

Practice

Ques Political Science

Explain Bentham's greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Answer

1. Introduction:-

Jeremy Bentham was born in England. He was a French socialist philosopher. He experienced social, political and economic changes of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. He was the strong advocate of legal and political reforms. According to him every action is moral, just and ethical if it produces greatest number of happiness for the greatest number of peoples. He criticized the previous legal system and social contracts.

2. Major works of Jeremy Bentham:-

His two notable works are "A Fragment of government" and "The Principles of morals and legislation". In his work he gave the idea of utilitarianism which means that greatest number of happiness for greatest number of peoples.

3. Theory of Hedonism.

Bentham was the strong Hedonist. Hedonism is the position that the action is only justified if it produces greatest number of happiness for the greatest number of peoples. Otherwise this action is not acceptable.

According to him there are two types of Hedonism. Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism.

(i) Ethical Hedonism

Ethical hedonism is the position that every action is morally and ethically justified if it produces largest number of happiness for the largest number of people. The action that reduces greatest number of pain for greatest number of people is also justified.

(ii) Psychological Hedonism

It is the position that human finds pleasure in whatever they do. Human do the things that provides him the greatest pleasure. Human's self interest is important over social interest.

4) Theory of Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is the most popular and important thought in the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham. He used the term utility which means happiness or pleasure. According to him there are two sovereign in world that are ruling over human. They are the Pleasure and Pain. Human do everything

in order to get pleasure and do anything
in order to get rid of pain
According to him human binds pleasure
in anything whatever he does. He
said nothing is absolutely good
nor is absolutely bad.

He said that every action
is morally, ethically and legally
justified ~~with~~ if it produces greatest
number of pleasure for the
greatest number of people. At
the same time if it reduces greatest
number of pain of largest number
of people. Pleasure is an end for
that every mean is justified.
He was the advocate of
physical pleasure.

5). Utilitarian Calculus by Bentham.

In Bentham's Utilitarianism
focus should be on the outcome.
Every mean will be justified if
outcome will be the greatest. There
are five major Utilitarian calculus that
can help to measure ^{happiness in} outcome.

i) Intensity:-

It is the calculus
through which the intensity of
utility will be measured. What
will be the intensity of
happiness that will gain after particular
action? In this way intensity of the

happiness will be measured.

(ii) Certainty:-

This is the second calculus through which certainty of the possible outcome (happiness) will be measured. Some common questions dealing with the certainty are: What is certainty of that particular measure? Are you sure about the happiness?

(iii) Proximity:-

It is the technique to measure the closeness of the pleasure that will be the outcome. What will be the closest pleasure to it, etc.

(iv) Fecundity:-

It is the fourth calculus of the utilitarianism. It will be used to measure the possible number of happiness that will gain after a action. For example: After studying there will be three possible pleasure. One will be economic sustainability, second will be secure job and third will be luxurious apartment etc.

(v) Extendity:-

It is the fifth and the last calculus of utility.

This will measure the extension of the possible pleasure. It means that how that pleasure will be extended, whether it will be for the short or long period of time.

6). Criticism on the Utilitarianism.

(i) Emanuel Kant was a philosopher who criticized Bentham's utilitarianism. He said that there are two types of things. Some are absolutely good and some are absolutely bad. No matter what are the circumstances you would never do absolute bad.

(ii) John Stuart Mill

He was a socialist philosopher. He also criticized Bentham's philosophy of happiness. He says that humans are not allowed to harm other whatever will be the outcomes.

7). Conclusion

In a nutshell, Bentham was the strong advocate of happiness. According to him every action will be justified if it will produce greatest number of happiness. Focus should be on the outcomes.

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