Types of inquiry, moral delimas and moral anotomy

Types of inquiry

The three types of inquiries are:

*Normative inquiries

*Conceptual inquiries

*Factual inquiries.

Normative Inquiries:

•Normative inquiries are useful to identify the values that guide the individuals and groups in taking a decision.

•Normative inquiries are meant for identifying and establishing the morally describe norms or standards that are used as guide to assess something as good or bad.

•Generally, normative questions are about what ought to be? and what is good?

Some examples are:

•When and why the engineers have obligations to their employers, their clients and the general public?

•When should the engineers attempt for whistle blowing ?

•Why must some engineering information kept confidential?

•What are the moral rights an engineer should possess in order to fulfill their professional obligations?

•How an engineer can protect the public safety in a given situation?

From the above questions, it is clear that the goal of normative inquiries is justifying many moral judgments.

Conceptual Inquiries

•These inquiries are useful in clarifying the meaning of concepts, principles and issues in engineering ethics.

•In other words, the aim of conceptual inquiries is to clarify the meaning of key ideas and issues, possibly expression by single word or by statements.

■Examples of conceptual inquiries:

•What is safety?

•What is meant by risk?

•How safety is related to risk?

•What is a bribe? When a gift becomes a bribe?

•What is a profession?

Factual Inquiries

Factual inquiries are also known as 'descriptive or exploratory' inquiries. These inquiries are helpful to provide facts required for understanding and resolving value issues.

Researchers and engineers use these inquiries to get various information such as the history of engineering profession, the effectiveness of professional societies in promoting moral conduct, the procedures used in risk-benefit analysis and psychological profiles of engineers.

The above-obtained information through factual inquiries provides an understanding of the background conditions that generate moral problems. And these factual inquiries are helpful in solving moral problems by using alternative ways of solutions. Thus factual inquiries are helpful in understanding the business, social and political realities in which the company operates.

Examples of Factual Inquiries:

•What are the laws enforced in the intellectual property rights law recently?

•What are the procedures used in making risk assessments?

•In what way, the 'code of ethics' of engineering societies inspires and guided the engineer's obligations?

•What is the validity period of a patented product?

2.4 Moral dilemmas

Moral dilemmas are situations in which two or more moral obligations, duties, rights, goods or ideals that comes into conflict with each other. Moral dilemmas occurs due to:

•Problem of vagueness.

•Problem of conflicting reasons.

•Problem of disagreement.

•**Steps to overcome moral dilemma:**

•Identify the moral factors and reasons.

•Collecting all the available moral considerations.

•Ranking the above, collected moral considerations.

•Making factual inquiries.

•Inviting for discussions, suggestions from colleagues, friends, etc.

•Taking the final decision.

2.5 Moral autonoMy

It is the ability to think critically and independently about moral issues and apply this normal thinking to situations that arise during the professional engineering. It is concerned with the independent attitude of an individual related to ethical issues.

Factor influencing the moral concern:

•Atmosphere in which a person is brought up.

•One's relationship with friends and relatives.

•One's interaction with his neighbour.

•One's family structure and the family's economy.

•Influence of religious institutions.

•Influence of educational institutions.

•Influence of media and social events.

Skills required to improve Moral Autonomy:

1)Proficiency in recognizing moral problems and issues in engineering.

2)Skills in understandings, clarifying and critically evaluating the arguments, which are against the moral issues.

3)The ability to form consistent and complete perspectives on the basis of relevant facts.

4)The ability to make imaginative and creative alternative solutions under difficult situations.

5)Sensitivity to valid difficulties and delicacies. That is sensitivity to others views, problems and sufferings.

6)Adequate knowledge to use the common ethical language so as to support or defend one's moral views with others.

7)The ability of understanding the importance of maintaining one's moral integrity.