

Why Ethics?

Ethics serves as the guiding force that shapes our behaviour, decisions, and interactions in society. The importance of ethics can be understood through various dimensions

- **Satisfying Basic Needs:** Ethics provides a framework for addressing the fundamental needs of individuals and communities. It helps establish norms and values that contribute to a harmonious and supportive social environment.
- **Creating Credibility:** Ethical behaviour enhances an individual's or an organisation's credibility. Trust is built on the foundation of ethical conduct, fostering positive relationships with others and contributing to a reputable and trustworthy image.
- **Improving Decision Making:** Ethical principles offer a set of guidelines for making sound decisions. By considering the ethical implications of choices, individuals and organizations can navigate complex situations with integrity and fairness.
- **Self-Realization:** Ethics plays a role in personal development and self-realization. By adhering to ethical standards, individuals can better understand their values, principles, and the impact of their actions on themselves and the broader community.

ETHICS

The term "Ethics" is etymologically linked to the Greek word "Ethos," which encompasses character, habits, customs, and behaviour. It can be defined as the systematic study of human actions from the perspective of their rightfulness or wrongfulness. In simpler terms, ethics provides a set of principles guiding what is acceptable behaviour in society.

What Ethics is Not About

- Ethics is not synonymous with morality.
- It is not solely a religious concept.
- It goes beyond mere adherence to laws.
- It is not determined by culturally accepted norms.
- It is not merely based on personal likes and dislikes.
- It is not confined to individual beliefs.

ESSENCE OF ETHICS: The essence of ethics lies in its intrinsic quality, determining the character of human actions. Key points include:

- **Choices:** Preferences and priorities lead to decisions, reflecting in actions.
- **Actions:** Choices manifest physically through actions.
- **Behaviour:** The way individuals act or conduct themselves, influenced by their choices and actions, defines behaviour.

NEED OF ETHICS

- **To Regulate Social Relationships:** It establishes norms that govern interactions, fostering a harmonious society.
- **For Growth and Development:** Ethical values contribute to individual and societal growth, providing a foundation for progress.
- **For Self-Satisfaction:** Adhering to ethical principles brings a sense of self-satisfaction and fulfillment.
- **To Live a Happy and Meaningful Life:** Ethical living contributes to a life filled with happiness and purpose.
- **Making a Good Citizen:** Ethics shapes individuals into responsible citizens, contributing positively to society.
- **Achieving Greater Good:** In a society where individuals may act selfishly, ethics promotes actions for the greater good.

CONSEQUENCES OF ETHICS

Consequences for Individuals:

- Happiness
- Positive Outlook Toward Society
- Elevated Sense of Being
- Credibility
- Accomplishment
- Acceptability and Likeability
- Interpersonal Relations
- Decision Making

Consequences for Society:

- Good Governance
- Justice and Inclusion
- Equitable and Inclusive Development
- Future Generations
- Environmental Well-being
- Healthy Society
- Faith

ETHICS IN INDIA AND SOURCES OF ETHICS

- **Historic Texts:** Ashoka's commitment to dharma, Harshvardhan's charity and truthfulness.
- **Ramayana & Mahabharat:** Ideal governance, consequences of bad intentions, Nishkam karma.
- **Gandhi Ethics:** Non-violence, self-sustenance, swaraj, satyagraha, courage of conviction, sustainable development.
- **Constitution:** Liberty, equality, fraternity, secularism, justice, etc.
- **Buddhist Ethics:** Four Noble Truths, middle path, non-violence.
- **Jain Ethics:** Non-harm to any creature.
- **Sikh Ethics:** Langar, brotherhood.
- **Islamic Ethics:** Collectivism, a code of conduct.
- **Laws:** Establishing the basic framework for ethical action.

- **Society:** Shaping norms for acceptable community behavior.
- **Conscience:** Internalized sense of right and wrong.
- **Human Values:** Universal values like truthfulness, honesty, integrity, etc.

DETERMINANTS OF ETHICS:

- **Person:** *Dependence on Mental Makeup:* Ethical considerations are influenced by an individual's mental composition. The internalized attitudes and values regarding ethical behaviour shape how a person perceives and responds to moral dilemmas.
- **Place:** *External Environment Impact:* The external environment, including family, school, and workplace, contributes to ethical development. Childhood teachings about not stealing from parents and teachers are later applied in real-world situations. Workplaces instil ethics of teamwork, punctuality, and responsibility.
- **Time:** *Evolution of Moral Codes:* Different times witness variations in moral codes. Practices considered ethical in the past, like owning slaves, are now deemed unethical. The evolving societal norms influence the ethical perspectives of individuals and cultures.
- **Object:** *Intention and Circumstances:* Lying is universally considered unethical. However, the intention behind telling the truth matters. If the truth is intentionally used to harm someone, it becomes unethical. Circumstances, like a poor person stealing to feed their children, introduce subjectivity to the evaluation of morality.
- **Circumstances:** *Subjectivity in Stealing:* While stealing is generally unethical, the circumstances surrounding the act can introduce subjectivity. For instance, a poor person stealing to meet basic needs may be perceived as less unethical due to the dire circumstances.
- **End Purpose:** *Moral Evaluation of Intent:* The end purpose of an action contributes to its moral evaluation. Giving a donation to a poor person is generally considered good. However, if the donation is intended to manipulate the person into performing certain actions, it turns immoral.
- **Culture:** *Shaping Individual Values:* Culture significantly shapes individual values. Western culture often revolves around individualism, while Indian culture is rooted in universalism. Cultural norms provide a framework for ethical considerations, influencing behavior and decision-making.
- **Role Models/Celebrities/Famous Personalities:** *Influence of Leaders:* The conduct of leaders, role models, celebrities, or famous personalities within a society or organization impacts the ethical behavior of their followers. The actions of influential figures set standards and expectations.
- **Constitution:** *Establishing Moral Disposition:* The constitution of various countries serves as a guide for establishing the moral disposition of society. Legal frameworks outline fundamental principles and values that contribute to the ethical fabric of a nation.
- **God & Religion:** - *Religious Guidance:* Every religion and the concept of God advocate universal peace and ethical practices. Religious texts provide teachings on how individuals should behave in society, emphasizing ethical conduct.
- **Conscience & Intuition:** - *Internal Moral Compass:* Conscience and intuition serve as internal moral compasses. Following one's conscience is often based on moral reasoning and justification, while intuition operates without explicit justification. Both play roles in determining what is perceived as good or bad.

12. Family: - *Initial Ethical Development:* Family, as the first interaction point for a child, significantly influences ethical development. The family environment imparts foundational teachings about what is ethically correct, shaping the ethical outlook of future citizens.

laslearning.in