

Ethical questions on charity

Sociology



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Ethical Questions on Charity Most of the people of poor nations lack adequate healthcare, food, and safe drinking water. According to the UNICEF, more than 10 million children die every year due to poverty related causes. In this context, philanthropic giants like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller donated billions of dollars to reduce global poverty, disease and premature death. The global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization which is highly supported by Gate's Foundation claims that it has already prevented nearly 1. 7 million future deaths. Although these so called philanthropists have donated considerable amounts, such level of help raises several ethical questions.

One argument is that rich people give away money either to ease their consciences or to enhance publicity. For instance, Kirkpatrick the senior editor at Fortune Magazine states that Bill Gates' donation meant to improve his and his company's image which had been declined due to the antitrust problems. When we come to know that someone has given away huge amounts for helping others, it challenges our own moral perception.

However, the real cause of an act is the significant aspect that determines the ethical value of a philanthropic act. If the act is to compensate past misdeeds of an individual, it has no relevance to moral value. Thomas Hobbs' egoistic theory of human behavior suggests that we all act according to our own interests. However, according to Immanuel Kant, an act has moral value only if it is done out of a sense of duty. Another moral question is that to what extent the rich should give help. Obviously it is a serious moral breakdown when people with abundant income do not contribute their fair share toward relieving global poverty.