4.1. Introduction:

Considering the aspect of the principle of humanity as an objective end and based upon the belief that rational nature exists as an end in itself, this formula serves the ground to the will for its being determined in order to provide objective laws applied to all rational beings so that by virtue of those laws only, a rational being could appraise his conduct and thereby regulate the freedom of his action for his being moral. And consequently, a rational being, through his autonomous will, could be able to construct fruitfully the idea of the kingdom of ends, i.e. the telos of Kant's moral theory.

In this formula, Kant is in search of the supreme moral principle, i.e., ‘the categorical imperative’ in the form of a moral law in order to provide possible practical laws through our law giving nature of will based upon the principle of humanity as its content and thus paves the way for our endless endeavour towards the idea of constructing the said kingdom of ends which is a logical consequence of the categorical imperative as such.

However, according to Kant, there is something, the existence of which itself has an absolute worth that could be the ground of determinate laws and so, in it, and in it alone, the ground of a possible categorical imperative or of a practical laws would lie. For in it, the ends served to the will are objective ends based upon our motives that are intrinsically valuable and so they are applied to all rational beings which necessitate a rational being to adopt such maxims which he himself could will to serve as universal laws.
In view of the above, it can be said that this formula has a greater and broader significance on the following grounds:

Firstly: It is objective and universal in nature. The supreme moral principle appears in the form of the categorical imperative containing the principle of humanity as a content within it and serves itself to the will as the supreme limiting condition of all our subjective principles of actions from which all our possible categorical imperatives or of possible practical laws would be derived.

Secondly: Being universal in nature it applies to all rational beings and thus excludes all maxims based upon our whims, self interests or inclinations and thereby accommodates the inviolability feature like the law of nature.

Thirdly: It also represents an idea of every rational being as self-legislator and so it explicates the dignity of the rational nature as an end-in-itself, as a mark of reverence for the moral law and ultimately directs the rational beings to conceive an idea of constructing a kingdom of ends that is, an idea of a moral realm.

4.2. The Nature and Function of the Principle of Humanity as an Objective End based upon the Rational Nature exists as an End-in-Itself:

Regarding the formula of the end-in-itself, which contains in the principle of humanity as its content, Kant said, “This principle of humanity and in general of every rational nature, as an end in itself, (which is the supreme limiting condition of the freedom of action of every human being) is not borrowed from experience; first because of its universality, since it applies to all rational beings as such and no experience is sufficient to determine anything about them; second
because in it the humanity is represented not as an end of human beings, (subjectively), that is, not as an object that we of ourselves actually make our end, but as an objective end that, whatever ends we may have, ought as law to constitute the supreme limiting condition of all subjective ends, so that the principle must arise from pure reason. That is to say, the ground of all practical lawgiving lies (in accordance with the first principle) objectively in the rule and the form of universality which makes it fit to be a law (possibly a law of nature); subjectively, however, it lies in the end but the subject of all ends is every rational being as an end in itself (in accordance with the second principle); . . .”¹ which explicates the principle of autonomy, i.e., “. . . the third practical Principle of the will, as supreme condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, the idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law”. ¹α

Thus according to Kant, the principle of humanity lies objectively in the rule as the ground of all practical laws since it applies to all rational beings and also being universal, it is suitable for law like a law of nature. And on the other hand, subjectively, it lies in the end as the subject of all ends, which must regard every rational being as an end-in-itself.

Therefore, the end provided by this principle is an objective end wherein every rational being must be treated as an end in itself instead of its being treated merely as means. For, this principle provides the ground to every rational will for making its maxims of actions or subjective principles of actions in such a way that every rational being must think of their maxims in the same volition (i.e. on the same basis or objective ground) valid for all rational beings and consequently, it serves the supreme rational ground of practical laws from which all laws of the will
would be derived. For, according to Kant, “The ground of this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*”.  

Prof. Allen W. Wood has made a derivation of the principle under the following ways:

“The ground of [moral principle] is: *Rational nature exists as an end in itself*:

[1] This is how the human being necessarily represents his own existence; to this extent, therefore, it is a *subjective* principle of human actions,

[2] But every other rational being also represents its existence consequent to precisely the same rational ground, which is valid for me;

[3] Therefore, it is at the same time the rational ground of an *objective* principle, from which, as a supreme practical ground, all laws of the will must be able to be derived.

[4] The practical imperative will therefore be the following: *Act so that you use humanity in your own person, as well as in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means* (C 4:429”). This is how the derivation has been done from the principle of rational nature to the formula of the end in itself”.

For “. . . the end must here be thought not as an end to be effected but as an *independently existing* end, an hence thought only negatively, that is, as that which must never merely be acted a against and which must therefore in every volition be estimated never merely as a means but always at the same time as an end”. This objective end is the determining ground of every good will which is absolutely good. Thus, “Now, this end can be nothing other than the subject of all possible ends itself;
because this subject is also the subject of a possible absolutely good will; for, such a will cannot without contradiction be subordinated to any other object”.\(^5\)

In view of the above, it can be said that this objective principle of will refers to every human being in general, which includes the agent himself as well as others, and thus, it guides the rational being to adopt those maxims which are in agreement with the universal law valid for all rational beings.

Therefore, Kant said, "... the principle so act with reference to every rational being (yourself and others) that in your maxim it holds at the same time as an end in itself, is thus at bottom the same as the basic principle, act on a maxim that at the same time contains in itself its own universal validity for every rational being”.\(^6\)

In it, the subject is the rational being itself, which serves as the basic principle of all our maxims and thereby provides the supreme limiting condition in the use of all means, i.e. that the human being would never be treated as means only but always at the same time as an end also. “For, to say that in the use of means to any end I am to limit my maxim to the condition of its universal validity as a law for every subject is tantamount to saying that the subject of ends, that is, the rational being itself, must be made the basis of all maxims of actions, never merely as a means but as the supreme limiting condition in the use of all means, that is, always at the same time as an end.”\(^7\)

The above implies that a rational being would be able to reconcile his maxims with this objective principle of humanity itself as a greatest or highest limiting condition in the use of all means in order to provide the objective laws, by virtue of which a rational being could be able to appraise his conduct absolutely or necessarily.
Now, from the above it follows that the principle of humanity, based upon rationality as an end-in-itself, serves as a ground to the will for its providing objective laws. In this way, the second formula relates to the third principle of our will, which considers every rational will as will giving universal law. Hence “Act on a maxim that at the same time contains in itself its own universal validity for every rational being (C4:437-438),”\(^8\)

That is to say, in accordance with the principle mentioned above, all of our subjective principles of will towards the actions which are not validated by this principle must be removed. This is because the will is not merely considered as subject to the law, but subject to it in such a way that it must be viewed as also giving the law to itself. Hence, Kant said, “In accordance with this principle all maxims are repudiated that are inconsistent with the will’s own giving of universal law. Hence the will is not merely subject to the law but subject to it in each a way that it must be viewed as also giving the law to itself and just because of this as first subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as author)”\(^9\). This is how the objective principle makes our autonomous will a self-legislator wherein every rational being is considered a supreme author of his own law and thus, no other being is capable to impose its own law to any one else except the lawmaker to itself alone. In this way, the autonomy of our will as principle finds its place in the third main formulation of the moral law.

4.3. **Humanity & Autonomy:**

“FA: Act so that (your) will could regard itself as giving universal law through all its maxims” (AK:4;434)\(^{10}\) It implies that the universalisability is an essential mark of morality. It shows that every maxim must contain this feature through our rational will and also due to
this, every rational being must consider itself as an author. For this reason only, our practical reason, in such cases, is to be independent of any other alien influences based upon incentives. As Kant said, “Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien in influences; consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must be regarded of itself as free, that is, the will of such a being cannot be a will of his own except under the idea of freedom, and such a will must in a practical respect thus be attributed to every rational being”;\textsuperscript{11} since this will based upon motives is determined by the objective principle of the law itself. So, it is absolutely good, which makes a rational being an author; he is not only the subject of the law but as an author too. This is the reason how the nature of self-legislation is explicated. And this is how the role of our will along its feature as self-legislature comes into play and gives us an enormous hope and moral strength in the process of making maxims and acting on them as regards our moral journey.

According to Prof. A. W. Wood, Kant has actually drawn the idea of self-legislation by combining the idea of universal law itself with that of the intrinsic value of a rational being as expressed in this second formula. For, Kant said that objective principle of the humanity serves itself, “. . . as supreme limiting condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, the idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law”.\textsuperscript{12} For, as per him, the “categorical imperative can be binding on a rational will only if there is an objective end or end-in-itself”\textsuperscript{13} Prof. A. W. Wood also added, “Kant’s contention is that humanity, or “the human being and every rational being in general,” is the end in itself that provides the categorical imperative with its objective ground (G4:428)”\textsuperscript{14}
Rationality, according to Kant, is a value in itself since it can set its own end; so, it is intrinsically valuable. Thus in setting his own end, a rational being must consider other’s end too, as the end set by a rational being, as an objective end and based upon a motive which is a matter of good will. That is why Kant said, "Rational nature is distinguished from the rest of nature by this, that it sets itself an end. This end would be the matter of every good will". For, this will is absolutely good and hence free from any limiting condition which is to attain this end or that end. It means that the end set by the rational being is an independently existing end; it is based upon the idea that no human being can ever be used as a mere means but always at the same time as an end in every volition of a rational being. For, “The categorical imperative sets forth the rules of a good will”. So the will is intrinsically good and must stand under the categorical imperative.

That is the only reason why, “. . . abstraction must be made altogether from every end to be effected (this would make every will only relatively good). . .” So, the principle of will as will-giving law being independent of inclinations is alone categorical. For “. . . the principle of every human will as a will giving universal law through its maxims, would be very well suited to be the categorical imperative . . .”. Now, the objective end which is the ground of possible practical laws and that is provided by the reason to the will for its being determined is, thus, stated by Kant: “. . . the human being and in general every rational being exists as an end in itself, not merely as a means to be used by this or that will at its own discretion; instead he must in all his actions, whether directed to himself or also to other rational beings, always be regarded at the same time as an end” which is intrinsically valuable. For, the worth of any object except this is conditional, since they are the “Beings the
existence of which rests not on our will but on nature, if they are beings without reason, still have only a relative worth, as means, and are therefore called \textit{things}, whereas rational beings are called \textit{persons} because their nature already marks them out as an end in itself, that is, as something that may not be used merely as means, and hence so far limits all choice (and is an object of respect)”. \textsuperscript{20} So, Kant has distinguished between the objects which have some exchange, material value and the objects which are intrinsically valuable having some absolute worth, and thus they correspond to the distinction between 'things' and 'persons' respectively. In this way, he emphasized in the second formula the fact that rational beings are 'persons' since they are intrinsically valuable and so they would never be used merely as means but always at the same time must be treated as ends in themselves.

To provide the possible practical laws is the main concern of this formula; so it is in search of something, which is intrinsically valuable and its absolute and categorical nature are suitable or fit for the law only. And these could be found only in the principle of humanity as an objective end. For without this principle, according to Kant, “. . . nothing of \textit{absolute worth} would be found anywhere; but if all worth were conditional and therefore, contingent, then we supreme practical principle for reason could be found anywhere”. \textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{4.4. Humanity and Duty:}

It can be said that the principle of humanity in every rational being as an end in itself being universal is an a priori concept, which serves itself as distinguishing parameter between all subjective ends based upon our inclinations and the objective ends based upon our motives and thus directs our freedom of actions towards our duties. For, the principle of humanity presents itself as the supreme limiting condition in accordance
with which all our subjective ends would be designed. It implies that all our relative ends, validated by the objective principle of the universal law, fall within the ambit of this universal principle of humanity as an end-in-itself and hence they would fall within the purview of the moral law. This principle, being the content of the moral law, gets its utmost privilege to control our will in adopting the maxims in such a way that it guides a rational being to adopt such maxims which are commensurate to the universal law only. In this way it upholds morality and consequently dignifies the principle of humanity. Now, it seems that this principle of humanity as an objective end makes a boundary or an upper limit beyond which a rational being cannot adopt his maxims of actions. Inevitably, all his relative ends must be confined within the boundary prescribed by the principle itself and would take their shapes in such a way beyond which a rational being cannot extend his principle of choice, and thereby it restricts a rational being to take the courses of his action. In this way, the principle of humanity makes a line of demarcation between the maxims based upon our motives and those based on our self-interest.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the principle of humanity, based upon our rational nature exists as an end-in-itself, constitutes an objective principle to every human will and thus can serve the content of universal law which is practical, and from which all possible objective laws of will would be derived. It implies that this objective principle of will, which includes the agent himself and also others, would guide to adopt the maxims whose universal validity lie in every rational will.

Therefore, from the above principle, the practical imperative will be the following:
“So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means”. 22

The principle implies that we cannot use a human being merely as a means but also as an end-in-itself. Here the words ‘merely as means’ imply treating the other human beings with some ulterior motives, and hence consider them as ‘objects’ only not as 'persons' in course of setting our own ends. In this respect, we do not consider other's value in setting the ends; rather we desire to fulfill them at the cost of other’s value only. As a result, we use human being merely as means. But, humanity is a value in itself, since it is intrinsically valuable. That is why, in deciding our ends, we must consider other’s value also. Otherwise, we would degrade the value of the humanity contained in us rather than to uphold it and thereby we would deny its intrinsic value. Due to this, according to Kant, in helping others in need, we should not expect that others too, will help me in turn. Else, we would treat them merely as means instead of treating them as ends in themselves and thus it would be considered as prudential rather than moral.

In view of the above it can even be said, that, “In cases where a man is liable to dishonour, he is duty bound to give up his life, rather than dishonour the humanity in his own person”23, as Kant asserted.

Kant, in fact, has given so much importance to the value of the humanity that he said, “Humanity in our person, is an object of the highest respect and never be violated in us”, 24 as Kant asserted.

That is the reason why the principle of such duties described by him is on par with our self esteem, towards maintaining the dignity of humanity as such. So he said, "The principium of the self-regarding
duties does not consist in self-flavour, but in self-esteem; our actions that is, must be keeping with the worth of humanity”.

In the light of all these, Kant has discussed all types of duties (self-regarding as well as other-regarding duties) which we can analyse in the following manner:

(a) Regarding perfect duty (self-regarding) Kant has referred the case of suicide and remarked that it is not consistent with the idea of humanity as an end in itself. So, to commit suicide is morally wrong: “. . . disposining of oneself as mere means to some discretionary end is debasing humanity in one's person” (AK 6:423): . . ”. Since Kant maintained that the principle of life is to preserve one's life at the cost of the humanity as an end in itself, Kant said, “. . . suicide is not permitted under any condition. Man has, in his own person, a thing inviolable; it is something holy, that has been entrusted to us”.

According to Kant, we cannot dispose humanity by “. . . degrading to the humanity in one’s own person” (MS 6: 422-423) “. The case of committing suicide is the supreme violation of the duties ‘to oneself’. Kant also added that it is 'abominable' in nature, so it is strictly forbidden. For him, “Suicide is the supreme violation of the duties of oneself, now what, then, does the abominable nature of this act consist in? With all such duties, one must not look for the ground in any prohibition on the part of God, for suicide is not abominable because God has forbidden it; on the contrary, God has forbidden it because it is abominable. If it were otherwise, suicide would be abominable only by God’s prohibition, and then I would not know why he should have forbidden it, if it were not abominable in itself”.

In explaining the cases of other regarding perfect duties which also belong to strict duties, Kant argued, “. . . he who has it in mind to make a
false promise to others sees at once that he wants to make use of another human being *merely as means*, without the other at the same time containing in himself the end. For, he whom I want to use for my purposes by such a promise cannot possibly agree to my way of behaving towards him, and so himself contain the end of this action. This conflict with the principle of other human beings is seen more distinctly if examples of assaults on the freedom and property of others are brought forward”.30 Regarding false promise Kant remarked, “Whoever may have told me a lie, I do him no wrong if I lie to him in return but I violate the right of mankind; for I have acted contrary to the condition, and the means, under which a society of men can come about, and thus contrary to the right of humanity”.31 In other words, “... the question arises: Am I then a liar? If the other has cheated me, and I cheat him in return, I have certainly done this fellow no wrong; since he has cheated me, he cannot complain about it, yet I am a liar nonetheless, since I have acted contrary to the right of humanity”.32 Thus ‘lying’, according to him, “... violates the dignity of humanity in one's own person”. (AK 6:429)33

Moreover Kant said, “The lie is more an infringement of duty to oneself than to others, and even if a liar does nobody harm by it, he is still an object of contempt, a low fellow who violates the duties to himself”.34

In Kant's moral philosophy, the dignity of humanity is given supreme importance and it has so incomparable worth that it cannot be replaced by anything else. So, in our moral pursuit, we should remember that the value of humanity must be upheld for it is a moral pursuit because it upholds the rights of humanity.

In regard to the self regarding duties, Kant pointed out, “Just as the precepts of the law restrict our freedom in our dealings with other people, so the self regarding duties restrict our freedom with respect to
ourselves”. He also added, “self regarding duties, however, are independent of all advantage, and pertain only to the worth of being human. They rest on the fact that in regard to our person we have no untrammeled freedom, that humanity in our own person must be highly esteemed, since without this, man is an object of contempt, which is an absolute fault, since he is worthless not only in the eyes of others, but also in himself. The self-regarding duties are the supreme condition and præcipium of all morality, for the word of the person constitutes moral worth; . . . . Under this worth of humanity alone can we perform our other duties. It is the basis for all the rest. He who has no inner worth has thrown away his person and can no longer perform any other duty”.

In view of this, it can be said that the humanity itself is intrinsically valuable and so it should be upheld in our moral pursuits. For this, the objective end based upon our motives restricts our freedom in regard to adopt the maxims based upon our whims, i.e. self-interests and inclinations. It signifies that all of our maxims must be designed according to the norms prescribed by this objective principle of the end-in-itself and they would take their pattern accordingly. So they should be restrained to this upper limit only. This is the reason why our freedom is restricted because all such duties as described so far are to be performed just like the precepts or commands are obeyed.

Due to this only, “The self-regarding duties are negative, and restrict our freedom in regard to the inclinations that are directed to our well being”. So, we find that our freedom is quite consistent with the principles of the said duties. And whether it is positive or negative, it is quite consistent with our duties. It is restricted only to dignify humanity or when others' values are taken into consideration. Thus, it approves that we should keep ourselves always in relation with others. So, we should
maintain the dignity of others while adopting our ends. This has been emphasized by Kant when he said, “He who has spent all his life in acts of kindness, and has but infringed the right of a single-man, can't wipe this out by all his acts of kindness”.  

Regarding imperfect duties Kant maintained the same view that exercising our talent is to be considered as duty. For, if a man possesses some potential qualities, it is his duty to cultivate them; since they are connected with the worth of humanity contained in us, although this sort of duty doesn’t belong to the strict duties, as referred to by Kant. That is why, Prof. Allen W. Wood stated, "The capacity to set oneself an end - any end - whatsoever is what characterizes humanity (as distinguished from animality). Hence there is also bound up with the end of humanity in our own person the rational will, and so the duty, to make ourselves worthy of humanity by culture in general, by procuring or promoting the capacity to realize all sorts of possible ends. (Ms 6:392)" Thus in order to develop our abilities which are inherently present in us, we should make use of those capacities to the tune with upholding the rights of humanity only. Thus it is stated, “. . . as a rational being he necessarily wills that all the capacities in him be developed, since they serve him and are given to him for all sorts of possible purposes.” (G4:423) So, to exercise talents which a rational being possesses is a duty according to Kant. Thus a man, as per him, should cultivate his capability what “. . . he owes himself (as a rational being) because it is bound up with the end of the humanity in our own person”. (AK 6:444, 392)

Thus it appears that humanity along with its rational nature exists as an end-in-itself, with its incomparable worth makes ourselves valuable. That is why the word ‘esteem’ implies the special worth of a character which is possible due to our good will only. Because good will confers
this dignity upon us, since this good will is intrinsically good which is
good in itself. Hence, the term is worth applicable to a human being for
his ‘good will’ only. Thus we should uphold the value of humanity,
which amounts to upholding the rights of humanity. So, we should not
use human beings as mere means else, we would degrade the value of
humanity contained in us in order to satisfy some desired ends based
upon our whims. If it is so, it would be considered as the transgression of
duties. And the transgression of duties implies taking a rational being
merely as means which is morally wrong. For transgression of duties is
nothing but an encroachment on the rights of humanity and thereby,
degrading the humanity of a rational being contained in his own person.
Therefore, Kant said, “. . . that he who transgresses the rights of human
beings intends to make use of the person of others merely as means,
without taking into consideration that, as rational beings, they are always
to be valued at the same time have as ends, that is, only as beings who
must also be able to contain in themselves the end of the very same
action”.42

From the above it follows that without the principle of humanity,
morality is unthinkable. All types of duties have shown that doing duty is
upholding the value of humanity for its own sake only. Without the
principle of humanity, no duty is possible according to Kant and hence
there is no morality, since “All such duties are founded on a certain love
of honour consisting in the fact that a man values himself, and in his own
eyes is not unworthy that his actions should be in keeping with
humanity”.43

So, the principle of humanity serves as a content of the moral law
or the essential characteristic of the categorical imperative and thereby it
provides not only necessary but also sufficient condition of the moral law
itself. For, all types of moral maxims, having this content, are not only universal and necessary, but they are also synthetic a priori. That is why, this objective principle is able to provide its justification condition too.

However, in view of the above, it can be said that whatsoever ends may be set by rational beings themselves, they must be bound up with this objective end. So, it is our duty to reconcile all sorts of ends (subjective) with this objective end and thus it upholds its value as such. That is the reason why we should exercise all sorts of possibilities implicit in us and it is just to make ourselves to be worthy of humanity by culture. That is to say, our duty is to make ourselves capable of promoting this value by cultivating all sorts of possible talents which are within us.

Since it is a question of practical philosophy, our will is prepared to determine itself by this principle to provide objective laws in order to appraise our conduct. And hence our will is not concerned with “. . . what happens but rather laws for what ought to happens. . . .”

So, Kant said, "Here, however, it is a question of objective practical laws and hence of the relation of a will to itself insofar as it determines only by reason; for then everything that has reference to the empirical falls away itself, since if reason entirely by itself determines conduct (and the possibility of this is just what we want now to investigate), it must necessarily do so a priori.”

So, depending on rational will Kant's moral theory is concerned with investigating the clue about how to provide the apodictic and objective laws applied to all rational beings. For, “The will is thought as a capacity to determine itself to acting in conformity with the representation of certain laws. And such a capacity can be found only in rational beings. Now, what serves the will as the objective ground of its
self determination is an end, and, if it is given by reason alone, must hold equally for all rational beings”. 46 For, all objects of our inclinations have only a conditional worth since they (objects) are based upon our needs and desires and thus they are far from having an absolute worth. So, the 'things' having only the conditional or relative worth or values are incapable of furnishing apriori objective laws. Kant observed, “But suppose there were something the existence of which in itself has an absolute worth, something which as an end-in-itself could be a ground of determinate laws; then in it, and in it alone, would lie the ground of a possible categorical imperative, that is, of a practical law” 47 which would be capable to dictate us about, ‘how we ought to act.’

Due to the above, it can be said, “The agreement of the will its own general validity or its accordancy in so far as it views itself as a universal law, is morality; and by this all men judge the morality of their actions”. 48 For the good will is good under all circumstances and thus must in no way conflict with itself if it is to turn itself into a universal law being validated by the moral law itself.

4.5. Supreme Moral Principle or The Categorical Imperative:

Therefore, what is conveyed to us is that moral law which appears before us in the form of the categorical imperative is an apriori concept. For, according to Kant, “. . . the categorical imperative alone has the tenor of a practical law; all the others can indeed be called principles of the will but not laws, since what it is necessary to do merely for achieving a discretionary purpose can be regarded as in itself contingent and we can always be released from the precept if we give up the purpose; on the contrary, the unconditional commands leaves the will no discretion with respect to the opposite, so that it alone brings with it that necessity which we require of a law”. 49 Further, Kant said, “Thus practical laws refer only
to the will, without regard to what is attained by its causality, and one may abstract from this letter (as belonging to the world of sense) so as to have them pure”.

For here, rational will being a subject and also an author of this practical law, it has a capacity to act in accordance with the representation of the universal moral law. So, the inclination can have no basis in our rational will since it is a law which is originated through the said will.

In view of the above, Kant stated, “Now, if I say that my will is subject to a practical law, I cannot will my inclination (e.g., in the present case my avarice) as the determining ground of my will appropriate to a universal practical law, for this so far from being qualified for a giving universal law that in the form of a universal law it must instead destroy itself”.

From the above it follows that our good will itself is instrumental to validate the purity of the absolute nature of the formal moral law, i.e. the categorical imperative. So, the maxim made by our will must be in conformity with the universal moral law only. Hence Kant stated, “Now, all that remains of a law if one separates from it everything material, that is, every object of the will (as its determining ground), is the mere form of giving universal law. Therefore, either rational being cannot think of his subjectively practical principles, that is, his maxims as being at the same time universal laws or he must assume that their mere form, by which they are fit for giving of universal law, of itself and alone make them practical laws”. This is where Kant has recognized the role of our autonomous will as a self-legislator which acknowledges our dignity as rational human beings.

Kant believes “. . . that the categorical general principle of morality set forth by himself:
So act, that by the maxims of your action you may present yourself as a universal legislator,

conveys the essential character of a moral principle, and incorporates within itself all other that have hitherto been devised. For (a) the principle of purposiveness and perfection is subordinated to the morality of the action; (b) morality can rest only on the law of reason; (c) the action can therefore relate, not to itself, but only to the form; (d) this must be the form of lawfulness; for it must confirm to the universality of the faculty of reason, and only under this form can it be morally good; (e) the action is merely to be tested according to this principle, without the agent expressly willing thereby that the determining ground of his action should also be law; (f) the conformity discovered serves only as a motive for him to act”.53 And the principle of humanity as an end in itself gives an absolute worth to it because of our law-giving nature of will makes maxims which are validated by means of this objective principle of the universal law. In this way this principle provides the ground of a possible categorical imperatives that distinguishes a rational being from other entities around him.

4.6. Law giving nature of Rational will:

A rational being can adopt his maxims, through his law giving nature of will, which are in compliance with the universal law. This is to say that this faculty helps a rational will to get in touch with the universal law to frame his maxims. For, our will being autonomous has a capacity to act in concurrence with the representation of the universal law. So, every rational agent should be able to adopt their maxims in the similar way as law-giving beings and thus makes themselves worthy as ‘persons’.
In view of the above, thus Kant stated, “. . . that every rational being, as an end in itself, must be able to regard himself as also giving universal laws with respect to any law whatsoever to which he may be subject; for, it is just this fitness of his maxims for giving universal law that marks him out as an end in itself; it also follows that this dignity (prerogative) he has over all merely natural beings brings with it that he must always take his maxims from the point of view of himself, and likewise every other rational being, as law giving beings (who for this reason are called persons)”.

It implies that the rational being is the subject of the universal law made by him which makes him dignified over others as lawgiving being and due to this reason, he is subjected to this law. That is why the maxim so chosen must be in accordance with the universal law in so far as our autonomy is concerned. so, “. . . to choose only in such a way that the maxims of your choice are also included as universal in the same volition” which dictates the duty. For, it is a law which proceeds from our will and it serves as the principle of duty because the principle of duty is a principle that reason prescribes to human being absolutely and hence objectively (how he ought to act), since his rational will, as will giving universal law through its maxims is based on no interest, can alone be unconditional and thereby categorical.

So, Kant proclaimed, “. . . if there is a categorical imperative (i.e., a law for every will of a rational being) it can command that everything be done from the maxim of one’s will as a will that could at the same time have as its object itself as giving universal law; for only then is the practical principle, and the imperative that the will obeys, unconditional, since it can have no interest as its basis” and so, it is necessary for all rational beings that they would appraise their conduct by virtue of that
universal laws which they themselves could will through their maxims. In other words, all rational beings would be capable of appraising their conduct in accordance with such maxims as they themselves could will to serve as universal law, since the ‘will’ in question here is based upon the motives only. So, everything what has reference to empirical object has been kept away from itself.

According to Kant, “. . . if there is an end that is also a duty, the only condition that maxims of actions, as means to ends, must contain is that of qualifying for a possible giving of universal law”.\footnote{57} and, this is where we can discover a relation between the concept of duty and that of moral law. For the categorical imperative itself contains the principle of duty, since “. . . this duty as duty in general lies, prior to all experience in the idea of a reason determining the will by means of a priori grounds”.\footnote{58}

Therefore, “The imperative of morality abstracts from all inclinations. The motivating ground is not drawn from sense, or from happiness, but given solely from pure reason. The motivating grounds and the law itself must be \textit{a priori}”.\footnote{59}

Hence, the principle of autonomy is the sole principle of morals and it can be explicated simply by the analysis of the concept of morality. This is how the role of ethics is brought to the fore.

Thus, Kant said, “Hence in ethics the \textit{concept of duty} will lead to ends and will have to establish \textit{maxims} with respect to ends we \textit{ought} to set ourselves, grounding them in accordance with moral principles”.\footnote{60}

So, this principle is nothing but the categorical imperative itself, which dictates our duty, and it is possible through our autonomy only. As Kant said, “For, by this analysis we find that its principle must be a
categorical imperative while this commands neither more nor less than just this autonomy”. 61

Thus according to Kant, the autonomy implies that “... if moral actions are to be grounded in the form of lawfulness, the moral laws must have their basic determination in a law giving power which (so Kant says) constitutes legislation. Moral legislation is the law-giving of human reason, as which it is the law-giver in regard to all laws, and is so through itself. This is the autonomy of reason, whereby, that is, it determines the laws of free choice through its own law-giving, independently of any influence, and the principle of the autonomy of reason is thus the individual legislation of choice by reason.”62 On the other hand, “The opposite would be heteronomy, i.e., legislation that is founded in like fashion on grounds other than the freedom of reason.”63

In view of the above, it can further be said that, “All autonomy of reason must therefore be independent, (a) of all empirical principles, such as the principle of personal happiness, which may be called the physiological principle; (b) of the aesthetic principle, or that of moral feeling; and (c) of any alien will (the theological principle)”.64

Hence, the principle of autonomy is in tune with the principle of morality. For the maxims so chosen, validated by the universal law, would be considered to provide the possible universal practical laws.

All moral maxims which are incompliance with ‘the categorical imperative’ based upon the principle of the humanity as an end in itself, are called ‘possible practical laws’ that are also to be considered as synthetic apriori, according to Kant. As in regards to ‘the categorical imperative’, he said, “I connect the deed with the will, without a presupposed condition from any inclination, a priori and hence necessarily (though only, objectively, i.e., under the idea of a reason
having complete control over all subjective motives). This is, therefore, a practical proposition that does not derive the volition of an action analytically from another volition already presupposed (for we have no such perfect will), but connects it immediately with the concept of the will of a rational being as something that is not contained in it”.  

Hence, the moral imperative commands absolutely, without looking at the end. Our free acting has an inner goodness, that gives human being an immediate inner absolute worth of morality, although “Ethics, however, sets forth the necessity of actions from inner obligation, arising from the right of another, in so far as one is not compelled thereto”.  

4.7. Discussion and Analysis:  

It is, therefore, clear that the above principle of humanity, in the second formula given by Kant, as an objective end, i.e., as a content of the moral law or the categorical imperative, plays the most crucial role for giving possible practical laws as well as providing the justifying condition of the moral law itself. As Kant emphatically expressed, “There is nothing in the world so holy, therefore, as the rights of another. . .” which enables us to identify the duty and also directs us to do duty from the sense of duty for our being moral. Further Kant said, “Humanity, in our person, is an object of the highest respect and never to be violated in us. In the cases where a man is liable to dishonour, he is duty bound to give up his life, rather than dishonour the humanity in his own person”. It implies that humanity is the highest object to be worshiped. And therefore, our duty is to ensure the rights of another based upon this objective principle of humanity.
So we see that, for Kant, there is an intrinsic relationship between morality and humanity since the latter is intrinsically valuable. And it is our duty to uphold its value, meaning thereby it is to uphold morality.

Now, this relationship can be expressed in the following ways:

a) Wherever there is morality, there is upholding the principle of humanity or the rights of the humanity.

b) Wherever there is no question of upholding the value of the principle of humanity, there is no question of morality, and therefore there exists an associative relationship between them.

The above, then, entails that the principle of humanity as an end-in-itself serves not only necessary but also the sufficient condition of morality, — or so it seems to me.

Further, the said principle as an objective ground of universal categorical moral law is able to identify our duty. So, our duty is to obey its dictate necessarily and thus, from this point only, a rational being can be able to construct the idea of constructing a very fruitful kingdom of ends dependent upon it in the world of our experience which is the telos of Kant’s moral theory.

The distinctive feature of Kant’s moral philosophy is that it has an immense contribution in its recognition of human being not only as a ‘subject’ of the moral law, but an ‘author’ of that law as well. So, the recognition of the lawgiving nature of the will is a special contribution of Kant’s moral philosophy compared to its predecessors.

Traditionally, it was believed that human being was bound to the law of which he was not an author. But contrary to this, “. . . it never occurred to them that he is subject only to laws given by himself but still universal and he is bound only to act in conformity with his own will,
which, however, in accordance with the nature’s end is will giving universal law”.\footnote{69} Now, this law-giving nature of will ultimately inspires a rational being to construct an idea of a moral realm which is called ‘kingdom of ends’ wherein the dignity of rational being happens to be highly recognized.

Secondly, Kant as a moral philosopher, for the first time, has made a distinction between two sources of good will, i.e., the sources of a priori world, and the empirical world and connected the source of good will with the a priori reason. His prescriptive good will is unconditionally and absolutely good and it is determined by the principles of pure practical reason, the sources of which lie in the a priori principle of reason. So, ‘good will’ is based upon pure motives, whereas the will based upon desires and inclinations is guided by the conditional imperative is relatively good and its source is experience.

Accordingly, Kant has distinguished between an action in conformity with duty and an action done from duty. For, an action which may conform to duty might have been done with some ulterior motive lying behind it. Kant’s example of the shop-keeper may elucidate the point. In the said example, it had been shown that the shopkeeper did not overcharge, even if from an inexperienced customer, so that a child could buy a thing as others did and consequently, people were served ‘honestly’. But Kant observed that this fact was not sufficient for someone to believe whether the motive of the said shopkeeper was really good. So, it was not enough for someone to believe that the merchant acted in this way from duty or the basic principles of honesty; his advantage required it; it could not be assumed here that he had, an immediate inclination toward his customers, so as from love, as it were, to give no one preference over another in the matter of price. It appears
that the shopkeeper’s action could not be viewed to have been performed from the motive of duty at the same time it could not be ensured that there was no influence of inclination or self interest in his dealings.

So, Kant remarked that the action has been done ‘in conformity with duty’ but not from duty. And, Kant claimed that the action done from duty alone is morally worthy. But this kind of distinction his predecessors had overlooked.

Further, throughout his ethics, Kant has laid emphasis on promoting this motive of duty which is rooted in the a priori reason and in fact, it is the key concept in his moral philosophy which he is said to have introduced for the first time and by virtue of establishing it, he has been able to construct an idea of moral Kingdom in the world of experience.

Furthermore, on the basis of the said unconditional good motive only, which lies in the basic principles of duty and consequently, he has distinguished between benevolent and the beneficent people considering the principle of the humanity as an end in itself. By virtue of this, he has shifted his theory from the idea of the so called ‘egalitarianism’ and established the motive of duty through the beneficent people out of the respect for the moral law, i.e., the categorical imperative.

According to Kant, good will is independently good, so it is categorical in nature. Thus, shopkeeper’s action might have been good but it was only relatively good which has its conditional worth. What is noteworthy as to Kant’s moral philosophy is the establishment of a link between our will and the moral law itself, and this motive of duty serves as a necessary condition for our being moral. In Kant’s view, the action of a philanthropist possesses genuine moral worth. Thus Kant said, “By all means! It is just then the worth of character comes out, which is moral
and incomparably highest namely that he is beneficent not from inclination but from duty”.71

Another distinguishing feature of Kant’s moral philosophy is that his ‘Enlightenment Theory’ recognizes that every common moral human reason possesses moral principle as the norm for the appraisal of “. . . what is good and what is evil, what is in conformity with duty or contrary to duty if, without in the least teaching it anything new, we only, as did Socrates, make it attentive to its own principle; and that there is, accordingly, no need of science and philosophy to know what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and even wise and virtuous. We might even have assumed in advance that cognizance of what it is incumbent upon everyone to do, and so also to know, would be the affair of every human being, even the most common”. 72 This theory implies that one can make use of one’s own reason or understanding without the guidance of others except his self given moral law. So, based upon the idea of common moral cognition, his moral theory proceeds by virtue of autonomy of will, and be able to reach its final destination, that is, towards constructing the kingdom of ends.

Moreover, Kant had shifted his theory from the idea of so-called egalitarianism, which was prevailed in the society. Conventionally, it was believed that “People tend to judge themselves to be better than others on various grounds, such as birth, wealth, honor, power, or — in Kant’s case — learning”.73 Later on, he admitted the influence of Rousseau upon him, when he admitted that “. . . Rousseau set me right about this. This binding prejudice disappeared. I learned to honor humanity, and I would find myself more useless than the common laborer if I did not believe that this attitude of mine can give worth to all others in establishing the rights of
humanity. (AK 20:44)”74 So, we should respect these rights by upholding the principle of humanity ignoring our self-interest and inclinations.

Thus, it is clear that Kant’s egalitarianism at least approved “…that people can differ in worth on moral grounds – that the morally better or more virtuous person would have more worth than the bad or vicious, the person of good will more value than the person of evil will. Kant does allow the morally good person has greater “inner” worth – that is, worth as measured by comparison with the person’s own self given moral law or idea of virtue”.75

And thus, Kant acknowledged that equality of men founded on or based upon human dignity, which properly belongs to every rational human being.

But according to Kant, people can morally differ among themselves (in so far as upholding the value of dignifying humanity from the motive of duty or from its basic principles of duty) by way of beneficent acts from the basic principle of the duties, which are viewed as moral. So he reacted, “Many people take pleasure in doing good actions, but consequently do not want to stand under obligations toward others. If one only comes to them submissively, they will do everything; they do not want to subject themselves to the rights of people, but to view them simply as objects of their magnanimity. It is not all the same under what title I get something. What properly belongs to me must not be accorded me as something I beg for. (AK 19:145)”76 Therefore, what we really owe cannot be begged from others as an act of kindness. What we owe is derived from the rights of the humanity. That is the reason as to why, “All acts and duties, moreover, arising from the right, of others are the greatest of our duties to others”.77
From the above it follows that the principle of humanity as a content of the moral law as expressed in the second formula of Kant’s moral theory, upholds the rights of the humanity and gives us an important lesson that without considering this aspect as an end-in-itself, no morality is possible.

Moreover, Kant warned by saying, "If somebody, for example can preserve life no longer save by surrendering their person to the will of another, they are bound rather to sacrifice their life, than to dishonor the dignity of humanity in their person, which is what they do by giving themselves up as a thing to the will of someone else”.

For, Kant said,” . . . But moral life is at end if it no longer accords with the dignity of humanity. This moral life is determined through its evil and hardships. Amid all torments, I can still live morally, and must endure them all, even death itself, before ever I perform a disreputable act”.

It entails that by all means we should uphold the dignity of the humanity, and it is morality.

Therefore, it appears that this formula is able to provide the necessary and the sufficient conditions of morality. And thus, this formula has its own unique contribution and significance in regard to upholding morality as a virtue — or so it seems to me.

4.8. Observations:

Before I conclude this chapter I would like to record my observations. This observation relates to the self-consistency of the rational will. The following questions are raised:
How can the various moral maxims be derived from the formal principle of the moral law, i.e. ‘the categorical imperative’ as expressed in the first formula?

How can the objective laws which are having their content be justified by the test condition of self-contradiction being a formal principle of justification? In that case, the test condition, i.e. the principle of self-contradiction as a justifying principle, is questionable.

Since the principle of self-contradiction cannot identify duty for it is unable to justify the ‘transgression of duty’ which means the violation of the rights of humanity. And it, in turn, implies immorality. For Kant said, “…it is obvious that he who transgresses the rights of human beings intends to make use of the person of others merely as means, without taking into consideration that, as rational beings, they are always to be valued at the same time as ends, that is, only as beings who must also be able to contain in themselves the end of the very same action”. But the principle of self-contradiction of will is found to have failed in justifying the above.

In view of the above, can we be sure that the objective laws are being derived in compliance with the formal law, i.e., ‘the categorical imperative’?
Notes & References


1a. Ibid, p. 79.

2. Ibid, p. 79.


5. Ibid, p. 87.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.


10. Ibid, p. xxiv.


14. Ibid.


19. Ibid, p. 79.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid, p. 80.


32. Ibid.


35. Ibid, p. 127.

36. Ibid, 125.


38. Ibid, p. 192.


45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.


52. Ibid, p. 160.


55. Ibid, p. 89.

56. Ibid, p. 82.

57. Ibid, p. 520.


61. Ibid, p. 80.


63. Ibid, p. 266.

64. Ibid, p. 267.


67. Ibid.

68. Ibid, p. 150.


70. Ibid, p. xxii.

72. Ibid, p. 54.

73. Ibid, p. 58.

74. Ibid, p. xvii.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid, pp. xvii, xviii.

77. Ibid, pp. xviii, xix

79. Ibid, p. 150.

80. Ibid.