

Philosophy- business ethics



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Norman Bowie's arguments for the ethical and moral responsibilities of an organization are discussed in this article. What is really important to here is the Bowie's arguments are based on the respective roles of different stakeholders within the society and how they shall approach to the moral and ethical problems being faced by the society itself. Bowie argued that the assumption of considering a business responsible for the environmental disasters as well as its damage shall be viewed from the perspectives of the different roles. If the role of the business is to protect the environment than a business shall be held accountable on ethical, moral as well as legal grounds however, if this is not the case, an organization shall only be bound by the violation of laws rather than violation of its implicit responsibilities.

The businesses are only responsible to the extent of the law and it is the responsibility of an organization to follow the law in its true spirit however, externalities can result into significant deviation in the roles and responsibilities of the organizations. Bowie's arguments are convincing due to the fact that there is an implicit difference between a consumer and a citizen. Segoff's distinction between a consumer and a citizen is largely based on the ability of each to derive the value and is correlated with the preferences of both. However, Bowie does not make this distinction because a consumer and a citizen are considered as both the mass consumers of the goods and services produced by the organization. The distinction made by Segoff is firmly based on the assumption that an individual at one point in time can be a consumer as well as a supporter of the environment also. This potentially overlapping role of a consumer and a citizen therefore results into the institutional change which can ultimately force the authorities and government to pass laws which can protect the environment and redefine

the role of organization with the external world.

Bowie's ideas are however slightly different because of the distinction made between the legal and ethical responsibilities of the organization. Further, Bowie also attempted to define the role of organization from the perspective of its core competencies i. e. if an organization's role is to protect the environment than any violations shall be the moral as well as legal responsibility of the organization however, if it is not than an organization shall not morally and ethically held accountable. What is also important to consider that Bowie's idea of citizen and a consumer is not overlapping as against the Segoff's because Segoff's idea, at point in time, do indicate that a consumer, while enjoying the personal comforts by using the goods and services of the organization, can actually take on the role of a citizen also. This overlapping of roles however is not evident in Bowie's work. The only role Bowie conceive off for an organization is not to hinder the political legislation process however, it does not have any moral compulsion to protect the environment.