

INTRODUCTION

Ethics, sometimes known as moral philosophy, is not easily defined and philosophers provide different explanations of it.

The following questions to get an idea about what is involved in the study of ethics:

- Are some things always wrong? If so, what are they? Or does depend on the point of view or situation?
- Can we measure goodness and badness? If so, how?
- Are humans selfish or kind?
- Are some people "better" at morality than others, or is everyone equally capable of being good?
- Can we teach people how to be good?
- Does anyone have the right to tell others what is goodness or wickedness?
- Why should you be good?
- Is ethics a special kind of knowledge? If so, what sort of knowledge is it and how do we get hold of it?
- Is morality about obeying a set of rules or about thinking carefully about consequences?
- When people say, "I know of murder someone is wrong", do they know it is wrong or believe it very strongly?
- Are moral laws the same as society's laws or are they different and why?

The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word *ethikos* (root form *ethos*) which means "character" or "custom." For the Greeks, it referred to the appropriate or customary way to behave in society.

The word morality, has its root in the Latin word *moralis* and is concerned with which actions are right and which are wrong, rather than the character of the person. Today, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

2.2 APPROACHES TO ETHICS

There are three main approaches to ethics: (i) normative ethics, (1) descriptive ethics, and (iii) metaethics

Normative Ethics

Normative ethics was the prevalent form of ethics in philosophy till the end of the 19th century. To decide what things are good on bad and what kind of actions/behaviour are right or wrong involves how people ought to act on the principles, how they make moral choices, and how rules apply to individual lives. It includes a consideration of the importance of human freedom, and a discussion of the limits of a human's responsibility for moral decisions

and for the consequences of his actions. The role of conscience in moral decision making is also a part of normative ethics. This may come from an established group of culture, such as the Christian tradition, or it may be based on some other way of thinking. This is the traditional way of viewing ethics.

Descriptive Ethics

Descriptive ethics is the study of ways in which different people and societies have answered moral questions. Can it be described as moral sociology or moral anthropology, a description of the moral code prevailing in different societies? It involves different approaches inside one society for the resolution of ethical problems.

Metaethics

Metaethics is, sometimes called moral philosophy or philosophical ethics. This group attracts considerable interest today. It seeks to understand the meaning and function of moral language, and of ethical terms such as good and bad. It looks at the logic used in arriving at the conclusion of an argument that justifies a moral choice.

2.3 MEANING OF ETHICS

Ethics involves moral principles which, in turn, involve the way individuals, groups or organisations conduct themselves which of the time as good or bad conduct. It has to do with fulfilling the relationship between people and society at large. When applied in a business context, it becomes business ethics. Ethics in business has become one of the most challenging issues confronting the whole business community. Establishing ethical climate is like starting an endless marathon. The first step should be to change unethical behaviour. It is an "on-going process" and never stops. An effective programme of ethics requires involvement and commitment from all. The stakeholder, the management, the staff and everyone associated should ensure commitment towards ethical behaviour at all levels.

2.4 MAJOR ATTRIBUTES OF ETHICS

Concept: The field of ethics may be conceived as a discipline, science, study or evaluation.

Content: The subject matter of ethics is concerned with what is good or bad, and right or wrong.

Judgment: Judgment is required to determine whether human action ethical or not. It is concerned with the overt act, not the motivations behind it. Behaviour and its cause are judged

Standards: Judgment is based on standards which are, in turn, based on values.

Values: The final element of ethics, therefore, is the set of values and criteria used as standards for judging human conduct.

2.5 BUSINESS ETHICS

Business ethics is very much influenced by social movements, social system and social preferences. No business can survive or grow without social harmony. Individual's values, however best they may be, are not sufficient to attain the maximum level of ethical performance.

Approaches

1. Profit motive approach:
2. Legal approach:
3. Moral obligations approach

- ♦ The ethical approach includes concerns like justice, individual rights, & utilitarianism.
- ♦ Managerial ethics improves society at large with:
 - Organisational revolution, corporate revolution, managerial revolution, property revolution.
- ♦ Business ethics is more concerned with its social responsibilities.



ORGANISATIONAL ETHICS

Change is a necessary way of life for all organisations. The way an organization should respond to external environment refers to organization ethics. No organization should depend on unfair means to earn money. Employees should not indulge in destruction or manipulation of information to get results. For example, data tampering is considered strictly as an unethical activity in the corporate world. Common unethical practices prevailing in an organisation:

- 1) The consumers
Adulteration, spurious products, duplicates, injurious products, deceptive advertisements.
- 2) The Employees
Low salaries, working conditions, exploitation, Unreal acceptance of remuneration.
- 3) The Government
Tax evasion, pollution, bribes for political support.

BUSINESS ETHICS

Business ethics refers to implementing appropriate business policies and practices with regard to arguably controversial subjects. It guides executives, managers, and employees in their daily actions and decision-making. Some facets of business ethics are:

- ♦ *Stakeholders/ shareholders or other providers of money.*
- ♦ *Employees*
- ♦ *Customer relations*
- ♦ *Community/ Society*
- ♦ *Government*



ETHICAL ASPECTS IN MARKETING

Marketing ethics involve moral principles and values that should be followed during marketing communication. The laws & regulations are generally designed to protect the consumer from unethical practices by businesses. They are the guidelines that let companies decide about their new marketing strategies. But also keep in mind that it depends on one's judgment of 'right' and 'wrong.' Any unethical behaviour is not necessarily unlawful.

In other words, if a company makes any claims about its products and cannot live up to those claims, it may be called unethical behaviour. The American Marketing Association's code has outlined the responsibilities as:

- ♦ Responsibility of the marketer.
- ♦ Honesty & fairness.
- ♦ Rights & duties in marketing exchange process.
- ♦ Organisational relationships.

ETHICAL CONFLICTS IN MARKETING

- 1) *Difference between the needs of the three groups. (company, industry, society)*
- 2) *An individual's personal values contradict with the organisation's values.*

STANDARDS FOR ETHICAL MARKETING CODE

- 1) *To help identify acceptable practices.*
- 2) *Foster internal control.*
- 3) *Avoid confusion.*
- 4) *Facilitate a basis for discussion.*



MASS COMMUNICATION AND ETHICS- TELEVISION

Television networks usually try to exercise professional judgment and to avoid offending viewers. Some television networks have published codes of conduct to guide their efforts. In cases where a television station does offend a viewer or group of viewers, laws are in place to guide both the offended party and the television industry. Laws take over when ethics questions are not resolved between people representing two sides of an issue.

When a program or an advertisement offends a television viewer, several outcomes might occur. The following is a list of some of the ways in which viewers have, in the past, used their right to object to television programming or advertising, and registered their concerns about the ethics of television.

- 1) A viewer might write a letter of complaint.
- 2) A viewer might bring a legal suit against the television network or a specific department or individual employed by the network.
- 3) A viewer contacts a consumer group and registers a concern. The group, then, may present the concern of several viewers on the same topic in more public ways:
 - ♦ *Letters to a local newspaper complaining about the programming or advertising.*
 - ♦ *Informal complaints (usually verbal in a meeting with representatives of the television network).*
 - ♦ *A public demonstration.*
 - ♦ *Formal complaints through a judicial body such as a court.*

Meaning

'Whistleblowing' is the term used to define an individual's decision to disclose the information regarding unethical, immoral or illegal actions to an authority.



Examples

- 1 . Dumping of toxic waste
- 2_ Padding an expense report
- 3 Violating laws on hiring and firing
- 4 Defying laws on workplace safety
- 5 Breach of health Laws which led to documented illness and even death.

Benefits

1. Combat fraud
2. Avoid reputational damage
3. Prevent issues escalating
4. Minimise losses
5. Raise awareness
6. Create an open culture
7. Whistle blowing is an anti-corruption tool
8. It ensures effective system of internal control
9. It is a good corporate governance practice

Disdvantages

- 1 Stress, termination and mistrust
- 2 Disrupt the team spirit
- 3 Mobbing

BUSINESS EDUCATION-ETHICS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS

- On-the job training
- Training programmes on the ethical use of the World Wide Web
- Employee discussion groups on ethical Issues
- Personnel services

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND ETHICS

Meaning:

Intellectual property, like the other property (land, buildings, etc.), is a matter of great importance for those who are involved in creating new ideas and information in any field of study or work, particularly in science, technology and entertainment.

Examples

“**trademark**” is a symbol or brand that is owned by the person who created it.

“**patent**” guarantees that an inventor owns the rights to profit made from an invention.

“**copyright**” means legal and exclusive rights to written material, either published or unpublished.

IP & ETHICS

The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** is one of the [15 specialized agencies](#) of the [United Nations](#) (UN).

WIPO was created to promote and protect [intellectual property](#) (IP) across the world by cooperating with countries as well as international organizations.

WIPO's activities include hosting forums to discuss and shape international IP rules and policies, providing global services that register and protect IP in different countries, resolving transboundary IP disputes, helping connect IP systems through uniform standards and infrastructure, and serving as a general reference database on all IP matters; this includes providing reports and statistics on the state of IP protection or innovation both globally and in specific countries.

WIPO also works with governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals to utilize IP for socioeconomic development.

ETHICAL INVESTING

Meaning: Ethical investing means allocating financial resources taking into consideration both economic and social criteria, with the goals of maximising the potential financial and social returns to both investor and the investee.

Professional Ethics

Professional ethics encompass the personal and corporate standards of behaviour expected of professionals.

Professional ethics are **principles that govern the behaviour of a person or group in a business environment**. Like values, professional ethics provide rules on how a person should act towards other people and institutions in such an environment.



ENGINEERING ETHICS



Engineers, in the fulfilment of their professional duties, shall:

- hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public;
- perform services only in areas of their competence;
- issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner;
- act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees;
- avoid deceptive acts and
- conduct themselves honourably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honour, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.