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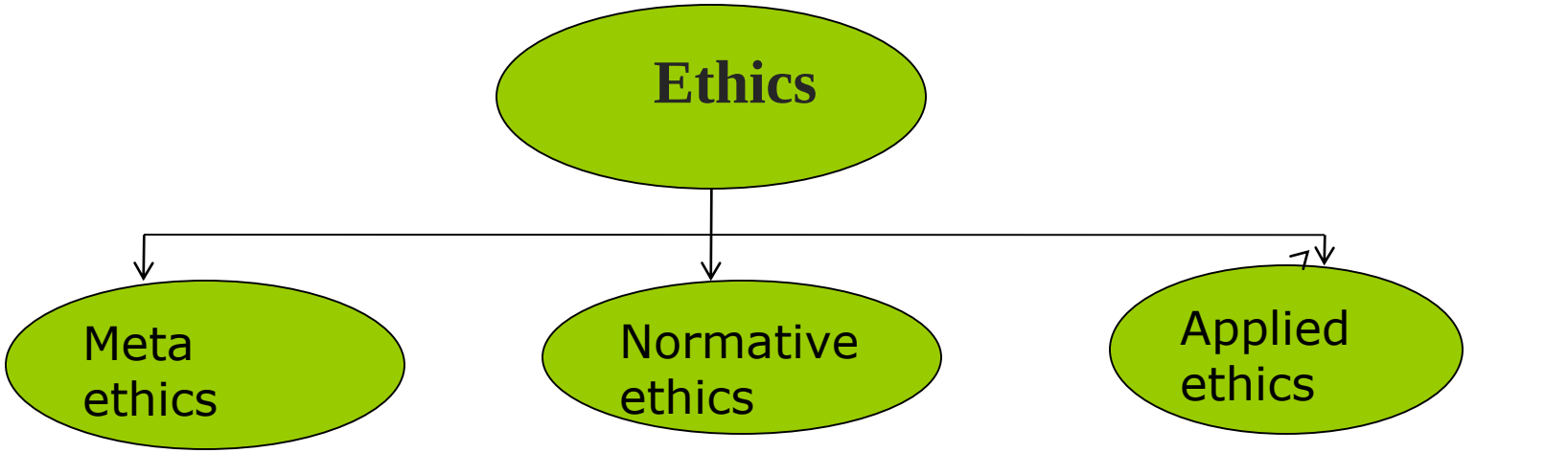
Introduction

- Ethics is a standard of moral practice
- It is a study of morality
- Refer to a specific area of study – *the area of morality*
- Concentrates on human conduct and human values



Key Terms

- Moral (Immoral) and Ethical (Unethical) are interchangeably used
- Person / Act => ethical (unethical) or moral (immoral)
- '**Ethics**' (Greek word *ethos*= *Character*)
  - pertains to the individual character of a person or persons
- '**Morality**' (Latin word *moralis= customs or manner)*
  - points to relationships among human beings

Key Terms...

- **‘Amoral’**
- having no moral sense
  - Indifferent to right or wrong
  - Two extremes of people belonging to this class
    - Babies
    - Some Hard core criminals
- ‘**Nonmoral**’
  - Out of the realm of morality
  - Inanimate objects like cars, guns etc
  - Nonmoral area of study like Physics, Mathematics, Astronomy etc.

Need for Study in Ethics

- We refer to human actions as moral, ethical, immoral, or unethical

Q. But what are the criteria for this?

Q. How to define a right or wrong action or a good or bad person?

Q. What are the human standards to make such decisions?

Q. What are the qualities of good character?

Q. What type of human behaviour is evil or bad?

- Ethics is concerned with the ideal or standard to which our conduct should confirm

Ethics Concerned:

- Agent
  - Virtue ethics: it is an agent centric or agent based value
  - Virtue is an inherent character of human being
  - It is the habit of deliberate choice of right actions
- Action
  - Deontology: it is an action based value
  - It is the study of the nature of the duty and obligation
  - An agent abides by duty and obligation
- Consequence
  - Consenquentialism: it is a consequence based value
  - An action may be morally right if it gives rise to some greater good

Ethics Concerned:

- Normative ethics of behaviour studies what makes action(e.g. Murder/charity) right or wrong
  - It addresses such questions as which things are morally good or bad
- Virtue ethics studies what makes the character traits of people (e.g. Bravery, coward) virtuous or vicious
  - E.g. A lie is wrong not because of its consequences and not because it violates rules but because it is not what a virtuous and honest perosn would do
- Encourage us to think about moral heroes and saints;
  - E.g. Jesus, Socrates, Gandhi
  - And consider what about their personalities made them virtuous
- Virtue ethicists don’t ignore actions, but regard them as outgrowths of a person's character
  - The notion of *character* is the morally more important concept

Approaches to the Study of Morality

- Two major approaches-

I. Scientific or Descriptive Approach

- It is study of ethical theories that prescribe how people ought to act (How should people act?)

II. Philosophical Approach

A. Normative or Prescriptive Ethics

- It is study of ethical theories that prescribe how people ought to act (How should people act?)

B. Meta-ethics or Analytic Ethics

- It is the study of what ethical terms and theories actually refer to (What does "right" even mean?)

Philosophical Approach

- Normative or Prescriptive Ethics
  - Deals with norms or standards and prescriptions
  - Go beyond description
  - Major concern is how human being *should* behave or *ought* to act?
  - Their conclusions are prescriptive
  - It includes the making of moral value judgements

Philosophical Approach

- Meta-ethics or Analytic Ethics

  (*meta* = beyond)

  - It analyses ethical language – what we mean when we use the words ‘good’, ‘bad’ etc.
  - What is the meaning or definition of ethical terms or concepts like ‘right’, ‘wrong’, etc.
  - It analyses the rational foundations of ethical systems

  – what is the logic and reasoning behind certain value judgements?

  - Concerned with reasoning, logical structures, and language rather than with content
  - What is the nature of moral judgements
  - What is the analysis or meaning of related concepts like ‘action’, ‘free-will’, ‘responsibility’, etc.

Important Meta-ethical Theories:

- Ethical naturalism
  - *Ought* can be derived from *fact*
  - All ethical sentences can be translated to non-ethical sentences
  - Ethical sentences are either true or false as they assert genuine propositions
  - They are objectively verified propositions
- Ethical Non-naturalism
  - Ethical terms are very logical and simple
  - They are indefinable and indescribable
- Ethical Non-congnitivism
  - All ethical sentences can be translated to non-ethical sentences
  - Ethical sentences are neither true nor false as they don't assert genuine propositions
  - They are not objectively verified propositions