



# **SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**(An Autonomous Institution)**

**COIMBATORE-35**

**Accredited by NBA-AICTE and Accredited by NAAC – UGC with A+ Grade  
Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai**



**DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING**

**COURSE NAME: 16GE301 Professional Ethics**

**III YEAR / V SEMESTER**

**Unit 1 – Engineering Ethics**

**Topic 1: Moral Issues and Inquiry**





# What We'll Discuss

TOPIC OUTLINE



Variety of Moral Issues  
Types of Inquiry



# CASE STUDY



- A software engineer discovers that a colleague has been downloading restricted files that contain trade secrets about a new product that the colleague is not personally involved with. He knows the colleague has been having financial problems, and he fears the colleague is planning to sell the secrets or perhaps leave the company and use them in starting up his own company. Company policy requires him to inform his supervisor, but the colleague is a close friend. **Should he first talk with the friend about what he is doing, or should he immediately inform his supervisor?**



# MORAL ISSUES



- It would be relevant to know why and how do moral issues (problems) arise in a profession or why do people behave unethically?
- The reasons for people including the employer and employees, behaving unethically may be classified into three categories:
  1. Resource Crunch
  2. Opportunity
  3. Attitude



# Resource Crunch



- Poor attitude of the employees set in due to
  - (a) Low morale of the employees because of dissatisfaction and downsizing,**
  - (b) Absence of grievance redressal mechanism,**
  - (c) Lack of promotion or career development policies or denied promotions,**
  - (d) Lack of transparency,**
  - (e) Absence of recognition and reward system, and**
  - (f) Poor working environments.**



# Opportunity



- Double standards or behaviour of the employers towards the employees and the public.
- Management projecting their own interests more than that of their employees.
- Emphasis on results and gains at the expense of the employees
- Management by objectives, without focus on empowerment and improvement of the infrastructure.



# Attitude



Poor attitude of the employees set in due to

- (a) Low morale of the employees because of dissatisfaction and downsizing,**
- (b) Absence of grievance redressal mechanism,**
- (c) Lack of promotion or career development policies or denied promotions,**
- (d) Lack of transparency,**
- (e) Absence of recognition and reward system, and**
- (f) Poor working environments.**



# Moral Problems



## Examples

- Faculty construction equipment
- Applying for a permit to operate a nuclear power plant
- Chemical plant dumping wastes in a landfill
- Advertisements from an electronic company for a product which is not ready for sale

Engineer might be faced with contrary opinions

- Within the firm
- From the client
- From other firms within the industry

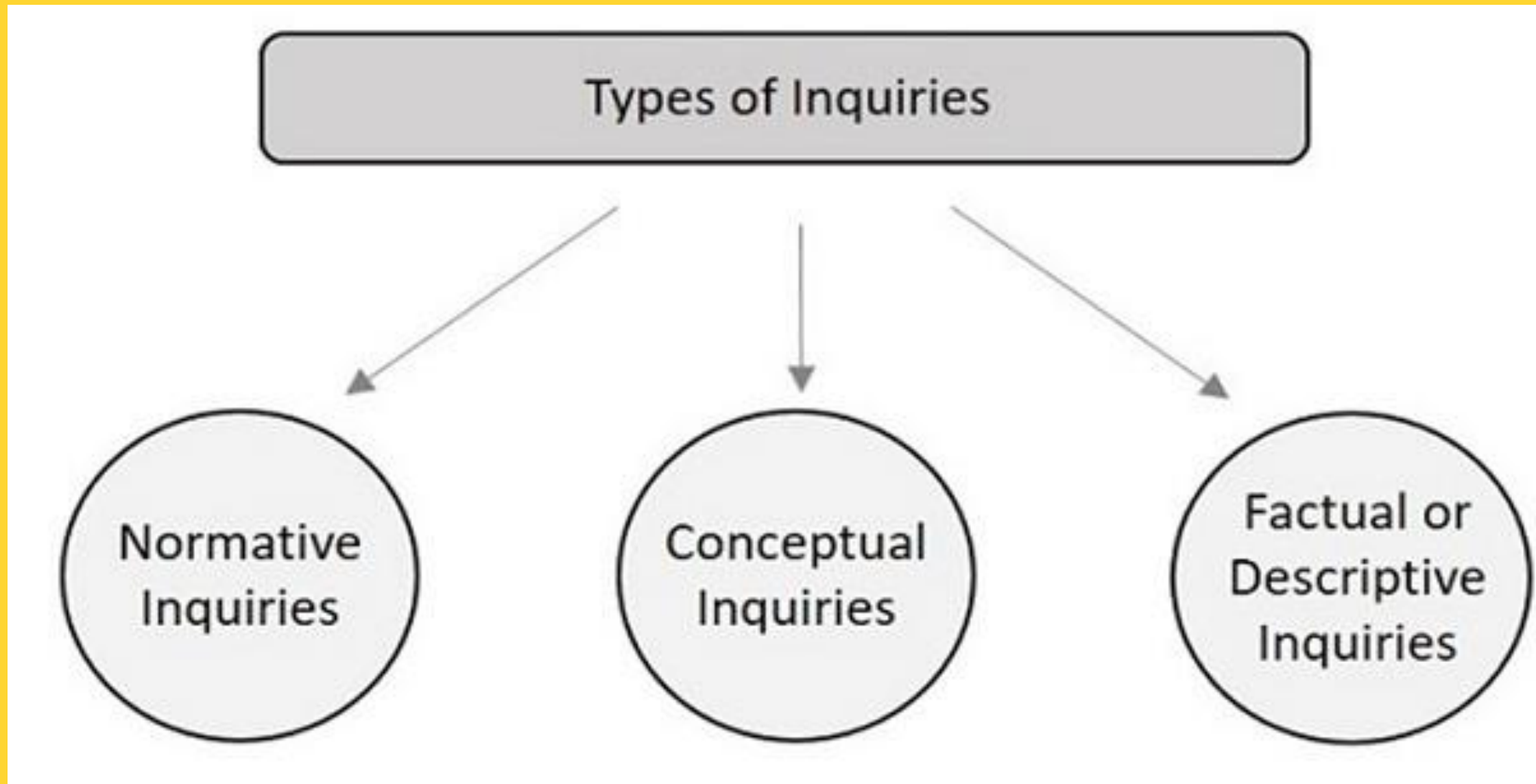




# INQUIRY



The issues can be resolved by following an investigation procedure, step by step in order to have a clear understanding towards the issue. Here we have three different types of inquiries.





# Normative Inquiry



It seeks to identify and justify the morally-desirable norms or standards that should guide individuals and groups. 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?
4. When and why is the government justified in interfering with the organisations?



# Conceptual Inquiry



- Normative Inquiry refers to the description that describes what one ought to do under a specific circumstance. 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.



# Factual or Descriptive Inquiry

- Factual Inquiry or the descriptive inquiry help to provide the facts for understanding and finding solutions to the value based issues. The engineer has to conduct factual inquiries by using scientific techniques.
- 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?
  4. Who conducted the tests on materials?





RECALL TIME

ASSESSMENT  
TIME



# THANK YOU