

kitchen and cleaning vessels, the notion that this is a women's role is smashed and the child goes on to become a responsible citizen.

- **Educational Institutes:** It is said that the destiny of a nation is shaped in its classrooms. A wholesome education that not only teaches  $2 + 2 = 4$  but also teaches civic discipline and ensures an atmosphere of friendliness and morality will ensure empowered citizens and leaders. For example: The Happiness Curriculum of the Government of Delhi-NCT and the New Education Policy, 2020.
- **Society-** The next big influence is the society. Often, acts of the society will shape the ethics of its members. For example: Compassion exhibited by the residents of Gurugram to the migrant labourers during the COVID-19 pandemic vs the rampaging mobs of the neighbouring Delhi during the riots that did not even spare schools and school children.
- **Media** or the fourth estate plays a critical role in informing and shaping information events and outcomes amongst the population. It is in this regard that the culture of fake news is particularly a matter of concern.
- **Government** influences the ethics of the society through its actions. A government that has scant regard for the principles of the Constitution will face a society that disobeys laws and a society that will continuously indulge in acts of protests and disharmony. Whereas a government that is high on morals will also have a citizenry that is ideal. Example: New Zealand's reaction to a terrorist attack Vs Pakistan's reaction towards its minorities and their rights.
- **Social Media** has in recent times gained prominence and has begun to have a large stronghold over formation and pursuance of ethics. The digital life of

an individual has come to assume as much importance as his/ her real life.

## Dimensions of ethics

There are four branches of ethics.

- **Meta-ethics:** It deals with the nature of moral judgments. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles. For example, when we talk of bioethics, meta-ethics will not answer the questions of right or wrong. Rather it tries to define the essential meaning and nature of problem being discussed. So it will examine 'what does it **mean** to ask whether genetic research is morally permissible?'
- **Descriptive ethics:** It simply involves describing how people behave and/ or what sorts of moral standards they claim to follow. It studies people's way of life in different communities. It is the process of understanding what people do or have believed about moral norms.
- **Normative ethics:** It is concerned with the content of moral judgments and the criteria for what is right or wrong. It involves arriving at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. In a sense, it is a search for an ideal litmus test of proper behavior. The various approach in normative ethics are:
  - » **Consequentialist approach:** The ethics of an action, according to this perspective, is dictated by its consequences, effects, or outcomes. One form is utilitarianism. It notes that people can make the most of their resources. Human health or well-being may be used to calculate utility. People should optimise their happiness, according to hedonism. As a result, acts that enhance happiness or welfare while minimising pain or suffering are ethical, according to these. Utilitarianism was conceived in the 19th century by Jeremy