

# APPLICATION OF KANTIAN CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE IN RESOLVING CONCURRENT MORAL DECAY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

*This article examines the application of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative in improving concurrent social moral decency: injustice towards us to injustice towards others. Morality is the basis of any society, which is conformed under the consensus of people living in the society to ensure a good life for the individual and the community. However, this foundation is frequently affected by the activities of people living in the community. Although humans are made up of rationality and animality, animality often triumphs over reason, leading to our exposure to immoral behaviours, which are vulnerable both for the individual and society. Moral degradation is thus the result of prioritizing animality over humanity. This article analyzes the effectiveness of the Kantian categorical imperative in resolving our daily moral crises and preventing moral decay in society.*

**Keywords:** *Goodwill, Deontological theory, Duty, Mean, End, Kingdom of End, Categorical imperative.*

## Introduction

Moral decay is one of the problems that the world is now dealing with. It is like a slow poison in the human body that eventually destroys society's core foundation. Although the rate, or more precisely the kinds of degradation, have altered over time, it is not as it was in the past. Moral degradation refers to the decline in moral standards in a particular community. Every community establishes moral standards to guarantee the quality of life for its members; therefore, when these standards are disregarded, chaos results in people's everyday lives. In this connection, we can differentiate between morality and ethics. Ethics is a normative standard, while morality entirely depends upon the role of the individual, which means ethics is the theoretical issue.

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In contrast, morality is the application of norms that rely upon the individual living in the society. Whenever individuals disregard the standard, moral degradation occurs. Our Divorce-related concerns have been more prevalent recently, which has caused the institution of marriage to fall apart. The reason behind this very institution's failure is domestic violence, lack of mutual respect, and, very notably, extramarital affairs. Not only have individuals become so intolerable toward other people's viewpoints, which causes riots, even war sometimes, but also toward life itself, which encourages suicide among the younger generation. Technology that has been produced for the benefit of humanity has also put them in danger. People frequently operate with an ulterior motivation or self-interest, which obstructs regular existence and causes issues for their world and other entities, including the environment. This behaviour encourages several unethical business practices and carelessness while doing duties. I want to resolve this issue, as this issue is more crucial to address. To resolve these issues, I prefer to use the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher known for his contribution to ethics and as the father of modern ethics. As a philosopher, he has many contributions to different knowledge sectors, including epistemology, metaphysics, and aesthetics. He has significantly contributed to creating a reconciliation of reason and experience in epistemology. His notable works include *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. In resolving the concurrent issues and providing an argument, I use the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, where Kant discusses his concept of categorical imperative. In this book, Kant shows how categorical imperative can play an essential role in shaping the moral side of human beings and can make the human realm more secure and livable. In resolving the concurrent moral issues, I find Kant's philosophy relevant. Kantian ethics is a deontological theory focusing on human beings' duty or intention. We live in a society where working from the urge to duty towards duty is essential, rather than the inclination to get anything in return. People should work from the concept that if I were in their shoes, would I expect the same behaviour from others, or would I do the same with others? This kind of thought has been discussed in the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, which is crucial for improving concurrent moral issues. For this reason, I will use the Kantian ethics of categorical imperative in this article. I will analyze how his concept is effective in resolving concurrent moral issues.

## Understanding Categorical Imperative

Immanuel Kant, a significant figure in eighteenth-century philosophy, presents his traditional deontological theory, the categorical imperative, in his book *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. In his book, Immanuel Kant (1785/1962) emphasizes goodwill, stating that:

“It is impossible to conceive anything in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except goodwill. (p.10). Kant considers goodwill to be the only qualification that is unconditionally good. This unconditional goodwill is the basis of deontological theory. Kantian ethics is a deontological theory known as the science of moral duty, coming from the Greek word deont, combining the form of deon, which is a binding duty, and ‘ology’, which means the branch of knowledge.” (Harper, 2015) There are two theories in normative ethics: deontology and teleology.

The deontological theory focuses on the action or the intention of an action, precisely on the rightness or wrongness of an action. According to deontological theory, if an action is right, even if its outcome is not good, it has moral worth. For example, Always speak the truth even if it does not bring a positive outcome. Even if the results are not good, the action has been done from goodwill; in that case, actions have moral worth. As opposed to deontological theory, teleological theory focuses on the result of an action; it does not consider the rightness or wrongness of an action. Kant establishes the concept of duty to establish goodwill. It must be noted that Kant believes that by being a holder of reason, we have the authority to decide the moral principle for ourselves without being controlled by any external force. Our rationale will differ from the rest of the animals in our spectrum. Kant chooses reason over duty to establish goodwill as guidance of reason might lead to some inclination. The Kantian concept of duty is the duty for duty’s sake, which means duty should only be done for the sake of duty. That means an action has moral worth only when it is done from the core concept of duty. For example, if a person is doing noble work to gain mental satisfaction, that person’s action does not have moral worth as that person is doing duty under the inclination.

Kant (1785/1962) outlines three maxims in defining duty (pp.15-19). He distinguishes between actions taken out of obligation and those born out of inclination in the first proposition. His view is that taking an inclined course of action is not obligatory. He uses a dealer as an example

to illustrate his point. He asserts that it is tough to determine when a dealer does not overcharge a novice customer or charge equally from everyone; his behaviour is not done out of obligation; he might not have a direct propensity, but he has an ulterior selfish motivation to gain something in the future that means a dealer is charging everyone an equal amount of money because of maintaining the reputation of his business. Kant further explains this by asserting that if an act of kindness is motivated by any disposition, even the desire for mental fulfilment, it lacks moral value. The Second proposition focuses on the points of the maxim. As Kant (1785/1962) states,

“The action done from duty derives its moral worth, not from the purpose which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realization of the object of the action but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place, without regard to any object of desire.” ( pp.18-19)

That means Kant states that an action’s moral worth has been determined by the volition from which his action is circulated. The third proposition is that the other two are circulated. As Kant ( 1785/1962) states, “ duty is the action done from the necessity of acting from respect for the law. ” (P.19) . That means a person will abide by the duty, not for the purpose or inclination but from the respect for the law, without expecting anything in return. Duty has different sorts, according to Kant. He divided duties into two categories: those owed to others and those owed to oneself. He then divides duties into two categories: perfect and imperfect duties. A duty is considered perfect when it is separate from the rule of law. For example, a perfect duty to oneself is the prohibition of suicide while others are not making deceitful promises to others. Violating a perfect duty violates the rule of law, making compliance with the duty obligatory. A duty is considered imperfect when it is permissible to violate it without consequence. For example, the imperfect duty to oneself is the cultivation of one’s talent, while the imperfect duty to others is the prescription of benevolence. The categorical imperative should serve as the inspiration for performing one’s duties. Categorical imperatives are imperatives without any conditions or limitations. The foundation of this requirement is the maxim, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” known as the golden rule in Christian Religion.( *Holy Bible, New living Translation*, 1996/2015,Luke 6:31). In defining imperative,Kant(1785/1962 ) states, “The conception of an objective principle in so far as it is obligatory for

a will is called a command, and the formula of the command is called Imperative” ( p. 35)

That means imperative is an ought statement containing the word shall or should; for example, one should not steal, or one should not tell a lie. The imperative can be classified under two types, hypothetical and categorical; when an imperative commands some action without the requirement of anything other than the action in that case, that imperative is the categorical imperative, i.e., one should not steal, not because he would be get punished, but simply because his action requires him to stay away from this action. When an imperative asks for some effort to get something in return, in that case, that imperative is hypothetical; for example, One should study hard to get good marks in the examination, this imperative is hypothetical. Kant has divided categorical imperative into three: the first formulation is about universality, the second is concerned with how a person should be treated, and the last involves human beings’ autonomous authority to formulate the moral principle for their realm.

### **First Formulation**

“Act as if the maxims of thy action were to become by thy will  
a universal law of nature.” ( Kant, 1785/1962, p.46 )

The first formulation mainly concentrates on the universality of law. This formulation applies to all rational beings irrespective of class, sex, nationality, and religion. This exact formula is trying to establish that if you want to get proper treatment from others, you must treat others precisely how you want to be treated. For example, if you want that one to keep your promise, you should not break others. In other words, this law is a give-and-take arrangement, which means if someone wants some moral principle established for them, they should be careful that it is also maintained in other cases.

### **Second Formulation**

“So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or the person of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only”  
(Kant, 1785/1962, p.56)

This formulation is about human dignity. By introducing the terms means and end, Kant wants to uphold the dignity of each person irrespective of his class, religion, sex, and nationality. In other words, A person should not be treated as a means, i.e., a person should not be treated as a medium or way to get something. For example, We should not respect someone as he is holding some position or because we can get help from him. Not only that, but we also should not consider ourselves as mean, which means the Kantian principle denotes the concept of respect for others and also for respect for ourselves. Respect should be given based on humanity only. Here, Kant is talking about providing the intrinsic value of human beings both in the cases of others and in the case of oneself. Thus, Kant maintains that a person should be treated as an end; here, Kant attributes a unique value to being human.

### **Third Formulation**

“...every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a law-making member in the universal kingdom of ends...So act as if thy maxim to serve likewise as the universal law” ( Kant, 1785/1962, p.68)

The first two formulations derive from this final formulation. According to this formulation, since we are free individuals, we can determine the moral standards that apply to our world. Without being governed by any outside force, we can establish moral standards. The formula for autonomy refers to this idea. This idea states that legislation should be created with an impartial viewpoint without considering any particular individual's interests. According to this principle, we have to interact with other persons in such a way as to acknowledge and honour their autonomy, and we have to preserve our own. We, human beings, are subject to law, as we will have to follow the law from that sense; in the kingdom of end, everyone is the legislator, establishing law for humankind and ensuring equal justice for everyone. Arrington compares this with the concept of democracy, declaring it as the foundation of democracy. As Arrington(1998) says,

“The idea of a kingdom of ends can also be seen as the philosophical backbone of the ideal of democracy. A democratic government is precisely one in which the citizens are lawmakers and free subjects. Democracy alone, its advocates contend, provides the political conditions under which each of its citizens has dignity and not merely a price.” ( pp. 280-281)

## **Application of Categorical Imperative**

### **In Improving Our Modern day-Relationship**

According to Gautam Buddha, the main reason for our suffering in this transitory world is

expectation. ( Lopez, 2024). To preserve modern relationships, we now place high expectations on our partners and frequently treat other people as a means to meet our needs. When others' expectations do not match our own, conflict arises. Finally, our relationships suffer. There is also a lack of respect for one another. Every relationship has some intolerance and superiority complexes. It should be emphasized that relationships often suffer when a crisis occurs. The pandemic was difficult for us, and relationship equations underwent significant upheaval. Divorce lawsuits were filed often at that time. We also had a pandemic known as the "shadow pandemic," when domestic violence rates unexpectedly rise, the household strain on women increases, many lose their jobs, and others have to work from home, causing family strife. Not only that but instances of this nature call into question how gender roles are apportioned within families. Expectations from one partner's perspective might occasionally result in conflict. The Kantian second formulation of categorical imperative can be used to maintain relationships. In relationships, we often treat people as a means to get something. Learning to respect others even when our expectations are unmet, even on the darkest days of our lives, will strengthen our relationships. In this situation, the person's inherent worth will be acknowledged. One can say that marriage is a social contract that meets each other's needs and is the fundamental foundation of a marriage or any other type of relationship. One can say that If one person's requirements are not met, that person will still be in a relationship. which is an invalid question since a relationship cannot be compared to a business proposition because the foundation of any partnership is mutual trust and loyalty. Distrust and having extramarital affairs are other factors that might lead to conflict or divorce. This type of issue, such as mistrust and disloyalty laws, cannot be the universal law from the beginning since doing so would bring about social turmoil and undermine marriage, the fundamental pillar of society. As a result, formulations of the Kantian categorical imperative can be used to preserve relationships and cope with moral crises.

### **In dealing with suicide**

Even in modern times, talking about our mental health is taboo. Suicide rates are rising daily. According to the World Health Organization(2018), suicide occurs every 40 seconds. Somehow, in looking after our bodily well-being, we neglect to care for our mental well-being. Whenever a person commits suicide, there are economic, social, and psychological reasons behind this. However, one reason is common: a way to end their despair. By committing suicide, a person treats herself as a means, i.e., a way to end his despair and life. In describing the duty toward us, Kant(1785/1962) states, "But a man is not a thing, that is to say, something which can be used merely as means, but must in all his actions be considered an end in himself" ( p.56)

That means being autonomous and rational; he cannot consider himself like a thing; he should respect others and the self in himself. Here, the second formulation of the categorical imperative can be applied.

It must be noted that Kant mentioned that when a person is not using his talent to the fullest, he sits idly, prefers to enjoy life, avoids pain, and does not do justice to himself. As Kant (1785/1962) says,

"For as a rational being, he necessarily wills that his faculties be developed, since they serve him and have been given him, for all sorts of possible purposes. " (p.48)

Kant named this kind of duty imperfect; he does not emphasize abiding by this duty and says that developing one's talent is optional. By combining these two, we can say that a person has some duty towards humanity itself; he just cannot ignore it by sitting idly enjoying his own life or committing suicide. Being a rational being, everyone has some potential to contribute. We can also apply the first formulation here; we will never want suicide to be the universal law of nature because if everyone started to commit suicide by avoiding the duty bestowed upon them by being a human, who will work for humanity itself and this same rule contradicts with the universal law of nature. Kant ( 1785/1962) states:

".....a system of nature of which it should be a law to destroy life using the very feeling whose special nature it is to impel to the improvement of life would contradict itself, and therefore could not exist as a system of nature. "( P. 47)

We human beings cannot ignore our responsibility as holders of reason. It has to be added that we do have the authority to decide moral principles on our own but do not have the authority to end or create life. This is not about human freedom or will. It is about how a person should lead his life; being a rational animal, he should not lead his life on principles that might threaten the human community.

### **In dealing with technological issues**

Philosophy is the creation of age and time. This exact phrase is pertinent to the current issue. Technology has improved our lives but has also given birth to new problems. People often engage in certain activities that seem better in the media than in real life to get the media's attention. Even yet, it is also true that positive things happen on social media. Immanuel Kant has mentioned that Philanthropists' work does not have moral worth if it is done for any purpose, such as gaining fame, or even if done for mental satisfaction itself. Kant (1785/1962) states:

“...in such a case an action of this kind, [ beneficiary action] however proper, however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth but is on a level with another inclinations, e.g., the inclination to honour...” ( p.16)

That means if action is done from the concept of action only when that action has moral worth. There are many incidents nowadays where people are leading a double life, e.g., conflicts between practical life and virtual life. Giving importance to practical life over the virtual makes our lives more difficult than before. To gain Popularity in social media and gain more views, people are deceiving, and there are many cases where people play with the sentiments of ordinary people to fulfil their needs. Therefore, people are being used as a means, and the intrinsic value of the human being gets ignored. Of course, this immoral tactic cannot be the universal law. While using social media, people should be more sensible, and if philanthropist activities are done, that has to be done from the perspective of doing duty. Duty towards humanity should be done for the sake of duty itself. From this point of view, a person should do humanitarian work not to gain fame or become an influencer in the media but for humanity itself. Kant does not put a necessary condition on doing charity or the rules of helping others. According to Kant(1785/1962), doing charity is an imperfect duty, as being unable to help others does not contradict the universal law. However, when it comes to deceiving or using others as a

means to get something, it is indeed the contradiction of universal law. Thus, when someone is doing something, he should be doing something genuinely in real life instead of a virtual one, which is nothing more than deceitful conduct that directly opposes the universal law, which manifests moral degradation. People should always be genuine to themselves, whether they are acting in real life or on social media.

Although social media and other technical gadgets were developed with human beings in mind, they are now controlled by them. Artificial intelligence is one of the recent inventions of technology, the product of the fourth industrial revolution. The purpose behind the invention is to make our lives easier, but it could be scary if we do not get hold of its usage. People might use it for evil purposes, including blackmailing someone or scamming someone. Even the use of artificial intelligence can destroy the whole creativity of humankind. The Kantian principle of ethics can be applied to artificial intelligence. The gadget or software invented for people's welfare cannot be used by other people to destroy others or the world's peace. Anyways, social media is frequently used as a platform where people are used as a means to belittle others. Even misinformation is circulated on social media, which causes riots and disrupts religious unity. Another issue with social areas for improvement is the media trial, where decisions are made without considering reliable facts. This sort of moral decay cannot be a fundamental principle of nature. If people stop treating people as a means and start treating them with the respect they deserve, and if social media users and news reporters act out of a sense of responsibility, that may be the answer to this moral degradation.

### **In Dealing with War**

From the First World War to the Ukraine-Russia war, the world has gone through many moral crises. In battle, ordinary people around the world usually suffer the worst. The world has seen the disastrous effects of the war and the use of nuclear weapons. Somehow, they are being used to get or acquire something. From the deontological argument for war, the soldier must protect one's country, and when a war occurs between two Countries, they also do their duty toward the country. At the same time, when a war happens, the commoner gets used as a means, and the inherent value of humanity gets ignored. However, it must be remembered that where war can be avoided by simple compromise or agreement, war should be avoided. Even if a battle takes place, it should be remembered that one

should not use others as a means; instead, as an end itself, humanity should get priority over anything. Being autonomous rational beings is our duty to ensure the safety of our surroundings and humankind. In justifying the war, there is also just war theory, which justifies war under some conditions, including ordinary people should not be used as a means; that is to say, this just war theory has similarities with the Kantian concept of the categorical imperative. Therefore, the categorical imperative can be applied to justify or prevent war.

### **In Dealing with Environmental issues**

For the last decades, the world has gone through significant climate change, and the reason behind the difference is the human being. Somehow, intrinsic environments are being ignored, as they are treated as a means to fulfil the needs of the human being. The Kantian maxim of the categorical imperative applies to the rational animal only; that is to say, this law applies only to a human being. Being rational animals, one should not forget that we are not the only living entities in this world. Apart from us, there is another entity: living things and the future generation, and we cannot ignore our responsibilities towards them. In environmental Philosophy, there are three theories regarding the relationship between humans and other entities living in this world. Among them, anthropocentrism is the theory that emphasizes human beings, giving them the ultimate value, considering other entities have been only created for them; biocentrism is the theory that grants every living being equal value without giving any particular living things superior status; and last of all ecocentrism is the theory that offers moral value not only on the living things but also from the non-living materials like rock, water, and soil. If we act out from the anthropocentric perspective, that will justify using nature as the means to fulfil our needs. From a biocentric standpoint, we justify the use of non-living things as a means. In the ecocentric view, living or non-living has equal values; we can not treat them as means, so their intrinsic value is acknowledged. Thus, it is true that we might use nature's resources to meet our end, but where we can meet our needs without using or exploiting the environment, we should stop ourselves from exploiting it.

In medical experiments, different types of animals are used to invent new medicines, vaccines, or drugs. Animals are being used in the medical industry to invent new medications. Still, apart from this, vast numbers of animals are being used in making beauty products, animals are being

used for making different types of cosmetics, and animals are being used to determine the safety parameter of the product, and this is nothing but the manifestation of human cruelty. As the Humane Society international's slogan is, there is no beauty in cruelty; according to them, globally, around 500,000 animals suffer and die from making cosmetics( Thompson, 2023). Most of the time, how we treat others and their intrinsic values gets ignored; we merely use ourselves to meet our needs. We claim to be rational animals, but what is the use of being rational if other entities do not feel safe in our presence? This moral dilemma is whether to work for the human community or other entities, others from us. If the use of animals can be avoided, they should not be used. They should not be used merely as a means; they should be treated as an end.

### **In Dealing with Administrative issues and business-related issues**

The application of Kantian ethics in administration is a crying need. Lord Acton remarked, 'power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely. ( Sorensen,2013,p.83 ) People tend to change when they do have power. The power assigned to ensure the safety of the people often becomes the reason for their insecurity. There are several incidents where the people in administrative power, let alone giving service, show authority over others. In this section, the Kantian notion of duty should be applied for the sake of duty. Although we are imperfect beings, we always seek perfection. We are not seeking perfection in our assigned duties as per Carlyle's great principle: "Do the duty that lies nearest thee." ( Carlye, 1834, as quoted in Mackenzie, 1929,p.323 )In terms of giving service, we should be as honest as possible; the value of a workman lies in the execution. As Mackenzie(1929) says, "The primary duty of a workman of any kind is to do his work well, to be a good workman." (p.323); in every office or administration, there are some legal rules that every employee follows; they work under a particular oath, but working under specific regulations does not mean that an employee will necessarily follow the rules; following any rules is undoubtedly related to the concept of morality and ethics, for example, in every government office it is to treat every person equally and to give the service without considering the religion, sex or social status of the people, but somehow there many cases where people tend to break the rules, and also giving certain people privilege considering their position. Here, one section of the other administration should learn to abide by the duty without the inclination to get something in return. This attitude will ensure transparency

in the administration, and everyone gets what they deserve. Often, while providing the highest profits in business, the office employee forces the employee to work in an environment that might not be a safe place for that person. That person is not even aware of that. Not only the employees of the company but also the entities of the environment are often affected. To ensure the company's profit, all kinds of humanitarian grounds get ignored, and employees and other entities of the world get used as a means by the company's owner. This kind of exploitation can be related to the relation of exploitation related to the proletariat and bourgeois relationship explained by Karl Marx. In this kind of exploitative relationship, there was always a chance of hidden dissatisfaction among the employees of that organisation. Employees lose interest in doing the job perfectly. A business involves not only the employee but also the stakeholders and customers.

Kantian categorical imperative ensures everyone gets what they deserve. As Norman E. Bowie (2013) says, "In a Kantian business Community, there would be no hold-up problem because no one could universalize a norm that permits one to take advantage of great inequality in bargaining power" (p.48). The right work conditions will be created by treating employees and stallholders with respect, ensuring everyone is motivated to do their duties to the fullest extent possible. Each employee will receive the necessary compensation and benefits they deserve, and the exploitative relationships between them will be diminished if everyone is treated as an end in themselves. Hiring is frequently unfair in any workplace, and candidates are commonly accused of nepotism and unethical behaviour. In these situations, people are oppressed, and their inherent worth is disregarded. This procedure closes the door to justice and causes the human realm to suffer for a long time. It will not guarantee the calibre of their job since it does not guarantee that everyone will receive what they deserve. The social order would undoubtedly collapse if bribery and other unethical practices like nepotism were made to be considered legal across the board. Everyone wants to avoid having the same thing happen to them, and this will prevent people from developing their skills. In addition, it will kill people's originality.

Another business problem arises when businesspeople gain profit, often creating an artificial crisis in the market. Market distortion is one of the main problems with hoarding. Artificial shortages are introduced into the market, leading to an imbalance in supply and inflated customer costs, upsetting stability and decreasing economic efficiency.

Business people often adulterate food to gain extra profit, or sometimes there is deception with weight, in which vendors purposefully offer less quantity or weight of a product than what is advertised or anticipated. This unethical business activity can be seen in various sectors, including manufacturing, retail, agricultural, and food processing. This kind of activity has increased in this era of online business, and often, consumers have been deceived by the flashy ads shown on the internet. In this kind of activity, people have been just used as a means by the businessman to fulfil his needs. A business person will undoubtedly focus on gaining profit rather than on the cost to humanity. Being a human being, he does have some responsibility; he cannot ignore it by demeaning humanity. Even the same things can happen to him as he is also a customer to someone. From this perspective, categorical imperative can be applied here.

### **In Dealing with Religious Riots**

In the Asian subcontinent, religion is one of the sensitive issues of ordinary people that has been used against human beings. Human beings are often just too superior to their faith and demean others, disrespecting the view of their thought, which often creates riots and even terrorist activities worldwide, instigating human beings to stand against each other. Even This kind of activity results in the loss of thousands of innocent people. The Kantian principle is relevant here: human beings deserve respect irrespective of class, caste, or religion, based on being a human being and also their autonomy of holding different views. Human beings should respect not only others but also the views of others. Therefore, the categorical imperative may be used to guarantee a better world for us.

### **Criticism against Categorical Imperative**

As a theory, it faces criticism from different philosophers.

The prominent critic of the categorical imperative or Kantian ethics is Hegel. In his book *Phenomenology of Right*, Hegel criticizes the categorical imperative as a theory under the name of empty formalism. (Stern, 2011). Hegel claims that the universal law on which the first formulation is established is empty, as it focuses only on principle. Hegel asserts that Kant determines right or wrong by using whether that action leads to a contradictory situation if it is universalized. Hegel has given the example that if the first formulation is formulated, there would be no poverty and no need to protect one's country because no one will snatch

the rights of others or attack another country, as none wants to do the same action with them. Helping people experiencing poverty, acting benevolently, or fighting for their own country cannot be universalized.

Kantian supporters claim that helping the poor is a maxim with some end, where the end is to abolish poverty, so the end of the poverty will be an achievement". Another objection raised against Kantian ethics is by Professor Adler in his book *An Ethical Philosophy of Life*, which Frank Thrilly has criticized. ( Thrilly, 1918). Professor Adler's main objection was that the Kantian maxim is a physical principle, while Kant is talking about the autonomy of humans, which means the Kantian principle is contradictory, as people are subordinated under this maxim. According to Frank Thrilly (1918), following the law does not mean violating human freedom. According to Kant( 1785/1962), there is a distinction between rules of a nature to which the will is subject and laws of a nature to which the will is subject. Here, Kant shows that abiding by the maxim does not mean human beings are subjected to will, as the human being formulates all the maxims. Apart from these theoretical issues, there might be some issues raised against the application of categorical imperative; these are:

The first point is that Kantian axiom can be found in religious notes; still, people ignore it by doing it their way. For example, when someone steals, he already knows he is not doing the right thing, and if someone did the same action, he would not accept it. In opposition, we can only prevent others from doing their way if they want or listen to us. If this statement is taken seriously, there will be no objective or universal law; all law will be subjective, and in that case, the very foundation of society will be very much vulnerable, and in that case, one can raise questions even over the logic behind the same formation of society itself.

Another objection that can be raised against Kantian rules is that, as autonomous people, we have the authority to decide moral principles for us; we can use this against the Kantian concept. For example, If we want, we can formulate breaking promises, stealing, or committing suicide as the moral principle for our realm. In response, if everyone started to work under this statement, it would create only chaos in the world, and more or less, this would completely violate the law of nature itself. Because we are rational animals, we have a duty towards the universe, which we cannot ignore. The Kantian maxim was indeed set for the rational being only, but we can apply it to the surroundings around us.

Again, if people have to work for a reason, they might lose interest in doing their duty. It is true that, in my opinion, Kant has emphasized reason, ignoring the importance of emotion in our lives. Still, it is also true that when people work from emotion or desire, they tend to be biased or do something that might pave the way to ensure justice. For example, In establishing justice in the society the person might get biased to his acquaintance, he might give undue privilege. In his *Classics, The Republic*, the Greek philosopher Plato also maintained that the philosopher king would not have any family of his own, which would manipulate him and make him biased. Plato thought this way to ensure justice in his utopian ideal state.

Kant's notion of the categorical imperative and John Rawls' original position concept are similar. According to the Rawlsian conception of justice, a person should decide on moral principles for a society without taking the sex, gender, religion, class, or status of the community into consideration, which is known as the veil of ignorance. ( Rawls, 1971). Additionally, while forming the community's moral code, the person should be free of class, sex, and gender. Given that he is unsure of his social status, the individual will choose reasonable standards for the community, but he may be a victim of the standards he sets for himself. The Kantian idea holds that a person should not act immorally toward others since he could become a victim of his actions; for example, a person should not break another person's trust as the same thing can happen to him. From this perspective, Kant's advanced thought is similar to that of the influential philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## **Conclusion**

From the above discussion, many criticisms might be held against the concept of the categorical imperative as a theory. Also, there might be some difficulties in applying the theory, but its relevance must be addressed.

The nature of a human being is what prohibits this categorical imperative from being applied. We need goodwill, which is like a jewel sparkling in its light, to apply this categorical imperative in our practical life. (Kant, 1785/1962,p.11). Humans, by nature, are self-centred by birth. However, if that were the final truth of humankind, there would be no progress or development in this world. This categorical imperative offers a solid basis for moral decision-making on an individual level: it does not explicitly address societal or cultural issues that can lead to moral decline.

It is impossible to merely blame moral deterioration on people's inability to uphold the categorical imperative because it is a complicated issue influenced by several social, economic, and historical circumstances. That is to say, an individual is not only held responsible for moral deterioration, but people also tend to be corrupt in some situations. Whether this categorical imperative effectively reduces or prevents moral degradation in a society entirely lies in the hands of human beings; they are the ones to decide whether to live in a world of chaos or a world of global peace. The motivation behind this goodwill will inspire us to act for humanity, putting aside our innate traits in favour of qualities that set us apart from moral dilemmas and guarantee the global peace we aspire for.

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