

The Ethical Healthcare Paradigm with in Corporate Framework: CSR for Equitable Access to Drugs

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Abstract : The pharmaceutical industry today is a multi-billion dollar business and yet disadvantages people in many corners of the globe who are still dying in large numbers from curable illnesses for lack of access to drugs. The astronomical prices of essential and life-saving drugs is not just an economic problem that can be settled through clever market strategies but is an ethical issue, given the accumulated wealth of today's humanity and the sense of global justice that it increasingly comes to share. In this paper, I make a very practical argument for what I shall call 'the ethical healthcare paradigm', which, I propose, can replace the economic paradigm that can still drive the healthcare sector without creating spillover effects on the market. Taking off from the ethical-philosophical argument for recognizing every individual's right to capability to be healthy, I shall come to the focused practical proposal of the cost-rationalization and universal availability of essential, life-saving drugs through the undertaking of research and development funding for drug innovation by the business establishment as such in terms of the concept of CSR. The paper will first expose the concepts of basic and fundamental capabilities in relation to education and health, after which it will focus on the right to capability to be healthy of every person. In the third section, it will discuss the 'ethical healthcare paradigm' as opposed to the economic health paradigm and will argue that the patient will have to be considered the primary stakeholder of this paradigm or the very 'subject' of healthcare. The next section will be on an ethical-historical critique of the pharmaceutical industry's profit driven economism. The section after that will look at the business operation and the stages in the life cycle of a drug that comes to the market in order to understand the risks, strengths and problems of the pharmaceutical industry. Finally, the paper will discuss the concept of CSR in relation to the ethical healthcare paradigm in order to propose CSR funding in research and development for innovation on drugs so that life-saving drugs can be made available to every sick person cost-effectively.

Keywords : capability approach, healthcare, CSR, patient

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