CHAPTER - VII

SUMMARY

One of the serious challenges facing mankind in organized social life is ethics; that is, the problem of choice between good and bad, do’s and do not’s etc. All the creations in this natural world follow certain fixed laws of nature. That is why one can exactly predict when the sun will rise tomorrow. But nobody can predict human behaviour in the same way. Nobody can confidently say that two individuals would behave in the same way tomorrow as they do today, because man has been endowed with the freedom to decide, which other creations do not possess. That is why philosophers and scholars have emphasized ethical development of human beings to ensure rational behaviour in society. Ethics, which is a major branch of philosophy, encompasses right conduct and good life. It is significantly broader than the common conception of analyzing right and wrong. A central aspect of ethics is "the good life", the life worth living or life that is simply satisfying, which is held by many philosophers to be more important than traditional moral conduct.

Standards of right and wrong:

Ethics is two things. First, ethics refers to 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. 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, and the right to privacy. Such standards are adequate standards of ethics because they are supported by consistent and well-founded reasons.

Secondly, ethics refers to the study and development of one's ethical standards. As mentioned above, feelings, laws, and social norms can deviate from what is ethical. 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 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. The significance of ethical formulations, today, as in all times, is in their power for shaping attitudes and constraining behaviors.

**Secular ethics:**

Secular ethics is a branch of moral philosophy in which ethics is based solely on human faculties such as logic, reason or moral intuition, and not derived from purported supernatural revelation or guidance (which is the source of religious ethics). Secular ethics comprises any ethical system that does not draw on the supernatural, such as humanism, secularism and freethinking.
The majority of secular moral systems accept either the normativity of social contracts, some form of attribution of intrinsic moral value, intuition-based deontology, or cultural moral relativism. A smaller minority believe scientific reasoning can reveal moral truth. This is known as science of morality. Approaches like utilitarianism, subjective moral relativism, and ethical egoism are less common, but still maintain a significant following among secular ethicists. Little attention is paid to the positions of moral skepticism and moral nihilism; however, many religious and some secular ethicists believe that secular morality cannot exist without a god or gods to provide ontological grounding, or is at least impossible to apprehend apart from authoritative revelation.

Secular ethics frameworks do not necessarily contradict theological value systems. For example, the Golden Rule or a commitment to non-violence, could be supported by those within religious and secular frameworks. Secular ethics systems can also vary within the societal and cultural norms of a specific time period.

**The Golden Rule:**

The Golden Rule or ethic of reciprocity is a maxim, ethical code, or morality that essentially states either of the following:

(Positive form of Golden Rule): One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself.

(Negative form of Golden Rule): One should not treat others in ways that one would not like to be treated.
This concept describes a "reciprocal", or "two-way", relationship between one’s self and others that involves both sides equally, and in a mutual fashion.

This concept can be explained from the perspective of psychology, philosophy, sociology, and religion. Psychologically, it involves a person empathizing with others. Philosophically, it involves a person perceiving their neighbor as also "an I" or "self." Sociologically, this principle is applicable between individuals, between groups, and also between individuals and groups. (For example, a person living by this rule treats all people with consideration, not just members of his or her in-group). Religion is an integral part of the history of this concept.

As a concept, the Golden Rule has a history that long predates the term "Golden Rule", or "Golden law", as it was called from the 1670s. As a concept of "the ethic of reciprocity," it has its roots in a wide range of world cultures, and is a standard way that different cultures use to resolve conflicts. It has a long history, and a great number of prominent religious figures and philosophers have restated its reciprocal, "two-way" nature in various ways (not limited to the above forms).

Secular ethics and religion:

There are those who state that religion is not necessary for moral behavior at all. Those who are unhappy with the negative orientation of traditional religious ethics believe that prohibitions can only set the absolute limits of what a society is willing to tolerate from people at their
worst, not guide them towards achieving their best. In other words, someone who follows all these prohibitions has just barely avoided being a criminal, not acted as a positive influence on the world. They conclude that rational ethics can lead to a fully expressed ethical life, while religious prohibitions are insufficient. That does not mean secular ethics and religion are mutually exclusive. In fact, many principles, such as the Golden Rule, are present in both systems, and some religious people, as well as some Deists, prefer to adopt a rational approach to ethics.

The philosophy of morality is ethics. A moral code is a system of morality (according to a particular philosophy, religion, culture, etc.) and a moral is any one practice or teaching within a moral code. Morality may also be specifically synonymous with "goodness" or "rightness." Immorality is the active opposition to morality (i.e. opposition to that which is good or right), while amorality is variously defined as an unawareness of, indifference toward, or disbelief in any set of moral standards or principles. An example of a moral code is the Golden Rule which states that, "One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself."

Ethics 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." Likewise, certain types of ethical theories, especially deontological ethics (It is
sometimes described as "duty" or "obligation" or "rule" -based ethics, because rules "bind you to your duty"), sometimes distinguish between 'ethics' and 'morals': "Although the morality of people and their ethics amounts to the same thing, there is a usage that restricts morality to systems, based on notions such as duty, obligation, and principles of conduct, reserving ethics for the approach to practical reasoning, based on the notion of a virtue, and generally avoiding the separation of 'moral' considerations from other practical considerations."

**Descriptive and normative:**

In its descriptive sense, "morality" refers to personal or cultural values, codes of conduct or social mores. It does not connote objective claims of right or wrong, but only refers to that which is considered right or wrong. Descriptive ethics is the branch of philosophy which studies morality in this sense. In its normative sense, "morality" refers to whatever (if anything) is actually right or wrong, which may be independent of the values or mores held by any particular peoples or cultures. Normative ethics is the branch of philosophy which studies morality in this sense.

**Religious based ethics:**

Development is closely linked to the idea of progress. Therefore the way in which progress is quantified, whether through economic, social or spiritual values, determines the way in which we conceptualize development. Religious beliefs are similarly ambiguous, although this arises from the sheer diversity of faiths present in the world today.
Consequently the relationship between development and religion is hauntingly complex and so variable that it eludes simple definition.

Religious-based ethics do play a role in development. Religious-based ethics strongly influence culture and partly inform an individual’s world view. Understanding how religious ethics shape organizations and the work they do is the first step to understanding the relationship between religion and development.

Both secular and religious development organizations have the shared humanitarian goal of alleviating and tackling the causes of poverty. Their difference lies in their motivation. Unlike secular organizations religious groups draw on the spiritual values embedded in their faith to provide the logic for development work, and this can act as a powerful motivator. Religious motivation has played an important part in development over the years.

**The relationship between Religion & Ethics:**

Religion has been defined as a system of faith and worship. Ethics/morality is the attempt to arrive at a view of the nature of human values, of how we ought to live and of what constitutes right conduct, by force of reason alone and not by revelation. In order to arrive at a view, it sets goals and assesses actions by the extent to which they further these goals, e.g. if happiness is a goal then the action which produces most happiness to all affected is the right one. Revelation too, through the written and oral law, directs people to an understanding of the nature of human values, of how they ought to live and of what
constitutes right conduct; such teachings and examples are scattered amongst various verses and sources.

It can be seen that while both the secular person who wishes to behave ethically and the religious person who wishes to behave in accordance with the revealed code may do similar good deeds in order to achieve similar good and worthwhile objectives, their motivation is quite different. Indeed, there is some debate as to whether the religious person is behaving ethically in the strict sense of the word. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with ideas such as right, good and duty and these concepts were discussed in ancient Greece by Plato and Aristotle in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4th Century BC. The role of philosophers is to accurately try to define and promote these concepts based upon logic and reason. A religious person on the other hand, follows his code of conduct because he believes that it is proper behaviour and reaction to the varying challenges and circumstances which arise during the course of life.

Immanuel Kant, (April 22, 1724, February 12, 1804, a German philosopher) although himself a religious person, stated, that moral acts depend upon the motives. An act which is moral is done for its own sake; an act which is done in self-interest is non-moral. Since a religious person does his good deed not necessarily for its own sake, but because he has been instructed to do so by God, then, by Kant’s definition, his act is non-moral. Kant’s definition is a challenge to religion for it suggests that one can be both irreligious and moral. Acting
autonomously, doing right for its own sake, suggests that a person has the right to choose what is right.

A challenge by Plato (427-347 BC) to religion is posed by the dilemma:

a) X is right because God has commanded it, or

b) Does God command X because it is right?

If we accept (a) we have the arbitrary morality of "might is right". If we accept (b) it indicates that God too is bound by morality and, therefore, in one sense, morality preceded God. This poses the stronger challenge to religion for it indicates that secular morality predates and is independent of, religion and is a basic necessity of the "good" life.

Plato anticipated and, according to many philosophers, refuted the Divine Command Theory, four centuries before Christianity even began. Plato's refutation goes like this: if "being obligatory" means just "commanded by God," "it becomes unintelligible to ask why God wills one thing rather than another." Things are simply good because God wills them; his willing them makes them good. Nothing is good until God wills it. God's commands become arbitrary.

As many philosophers (beginning with Plato in the Euthyphro) have said, this is nothing but a "might makes right" doctrine. Claiming that X is good simply because God wills it implies that God's commands are not necessarily good in any "objective" way. If God commanded you to slaughter innocent children, would slaughtering innocent children be
good? But ethical behavior is doing the good, not simply doing what somebody else (even God) commands. Therefore ethical behavior must be more than simply obeying God's commands.

Moral behavior consists in knowing and doing what's good - not simply in knowing and doing what God commands. So anyone, even an atheist, who knows and does the good is behaving morally, whether or not that person knows anything about God's commands. Taking this view, it is possible for an atheist to behave morally, as long as the atheist knows and does the good. And philosophers usually assume that theists have no special advantage when it comes to knowing the good. Ethical philosophers tend to view the good as a matter of reason and thus accessible to any rational being; if you think about the good long enough and well enough, you can figure it out, at least the important parts. God's no longer the best thing there is; there's the Good, a standard to which God must also adhere. There are ways to interpret the claim that ethical rules are God's commands.

Most religions have an ethical component, often derived from purported supernatural revelation or guidance. For many people, ethics is not only tied up with religion, but is completely settled by it. 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."

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"the good life", the life worth living or life that is simply satisfying, which is held by many philosophers to be more important than traditional moral conduct. Some assert that religion is necessary to live ethically. There are those who would say that we can only flourish under the umbrella of a strong social order, cemented by common adherence to a particular religious tradition.

**Ethical problems in Globalization:**

There is a growing middle class in countries such as India, comprising more than 100 million people, with an unquenchable thirst for consumer goods. The spread of new capital has provided opportunities for those who have skills to participate in the growth. More jobs have been created in the country, and there is a sharp rise in salaries and personal incomes for millions of people. But the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Asian societies has become a serious problem. There are millions who do not have the technological skills to participate in the dynamism of globalization; they are thus marginalized.

Today, even many remote villages have some access to a computer, phone or cable television, but when it comes to improving their economic status, they do not have the same opportunities. Traditional workers like artisans, craftsmen, shoemakers, fishermen and small-scale farmers have been thrown out of their occupations, thereby creating economic problems for these families. The influences of foreign
media on the people of Asia have been significant. These influences are positive and negative.

Transmitting information across cultures instantly has helped in exposing human rights violations and abuses of ethnic groups. But we must admit the fact that the global media is changing and shaping the worldviews of the traditional societies through transnational programmes; no one has control over the nature of information received. This is seen as a threat to indigenous cultural norms and practices.

Globalization has created many ethical problems that are beginning to surface with greater force. First, there is a new phenomenon of individualism, which is challenging the social cohesion and extended family system. Second, the newly emerging employment patterns and the demands of the corporations upon their employees have been placing new strains on the family. As in the West, the emerging patterns make the employee an “adjusted person.” Asian cultures always have valued sacrificial love for one’s family and adherence to basic traditional values.

There is a destabilization of the family. Traditionally, the family system that served as the nucleus of indigenous social value system and the locus of child-rearing is beginning to break down under the burden of the new ideology of economic growth. This situation has resulted in the need for adjustment to the new socio-economic trends set by market economy and the changing behavioral patterns of the
workers created by the multinational corporations. The family is becoming smaller and dispersed. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which religious institutions and other religious communities are aware of this cultural synthesis and the ethical challenges the communities are facing.

The need for cultural analysis and a communal ethics is urgent. The family always has borne the brunt of social welfare in these societies by looking after the young and the elderly, without institutionalizing them. The need for a proactive strategy to deal with the crisis of the elderly and the children never can be ignored. The ethics that deals with transnational problems must be collaborative and life-affirming, which sees people as more important than profit.

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Ethics in Globalization:

Debates on globalization, especially in policy-making circles, are often shaped by purely national interests, whether social, economic, or political. But such interests are parochial, whereas, if the phenomenon of globalization were to be carefully examined, it would be found to affect far more than the narrow range of concerns and issues to which it is customarily restricted, so that discussions of the subject would properly be broadened to take into account the cultural and spiritual dimensions.

While enormous possibilities are associated with the phenomenon of globalization, these potentialities must not blind us to the grave problems it entails. Only through concerted action by the
world community can there be any hope of tackling and finally eradicating such menaces as international terrorism, the proliferation of deadly weapons, illegal drug and human trafficking, organized crime, the spread of disease, and environmental degradation.

Perhaps foremost, all responsible parties and bodies in today's world are compelled to seek some means of global conflict resolution and arbitration. Whatever the degree to which they divided humankind, the world's major religions, Christianity, Orthodoxy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism also share key values in common. If humans are ever to develop a universal civilization, it will emerge gradually through the exploration and expansion of these commonalities.

Asia not only has the type of stable common ethical foundations and also has a well developed set of moral principles, some of which were an established part of Asian culture. Indeed, these Asian principles can serve as a part of an emerging common global ethic. There are core ethical constants that have long governed Asian societies and indicate common ethical foundations. As early as the third century B.C., Buddhism spread peacefully from India to Sri Lanka and to large parts of Southeast Asia. In the first century C.E., it continued its advance, spreading along the Silk Road to Central Asia and China, and finally made its way to Korea and Japan centuries later.

Ethnically homogeneous Japan is an example of how three different religions—Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism—can coexist
peacefully and, in many cases, intermingle. Even Islam—which mostly spread in the wake of military conquests in the Middle East, India, and North Africa—expanded rather peacefully into Southeast Asia in the footsteps of merchants, scholars, and mystics.

Moreover, there was a historically important and ethically oriented humanism in China as early as the fifth century B.C. The concept of "ren," which corresponds to our "humanum," is a central term in the Chinese tradition. Likewise, Confucius was the first to formulate the Golden Rule of Reciprocity: "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself." Through the spread of Chinese characters, the concept of ren and the Golden Rule spread throughout the vast Chinese-influenced area that reaches from Central Asia to Taiwan and from Korea to Singapore.

In Hinduism: "One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality." This "Golden Rule" can also, of course, be found in the Abrahamic religions. Rabbi Hillel (60 B.C.) said: "What is hurtful to yourself do not do to your fellow man." Jesus worded it positively: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Islam, too, has a similar concept: "None of you believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."

Moreover, such commonalities go beyond the principle of humanity and the Golden Rule of Reciprocity. Four concrete ethical rules were laid down in the Buddhist canon by Patanjali, the founder of
Yoga, in the Chinese tradition and, of course, in the three prophetic religions: "Do not kill," "do not steal," "do not bear false witness," and "do not abuse sexuality."

These trans-cultural ethical rules form structural elements of a common human ethic, whatever we call it, and make almost irrelevant the idea of a deep antagonism between "Asian" and "Western" values. If Asia focuses on its trans-cultural ethical core, an entirely new spirit of unity can be developed that uses soft power instead of military force and does not know enemies, but only partners and competitors. In this way, Asia could catch up with the West in terms of its cultural integration while contributing to the establishment of a genuinely peaceful new world order.

**Applied Ethics:**

Morality is a natural feature of human life. As human beings we cannot avoid making judgments about what is right and wrong, what one should do and what is valuable. We engage in ethics when we start to reflect on our moral judgments such as - why is this right? what is the reason for this act? can it be justified? Hence, ethics is the reflection on morality or - one might say - the theory of morality. We act in different capacities and roles and, hence, moral judgments are made in different social contexts such as health care, politics, economics, science and technology.

For example - look at the following paradigms that Applied Ethics touches upon:
• In health care moral issues are related to life and death and well-being of humans: Should we with any means retain life-saving measures?
• Should we introduce screening for genetic diseases?
• In politics, judgments often concern value conflicts; the decision maker must choose an alternative that might promote one or the other value: equality, liberty, well-fare etc.
• In the current age of science and technology, there are more compelling moral bi-polarization that we witness in application of science and engineering to collect, store and distribute information.

Applied ethics is the art or science to reflect on moral dilemmas and moral problems in different social contexts. One of the most influential authors in the field of applied ethics, James Childress defines applied ethics as follows:

“The terms “applied ethics” and “practical ethics” are used interchangeable to indicate the application of ethics to special arenas of human activity, such as business, politics and medicine, and to particular problems, such as abortions.” Applied ethics intends to resolve or at least discuss the allied "moral dilemmas." Such moral dilemmas are involved in many ordinary societal situations with other people, and in many situations which involve conflicting demands.

For instance, the conflict between the individual's right to smoke and the law prohibiting smoking in a public place is not a moral dilemma. "Moral dilemma arises only if there are moral considerations
for taking each of two opposing courses of action." When we consider a moral question, we need to know and understand the codes unique to the dilemma in question. And in order to know and understand these codes, we need to communicate with people concerned with ethical issues. In that sense, applied ethics is a process, which has produced "Particular Judgments and Actions," "Rules," "Principles," and "Ethical Theories,"

It is therefore important that applied ethics be intercultural and interdisciplinary, in order to deal with problems involving very different political, economical, legal, medical and biological codes. This is a very interesting aspect of "applied ethics."

Applied ethics as a distinct branch of Philosophy (more so as an extension of Moral Philosophy) - first emerged as an intellectually active area of interest in the 1960’s in response to major public concerns about the ethics of health care - the treatment of research subjects, abortion, euthanasia, the patient-physician relation, etc.

Other situations which highlight the friction between religion and ethics are those concerned with suicide and euthanasia. A leading exponent against suicide was Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 7 March 1274), who said that it offends against:-

1) The duty to oneself because it is contrary to natural law. Everything loves itself.

2) Duty to the community because it injures the community.
3) Duty to God. Life is God’s gift to man and suicide offends against God.

Aquinas believed in God and Duty.

The philosopher David Hume, (26 April 1711 - 25 August 1776), a Scottish philosopher, in opposing Aquinas’s view, replies to the three points as follows:-

1) If one may not offend against natural law then man should do nothing to protect himself from the adverse effects of any natural causes.

2) A person's duty to the community is reciprocal therefore; man should unilaterally be able to withdraw from the community. But even if man does have a duty to the community, then there must be a limit to such a duty.

3) If one believes in God and one should believe that everything is in the hands of God. If, therefore, someone commits suicide, it is God’s will.

Hume believed in autonomy and maximising consequences.

In a famous expression philosopher Stephan Toulmin said that “Medicine saved the life of ethics”. In 1960s, most moral philosophers worked with conceptual and epistemological questions. Not many were engaged in normative ethics and even bothered less to analyse moral problems in the real world. As a consequence academic ethics are considered by many as one of those peculiar philosophical subjects. In the beginning of 1970s, the situation changed. Medicine saved the life of
ethics; there were new moral problems in medicine and there were no ready-to-hand answers. Ethicists are wanted!

Applied ethics also has its roots in theological ethics. As one classical example one can mention Augustine’s (5th Century) and Aquinas’s (13th Century) theory of a just war. The conditions they set up for a war to be just are still highly relevant in the present discussion on just war. Furthermore, ethicists in both the Catholic and the Protestant tradition were among the first to engage in medical ethics. The theories and emancipations related to the “Just War” from the distant past (as mentioned above) - are still applicable to the American war on the Iraq. That shows the concept and applications of the applied ethics are applicable from the remote past to the most recent times.

In a rudimentary sense Applied Ethics involves the mechanical application of normative theories to particular cases. However from a practical perspective- “applied ethics” applies to every one in a self-reflective way, and that means reflecting on the status of our normative ethical theories on individuals, groups and society in general.

Applied ethics is often distinguished from normative ethics. The project of normative ethics is usually regarded as the attempt to discover the moral theory which considered the best sense of our moral intuitions. For example, some normative ethicists believe that our obligation is to do whatever promotes the most pleasure (and the least pain) for the most people involved in any decision. For other normative ethicists, rights are fundamental.
Applied ethics is rather like applied mathematics. In applied mathematics (or engineering, and so on) we take our mathematical theories - which we know independently of any particular case to be true - and we apply them to concrete problems, such as how much weight a particular bridge will bear given such and such forces acting on such and such a type of material. If we think of applied ethics in the same way, we may well imagine that the task of applied ethics is to take our normative theories which we know independently of any particular case to be true and apply them to concrete moral problems, such as abortion, euthanasia, and so on.

Ethics however teaches that an act is ethical only if it is autonomous but it does not teach that every autonomous act is ethical. Suicide may well be an autonomous act, but it is not necessarily an ethical act. Does it for example, measure up to “the principle of equal consideration of interest”? Is it an act which “produces most happiness to all affected”? The suicide may well have family, business acquaintances and community who may all be adversely affected to a greater extent than the benefit to the suicide and, therefore, by the standard set by ethical secularists, unless the act of suicide measures up to the standards which they set for themselves, the act is not ethical.

In the matter of euthanasia, the difference between ethics and religion, while not absolutely clear cut, is much clearer. For ethics, so long as the “victim” is subject to voluntary euthanasia or non-voluntary euthanasia, the presumption is that the “victim” wants or would have
wanted his death; this death has utilitarian value and it is an autonomous decision. Ethics would not approve of involuntary suicide. Religion, on the other hand, forbids killing absolutely. It does not distinguish between killing healthy people or sick people, and, in any event, would find it difficult to draw the line between them. It also forbids both active and passive euthanasia.

**The rise of Applied Ethics - A Sociological response phenomenon:**

The rise of applied ethics had many reasons. There are three fundamental subjects to be mentioned. Firstly; during the 20th century the Western societies in particular and world at large had experienced a period of secularization. Less and less people attended the religious institutions and less and less people asked for moral advice from these institutions. There was a change from “moral heteronomy” when moral answers were provided by an authority, to “moral autonomy” when the individual him/herself had to formulate an answer. And this happened at a time when in medicine, as well as in other social arenas, new and difficult moral problems arouse: pre-natal diagnostics, euthanasia, human cloning etc.

A second, complementary explanation of the rise of applied ethics relates to new moral problems facing the society not least due to new technical possibilities. For example: in neo-natal intensive care the possibilities to save very early born babies increased continuously. But in many cases the babies were saved to a short and handicapped life. Another example from another arena: through the development of
computer technology it became possible to store more and more information, including information about individuals. However, given that it in a complicated society is necessary to store personal information, this development may threaten privacy.

The problems mentioned are examples of what in ICT-ethics (Information and Communication Ethics) has been called “policy vacuums”: we do not know how to handle the new situations and we lack moral and legal concepts and principles to deal with them. Thus, the rise of applied ethics can be explained by a need to fill the policy vacuums.

Thirdly - Developments in social science and humanities often mirror social change. At the end of 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, there were some ethical challenges established in society. There were heated discussions over topics such as the Vietnam War, social injustices, poverty in the third world, inequality between men and women and the maltreatment of animals. Many philosophers were engaged in the discussions.

From this perspective, the rise of applied ethics can be seen as a philosophical response to a new social situation. In the 1970’s and 1980’s, new topics were added to the list such as environmental ethics, business ethics, professional ethics, and the ethics in Public life & public policy.

Late 1990s and in the current decade there is a tremendous need identified for further inquiry and research in the field of Information
ethics as a broad subject and computer ethics as a specialization exploring the ethical implications as they are applicable on collecting, storing and distribution of “information” that is related to human interest and scientific development.

**Contemporary Globalization:**

Whereas roots of globalization are far reaching, it is primarily a modern age phenomenon. Modern business operation and the world economy are characterized by domination of multinational corporations, strong presence of the government in economy and the long-term tendency towards globalization in manufacturing, trading and consumption in the world. Containing both risks and opportunities, globalization is a problem of manifold nature. For some it means regression and falling into “neocolonialism”, the others glorify it.

The turn in the applied ethics implied that many moral philosophers changed their focus from traditional philosophical explorations of value system into those ethical aspects that are important to general well being of the society. As we understand moral philosophers were traditionally engaged in analyzing moral semantics and other issues in meta-ethics. Now, more and more philosophers worked with moral problems in society. However, the turn to applied ethics was not a turn away from issues in meta-ethics. The paradigm shift in the role of applied ethics points to more broader social responsibilities of a moral philosopher in the 21st century. The need of the hour is to interpret and analyze various socio-ethical challenges and
provide an acceptable solution that protects the ethical foundations of the belief systems and the institutions at the same time. Information Ethics deals with value system and moral dilemmas of individuals, businesses, institutions and governments - when it comes to collecting, storing and distributing of the “information”. In the current society the value of “information” is immense and inappropriate and unauthorized usage of information leads to compromising individual privacy, institutions trust and national interests.

**Ethical Issues of the Information Age:**

Today in globalization more people are employed collecting, handling and distributing information than in any other occupation. Millions of computers inhabit the earth and many millions of miles of optical fiber, wire and air waves link people, their computers and the vast array of information handling devices together. Our society is truly an information society, our time an information age. The question before us now is whether the kind of society being created is the one we want.

There are many unique challenges we face in this age of information. They stem from the nature of information itself. Information is the means through which the minds expand and increases its capacity to achieve its goals, often as the result of an input from another mind. Thus, information forms the intellectual capital from which human beings craft their lives and secure dignity. However, the building of intellectual capital is vulnerable in many ways. For example, people's intellectual capital is impaired whenever they lose their personal
information without being compensated for it, when they are precluded access to information which is of value to them, when they have revealed information they hold intimate, or when they find out that the information upon which their living depends is in error. The social contract among people in the information age must deal with these threats to human dignity.