African Journal of Business Management Vol. 6(1), pp. 18-25,11 January, 2012
Available online at http://www.academicjournals.org/AJBM
DOI: 10.5897/AJBM11.2438
ISSN 1993-8233 ©2012 Academic Journals

Review

Spheres of responsibilities: An assessment of community assistance issues in Ghanaian mining communities

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Accepted 31 October, 2011

Business assistance to communities remains an important component of corporate social responsibility (CSR) because the notion we carry today is that, being a responsible corporate citizen means participating as an active member of the community in which they do business. However, the concept of community assistance confronts difficult balances and demands a lot of tactfulness and moral judgement. The article talk about issues of how mining companies offer support to security agencies. It notes that although companies' community assistance programmes have served as a basis to address the needs of disadvantaged communities and even some malfunctioning state organisations in Ghana, it has also led to some concerns, especially over gestures made to members of the security services, who are regarded as apologists of the companies by local communities.

Key words: Stakeholder, community, mining, security agencies, corporate social responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Expectations about the role of business in society have changed considerably in view of the changes in the context of foreign investment. In many developing countries, aspects of the state's functional role have been compromised in a bid to secure the interest of investors (Bastida, 2006). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank engineered reform programmes that many developing countries embraced in the 1980s and early 1990s meant states were barred from directly involving themselves in commercial large-scale mining ventures (Coakley et al., 2001). They were subsequently made to focus on industry regulation and promotion while private companies took the lead in operating, managing and owning mineral enterprises.

The reforms also ensured that state funds were dramatically cut which obviously affected the delivery of services especially to rural areas. The ability of the state to bring 'development' to such areas was therefore minimised and impaired. This arrangement has, to some extent, had implications on the ability and/or willingness of countries to pursue their own agenda, especially in enacting and enforcing stricter environmental standards in the sector (Bastida, 2006). In essence, as Harrison (2001) indicates, states have since have proved to be very weak, both institutionally and socially in spite of their pretensions to the contrary.

Corporate bodies, meanwhile, have been gradually consolidating their positions as key components for the generation of progress and development in many developing countries in the absence of the state's ability to do so (Chang, 2004). The on-going shift in power from the public to the private sector has meant that societies at large, now look up to the business sector to help solve social, environmental and economic problems that were once considered solely in the province of government. With the private sector emerging as a principal engine for development in many countries, the sector now has increasingly assumed an influential role (Krugman, 1995). The companies have, therefore, become such a significant factor in the social system and as Sethi (1975) warns, unless they accept their social responsibilities and discharge them effectively, they may well find themselves embroiled in the local politics of their area of operation. Matten and Crane (2005) have acknowledged the significance of globalisation in reshaping the demands being placed on corporations. According to them, corporations, as one of the group of actors most central to globalisation, and indeed one of its principal drivers, have tended to partly take over (or are expected to take over) certain functions with regard to the protection, facilitation, and enabling of citizens' rights, which incidentally, were formerly placed solely on governments. However, the recourse to this role, in some cases, has been met with suspicions by some stakeholders, especially local communities, whose mistrust of business concerns remains considerable. The mistrust has tended to negate the outcome of some well-intended programmes meant to facilitate the development of local communities.

The article, which dwells on the Ghanaian mining sector, argues for openness and frankness in dealings with stakeholders. It recognises that improved outcomes can be achieved when extractive companies engage with stakeholders in a manner that does not raise suspicions especially in an environment that has fuelled much mistrust and mutual recriminations.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Corporations are facing increasing pressures to respond to their stakeholders, with the pressure becoming even greater since the recent discovery of unethical and illegal behaviour in the business world (Clement, 2005). Corporate social responsibility (CSR), defined by Jones (1980) as 'the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stockholders and beyond that prescribed by law or union contract', clearly has 'stakeholders' at its core. The literature on stakeholder theory, which has accumulated for some years now, holds several clear-cut lessons for today's business leaders (Clement, 2005). Its importance lies in the fact that it seeks to address the often overlooked sociological question of how organisations affect society (Hinings and Greenwood, 2003).

Freeman's (1984) seminal work which ushered in the stakeholder's theory in the mid-1980s was meant to offer an approach to strategy that recognised the immense contribution of all stakeholders in order to achieve superior performance for business. It spelt out the need for business entities to identify and understand the interests of their stakeholders. Freeman has argued that monitoring and satisfying the interests of relevant stakeholders ultimately leads to improved corporate performance and sustainability. There is immense support for this contention (Waddock and Graves, 1997; Wheeler and Sillanpaa, 1997; Clarkson, 1995).

The notion of stake holding in business is based on a sophisticated view of the company as a social vehicle whose speed and steering are dependant upon careful reading of the road signs and the behaviour of other users (Wheeler and Sillanpaa, 1997). It is meant to keep the interests of different stakeholders in balance. As Donaldson and Preston (1995) point out, 'stakeholder management requires, as its key attribute, simultaneous attention to the legitimate interest of all legitimate stakeholders.' It can be reiterated that 'stakeholder theory' has gained currency of late because many business firms have found the need to develop much interest in business ethics policies. This is in direct contrast to the profit maximisation position which proponents like Milton Friedman have argued as the sole responsibility of business (Beauchamp and Bowie, 2001).

A fundamental thesis of stakeholder-based arguments is that it takes into account the interest of all constituents. Yet, determining what the interests of all stakeholders are and how to ensure their ultimate satisfaction remains very difficult to fulfil. The fact that different people want different things from their relationships with organisations makes it impossible to know with certainty what stakeholders want. Balancing stakeholder interests is, therefore, arguably the most critical of stakeholder principles as it represents the principal mechanism by which managers pay attention to, elicit and maintain the support of stakeholder groups with disparate needs and wants (Reynolds et al., 2006). Increasingly, it has also been found that meritocracy and the equitable distribution of organisational input and resources are perfectly consistent with managing for stakeholders (Phillips, 2004). Reynolds et al. (2006) have also demonstrated that balancing interests across decisions (instead of within decisions) tends to generate more instrumental value and is also seen as more ethical.

Stakeholder discussions often focus on allocating some measure of organisational value or outcome (Phillips, 2004). Examples of this are who gets how much money from the firm. However, as been conceded by Ryan and Schneider (2003), this is problematic because stakeholder groups can be heterogeneous or ambiguous. This ambiguity clearly presents some concerns to business as it becomes difficult to determine which stakeholders need the most attention and the extent to which this ought to be done.

Despite the ambiguity that this presents, many businesses, it seems, have found the wherewithal to implement CSR policies and practices in this present time and also sought to involve their stakeholders in their activities (Waddock, 2001). This ability to implement policies, upon a concept that remains ambiguous, raises a number of questions, especially as to how effective such policies could be in ensuring the level of fairness expected to guarantee that firm's value creation and societal licence.

Whereas Freeman (1984) suggests that the role of management is to balance the interests of stakeholders over time, it has been argued that the theory provides no basis for deciding between competing stakeholder interests (Kaler, 2006). Balancing such interests is therefore, a process of assessing, weighing and addressing the competing claims of those who have a stake in the actions of the organisation (Reynolds et al., 2006). Several researchers have examined these kinds of balancing behaviours and have provided many interesting insights (Burton and Dunn, 1996). Jensen (2002), for instance, has suggested that managers should look to the 'maximisation of the long-run value of the firm as the criterion for making the requisite tradeoffs among its stakeholders'. A position put forward by Beekun and Badawi (2005) is quite suggestive that the religiously-inclined could look to religion for guidance on how to balance stakeholder interests. Mitchell et al. (1997), meanwhile, proposed a model of stakeholder identification to help management identify the stakeholders it needs to focus on. The model also explained the relative importance of each stakeholder. They suggested three stakeholder features - power, legitimacy, and urgency which they argued can provide management with the ability to decide how and when to respond to their corporation's stakeholders.

The various suggestions are indicative of how difficult the trade-offs could be in balancing stakeholder interests. At best, there is the need for a careful profile of stakeholder groups to understand them better. Although, much research has addressed the question of balancing stakeholder interests, the lack of practicable heuristics remains problematic (Kaler, 2006). What is being bandied around now is the idea that 'wisdom' is essential in this determination (Baltes and Staudinger, 2000). But is it possible for a firm to help all its stakeholders without any recrimination from any quarter?

Given that social responsibility projects in communities should entail community interests, it is not always obvious and under what precise conditions business can pursue such projects that enhance their standing in local communities. This is because seeking solutions for issues designed to promote societal goals, often collides directly or indirectly with competing moral frameworks and with conflicting, powerful stakeholder interests. There is a lack of appreciation of the range of stakeholder relations that can occur; the extent to which such relations change over time as well as how and why such changes occur (Friedman and Miles, 2002). In particular, extremely negative and highly conflicting relations between organisations and stakeholders have been ignored, or perhaps not adequately explored hence the need to re-focus on this aspect which this article dwells on.

Whilst it can be argued that the behavioural intentions of helping others are important values that hold the key to the competitive advantage for business organisations, it must also be stressed that negative ones also cause fatalities for the organisation's survival (Lin, 2006). Investigating this aspect should be seriously recognised as a critical issue to both academics and business organisations in order to avoid or minimise highly conflicting relations between organizations and stakeholders since problems tend to arise when stakeholder groups feel the firms are playing groups against each other. This situation is what seems to prevail in the mining areas of Ghana.

GHANA'S MINING INDUSTRY

Ghana has a 'dual-mining' economy, comprised, on one hand, of a highly mechanised large-scale mining sector dominated by foreign multinationals, and on the other hand, a more rudimentary, labour-intensive small-scale mining sector populated by indigenous people. The impact of mining has been phenomenal since Ghana embarked on the privatisation of its state-owned mines in the 1980s (Hilson and Potter, 2005). More mines have now been opened with internationally renowned large-scale firms operating alongside other small-scale companies. Increases in the price of gold together with favourable government policies have culminated in increased investment by mining giants such as Newmont of USA, Golden Star Resources (GSR) and Gold Fields of South Africa. What is quite encouraging is that, there is more efficiency in the workings of the mines now, following the retrenchment of workers and the use of modern technology.

The social consequences have, however, soared. More people are now out of work and environmental degradation seems to be quite severe in the mining areas (Lassey, 2000). Many of the local inhabitants now have less land to farm on whilst others have resorted to illegal small-scale mining, to make ends meet. Some have died through this activity which is quite laborious and risky, others have been killed or injured from collapsing mine shafts, and yet many more could suffer the consequence of mercury exposure which they use extensively to purify gold (UNEP, 2000).

A wide range of issues has led to differences between the mining companies and the local communities. As Ballard and Banks (2003) indicate, "mineral resources…pose particular challenges to states in terms of their relationships with local communities in the vicinity of a project…(largely because of) the multiple and often conflicting interests being pursued by elements of the state." The mining firms detest the illegal mining which is often perpetuated on their concessions. But the illegal miners have always contested this stance, stressing that, they mine areas that are largely unused or often deemed uneconomical for operation by the large-scale mining companies. The large-scale mining companies, meanwhile, have been reluctant to relinquish unused portions of their concessions to them. In spite of the legal acceptability of their claim to the ownership of the concessions, an intense debate remains over why mining companies continue to have large unused tracts of land when the local inhabitants have less land to farm on or use for other ventures.

There have been serious implications for relations between the companies and local communities in view of the running battles between the mining firms and illegal miners. Small-scale mining remains a community activity and has long been in existence before the advent of large-scale commercial activity (Akabzaa, 2000). Local residents, therefore, have the tendency to support illegal mining, seeing the venture as the only way the residents can make a genuine living. Residents often insist that the relentless pursuit of a means to survive has led them to engage in illegal mining. It is through this that many have been able to fend for themselves.

Although, the illegal miners are often flushed out periodically by state security personnel, they usually come back afterwards, some with vengeance, to continue with their activities. In 2004, following clashes with security personnel, some illegal miners essentially declared war on the companies. They accused the companies of engaging the services of the state security apparatus and vowed to disrupt their operations. Similar threats have further driven the mining companies more into the arms of the state security apparatus in order to defend their corporate interests.

Since Ghana does not permit private security services to be armed, the companies usually rely on the police and the military to fend off trespassers. But this is exacerbated when the security forces react with excessive force in fending off the illegal miners. Local residents have provided a long catalogue of abuses allegedly perpetrated by state security forces during such incidents. A fact finding mission carried out by Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice Commission (CHRAJ), an independent body charged with enhancing the scale of good governance, in the mining area of Wassa West mining area in 2004, confirmed reports of arbitrary arrests, forceful evictions and other brutalities meted out to the local people.

Major companies like the AngloGold Ashanti, Golden Star Resources and Newmont Mining Corporation have been indicted for their alleged connivance in the injuries and deaths in the mining communities. In 2005, community activists accused Newmont, of complicity in brutalities meted out by the police. Newmont, on its part explained that, there was a threat to life and property in relation to Newmont arising from the conduct of the crowd. Newmont was therefore compelled to notify the police in order that peace could be restored in a timely fashion. Newmont did not in any way instruct the police on how they should handle the situation (Ghana News Agency, 11 November 2005).

In Prestea, an area within Ghana's main gold hub, the military have been used extensively on GSR's premises. Members of the community have complained that they have been at the receiving end of police/military operations ever since they indicated their opposition to the company's surface mining operations. In 2003, a demonstration against GSR turned bloody when seven people were shot at by the military, who were reportedly called in at the instance of the company. When such issues come to the fore, it becomes quite expedient for the companies to deflect the charges - their position is that responsibility for police/military operations rests with the security agencies and not the companies.

In view of their bitter encounters with the police/military, the mining communities now perceive the security agencies as adjuncts of the mining companies. Their confidence in the security apparatus has eroded considerably. Confronted with the severity of the problem, the former Irish President, Mrs Mary Anne Robinson on a visit to Ghana in 2006, urged mining companies to avoid any level of complicity in human rights violations.

FORGING A NEW RELATIONSHIP

In view of the afore-mentioned and other incidents, mining's reputation in Ghana has been quite depressing. Of late, mining concerns in Ghana have been wrestling with the need for a new image and a new relationship with the society at large following severe criticisms levelled against them. The impetus for this, according to Joyce and Thomson (2002), comes from the fact that in many countries, mining is no longer considered socially acceptable. They acknowledge that for mining companies to maintain shareholders, access to capital and, indeed, access to land, the industry has to break with its historical image of rape and run. A further significant development impacting on the mining industry, for instance, has been the growing reluctance of financial institutions to support mining-related projects that are seen as presenting significant social and/or environmental risks (Zemak, 2002).

Mining companies have begun to engage with the communities more prominently. Companies are now assisting communities with alternative livelihood schemes, roads, boreholes and other ventures. However, some mining communities dispute the motivation of the companies when it comes to the provision of social amenities. Their contention is that many of the projects like roads and clinics undertaken in their communities were put up in order to facilitate the operations of the companies and not because of the companies' magnanimity. Contestable as this might seem, it is important to reiterate that the relationship between mining companies and communities have created much discussion in recent times in view of their considerable differences.

GOVERNMENT CAPACITY AND PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT

In Ghana, it is generally accepted that the private sector is at the heart of the changes that are supposed to bring development to the country. Mining companies have been called upon to spearhead the drive towards the development of their host communities. The task has, become imminent in view of the state's lukewarm attitude towards rural development. In particular, the declining role of the state, the consequences of economic crisis and the neo-liberal policies foisted by international financial institutions have created a vacuum for which the companies have been asked to fill. IMF/World Bank conditionalities meant the government had to lift subsidies on health and education, quite detrimental to the people.

Adjustment policies as O'Brien et al. (2000) have noted, affected state-civil society relations in a number of ways. Firstly, structural adjustment resulted in the shrinking of the state especially in terms of the delivery of welfare services. Secondly, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) increased their provision of basic needs such as education and health as a result of diminished state provision. Harrison (2001) has supported O'Brien et al.'s (2000) assertion, stressing that a striking feature of recent trend in rural development is the demotion of the state's role as an agency for development.

Lately, some companies have even given the local police equipment like mobile phones; vehicles and other logistic support to enable the police maintain law and order in the mining communities. Not only has the assistance to security agencies stoked up embers, it has also opened up the concept of community assistance to questioning and brought to the fore, an aspect of CSR that has not been adequately debated. This sort of assistance has raised questions regarding the appropriateness or otherwise of providing support for security agencies in capricious areas. Local residents have argued that by equipping the security agencies with certain aids, the mining companies are reinforcing a conflictual situation in the already unstable mining areas. This is because of the likelihood of the donated equipment being used against them in their on-going battle with security personnel. Central to this is the question of whether CSR could be stretched to include the state security apparatus. What effect does such support have on security agencies and communities, especially when these communities perceive them to be apologists of the companies?

THE ROLE OF SECURITY FORCES IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Police-military/community conflicts are commonplace in many mining areas in Ghana. The police, in particular, are deemed to employ unorthodox methods to protect the interests of mining concerns. Whichever way one looks at it, the methods they adopt in going about their duties leave much to be desired. Abuses become an inevitable part of the process. The nature of these abuses range from assault to shootings that have led to deaths and injuries to the local people (Lassey, 2000).

Following representations made by NGOs in the country to the international community in May 2008, Ghana announced the discontinuation of military protection (this had been used alongside the police) for mining companies. The then Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Joe Ghartey admitted before the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva that, 'it is true that at a certain point, joint military and police teams were protecting mining companies driving away illegal miners, but that was a short term measure and we have reviewed it and we do not intend to continue (with) it' (Ghanaian Observer, 9 May 2008).

Whilst most stakeholders agree that improved policing should be the responsibility of the state, the more fundamental problem, however, is that the local police personnel lack the necessary capacity, will and resources to provide an effective solution to this problem.

Unlike the military, which is well funded by the Ministry of Defence, the Police Service is often under-resourced. Public trust and confidence in the police nationwide is low as a result of the involvement of some police personnel in corrupt practices. Questions about the independence and professionalism of local police have often been raised following reports of their ill-treatment of illegal miners allegedly at the instance of companies. Sometimes, the action taken against the local people seems high-handed (Lassey, 2000). In any case, many mining communities believe the police only act on the promptings of the companies. They also accuse the police of becoming willing tools in the hands of mining companies. As such, a legacy of mistrust now prevails between communities and the public security apparatus.

DISCUSSION

The support currently being offered by the mining concerns to the police has been met with a lot of scepticism because many communities believe the companies have a hidden agenda in assisting the police. But the support dwells on a well-founded CSR principle to offer a state organisation – the police (that is, a stakeholder) some leverage in order for them to carry out their objectives diligently. The question, however, arises as to whether such support would be used for its intended purpose only and or whether its use could spill over to an unintended function.

If we were to use an analogy like a donation of a telephone, for instance, we can say that a telephone is not a lethal weapon that can be used against the people. However, the communities' argument is that, it is not the equipment per se but the formation of that bond of friendship which derisively has the tendency to strengthen the police to act in very questionable ways. Since it is accepted that Ghanaians have a deep sense of appreciation for favours received (Sarpong, 1968), then there is a proper sequence of events to adhere to, in this instance. The gratitude is poured out by engaging in an act that would be beneficial to the donor. A gift, Sarpong (1968) argues, always calls for a reciprocal action in some form or the other, hence, the exception the communities have taken to the ‘donations’. They think any donation that can enhance the police to brutalise the people is inappropriate, especially when they believe the police could be easily influenced by the mining companies. It is no secret that state security agencies in mining communities are heavily dependent on the largesse of big multinational mining companies.

Problem supporting security agencies

The argument to be advanced is a moral one. It concerns the morality of supporting security agencies in their performance of duty. The first premise is that management has a fiduciary responsibility to its shareholders to act in the firm’s best interests, subject to the constraints imposed by the law. Apparently, in providing that support for the security agencies, the firms believe they can help establish and operate in an atmosphere devoid of lawlessness and criminal activities (like those being instigated by illegal miners). In effect, any action, as contemplated in this instance, by the firm could be seen to be in the firm’s best interest. However, a difficulty arises in identifying which policies will actually further the firm’s goals. Does that support serve the goals of the firm or is it rather something of a distraction? Or has such an activity become a business one rather than largely a social responsibility?

One of the most common observations in business is that self-interest and good ethics generally coincide, because it is usually in one’s interest to act morally (Beauchamp and Bowie, 2001). By aiding the police, the mining companies are in a way simply trying to help rid the community of crimes and also seeking to ensure the police are efficient. Such behaviour must be an example of moral goodwill and ethical atruism. Although, the mining companies believe such a decision is ethically sound and promotes the public good, they also believe that the resort to helping the police will be good business because it would create a crime-free atmosphere, peace and security for their operations. A more detailed attention to this would reveal that communities are more concerned with the motivations of business than the actions business takes. The distinction between motives and actions becomes very important in this aspect. This is because business people reflect on the morality of their actions not because it is prudent to do so but because it is right to do so (Beauchamp and Bowie, 2001).

Generally, donations become problematic when they are made in mining areas. In its Akyem mining site, for instance, Newmont, a giant mining company, has supplied the local police with radios and restored police stations. The legitimacy of this support was purely moral yet this raised eyebrows in the communities. Meanwhile, there was no public reaction when Kasapa Telecom Limited, a telecommunication company, presented a new police station at Hlefi, a non-mining area, with communication equipment. Suspicions were not aroused because Hlefi is not a mining area and besides, the donation was not from a mining company.

The relevance here is that there was no expressed feeling that that equipment would be used to ‘fight’ the people. Significantly, it is only in mining communities like the Wassa West district, Akyem and Obuasi where there have been concerns over donations to the police in view of the mistrust between the people and the mining companies. While members of the public accept the need for an efficient and friendly police service and in certain instances have been welcoming of the services they provide, the underlying sense of mistrust and discomfort with the police, especially, is so perverse.

The charges of immoral conduct on mining companies constitute a startling array of cases where multinational companies are seen to have failed to live up to their moral obligations.

But if we hold that a company is obligated to consider all its stakeholders, then fulfilling this obligation is much more complicated. It may also be more difficult for the company to take the morally correct action in satisfying all stakeholders in society. As can be inferred, the security agencies are also part of the community and constitute a part of the mining companies’ stakeholders, hence, any support they receive from the companies is in line with the averred position the companies have taken to support all their stakeholders.

But does such an action violate the morality of the marketplace? Obviously gift giving or supporting an institution or organisation is quite an ideal thing to do when the donating organisation is in a position to do so. It is a prevalent social custom in significant relationships. However, within the Ghanaian culture, there are indeed moral parameters to distinguish morally proper gift giving from bribery and corruption or attempts to influence certain decisions (Sarpong, 1968). Gift giving is rooted in benevolence and righteousness. It is however, very difficult to discern when it is proper to give a gift, what its nature should be and to whom it should be given. Such discernment is usually a matter of social knowledge. It is also significant to note that most moral principles are already embedded in public morality, but usually in a vague and under-analysed form. In analysing whether a transaction is amorally right or wrong, the guiding principle, in my view, would be to determine what that gift is to be used for, whether it is appropriate for the receiving institution, but the determinative dynamics of the situation and the consequences for the use of the said item(s) in some cases might be beyond one’s knowledge and measurement.

Problems of proof and intention

In Ghana, as Sarpong (1968) rightly argues, people typically conceive support as facilitation. Issues about the depth and nature of support may divide companies and the communities. In the case of donations to the police, the fairness of the idea cannot be denied, though the consequences, in its perceptible form, seem unacceptable. In one vein, one can argue that the police should not be allowed to accept gifts. That way they can never be influenced to do anything, that is if there is anything like that going on. But such a notion would seem preposterous though.

From the fore-going it is evident that some problems confronting mining firms in Ghana arise from unintended consequences. But in a society of competing interests, it is a formidable task for the mining firms to try in keeping the competing factions happy. In order to deal with these, firms must have a clear picture, not only of what is going on when they act, but also of what is going on when they decide to act. In considering the police-community-company acrimony, we might suppose that the companies acted because they felt the handicapped police personnel were not doing enough to ensure law and order in the mining areas or simply because they sympathised with the deplorable service conditions of the police. Whilst the companies might think that they base their judgements on the facts of the moment, unfortunately many people base their judgments upon presumptions. Given that ethics investigates the varieties of thought by which peoples' conduct is guided and may be appraised, its special concern is their actions and the normative principles underlying them.

Assuming that actions are traditionally 'right', 'wrong', both or neither; and that the consequences to which they give rise to could be 'good', 'bad', both or neither. We could therefore have something which gives rise to right, wrong and possibly neither right nor wrong. In this wise, can we say the action by the companies is good, bad, both or neither? To say that something is both right and wrong is only comprehensible, if it means 'right in one respect and wrong in another respect'. Could that be said of the donations to the police, if weighed in the context in which the mining communities see it?

An action is right when it promotes a general good. In practice, however, the situation is often far from ideal because the company's information and/or presuppositions may be wrong or insufficient, and it is on the basis of these that it has to decide what to do. Even though the company's intention may be to promote the general good, or to fulfil a certain duty, which in this case was to help the police, its actual performance may have very bad consequences, or may not result in the fulfilment of that duty at all.

But how does one act in an unpredictable, complex society in order to achieve desired ends? Perhaps, we must become increasingly sensitive to the dynamics of cause and effect relationships, particularly as events play themselves out over time. Mining companies need to become aware of consequences that are implicit in their actions, even if they do not lead to predictable results. Obviously, such firms should know and recognise the enhanced likelihood of like troubles in view of the relationship they have with the mining communities. This calls for a focused awareness of the connection between ends and means. This is particularly important in the far-reaching nature of business activity, where mining firms routinely fail to consider the adverse consequences implicit in their programmes. In more than just our physical world, every action produces a reaction, a truth often overlooked.

There are degrees of conflict or instability in many areas in which mining companies operate, and the role a company can play in this varies accordingly. They may be complicit in a conflict when their operations directly benefit from the government's failure to enforce human rights standards, or when they are involved in systematic violations of human rights. Business has a duty to be helpful to communities, but there is no guarantee that a kind act is the right act. In this instance, it cannot be said that business support to the police is geared towards ensuring that members of the community suffer at the hands of the police. In line with this, it is important to obtain extensive background information from different sources and to maintain productive relations with local communities and government officials. Besides, where companies provide equipment to public security (that is, police), they should consider the risk of such transfers, and the feasibility of measures to mitigate foreseeable negative consequences, including adequate controls to prevent the misuse of equipment which may lead to human rights abuses.

It is important too to stress too that companies can operate in a conducive atmosphere provided they adopt conflict-management techniques and also ensure community members are consulted on issues that have a bearing on them. The communities should also understand that the perceived unsatisfactory level of development in their area cannot be attributed only to companies' neglect and perceived insensitivity as the district and central government are also partly to be blamed.

Ensuring companies and public security are in tune

Although, governments have the primary role of maintaining law and order, security and respect for human rights, companies have an interest in ensuring that the actions of the police and other law enforcement agencies are consistent with the protection and promotion of human rights. In an effort to reduce the risk of abuses and to promote respect for human rights generally;

1. Companies should consult regularly with the government and local communities about the impact of their security arrangements on those communities.
2. Companies should communicate their policies regarding ethical conduct and human rights to public security providers, and express their desire that security be provided in a manner consistent with those policies by

personnel with adequate and effective training.
3. Companies should also ensure that security arrangements are transparent and accessible to the public.

Besides, where appropriate, the type and number of public security forces deployed should be competent, appropriate and proportional to the threat.

CONCLUSION

The paper sought to provide a general discussion about the legitimacy of some aspects of CRS. It found that given the increasing rate of social responsibility projects, it is not always obvious under what precise conditions managers should engage in activities primarily designed to promote societal goals. Following from this, it discussed distinct criteria for evaluating the legitimacy of corporate projects for institutionalising social responsibility. It was realised that social responsibility responds to certain public demands but it also has its dangers. The key lessons for company managers, however, are that responsibilities towards communities require that managers, first conduct themselves morally, for which business leadership may be crucial. The CSR argument contains both an ethical aspect, that corporations have a moral obligation to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions, as well as a more pragmatic claim that responsible corporate behaviour is advantageous for business because it promotes beneficial business environments, and avoids generating negative publicity and lawsuits among others.

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