

Chapter 10

Ethics and International Business

If we examine the relationship between morality and religion, we shall see that different religions generate different moral codes. A society in which there is a dominant religion or ideology can be expected to produce a reasonably uniform set of values. In modern Europe, capitalism flourishes with its emphasis on private ownership, a competition and the profit motive. A country's success is measured in terms of its GNP and consumption is encouraged by means of advertising that attempts to stimulate wants and boost up demand. The means of production results from a system in which the investment of money is rewarded by interest. This interest is not earned by the investor through his immediate labour.

Today's prevailing norm maintains that work is good, ambition should be encouraged and unemployment is undesirable. At the level to personal ethics, certain ethical standards are maintained and reasonable standards of integrity are expected. Sexual harassment, racial discrimination, bribery, industrial espionage, embezzlement, breaches of trust—are all actions that fall short of ideals that are expected in the business world.

As business has become increasingly internationalised, westerners take business partners from different cultures who subscribe to different ethical systems. European countries and the USA have many migrant workers from India, Africa, the Middle East and the Far East and as migrant workers settle a new cosmopolitan generation of business people emerges.

The question is whether different cultures have different value systems. It may be, for example, that all cultures do not condemn
