



SNS COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Kurumbapalayam (Po), Coimbatore – 641 107

AN AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTION

Approved by AICTE, New Delhi and Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai



Consensus and Controversy

- Literally, consensus means agreement‘, and controversy means disagreement‘.
- When an individual exercise moral autonomy, he may not be able to attain the same results as other people obtain in practicing their moral autonomy. Here there might be some differences in the practical application of moral autonomy. This kind of controversies i.e., disagreements are inevitable.
- Since exercising moral autonomy is not as precise and clear-cut as arithmetic, therefore the moral disagreements are natural and common. So in order to allow scope for disagreement, the tolerance is required among individuals with autonomous, reasonable and responsible thinking.
- According to the principle of tolerance, the objective of teaching and studying engineering ethics is to discover ways of promoting tolerance in the exercise of moral autonomy by engineers.
- Thus the goal of teaching engineering ethics is not merely producing always a unanimous moral conformity; it is about finding the proper ways and means for promoting tolerance in the practical applications of moral autonomy by engineers.
- In a way, the goal of courses on engineering ethics and goals of responsible engineering have some similarities. Both situations require the need for some consensus regarding the role of authority.

Relationship between autonomy and authority:

Moral autonomy and respect for authority are compatible with each other. Exercising moral autonomy is based on the moral concern for other people and recognition of good moral reasons. Also moral autonomy emphasizes the capabilities and responsibilities of people. Authority provides the framework through which learning attitudes are encouraged.

Sometimes, conflicts will arise between individuals‘ need for autonomy and the need for consensus about authority. This situation can be rescued by having open and frank discussion regarding a moral issue with the help of authority.