Ethics is also known as moral philosophy
4. The concept of ethics can be viewed from two broad perspective; Moral code of conduct and as a discipline
5. The role ethics plays in building society makes it such that we need to learn about good ethics because they guide our decisions, make us who we are, and determine our future
6. The role of ethics to the society is viewed from the moral life as a rational being

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study

Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

**SAQ 3.1(Test Learning Outcome 3.1)**

According to De-Shalit mention the three main conditions that must be met before a people/group can be considered as a community?

**SAQ 3.2(Test Learning Outcome 3.2)**

- I. Ethics is that branch of Philosophy which addresses the question of?
  - a) Immorality
  - b) Security
  - c) Morality
  - d) Good and Morality
- II. Briefly explain what ethics as a discipline is.

**SAQ 3.3(Test Learning Outcomes 3.3)**

Give a brief explanation on how ethics play a role in an individual's life

**Notes on Study Section 3**

**SAQ 3.1**

- 1) interaction between people in daily life
- 2) cultural interaction
- 3) moral similarity

**SAQ 3.2**

- I. Morality(c)
- II. As a discipline, Ethics is said to refer to the study and development of one's ethical standards. On the basis that a person following his or her feelings may recoil from doing what is right, it has been found necessary that we constantly examine our standards to ensure that they are reasonable and well-founded

**SAQ 3.3**

Many people decide early in life if they are going to live their lives in truth or dishonesty. Ethics influences the choices that individuals make and will eventually determine their lives and who they become.

## Study Session 4: Ethics and Religion

### Introduction

Central to this task is the question of the place of ethics or morality in religious practices. The question asked in this light is whether an individual can be moral without being religious, or, on the other hand, whether a man can be judged to be religious without being moral.

If, however, a man cannot be said to be moral without being religious or that an individual cannot be judged to be religious without being moral, is it the case, then, that the concepts 'religion' and 'morality' are co-extensive?

This study session will introduce you to the nature of the relation between ethics and religion and to make the distinction between ethics/morality and religion.

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 4.1 Explain the word Religion
- 4.2 Answer the question "Can Religion be the basis of Morality"
- 4.3 Briefly explain if Religion co-extensive with Ethics/Morality

### 4.1 Religion

Religion is such a striking and interesting phenomenon in human life that it cannot be ignored even by the sceptics, agnostics or the atheists. There is no other phenomenon which moulds and controls man's life as much as religion does. Men have given up not only their possessions, but even their lives for their religious beliefs. Men born into wealth and destined to inherit wealth have renounced wealth for their religious beliefs.

Men have given themselves up to be slaughtered, to be eaten by wild animals, to be thrown into fire and be burnt alive, rather than renounce their religious beliefs. Thus religion has such a powerful grip on man that it cannot be ignored in human society.

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#### Case Study: An example of Religious belief

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The Biblical story of Daniel, who was thrown into the Lion's den was because of his religious belief.

This imply that men have given themselves to be slaughtered, to be eaten by wild animals because of their belief

What then is religion? Incidentally, religion means different things to different people. It means one thing to the anthropologist, another thing to the psychologist. It means one thing to the sociologist, another to the theologian, and yet another thing to the politician. It is important to

note that the *concept of 'God' is central to religion*. God is such an incomprehensible mystery that different religions conceive him differently.

To the question of the meaning of religion, there are people who hold the view that religion is whatever anybody believes in very strongly; such people go on to say that there is nobody without a religion. They say that everybody has his own religion, depending on what he believes in very strongly.

Thus if a person believes very strongly in science, then science is his religion. Be that as it may, the word 'religion' can be traced to the Latin words that provide its root meaning. These are *ligare* (meaning 'to bind'), *relegere* (meaning 'to unite', or 'to link'), and *religio* (meaning 'relationship').

#### Box 4.1: Etymology of the word Religion

Religion shows that it is essentially a relationship, a link established between two persons, namely, the *human person* and the *divine person*, who is believed to exist. It is something that links or unites man with a transcendent being, a deity, believed to exist and worshipped by man.

Religion is essentially a bi-polar phenomenon. On the one end is man (the religious man), while on the other end is the transcendent being, the deity he believes to exist and which he worships. Now, whether such a deity really exists or is simply the figment of the imagination of the religious man is not important to the concept of religion, as long as the deity is really believed by the religious man to actually exist. For him the deity is a reality.

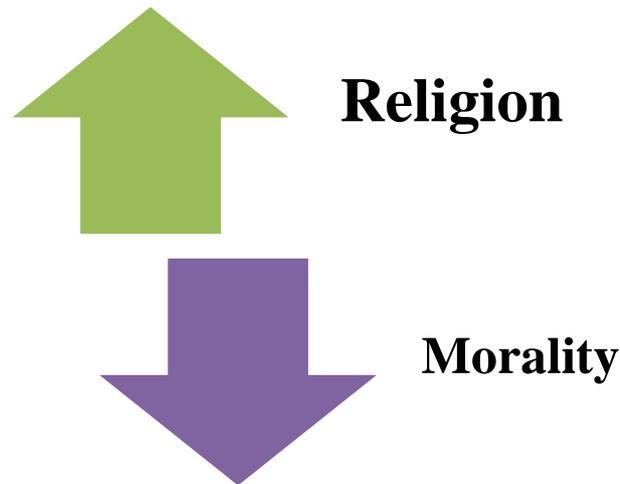
Hence, where a belief in a deity is lacking there can be no religion since religion, as we have said, is essentially a relationship established between man and a deity; that is, a transcendent personal being, believed to exist.

Indeed, **A. C. Bouquet** defines religion as: a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute, the absolute or simply, God.

## 4.2 Can Religion be the basis of Morality?

*Religion cannot be the basis of morality*; because moral standards are required in order to accept a religion (we would only love God if we decided he was good).

Therefore there must be some basis within us for morality, and this must be reason. The only alternative is desires, and these lead to chaos, lack of principle and suffering. Reason is a motivation, as seen in our preference for the right answer in arithmetic. We can, however, come to believe in God as an ideal of justice which is required by our moral beliefs.



**Figure 4.1:** Morality and Religion do not go hand in hand

**Source:** Schulportals Inc. ©

For many people, ethics is not only tied up with religion; it is sometimes held to provide the basis for religion. Such people do not need to think too much about ethics, because there is an authoritative code of instructions, a handbook of how to live. It is the word of Heaven, or the will of a Being greater than humans.

The standards of living become known to us by revelation of this Being. Either we take ourselves to perceive the fountainhead directly, or more often we have the benefit of an intermediary – a priest, or a prophet, or a text, or a tradition sufficiently in touch with the divine will to be able to communicate it to us. Then we know what to do.

Obedience to the divine will is meritorious, and brings reward; disobedience is punished. In the ChRistian version, obedience brings triumph over death, or everlasting life; disobedience means eternal Hell.

In the 19th century, in the West, when traditional religious belief began to lose its grip, many thinkers felt that ethics went with it. It is not to the purpose here to assess whether such belief should have lost its grip. Our question is the implication for our standards of behaviour. Is it true that, as **Dostoevsky** said, 'If God is dead, everything is permitted?' It might seem to be true: without a lawgiver, how can there be a law?

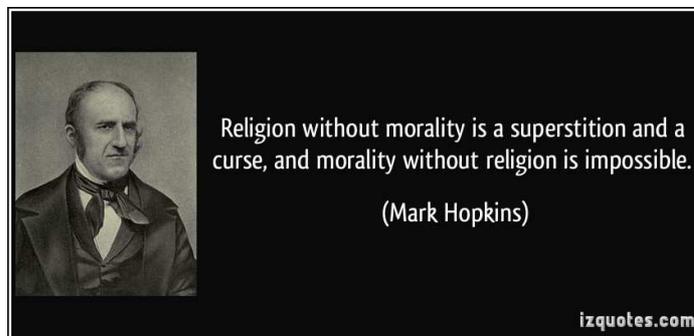
- Obedience to the Divine will is meritorious and bring reward while disobedience in ChRistian version is?
  - a) Eternal Hell
  - b) Struggling
  - c) Crying
  - d) Hunger

Eternal Hell

### 4.3 Is Religion co-extensive with Ethics/Morality?

A view of the relation of ethics to religion holds that religion and morality are inseparable; that there can be no morality without religion. Any good man is, according to this view, necessarily a religious man, even if the man in question is an atheist.

He is religious all the same even if he declares himself to be an atheist and he belongs to more religious organization. For if he were not religious, the argument goes, he would not be a good man, since there can be no morality without religion.



**Figure 4.2:** Mark Hopkins Quote on Religion and Morality

**Source:** <http://izquotes.com/quote/87573>

Be that as it may, this position can be shown to be erroneous. As it were, morality is independent of religion, it does not need religion to exist; nor does man need to practice religion in order to be moral. There are a good number of people who practice one religion or the other, but live immoral lives, while a number of atheists and agnostics, who practice no religion live lives that can be describe as exemplary.

On this note, it can be said that it is religion that requires morality in order to gain acceptance. In relation to morality, religion is simply a perspective one of several perspectives from which morality can be viewed. In other words, morality can be viewed from a religious perspective, just as it can be viewed from a humanistic perspective, from a philosophical perspective, and so on.

While it is the case that some men view morality and practice it from a religious perspective, some others do not see the need for religion, at least at certain stages in their lives, in order to be moral; they do not need religion in order to be moral, for they view the practice of morality from other perspectives and they attain some high moral standard without religion.

## Summary of Study Session 4

In Study Session 4, you have learnt that:

1. Religion is such a striking and interesting phenomenon in human life that it cannot be ignored even by the sceptics, agnostics or the atheists.
2. The Entomology of Religion shows that it is essentially a relationship, a link established between two persons, namely, the *human person* and the *divine person*, who is believed to exist. It is something that links or unites man with a transcendent being, a deity, believed to exist and worshipped by man.
3. Religion cannot be the basis of morality; because moral standards are required in order to accept a religion (we would only love God if we decided he was good).
4. It is religion that requires morality in order to gain acceptance.

## Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

### SAQ 4.1(Test Learning Outcome 4.1)

- i. If the concept of God is central to religion then religion means the same thing to everybody. TRUE or FALSE.
- ii. What is the Entomological Definition of Religion

### SAQ 4.2(Test Learning Outcome 4.2)

Can religion be the basis of Morality? Explain Briefly

### SAQ 4.3(Test Learning Outcome 4.3)

Briefly explain why Morality does not need religion to exist

## Notes on Study Section 4

### SAQ 4.1

- i. FALSE
- ii. Religion shows that it is essentially a relationship, a link established between two persons, a deity, believed to exist and worshipped by man

### SAQ 4.2

Religion cannot be the basis of morality; because moral standards are required in order to accept a religion (we would only love God if we decided he was good). Therefore there must be some

basis within us for morality, and this must be reason. The only alternative is desires, and these lead to chaos, lack of principle and suffering.

**SAQ 4.3**

Morality is independent of religion, it does not need religion to exist; nor does man need to practice religion in order to be moral. There are a good number of people who practice one religion or the other, but live immoral lives, while a number of atheists and agnostics, who practice no religion live lives that can be describe as exemplary.

## Study Session 5: Ethics and Politics

### Introduction

Ethics and politics are intimately related. Both are normative sciences. Whereas ethics aims at the supreme good of the individual, politics aims at public good, though public good can be attained through individual good. And so, the influence of ethics on the practical life cannot be ignored. It can therefore be said that politics aims at the establishment of an ideal welfare state where more perfection of the citizens can be realized.

Ethics and politics are concerned with the ideas of duty, responsibility. The moral thinker makes a theoretical and analytical study in order to consider what responsibility is and what it is not; the politician also does the same, but with the extra task of determining what is practically implied by responsibility, and to recommend the quantum of penalty on those who fail to ascribe to this. This is done for the smooth running of the government.

In this study session you will introduce to the relationship of ethics to politics and the role ethics play to society.

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 5.1 Explain the relationship between Ethics and Politics
- 5.2 Discuss Modern theories of Ethics and Politics
- 5.3 Briefly discuss about the ancient philosophy and politics
- 5.4 Describe **Aristotle** take on relation of Ethics and Politics

### 5.1 Relationship between Ethics and Politics

On the one hand, the subject matter of politics is to describe the structure and function of the government. Politics prescribes laws for the citizens in order to regulate their conducts so that public good can be realized.

Man is not only a social being but also political beings. The individual and the state are inter dependent. Since political science determines the duty of the individual to the state and also duty for the state with regard to the individual. Rights and duties are maintained by the state and as such moral life is intimately connected with the political life.

On the other hand, the job of ethics is understood to be one that is laden with the burden of giving an account and justification of why such and such is good or bad, right or wrong. As a result, it is not the job of ethics as a practical science to assume this in advance and then attempt to tell say what ought to be done or how to live.

- Man is not only a social being but also a political being. TRUE or FALSE  
 TRUE

To view the job of ethics in this way would be to think that the job of ethics is simply to tell us what we are already supposed to know, and that is not only useless, but completely misses the point. Rather, it is because we do not know, or are unsure about, what we should do or how we should live that we turn to ethics in the hope of finding answers which is attempted in the modern theories of ethics below.

## 5.2 Modern Ethics and Politics

The modern theories of ethics, utilitarianism and **Kantianism**, attempted to find answer to the job of ethics in a political life; if it were not so, their theory could not be put forward as a serious rival to each other. The dominant ethical theories affecting Western political thinking in the twentieth century have been utilitarianism and deontology and virtue.

### ❖ Utilitarianism

This is one type of teleological or consequentialist ethics, postulating that the end (telos) of moral action is prior in importance to the content of moral judgment.

### ❖ Deontology

This is concerned with “ought,” with obligation, with rights and duties, with promises and commitments. In the language of ethicists, deontology is preoccupied with the nature of right, or the content of moral action; utilitarians (and other teleologists), are preoccupied with the nature of the good, or the object of moral action. *Kant* is the archetypical deontologist. *Bentham* is the “classical” utilitarian.

### ❖ Ethics of Virtue

A third, more amorphous, form of ethics is what has referred to as the ethics of virtue. It is concerned not first of all with the criteria of good actions, measured by consequences, but the criteria of the good actor, measured by standards of character and performance. It regards as prior in importance and concern not the obligations that ought to be felt by moral persons, but the quality of moral excellence in persons.

It seeks to judge excellent character, rather than good objectives or right duties. However, increasing dissatisfaction with these theories and their variants has led in recent years to the re-emergence in modern times, of a different theory; the theory of Virtue Ethics.

According to Virtue Ethics, what is primary for ethics is not, as deontologists and utilitarianism hold, the judgment of acts or their consequences, but the judgment of moral agents. In this view, the good person is the fundamental category for moral philosophy, and the good person is the person of good character, the person who possesses moral virtue.

## 5.3 Ancient Philosophical theories and Politics

To begin, ancient philosophical theories about the legitimization of political authority and a just political constitution (or regime) are imbedded in general ethical theories. Ancient philosophical thinking is subordinated to the question what is the best way for a human being to live. To answer this question means to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions of a good life. Human beings are, as **ARistotle** puts it, “by nature political animals”.

Indeed an individual person's life is embedded in various ways of social interaction, and the individual person's good life depends upon successful social cooperation. This is why every attempt to answer the question of the individual person's good life (*eudaimonia*) naturally leads to the analysis of the structure of a community that provides the conditions for the pursuit of happiness of its citizens.

**“MAN IS BY NATURE A SOCIAL ANIMAL; AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS UNSOCIAL NATURALLY AND NOT ACCIDENTALLY IS EITHER BENEATH OUR NOTICE OR MORE THAN HUMAN. SOCIETY IS SOMETHING THAT PRECEDES THE INDIVIDUAL. ANYONE WHO EITHER CANNOT LEAD THE COMMON LIFE OR IS SO SELF-SUFFICIENT AS NOT TO NEED TO, AND THEREFORE DOES NOT PARTAKE OF SOCIETY, IS EITHER A BEAST OR A GOD.”**  
— ARISTOTLE, POLITICS

**Figure 5.1: ARistotle thought on Humanity**

**Source:**<http://aspoonfulofsuga.wordpress.com/2014/02/27/humorous-reflections>

Basic to the various questions raised in the discourses in political philosophy regarding, say, the limits and extent of authority and power, the nature of the state and so on, is the relationship of the individual to society.

**These** questions include, for instance, “what ought to be a person’s relationship to society?” Or put differently, “what ought to be the responsibility of a citizen to the state?” In this regard, it is discernable that the notion of “responsibility” connotes some ethical concerns for the individual or citizen of the state.

We could therefore posit that when reference is made to the fact that there exist a relationship between the citizen and the state, reference is also being made to some form of ‘responsibility’ that is reciprocal between the citizen and the state. As a result of this, one can begin to talk of a relationship that exists between ethics and politics.

- What notion connotes some ethical concerns for the individual or citizen of a state
  - a) Relationship
  - b) Annoyance
  - c) Security
  - d) Politics
- Relationship (a)

In this vein, **Alan Gewirth** views the moral evaluation of a concept, such as political power, as the central concern of political philosophy. Thus for him, political philosophy is primarily concerned with task of subjecting political institutions and practices to moral reasoning. And to this extent, he identifies political philosophy as a branch of moral philosophy.

As much as this may appear tenable, some have contested this view (that ethics bears a relationship to political philosophy) with some level of success, on the grounds that what is

required, for instance, for the national interest may be different from what is necessary for moral inter-personal relations.

However, contestable this position regarding the relation between ethics and politics, it remains rather seen:

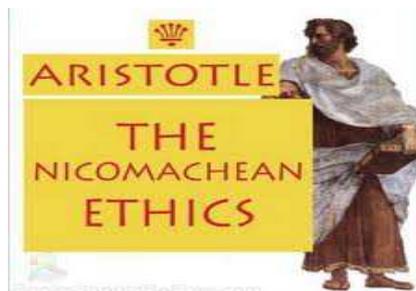
*“that rather than seeking rational grounds for accepting a proposition or belief as true or false, political philosophy seeks rational grounds for accepting a proposition as right, good or just. Such rational grounds may at times lead us to reject a position as wrong and unworthy of being accepted.”*

What is, thus, done in political philosophy can be *“rightly described as a critical moral evaluation of political belief and judgments.”*

#### 5.4 ARistotle’s take on the relation of ethics to politics

Furthermore, **ARistotle**’s projects in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* portrays the relationship between ethics and politics. The purpose of ethics for **ARistotle** is simply to find the ultimate purpose of human life, once again demonstrating his emphasis on teleology. Ethics falls under the category of practical sciences, since its concern is not knowledge for its own sake but rather for the purpose of application.

**Figure 5.2: ARistotle**  
Source:



and Nicomachean Ethics

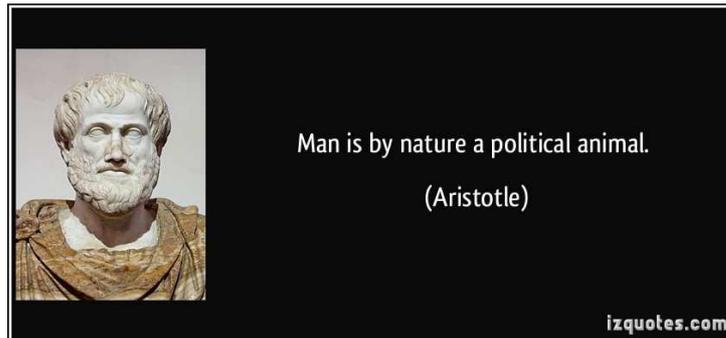
<http://www.papermasters.com/nicomachean-ethics.html>

**ARistotle** first recognizes that happiness is the ultimate good, since all other goods are intermediate while happiness is final. **We** pursue other goods to achieve happiness, but happiness is valuable in itself. In this vein, **ARistotle**, in the last chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (chapter 6), answers in the negative the question of whether the chosen project of the *Nicomachean Ethics* has been completed on the grounds that in practical matters the end is to theorize.

In this regard, **ARistotle** averred that in practical matters the end is not to know virtue but to possess and exercise it. **For ARistotle**, politics or political science is the second half of a subject of which ethics is the first half; indeed in the opening chapters of the *Nicomachean Ethics* the term *politike* is applied to the whole subject.

It is considered to be the science of human affairs, of man's happiness or good. This consists in a certain mode of life, and man's life is shaped for him by his social environment, the laws, customs and institutions of the community to which he belongs.

**Aristotle** describes man in biological terms as “by nature a political animal”; he only develops his capacities in society, rightly organized for his welfare. The aim of *politike* is to discover first in what mode of life man's happiness consists, then by what form of government and what social institutions that mode of life can be secured.



**Figure 5.3: Aristotle** Description of man as a political animal

Source: <http://izquotes.com/quote/6783>

The former question requires the study man's ethos or character, which occupies the *Nicomachean Ethics*; the latter is the subject of the constitution of the state, which is treated in *Politics*. *Politics* is a sequel to *Ethics*, the second half of a single treatise, although it bears the title that in the preface has been given to the whole subject; this subject is covered by Plato in the single dialogue of *The Republic*.

**In Aristotle's** whole scheme of science, *politike* belongs to the group of practical science, which seeks knowledge as a means to action, whereas the Theoretical Sciences (such as theology, metaphysics, pure mathematics and astronomy) seek knowledge for its own sake.

The supreme practical science is *politike*; it is the science of man's welfare or happiness as a whole. It is practical in the wider sense of the term, because it studies not only what happiness is (the topic of ethics), but also how it is to be secured (that of politics); and it is also practical in the narrower sense, because happiness is found (in ethics) not to be a product of action but itself to consist in action of a certain sort. In this sense, **Aristotle's** concern is about what is right and wrong on the one hand, and actually doing the right and avoiding the wrong on the other.

### Summary of Study Session 5

In Study Session 5, you have learnt that:

1. The subject matter of politics is to describe the structure and function of the government.
2. Man is not only a social being but also political beings
3. The dominant ethical theories affecting Western political thinking in the twentieth century have been utilitarianism and deontology and virtue.

4. Deontology is concerned with “ought,” with obligation, with rights and duties, with promises and commitments.
5. Ancient philosophical theories about the legitimization of political authority and a just political constitution (or regime) are imbedded in general ethical theories
6. For **ARistotle**, politics or political science is the second half of a subject of which ethics is the first half

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

#### SAQ 5.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.1)

Briefly explain the job of ethics?

#### SAQ 5.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.2)

The dominant ethical theories affecting Western political thinking in the twentieth century have been?

- a) **ARistotle**, Thomas Hobbes and Obasanjo
- b) Utilitarianism and deontology and virtue
- c) Utilitarianism and Virtue
- d) **ARistotle**, Deontology and Virtue

#### SAQ 5.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.3)

Ancient philosophical thinking is subordinated to the question what is the best way for a human being to live. TRUE or FALSE

#### SAQ 5.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.4)

The purpose of ethics for **ARistotle** is simply to?

- a) Find the ultimate purpose of human life
- b) Obedient to Authority
- c) Peace and Tranquillity
- d) Find lasting solution to wars

### Notes on Study Section 5

## Study Session 6: Ethics and Environment

### Introduction

According to **Edward Goldsmith**, “The goal of life was not just egoistic self-indulgence but to contribute to what was everywhere the ultimate goal of human society, to assist in maintaining the continuity and integrity of the cosmos itself on which human welfare and indeed human survival ultimately depends.

It is the case that our world has been plunged into series of environmental crises as a result of man’s unfriendly behaviour to the environment. Our planet is presently faced with crises of alarming complexity such as deforestation and desertification, land and water pollution, disappearing species of plants and animals, deadly waves and rising ocean current, economic chaos and nuclear threats

In this study session you will study on the relation between Ethics and Environment with its important to the environment.

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 6.1 Describe the relation between Ethics and Environment
- 6.2 Discuss the important of Ethics to the environment
- 6.3 Briefly explain the role of Ethics in the Environment

### 6.1 Relationship between Ethics and Environment

There exists an extensive interest in environmental questions in our time, which takes as its point of departure an interest in human welfare (or perhaps the welfare of humans and other sentient beings). It is not difficult, however, to acknowledge that certain kinds of natural disasters may come to harm humans and other sentient beings as well.

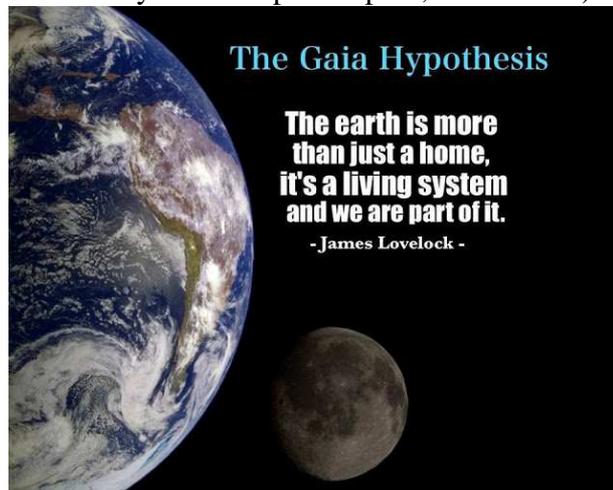
#### Box 6.1: L. O Ugwuanyi Definition of Environmental Ethics

Environmental ethics is one which the environment achieves a space in the notion of the good and the bad; one in which the environment is understood to be moral agent; one that can offend or be offended and for this reason cannot be allowed to be a non-moral agent.

The concern of environmental ethicist regard to, for instance, arguments to the effect that natural environments, such as rainforests, woods near mountain tops, or ecosystems, ought to be preserved because they possess value in themselves. It also regards to such thinking to the effect that existing species should be preserved, because this is considered to be of value in itself.

These concern can be understood in the light of such grandiose ideas as the ‘**Gaia-hypothesis**’, put forward by the ecologist James Lovelock. According to the Gaia-hypothesis, the entire biosphere can be seen as a living, self-regulating and self-preserving organism, of value in itself.

We may speak of these concerns somewhat loosely as examples of ‘deep’ ecological thinking (referring to the term coined by the Oslo philosopher, Arne Naess).



**Figure 6.1:** Gaia Hypothesis

**Source:** <http://www.breathingforgiveness.net/2013/07/the-gaia-hypothesis.html>

On an ecological platform, Arne Naess states that “the flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.” One may however ask whether any of such views is plausible? Note that the implications of these ideas may be very far-reaching.

The imperative that we should protect the environment in so far as this would protect the interests of human beings, may be a claim about the usefulness to humans of aspects of the physical world, and/or about the aesthetic value of nature – the pleasure which it gives to humans. The implication of this view is that animals, plants and the non-living physical world have no moral status or values, except indirectly because of their relationship with human beings

Many of the moral theories in the study of ethics are heavily anthropocentric in nature. This is true of egoism, of course, but also of some versions of utilitarianism, deontological ethics and the theory of moral rights (in its traditional version). Advocates of *deontological ethics* in particular have declared that animals lack moral standing. With **Kant** this is made clear with something close to brutality.

For **Kant**, so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are there merely as means to an end. That end is man. And Thomas Aquinas had earlier made the same point as follows:

*Hereby is refuted the error of those who said it is sinful for a man to kill dumb animals: for by divine providence they are intended for man’s use in the natural order. Hence it is no wrong for a man to make use of them, either by killing them or in any other way whatever.*

This view can even be further traced back to the view of **Aristotle**, who claimed that:

*After the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food,*

*the wild, if not all, at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man.*

There are certainly worldviews and religio-cultural attitudes that are far less anthropocentric; **such as Buddhism and Hinduism**, where animals, plants and other creatures that are not humans are taken to possess values in themselves.

Within Western culture, however, the anthropocentric attitude went unchallenged for a very long time. The classical hedonistic utilitarianism, put forward by Jeremy Bentham, however made a radical break with this tradition. This is what Bentham had to say about the moral status of animals:

*The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been with-holden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor.*

*It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the os sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate? What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk?, but, Can they suffer?*

Bentham's defence of the moral status of animals was not entirely unprecedented. In antiquity, Zeno and some Stoics defended vegetarianism, and one of the founders of Neoplatonism, Porphyry took up a position similar to Bentham's:

*To compare plants, however, with animals, is doing violence to the order of things. For the latter are naturally sensitive, and adapted to feel pain, to be terrified and hurt. But the former are entirely destitute of sensation, and in consequence of this, nothing foreign, or evil, or hurtful, or injurious, can befall them. For sensation is the principle of all alliance.*

## 6.2 Importance of Ethics to Environment (Thought during the contemporary times)

In contemporary times, Peter Singer, who has argued that sentient animals are in many ways of equal moral importance to people, has taken up the theme. Even animals have interests,

according to Singer; if they can suffer or experience pleasure, then they have interests, and these interests are no less important than corresponding interests held by human beings.

In this regard, Singer's book *Animal Liberation* has been enormously influential for a movement defending the interests of sentient animals.

In this vein, the argument is that we (humans) should not engage in activities which have adverse effects on sentient beings, present and future.

We have also seen that some attempts have been made to revise the theory of moral rights so that it can acknowledge that some animals are moral subjects, possessing moral rights, most famously by Tom Regan in his book *The Case for Animal Rights*. It seemed that many contemporary thinkers as if old prejudices held with respect to animals will eventually decay.

■ Peter Singer, who has argued that sentient animals are in many ways of equal moral importance to people. TRUE or FALSE

TRUE

According to these thinkers, our moral reasoning now provides us with an 'expanding circle' (the title of a book by Singer). But where is the expansion to end? Note that **Aristotle** thought that plants exist for the sake of animals. Was that a prejudice too? Must we also include plants in our moral concern? This is what some critics of utilitarianism and theories of animal rights have claimed.

These approaches are on the right track, they concede, but they do not go far enough.

Nature itself has intrinsic value and must be taken into account. In response to this, many hold the view that there is a difference between adult human beings and many animals. With the possible exception of certain mammals, even those animals that can feel pleasure and pain do not conceive of themselves as individuals existing in time, with a past, a present and a future.

This means that if we kill them, while we rob them of possible future satisfaction of preferences we do not violate their interest in continued life. They lack such an interest. So while adult human beings and some mammals have a direct interest in continued life, the interest most animals have in continued life is merely indirect.

**The** arguments of those referred to as animal welfa**Rists** can be couched as based on **the principle** of the *reverence or respect for life*. What this implies is that we should have respect for anything which is living, including plants. This view is associated with, for instance, Albert Schweitzer, who believed that all forms of life are equally valuable. There are, however, two problems associated with this view:

- 1) Plants do not have wants and desires, and as such, cannot be said to have interests. Singer says that talking about the interests of plants is 'merely metaphorical'.
- 2) Since we (humans) have to eat in order to live, and since our food comes from living things, then we have to 'exploit' living things in order to survive.

In this regard, some have argued that one can hold that all forms of life are equally valuable, and still believe that so long as we keep to a vegetarian diet, we are not doing anything wrong. Even so, we might sometimes be faced with having to choose between surviving two different forms of life, where the survival of both is not possible.

For example, if a colony of rats which **Carry** disease is threatening to wipe out a human population, we might choose to save the human population by killing the rats. But if all forms of life are equally valuable, then we have as much reason to leave the rats alone and let the human beings die.

For the **Deep ecology ethicist**, everything is morally relevant. It is not just that which is human, conscious or alive that matters. Everything in the world has value in its own right. At first sight this might appear to be a claim that each individual thing in the world has intrinsic value, in common with the previous positions, but extending the list of individual things to include, for example, rocks, lakes, and so on.

But the view is rather that the system as a whole has value, and deep ecologists may have less in common with people concerned about animal welfare than we would imagine. The view can be summarised as expressed by **Aldo Leopold**: “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.” Leopold himself was in favour of hunting and killing wild animals, so his view was different from that of animal welfare **Rists**.

### 6.2.1 Difference between Leopold and animal welfare **Rists**

A difference between Leopold and animal welfare **Rists** such as Singer are as follows:

- (i) A different conception of the nature of the world: Seeing the world as a unified system, an organic whole, not simply as a collection of objects, some of which are alive and some of which are conscious. The world is viewed as a system which has value in itself (intrinsic value).
- (ii) A different basis for justifying actions: Instead of asking ‘what pain or pleasure will our actions cause or what interests will they satisfy or thwart?’, we should ask ‘what is the effect of our actions on the ecological system?’
- (iii) Leads to different recommendations: There may be agreement on issues such as pollution, destruction of habitats for human convenience, and so on, since it may be true that such activities are both harmful to individuals and destructive of the integrity and stability of the ecosphere.

### 6.3 The Role of Ethics with the Environment

Regarding issues arising from competition between species, deep ecologists think we should intervene in the natural world when order and stability are threatened in some way.

Some examples of the kinds of disputes in which deep ecologists would make different recommendations from those who campaign for animal welfare include; for instance, the steps taken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to control the numbers of ruddy duck, a

species which was originally introduced to Britain from North America, and whose numbers threaten the survival of indigenous species by monopolizing food supplies.

The Society was criticised by animal welfare activists. Again, for similar reasons, grey squirrels may be killed in order to safeguard red squirrels. Animal welfare activists may be opposed to this. Furthermore, elephant culling in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, it is proposed that, contrary to the wishes of many animal welfare activists, many thousands of elephants be shot over the next few years, in order to protect the park habitat from the impact of the increasing elephant population



**Figure 6.2:** Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

**Source:** <http://controversies.msa.ac.uk/blogs/thames1/rspb/>

There are, however, problems for applying the deep ecologists' view. For example, how do we judge that nature is in balance? What counts as 'integrity, stability and beauty of the biosphere'? 'Beauty' seems to be a characteristic which something could have only in relation to beings who regarded it as beautiful, and yet these characteristics are supposed to be intrinsic, independent of the value the biosphere has for humans.

How do we know when integrity and stability are achieved? Is it better if there are a million and one species in the world than if there are a million? Furthermore, why should the fact that there *is* a balance of nature tell us anything about what *ought* to be the case? Is the fact that something is natural a good reason for preserving it?

Suppose we reject the idea that nature has intrinsic value, and we base our ideas about how we should protect the environment on the value of the environment to sentient beings. Should we take account of future generations? What demands can future generations reasonably be said to

impose on us? Will there be more happiness if, for example, we leave non-renewable resources such as oil for future generations to use?

In talking about happiness which is a concept important to the utilitarian thesis, the difficulties for utilitarianism are difficulties about establishing facts about, for example, which generation will get the most benefit from oil. Since we cannot be absolutely certain about the answer to that, perhaps it does not matter much which generation uses it.

In relation to pollution, we might have to sacrifice some of our pleasurable activities now in order to ensure greater happiness for others in the future. For right theorists, it seems strange to talk about the rights of people, or animals, who do not yet exist, so perhaps an ethical approach based on rights is not appropriate in environmental ethics.

- The concept of utilitarian thesis is?
  - a) Happiness
  - b) Sadness
  - c) Hatred
  - d) Ethics
- Happiness (a)

Despite these problems, both for utilitarianism and for rights theories, the idea of our duties to future generations does not seem totally absurd. If we believe that there will be people living on earth in some years' time, it seems unfair that we should consider only our own comfort and welfare now.

## Summary of Study Session 6

In Study Session 6, you have learnt that:

1. The concern of environmental ethicist regard to, for instance, arguments to the effect that natural environments, such as rainforests, woods near mountain tops, or ecosystems, ought to be preserved because they possess value in themselves.
2. Many of the moral theories in the study of ethics are heavily anthropocentric in nature. This is true of egoism, of course, but also of some versions of utilitarianism, deontological ethics and the theory of moral rights (in its traditional version).
3. Animals have interests, according to Singer; if they can suffer or experience pleasure, then they have interests, and these interests are no less important than corresponding interests held by human beings.
4. Regarding issues arising from competition between species, deep ecologists think we should intervene in the natural world when order and stability are threatened in some way
5. In talking about happiness which is a concept important to the utilitarian thesis, the difficulties for utilitarianism are difficulties about establishing facts about, for example, which generation will get the most benefit from oil. Since we cannot be absolutely certain about the answer to that, perhaps it does not matter much which generation uses it.

### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 6**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

#### **SAQ 6.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.1)**

- 1) Give the definition of environmental Ethics by L. O. Ugwuanyi?
- 2) What is the view of Buddhism and Hinduism on the environment

#### **SAQ 6.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.2)**

- i. What is the argument of Peter Singer on Animals?
- ii. What is the principle of the reverence or respect for life?

#### **SAQ 6.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.3)**

What is the thought of the Right Theories on sacrificing some of our pleasurable activities now in order to ensure greater happiness for others in the future?

### **Notes on Study Section 6**

#### **SAQ 6.1**

- 1) L. O Ugwuanyi defines environmental ethics as “one in which the environment achieves a space in the notion of the good and the bad; one in which the environment is understood to be a moral agent; one that can offend or be offended and for this reason cannot be allowed to be a non-moral agent
- 2) That animals, plants and other creatures that are not humans are taken to possess values in themselves

#### **SAQ 6.2**

- i. Peter Singer, argued that sentient animals are in many ways of equal moral importance to people
- ii. This implies is that we should have respect for anything which is living, including plants

#### **SAQ 6.3**

If we believe that there will be people living on earth in some years' time, it seems unfair that we should consider only our own comfort and welfare now.

## Study Session 7: Ethics and Business

### Introduction

Business ethics reflects what can be termed the philosophy of business, one of whose aims is to determine the fundamental purposes of a company. The bases for this kind of philosophy can be found in the supposition that whether it becomes a violation of a company's fiduciary responsibility if a company, against its set purpose of the maximization shareholder returns, sacrifices profits to other concerns.

In this vein, ethical issues include the rights and duties between a company and its employees, suppliers, customers and "host community", its fiduciary responsibility to its shareholders. Issues concerning relations between different companies include hostile take-over and industrial espionage.

Related issues include corporate government; corporate social entrepreneurship; political contribution; legal issues such as the ethical debate over introducing a crime of corporate manslaughter; and the marketing of corporations' ethics policies. This study session will be introducing you to the relation between Ethics and Business, business managers and thought of some economist on the topic.

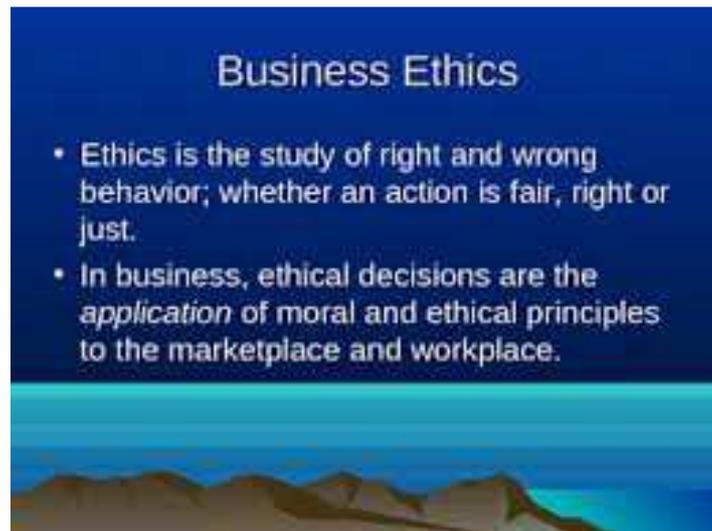
### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

After you have studied this study session, you should able to:

- 7.1 Briefly explain the relationship between Ethics and Business
- 7.2 Discuss about Business managers and the study of Ethics
- 7.3 Explain the economist view on Ethics and Business
- 7.4 Highlight the importance of Ethics to Business

### 7.1 The nature of the relation between ethics and business practices

Business ethics (also corporate ethics) is a form of applied ethics or professional ethics that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment. It applies to all aspects of business conduct and is relevant to the conduct of individuals and entire organizations.



**Figure 7.1:** A definition of Ethics and Business

**Source:** <http://nclds.me/job-description/corporate-social-responsibility-in-business-ethics> ppt.php

Business ethics has both normative and descriptive dimensions. As a corporate practice, the field is primarily normative, while academics attempting to understand business behaviour employ descriptive methods. The range and quantity of business ethical issues reflects the interaction of profit-maximizing behaviour with non-economic concerns. Within the business context, businesses are expected to have good ethical values and act socially responsible

Social responsibility can be an example of ethical behaviour. It is enhancing society in general. However, a business can't afford to go around doing good deeds if there is no potential pay-off. If the business were to lose too much money, then it would cease to exist, hurt customers, and leave employees jobless. It is in this regard that some have argued that the social responsibility of business is to increase profit.

## 7.2 Business Managers and the Study of Ethics

Again, everyone agrees that business managers must understand finance and marketing. But is it necessary for them to study ethics? Managers who answer in the negative generally base their thinking on one of three rationales.

- i. They may simply say that they have no *reason* to be ethical
- ii. They see why they should make a profit, and most agree they should do so legally
- iii. Why should they be concerned about ethics, as long as they are making money and staying out of jail?

Other managers recognize that they should be ethical but *identify* their ethical duty with making a legal profit for the firm. They see no need to be ethical in any further sense beyond business and law.

A third group of managers, though grant that ethical duty goes further than what is required by law, still insist that there is no point in studying ethics.

Perhaps when business people ask why they should be ethical, they have a different question in mind: what is the *motivation* for being good? Is there something in it for them? In response to questions as these, it is perfectly all right to ask if there is a reward for being good, but as it seems, this has nothing to do with whether one should be good.

- Why should they be concerned about ethics, as long as they are making money and staying out of jail is one of the reasons for not studying Ethics? TRUE or FALSE
- TRUE

It makes no sense to try convincing people that they should be good by pointing to the rewards that may follow. Rather, one should be good because “*good*” is, by definition, that which one should be. As for motivation, good behaviour often brings a reward, but not every time. Think about it. If it were always in one’s interest to be good, there would be no need for ethics.

We could simply act selfishly and forget about obligation. And, although ethics is not the same as self-interest, business executives often want to be assured that it *is* the same. They want to make certain that “one can do well by doing good”; meaning that one can succeed in business by being ethical.

There is no denying that one can often do well by doing good. An ethical company is more likely to build a good reputation, which is more likely to bring financial rewards over the long term. But good behaviour cannot be grounded in tangible reward alone.

People who are interested only in reward will behave ethically when it suits their purpose, but they will go astray whenever the incentives change. It is important to know that one can normally do well by doing good. Otherwise ethical people could go into business only with a high risk of failure

In relation to business, ethics, however, addresses the question: *how can one do good by doing well?* It begins with the premise that managers want to do something good with their lives and investigates how to accomplish this through business. In other words, it treats profit and business success as means to a greater end: making the world a little better.

Granting that a business person’s ultimate objective is to make the world better, how is this best achieved? A common view is that it is achieved by making as much money as possible. The best thing business people can do for society is to be good business people; that is, to maximize the company’s profit. They should therefore stick to finance, marketing and operations management rather than waste time with ethics.

- In relation to business ethics addresses the question of?
  - a) How can one do good by doing well?
  - b) How can one do better by ethics

- c) Make Profit in Business
- d) How can one be a manager
- How can one do good by doing well (a)

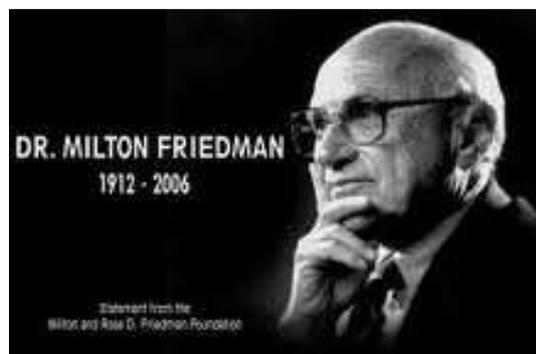
### 7.3 Economist View on Business and Ethics

Economist **Milton Friedman** articulates this view in an essay, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase its Profits. According to Friedman, corporate officers have no obligation to support such social causes as hiring the hard-core unemployed to reduce poverty, or reducing pollution beyond that mandated by law.

Their sole task is to maximize profit for the company, subject to the limits of law and “rules of the game” that ensure “open and free competition without deception or fraud. Friedman advances two main arguments for this position:

- 1) First, corporate executives and directors are not *qualified* to do anything other than maximize profit. Business people are expert at making money, not at making social policy. They lack the perspective and training to address complex social problems, which should be left to governments and social service agencies.
- 2) Second, and more fundamentally, corporate officers have no *right* to do anything other than maximize profit. If they invest company funds to train the chronically unemployed or reduce emissions below legal limits, they in effect levy a “tax” on the company’s owners, employees and customers in order to accomplish a social purpose. But they have no right to spend other people’s money on social welfare projects. At best, only elected representatives of the people have such authority.

Sole proprietors can spend the company’s money any way they want, since it is their money, but fiduciaries and hired managers have no such privilege. As such, if they contribute corporate money to arts or community development, it must be with an eye to increasing profit, perhaps by attracting better employees or improving the company’s image.



**Figure 7.2:** Dr. Milton Friedman

**Source:** <http://city-countyobserver.com/2012/07/31/100th-birthday-tribute-to-milton-friedman-10-ideas-that-still-affect-us-everyday/>

While **R. Duska** views Friedman’s argument as consequentialist rather than pragmatic, implying that unrestrained corporate freedom would benefit the most in long term, other critics of Friedman have challenged his position for committing two fallacies, which will be briefly stated here.

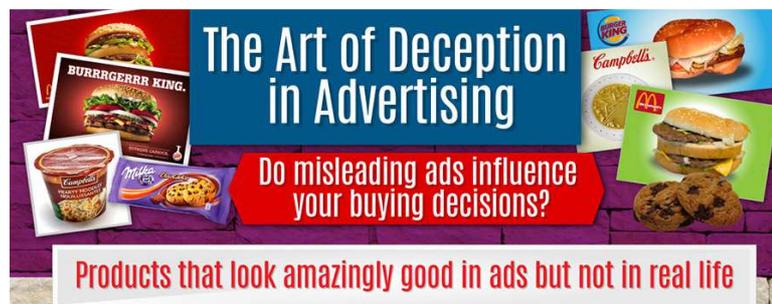
- One is the idea that company officers somehow usurp authority when they act ethically at the expense of owners. However, Friedman admits that it is perfectly all right for a sole proprietor to sacrifice potential profit in order to appear a decent human being. But suppose the owner has turned the business over to professional managers. Do such ethical obligations suddenly vanish? It can be argued, in this regard, that the owner cannot escape obligations simply by hiring someone to run the business.
- The second major fallacy in Friedman’s position is his misapplication of libertarian principles. He states that spending the owners’ money in the service of ethics is coercion and therefore wrong, while, at the same instance, stating that operating in a free market to increase their wealth compromises no one’s freedom and is therefore permissible. As it appears from the foregoing, the task of business ethics, then, is to identify the duties that business people have as business people.

One can begin with the most basic ones mentioned by Friedman: the duty to obey the law and the “rules of the game,” which provide for “open and free competition without deception or fraud.” Yet even these basic obligations are disputed.

❖ **Albert Carrs**

**Albert Carr**’s very popular essay, “Is Business Bluffing Ethical?” argues that deception, for example, is a legitimate part of business. Business, he says, is like a poker game. There are rules, but within the rules it is permissible to bluff in order to mislead others. In fact one must do so or lose the game.

The ethical rules of everyday life therefore do not apply to business. Using examples from the 1960s era in which he wrote the paper, **Carr** defended food processors, who use deceptive packaging of numerous products, and utility companies that elude regulatory government bodies to extract unduly large payments from users of electricity; for him as long as they comply with the letter of the law, they are within their rights to operate their businesses as they see fit.



**Figure 7.3:** A diagram on Deception in advertisement

**Source:** <http://imgur.com/gallery/y9QsC>

**Carr** further tells of a sales executive who made a political contribution he did not believe in, to keep an important client happy. When the executive told his wife about it, she was disappointed

with her husband and insisted he should have stood up for his principles. The executive explained to her how he must humour clients to keep his job. She understood the dilemma but concluded that “something is wrong with business.” Carr analyses the incident as follows:

This wife saw the problem in terms of moral obligation as conceived in private life; her husband saw it as a matter of game strategy. As a player in a weak position, he felt that he could not afford to indulge an ethical sentiment that might have cost his seat at the [poker] table

In this vein, Carr not only expects the executive to make such choices but cautions him not to agonize over them. “If an executive allows himself to be torn between a decision based on business considerations and one based on his private ethical code, he exposes himself to a grave psychological strain.”

Hiding a card up one’s sleeve, on the other hand, is truly deception because it breaks the rules of poker and no one is expecting it. Carr agrees that this sort of behaviour, which he calls “malicious deception,” is wrong.

One problem with Carr’s poker analogy, however, is that he overextends it. In a poker game everyone knows the rules, but business situations can be very ambiguous. If a food processor places false labels on packaging, it is highly unclear that consumers are “in on the game” and expect this sort of thing. Such practice is precisely illegal because they genuinely deceived customers, sometimes with deadly results.

From the above illustration of the deceptive attitude in business promotion through adverts and its often deadly consequences, it becomes clear that ethics and ethical thinking is of value to business practices. As such, ethics has a number of ways through which it possibly influences behaviour and practices. It provides a language and conceptual framework with which one can talk and think about the right course of action to take based on the right decision made

## 7.4 Importance of Ethics to Business

Through the study of ethics, ethical theories that help define what a valid business practice, for instance, ought to look like is appreciated. Also, the study of ethics in relation to business equips one with the capacity to make distinctions and avoid fallacies that are so common when people make decisions; provides one an opportunity to think through, at one’s leisure, complex ethical issues that are likely to arise later regarding certain business decisions.

It also introduces one to such specialized areas as product liability, employment, intellectual property, environmental protection, and cross-cultural management. In all, it provides one the training of articulating an ethical position, in relation to business decision-making, which can help resist pressure to compromise; thus improving business conduct in general.

How many of the recent business scandals would have occurred if subordinates had possessed the skills, vocabulary and conceptual equipment to raise an ethical issue with their co-workers?

- The study of Ethics introduces one to specialized areas as:
  - a) Product liability, Employment, Intellectual Property etc.
  - b) Unemployment, Profit Making and Intellectual Property

- c) Environ Protection, Intellectual Provision and Business
- d) Business Practises, Liability and Asset
- Product Liability, Employment, Intellectual Property (a)

Ethics not only should be studied alongside management, but the two fields are closely related. Business management is all about making the right decisions. Ethics is all about learning how to make the right decisions. So what is the difference between the two? Management is concerned with how decisions affect the *company*, while ethics is concerned about how decisions affect *everything*.

Management operates in the specialized context of the firm, while ethics operates in the general context of the world. Management is therefore part of ethics. A business manager cannot make the right decisions without understanding management in particular as well as ethics in general. **Business ethics** is management **Carried** out in the real world. This is why business managers should study ethics.

Not everyone supports corporate policies that govern ethical conduct. Some claim that ethical problems are better dealt with by depending upon employees to use their own judgment. Others believe that corporate ethics policies are primarily rooted in utilitarian concerns, and that they are mainly to limit the company's legal liability, or to curry public favour by giving the appearance of being a good corporate citizen.

Ideally, the company will avoid a lawsuit because its employees will follow the rules. Should a lawsuit occur, the company can claim that the problem would not have arisen if the employee had only followed the code properly. Sometimes there is disconnection between the company's code of ethics and the company's actual practices. Thus, whether or not such conduct is explicitly sanctioned by management, at worst, this makes the policy duplicitous, and, at best, it is merely a marketing tool.

**Jones and Parker** write, "Most of what we read under the name business ethics is either sentimental common sense, or a set of excuses for being unpleasant." Many manuals are procedural form filling exercises unconcerned about the real ethical dilemmas.

For instance, *US Department of Commerce* ethics program treats business ethics as a set of instructions and procedures to be followed by 'ethics officers'. Some others claim being ethical is just for the sake of being ethical. Business ethicists may trivialize the subject, offering standard answers that do not reflect the situation's complexity.

## Summary of Study Session 7

In Study Session 4, you have learnt that:

1. Business ethics (also corporate ethics) is a form of applied ethics or professional ethics that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment.
2. Business ethics has both normative and descriptive dimensions
3. Some group of managers, though grant that ethical duty goes further than what is required by law, still insist that there is no point in studying ethics
4. In relation to business, ethics, however, addresses the question: *how can one do good by doing well?*
5. Milton Friedman articulates this view in an essay, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase its Profits. According to Friedman, corporate officers have no obligation to support such social causes as hiring the hard-core unemployed to reduce poverty, or reducing pollution beyond that mandated by law.
6. R. Duska views Friedman’s argument as consequentialist rather than pragmatic, implying that unrestrained corporate freedom would benefit the most in long term
7. Through the study of ethics, ethical theories that help define what a valid business practice, for instance, ought to look like is appreciated.

## Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 7

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

### SAQ 7.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.1)

Explain Business ethics has both normative and descriptive dimensions

### SAQ 7.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.2)

Give three reasons why some business managers guide against the study of ethics

### SAQ 7.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.3)

Albert Carrs essay “Is Business Bluffing Ethical?” argues that deception is?

- a) Illegitimate part of business
- b) Legitimate part of Business
- c) Profitable business
- d) Profit Making

### SAQ 7.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.4)

Give three importance of Ethics

## Study Session 8: Ethics and Development

### Introduction

It is an indubitable and unquestionable fact that every nation strives after development, of which economic progress is an essential component, but obviously not the only component. As such, development is not purely an economic phenomenon.

In an ultimate sense, it must encompass more than the material and financial side of people's lives. In addition to improvements in incomes and output, it typically involves radical changes in institutional, social, and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes and, in many cases, even customs and beliefs. Indeed, it is a holistic concept that espouses the entirety of man's being.

The implication of this perspective is that, though development is usually defined in a national context, its widespread realization may necessitate fundamental modification of the international economic and social system.

In this study session you will be introduced to the concept of Ethics and how it relates to development and the concept of development

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 8.1 Discuss the concept and history of development
- 8.2 Explain the concept of ethics and how it relates to development

### 8.1 The concept and history of development

According to **G. Rist** in *The History of Development, From Western Origin to Global Faith*, the modern idea of development is intrinsically bound up with notions of progress and evolution which have had a marked effect on Western culture ever since the Renaissance.



**Figure 8.1:** Gilbert Rist

**Source:** <http://www.ecosostenibile.org/ideologieng.html>

The implication of **Rist**'s statement is that the growth of science and the rise of capitalism and, hence, the industrialization of Europe, the belief in possibility of progress in every aspect of human endeavour gradually came to replace providence; and as such, the perception that the future could be controlled and mastered through the advance of human knowledge became inseparable from Western culture.

As such, development has been as a multi-faceted concept with its cognate notions and Victorian terms of “growth” and “progress” respectively.

Also, when the term development is mentioned, there is a tendency for economists to dwell on the indices of Gross National Productivity, increasing productivity, developing technology in the bid to increase productivity based on the conception that development is the route to economic growth. Indeed, by the time **Karl Marx** was writing his critiques of capitalist society. The believe in progress was so deeply ingrained in European culture that he regarded it as a law of history.

Though the idea of development can see as intimately bound up with the rise of capitalism and modernity in nineteenth century Europe, the institutionalization of development really started after the Second World War.

This was the period that saw the birth of organizations chiefly concerned with different development goals and projects, development experts, national development plan of various nations, and numerous university courses focussing on the concept of development. The post-war period can therefore justifiably be regarded as ‘the era of development’.

Implicit in the old consensus was a tendency to view development and economic growth as synonymous, with trends in income *per capita* taken as the chief indicator of the rate of progress.

It was left mainly to Marxian writers to draw attention to the existence of large inequalities within Less Developed Countries, and to warn that the benefits of growth may be captured by a privileged few at the expense of the many. It is not necessary to elaborate much on the proposition that the situation today is very different.

■ The institutionalization of development really started after the?

- a) Second World war
- b) First World War
- c) Millennium
- d) Economic Boom

□ The Answer is (a)

Beginning about ten years ago, economists began increasingly to question whether the benefits of increased production were generally percolating through to all socio-economic strata of Less Developed Countries populations.

Evidence of large, perhaps widening, income inequalities, and of a growing employment problem, suggested that the simple average statistic provided by G.N.P. *per capita* was a drastically deficient indicator of development. Increasingly, therefore, writers insisted that considerations of social justice and human satisfaction were essential components of any adequate definition of development.

Thus Michael Todaro asserts, in a popular introductory text of economics for Less Developed Countries, that development in all societies must have *at least* the following objectives:

*to increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection to all members of society; to raise levels of living, including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education and more attention to cultural and humanistic values.*

*These all serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem; to expand the range of economic and social choice to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery.*

The strongly moralistic flavour of this illustrates one of the sharpest points of contrast with conventional “western” economic theory: namely, the normative nature of much of development economics, as contrasted with the positivist tradition which would deny that it is a task of economists to specify policy objectives.

On the other hand, the concern now being expressed about the incidence of inequality and associated evils in Less Developed Countries is entirely in the tradition of earlier writers on development. A desire to alleviate income disparities has always been a special regard of

development economists, but their attention in the 1950s and 1960s was largely focused on the problem of inequality between nation-states.

While the broader definitions of development carry the danger of reducing its utility by making it too all-embracing, they certainly serve to emphasise the truth that the study of development cannot fruitfully be limited to the confines of economics.

The broad view has also been associated with an enormous upsurge of research into inequality, unemployment, basic needs, and related features of developing countries, to which we return shortly. And underlying the reference in Todaro's definition to freeing individuals and nations from "servitude and dependence" is another recent and influential body of writings about what is now known as Development ethics.

## 8.2 The concept of ethics and how it relates to development

Development ethicists assess the ends and means of local, national, regional, and global development. National policymakers, project managers, grassroots communities, and international aid donors involved in development in poor countries often confront moral questions in their work.

Development scholars recognize that social-scientific theories of "development" and "underdevelopment" have ethical as well as empirical and policy components.

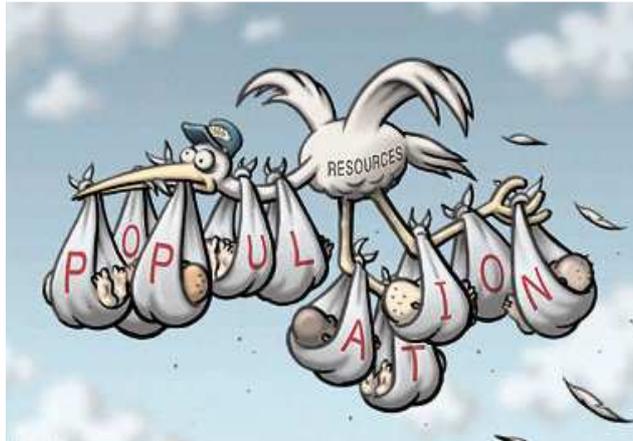
Development philosophers and other ethicists formulate ethical principles relevant to social change in poor countries, and they analyze and assess the moral dimensions of development theories and seek to resolve the moral quandaries lurking in development policies and practice. Several sources exist for the moral assessment of the theory and practice of development.

They are:

- First, activists and social critics, such as Mohandas Gandhi (beginning in the 1890s) in South Africa and India, Raul Prebisch (beginning in the 1940s) in Latin America, and Frantz Fanon (in the 1960s) in Africa criticized colonialism and orthodox economic development.
- Second, since the early 1960s, American development scholar, critic, and development practitioner Denis Goulet – drawing inspiration from the work of Louis-Joseph Lebret and Albert Hirschman, Benjamin Higgins, and Gunnar Myrdal and American sociologist Peter Berger – pioneered what we now call "development ethics" by arguing that development theory, policy, and practices should be subjected to ethical assessment. Both Goulet and Berger insisted that what was often called development was bad for human beings and that both ethics and development would benefit from interaction.

Further sources include the effort of primarily Anglo-American moral philosophers in the late 1970s and the 1980s to deepen and broaden philosophical debate about famine relief and food aid.

Beginning in the early 1970s, often in response to Peter Singer's utilitarian argument for famine relief (1972) and **Garrett Hardin's** "lifeboat ethics" (1974), many philosophers debated whether affluent nations (or their citizens) have moral obligations to aid starving people in poor countries and, if they do, what are the nature, bases, and extent of those obligations



**Figure 8.2:** Garret Hardin’s overpopulation problem in the his “lifeboat ethics

**Source:** <http://therightenvironmentality.wordpress.com/2012/10/24/somethings-gotta-give/>

In response to Singer’s seminal approach and the theoretical debate it stimulated led three Colorado State University professors in the late 1970s to devise a course on ethics and development that went beyond Singer’s seminal approach and the theoretical debate that it stimulated. By the early 1980s, moral philosophers such as Nigel Dower, Onora O’Neill, and Jerome M. Segal had come to views similar to those of the Colorado State University professors: famine relief and food aid were only one part of the solution to the problems of hunger, poverty, underdevelopment, and international injustice

What are needed, argued these philosophers, is not merely an ethics of aid but a more comprehensive, empirically informed, and policy relevant “ethics of Third World development.” The kind of assistance and North/South relations that are called for will depend on how (good) development is understood.

- A fourth source of development ethics is the work of **Paul Streeten and Amartya Sen**. Both economists have addressed the causes of global economic inequality, hunger, and underdevelopment and addressed these problems with, among other things, a conception of development explicitly based on ethical principles.

Building on **Streeten’s** “basic human needs” strategy, **Sen**, argues that development should be understood ultimately not as economic growth, industrialization, or modernization, which are at best means for the expansion of people’s “valuable capabilities and functioning.”

The valued functioning can vary from such elementary ones as avoiding mortality or preventable morbidity, or being sheltered, clothed, and nourished, to such complex achievements as taking part in the life of the community, having a joyful and stimulating life, or attaining self-respect and the respect of others.

## Summary of Study Session 8

In Study Session 8, you have learnt that:

1. The modern idea of development is intrinsically bound up with notions of progress and evolution which have had a marked effect on Western culture ever since the Renaissance.
2. Implicit in the old consensus was a tendency to view development and economic growth as synonymous, with trends in income *per capita* taken as the chief indicator of the rate of progress
3. Development ethicists assess the ends and means of local, national, regional, and global development
4. Building on **Streeten's** "basic human needs" strategy, Sen, argues that development should be understood ultimately not as economic growth, industrialization, or modernization, which are at best means for the expansion of people's "valuable capabilities and functioning."

## Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 8

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

### SAQ 8.1 (Test Learning Outcome 8.1)

1. What do you understand by the concept "development?"
2. Make a distinction between development understood as a economic progress and development taken wholly

### SAQ 8.2(Test Learning Outcome 8.2)

1. In what sense(s) would you consider ethics as contributed to the holistic sense of development?
2. With the knowledge of ethics so far gained, what contributions do you think ethics can make of to our understanding of development?

## Study Session 9: Ethics, Science and Technology

### Introduction

Most of the ethical debates that concern politics and the public at large are greatly influenced by scientific and technological progress. As we are all aware, recent development in various areas of science and technology has raised complex ethical, legal and societal issues that require urgent attention.

For instance, in the area of information technology, we are confronted with various practices that violate human rights and constitute threat to our moral atmosphere. In this module, we shall probe into the activities of scientists and technologists in order to identify and address some of the ethical issues that arose from their enterprise.

This study session will introduce you to the relationship between Ethics, Science and Technology, exploring the nature of science and technology

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 9

After you have studied this study session, you should be able to:

- 9.1 Describe Ethics and the Society
- 9.2 Explain the nature of Science and Technology
- 9.3 Discuss the relationship between Ethics, Science and Technology

### 9.1 Ethics and the Society

Ethics are moral standards that help guide behaviour, actions, and choices. Ethics are grounded in the notion of responsibility (as free moral agents, individuals, organizations, and societies are responsible for the actions that they take) and accountability (individuals, organizations, and society should be held accountable to others for the consequences of their actions).

In most societies, a system of laws codifies the most significant ethical standards and provides a mechanism for holding people, organizations, and even governments accountable. Applied ethics refers to an aspect of ethics that examines the implications of moral principles and practices in various spheres of human activity (such as business, law, medicine, engineering and computer) on our lives.

Ethics can be viewed from two angles, normative and prescriptive.

- i. First, ethics refers to well-based standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, and specific virtues. Ethics, for example, refers to those standards that impose the reasonable obligations to refrain from rape, stealing, murder, assault, slander, and fraud.

Ethical standards also include those that enjoin virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. And, ethical standards include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury, the right to choose, the right to privacy, and right to

freedom of speech and expression. Such standards are adequate standards of ethics because they are supported by consistent and well-founded reasons.

- ii. Secondly, ethics refers to the study and development of personal ethical standards, as well as community ethics, in terms of behaviour, feelings, laws, and social habits and norms which can deviate from more universal ethical standards. So it is necessary to constantly examine one's standards to ensure that they are reasonable and well-founded.

Ethics also means, then, the continuous effort of studying of our own moral beliefs and conduct, and striving to ensure that we, and our community and the institutions we help to shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based for the progress of human beings.

## 9.2 Nature of Science and Technology

Science and technology play prominent roles in many societies. Many advances in science have been made as a result of the development of new technology. For instance, scientific instruments such as the telescope, the microscope, and satellites have made further advances in the fields of astronomy, biology, and meteorology possible. At the same time, technology has in some cases come to pose a threat to our very existence. Such is the case with weapons of mass destruction, and our ability to produce environmental pollutants.

Many advances in science have been made as a result of the development of new technology. For instance, scientific instruments such as the telescope, the microscope, and satellites have made further advances in the fields of astronomy, biology, and meteorology possible. At the same time, technology has in some cases come to pose a threat to our very existence. Such is the case with weapons of mass destruction, and our ability to produce environmental pollutants. Technology is a double edged sword that can have unforeseen benefits and unexpected risks and consequences for different people, places, and times.

### 9.2.1 Definition of Science

The English word "Science" is derived from the Latin word "scientia" which means "knowledge", and the German word "Wissenschaft" which means "systematic, organized knowledge".

#### **Box 9.1: Literally Meaning of Science**

Science has been taken literally to mean "knowledge" the synthesis of the systematic study of every aspect of our experience of reality, especially objective reality, usually with the aim of reducing it to a logically consistent system of order.

Science is identified with any domain of knowledge accumulated by a systematic study, and organized by general covering principles; it is identified with knowledge covering general truths, or the operation of general laws; a systematically acquired knowledge, testable or verifiable.

It is also a process- the process of gaining knowledge based on repeated observations in controlled conditions (experimentations) and attempting to explain what causes those observations (theorizing) through constructing hypotheses that can be tested experimentally. To

this extent, science is the study of the natural world through observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanations.

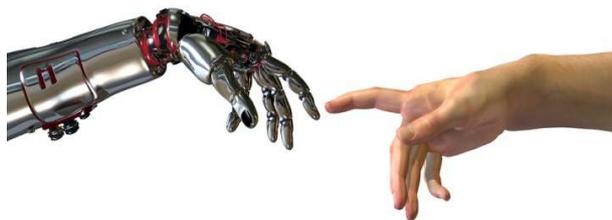
### 9.2.2 Definition of Technology

The word technology comes from two Greek words, transliterated 'techne' and logos. 'Techne' means art, skill, craft, or the way, manner, or means by which a thing is gained. Logos means word, the utterance by which inward thought is expressed, a saying, or an expression. So, literally, **technology** means words or discourse about the way things are gained. In recent times, technology has come to mean something different.

In one respect, the term has come to mean something narrower, the above definition would admit art or politics as means of gain, yet though those activities are permeated by technology now, most of us would not consider them to be examples or subsets of technology. In another respect, this definition is too narrow, for when most of us speak of technology today, we mean more than just discourse about means of gain.

### 9.3 The Relationship between Ethics, Science and Technology

The ethical issues that comes to mind with regards to science and technology is that the general public is increasingly worried whether science and technology will be able to control everything completely amidst the recent advanced materialism; whether science and technology truly bring luxurious life to humans, and whether there are any risks in the seemingly smart, smooth paths led by science and technology.



**Figure 9.1:** Technology and Society

**Source:** <http://blog.nus.edu.sg/group101/2012/09/30/does-technology-determine-society-or-does-society-determine-technology/>

Technologies will continue to expedite productivity and facilitate research towards a greater goal. However with each new technology concerns become greater for safety and the impact that those technologies will have on their respective environments.

Science and technology have dominated virtually every area of our lives, virtually every hour of the day. Technology acts as an amplifier of both problems and possibilities; it also creates greater speed, reducing our time for exactly the sort of careful ethical reflection required by the growing scale of the problems.

### **Summary of Study Session 9**

In Study Session 9, you have learnt that:

1. Ethics are moral standards that help guide behaviour, actions, and choices
2. In most societies, a system of laws codifies the most significant ethical standards and provides a mechanism for holding people, organizations, and even governments accountable
3. Science and technology play prominent roles in many societies. Many advances in science have been made as a result of the development of new technology
4. The English word “Science” is derived from the Latin word “scientia” which means “knowledge”, and the German word “Wissenschaft” which means “systematic, organized knowledge”
5. The word technology comes from two Greek words, transliterated ‘techne’ and logos
6. Technologies will continue to expedite productivity and facilitate research towards a greater goal
7. Science and technology have dominated virtually every area of our lives, virtually every hour of the day

### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 9**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

#### **SAQ 9.1 (Test Learning Outcome 9.1)**

Explain briefly the two angle Ethics can be viewed

#### **SAQ 9.2 (Test Learning Outcomes 9.2)**

What is the definition of Science and Technology?

#### **SAQ 9.3 (Test Learning Outcomes 9.3)**

What in your opinion is the most suitable ethical theory or theories to describe the relation of ethics to science and technology?

## Study Session 10: Bioethics

### Introduction

As a species of practical ethics, bioethics exhibits a complex and contested relationship to philosophical theory. On the one hand, many who teach and write in this interdisciplinary field are philosophers who naturally believe that their specific contribution to the field, their “expertise,” if you will consists in the application of distinctly philosophical methods, including various kinds of ethical theory, to practical problems arising in biomedical research, clinical medicine, and public health.

But on the other hand, many who work in the area of bioethics, including many philosophers, are highly sceptical of the so-called “applied ethics” model of moral reasoning, in which exemplars of high theory (e.g., consequentialist utilitarianism, **Kantian** deontology, rights-based theories, natural law) are directly “applied” to practical problems.

Indeed, most philosophically-inclined contributors to the bioethics literature have eschewed high moral theory in favour of various modes of moral reasoning falling on a spectrum between the strong particularism of various strains of casuistry or narrative ethics, on one end, and the mid-level norms of the enormously influential “principlism” of **Beauchamp and Childress**, on the other (Beauchamp and Childress, 2009).

This study session will introduce you the nature of the relation of ethics in the field of medicine, History and Issues bothering Bioethics

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 10

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 10.1 Explain the relation of ethics in the field of medicine (Bioethics)
- 10.2 Discuss the Early History of Medical Ethics
- 10.3 Highlight the Issues in Bioethics

#### 10.1 Relationship of Ethics in the Field of Medicine

The nature of the relation of ethics in the field of medicine, a relation referred to as **bioethics**. There is a phenomenon that has been over the last several years which, as a start, this lecture intends to identify.

Contrary to “popular opinion,” bioethics, as predominantly practiced today especially as embedded in formal governmental regulations, state laws and a myriad of other documents, committees, guidelines, guidebooks, around the world is not the same thing as “ethics *per se*.”

Academically it is actually a sub-field of ethics and stands alongside many other theories of ethics; for instance, **Kantian** deontology, Millsean utilitarianism, casuistry, natural law, egoism, situation ethics, relativism, and various forms of theological ethics. And like all ethical theories, bioethics is by no means “neutral” there is no such thing as a “neutral ethics

- Ethics in the field of Medicine is also referred to as .....
- Bioethics.

In fact, **bioethics** defines *itself* as a *normative* ethical theory that is; it takes a stand on what is right or wrong. Nor is bioethics to be equated with “medical ethics,” as that term is still generally understood. Nor is it the same as some religious medical ethics or any other such subsystem of ethics that could be used to determine the rightness and wrongness of human actions within the medical context; nor is bioethics restricted to the medical context.

Bioethics understood as “principlism” is an academic theory of ethics which was formally articulated for the first time in 1978 by the Congressionally-mandated 11-member National Commission in their *Belmont Report*. That *Report*, as Congressionally mandated, identified three bioethics principles:

- respect for persons
- justice
- beneficence.

It is important to note here that the Commission defined these three bioethics principles in less-than-traditional terms. At least this much must be clear before anyone takes up any discussion on bioethics.

And so, the purpose in this lecture is simply to provide historical confirmation of what bioethics is, who the founders, theorists, and practitioners are, identify just some of the major issues addressed (particularly those concerning research using human embryos and fetuses), and touch on some of the more salient inherent problems of and concerns about this “theory.”

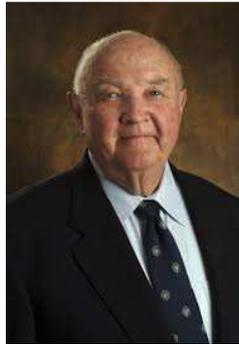
As the formal body of bioethics literature is enormous extending over 30 years or more, it will be impossible in this essay properly to evaluate in detail all of the ramifications of this “bioethics edifice.”

## 10.2 Early History of Medical Ethics

Several of the Founders of the field of bioethics are now busily writing books containing their own various accounts and versions of the history of the new “field” of bioethics. One example is the recent book by philosopher-Founder **Albert Jonsen**, *The Birth of Bioethics*

**Although Jonsen** presents the history of bioethics from within his own perspective and his own important role in that history, his book is a wealth of historical information and extensive documentation. The book does help to explain a great deal of some of the historical roots of bioethics, precisely *what* bioethics is and *who* the “experts” are who founded it and are currently plying this trade.

**Jonsen** (a trained philosopher and former Jesuit priest) starts his “history” of bioethics by outlining its roots in the ancient Hippocratic tradition, and then moves chronologically through the mediaeval and modern periods of medical ethics.



**Figure 10.1:** Albert Jonsen

**Source:** [http://www.yale.edu/bioethics/lecture\\_nuland.shtml](http://www.yale.edu/bioethics/lecture_nuland.shtml)

He marks the contemporary “birth” of bioethics as beginning about 1947 and extends it to 1987. It is of note that he stops the “history” there, probably because the burning leading ideas that form the discipline at its inception have come under scrutiny; as such, the theory, principles, and practices that evolved during the first decades do not seem to measure up to the new questions.

### 10.3 Central Issues in Bioethics

A discussion of the central issues can be presented by highlighting the central tenets of the field of medical ethics in relation to bioethics. To begin, while *conventional medical ethics* focused on the individual doctor patient encounter, *bioethics*’ remit is much broader, taking in the dilemmas new technologies generate for society as a whole.

While medical ethics has a long history, bioethics is a much newer discipline. Conventionally, medical ethics has been concerned with the ethics of good medical practice: that is, with what it means to be a good doctor. Ethical rules or codes of conduct were guidelines that the medical profession imposed upon itself in order to ensure that doctors’ behavior towards both their colleagues and their patients met appropriate standards of moral decency.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, the vantage point was always that of the doctor himself: how the doctor should obtain consent; when a doctor can breach his duty of confidentiality; and so on. Medical practice was strongly paternalistic: doctors were under a duty to act in their patients’ best interests, but it was doctors (as opposed to the patients themselves) who decided what those interests were. In this light, some scholars have argued that conventional medical ethics tended to marginalize both the patient’s perspective and the broader social causes of ill health.

Until very recently, conscientious physicians were actually trained to act paternalistically toward their patients, to treat patients according to the physician’s own judgment about what would be best for their patients, with little regard for each patient’s own perspectives or preferences.

The problem with this arrangement, however, is that health care may involve such intimate and central aspects of a patient's life including, for example, matters such as health, illness, reproduction, death, dying, bodily integrity, nutrition, lifestyle, self-image, disability, sexuality, and psychological well-being that it is difficult for anyone other than the patient to make choices that will be compatible with that patient's personal value system.

- Some scholars have argued that conventional medical ethics tends to marginalize the patient perspective. TRUE or FALSE

TRUE

The 'principles' approach lays out four key principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, which can be brought to bear on medical dilemmas. A striking feature of most discussions about patient autonomy is their exclusive focus on individual patients; this pattern mirrors medicine's consistent tendency to approach illness as primarily a problem of particular patients.

Within the medical tradition, suffering is located and addressed in the individuals who experience it rather than in the social arrangements that may be responsible for causing the problem.

Instead of exploring the cultural context that tolerates and even supports practices such as war, pollution, sexual violence, and systemic unemployment practices that contribute to much of the illness that occupies modern medicine physicians generally respond to the symptoms troubling particular patients in isolation from the context that produces these conditions.

**Heather Draper and Tom Sorrell** also argue that the focus of medical ethics has been too narrow, but in a different way. They maintain that by focusing upon the duties of doctors, the obligations of patients have been ignored.

In **comparison** to what it asks of doctors, mainstream medical ethics makes very few demands of patients, and these usually begin and end with consent. Traditionally medical ethics has asserted that, as autonomous agents, competent patients must be allowed to decide for themselves the course of their medical treatment, and even whether to be treated at all.

Little or nothing is said about what kinds of decisions patients *ought* to make; nor is much said about their responsibilities for making good rather than bad decisions. Indeed, mainstream medical ethics implies that a competent patient's decision is good simply by virtue of having been made by the patient.

At times it seems as though patients never make, or cannot make, bad decisions. In welfare states, discussion about the use of limited resources extends naturally to a consideration of whether citizens have some sort of moral obligation, other things being equal, to limit their demands on these resources. If the answer is 'Yes', then there may be a civic obligation to follow preventive health measures recommended by one's doctor.

- Traditional medical ethics has asserted that competent patients must be allowed to decide for themselves the course of their medical treatment. TRUE or FALSE

TRUE

If one is advised to stop smoking or over-eating, and one disregards that advice, so that one's condition deteriorates to the point that expensive treatment is required to keep one alive, one may be doing something doubly wrong breaking obligations to oneself and breaking civic obligations not to use public resources unnecessarily. In short, there are duties not to use health services casually.

Someone who summons an ambulance after getting sunburn; someone who knowingly presents himself at an emergency room with nothing more than severe indigestion; or who calls out a doctor because he needs a prescription that could be filled in office hours next day; all of these patients do something morally wrong, wrong primarily because they have taken away time and resources better spent on more urgent cases

Traditionally, medical ethics has focused primarily on the doctor–patient relationship and on the virtues possessed by the good doctor. It has also been very much concerned with relations between colleagues within the profession. Bioethics, on the other hand, is a more overtly critical and reflective enterprise. Not limited to questioning the ethical dimensions of doctor patient and doctor -doctor relationships, it goes well beyond the scope of traditional medical ethics in several ways.

- First, its goal is not the development of, or adherence to, a code or set of precepts, but a better understanding of the issues.
- Second, it is prepared to ask deep philosophical questions about the nature of ethics, the value of life, what it is to be a person, the significance of being human.
- Third, it embraces issues of public policy and the direction and control of science.

Furthermore, bioethics' remit is generally assumed to be much wider than that of traditional medical ethics. It emerged as a distinctive discipline in the 1960s in response to a number of different factors.

- ❖ First, rapid technological progress was posing some complex dilemmas, particularly at the beginning and end of life, which went beyond ethical conduct within the doctor patient encounter.  
**For** example, once it became possible to (a) perform organ transplants, and (b) keep a patient's heart beating after death, it was necessary to ask whether 'brain-dead' but still breathing patients could be a legitimate source of organs for transplantation.
- ❖ Secondly, medical paternalism was beginning to be challenged, and the principle of patient autonomy was instead ascendant. Patients no longer automatically deferred to doctors' superior medical expertise, but were increasingly willing to insist upon their 'rights'. In this vein, Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer have reflected upon the origins and remit of bioethics.

Since the 1960s, **ethical problems** in health care and the biomedical sciences have gripped the public consciousness in unprecedented ways. In part, this is the result of new and sometimes revolutionary developments in the biomedical sciences and in clinical medicine. These technological breakthroughs, however, have not been the only factor in the increasing interest in ethical problems in this area.

Another factor has been a growing concern about the power exercised by doctors and scientists, which shows itself in concern to assert ‘patients’ rights’ and the rights of the community as a whole to be involved in decisions that affect them. This has meant greater public awareness of the value-laden nature of medical decision making, and a critical questioning of the basis on which such decisions are made. It was in the climate of such new ethical issues and choices that the field of inquiry now known as ‘bioethics’ was born. The word was not originally used in this sense.

**Van Rensselaer Potter** originally proposed the term for a ‘science of survival’ in the ecological sense; that is, an interdisciplinary study aimed at ensuring the preservation of the biosphere. This terminology never became widely established, however, and instead ‘bioethics’ came to refer to the growing interest in the ethical issues arising from health care and the biomedical sciences.

### Summary of Study Session 10

In Study Session 10, you have learnt that:

1. Ethics in the field of medicine is also referred to as Bioethics
2. Academically Bioethics is actually a sub-field of ethics and stands alongside many other theories of ethics
3. Bioethics defines itself as a normative ethical theory that is; it takes a stand on what is right or wrong.
4. **Jonsen** (a trained philosopher and former Jesuit priest) starts his “history” of bioethics by outlining its roots in the ancient Hippocratic tradition, and then moves chronologically through the mediaeval and modern periods of medical ethics.
5. Conventional medical ethics focused on the individual doctor patient encounter, bioethics’ remit is much broader, taking in the dilemmas new technologies generate for society as a whole.
6. Traditionally, medical ethics has focused primarily on the doctor–patient relationship and on the virtues possessed by the good doctor. It has also been very much concerned with relations between colleagues within the profession

### Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 10

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

#### SAQ 10.1 (Test Learning Outcomes 10.1)

What do you understand by bioethics?

#### SAQ 10.2 (Test Learning Outcomes 10.2)

With the understanding of ethics so far gained, what, in your opinion, is the role of ethics in the practice of medicine?

#### SAQ 10.3 (Test Learning Outcome 10.3)

Enumerate and discuss two central issues in bioethics

## Study Session 11: Sexual Ethics

### Introduction

You are now at the last study session of this course; you will be learning an interesting topic called Sexual Ethics. Sex ethics (also referred to as sexual morality)

Many practical questions arise regarding human sexuality, such as whether sexual norms should be enforced by law, given social approval, or changed. Answers to these questions can be considered on a scale from social liberalism to social conservatism. Considerable controversy continues over which system of ethics or morality best promotes human happiness, and which, if any, is inherently right.

Age of Consent is also a key issue in sexual ethics. It is a controversial question of whether or not minors should be allowed to have sex for recreation. The debate includes whether or not minors can meaningfully consent to have sex with each other, and whether they can meaningfully consent to have sex with adults. In many places in the world people are not legally allowed to have sex until they reach a set age.

You will be introduced to the understanding of the nature of the role of ethics in sexual education, be able to make a defence of the right sexual behaviour befitting the dignity of the human person and issues in sexual ethics

### Learning Outcomes for Study Session 11

When you have study this session, you should be able to:

- 11.1 Explain the concept of Sexual Ethics
- 11.2 Highlight and Discuss the Issues in Sexual Ethics

#### 11.1 Concept of Sexual Ethics

Broadly speaking, sexual ethics relates to community and personal standards relating to the conduct of interpersonal relationships, and deals with issues of consent, sexual relations before marriage and/or while married, including;

- I. Issues of Marital Fidelity and Premarital And Non-Marital Sex,
- II. Issues Related to Sexuality,
- III. Questions about How Gender and Power Are Expressed Through Sexual Behaviour,
- IV. Questions about How Individuals Relate To Society, And
- V. Questions about how individual behaviour impacts public health concerns.

#### Box 11.1: Meaning of Sexual Ethics

**Sexual** ethics (also referred to as sexual morality) refers to those aspects of ethics that deal with issues arising from all aspects of sexuality and human sexual behaviour.

Sexual ethics can be viewed from what has been referred to as traditional sexual morality and liberal sexual morality. We shall now attempt a brief presentation of these ways of looking at morality:

### 11.1.1 Traditional Sexual Morality

In Traditional Sexual Morality, it is commonly believed that a person’s sexual life is, to a large extent, not his or her own. In this system, there were rules that imposed a highly confining set of duties on sexual choices and actions. Sexual activity was condemned as unnatural if it was outside of heterosexual marriage or if the activities were undertaken for purposes other than procreation.

Furthermore, traditional sexual morality rejects **pornography** on the basis that those materials excite passions that do not stay neatly confined within the narrow channels of sexual activity that it (traditional morality) deemed the only natural and acceptable way of expressing human sexuality. It views pornography as corrupting individual character and subverting the proper order of society.

**Robert George**, a contemporary proponent of the traditional view, asserts that traditional morality claim that liberal “*permissiveness*” leads to social disintegration. It is assumed by traditionalists that sexual immorality cuts to the core of humans in a way that other vices do not and that it has a way of tearing apart lives and relationships in a way that other vices do not.

### 11.1.2 Liberal Sexual Ethics

Here, it is commonly believed that a person’s sexual life is within his or her own dominion. This view follows on the proclamation of liberalist regarding the individual; who, among other things, is proclaimed an autonomous existent with a freedom to do as he/she pleases with his/her body or his/her life. And so, in this system adults are left morally free to engage in the sexual activities of their choice, so long as the activities had no direct unwilling victims.



**Figure 11.1:** Sex is a Human Right

**Source:** <http://venusplusx.org/sex-education-is-a-human-right/>

Among the proponents of Liberal sexual morality is **David Richards**. He opines that the Legal enforcement of a particular sexual ideal fails to accord due respect to individual autonomy. The implication of this for the sexual act is that sex is not only morally acceptable within marriage; it is acceptable in other ways, include that of seeking pure pleasure, as long as the autonomy of the other is not violated.

In the light of this understanding of the nature of the asexual act, someone giving consent to sex is someone giving a clear, active and enthusiastic yes, and who is clearly, actively and enthusiastically participating throughout. Partnered sex is about two people equally sharing something sexually

## 11.2 Issues in Sexual Ethics

Sexual exploitation is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites. Taking child sexual exploitation as an instance, it involves:

- i. Possession, manufacture and distribution of child pornography
- ii. online enticement of children for sexual acts
- iii. child prostitution;
- iv. child sex tourism
- v. Child sexual molestation.

### 11.2.1 Rape

**Rape** is another issue discussed in sexual ethics. It refers to forced and unwanted sexual activity. Some scholars have reflected on the cause of rape as the drive for power.

#### **Box 11.2 Definition of Rape**

Rape is a type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse, which is initiated by one or more persons against another person without that person's consent.

The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority or with a person who is incapable of valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, or below the legal age of consent. In other words, a rapist uses actual force or violence or the threat of it to take control over his/her victim. Some rapists use drugs to take away a person's ability to fight back.

#### **Important Notes on Rape**

1. It is important to state here that rape is a crime, whether viewed from the traditional or liberalist perspectives
2. It is important to also note that to coerce someone sexually is to get them to engage in a sexual activity they do not want through guilt-trips or nagging, threats, bribes,

intimidation or some other kind of emotional pressure or force, have been considered by some to be rape.

3. No matter how it happened, rape is frightening and traumatizing. People who have been raped need care, comfort, and a way to heal.

### 11.2.2 Bestiality

This has also received some attention in the discussion of issues in sexual ethics. This has been defined as a human being having sex with an animal. There are a number of reasons why bestiality is always wrong: these include;

1. It is sex with a species too different and of different flesh.
2. Animals are incapable of giving informed consent to sex with humans. This logically excludes animals from the ability to give informed consent
3. No reasonable person views bestiality as an innate condition, like heterosexuality or homosexuality.
4. Human exceptionalism teaches us that animals are never orientation compatible partners for humans by virtue of the fact that they are animals and not human whereas human beings are separate from, different than and elevated above the animals, without being evolved from the animals.

### 11.2.3 Necrophilia

This refers to sexual gratification by having sex with the dead. It is one of the most weird, bizarre and revolting practices of abnormal and perverse sensuality. Also known as necrophilism, necrolagnia, necrocoitus, necrochlesis and thanatophilia, it may be seen alone or in association with a number of other paraphilias, namely:

- i. sadism,
- ii. cannibalism,
- iii. vampirism (the practice of drinking blood from a person or animal),
- iv. necrophagia (eating the flesh of the dead),
- v. necropedophilia (sexual attraction to the corpses of children) and
- vi. necrozoophilia (sexual attraction to the corpses of or killings of animals – also known as necrobestiality).

A ten-tier classification of necrophilia exists:

- Role players,
- Romantic necrophiles,
- People having a necrophilic fantasy necrophilic miracle,
- Tactile necrophiles, People having a sexual fetish for the dead
- fetishistic necrophiles, People having a necromutilomania – necromutilomaniacs,
- Opportunistic necrophiles,
- Regular necrophiles,
- Homicidal necrophiles,
- Exclusive necrophiles.

### 11.2.3 Incest

The term may apply to sexual activities between: individuals of close “blood relationship”; members of the same household; step relatives related by adoption or marriage; and members of the same clan or lineage. The incest taboo is and has been one of the most common of all cultural taboos, both in current nations and many past societies.

#### Box 11.3 Definition of Incest

**Incest** is intimate sexual contact between persons who are related by blood; it is sexual intercourse between family members and close relatives. In other words, someone you are not legally allowed to marry.

Most modern societies have laws regarding incest or social restrictions on closely consanguineous marriages. In countries where it is illegal, consensual adult incest is seen by some as a victimless crime. Incest between an adult and a child is usually considered a form of child sexual abuse and for many years has been the most reported form of incest.

Father–daughter and stepfather–stepdaughter incest is the most commonly reported form of adult-child incest, with most of the remaining involving a mother or stepmother. Father–son incest is reported less often, but it is not known how close the frequency is to heterosexual incest because it is likely more under-reported

### 11.2.4 Homosexuality

Though common, is one of the most controversial sexual practices. Many people reject conventional sexual morality but also find homosexuality morally problematic. Some reasons given for this response:

1. Homosexual acts are repulsive and offensive.
2. Homosexuals are inherently promiscuous and cannot achieve enduring love relations. Consequently, homosexuality undermines the family structure
3. Homosexuals have a greater tendency to molest children than heterosexuals.
4. Homosexuality is contrary to nature
5. Homosexuals are more likely to spread AIDS. As a sexual practice, it seriously threatens public health

There is no precise, all-inclusive definition of homosexuality. It is probably much easier to say what homosexuality is not. It is not: a genetic defect, a hormonal imbalance, a mental illness, or a result of demonic possession. **Homosexuality** means that men are sexually and emotionally attracted to men, and women are sexually and emotionally attracted to women. This is also called same-sex attraction.

The question is why do people experience same-sex attraction? Homosexuality is learned through a complex combination of shaping factors and personal choices. Many same-sex-attracted people have a sense of being “different” from a very early age and consequently they believe that they were “born gay.”

Sometimes the news or magazines have even made it sound like scientists have found genetic proof. So far, there is no proof that this is really true. But the perception of being different is a factor. Others believe that some people are gay because they chose to be gay. For most gay people, this is not true. They did not wake up one morning and say to themselves, “Well, so far in my life I’ve been straight; from now on I think I am going to be gay.”

The direction of our attractions is not something that we can quickly change, like switching a light on and off. Of course, whether gay or straight, we always have a choice about what we do, whether and how we act on our feelings and desires. Just because we feel like doing something, doesn’t mean we are compelled to do it. As well, those who experience same-sex attraction can choose whether or not they wish to identify themselves with a label like “gay” or “lesbian”.

### 11.2.5 Promiscuity

In human sexual behaviour, it is the practice of casual sex with multiple sexual partners. The term can **Carry** a moral judgement and is viewed in the context of a mainstream social ideal for sexual activity to take place within exclusive committed relationships. A common example of behaviour viewed as promiscuous within the mainstream social ideals of many cultures is a one-night stand. What sexual behaviour is considered “promiscuous” varies between cultures as does the prevalence of promiscuity, with different standards often being applied to different genders and civil status?

Throughout the world and in most religions, the act of **adultery** has been considered a crime punishable even by death. The Romans, the Jews, the Hindus, and many other cultures demanded that adulterers be executed. Yet, because religious leaders have failed to explain why adultery is such a grave act, humanity has gradually arrived to a stage where few people consider adultery a wrong action.

However, while adultery refers to voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her lawful spouse, **fornication** is the voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other.

## Summary of Study Session 5

In Study Session 5, you have learnt that:

1. Sexual ethics relates to community and personal standards relating to the conduct of interpersonal relationships, and deals with issues of consent, sexual relations before marriage and/or while married, including issues of marital fidelity and premarital and non-marital sex, issues related to sexuality.
2. In Traditional Sexual Morality, it is commonly believed that a person’s sexual life is, to a large extent, not his or her own.
3. Liberal Sexual Ethics it is commonly believed that a person’s sexual life is within his or her own dominion.
4. Sexual exploitation is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money.

5. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites.
6. Bestiality has been defined as a human being having sex with an animal.
7. Throughout the world and in most religions, the act of adultery has been considered a crime punishable even by death. The Romans, the Jews, the Hindus, and many other cultures demanded that adulterers be executed

### **Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 11**

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

#### **SAQ 11.1 (Test Learning Outcomes 11.1)**

1. Highlight the differences between the views of the traditionalists and the liberalist regarding sexual ethics.
2. How would you define sexual ethics?

#### **SAQ 11.2 (Test Learning Outcomes 11.2)**

1. What would you say is the goal of the sexual act; procreation or pleasure?
2. Explain four issues in Sexual Ethics

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