

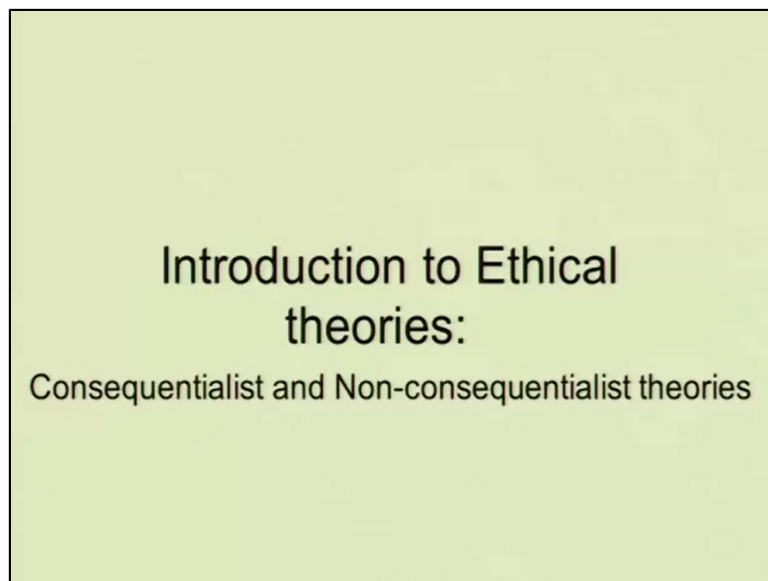
**Ethics**  
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**Module No. #01**  
**Lecture No. #03**  
**Consequentialism – Introduction**

Hello, everyone. Today, we are going to talk about, the introduction to Ethical Theories. And, in this, the first part, Consequentialism, and Non-Consequentialism. Now, what is an Ethical Theory, we would recollect from the class, that we have held earlier. An Ethical Theory is a normative claim, about the value domain.

It is trying to take a theorised that, what is the basis on which, people take a moral decision. Now, coming till the first part of our claim, for study over here, is Ethical Theories. And, we are going to discuss about, Consequentialism, and Non-Consequentialist Theories

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**Simply put:**

- Consequentialism includes any theory that judges the moral character of an action by the results (consequences) of that action.
  - extrinsic = GOAL DIRECTED BEHAVIOUR
  - What it brings about
- Non-consequentialism, on the other hand, includes any theory that judges the moral character of any action independent of the result (consequences) of that action - also known as Deontological theories.
  - intrinsic
  - What is in
  - Actions valuable in itself
  - Are there actions without consequences?

And, as you pay attention on the screen, it is written that, Consequentialism includes, any theory that judges the moral character of an action, by the results, consequences of that action. Non-Consequentialism, on the other hand, includes any theory, that judges the moral character of any action, independent of the result of the consequences of that action. And, this is also known as, the set of Deontological Theories.

Now, let me show you, why I have written two words over here. Extrinsic, and Intrinsic. What does that mean? Why do we have an Extrinsic and Intrinsic, written over here. Now, a Consequentialist Ethics domain, is not a theory of Ethics. It is a category of Ethical Theory, in which, there are various Ethical Theories, that can be subsumed. Now, we are aware that, every action that we do, has a consequence, as a result.

We have learnt it, in our childhood that, everything that we do, every act that we do, has our consequences. And, are the consequences determine, what kind of act, we choose to do. So, in a way, it is a trivial truth that well, a certain kind of act brings in, a certain kind of consequence. And, having the consequence in mind, we do the act. So, it is almost a metaphysical necessity, that certain kinds of acts, have always resulted in certain kinds of consequences.

And thereby, we assume that well, these acts result in, these kinds of consequences. Now, coming to Moral Behaviour, or a Moral Theory. A Moral Theory essentially makes a moral judgement. It is a theory about, deciding between right and wrong. A theory about, making a choice, giving adequate parameter, to the moral domain. Now, what is Consequentialism

claim. It claims that, for any Moral Theory to be under the ambit of Consequentialism, it has to judge an action, by the results, or consequence of that action.

Now, does it strike you all that. How can this even be possible. That, how can there be, are there actions, without consequences. I mean, every action, we are aware of, has consequences. And thereby, we decide that choose, which act to do. What is there. Are there acts, without any consequences. Or, do we decide on something, without taking the consequences into action. Well, we will see about that.

Because, a lot of moral philosophers have, contested the claim that, all actions are Consequentialist actions. Now, coming to Consequentialism, it is a claim that is saying that, any action can be judged as, right, wrong, or any moral judgement on any action, can be passed, dependent on its consequences. Now, an act can be meta physically separated, with the consequences it brings about.

So, it is a matter of almost a metaphysical necessity, that there is a correlation between acts and their consequences. And, similar kinds of acts, bringing under the same circumstances and laws following, bring the same kind of results. Now, this is something, we take to be trivially true. And, the Consequentialist maintains that, there is a distance between the anticipated consequence and the act.

And, this consequence determines, however the act can be judged. Now, why do I say something as Extrinsic. Extrinsic is, well, when we do something for a goal, for an objective in mind, we call it Extrinsic. So, this is fairly easy to imagine. Extrinsic actions are goal detective behaviours, which are full and plenty, that we do today. That well, if you want to score well, you have to study hard.

So, you are studying hard, is towards a goal. So, Extrinsic can be understood in a certain way, as goal directed behaviour. So, by contrast, what would Intrinsic mean. Would Intrinsic mean that, behaviour that does not have any goal. Well, not exactly. Intrinsic actions would be actions, that are valuable, or that have goals in themselves, or that are themselves the goals of, or the purpose of that act.

Let me put in, an example. Say, you are enjoying, watching a sunset, everyday evening, on the top of your accommodation. Now, is that for a purpose. Yes, on in the deeper sense, you can say, you feel happy about it. You are, it brings about calmness. If I am assuming that, it does. But, are these the consequences, or are these intrinsically a part of the reason, why you go up. That is, when you watch a sunset, or when you watch a sunrise, perhaps mostly you are watching it, because it is intrinsically valuable to you.

That is, it is valuable for what it is, not for what it brings about. This is a crucial difference, that we need to keep in mind. Non-Consequentialist belongs to, what it is. And, Consequentialism talks about, what it brings about. Okay. Now, we have seen that, there is, if you could pay attention on the slide now, Consequentialism is, includes by itself, it is not a theory. It is a domain under which, the theories that judge the moral character of an action by the results, or its consequences of that action fall.

So, they kind of Moral Theories, that depend on use the consequence as the parameter, or Consequentialist Theories. We have understood as, it as Extrinsic, or the purpose of the action, is Extrinsic to the action. We have called it, or we have also understood it as, goal-directed behaviour. It is about, what acts that bring about something. Right, what it brings about. Non Consequentialism, on the other hand, includes any theory, that judges the moral character of an action, independent of the consequences of that action.

It is also known as Deontological Theories. So, what we have assumed as Non-Consequential, somethings that are valuable in itself. Now, if things are valuable in itself, that is, or actions which are valuable in itself, or actions that are valuable in itself, can fall into Non-Consequential Theory. Now, let us imagine an act. Because, intuitively, it is very easy for us to believe, what is a Consequentialist act.

But, can we imagine, what a Non-Consequentialist act would be. Is there something, that we do, not for achieving a consequence, or not desiring a state of affair, or a consequence. Well, one example that we talked about was the, that of a student, relishing the joy of, the view of a sunset, or a sunrise, or a view of nature, or watching the skies. The Fine Arts, given an excellent example of things, which are Intrinsic. Intrinsically valuable, that is valuable in themselves, right.

But, we will talk more about the domain, whether the Deontological domain, whether they can be theories, which can actually claim that, there are things valuable in themselves, and not to the consequence, that they lead to. But, for now, we will, our area, our focus, would be on Consequentialism. Please focus on the next slide, now.

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**More about consequentialism**

- ① Are there intrinsic reasons for action, or is'nt it that all reasons are extrinsic or consequential? *Happiness 7/21*
- ② What are desirable consequences? What makes one set of consequences more desirable than the other? *What makes one set of consequences more desirable than the other?*
- Consequentialism does not commit to the content of the consequences. *Consequentialism does not commit to the content of the consequences.*

*Consequences* → *Happiness*, *Satisfaction*, *PERFECTION*  
*Moral Theory* } *Hierarchy of consequences*

Given that, we have talked about that well. Intuitively, perhaps it is aware that Consequentialism, is the most obvious basis of human behaviour. That, all our actions are generally goal driven. We raise some important questions here. Let me read out the questions. Are there Intrinsic reasons for actions? Or, is not it that, all reasons are Extrinsic, or consequential? What are desirable consequences?

What makes, one set of consequences, more desirable than the other. Consequentialism does not commit to the content of the consequences. Okay. Now, let us take these questions, one by one. Are there Intrinsic reasons for actions? Or, is not it that all reasons, are Extrinsic or consequential. We just talked about this theory, that whatever we act, how do we decide, how do we choose a course of action. We choose a course of action by, let us get to the basics.

What is the fundamentals of human thinking, that decides moral choice, or any choice, for the matter of fact? We start with a familiarity, with certain kinds of actions, which have led to a certain kinds of consequence? Now, that we desire, that certain kind of consequence, we do this certain kind of action. First, it assumes a principle of correlation, if not, causality, between actions and their consequences.

And that, this is a sustainable stable relation. And, there off, when we choose an action, we have the consequence in mind. If I want to get slimmer, I would exercise. If I want to score well in the exams, I would study hard. So, these are some of these conditionals. Or, if, then statements, which exemplify Consequentialist Behaviour. Now, the first question. It talks about that, that there are Intrinsic reasons for actions.

But, is not it that, all reasons are Extrinsic or consequential. Now, just as we had talked earlier, that there is a tendency for us to understand all reasons, as a reasons for actions, as Extrinsic, or consequential. That, whatever we do, we do it for a purpose. Can there be a purposeless action. That is the question. Purposeless action. Are there purposeless actions, now? Because, we are used to purposive actions.

Actions, which have a purpose, which have a consequence in mind. This domain of purposeless action seems to be, a difficult domain. We will talk about this, when we talk about Deontological Ethics. For now, let us talk about Consequentialism. Now given, that we assume that, whatever we do, we do it, the acts that we perform, are performed with a consequence in mind. Now, the first question, that comes out, which is question number two in the sequence, what are the desirable consequences?

What makes, one set of consequences, more desirable than the other. Given that well, we have consequences. And, consequences determine, what acts we do. But, how do we decide, which consequence is more desirable, than the other. How do we choose, one consequence over the other? Now, this is where, you need to remember that, consequentialism is not a theory of ethics. It is a domain of ethics. It just claims that well, acts are to be determined by their, the consequences they bring about.

Now, what kind of consequences? That is where, theories come about. So, whether this consequence should be happiness, as many of us would be familiar with. This should be anything else. Say, X. Now, these consequences, that we target determine, what moral theory we are talking about, in the consequential domain. Consequentialism per say, number three, does not commit, to the content of the consequences.

So, consequences can be anything, from happiness, satisfaction, that would determine, what Moral Theory, are we talking about. Can we think of, any other consequence, that could be

the target of Consequentialism, that describes the domain of consequences? Or, how do we make a hierarchy of consequences. This is the job of the Moral Theory. And, it is under the ambit of Consequentialism.

So, to determine the hierarchy of consequences, and we have a Moral Theory, which is largely under the ambit of Consequentialism. Now, two of the very famous, and talked about Consequentialist Theories have been, Utilitarianism, and Eudemonism. Aristotle's Eudemonism or Perfectionism. Now, happiness comes as a desirable consequence. There could be a third consequence, that is perfection.

Perfection as a consequence. So, what do you mean that, when happiness is a consequence, or a Moral Theory, that is describing a consequence. A Moral Theory needs to describe, what is the hierarchy of consequences. Now, a Utilitarianism is one, Eudemonism is another, a case study or an example of a Moral Theory. Now, coming to Utilitarianism, or it describes happiness, as the desirable consequence.

And that, when we have any action, that promotes happiness, becomes an indicator of, whether the action is right or wrong. Perfection. Any action, that brings about perfection, becomes an indicator of, whether the action is right or wrong, or any other value judgement, that takes place ((core under)) (17:57). Let us go to the next slide, now.

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**Consequentialism: Issues**

- There can be many moral theories with contradictory view on the content of desirable consequence, but still under the ambit consequentialism. For example, Utilitarianism is only a kind of consequentialism which describes the desirable consequences as utility or happiness; *Perfectionism (EUDEMONISM) brings perfection.*
- How far are the consequences - short term or long term?
- Are the consequences always foreseeable?

*Consequences - now or later?  
TIME?  
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES?*

We will be talking about Utilitarianism, in the coming lectures. For now, let us stick to Consequentialism. I am in see, what kind of questions, do we need to answer. And, be clear

about, what it is to be a Consequentialist. Now, what are the issues with Consequentialism. There can be many Moral Theories with contradictory view, on the content of desirable consequence, but still under the ambit of Consequentialism.

For example, Utilitarianism is only a kind of Consequentialism, which describes the desirable consequences, utility, or happiness. The other one, that we talked about was, Perfectionism, also known as Eudemonism, after Aristotle. Perfectionism, is again another kind of Consequentialism, which describes that desirable consequences as those which, promote perfection. So, we are looking at actions, that promote perfection.

So, it depends on, what is your parameter, or your compass. For the Utilitarian, it is the happiness. For the Eudemonistic individual, it is perfection. So, acts that promote perfection. But then, there are few more questions, that arise. Whose perfection. And, or whose happiness, or whose consequences. And, when are the consequences. Are they long-term or short-term? This is an important question that, the Consequentialist has to ask.

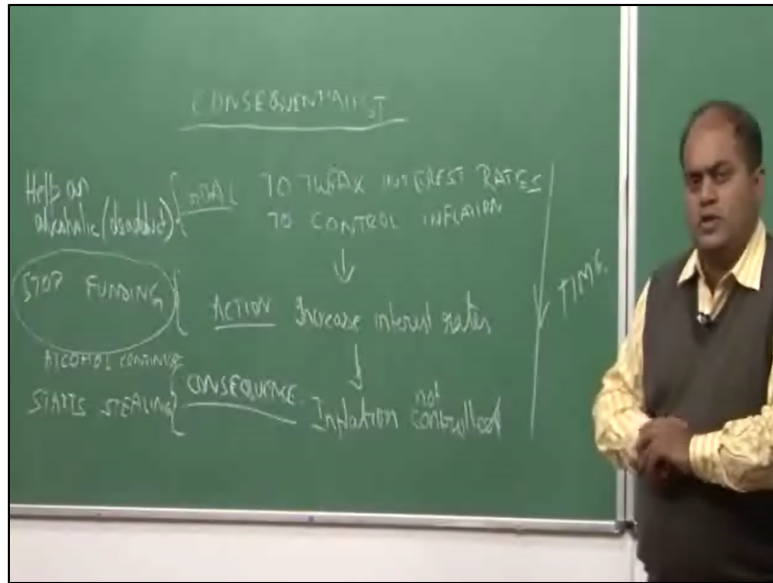
And then, this is also question that, that is where, the Consequentialist may get bothered and troubled. Now, look at, in this way. It is a very commonsensical way of taking decisions, by visualising consequences, and there of choosing the actions. But, how do you visualise consequences. Consequences now, or consequences later. How would you assign a temporal factor, to these consequences? By time, or what about unintended consequences.

Many times, we land up with consequences, that we do not intend. Can they be judged. Well, these are some of the questions. Now, let us take it, one by one. What is the difficulty. Now, the Consequentialist has to define, or has to explain that, what is the term of the consequence, that it takes. Say, a government body, sitting to take a policy decision, on interest rates. Now, it clearly, these are actions, which are teleological or purposive.

Now, this body has to decide, or will know, whether its action is right or wrong, depending on the consequence, that comes about. Now, look at this. There is an interesting possibility, over here. Now, if the bank, let me use the board now, to explain this predicament of the Consequentialist.

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Assuming that, you are a Consequentialist. Your goal, to tweak interest rates, to control inflation. Now, if this turns to be your goal, that you want to tweak interest rates, to control inflation. You act, increase interest rates or decrease. I am not an economist, to be very clear about that. So, say I increase interest rates. And, the consequence is, inflation controlled, or let us say, inflation is not controlled. Now, this happens over a period of time.

When the committee sits, to decide on the interest rates. And, from the time, they expect the policy to have an effect. So, can we judge, whether the policy was right or wrong, by the result it brings along. Or, but we have studied in these, these well intentioned economists have studied that well, to control inflation, we have to increase interest rates.

And, they did, what they had studied. And well, they find that, inflation is not controlled. Now, does it make the theory wrong. Does it make the economists, bad economists? Well, in this here, in this sense, it is not a moral term, it is a functional term. That, when we say that, this is a bad policy. It is because, the policy did not achieve its intended consequence. Now, substitute this, with a moral dilemma.

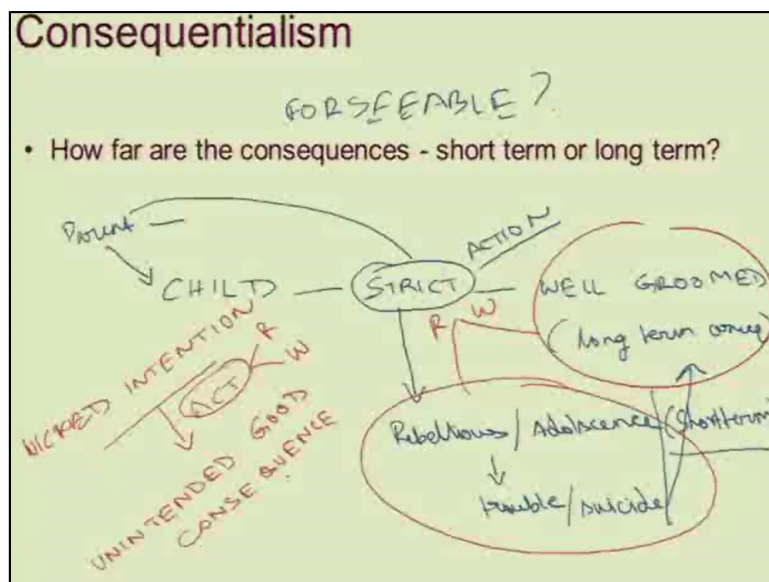
Suppose, you want to help an alcoholic. Right. That is, you want to de-addict him or her. Now, what do you do. Or, you are usually responsible. You are a banker. And, you pay his pension to, pay to the pre-current alcoholic. So, you stop his funding. Now, see what happens, with the consequence. Let us assume that well, he continues to take alcohol, but now start stealing. The alcohol continues, starts stealing.

Now, look at this. This is an interesting, a closer moral dilemma, that we come across. Now, our goal was to help an alcoholic. We stopped his funding. And, what we find that, he continues to have alcohol, in fact he has already started stealing. So, our intended effect, was not achieved, in fact, quite on the converse. He started doing something, which was clearly wrong. So, now we have to judge the action. The action, that we took, stop funding.

Now, is this the right action, or wrong action. Now imagine, if he would have stopped consuming alcohol, it would have become a right action. Because, we stopped funding, and thereof, he did not have any funds. So, he could not buy liquor, and he stopped taking alcohol. This is a Consequentialist way of evaluating an action. So well, there is nothing Intrinsically, or in itself right or wrong, about the action. To stop funding, there was nothing Intrinsically right or wrong, to your action.

Then, what about your intention. You could stop funding, with the intention to, for him to suffer. And, there of perhaps, to start stealing. Or, you could stop funding with an honest intention, for him to improve. Now, this is where the Consequentialist faces a little difficulty. Can consequences decide everything. Now, if you pay attention on the slide, the third question in this slide, we come across is, are the consequences always foreseeable.

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So, the next slide talks about, how far are the consequences. It is short-term or long-term. So basically, are consequences foreseeable. And, how long or how far are the consequences. Now, let me illustrate this, with an example. Say, you are a moral agent. You are a person.

And, you are taking a decision. Say, you are a parent. Now, as a parent, you come out, you have a child. And, you are strict with the child.

You are strict to the child, for the consequence that, he will be, or she will be, well groomed. Right. This is the long-term consequence. However, this strictness, in the short-term, let us assume it to be a male child. That, this strict upbringing, re-leads the child to become rebellious, in adolescence. Right. Now, and this rebelliousness has landed him in trouble. Right. Now, as a parent of the child, you have chosen strictness, as the action.

Hence, simplistically put, that has your intention was that, the child turned out to be, well groomed and well. But, it eventually turned out, that in short-term, he became a rebellious adolescent, landed in trouble. And, let us assume that, he commits suicide. So, that is then, no long-term. Now, this is a very painful example. And, we would rather hope that, nobody goes through this. But, this is a common dilemma, that parents face.

Because, when they choose a moral action, the way the moral ethos with which, they would raise their children, they have the long-term good in mind. That, if that long-term good, pays off as, or brings forth short-term consequences, which are unhappy, or which is tragic, in this case. Would you say that, this result here or here determines, whether this action was right or wrong.

Now, in that case, say, the next sibling is again raised in a strict environment, and turns out to be a very well-groomed individual. How do you decide, whether, which action is right or wrong, depending on the consequences? In that case, does it not take away a lot of, somewhere it is counterintuitive to the moral sense. That well, we are judging an action by the consequence, that it brings along

Let us also take another example. Let us say, sometimes often wicked intention, we get an unintended good result. Will this act be termed as, good, or right, or wrong? Now, this depends. A wicked intention, would clearly be a wicked act, wrong act, for us part. With strange circumstances, we find it results to an, unintended good consequence. We have all heard of that joke, where an individual was rewarded, for saving a child from the well.

And, when in the award ceremony, he was asked that well, how did you decide on doing such a brave thing. So, well, he very frankly honestly said that, well, I before answering that question, I would like to know, who in that crowd surrounding that well, pushed me into the well. So, thereby showing that well, he did fall in to the well, or he was pushed into the well, and saved the child as an accident, not as in a conscious choice.

But, the consequences were good. So, does he deserve the reward or not. Now, this is a problem, that the Consequentialist does face. When you describe the consequences, how sure are we of consequences. Let us go to the next slide.

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- Actual consequence or expected consequence? what if there is a difference between the two? Leads to the distinction between act-consequentialism and rule-consequentialism
- Explain 'justice' and 'rights' in consequential terms
- The role of agent in consequentialism: agent relative or agent neutral - consequences or whom?
- Relation between equality and consequentialism:
- Intention and foresight:

Yes, as we talked about, what about the actual consequence, or expected consequence? What is the object of judgement? What if there is a difference between the two? As we clearly saw in the case, talked about, just now. What does it. It leads to a distinction between, Act Consequentialism, and Rule Consequentialism. We will talk about that, in detail. And then, there is, explain the difficulties, that Consequentialist faces.

He is trying to explain, justice and rights, in consequential terms. The role of agent. The consequence for the individual, or for the group. The consequences are related to the agent, or it is independent of the agent. Anyway, there are various question, that we need to tackle. Especially, whether it is relation between equality, or and Consequentialism. We will talk about it, now.

