

UPSC

MAIN EXAM REVISED STUDY MATERIALS

GENERAL STUDIES

PAPER - IV

(Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude)

“लोकसेवकों के लिए नीतिशास्त्र वैसे ही है, जैसे कि शरीर के लिए खून”

(“Ethics are as important for the public servant as blood for the body”)



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GENERAL STUDIES - IV

(Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude)

SYLLABUS GENERAL STUDIES- IV

This paper will include questions to test the candidates' attitude and approach to issues relating to integrity, probity in public life and his problem solving approach to various issues and conflicts faced by him in dealing with society. Questions may utilise the case study approach to determine these aspects. The following broad areas will be covered.

Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics in private and public relationships. Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.

Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.

Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.

Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.

Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration : Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.

Probity in Governance : Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Case Studies on above issues.

ETHICS, INTEGRITY, AND APTITUDE

ETHICS & HUMAN INTERFACE

There is no universally agreed definition of the term “ethics”. The question of ethics is one that is linked to the history of mankind. Ethics deals with the character and conduct of morals of human beings. It deals with good or bad, right or wrong behaviour; it evaluates conduct against some absolute criteria and puts negative or positive values on it.

Ethics, integrity and **better governance** are core principles for the Indian administration and the Indian civil service. Civil servants prepare and take decisions directly affecting the citizens; they conceive policies, conduct negotiations, determine the use of various public resources and have access to sensitive information. The citizens are entitled to expect ethical behavior and integrity from them, and the reputation and performance of the European institutions as well as the political fate of public office holders depend on these qualities.

The **Code of Ethics** establishes a set of principles and values which will enable public servants to deliver excellent service with the highest standard of courtesy, honesty, integrity, objectivity and impartiality and with due regard to the best value for money. The Code applies to all categories of public servants; it complements and is complemented by existing rules and regulations, including General Orders, which establish standards of conduct in the public service.

Public servants are prepared to subscribe to the Code, but they are concerned that their employers provide the facilities and environment that are conducive to excellent service.

They regard Ministers of government as public servants also, albeit of a special kind, and expect them to be exemplars of ethical conduct and integrity in their work. They are also concerned that their own rights as individual citizens be respected and protected. A section of the Code reflects these issues. What is really envisioned is a culture of public service characterised by the highest, ethical principles, integrity and professionalism.

Accordingly, public servants expect national leaders with or without a corresponding Code of Conduct to discharge their office with acceptable standards of fairness, honesty and respect for individual autonomy.

Ethics

Ethics is a philosophical discipline to inquire into the nature of morally good, and the criterion of morally right action as well as nature of virtue. Aristotle used this conception for the first time and designated by this discipline the inquiry into the virtues or the human characters which are conducive to the maintenance and development of a city state (polis). In this sense, ethics was considered as a portion of political science or political philosophy. As soon as the polis, the foundation of morality, was destroyed by Alexander the Great, and people started wondering what makes one morally good, and further what makes one happy as an individual. This is the beginning of the new meaning of ethics. In terms of the question of the criterion for a morally right action, there are two irreconcilable positions: one is called utilitarianism, which considers the outcome of one's action must be the criterion, while the other viewpoint is called deontology, according to which a moral action is right, regardless of its consequences, as long as it is performed from the moral imperative or pure ought. In this case, as shown above, the criterion of a right action has nothing to do with morality, but is essentially concerned with the knowledge of what is to be done and the action which is purely motivated from the moral ought and nothing else. The representative of this position is Kant, while the former is generally represented by Bentham and by Mill in a much modified form. As to the nature of morally good, here are also two distinct positions in which the nature of good is philosophically understood. One considers the good is related to pleasure, the sensuous pleasure, because it is more in its intensity, and this was represented by hedonists (Epicurus, Bentham). Since this position tries to reduce the nature of good to pleasure or pain, it is often called naturalistic. The other considers the good either should be known by a priori intuition more primordially than the mere object and natural characters. This point of view is represented by Max Scheler, a phenomenologist. In this view point, value is totally different from thingness and can be known by a different kind of cognitive act of a priori feeling and preference. This point of view was called intuitionism by G.E. Moore. Kant's approach is totally against Hedonistic reductionism, but is not necessarily considered as intuitionism, for Kant consid-

ers the nature of good is not an object of our cognitive act, but it is determined by the accord of an action with moral law or principle, which Kant called categorical imperative.

Origins of ethics

The origins of ethics have a meta-ethical basis. Several philosophers have argued that human beings are inherently ethical. Mencius, asserts that human beings are naturally virtuous in that if people follow their nature, they will be able to do good. Rousseau contends that the origins of ethics are natural human sentiments. Pity is considered as a natural human feeling which tempered selfishness and consequently contributed to the mutual preservation of the whole species.

Centuries of debate on the origin of ethics culminate in either ethical principles, such as justice and human rights which are independent of human experience, or they are human inventions.

The choice between these two understandings regulates the difference in the way we view ourselves as a species. It measures the authority of religion and it determines the conduct of moral reasoning.

In the empiricist view, ethics is behaviour advocated consistently throughout a society to be expressed as a code of principles. It reaches its precise form in each culture according to historical circumstance. The codes, whether adjusted as good or evil by outsiders, play an important role in determining which cultures flourish and which decline.

The thrust of the empiricist view is its emphasis on objective knowledge. Since the success of an ethical code depends on how wisely it interprets moral sentiments, senior officials who frame one should know how the brain works, and how the mind develops.

The success of ethics also depends on how accurately a society can predict the consequences of particular actions as opposed to others, especially in cases of moral ambiguity.

Aristotle contended that humans are not inherently virtuous and that ethics must be taught and practiced. Furthermore, virtues are attained by first exercising them and people become just by doing just acts. Kant, who concurs with Aristotle, argued that ethics were not derived from human feelings. Ethics can be identified by the use of reason.

For example, since public officials in India operate in a diverse society, their ethical convictions and accountability to its populace are bound to be tested. To ensure that officials act confidently with organisational support, training in ethics is essential as an initiative for the establishment of an efficient and effective ethical and accountable public service.

Some Fundamental Concepts in Ethics

"Ethics" may be broadly defined as that division of philosophy which deals with questions concerning the nature of value in matters of human conduct.

While virtually all people are concerned with making ethical judgments and decisions, philosophers in particular are concerned to

- explicate the nature of such judgments in general and
- provide criteria for determining what is ethically right or wrong, and
- analyze the grounds or reasons we have for holding them to be correct.

Those concerned exclusively with telling us what is right or wrong, good or bad, in matters of human conduct may be termed "moralists." While philosophers have sometimes been moralists, as philosophers their primary concern is not so much to provide moral prescriptions as it is to explain why what we consider to be "right" or "good" is right or good. To do so, philosophers engaged with such questions have generally sought to formulate and justify "ethical theories" which are intended to explain the fundamental nature of that which is "good," why it is "good," and why the ethical principles which are most commonly used to evaluate human conduct follow (or do not follow) from this theory of that which is good.

While there are of course many words in English (as well as most languages) which refer to positive and negative values, we may simplify our vocabulary by taking the words "good" and "bad" to refer to positive and negative values respectively in judgments with respect to people and things, and "right" or "wrong" to refer to positive and negative values respectively with respect to actions. In this way of speaking, then, a "good person" will simply be one whose actions are "right" by the criteria of whatever ethical theory is the basis of such a judgment.

If we restrict attention to actions, any "action" may be analyzed as involving an actor, the person who does the action, and an end result or outcome of the action. In ethical terminology the actor is called the "agent," and the end result is the "consequence" of the action.

Ethical theories may be presented for various purposes. Some theories may merely purport to describe what people do, in fact (so it is claimed), consider to be "good" or "right." Such theories are "descriptive ethical theories" and may be considered "true" or "false" depending on whether or not they do indeed describe correctly what people in fact do consider good or right. Since such descriptive theories are concerned with