



# **SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**An Autonomous Institution  
Coimbatore – 35**

Accredited by NBA – AICTE and Accredited by NACC – UGC with 'A++ Grade

Approved by AICTE , New Delhi and Affiliated to Anna University , Chennai.

## **DEPARTMENT OF FOOD TECHNOLOGY**

# **19GET201 Professional Ethics and Human Values**

## **Types of inquiry**



## TYPES OF INQUIRIES

The three types of inquiries, in solving ethical problems are: normative inquiry, conceptual inquiry, and factual or descriptive inquiry.

1. Normative Inquiry
  2. Conceptual Inquiry
  3. Factual or Descriptive Inquiry
- The three types of inquiries are discussed below to illustrate the differences and preference.



# 1. Normative Inquiry

It seeks to identify and justify the morally-desirable norms or standards that should guide individuals and groups. It also has the theoretical goal of justifying particular moral judgments. Normative questions are about what ought to be and what is good, based on moral values. For example,

1. How far does the obligation of engineers to protect public safety extend in any given situation?
2. When, if ever, should engineers be expected to blow whistle on dangerous practices of their employers?
3. Whose values ought to be primary in making judgment about acceptable risks in design for a public transport system or a nuclear plant? Is it of management, senior engineers, government, voters or all of them?
4. When and why is the government justified in interfering with the organisations?
5. What are the reasons on which the engineers show their obligations to their employees or clients or the public?



## 2. Conceptual Inquiry

It is directed to clarify the meaning of concepts or ideas or principles that are expressed by words or by questions and statements. For example,

- (a) What is meant by safety?
- (b) How is it related to risk?
- (c) What is a bribe?
- (d) What is a profession?

When moral concepts are discussed, normative and conceptual issues are closely interconnected.



### 3. Factual or Descriptive Inquiry

It is aimed to obtain facts needed for understanding and resolving value issues. Researchers conduct factual inquiries using mathematical or statistical techniques. The inquiry provide important information on business realities, engineering practice, and the effectiveness of professional societies in fostering moral conduct, the procedures used in risk assessment, and psychological profiles of engineers. The facts provide not only the reasons for moral problems but also enable us to develop alternative ways of resolving moral problems. For example,

1. How were the benefits assessed?
2. What are procedures followed in risk assessment?
3. What are short-term and long-term effects of drinking water being polluted?