Business, Society & Ethics

Fall 2023

Moral Challenges at the Base of the Pyramid

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, it is *information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Karnani, A. (2009, Winter). Romanticizing the poor. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, 7*(1), 38-43.

Questions

As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. Aneel Karnani is skeptical about the morality of growing markets at the bottom of the pyramid (BOP).

    What is his argument justifying his claim that "just being poor hinders people's ability to make good decisions" (p41)?
2. Karnani claims that "poor people suffer disproportionately for their bad choices" (p41).

    What is his argument justifying this claim?
3. According to Karnani, what is the proper role of business to help reduce poverty? What is the government's proper role?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

    Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.