

Question Explain Bentham's greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Answer Exordium

Jeremy Bentham was born in 1748 and he is one of the influential philosophers of his time. He is famous for his concept of 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' his theory 'Utilitarianism' which he presented in 'An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation'. He based his work on two sovereign forces which are pleasure and pain. John Stuart Mill also contributed in (Bentham) expanding Bentham's theory of Utilitarianism. John Mill gave his book name, 'Utilitarianism' itself. Both Bentham and Mill supported happiness but their concept of 'pleasure' is little different.

Utilitarianism by Bentham

Bentham justified pleasure and pain as two sovereign forces

which governs all the activities of individual. Every individual is in search of seeking pleasure and hiding from pain. Bentham gave the notion of 'greatest number of happiness for greatest number of people'. He also contributed in 'to avoid greatest number of pain for greatest number of people'.

1- Consequentialism

Bentham's theory is consequential based. He highlights that good or bad of an action is decided by the results. He judged events by the consequences. He favoured that if by killing few theorists you can save whole community then killing is justifiable as it is bringing greatest number of happiness for greatest number of people. If any action is resulted in avoidance of pain and achievement of pleasure it is

good.

2- Opposition

Immanuel Kant opposed Bentham's theory. He emphasized that few actions are absolutely bad and even consequences are bringing greatest number of pleasure. Even then the action will remain bad. He identified that murder, thief, robbery all are absolutely bad. Their good consequences can not justify their absolute bad nature. He did not favour to kill anyone even if it avoid greatest number of people from greatest number of pain.

3- Hedonic calculus

A method which is used to measure the pain or pleasure an action brought.

It can be measured by certain factors like, intensity, certainty, propinquity, fecundity and exertion.

1. Intensity is the value of pleasure

How much pleasure is obtaining
If an action brought less
intensity of pleasure than search
for such action which has more intensity.

b- Certainty is the surety of happiness
While doing an action, the
individual is sure that the result
of action will be happiness
or not.

c- Propinquity is the closeness of happiness
Whether one has to wait or
the pleasure is at door step.

d- Fecundity is the number of
pleasure obtaining.

e- Exertion is the measurement of how
many people will get pleasure from
the action.

This calculus is used to measure
the pain or pleasure obtained
by an action. It satisfies
the idea of 'greatest number of
happiness for the greatest number
of people.' The consequence of action
must be pleasure and avoidance of pain.

Role of Stuart Mill

John Stuart Mill was born in 1806 and he expanded further the utilitarianism of Bentham. He contributed in two main ways. As he identified pleasure into two types. He argued that pleasure can be of physical and psychological.

Physical pleasure obtained from materialistic gain.

Psychological pleasure obtained by simple achievement it did not need material pursuit.

Mill gave preference to one form of ~~ind~~ pleasure (Intellectual) over the other form (physical pleasure).

He further discussed the pleasure is obtained from liberty. The individuals are demanding liberty from state yet they are entangled in chains of society. The individuals are living under tyranny.

of society. First demand liberty from society than from state. He advocated that it is very difficult to be right when majority is wrong.

Utilitarianism

Jeremy Bentham and his Utilitarianism is very influential theory. He explains actions on basis of consequences. He behaved like Machiaveli when he advised to pursue every action but if it is for welfare of nation. Machiaveli allowed all actions, they are justifiable and it is amoral approach. Bentham also focused on happiness of greatest number of people and avoidance of pain for greatest number of people. He is criticized by Immanuel Kant who believed on absolute bad actions, which can't be justified even by pleasure of greatest number. Hence, Bentham's greatest number of happiness is influential ^{theory.} ~~work.~~