

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ANCIENT INDIAN ECONOMIC ETHICS AND THEIR RELEVANCE IN CURRENT ECONOMIC ETHICS, WITH REFERENCE TO ACADEMIC BUSINESS STANDARD AT KOTA

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ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this paper is to reflect on the importance and impact of linkages amongst business ethics as a growing academic discipline, the principle of social engagement as promoted by the 2011 UN Global Compact, and the role and impact of academic research as carried out in higher education institutions. Taken together, these are gaining greater importance in the globalized society of 33 years, as well as in connection with the activities of the United Nations.

A considerable number of the objectives related to business ethics and the encouragement of social engagement depend to some extent on the role and contribution of relevant academic research. Certainly researchers, by virtue of their wide knowledge and investigative as well as analytical approaches, can help to identify and document the main or emerging issues surrounding the place of business in socio-economic development. The issues in question are complex ones necessitating reflection from various standpoints on the nature of commercial activity, of profit, of the human professional conduct involved, and of the contribution of this milieu to the general public good. Consequently, the research angle must be an interdisciplinary one so as to study the varied dimensions of the issues. Moreover, it should be recalled that research is the lifeblood of the Knowledge Society and the fuel for its successful operations because it helps generate new and effective approaches to problem-solving.

At the present time, it so happens that all these matters are of great interest to the United Nations, which promotes the principles of altruism and international cooperation amongst all nations for a common global good based on peace and equitable human development. This paper aims therefore to make comments on the diverse elements involved and on the synergy which can be derived from their positive interaction.

Keywords: Component; Business, Ethics, Economic Academic Etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ethics is the study of human behavior and its consequences in the light of what is ideally possible. Ethics defines the elements essential to human well-being and proposes principles to be used as guidelines for generating an ethical culture. Ethics also refers to the specific values, standards, rules, and agreements people adopt for conducting their lives. Ethics are not merely social conventions, like table manners. Ethics define the

social conditions necessary for human beings to thrive. ethics studies the moral behavior in humans and how one should act. Ethics may be divided into four major areas of study:^[1]

- Meta-ethics
- Normative ethics
- Applied ethics
- Descriptive ethics

Meta Ethics- it is a psychological ethics or moral proposition.it is focus on how we understand and what we need .we talk about what is right and what is wrong.

Normative Ethics- it is related with ethical action.ie examines standard for rightness and wrongness of actions.

Applied Ethics- it is a discipline of ethics that attempts to apply ethical theories to realize situation such as engg.

Ethics ,bio ethics ,geo ethics public service ethics and business or economic ethics.

Descriptive ethics- descriptive ethics is a value free approach to ethics which defines a social science rather than humanity ,this is a major concept of sociology and political science.

II. A CONSIDERATION ON BUSINESS ETHICS

A Consideration on business ethics requires a prior consideration of the domain of ethics, per se. This, unlike mathematics, is not an exact science. Resolving an ethical problem requires the analysis of particular circumstances and the study of specific facts.

In the business world, ethics often are displaced by greed when there is a periodic frenzy of rising stock market prices. Inevitably, a steep downturn then inflicts losses on investors and on businesses with a concomitant reduction in the work force. An excessive competitive spirit tends to induce unethical business practices so the business world becomes a battlefield where the normal rules are flouted, skirted or simply disregarded. The ensuing instability is bad for the economy and for the government.

Who is better placed than oneself to take care of one's own needs and desire?

Nevertheless, if self-seeking wreaks great harm to the general good in the process of bringing advantage to the individual, the imbalance must be redressed. It is not only painful but inefficient to live in a society where there are no ethics, law and order. Worse, if individuals or businesses become steeped in unethical practices, this trend generally engulfs the political

world as well. At this point, the quality of democracy languishes and the citizens lose faith in their institutions and their elected officials. Understanding of problems of business ethics can be addressed through a series of questions which offer different perspectives on the subject.

The first question relates to the origins of ethics - whether they come from religion, philosophy, the laws of nature, scientific study, study of political theory relating to ethical norms created in society or other fields of knowledge.

Ans A majority of individuals brought up in a monotheistic cultural background - Jews, Christians and Muslims - believe that standards of ethical conduct come from God by revelation. For example, according to the Christian and Jewish religions, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on a mountain top. For Muslims, Muhammad experienced revelations from Allah which were later written in beautiful prose and poetry in the Quran (Koran). Buddhists believe that Buddha found the proper way to virtue and to respect others through meditation without the direct intervention of a monotheistic god.

For the purpose of this analysis, the source of ethics is less important than discovering the right rules, at least some of which can evolve with time. However, since many are a product of evolution, traditional ethics could be more robust than new ones we might generate. As we have seen from the above discussion, there are many possible sources of ethics. Each source has probably contributed to ethical conduct.

The second question goes to the issue of whether ethics vary at different times and in different cultures.

Ans Beginning in the last half of the 20th Century, the human race has become aware that its economic activities on Earth are causing major threats to our environment, to our health and survival as well as to all life on our planet. Some businesses, but not all, have recognized their ethical duty to take special measures to lead them to sustainable social and economic development in their activities. These new ethical duties not only concern the present population on Earth but, perhaps more importantly, future generations. These are new ethical duties that have arisen as Man has begun to have a serious effect on the Earth's ecological systems.

In previous centuries, the slave trade was not generally considered unethical by most of the population but ethics have changed.

The third question asked is whether ethics vary depending upon who we are dealing with -- with a friend or foe.

Ans Many of the Crusaders were Christians who followed the ethical teaching of Saint Bernard. However, in order to recover the Holy Land, which could open to them the gates to Heaven, they killed many Jews and Muslims. They did not consider their conduct unethical.

Some Muslim extremists today seem to adopt a similar course of conduct with their Holy War, the "Jihad" against Jews, Christians and secular governments in countries with Muslim populations. History teaches us that violence, war and terrorism do not necessarily have religion since they are used by religious believers or by people without religion. Plundering others apparently has often seemed easier than acquiring wealth by working. Racial hatred, social discrimination and conflicts over territory are often a contributing factor to war and violence.

One seems to find more ethical conduct practiced among in-groups, like families and members of the same community, where ethical conduct is taught and enforced, rather than toward outsiders and foreigners. Outsiders and foreigners are often hated because they do not have the same religion or culture and are sometimes seen as trying to impose their will on a community or compete for the same territory. However, one should also note that violence

The fourth question asks whether different ethical conduct depend on the subject matter involved.

Ans Many professions have deontological rules, specially designed to fit their activity. Governments and associations for medical doctors, lawyers, architects make and enforce their special rules. Some have complained that while the American Bar Association (ABA) promulgates rules for lawyers in the United States, they also promote the best interests of the profession. Therefore these rules are not always in the public interest.

The fifth question relates to how should ethical rules be transmitted and formalized and how they have been formalized to date.

Ans Ethical rules are transmitted orally in families and schools, through sacred texts, church ceremonies, books on philosophy and other ways.

One also finds ethical principles stated in declarations and other documents. The Declaration of Human Rights

was signed by members of the United Nations in 1948, based in part on the Bill of Rights in the amendments to the United States Constitution, the French Rights of Man indicated in the preamble to the French Constitution of 1958 and on the French Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789. Many laws, constitutions and international treaties and other statements of principles (soft law) have ethical content.

The sixth question is whether or not certain activities or businesses are unethical by nature in whole or in part. It also considers whether the corporate institution can function as an ethical entity since it was designed to generate profit.

Ans If "the love of money is the root of all evil"¹⁷, then, since the primary objective of business is to make money, are all businesses unethical? Or does the love of money only become sinful if it is excessive and leads to improper conduct relating to others? In the Sermon on the Mount it is stated that one cannot serve God and Mammon¹⁸. But see "Render into Cesar what is Cesar's and into God's what is God's", Mark 12:17. This last quote, according to some Christians, is the basis for secularism separating religion from worldly materialistic activities. In this regard, it is interesting to note that some Churches have accumulated immense fortunes. In the U.S. some large Churches are managed like commercial businesses.

The seventh question is whether or not ethical conduct pays in a business context. For most people, ethics are related to justice. The eighth question deals with this subject.

Ans This question is difficult to answer because it is difficult to prove one way or the other since unethical conduct is usually hidden. However, in major business enterprises there are few open advocates for unethical dealing because it adversely affects the business's reputation and can create large potential risks for the business. There have been many examples in the press where unethical conduct has been extremely costly to countries and many individuals. Recent events in the US relating to Enron and World Com are examples where the real financial condition of the business was not apparent to investors because of lack of transparency and questionable accounting practices which resulted in overstating earnings.

What is the relation of ethics to justice?

Ans Justice can be harsh and severe like in the old testament. Or it can be more merciful and human. In either case it is closely related to ethics. They are adjacent concepts. A company's reputation depends in part upon how it applies social justice in dealing with employees and other third parties.

A leading scholar has written that the concept of justice arose in ancient Greece²⁵ when there were conflicts and disputes between the noblemen and the common people when the latter's economic position improved

Can ethics be enforced?

Ans Minimum ethics tend to be enforced by law where the law is effectively enforced. With human nature being imperfect i.e. selfish, envious, greedy, avaricious, violent and not always intelligent, even so-called civilized societies need minimum rules of conduct enforced in practice by some authority.

Public opinion through boycotts or unfavorable publicity in the press can bring pressure on those in violation of ethical principles as well.

Greenpeace objected when Shell planned to sink its petroleum drilling platform into the Baltic Sea. Threats of boycotts of Shell products by the public convinced the company to dispose of the rig in another more expensive way, which it claimed was more harmful to the environment since the rig contained a minimum amount of petroleum products. Cooperation with Greenpeace at an earlier stage might have avoided this environmental

conflict.

Investors in ethical funds have begun to apply pressure by withholding investment in companies in businesses considered unethical like tobacco, the arms industry and by imposing other ethical criteria on investment companies.

Peer pressure by other companies also induces companies to be more ethical even though it is to a certain extent "window-dressing". Competitive pressures motivate companies to keep up with their peers in term of human relations and environmental conduct.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 2011 UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

In recent years, the United Nations has accelerated its interaction with the private sector and with its major element, the business community. This co-operation results from the important role played by the economy (and so by business) in socio-economic development at all levels – community, national, regional and global.

This overview has sketched the wide range of social engagement involving cooperation with the private sector. Each type of alliance brings its specific benefits. In this regard, the private sector is no exception. For the UN, benefits may include greater visibility for the Organization's goals and programmes, the further diversification of partnerships, notably those with leading country and community actors, and the potential for enhanced funding support. For International, national and local business, partnership with the UN demonstrates commitment to social engagement and responsibility and to business ethics as well as support for sustainable human development through economic stability and growth. Such action can add considerable prestige to the image and impact of the private sector at country and community contexts. However, this activity, which is undeniably invaluable, has a more complex dimension related to its ethical nature. This opens a debate as to how ethics must underpin business activity so that business ethics are respected and upheld. This will be explored in the next section of the paper.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH

This section will consider how academic research and research universities are significant catalysts in promoting both ethical conduct and social engagement and comment impact of this research.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Consideration of the questions raised in this paper illustrates the complexity of the subject of business ethics. Businesses vie for clients and try to win in the struggle with their competition. But even the law places limits on too aggressive competition, i.e. rules against unfair competition which in France prohibit stealing a significant number of employees of a competitor so the competitor's business is seriously disorganized. Being ethical in business is Despite these difficulties, the public now more and more expects the private sector to fulfill its ethical and environmental obligations because it has become a most important actor in modern society with a direct and serious impact on the public interest. Public opinion expects it to produce a good result in all three of its balance sheets – financial success, ethics, social justice and sustainable development.

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