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Nature of Applied ethics : Applied ethics is the application of ethical theories to solve our practical problems. Peter Singer used “applied ethics” to express practical ethics. Applied ethics is not only the analysis of the normative theory or the analysis of terms and judgments used in normative ethics. It has a factual value. It tries to apply normative principles to our moral problems. Any discussion about applied ethics takes into account two features which are necessary for an issue to be considered an “applied ethical issue”. First, an issue is controversial when there are significant groups of people both for and against the issue. Such dilemmas, as for example, are found in bioethical issues. The issues like euthanasia, abortion, doctor patients’ relationship have lots of controversies which cause dilemma in these issues. Secondly, to be an applied ethical issue it must be a distinctly moral issue. We are confronted by lots of social problems, which are only issues of social policy. But moral issues concern more universally obligatory practices. Of course, there are some issues which are at the same time socially and morally prohibited, such as murder is prohibited socially and morally also. But still, they are often distinct. For example, for many people sexual promiscuity is immoral but there may not be any social policies to regulate sexual conduct. Similarly there are social policies to forbid some acts which are not immoral in a sense. So to be an applied ethical issue it must be more than one of mere social policy, it must be morally relevant as well.

Here, we may mention some characteristics of applied ethics by which we can distinguish it from Meta ethics and normative ethics. These are - (1) it helps people and society to clarify concrete problems of ethical urgency, (2) as a practical ethics its aim is the well-being of people, (3) though it is not completely theoretical, it takes help of normative principles or theories to solve the concrete problem in different aspects, (4) it has a special goal, so it is goal directed. It is directed towards the well-being of people. But to reach its goal one practical philosopher should be conscious about the right ways of well-being and he does not go beyond the social wellbeing. So, practical ethics always takes a social footing.

Applied Ethics and Its Scope in present time

Though applied ethics has been found in a new form during 1960, however its importance was felt before this specific time also. The study of applied ethics gained momentum during recent years as people become conscious of the present events taking place all over the world due to rapid scientific developments.

Today more new and genuine problems have been confronted by the modern people, which were completely unfamiliar to our ancestors. These problems mainly arise due to rapid scientific and technological developments. It may be worthwhile to mention that before people had become adjusted to industrial and technological revolution of nineteenth century they were brought into the electronic and thermonuclear age. No doubt, the development of science and technology has brought enough comfort for human being, but at the same time it has given rise some new problems also. Albert Einstein rightly opined that the unreleased power of atom has changed everything except our ways of thinking. He said that people were drifting towards a catastrophe beyond comparison.

Now a days modern men are trying to fulfill their different needs by acquiring scientific techniques. But at the same time they are facing mental conflict for adverse impacts of science and technology. People have now started to think about the loss of ideal values. A good number of new problems stand in our society as a consequence of rapid scientific and technological developments. Bio-ethical and environmental problems are two notable examples which may be cited here among many other examples. Scientific advancement has presented humanity great progress in treating and preventing various diseases. But at the same time it has given new

questions and uncertainties about the nature of life and death. The basic question that arises in this situation is whether it is morally right or wrong to do one sort of activity rather than another. Issues such as abortion and euthanasia fortunately are not everyday decisions for most of us, but they are issues that arise at sometimes in our lives. There are many other issues of current concern about which any active participant in our society's decisions making process needs to reflect. Environmental issues are also connected with a host of difficult ethical questions. Modern technological developments create a threat not only to human but to non human and plants also. Modern people are today compelled to think about their survival in a polluted environment of the earth. Though bio-medical and environmental issues are two worth mentioning issues of modern age, but the whole value system have changed due to other scientific developments. Industrial system and machines have made man its slave replacing the quality by quantity and beauty by utility.

Science has gifted abandon items to modern people ignoring its detrimental effects. It brings major problems when we accept all these gifts of science without considering, what type of comfort and utility we get from these. One significant characteristic of science is that, it divides our world into many branches. No doubt, it makes easy to study all these branches carefully. But when we left it, without making a unique relation among all, it creates some unsolvable value problems. Now every group of people in society has begun to think independently. Business wants to be free to make decision for its own sake. Professional groups like doctors, teachers, lawyers and others are busy with their own interests. Benefits have been brought with it but it brings danger also. Social peace and individual prosperity may remain with the combination of ethical knowledge, law, loyalty and proper scientific development. Without proper ethical knowledge mere science and technology may lead a society to a dangerous situation.

Now the question arises whether existing ethical theory can solve different moral problems of mankind in such a critical time. We have already mentioned that modern people have faced new problems which were not present in early society. The changing situation compels us to think about the traditional morality. Here we can think about the role of religious ethics also. The relation between ethics and religion is very old. For some thinkers, ethics cannot do any thing without religion and good is nothing but what God approves. But when we depend upon God's

approval, we already assume God as an omnipotent, omniscient being who is necessarily good. And it is a contradiction to suppose a good supernatural being may give evil commands. When we take this line of reasoning we find that we have already formed an idea of goodness which we impose upon the Supreme Being. And it follows that religion is based upon morality. Before religious commitment, we are capable to make moral judgment. Most philosophers including Kant have accepted the autonomy of morality. Modern moral philosopher Peter Singer, in his book "Practical ethics" states that ethics is entirely independent of religion². Ethics is concerned with human voluntary actions. The objective of ethics is to tell us what we ought to do and what not. Ethics is related to man's welfare living in the society. To solve our modern day's problem we should make ethics free from religion. Giving up our personal emotion and faith we should look after our problems from scientific outlook. In this respect relevance of applied ethics is worth mentioning.

In solving different moral dilemmas applied ethics keeps in view on some basic principles. The following principles are most common in applied ethical discussions -

- (1). Personal benefit
- (2). Social benefit
- (3). Principle of benevolence
- (4) Principle of paternalism
- (5). Principle of harm
- (6). Principle of honesty
- (7) Principle of lawfulness
- (8). Principle of autonomy
- (9) Principle of justice
- (10) Rights: acknowledge a person's rights to life, information, privacy, free expression and safety.

Conclusion:

Hence applied ethics is an important concept of society. It is a discipline of philosophy that attempts to apply ethical theory to real life situations. Applied ethics is also distinguished from normative ethics which concerns what people should believe to be right and wrong and metaethics which concerns the nature of moral statements and of course applied ethics is the philosophical examination from moral standpoint of particular issues in private and public life which are matters of moral judgement and the attempt to use philosophical method to identify the morally correct course of action in various fields of everyday life.