

ENGINEERING ETHICS

New Pattern
for
UPSC ESE Exam



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PREFACE

Preface to IIIrd Edition

“Do What is Right, Not What is Easy”

Engineering professionals are required to serve the general public by strictly adhering to the codes of conduct, and giving utmost importance to the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Engineering Ethics is a textbook that explores the moral issues and decisions encountered by practicing engineering professionals, and the study of related questions about the moral ideals, character, policies and relationships of people and corporations involved in technological activities.

The main objective of this third and revised edition of Engineering Ethics is to prepare students for their professional responsibilities as Engineers. To help them recognise and think through ethically significant problem situations that are common in the field of engineering, and to evaluate the existing ethical standards for engineering practice.

A disaster during an engineering project can occur due to many factors such as overconfidence, negligence, poor maintenance, etc. If the necessary codes of Engineering Ethics are followed, most of the disasters can be avoided.

The understanding of human character and values is ethics. Values provide a unique, personal and moral template to assess the intentions and actions of ourselves and others. It also differentiates the right from the wrong.

Starting from the very basic concepts of Ethics and Values, this book condenses and maps all important discussion on Ethical Theories, Professional Ethics, Principles of Ethics, Human Values and Psychology, and Ethical Governance in a manner that it all interlinks as one reads para, pages, and chapters. Thus, one gets a vivid picture of the moral issues and dilemmas faced by engineers. And the book also gives a critical insight into the major global issues concerning Environmental Ethics, Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), Computer Ethics and Internet, etc.

Further, to acclimatise students with engineering ethics, and to build their analytical and reasoning skills in solving problems, this revised and updated book includes more than 285 questions for self-practice and grasping the essence of Engineering Ethics.

Special thanks to **Mr. Ashutosh Saxena** for his contribution in ideating, generating, shaping, and editing of this book.

Any constructive ideas, suggestions, feedbacks for improving the content of future editions will be greatly appreciated.

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Understanding the Basic Concepts of Ethics and Values

INSIDE

- ❖ Values
- ❖ Role of Socialization in the Development of Values
- ❖ Moral Values
- ❖ Ethics and Ethical Values
- ❖ Ethical and Moral Dilemma
- ❖ Ethical and Moral Autonomy
- ❖ Ethics vs Law

OVERVIEW

The given chapter deals in detail with the basic understanding of the concepts of values, morals and ethics. It also talks about various ethical theories in depth. Then, it culminates into the concept of ethical and moral autonomy.

After going through this chapter, the reader would have a crisp understanding of the basic concepts and theories related to values, morals and ethics.

1.1 VALUES

1.1.1 Defining Values

“Values are a set of beliefs which help an individual, organisation or a society to make preferences for certain things or in certain issues or events”.

eg. **Tolerance** is a value which is very unique to Indian society.

or, **Empathy** is a value held by someone who shows concern with others by putting oneself in other's place.

In general, values have a positive connotation but in a cultural/contextual approach towards studying 'values', a society or an organisation may profess negative values too. eg - ISIS. (Islamic state of Iraq and Syria), a terrorist outfit, which values killing innocent people.

Values are a set of beliefs (not conviction) because they are byproduct of cognitive (reason) and affective (emotions, feelings) processes.

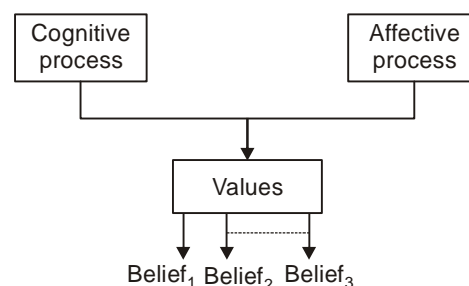


Fig. 1.1

1.1.2 Classification of Values

A strict classification of values encompassing every dimension of values is neither feasible nor recommended, given the kind of subjectivity in defining values. However, values can be classified under various dimensions as follows :

(a) Classification of values on the basis of their nature

- (i) **Positive values** : Values in the nature of prescriptions and having a positive connotation are called positive values eg truthfulness, non-violence, peace, compassion, honesty, integrity etc.
- (ii) **Negative values** : Values in the nature of prohibitions and having a negative connotation are called negative values. *e.g., Cynicism, depression, greed, guilt, pessimism etc.*

(b) Classification of values on the basis of their scope:

- (i) **Universal values** : Values, which are significant and indispensable for the very survival of a society as a whole, have a universal feature. These values are basic values which are evident in every human society irrespective of religion, race, region, caste etc. *e.g., justice, compassion, benevolence, brotherhood etc.*

It must be noted that a number of scholars have questioned the idea and philosophy of universal values. They call promotion of certain values as universal values as an intentional or unintentional attempt to super-impose a dominant culture of a specific society on other societies. eg. Hegemony (domination) of American values through globalization.

- (ii) **Contextual or cultural specific values** : Values which are specific to certain societies or unique to a particular society or organisations. These values depend upon the way a society or an organisation finds its expression beyond survival instincts. These values are affected by the geography, history, anatomy, evolution and philosophy of land and its people. *eg., individualism, familism etc.*

[Note : Values of an individual, organisation or society do not occur in vacuum. Values are the outcome of the complex interplay of the society, its structures and their functions and the members of the society.]

(c) Classification of values on the basis of their expression:

- (i) **Explicit values** : Values which can be observed directly in the value judgements. Explicit values are upheld by conscious awareness.
- (ii) **Implicit values** : Values which are inferred from verbal or non-verbal behaviours. Implicit values are upheld by the subconscious mental construct.

Explicit values can be calibrated for ensuring moral and ethical behaviour. Whereas, it is difficult to calibrate implicit values for ensuring moral and ethical behaviour.

Simply putting, it is difficult to predict behaviours driven by implicit values.

(d) Classification of values on the basis of their persistency in time frame.

To a large extent, values are relatively stable with respect to time. Values do not change abruptly and spontaneously. As values are a by product of social progress and social change, they may change but very slowly like social change.

Also, values reflect an identity of an individual, organisation or society which does not change abruptly.

Hence, values in a time frame can be classified as follows :

- (i) **Relatively stable values** : Values which remain almost constant or stable with respect to time eg- peace, brotherhood, benevolence etc.
- (ii) **Relatively less stable values** : Values which are not of fundamental nature may change. *e.g., values related to food habits.*

(e) Classification of values on the basis of directionality:

- (i) **Intrinsic values** : Intrinsic values are those values which are an end in itself, for its own sake and in its own right.

They are non-derivative and crucial for moral judgement and moral justice *e.g., beauty of something.*

- (ii) **Extrinsic value** : Extrinsic values are those values which are not an end in itself and leads to something other.



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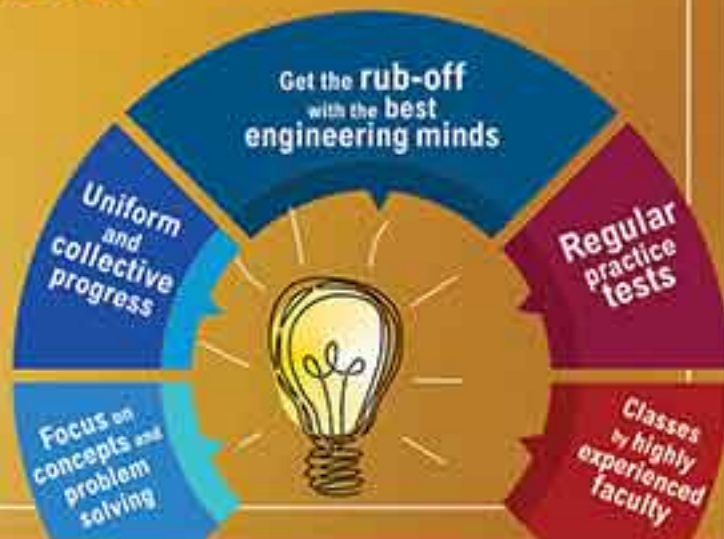
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They are derivative and good/right not for its own sake but for something else.

e.g., helping others in the time of need is not an end in itself rather it is good/right because it leads to other values like compassion brotherhood, well being etc.

1.2 ROLE OF SOCIALIZATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VALUES

Socialization is a continuous process whereby an individual acquires a personal identity and learns. The norms, values, behaviour and social skills.

The process of socialization can be classified as follows:

1. Primary socialization : Primary socialization is the stage that occurs from birth through

adolescence. It is guided by family, primary caregivers, teachers, coaches, religious figures and peer groups.

Family has a very significant role in primary socialization as it is the first institution which shapes a nascent biological entity. Hence, it is the values imparted by the family which play a major role in shaping basic character.

2. Secondary socialization : It occurs throughout life in which one encounter groups and situation out side the purview of primary socialization institutions.

It includes college, university, work place and other institutions becoming a part of life experience.

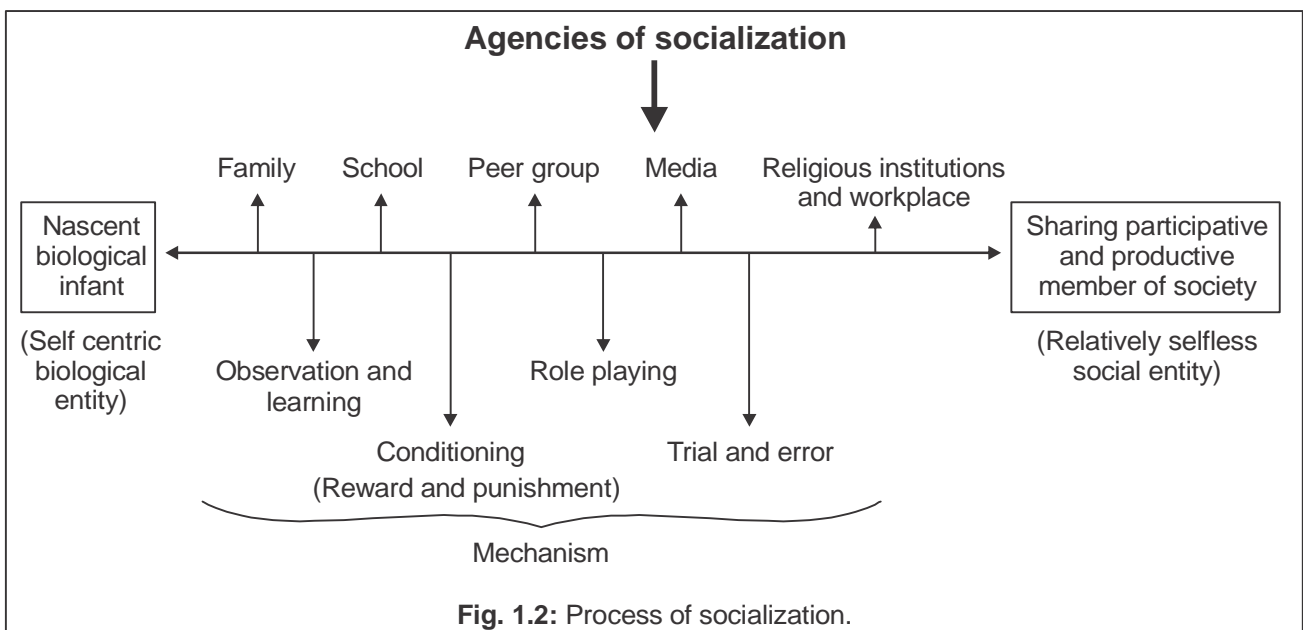


Fig. 1.2: Process of socialization.

1.3 MORAL VALUES

1.3.1 Defining Moral Values

(Keyword - Conscience)

Moral values are those values which are guided by the conscience (inner voice).

Moral values are individualistic in nature. Moral values do not exist in vacuum, rather moral values are those values which have personal sanction (not societal/organisational sanction).

They are a set of beliefs or a mental construct driven by cognitive (reason) and affective (emotions and feelings processes) which help in making preferences about what is good what is bad, what is right and what is wrong?

Moral values help in decision making about an individual, organisation, society, event or issue.

Moral values do not find validation in aesthetic issues. *e.g., a work or piece of art can not be judged as good or bad, right or wrong on moral grounds.*

Questions

1. Consider the following statements regarding definition of 'moral':
 1. Being or acting in accordance with standards and precepts of goodness
 2. Arising from conscience or a sense of right and wrong
 3. A concisely expressed precept or general truth, a maxim
 4. The principles of conduct governing an individual or a profession, standards of behaviourWhich of the above statements are correct?
 - (a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
 - (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
 - (c) 3 and 4 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3 only
2. Which is/are the levels of study of ethics?
 1. At the level of individual
 2. At the level of engineering
 3. At the level of Government
 4. At the level of society
 - (a) only 1, 2 and 3
 - (b) only 2, 3 and 4
 - (c) only 1, 2 and 4
 - (d) All of the above
3. Which of the following does not constitute the foundation of ethics?
 - (a) Honesty
 - (b) Justice
 - (c) Integrity
 - (d) Courtesy
4. What refers to situations in which moral reasons come into conflict, or in which the application of moral values is problematic?
 - (a) Silo mentality
 - (b) Preventive ethics
 - (c) Ethical issues
 - (d) Moral dilemmas
5. Ethics is synonymous to .
 - (a) Morality
 - (b) Money
 - (c) Standards
 - (d) Conduct
6. The general and abstract concepts of right and wrong behavior culled from philosophy, theology, and professional societies
 - (a) Ethics
 - (b) Morals
 - (c) Etiquette
 - (d) Law
7. The ethical dilemma of choosing between two rights refers to
 - (a) Choosing between the lesser of two evils
 - (b) Deciding which of two employee rights is the most important
 - (c) Deciding to offer a bribe or lose out on an important opportunity
 - (d) Choosing between the two types of sexual harassment
8. The cultural, organizational, community, interpersonal, or personal dynamics that should be considered when making ethical and professional issues are referred to as:
 - (a) Personal considerations.
 - (b) Contextual considerations.
 - (c) Environmental considerations.
 - (d) Ethical considerations.
9. Which of the following parameters are evaluated in definition of "Moral Agents" ?
 - (a) whose actions and intentions can be morally evaluated
 - (b) whose personal character can be morally evaluated
 - (c) Both of the above
 - (d) None of the above
10. In 'Normative Enquiry'; norms are to be identified for which of the following reasons?
 - (a) What is the reason behind work conflict?
 - (b) Which is the most desirable standard of behavior?
 - (c) What are the errors which resulted in unintended failures?
 - (d) What is the best principle in work ethics?
11. Ethics is needed for practising engineers because:
 - (a) Every decision engineer makes are not settled by rules.

- (b) Organizations function best when, the values implicit in the rules are widely known by all.
- (c) Engineers who understand the ethical climate of the organization can contribute to social interest better.
- (d) All of these
12. The capacity to recognize situations and circumstances which have implications for the welfare or well being of another is referred to as
- (a) relational dimension.
- (b) ethical sensitivity.
- (c) spirituality.
- (d) multicultural dimension.
13. Which of the following terms refers to the ideals, beliefs, norms, and ethos that arouse an emotional response for or against them in a given community?
- (a) Personal ethics
- (b) Ethical climate
- (c) Organizational ethics
- (d) Community values
14. Which is/are correct?
- (a) Legal rights are the entitlements and permissions given by the law.
- (b) Moral rights are not a matter of law but of ethics and generally apply to everyone equally
- (c) All the moral rights may not be legal rights.
- (d) All of the above
15. Which is true regarding virtue ethics?
- (a) It is ethical if the act is good
- (b) It is ethical if the consequence of the act is good.
- (c) It is ethical if the character of the agent is good
- (d) None of these
16. Legal rights are
- (a) The system of rules established by authority, society, or custom
- (b) The lack of clarity as to whether a particular act violates a law, rule or policy
- (c) The "just claims" given to all humans within a government's jurisdiction
- (d) The act of informing authorities of harmful, dangerous, or illegal activities
17. A moral theory that seeks to create the most good for the most people
- (a) Whistle blowing (b) Utilitarianism
- (c) Morals (d) Rights analysis
18. The accepted standards of right and wrong that are usually applied to **personal behavior**
- (a) Morals (b) Law
- (c) Etiquette (d) Ethics
19. If you believe in making decisions for the good of most people, you can be described as following which school of thought?
- (a) utilitarianism (b) teleology
- (c) deontology (d) egoism
20. Which statement is/are true?
- (a) Ethics is not synonymous to religious morality or moral theology
- (b) Ethics is the principle that guide the human behaviour
- (c) The terms 'ethics' and 'morality' are not synonymous terms
- (d) All of the above
21. A teleological approach to business ethics proposes that the guiding principle should be
- (a) Practice (b) People
- (c) Purpose (d) Power
22. The form of ethics which reflects an individual's internal sense of how he should live, what he should strive for, and serves as the basis for moral decisions or judgments and guiding behavior is referred to as
- (a) ethical virtues (b) ethical values
- (c) personal ethics (d) ethical principles
23. The ethical theory which considers the intention of the person choosing, the means, and the nature of the act itself is
- (a) rights ethics (b) care ethics
- (c) consequentialism (d) duty ethics

ANSWER KEY

1. (d)	12. (b)	23. (d)	34. (c)	45. (a)	56. (d)
2. (d)	13. (d)	24. (d)	35. (d)	46. (a)	57. (d)
3. (d)	14. (d)	25. (d)	36. (c)	47. (b)	58. (c)
4. (d)	15. (c)	26. (b)	37. (d)	48. (a)	59. (c)
5. (a)	16. (c)	27. (a)	38. (b)	49. (b)	60. (d)
6. (a)	17. (b)	28. (c)	39. (c)	50. (b)	
7. (a)	18. (a)	29. (c)	40. (d)	51. (c)	
8. (b)	19. (a)	30. (d)	41. (c)	52. (a)	
9. (c)	20. (d)	31. (b)	42. (b)	53. (a)	
10. (b)	21. (c)	32. (a)	43. (a)	54. (c)	
11. (a)	22. (c)	33. (b)	44. (b)	55. (a)	

EXPLANATIONS

1. (d) Statement 3 is wrong as a general truth or maxim can not always be moral or immoral. eg. the sun rises in the east is a general truth but it is not related to being moral or immoral.
3. (d) Courtesy is an aspect of behaviour and personality not related to ethical or moral aspect.
4. (d) Silo mentality is related to concealing or inhibiting information flow in a department or between department of an organisation due to competition given an incentive based system of remuneration.
5. (a) Though they are not same, both are used interchangeably. Morality is based on principles of what ought to be and ethics evaluates whether we have followed the principles or not.
6. (a) Ethics as a subject is taken from the principles of philosophy, religion and profession.
7. (a) When we are faced by ethical dilemma, i.e., choosing between two good choices, we will go for the one which has least negative.
8. (b) Context of work involves the equation of both organizational and environmental considerations.
9. (c) Moral Agents are those whose actions, character and intentions can be morally evaluated. A competent and reasonably mature human being is the most suitable example of a "Moral Agent". Personal characters is outcome of his value system which is inheritable from family.
10. (b) Normative enquiry is to identify what ought to be i.e. what is good, and what is the most desirable norm or standard.
12. (b) The ability to understand the situation and know the consequences of a particular action is ethical sensitivity. It ensures that the actions that are taken should be done in the best interest of the society and its members.
13. (d) How members of the community behave with each other and what they feel is important mode conduct, is community value. It is a generally held belief amongst the members the members of the community.
15. (c) Virtue ethics tries to promote good/ethical habits & qualities in individuals, so that they become good persons, so what thy will do will also be ethical. it promotes goodness in individuals, who will make good society.
16. (c) These are right available through the law given by the government. In our society it is the political system, i.e., the government which makes the laws to be followed by everyone.

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