

Social Responsibility

Corporate organizations have social responsibility to all of their 'stakeholders'. This includes the well-being of the employees and their unions, socially responsible investors, customers, dealers, suppliers, local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, and the business owners and managers. Besides showing concern with employee relations and other internal organizational matters, the organization is concerned with

- (a) how the product/project is marketed, used or misused, how it fails, and how it is disposed or discarded. The ways in which the used battery cells and computers are discarded have been debated in the engineers' forums.
- (b) protecting the work environment during manufacture as well as the external environment during transport or use
- (c) training the disadvantaged or physically-challenged workers
- (d) subcontracting and hiring practices, and
- (e) contribution to local communities to enrich their cultural, social, and civic life. It may be even compensatory against the harm to environment (e.g., planting trees).

Various types of responsibilities such as causal, moral, and legal are distinguished through appropriate examples, as shown below:

<i>Events</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
1. A stray cattle on the rail track caused the derailment of goods train	(a) Although cattle is the cause, the owner of the cattle is morally responsible (b) For letting the cattle go astray on the railway track, that is trespassing the owner is legally responsible
2. A child playing with (safety?) matches causes fire	Although the child is the cause, the parents who who have left the match box within the reach of the child, are morally responsible
3. (a) Seth was driving a car. He failed to stop at the red signal, which caused an accident (b) Suppose he applied brakes, but they failed	(a) Seth is causally responsible (b) Seth has been negligent of maintenance of brakes

Accountability

Accountability means:

1. The capacity to understand and act on moral reasons
2. Willingness to submit one's actions to moral scrutiny and be responsive to the assessment of others. It includes being answerable for meeting specific obligations, i.e., liable to justify (or give reasonable excuses) the decisions, actions or means, and outcomes (sometimes unexpected), when required by the stakeholders or by law.
3. Conscientiousness: It means:
 - (a) Being sensitive to full range of moral values and responsibilities and
 - (b) The willingness to upgrade their skills, put efforts, and reach the best balance possible among those considerations, and
4. Blameworthy/Praiseworthy: Own the responsibility for the good or wrong outcomes. Courage to accept the mistakes will ensure success in the efforts in future.

The terms 'corporate responsibility' and 'corporate accountability' have different meanings. Corporate responsibility emphasizes the voluntary compliance of a particular organization to particular codes of conduct. The groups of individuals in the organization are assigned responsibilities through policy manuals and flow charts. The corporate accountability means holding all the corporate organizations accountable to the public, employees, customers, and stock holders, as empowered by rules and laws

Obligation

The safety and other obligations of professional engineers are justifiable based on the following aspects.

5. Moral obligations through laws and enforced codes of conduct
6. Through membership of professional society
7. Contractual agreement with the employers
8. By entry into career as engineer upon graduation from Engineering institutions and
9. By special employment agreements or agreement with professional societies.

The *paramount obligation* means, giving importance to the safety, health, and welfare of the public in performing the professional duties

Uses and Criteria

The ethical theories are useful in many respects.

10. In understanding moral dilemma. They provide clarity, consistency, systematic and comprehensive understanding.
11. It provides helpful practical guidance in moral issues towards the solution.
12. Justifying professional obligations and decisions, and
3. In relating ordinary and professional morality.

Different *criteria* may be applied for evaluating various ethical theories and deciding upon the

best.

1. The theory must be clear and (coherent) formulated with concepts that are logically connected.
2. It must be internally consistent, i.e., none of its principles conflicts with any other
3. The theory and its defense must depend, only upon facts.
4. It must organize basic moral values in systematic and comprehensive manner. It is to fix priority of values and provide guidance in all situations
5. It must provide guidance compatible with our moral convictions (judgments) about concrete situations. For example, if an ethical theory says that it is all right for engineers to make explosive devices without the informed consent of the public, we can conclude that the theory is inadequate.

Theories and judgments are continually adjusted to each other until we reach a reflective

equilibrium. Most of the theories converge towards the welfare of the humanity. The duty ethics and right ethics differ in great extent on their emphasis. But they remain complementary always