

the inhuman practice of Sati which was widely practiced at that time. He changed social perception by persuading the masses that such practice had no religious sanction.

Further, real and long-term progress can happen by institutionalizing scientific methods of teaching by educators, so that rationality is ingrained right from childhood, thus building an atmosphere of critical thinking free of any prejudices.

7. Many argue that there are times, when war is morally permissible, and even obligatory. Critically discuss.

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by explaining ethical dilemmas regarding a war.
- Then mention how a war can be just and morally permissible.
- Conclude by critically evaluating the premise that a war be obligatory and moral.

Answer:

In its raw form, war is nothing but a duel at an extensive scale. It is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfill our will. Clausewitz defined war as a mere continuation of policy by other means. Thus, war becomes a political instrument to achieve one's goals. Use of this instrument is many times conditioned on exhaustion of all other instruments to achieve the same political goal. In view of subjective nature of 'exhaustion of all other instruments', war is many a times resorted to without active effort to avoid it. Thus, there are three moral positions that can be taken in context of a war. The **pacifist** perspective completely rejects the morality of war, from the perspective of a **realist**, war is not a moral enterprise and thirdly there is the middle approach of a just war. It states that under certain conditions war may be morally permissible or even necessary. The '**Just War Theory**' of St. Augustine (5th Century) helps in ethical assessment of a war.

- As per the theory, a war is just if the reasons to go to war, the conduct of war and post war resolution is right. War is ethical and just, if
 - Waged by legitimate authority (e.g. after UN sanction)
 - Has a just cause (e.g. against a State that indulges in human rights abuse)
 - Waged with right intention
 - Is the last resort
 - Be proportional (e.g. no use of nuclear weapons against conventional weapons)
 - only *unjust* combatants are legitimate targets of attack
- Similarly, Mahabharata outlines the principles and contours in conduct of a just war. Some rules propounded were –armies were allowed to collect bodies, personnel could meet for negotiations etc.
- In Statecraft, war is obligatory and moral when a State is defender, not an aggressor. For – example India has fought 4 wars since independence. And it has never been an aggressor. Its actions were aimed at defending its citizens, territory, resources and sovereignty.
- A war might be ethical but the means to wage the war is seldom principled especially in modern warfare which indiscriminately uses landmines, tortures, chemical and biological weapons and non-targeted bombings through drones. That the war is "just" is also questionable. For instance, though the professed aim of 2003 Iraq war was to liberate Iraq, usher democracy and eliminate biological weapons, none of these aim was achieved and sufferings of Iraqis continue till date. In fact, there was not even a UN sanction of the war before starting it.
- Even grounds of humanitarian interventions are not equal and proportional. Ex- NATO intervened in 1999 justifying the campaign in Kosovo as a "humanitarian war" but no one took cognizance of 1994 Rwanda genocide.

Hence, war in modern times is one of convenience to achieve geo-political goals, sometimes garbed under the facade of ethics and human rights. Justifying interventions has become increasingly difficult and a general trend has been towards avoiding war at all costs because of the catastrophic after-effects it has. Therefore, the character of war is changing fast and the ethics needs to keep pace with this change. Else a war remains inherently unethical.