



## Arguments for and against Killing: An Analytical Study

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### Abstract

Killing is a moral problem in our society as well as applied ethics. Social science has tried to solve the problem of Killing in various ways. In the present article I have discussed elaborately about Killing and tried to show that now-a-days killing is an ethical issue in not only our country but also in the world. In the second part of the article I have tried to definition of 'Killing'. Thirdly, I have introduced different types of Killing in details. Finally, I have discussed about the morality of killing. The article concludes that all countries must consider why is killing immoral?

**Keywords:** *Homicide, imprisonments, Uxoricide, Genocide and euthanasia*

### 1. Introduction

People often say killing is a dirty inhumanity action. If someone thinks that killing is dirty word so why people perform to do it? If anyone involved in any type of massacre, he will get reward from rigorous imprisonment in life or death penalty. People are generally genius and intelligent human being rather than other living entities. People sometimes involved in dirty work for their selfishness. We are killing animals for our food; destroying trees and forest for our requirements like, road, house etc. When a person decides to commit suicide, the reason is to trying for getting relief from pain. In connection with this point, I do say that I do not support any form of suicide for mental health or emotional reason. Now-a- days, in India suicide is not a punishable offence. Indian penal code u/s 309<sup>1</sup> has been removed from the Indian constitution for the reason behind mental depression. In the present article I have discussed elaborately why is killing morally wrong?

### 2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the proposed study are as follows:

1. To investigate about the definition of Killing
2. To investigate different types of Killing and draw a conclusion about the morality of Killing

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<sup>1</sup> Indian penal code u/s 309 is clearly disclosed that Suicide is obviously no crime under the Indian penal code; it is only attempt to commit suicide that is punishable under this section. This mean when a person is unsuccessful in committing suicide only then the provision of section 309, IPC are attracted. (See *Relevance of Section 309 Indian Penal Code (IPC): A Perspective*, M. Marwaha, IOSR, 15-20.)

### **3. What is killing?**

People often say life is sacred. Human life is most sacred and self respectable compared to other living entities. Killing is an action, an act of causing death, especially intentionally. Killing is also called 'murder'. Murder is the unlawful killing of another human by force without good reason or valid excuse. In connection with this point I do say that murder is unlawful calculated and conscious killing of one human being by another. It is very intricate or horrible task or incident. Killing is a punishable offence not only India but also all over the country. Accused persons are convicted and suffer from sentence to rigorous imprisonments for life or death.

### **4. Kinds of Killing**

There are various types of killing such as:-

#### ***4.1. Homicide***

Homicide is a one type of killing or murder. The term "homicide" has been derived from Latin word 'homo' or 'homin', which literally means "a person who kills a human being". The legal importance of killing or murder is homicide. First degree murder<sup>2</sup> is the most serious criminal homicide. Some homicide is not illegal like, self-defense (such as rape, armed robbery, police encounter or murder).

#### ***4.2. Manslaughter***

Manslaughter is another type of killing or murder. Manslaughter is generally means illegal. Manslaughter is generally classified as active or passive, and as either voluntary or involuntary. In this sense of voluntary manslaughter is that the offender did not have a prior intent to kill such as when the homicide occurs "in the heat of passion" and without forethought. The lowest form of manslaughter is involuntary manslaughter. This means that the perpetrator did not intend to kill anyone, but still killed the victim through behavior that was either criminally negligent or reckless.

#### ***4.3. Capital Punishment***

Capital punishment is literally means "death penalty", when a government or state kills convicted persons as a punishment for their criminal activities. Because everyone thinks human life is so valuable. Everyone has an inseparable of all living entities right to life, even those who commit murder. In this perspective Capital punishment is one type of killing. Ethical, philosophical and religious values are central to the continuing controversy over capital punishment. Nevertheless, factual evidence can and should inform policy making. The evidence for capital punishment as a uniquely effective deterrent to murder is especially important, since deterrence is the only major pragmatic argument on the pro death penalty side.

#### ***4.4. Genocide***

The term "genocide" has been derived from Greek words 'genos' and English suffix 'cide', which literally means "extermination of race or community by mass murder". It is an indiscriminating killing, deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group.

#### ***4.5. Suicide***

The term "Suicide" has been derived from Latin word 'suicidium', from Latin 'sui', which literally means "person who kills himself deliberately". Suicide is a self murder who commits on account of his own action.

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<sup>2</sup> The first degree murder generally refers to unlawful killing that which both intentionally and calculated. It is illegal and punishable offence.

#### ***4.6. Familicide***

The term “familicide” has been derived from two English word ‘family’ and ‘cide’, which literally means “the murder of an entire family by a family member, followed by suicide or the person who perpetrates a familicide.

#### ***4.7. Uxoricide***

The term “uxoricide” has been derived from Latin word ‘uxor’ (wife) and English suffix ‘cide’, which literally means “a person who kills his wife”. In another words Uxoricide is a man who kills one’s wife or the act of killing one’s wife.

#### ***4.8. Filicide***

The term “filicide” has been derived from Latin word ‘filius’ (son) and ‘filia’(daughter), and English suffix ‘cide’, which literally means “a person who kills their son or daughter.”

#### ***4.9. Assassination***

Assassination is also known as a political murder. The term “Assassination” has been derived from Arabic word ‘Hashshashin’ that means Assassins, which literally means “a person who kills secretly a prominent person or a secret murderer”. In a word, a person who killed secretly or treacherously is called assassination.

#### ***4.10. Consensual homicide***

Consensual homicide is a part of homicide. It is a one type of killing or murder. It is refers to case when one human being kills another, with the permission of the human being killed. Consensual homicide refers to an act where a victim wants to die with the aid of another person. It is a form of assisted suicide. Consensual homicide or murder is an agreement made by both parties involved. Assist suicide is helping someone to end his or her life.

#### ***4.11. Mass shooting***

Mass shooting is only gun violence. The term ‘mass shooting’ was originally defined as the murder of four or more fatalities. It is not a gang killing, defined as any incident in which four or more were killed and also includes family killings.

#### ***4.12. Execution-style murder***

Execution style murder is a one type of killing or murder. Execution style murder is also known as execution style killing. The term ‘execution’ means punishment by death or the warrant for caring into effect the sentence of the court. It is also a criminal punishable offence though all killing are unlawful. It is an act of criminal killing by forcefully putting some one on their knees, slitting their throat from left to right.

#### ***4.13. Abortion***

The term “abortion” has been derived from Latin word ‘aboriri’ (miscarry) and English ‘abort’, which literally means “miscarriage of birth”. Abortion is the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy. The biological explanation of abortion is exclusion of a fetus from the uterus by natural causes before it is able to survive.

#### ***4.14. Massacre***

The term 'massacre' is a French word. It is literally means kill in large numbers or indiscriminate slaughter.

#### **4.15. Political murder**

Political murder is also a one type of killing or murder. Political murder or killing is also known as assassination. It is a secret and preplanning killing regarding political interested.

#### **4.16. Child murder**

Child killing refers to death of new born children who under age 18 years old. Child murder is also called child homicide. It is a criminal punishable offence. Several U.S states have included child murder to their list of aggravating factors making a murder punishable by death penalty.

#### **4.17. Honour killing**

Traditionally practice in some countries killing a family member who believed to have brought shame on the family.

#### **4.18. Euthanasia**

Of late, euthanasia<sup>3</sup> is a moral problem in medical science as well as applied ethics. It is also called 'mercy killing'. The term 'euthanasia' has been derived from the two Greek 'eu' words and 'thanotos', which literally means 'good deaths. In a word, defines euthanasia as 'a quiet', 'painless death'.

### **5. Argumentative Killing**

There are many arguments for and against Killing. Is it really morally wrong to kill someone or is killing wrong? Arguments for Killing include: Killing is generally unacceptable and unallowable. It is acceptable only situation permitted like euthanasia, suicide, abortion capital punishment etc.

Arguments against Killing include: every significant religion endorses the commandment, "Thou Shall Not Kill", as do humanists, agnostics, and atheists.

#### **5.1 Arguments in favor of Killing**

The first argument for killing that I can give the example of euthanasia. Euthanasia<sup>4</sup> is also called mercy killing. In 2001, the Dutch parliament<sup>5</sup> decided that euthanasia or mercy killing should be legalized, and, the euthanasia act came into effect to regulate the ending of life by a physician at the request of a patient who was suffering unbearably without hope of relief. The patient request is voluntary and well considered. Terminally ill patient informed about his situation and prospect, and, there are no reasonable

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<sup>3</sup> Practical Ethics, Peter Singer, pp. 83-175

<sup>4</sup> Euthanasia is traditionally divided into three different types, Voluntary, non-voluntary and Involuntary euthanasia. Voluntary Euthanasia are generally refers to assisted suicide. Voluntary euthanasia occurs when consent or wish to die is expressed by the patient or sufferer. Non-voluntary euthanasia occurs when no consent or no wish to die is expressed by the patient or sufferer. Involuntary euthanasia occurs where patient or sufferer can express a wish to die but don't.

<sup>5</sup> "The new Dutch Law on Euthanasia" J. De Haan, pp. 57-75.

alternatives. The terminal of life should be performed with due medical care and attention. Another independent physician should be consulted.

Proponents argue that legalizing euthanasia is necessary “insurance policy” that will ensure that no one dies in painful agony or unremitting suffering. Legalized euthanasia would protect the vulnerable from wrongful death and enables peaceful death with dignity. Furthermore proponents of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide identify three main benefits to legalization: Realizing individual autonomy, reducing needless pain and suffering, and providing psychological reassurance to dying patients.

“The most famous case is Terri Schiavo from florida, USA. She collapsed in her home in full cardiac arrest on February (25), 1990. She suffered massive brain damage due to lack of Oxygen and, after two and half months in a coma, her diagnosis was changed to persistent vegetative state. At the request of her husband, county judge ordered the removal of Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube in February 1995, and she died one month later.”<sup>6</sup>

The second argument I shall give an example of suicide<sup>7</sup> in favor of killing. In this case the verdict of honorable Supreme Court said that attempted suicide no longer a crime as India changes attitude to mental health problems. New law aims to encourage recognition of mental health issues such as depression and provided rather than punishment.

Thomas Aquinas<sup>8</sup>, in his discussion of suicide, may seem to take the position that such an act would be wrong, for he says, “It is altogether unlawful to kill oneself,” admitting as an exception only the case of being under special command of God.

In the third argument in favor of killing is that I can give the example of abortion. It is an ethical argument concerning the moral permissibility of abortion as well as killing or murder.

The argument was made by famous philosopher Judith Jarvis Thomson in her influential article. ‘Thomson presents a thought experiment in which you are asked to imagine finding yourself connected by medical equipment to a famous but unconscious violinist with a kidney disease. The only way the violinist can survive is for his circulatory system to be connected to someone with the same blood type. As you are the only person available, a society of music lovers has kidnapped you, had the connecting operation performed, and had you placed in hospital. You can, if you choose, order a doctor to disconnect you from the violinist, but if you do the violinist will certainly die. On the other hand, if remain connected for nine months, the violinist will have recovered and you can be unplugged without endangering him or himself.’<sup>9</sup>

In the fourth or final argument in favor of killing is that I can give the example of capital punishment. The death penalty prevents future murders. Society has always used punishment to discourage would be criminals from unlawful action. Since society has the highest interest in preventing murder, it should use the strongest punishment available to deter murder, and that is the death penalty. If murderers sentence to death and executed, potential murderers will think twice before killing for fear of losing their own life.

## **5.2 Arguments against Killing**

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<sup>6</sup> “Euthanasia: A Sociological perspective”, G. Howarth, G; & j. Margot pp. 376-85

<sup>7</sup> Practical Ethics, Peter Singer, pp: 9-215

<sup>8</sup> See Summa Theologica (“The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect), St. Thomas Aquinas, pp 5:515.

<sup>9</sup> . “Euthanasia and other end of life decisions and care provided in final three months of Life: Nationwide Retrospective study in Belgium”, B.L Van den, pp. 1-8.

In the first argument against killing that human life is sacred. If there is a way to protect society from bad people without killing them, then the government should not kill them. Therefore, state-sponsored killing is wrong.

In the second argument against killing are moral arguments. There is a reasoned view that when man cannot give life, he has no right to take away life. Man should not interfere in god's domain. Court verdicts are not fool-proof. Innocents may be given death penalty by the courts.

In the third argument against killing is that the individual who is executed may not be himself responsible for his deed. The real culprits are the society and the social circumstances that made a criminal out of him. There might even be genetic factors at work.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion the killing debate is very large one with many arguments, both for and against. Some countries still retain death penalty. Death penalty is allowed in some states of USA and not in others. A study of crime rates in relation to death penalty does not reveal an association. Crime rates have not increased after abolition of death penalty. Crime rates continue to increase in countries where death penalty is given. Therefore, I can conclude that, under the circumstances described, the victim of a killing is not harmed. I will have to find reasons to justify a rule against killing other than those killing harms the victim. This conclusion seems so at odds with "common sense" that, at the risk of being repetitive, an elaboration of the argument seems appropriate.

Consider the following line of reasoning:

- (1) killing is morally wrong to harm people.
- (2) Killing hurts people and disables them.
- (3) Therefore, killing people harms them, and is morally wrong.

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