



Secure Synopsis compilation for February-2026

General Studies-4

Table of contents

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. ----- 3

Q. When accountability is diffused, wrongdoing becomes convenient. Analyse how fragmented institutional responsibility weakens ethics. What mechanisms can ensure clear accountability? (10 M) ----- 3

Q. What does the following quotation convey to you in the present context? (10 M) ----- 4

“Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants.” ----- 4

– Epictetus ----- 4

Q. “Administrative silence is a form of institutional dishonesty”. Explain how such silence corrodes citizen trust and weakens democratic governance. (10 M) ----- 5

Q. Crime is not merely a law-and-order problem; it is also a moral failure of society and institutions. Evaluate this statement. Suggest ethical measures to reduce habitual offending. (10 M) ----- 7

Q. Endangering vulnerable lives is a form of moral violence, even without intent to kill. Explain how society should respond to such conduct. (10 M) ----- 8

Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion. -----10

Q. “A neutral attitude is not the same as an impartial attitude”. Explain the distinction. Discuss why this distinction matters in civil service conduct. (10 M) ----- 10

Q. Examine the concept of ethical sensitivity. Discuss how it improves the quality of public decision-making. (10 M) ----- 11

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. ----- 12

Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance. -12

Q. “In public administration, empathy without impartiality becomes moral bias”. Suggest how civil servants can balance compassion with fairness. (10 M) ----- 12

Q. “The greatest threat to professionalism is not incompetence but unmanaged emotions”. Explain. Give examples from crisis governance. (10 M) ----- 14

Q. “Anger is natural, but violence is a choice”. Examine the ethical distinction between emotion and action. Discuss how moral reasoning can prevent violent escalation. (10 M) -----	15
Q. Analyse the role of empathy and moral courage in preventing communal violence. How can these virtues be institutionalised in public life? (10 M)-----	17
<i>Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world. -----</i>	<i>18</i>
Q. What does the following quotation means to you in the present context -----	18
“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.” -----	18
– Howard Zinn -----	18
<i>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.-----</i>	<i>20</i>
Q. Ethical governance fails not due to absence of rules, but due to erosion of conscience. Examine this statement in the context of public administration. Assess the limitations of rule-based ethics in ensuring moral conduct. (10 M)-----	20
Q. “Public service ethics deteriorate not due to lack of laws, but due to selective enforcement”. Analyse its impact on trust and accountability in governance. (10 M)-----	21
Q. Identify key ethical issues involved in foreign funding of domestic institutions. Explain how transparency can mitigate these risks. (10 M) -----	22
Q. Explain how conflict of interest operates as a gateway to corruption in public decision-making. Suggest safeguards to manage and disclose conflicts of interest. (10 M)-----	24
<i>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. -----</i>	<i>25</i>
Q. Explain the concept of probity in governance. Analyse its role in strengthening public trust in institutions. (10 M) -----	25
Q. Information asymmetry is an ethical failure, not merely an administrative one. Evaluate its implications for democratic governance. Assess the role of RTI in addressing this challenge. (10 M)-----	27
Q. Leakage of public funds is not only corruption, but also a failure of public ethics. Bring out the ethical responsibilities of public officials in preventing wastage and misallocation. (10 M) -----	28
Q. Distinguish between a Code of Ethics and a Code of Conduct. Explain why both are necessary for civil services. (10 M) -----	29
Q. Discuss how petty corruption differs from grand corruption in ethical impact. Propose targeted strategies to address both forms effectively. (10 M)-----	31
Q. Rule-following is not the same as ethical governance. Distinguish between the two. Illustrate how ethical discretion can be exercised without arbitrariness. (10 M)-----	32
Q. Explain how social media visibility pressures can affect public servants’ objectivity. Suggest ethical guidelines for digital conduct in public office. (10 M)-----	34
Q. Identify the key ethical issues involved in handling juvenile offenders. Suggest a balanced approach between compassion and deterrence. (10 M)-----	35
Q. “Administrative efficiency cannot override human dignity.” Examine this statement. Analyse its ethical implications in public policy implementation. (10 M)-----	36

Q. You are the Secretary of Defence, widely respected for your integrity and neutrality throughout your career. -----37

Q. As the Secretary of Minister of Sports in India, you introduced a ground breaking initiative called the Podium Scheme to enhance the country's performance in international events like the Olympics. -----40

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.

Q. When accountability is diffused, wrongdoing becomes convenient. Analyse how fragmented institutional responsibility weakens ethics. What mechanisms can ensure clear accountability? (10 M)

Introduction

In complex governance systems, ethical failure often happens not due to absence of rules, but due to absence of a clearly answerable authority. When responsibility is spread thin, integrity collapses quietly and wrongdoing becomes administratively “easy”.

Body

How fragmented institutional responsibility weakens ethics

- Responsibility without authority:** Officials are expected to deliver outcomes but lack power over inputs, creating ethical helplessness.
Eg: District administration during disaster response often faces resource constraints despite being held accountable for outcomes.
- Multiple agencies, no single ownership:** Overlapping mandates allow institutions to pass blame rather than solve problems.
Eg: Urban flooding management split across municipal bodies, development authorities and state departments leads to avoidable failures.
- Procedural compliance replaces moral responsibility:** Institutions focus on “rules followed” rather than “harm prevented”.
Eg: Data breaches and service denial in digital delivery show how technical compliance can coexist with ethical failure.
- Accountability becomes reactive not preventive:** Systems act only after public outrage, not through internal ethical checks.
Eg: Post-incident inquiries after infrastructure collapses often reveal ignored warnings but unclear responsibility.
- Erosion of public trust:** When citizens cannot identify who is answerable, legitimacy of institutions declines.
Eg: Citizen grievance portals often show unresolved complaints due to unclear departmental responsibility.

What mechanisms can ensure clear accountability?

1. **Single-point ownership for outcomes:** Fix one clearly accountable authority for each public outcome, even if multiple agencies assist.
Eg: Incident Command System (ICS) in disaster management assigns a clear commander for coordination and responsibility.
2. **Legally defined roles and duty of care:** Accountability must be backed by enforceable duty, not only administrative instructions.
Eg: Vishaka Guidelines (1997) and later law created **clear institutional responsibility** for workplace safety.
3. **Independent oversight and audits:** External scrutiny prevents institutions from hiding behind internal procedures.
Eg: CAG audit framework exposes accountability gaps in implementation and outcome delivery.
4. **Time-bound grievance redressal with liability:** Fix deadlines and consequences for non-resolution to prevent institutional escape.
Eg: RTI Act, 2005 created **time-bound duties** and penalties for non-compliance.
5. **Ethics-based performance metrics:** Measure institutions not only on outputs but on fairness, transparency and citizen experience.
Eg: 2nd ARC recommendations emphasise **citizen-centric administration** and outcome accountability.

Conclusion

Accountability must be treated as an ethical architecture, not merely an administrative tool. A system with clear ownership, enforceable duty, and independent oversight makes wrongdoing difficult and integrity natural.

Q. What does the following quotation convey to you in the present context? (10 M)

“Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants.”

– Epictetus

Introduction

In a consumerist age, wealth is often measured by accumulation and display. Epictetus offers a deeper ethical idea that true prosperity lies in self-restraint and contentment.

Body

Meaning of the quotation

1. **Contentment as wealth:** The quotation defines wealth as inner satisfaction rather than external possessions, rooted in moderation.
Eg: Stoic philosophy treats happiness as dependent on self-control and clarity of values, not on material abundance.
2. **Temperance and self-discipline:** Fewer wants reflect the virtue of restraint, which prevents greed and unethical shortcuts.
Eg: Many corruption scandals originate in **lifestyle inflation** rather than genuine need, showing the danger of unlimited wants.
3. **Freedom from dependence:** Reduced wants make a person less vulnerable to manipulation, inducements, or moral compromise.

Eg: A public servant's refusal of undue favour becomes easier when not trapped in **status consumption** or debt.

4. **Ethical use of resources:** Few wants encourage responsible consumption and reduce waste, supporting intergenerational fairness.

Eg: The idea aligns with **Gandhian ethics** of need over greed, which remains relevant for sustainable living.

Relevance in the present context

1. **Probity in governance:** Fewer wants strengthen integrity and reduce conflict of interest in public decision-making.

Eg: The **2nd ARC** stressed **probity in public life**, where personal restraint supports clean administration.

2. **Mental health and social comparison:** Consumerism-driven aspirations fuel anxiety, dissatisfaction, and social stress.

Eg: The rise of **social media lifestyle culture** amplifies unrealistic benchmarks, increasing dissatisfaction despite income growth.

3. **Social justice and inequality:** Unlimited wants among the privileged can deepen inequality and weaken social cohesion.

Eg: **Oxfam inequality reports** highlight how extreme wealth concentration harms trust and fairness in society.

4. **Environmental responsibility:** Fewer wants support sustainable lifestyles and reduce ecological footprints, complementing policy measures.

Eg: India's **LiFE initiative** promotes mindful consumption as part of climate responsibility.

5. **Constitutional duty and citizenship:** The quote connects with responsible citizenship based on restraint and collective welfare.

Eg: **Article 51A** includes duties like protecting the environment, which requires consumption discipline.

Conclusion

Epictetus reminds that the richest life is one governed by contentment and ethical restraint. In today's India, fewer wants can strengthen **integrity, sustainability, and responsible citizenship**.

Q. "Administrative silence is a form of institutional dishonesty". Explain how such silence corrodes citizen trust and weakens democratic governance. (10 M)

Introduction

Democracy is sustained not only by elections, but by everyday responsiveness of the State to citizens. When administration refuses to respond, it creates a gap between constitutional promises and lived reality.

Body

Why administrative silence is institutional dishonesty

1. **Breach of public trust:** Silence violates the ethical contract where authority is exercised as a public duty, not as private power.

Eg: Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC) stressed that **citizen-centric administration** requires timely and reasoned responses.

2. **Evasion of accountability:** Silence becomes a tool to escape scrutiny, audit trails, and responsibility for decisions.

Eg: Under the **RTI Act, 2005**, non-response is treated as **deemed refusal**, recognising silence as unethical.

3. **Denial of dignity:** Ignoring citizens reduces them from rights-bearing individuals to passive subjects.

Eg: The Supreme Court in **Maneka Gandhi (1978)** linked Article **21** with fairness and non-arbitrariness, which silence undermines.

How silence corrodes citizen trust

1. **Creates perception of bias and corruption:** Citizens assume silence protects the powerful and shields wrongdoing.

Eg: In local issues like **illegal mining or land violations**, non-response is widely read as **collusion**.

2. **Normalises helplessness and disengagement:** People stop using lawful channels and lose faith in institutions.

Eg: Citizens often shift to **protests, media pressure or informal brokers** when departments remain unresponsive.

3. **Weakens legitimacy of institutions:** Trust moves from systems to individuals, damaging long-term governance capacity.

Eg: **2nd ARC** warned that weak responsiveness fuels a “**middleman culture**” and administrative capture.

How it weakens democratic governance

1. **Undermines rule of law:** Silence delays enforcement, allowing illegality to become normalised.

Eg: The Supreme Court has consistently held that **arbitrariness violates Article 14**, and silence often masks arbitrary action.

2. **Erodes constitutional morality:** Rights remain formal, but administrative non-response blocks access to remedies.

Eg: In **Vineet Narain (1997)**, the Supreme Court emphasised **institutional accountability** as vital for clean governance.

Way forward to prevent administrative silence

1. **Time-bound service delivery:** Enforce citizen charters with penalties for non-response and delay.

Eg: **2nd ARC** recommended a **Right to Public Services** framework, now reflected in several state service delivery laws.

2. **Transparent grievance tracking:** Use dashboards and mandatory status updates to make silence impossible.

Eg: Platforms like **CPGRAMS** and state portals can be strengthened through **public disclosure of disposal quality**.

3. **Ethics and accountability in service rules:** Link responsiveness to performance appraisal and disciplinary action.
Eg: Conduct Rules require devotion to duty; persistent non-response can be treated as **misconduct**.

Conclusion

Administrative silence is not neutrality; it is a moral failure of the State's duty to be answerable. A responsive, time-bound and transparent administration is the strongest foundation for citizen trust and democratic governance.

Q. Crime is not merely a law-and-order problem; it is also a moral failure of society and institutions. Evaluate this statement. Suggest ethical measures to reduce habitual offending. (10 M)

Introduction

Crime is not just a violation of law; it is also a breakdown of values like empathy, self-control and respect for others' rights. When families, communities and institutions fail to uphold justice and dignity, crime becomes repetitive and socially normalised.

Body

Crime as a moral failure of society and institutions

1. **Breakdown of moral socialisation and self-restraint:** When early value formation fails, individuals become more prone to impulsive violence, theft and exploitation.
Eg: Rising substance abuse among youth in many districts has been linked with petty crime and aggression, showing how moral decline precedes criminality.
2. **Normalisation of illegality and weak ethical culture:** If society tolerates shortcuts, bribery and violence, crime stops being seen as morally unacceptable.
Eg: Mob violence and public celebration of "instant justice" reflect social approval of illegality, weakening ethical boundaries.
3. **Institutional injustice and loss of legitimacy:** Corruption, bias and arbitrary state action create alienation, where law is viewed as oppressive rather than protective.
Eg: Supreme Court jurisprudence under Article 14 and Article 21 repeatedly stresses fairness and due process, showing that legitimacy is central to compliance.
4. **Justice delay and weak deterrence:** When trials drag on, both punishment and reform lose meaning, and offenders believe the system can be manipulated.
Eg: Law Commission reports and public data on **high pendency** show how delayed justice weakens deterrence and encourages repeat offending.
5. **Failure of reformatory correctional systems:** Prisons that are overcrowded and non-rehabilitative harden criminals instead of transforming them.
Eg: The Mulla Committee on prison reforms (1983) emphasised rehabilitation, after-care and correctional training to reduce recidivism.

Ethical measures to reduce habitual offending

1. **Reformatory justice with rehabilitation and after-care:** Skill training, counselling, and structured reintegration are ethical tools to restore dignity and prevent relapse.

Eg: The **Mulla Committee** recommended rehabilitation and post-release support, recognising that punishment alone produces repeat offenders.

2. **Ethical policing with accountability and restraint:** Rights-based policing prevents torture, false cases and abuse, which otherwise deepen criminality and mistrust.
Eg: Prakash Singh vs Union of India (2006) mandated police reforms like independent complaints authorities and separation of investigation.
3. **Restorative justice and moral accountability:** Victim restitution, apology and community repair mechanisms create internal moral correction beyond fear of jail.
Eg: Plea bargaining provisions (CrPC, 2005) reflect a limited move towards negotiated justice, reducing backlog and encouraging accountability.
4. **Social prevention through dignity, education and opportunity:** Addressing school dropouts, unemployment and addiction reduces the ethical and economic drivers of crime.
Eg: PMKVY and Skill India can reduce vulnerability, but must target high-risk youth and those exiting prisons.
5. **Community-based correction and mentoring:** Probation, community service and local mentoring reduce stigma, rebuild trust and prevent offenders from returning to gangs.
Eg: The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 promotes reformatory correction instead of imprisonment for suitable cases.

Conclusion

Habitual offending reduces only when society builds moral foundations and institutions deliver justice with dignity. A reformatory, accountable and opportunity-based approach makes crime control both ethically legitimate and socially sustainable.

Q. Endangering vulnerable lives is a form of moral violence, even without intent to kill. Explain how society should respond to such conduct. (10 M)

Introduction

Violence is not limited to intention or physical injury; it also includes knowingly creating serious risk for innocent people. Endangering **vulnerable lives** like children is therefore a form of **moral violence**, even without an intent to kill.

Body

Why endangering vulnerable lives is a form of moral violence

1. **Conscious disregard for human life:** The person knowingly accepts the possibility of grave harm, showing ethical indifference to life.
Eg: Drunk driving with schoolchildren shows awareness that control is impaired, yet the risk is taken deliberately.
2. **Violation of duty of care:** Vulnerable persons depend on others for safety, so exposing them to danger is a breach of trust.
Eg: A school transport driver has a higher duty than ordinary road users because children cannot protect themselves.
3. **Attack on dignity and security:** Forcing others into fear and insecurity violates their right to live safely and with dignity.

Eg: The **Supreme Court's Article 21 jurisprudence** links life with dignity, which includes basic safety in public spaces.

4. **Creation of preventable harm:** Moral violence includes actions that predictably cause injury even if death is not intended.

Eg: Overspeeding or intoxicated driving often results in **lifelong disability**, not just temporary injury.

5. **Erosion of societal moral norms:** Tolerating such conduct normalises cruelty, irresponsibility and public apathy.

Eg: Communities often ignore **repeat drunk drivers** until a tragedy occurs, showing ethical numbness.

How society should respond to such conduct

1. **Firm accountability and deterrence:** Society must treat reckless endangerment as serious wrongdoing, not a minor lapse.

Eg: Applying strict provisions for **attempt to commit culpable homicide** signals higher moral and legal culpability.

2. **Prevention through institutional checks:** Schools, local bodies and police must enforce safety norms through audits and monitoring.

Eg: Breathalyser checks near schools and periodic verification of school transport drivers reduces predictable risk.

3. **Community-based moral condemnation:** Social disapproval should make such behaviour unacceptable and socially costly.

Eg: Parents' associations refusing unsafe transport and reporting violations can shift local ethical culture.

4. **Reform and rehabilitation for offenders:** Along with punishment, repeat offenders should face counselling and de-addiction support.

Eg: Court-linked referral to **de-addiction programmes** for alcohol-related offences prevents habitual wrongdoing.

5. **Ethical education and civic responsibility:** Long-term change needs empathy, self-control and public-mindedness as civic virtues.

Eg: MoRTH road safety awareness drives and school-based value education can reduce reckless behaviour over time.

Conclusion

A society that values life must treat reckless endangerment of vulnerable people as **moral violence**, not an "accident". The right response is **deterrence with prevention and reform**, so public safety becomes a shared ethical duty.

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

Q. “A neutral attitude is not the same as an impartial attitude”. Explain the distinction. Discuss why this distinction matters in civil service conduct. (10 M)

Introduction

In public life, **fairness is not achieved by being detached**, but by being **just and reasoned**. Civil services demand not emotional indifference, but **constitutional objectivity with empathy**.

Distinction between neutral attitude and impartial attitude

1. **Emotional detachment vs reasoned fairness:** A **neutral attitude** often implies staying emotionally distant, while **impartiality** means deciding fairly on **objective criteria**.
Eg: **Neutral** response to a riot may avoid “taking sides”, but **impartial** response enforces law equally against all offenders, regardless of identity.
2. **Non-involvement vs non-bias:** Neutrality can slip into **non-intervention**, whereas impartiality requires **active non-discrimination**.
Eg: **Impartial policing** in communal tension means equal protection to all communities and equal action against hate speech under **public order laws**.
3. **Value-free posture vs constitutional value commitment:** Neutrality can be mistaken as being value-free, but impartiality is rooted in **constitutional morality** and equality.
Eg: Applying **Article 14 (equality before law)** requires impartial decisions even if politically inconvenient.
4. **Avoiding judgement vs applying standards:** Neutrality may avoid judgement to appear “balanced”, while impartiality applies **uniform standards** consistently.
Eg: A tender evaluation must be impartial through **transparent criteria**, not “neutral” by informally adjusting scores to satisfy all bidders.
5. **Passivity vs accountability:** Neutrality can become **administrative silence**, but impartiality demands **answerable decision-making** with reasons.
Eg: **RTI-style disclosure culture** strengthens impartiality because decisions must survive scrutiny, not just appear neutral.

Why this distinction matters in civil service conduct

1. **Protects equality and non-discrimination in governance:** Impartiality operationalises **Article 14** by ensuring the State does not privilege or punish citizens selectively.
Eg: Welfare delivery must avoid exclusion based on identity; **impartial grievance redressal** prevents bias in ration, pension, or housing entitlements.
2. **Prevents “false balance” in ethical dilemmas:** Neutrality can create a misleading equivalence between right and wrong, while impartiality anchors action in **law and ethics**.
Eg: In custodial violence allegations, an officer cannot be “neutral”; **impartiality requires prompt inquiry** and adherence to due process.
3. **Improves credibility and public trust:** Citizens accept tough decisions when they see **fair procedures**, not when officers appear detached.

Eg: During disaster relief, **impartial prioritisation** (most vulnerable first) builds legitimacy more than neutral “first-come-first-serve” distribution.

4. **Strengthens integrity under political and social pressure:** Neutrality may become an excuse for avoiding conflict, but impartiality gives a defensible standard against interference.

Eg: **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)** emphasised **objectivity and impartiality** as core civil service values for ethical governance.

5. **Enables compassionate administration without bias:** Impartiality allows empathy while maintaining fairness, whereas neutrality can appear cold and alienating.

Eg: In handling sexual harassment complaints, **Vishaka guidelines (1997)** demand a fair institutional process—**not neutrality**, but impartial protection and due process.

Conclusion

Civil servants are not expected to be emotionally neutral machines; they are expected to be **impartial constitutional actors**. In a diverse democracy, this distinction is the line between **rule of law** and **rule by convenience**.

Q. Examine the concept of ethical sensitivity. Discuss how it improves the quality of public decision-making. (10 M)

Introduction

In public administration, many failures are not due to lack of rules, but due to failure to **notice the ethical dimension** of a decision early enough. Ethical sensitivity is the first moral “alarm system” that protects governance from becoming merely procedural.

Body

Concept of ethical sensitivity

1. Ethical awareness of moral stakes: Ethical sensitivity is the ability to **recognise that a decision involves values** like dignity, fairness and harm, not just efficiency.
Eg: **Bhopal Gas tragedy** showed how weak ethical alertness to **public safety** can turn regulatory clearance into moral failure.
2. Stakeholder perspective-taking: It involves anticipating how a policy affects **different groups**, especially the vulnerable, before acting.
Eg: **Supreme Court (2023)** in the **right to abortion for unmarried women** case stressed decisional autonomy under **Article 21**, reinforcing why administrators must see women’s lived realities.
3. Detecting hidden harm and unintended consequences: Ethical sensitivity includes spotting **second-order harms** (exclusion, stigma, discrimination) produced by “neutral” rules.
Eg: **Puttaswamy (2017)** recognised privacy as a fundamental right, showing why welfare tech must avoid **profiling** and **excessive data collection**.
4. Recognising conflicts of interest and moral blind spots: It enables early identification of **self-interest**, institutional bias, or political pressure shaping choices.
Eg: **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance, 2007)** emphasised conflict-of-interest frameworks to prevent public power from becoming private gain.
5. Moral imagination under discretion: It is the capacity to visualise ethically acceptable alternatives within legal limits, rather than defaulting to “rule-following”.

Eg: Nolan Principles (1995, UK) used widely in ethics training—especially **integrity and accountability**—help officers handle discretion without arbitrariness.

How it improves the quality of public decision-making

1. Prevents rights violations at the policy design stage: Ethical sensitivity makes decisions compatible with constitutional morality and fundamental rights.
Eg: Puttaswamy (2017) laid down proportionality logic—helping administrators design surveillance/welfare systems that avoid **excess intrusion**.
2. Improves fairness and reduces exclusion errors: It forces administrators to check whether implementation unintentionally blocks access for marginalised groups.
Eg: NITI Aayog (MPI 2023) highlights deprivation in health, education and living standards—ethical sensitivity ensures policies target the truly deprived without exclusion.
3. Builds public trust and legitimacy of the State: Citizens judge the State not only by outcomes but by the **moral quality of procedures**.
Eg: Sevottam model (2nd ARC) links service delivery with grievance redress—ethical sensitivity strengthens humane interface and trust.
4. Enhances accountability and reduces moral disengagement: It discourages the mindset of “I only followed orders”, strengthening individual moral responsibility.
Eg: Keshavananda Bharati (1973) established constitutional supremacy—reminding civil servants that legality and morality must align with constitutional values.
5. Improves conflict resolution and lowers coercive governance: Ethical sensitivity promotes dialogue, empathy and de-escalation instead of force-first administration.
Eg: National Police Commission (1979–81) recommended insulating policing from political misuse—ethical sensitivity supports restraint and rights-respecting law enforcement.

Conclusion

Ethical sensitivity is the **starting point of ethical governance**, because one cannot act ethically without first recognising the ethical problem. Strengthening it through training, institutional safeguards and rights-based culture is essential for a civil service that is both efficient and humane.

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.

Q. “In public administration, empathy without impartiality becomes moral bias”. Suggest how civil servants can balance compassion with fairness. (10 M)

Introduction

In public service, **empathy humanises power**, but **impartiality legitimises it**. When compassion is not anchored in fairness and rules, it can quietly turn into selective concern, weakening trust in the State.

Body

Empathy without impartiality becomes moral bias

- Selective compassion becomes unequal treatment:** Empathy can push an officer to “feel more” for those who are articulate, influential, or relatable, creating **hidden discrimination** against the voiceless.
Eg: A district officer fast-tracking relief for well-connected applicants while poor migrant families wait violates **Article 14 (equality before law)** and invites **administrative arbitrariness**.
- Emotional decision-making undermines rule of law:** When decisions are driven mainly by emotions, they risk ignoring **legal criteria**, creating precedent for discretionary governance.
Eg: Waiving penalties for one group due to sympathy but enforcing strictly on others can breach the **rule of law**, a core element of the **basic structure doctrine** (as consistently affirmed by the Supreme Court).
- Empathy can be captured by pressure narratives:** Organised groups often use emotional appeals to influence administration, turning empathy into **policy distortion**.
Eg: Prioritising compensation for politically mobilised victims while neglecting equally affected but less visible groups contradicts the **2nd ARC’s emphasis on fairness and citizen-centric neutrality** in service delivery.
- Compassion without impartiality fuels patronage and favouritism:** Empathy can unintentionally become a gateway for **nepotism**, “special cases,” and informal favours.
Eg: Granting discretionary benefits to “known” individuals violates the spirit of **All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968**, which require integrity and avoidance of undue favour.
- Moral bias damages institutional trust and social cohesion:** When citizens perceive that outcomes depend on emotional closeness rather than fairness, it weakens trust and deepens social divisions.
Eg: Differential handling of communal incidents due to “sympathy” for one side can violate **constitutional morality** and the Supreme Court’s emphasis on **state neutrality in matters affecting fraternity**.

How civil servants can balance compassion with fairness

- Rights-based empathy, not charity-based empathy:** Compassion should translate into ensuring **entitlements and dignity**, not discretionary kindness.
Eg: Treating welfare as a right aligns with **Article 21** and the Supreme Court’s long-standing expansion of dignity-based interpretation, ensuring empathy does not become personal favour.
- Follow reasoned orders and transparent criteria:** Fairness improves when decisions are recorded with **objective justification**, reducing emotional drift and external influence.
Eg: Using written eligibility checklists for relief distribution reflects the **principles of natural justice** and reduces arbitrary discretion.
- Institutionalise compassion through standard operating procedures:** Compassion should be built into systems (grievance redressal, outreach, facilitation desks), not dependent on an officer’s mood.
Eg: **CPGRAMS** and time-bound service delivery laws reflect best practice where empathy becomes **process-based** rather than personality-based.
- Use proportionality and least-harm approach in discretion:** When discretion is unavoidable, apply proportionality so that compassionate exceptions do not violate fairness.
Eg: In eviction drives, providing rehabilitation timelines aligns with **Olga Tellis v. Bombay**

Municipal Corporation (1985), where the Court linked livelihood with **Article 21**, balancing legality with humane governance.

5. **Practice ethical self-audit and bias checks:** Officers must consciously detect empathy-driven bias using reflection and peer review.

Eg: The **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance)** stresses internal integrity systems and ethical capacity-building so that personal emotion does not override public duty.

Conclusion

A civil servant must combine the **heart of empathy** with the **spine of impartiality**, so that compassion strengthens justice rather than replacing it. In a constitutional democracy, the highest empathy is not favour—it is **fairness delivered with dignity**.

Q. “The greatest threat to professionalism is not incompetence but unmanaged emotions”. Explain. Give examples from crisis governance. (10 M)

Introduction

Professional conduct in public service is tested not in routine administration but under stress, uncertainty and pressure. In such moments, unmanaged emotions—fear, anger, anxiety or ego—can derail judgment more severely than lack of technical competence, undermining ethical governance.

Body

The greatest threat to professionalism is not incompetence but unmanaged emotions

1. **Emotional reactivity distorts judgment:** Uncontrolled fear or anger leads to impulsive decisions, violating principles of reasonableness and due process expected from public servants.
Eg: During high-pressure law-and-order situations, **panic-driven use of force** has been criticised by courts for breaching **Article 14’s non-arbitrariness standard**.
2. **Erosion of objectivity and neutrality:** Professionalism demands emotional detachment, but unmanaged empathy or hostility can bias decisions.
Eg: **Supreme Court in Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)** emphasised fairness and non-arbitrariness, which emotional bias directly undermines.
3. **Ethical fading under stress:** Emotional exhaustion can cause officials to prioritise expediency over ethics, leading to moral compromise.
Eg: **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance)** notes that stress-induced decision-making weakens ethical sensitivity in administration.
4. **Breakdown of institutional trust:** Emotional outbursts by officials damage public confidence more than technical errors.
Eg: Public apologies and transfers following **authoritarian behaviour during citizen interactions** reflect recognition that emotional misconduct harms legitimacy.
5. **Failure of leadership responsibility:** Leaders are expected to absorb pressure, not transmit it downward through anger or blame.
Eg: **Civil Services Conduct Rules, 1964** mandate integrity and courtesy, implicitly requiring emotional self-regulation.

Unmanaged emotions in crisis governance

1. **Panic-led decision-making during disasters:** Anxiety can result in poor coordination and exclusion errors in relief distribution.
Eg: During **early COVID-19 lockdown (2020)**, fear-driven administrative haste contributed to **migrant distress**, later acknowledged in reports by **Ministry of Labour**.
2. **Anger escalation in crowd control:** Emotional aggression by officials can convert manageable protests into crises.
Eg: Judicial inquiries into police excesses during protests have highlighted lack of emotional restraint as a trigger for escalation.
3. **Compassion fatigue in prolonged crises:** Continuous exposure to suffering without emotional coping mechanisms reduces empathy.
Eg: ASHA and frontline workers during COVID-19 reported burnout, prompting **MoHFW advisories on mental health support**.
4. **Ego-driven inter-agency conflict:** Emotional insecurity among leaders hampers coordination during emergencies.
Eg: NDMA guidelines stress collaborative leadership after learning from coordination gaps in past disaster responses.
5. **Insensitive communication with citizens:** Emotionally detached or harsh messaging aggravates public anxiety.
Eg: WHO and Government of India risk communication advisories (2020–21) emphasised calm, empathetic messaging to maintain trust.

Conclusion

In crises, competence provides tools, but emotional intelligence provides control. Institutionalising emotional regulation through training, leadership modelling and mental health support is essential to preserve professionalism and ethical governance under pressure.

Q. “Anger is natural, but violence is a choice”. Examine the ethical distinction between emotion and action. Discuss how moral reasoning can prevent violent escalation. (10 M)

Introduction

Human emotions are instinctive responses, but ethical conduct depends on how individuals regulate and channel those emotions. A civilised society rests not on the absence of anger, but on the presence of moral restraint and reasoned action.

Body

Ethical distinction between emotion and action

1. **Natural emotion versus moral agency:** Anger is a spontaneous psychological reaction, but violence involves conscious choice and moral responsibility, reflecting the exercise of free will.
Eg: In **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)**, the Supreme Court emphasised that **procedure must be just, fair and reasonable**, reinforcing that actions, unlike emotions, are subject to ethical and constitutional scrutiny.
2. **Dignity as a constitutional value:** Acting violently violates the inherent dignity of others protected under **Article 21 of the Constitution**, even if the initial emotion was provoked.

Eg: In **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (2017)**, the Court reaffirmed **human dignity** as a core constitutional principle, implying that emotional provocation cannot justify harm to another's dignity.

- 3. Virtue ethics and self-control:** According to **Aristotle's doctrine of the mean**, virtue lies in moderation; courage and restraint are ethical responses, whereas uncontrolled anger becomes vice.
Eg: Ethical training modules under **Civil Services Foundation Course (LBSNAA)** emphasise **self-regulation and composure** as core public service virtues.
- 4. Legal accountability despite emotional triggers:** Criminal law distinguishes between motive and act, holding individuals accountable for violent conduct irrespective of emotional provocation.
Eg: The **Indian Penal Code** provisions on culpable homicide demonstrate that provocation may mitigate punishment but does not eliminate responsibility.
- 5. Social contract and public order:** Violence disrupts collective peace and violates the ethical obligation individuals owe to society under the implicit social contract.
Eg: The Supreme Court in **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)** underscored the importance of protecting public order while balancing individual freedoms.

How moral reasoning can prevent violent escalation

- 1. Emotional intelligence and pause principle:** Moral reasoning introduces reflection between stimulus and response, enabling individuals to pause and evaluate consequences.
Eg: The **National Education Policy 2020** advocates development of **social and emotional learning** to build self-awareness and impulse control among students.
- 2. Empathy as ethical compass:** Understanding the perspective and suffering of others reduces the likelihood of dehumanisation and retaliatory violence.
Eg: The **Justice Verma Committee Report (2013)** emphasised the need for **gender sensitisation and value education** to cultivate empathy and prevent aggression.
- 3. Constitutional morality as guiding framework:** Ethical reasoning anchored in constitutional values ensures that personal anger does not override principles of equality and fraternity under **Article 51A(e)**.
Eg: The Supreme Court in **Navtej Singh Johar (2018)** invoked **constitutional morality** to prioritise dignity and non-violence over societal prejudice.
- 4. Restorative conflict resolution mechanisms:** Dialogue and mediation enable grievances to be addressed without escalation into violence.
Eg: **Victim-offender mediation models** promoted under the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** aim at reform rather than retaliation.
- 5. Institutional cultivation of ethical resilience:** Schools and workplaces can embed counselling and ethics training to channel anger constructively.
Eg: The **CBSE life skills education guidelines**, based on **WHO's life skills framework**, promote anger management and conflict resolution training in adolescents.

Conclusion

Anger is human, but violence reflects ethical failure. Strengthening moral reasoning, empathy and constitutional values is essential to transform raw emotion into responsible action and sustain a just social order.

Q. Analyse the role of empathy and moral courage in preventing communal violence. How can these virtues be institutionalised in public life? (10 M)

Introduction

Communal violence reflects a failure of ethical reasoning as much as a breakdown of public order. In a constitutional democracy founded on **justice, liberty, equality and fraternity (Preamble)**, virtues such as **empathy** and **moral courage** are indispensable to prevent hatred from translating into violence.

Body

Role of empathy in preventing communal violence

- 1. Recognition of shared human dignity:** Empathy allows individuals to perceive others beyond religious identities, reinforcing **Article 21** which protects life and dignity. It prevents the moral disengagement that fuels mob behaviour.
Eg: In **Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India (2018)**, the Supreme Court emphasised that mob lynching violates the dignity guaranteed under **Article 21**, urging states to cultivate a culture of fraternity to prevent dehumanisation.
- 2. Countering stereotypes and collective blame:** Empathy challenges narratives that demonise entire communities, aligning with **Article 14 (Equality before law)** and the constitutional value of fraternity.
Eg: After communal tensions in **Nuh, Haryana (2023)**, local interfaith appeals and peace committees emphasised shared coexistence, helping reduce further escalation as reflected in official reports and media coverage.
- 3. Building trust through empathetic administration:** Sensitive policing and timely reassurance prevent retaliatory cycles of violence and strengthen ethical legitimacy of the state.
Eg: The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007), Ethics in Governance**, recommended community policing and citizen-centric conduct to build trust and prevent communal flare-ups.
- 4. Encouraging dialogue and reconciliation:** Empathy facilitates communication between conflicting groups and reduces polarisation.
Eg: District-level peace committees encouraged by **Ministry of Home Affairs advisories** after lynching incidents aim to foster dialogue and prevent misinformation-driven hostility.

Role of moral courage in preventing communal violence

- 1. Resisting unlawful mob pressure:** Moral courage empowers individuals and officials to uphold the **rule of law** even when confronted by majoritarian sentiment.
Eg: In **Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India (2014)**, the Supreme Court highlighted the need for restraint in hate speech, placing ethical responsibility on leaders to prevent incitement.
- 2. Active bystander intervention:** Moral courage inspires citizens to protect victims despite personal risk, reflecting the duty under **Article 51A(e)** to promote harmony.
Eg: During the **Delhi riots 2020**, documented instances showed individuals sheltering neighbours from other communities, demonstrating personal risk-taking to uphold fraternity.

3. **Impartial enforcement of law:** Courageous and swift legal action deters future violence and reinforces constitutional morality.

Eg: In **Tehseen S. Poonawalla (2018)**, the Court mandated appointment of district nodal officers and preventive measures, institutionalising accountability against mob violence.

Institutionalising empathy and moral courage in public life

1. **Value-based education:** Embedding constitutional values and ethics in schooling nurtures empathy from an early age.

Eg: The **National Education Policy 2020** emphasises value-based education, constitutional duties and critical thinking to promote responsible citizenship.

2. **Ethics training for public servants:** Institutionalising ethics training strengthens moral reasoning in sensitive situations.

Eg: The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007)** recommended mandatory ethics training and a Code of Ethics for civil servants to promote integrity and courage.

3. **Legal safeguards and accountability mechanisms:** Robust implementation of judicial guidelines ensures that ethical norms are enforceable.

Eg: Compliance with preventive and remedial directions in **Tehseen S. Poonawalla (2018)**, including compensation schemes and fast-track trials, operationalises the protection of dignity under **Article 21**.

Conclusion

Empathy prevents the erosion of humanity, while moral courage prevents the erosion of justice. When systematically nurtured through education, governance and law, these virtues transform constitutional promises into lived communal harmony

Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.

Q. What does the following quotation mean to you in the present context

“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”

– Howard Zinn

Introduction

Societal transformation is not always the result of dramatic revolutions; it often emerges from the quiet, consistent ethical conduct of ordinary citizens. When such acts are multiplied across society, they create a moral force capable of reshaping institutions and collective behaviour.

Body

Meaning of the quotation

1. **Collective moral agency:** The quotation highlights that individual ethical actions, when performed by millions, generate collective power that can influence governance and society.

Eg: Widespread citizen use of the **Right to Information Act, 2005** has enhanced transparency and

accountability, reinforcing constitutional values of **justice and equality under Articles 14 and 19**, as reflected in reports of the **Central Information Commission**.

2. **Incremental ethical change:** Sustainable transformation often occurs through repeated small acts rather than sudden upheavals.
Eg: Household-level participation in the **Swachh Bharat Mission (launched in 2014)** improved sanitation coverage nationwide, demonstrating how small behavioural changes collectively produce measurable public health gains, as reported by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
3. **Norm-building through repetition:** When ethical conduct becomes widespread, it shapes social norms and collective conscience.
Eg: The institutionalisation of **Constitution Day (26 November, since 2015)** encourages citizens to internalise values of **constitutional morality**, equality and fraternity.
4. **Empowerment of ordinary citizens:** The quotation underlines that change is not monopolised by elites; every citizen has transformative potential.
Eg: Social audits under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005**, recommended by the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007)**, empower villagers to ensure accountability in welfare delivery.
5. **Non-violent civic participation:** Peaceful, lawful civic actions by many can alter unjust structures.
Eg: High voter participation under **Article 326 of the Constitution** strengthens democratic legitimacy, as regularly highlighted in reports of the **Election Commission of India**.

Relevance in the present context

1. **Climate responsibility and sustainable lifestyles:** Individual environmental ethics, when widely adopted, can address global crises.
Eg: India's advocacy of **LiFE – Lifestyle for Environment**, highlighted at **COP27 (2022)**, emphasises small lifestyle changes like energy conservation and waste reduction to collectively combat climate change, as noted in India's submissions to the **UNFCCC**.
2. **Strengthening transparency and accountability:** Everyday civic vigilance reinforces institutional integrity.
Eg: Citizen engagement through **public grievance portals and RTI mechanisms** strengthens accountable governance, aligning with principles suggested by the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007)**.
3. **Promoting dignity and inclusion:** Small acts of non-discrimination uphold constitutional morality in daily life.
Eg: The Supreme Court in **K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India (2017)** affirmed **privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21**, whose practical protection depends on citizens respecting personal dignity in routine interactions.
4. **Ethical digital citizenship:** Responsible online conduct by millions can curb misinformation and protect social harmony.
Eg: Compliance with due diligence norms under the **Information Technology Act, 2000**, is strengthened when citizens verify information before sharing, promoting digital responsibility.
5. **Community-led problem solving:** Grassroots participation enhances resilience and social solidarity.
Eg: Local participation in disaster response and community initiatives, encouraged under frameworks like the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, demonstrates how collective small efforts strengthen societal resilience.

Conclusion

The quotation reminds us that ethical transformation begins with individual conscience but succeeds through collective action. When millions act with integrity in small ways, they build a just, accountable and compassionate society.

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.

Q. Ethical governance fails not due to absence of rules, but due to erosion of conscience. Examine this statement in the context of public administration. Assess the limitations of rule-based ethics in ensuring moral conduct. (10 M)

Introduction

India's administrative system is dense with laws, procedures and oversight bodies, yet ethical lapses persist across sectors. This paradox highlights that **formal compliance cannot substitute inner moral restraint**, making conscience central to ethical governance.

Body

Erosion of conscience and ethical failure in public administration

- 1. Substitution of moral judgement by procedural obedience:** When officials prioritise file correctness over ethical intent, conscience weakens and moral responsibility is diluted.
Eg: Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC), Ethics in Governance, 2007 noted that excessive rule-following enables "moral distancing" in decision-making.
- 2. Career incentives overriding ethical conviction:** Fear of transfers, postings and reprisals discourages conscience-driven action even when rules permit discretion.
Eg: Central Vigilance Commission annual observations have flagged reluctance among officers to act against powerful interests despite clear ethical concerns.
- 3. Normalisation of unethical practices through organisational culture:** Repeated exposure to informal norms erodes individual conscience over time.
Eg: NITI Aayog Governance Index 2022 links weak ethical culture within departments to declining trust and service quality outcomes.
- 4. Moral disengagement during routine administration:** Ethical lapses often occur in everyday decisions rather than crises, reflecting conscience fatigue.
Eg: OECD Public Integrity Indicators 2021 show routine discretion as a key vulnerability point for ethical erosion in bureaucracies.
- 5. Weak internalisation of constitutional morality:** Absence of value-based training limits the translation of constitutional ideals into daily conduct.
Eg: Supreme Court in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018) emphasised the duty of public authorities to act in accordance with **constitutional morality**, not mere legality.

Limitations of rule-based ethics in ensuring moral conduct

1. **Rules define minimum compliance, not ethical excellence:** Laws set outer boundaries but cannot guide complex moral choices.
Eg: Second ARC (2007) observed that ethical governance requires values beyond codified conduct rules.
2. **Inability to anticipate diverse ethical dilemmas:** Static rules cannot foresee context-specific moral conflicts faced by administrators.
Eg: Law Commission of India, 255th Report highlighted gaps where legal frameworks lag evolving governance challenges.
3. **Mechanical compliance without ethical intent:** Rule-based systems encourage box-ticking rather than principled decision-making.
Eg: Comptroller and Auditor General performance audits frequently note procedural compliance alongside poor ethical outcomes.
4. **Selective interpretation and enforcement of rules:** Rules become tools of convenience rather than moral guides when discretion is misused.
Eg: Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997) warned against discretionary enforcement undermining integrity of institutions.
5. **Over-reliance on external control mechanisms:** Excessive focus on vigilance discourages internal moral accountability.
Eg: OECD Trust in Government Report 2022 found that systems relying only on control mechanisms show lower ethical ownership among officials.

Conclusion

Rules provide structure, but conscience provides direction in public administration. Ethical governance endures only when **institutional frameworks are complemented by moral internalisation, constitutional values and ethical leadership.**

Q. “Public service ethics deteriorate not due to lack of laws, but due to selective enforcement”. Analyse its impact on trust and accountability in governance. (10 M)

Introduction

Ethical decay in public institutions is rarely a legislative vacuum problem; it is a governance failure rooted in discretion without discipline. When enforcement becomes selective, legality survives on paper while morality collapses in practice, corroding the foundations of public trust.

Body

Public service ethics deteriorate not due to lack of laws, but due to selective enforcement

1. **Erosion of rule of law principle:** Selective enforcement violates **Article 14** by creating unequal application of laws, normalising arbitrariness within administration and weakening ethical commitment among officials.
Eg: Supreme Court in E.P. Royappa (1974) linked arbitrariness with inequality, noting that discretionary abuse erodes constitutional morality; selective disciplinary action in services reflects this concern.
2. **Normalization of impunity culture:** When violations by influential actors go unpunished, ethical conduct loses incentive value and misconduct becomes rational behaviour within bureaucracy.
Eg: 2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance, 2007) highlighted how weak enforcement of Conduct Rules encourages rent-seeking and moral laxity despite adequate legal frameworks.
3. **Instrumentalisation of vigilance mechanisms:** Enforcement agencies become tools of control rather than accountability, shifting ethics from duty-based to fear-based compliance.

Eg: Central Vigilance Commission Annual Report 2023 noted disproportionate focus on lower-level officials, while systemic corruption cases face delays, diluting ethical signalling.

4. **Undermining internal accountability norms:** Selective punishment discourages whistleblowing and peer accountability, fostering ethical silence instead of ethical courage.
Eg: Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 remains weakly enforced, with repeated reports (PRS Legislative Research) highlighting lack of rules and retaliatory action risks.
5. **Moral disengagement among civil servants:** Persistent selective enforcement creates cognitive justification for unethical acts, weakening integrity as a core value of public service.
Eg: L.K. Jha Committee on Civil Services Reforms warned that inconsistent disciplinary standards erode esprit de corps and ethical self-regulation.

Impact on trust and accountability in governance

1. **Collapse of citizen trust in institutions:** Perceived bias in enforcement reduces legitimacy of state authority, leading to compliance driven by fear rather than consent.
Eg: Edelman Trust Barometer 2024 (India findings) showed declining trust in public institutions where accountability is seen as selective.
2. **Weakened democratic accountability:** Selective enforcement shields decision-makers from scrutiny, hollowing out legislative and social oversight mechanisms.
Eg: Public Accounts Committee reports (2022–23) flagged recurring irregularities without proportionate executive accountability.
3. **Distortion of answerability mechanisms:** Officials become accountable upwards to political authority rather than outward to citizens and constitutional values.
Eg: Supreme Court in Vineet Narain (1997) stressed independent enforcement as essential for preserving public accountability and institutional trust.
4. **Delegitimisation of anti-corruption frameworks:** Laws lose normative force when applied unevenly, reducing deterrence and public cooperation in governance reforms.
Eg: Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2023 links perceived selective enforcement with low confidence in anti-corruption regimes.
5. **Institutional decay and governance cynicism:** Persistent selective enforcement breeds public cynicism, weakening social capital essential for effective governance.
Eg: World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (2023) associate rule-of-law deficits with declining government effectiveness and trust.

Conclusion

Sustainable public ethics demand not more laws, but credible, impartial enforcement anchored in constitutional morality. Restoring trust requires shifting from discretionary power to rule-bound accountability, where enforcement itself becomes an ethical act of governance.

Q. Identify key ethical issues involved in foreign funding of domestic institutions. Explain how transparency can mitigate these risks. (10 M)

Introduction

In an era of deep global interdependence, foreign funding has become an important enabler of research, advocacy and development activities. However, when such funding intersects with domestic institutions, it raises serious ethical concerns related to autonomy, accountability and public trust.

Body

Key ethical issues involved in foreign funding

1. **Institutional autonomy and influence risk:** Foreign funding can subtly shape priorities, agendas and outcomes of domestic institutions, compromising their independent decision-making.
Eg: Under the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010**, amended in **2020**, restrictions were tightened after concerns that foreign-funded NGOs were influencing public policy debates beyond their stated mandates (Source: **Ministry of Home Affairs**).
2. **Conflict of interest and loyalty dilemma:** Acceptance of external funds may create divided loyalties between public interest and donor expectations, undermining ethical objectivity.
Eg: Parliamentary debates on FCRA amendments highlighted risks of advocacy organisations aligning positions with foreign donors rather than domestic stakeholders (**PRS Legislative Research**).
3. **Democratic accountability deficit:** Foreign-funded institutions may influence public discourse without being accountable to Indian citizens or legislatures.
Eg: The **Supreme Court in Indian Social Action Forum vs Union of India (2020)** upheld regulatory oversight, noting that unchecked foreign funding can affect democratic processes.
4. **Equity and fairness concerns:** Selective access to foreign funds can create an uneven institutional landscape, privileging some actors over others.
Eg: Policy think tanks with global funding networks often enjoy disproportionate visibility compared to grassroots organisations relying solely on domestic resources (**NITI Aayog, NGO Darpan framework**).
5. **National interest and sovereignty ethics:** Excessive dependence on foreign funding may dilute constitutional values linked to sovereignty and public order.
Eg: Ethical justification for regulation is linked to **Article 19(1)(c)** read with reasonable restrictions under **Article 19(4)** of the Constitution.

Role of transparency in mitigating ethical risks

1. **Disclosure and public scrutiny:** Mandatory disclosure of funding sources enables citizens and regulators to assess potential biases and motivations.
Eg: Annual foreign contribution disclosures on the **MHA FCRA portal** enhance traceability and public oversight.
2. **Strengthening accountability mechanisms:** Transparent reporting allows auditing bodies to ensure funds are used strictly for declared purposes.
Eg: **CAG audits** and compliance reviews act as deterrents against fund misuse (Source: **CAG of India reports**).
3. **Preserving institutional credibility:** Openness about funding sources builds trust and ethical legitimacy among stakeholders.
Eg: Adoption of voluntary disclosure norms by universities and research institutions aligns with **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** emphasis on transparency as a core ethical value.
4. **Preventing covert influence:** Transparency reduces scope for indirect policy capture or agenda-setting by external actors.
Eg: Requirement of prior permission for sensitive sectors under FCRA reflects a precautionary, ethics-based regulatory approach.
5. **Aligning with constitutional morality:** Transparent funding practices uphold **Article 14** principles of fairness and **Article 51(c)** which promotes ethical international engagement without compromising domestic integrity.

Conclusion

Foreign funding is not inherently unethical, but ethical legitimacy depends on transparency, accountability and constitutional alignment. Strengthening disclosure norms and ethical oversight can ensure that global cooperation complements, rather than compromises, democratic governance.

Q. Explain how conflict of interest operates as a gateway to corruption in public decision-making. Suggest safeguards to manage and disclose conflicts of interest. (10 M)

Introduction

Public power is held in trust, and **integrity is tested most sharply when private interests intersect with official duties**. Conflict of interest (CoI) is dangerous because it often appears “legal”, yet silently corrodes impartiality and fairness in governance.

Body

How conflict of interest becomes a gateway to corruption

1. Interest–duty collision creates biased discretion: When a decision-maker has a personal stake, discretionary power gets distorted, turning governance into favour-trading.
Eg: Tender manipulation where officials influence eligibility criteria to benefit a connected bidder, flagged repeatedly in **CVC vigilance advisories**.
2. Normalisation of unethical influence before bribery begins: CoI enables “soft corruption” (access, preference, inside knowledge) which later escalates into direct bribery.
Eg: Revolving door risks where retired regulators join industries they previously supervised, a concern highlighted in **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance, 2007)**.
3. Undermines fairness and equality in public decisions: Even without bribes, CoI violates equal treatment and destroys legitimacy of outcomes.
Eg: Allocation of public contracts or licences to connected parties can violate Article 14 (equality and non-arbitrariness) as affirmed in **E.P. Royappa (1974)** and **Maneka Gandhi (1978)**.
4. Enables insider advantage and leakage of confidential information: CoI often results in misuse of privileged information, creating an uneven playing field and rent extraction.
Eg: Leakage of tender estimates / bid details enabling cartelisation, commonly noted in audit observations by **CAG** in public procurement cases.
5. Weakens institutional accountability through capture: CoI allows private actors to influence policy, regulation, and enforcement, leading to systemic corruption.
Eg: Regulatory capture in sectors like mining or real estate where enforcement becomes selective, discussed in governance literature and repeatedly flagged in **2nd ARC (2007)**.

Safeguards to manage and disclose conflict of interest

1. Mandatory disclosure of assets and interests: Public officials must disclose financial interests, business links, and close family interests to prevent hidden influence.
Eg: Asset disclosure norms for public servants flow from probity standards and have been reinforced through transparency frameworks like RTI Act, 2005 and ethics guidance in 2nd ARC (2007).
2. Clear recusal and abstention rules: Where CoI exists, the official must recuse from decision-making to protect impartiality.

Eg: Judicial recusal practices in India are based on the principle of bias-free adjudication under **Article 21 (fairness as due process)** as expanded in **Maneka Gandhi (1978)**.

3. Independent ethics oversight and codes of conduct: Ethics officers/committees should vet conflicts, issue binding guidance, and ensure compliance.

Eg: 2nd ARC (2007) recommended strengthening ethical infrastructure including codes, disclosures, and institutional enforcement for probity.

4. Cooling-off period and post-retirement restrictions: To prevent revolving-door corruption, officials should face restrictions on joining related private entities after retirement.

Eg: Cooling-off rules exist for senior officials in several services and are widely recommended as global best practice; India's governance reform discussions repeatedly stress this under **2nd ARC (2007)**.

5. Transparent procurement and digital audit trails: E-procurement, open contracting, and real-time audit reduce discretion and make CoI harder to hide.

Eg: Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and expanded e-procurement systems improve traceability and reduce human discretion, aligned with anti-corruption goals supported by **CVC** and audit best practices.

Conclusion

Conflict of interest is the **first crack in public trust**, and corruption often enters through that crack. A culture of **disclosure, recusal, and enforceable ethics oversight** is essential to protect integrity in democratic 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.

Q. Explain the concept of probity in governance. Analyse its role in strengthening public trust in institutions. (10 M)

Introduction

Probity in governance represents the moral architecture of public administration, ensuring that public power is exercised with **integrity, impartiality, and accountability**. In an era of complex state-market interactions and high discretionary authority, probity acts as the ethical glue that sustains institutional legitimacy and democratic trust.

Body

Concept of probity in governance

1. **Integrity and upright conduct in public office:** Probity denotes adherence to **honesty, moral rectitude, and consistency between values and actions** by public servants, beyond mere legal compliance.

Eg: Second Administrative Reforms Commission (Ethics in Governance, 2007) defined probity as high ethical standards in decision-making to prevent abuse of authority and conflicts of interest.

2. **Impartial and non-arbitrary exercise of discretion:** Probity requires decisions to be **fair, objective, and free from personal or political bias**, aligning with constitutional morality.
Eg: Article 14 of the Constitution mandates equality before law, making arbitrary state action ethically and constitutionally impermissible.
3. **Transparency and openness in processes:** Ethical governance demands that procedures, criteria, and outcomes be **open to scrutiny**, enabling informed public oversight.
Eg: Right to Information Act, 2005 operationalises probity by enabling citizens to seek reasons and records for public decisions.
4. **Accountability and answerability to the public:** Probity entails readiness of institutions and officials to **justify actions and face consequences** for ethical lapses.
Eg: Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit reports exposing irregularities in public spending reinforce ethical accountability in governance.
5. **Avoidance of conflict of interest and misuse of office:** A probity framework prevents public office from being used for **private gain**, ensuring primacy of public interest.
Eg: Central Vigilance Commission guidelines on procurement and post-retirement employment aim to curb conflict-of-interest situations.

Role of probity in strengthening public trust in institutions

1. **Enhances legitimacy of state institutions:** Ethical conduct reassures citizens that authority is exercised for **public welfare**, not sectional interests.
Eg: Supreme Court in Vineet Narain (1997) stressed independent vigilance mechanisms to restore credibility of investigative institutions.
2. **Builds predictability and confidence in governance:** Probity reduces arbitrariness, making state actions **reliable and rule-based**, which strengthens citizen confidence.
Eg: E-procurement platforms and GeM portal reforms have reduced discretion and improved trust in public procurement systems.
3. **Strengthens social contract and democratic participation:** Ethical governance encourages citizens to **engage, comply, and cooperate** with institutions voluntarily.
Eg: Electoral Commission's Model Code of Conduct enforcement enhances trust in electoral outcomes and democratic processes.
4. **Prevents corruption and systemic moral decay:** By institutionalising ethical standards, probity acts as a **preventive mechanism** against corruption.
Eg: Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 provides an integrity framework for addressing corruption at higher political and administrative levels.
5. **Improves institutional resilience during crises:** Trust built through ethical conduct enables institutions to **retain public confidence during emergencies**.
Eg: Transparent communication and audit of disaster relief funds by governments during recent crises helped prevent credibility erosion.

Conclusion

Probity in governance is not an abstract virtue but a **functional necessity** for sustaining institutional trust in a constitutional democracy. Embedding ethical standards through rules, oversight, and ethical leadership is essential for future-ready, citizen-centric governance.

Q. Information asymmetry is an ethical failure, not merely an administrative one. Evaluate its implications for democratic governance. Assess the role of RTI in addressing this challenge.

(10 M)

Introduction

In a constitutional democracy, information held by the state is not a privilege but a public trust. When access to such information is denied, it raises not merely administrative concerns but deeper ethical questions about accountability, fairness, and respect for citizen autonomy.

Body

Information asymmetry as an ethical failure

1. **Breach of fiduciary responsibility:** Public officials are trustees of information on behalf of citizens, and withholding it violates the ethical duty of stewardship inherent in public office.
Eg: State of Uttar Pradesh v. Raj Narain (1975) held that secrecy in public affairs undermines democratic accountability and moral legitimacy of authority.
2. **Denial of moral agency to citizens:** Ethical governance requires enabling informed choice; asymmetry reduces citizens to passive recipients rather than active moral participants in governance.
Eg: S.P. Gupta v. Union of India (1981) linked the **right to information** to **Article 19(1)(a)**, emphasising informed public reasoning as a democratic ethic.
3. **Promotion of arbitrariness and discretion abuse:** Information monopolies enable unchecked discretion, contradicting ethical principles of fairness and impartiality in administration.
Eg: CBSE v. Aditya Bandopadhyay (2011) recognised transparency as a safeguard against arbitrary decision-making.
4. **Normalization of ethical indifference:** Persistent opacity fosters a culture where concealment becomes routine, weakening integrity norms within public institutions.
Eg: The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) identified lack of transparency as a root cause of ethical erosion in governance.

Implications for democratic governance

1. **Erosion of public trust:** Democratic legitimacy depends on trust, which diminishes when citizens perceive systematic information denial as deliberate manipulation.
Eg: Second ARC (Ethics in Governance Report) highlighted transparency as essential for sustaining citizen confidence in institutions.
2. **Weakening of participatory democracy:** Without access to information, citizen participation becomes symbolic rather than substantive, undermining deliberative democracy.
Eg: Supreme Court observations in PUCL v. Union of India (2003) stressed informed participation as central to electoral democracy.
3. **Inequality in access to justice and services:** Information asymmetry benefits insiders and elites, violating ethical equality and distributive justice.
Eg: RTI-based revelations on welfare exclusion errors have shown how opacity disproportionately harms vulnerable groups.
4. **Accountability deficit in institutions:** When information flows upward but not outward, institutional checks weaken, allowing ethical violations to persist.

Eg: Comptroller and Auditor General reports repeatedly note transparency gaps as enablers of governance failures.

Role of RTI in addressing the challenge

1. **Ethical institutionalisation of transparency:** The **Right to Information Act, 2005** converts moral expectations of openness into enforceable public duties.
Eg: The Act operationalises the constitutional “right to know” derived from **Article 19(1)(a)**, as affirmed by the Supreme Court.
2. **Empowerment of citizen-led ethical oversight:** RTI enables citizens to question ethical propriety, not just legality, in public decisions.
Eg: RTI-enabled **social audits in MGNREGS**, endorsed by the **Ministry of Rural Development**, improved ethical accountability at the local level.
3. **Deterrence against unethical conduct:** The possibility of disclosure acts as a moral deterrent against concealment and misuse of authority.
Eg: **Central Information Commission annual reports** highlight RTI’s role in exposing maladministration and unethical delays.
4. **Promotion of a transparency culture:** Over time, RTI nudges institutions towards proactive disclosure, embedding ethics into routine governance.
Eg: **Section 4 of the RTI Act** mandates suo-motu disclosure, reducing dependence on reactive information requests.

Conclusion

Information asymmetry corrodes the ethical foundations of democracy by weakening trust, equality, and accountability. By transforming transparency into a citizen-enforceable right, RTI acts as a moral equaliser, aligning state power with the ethical ideals of democratic governance.

Q. Leakage of public funds is not only corruption, but also a failure of public ethics. Bring out the ethical responsibilities of public officials in preventing wastage and misallocation. (10 M)

Introduction

Public funds are **citizens’ money held in trust by the state**, and their leakage represents both **corruption** and a deeper **ethical collapse of responsibility**. Hence, preventing wastage and misallocation is a core test of integrity in public administration.

Leakage of public funds as a failure of public ethics

1. **Breach of public trust (Fiduciary duty):** Public officials are trustees of taxpayer money; leakage violates this trust and weakens legitimacy of governance.
Eg: **CAG audit findings** in multiple schemes show how leakages erode confidence in state capacity and fairness.
2. **Injustice to the poor (Equity failure):** Leakage reduces resources meant for vulnerable groups, turning welfare into elite capture.
Eg: **PDS diversion** historically reduced food access for eligible households and weakened food security outcomes.

3. **Violation of constitutional morality:** Misuse of funds undermines the state's obligation to promote welfare and justice under the Constitution.
Eg: Directive Principles (Part IV) mandate a welfare orientation; leakage defeats the purpose of social spending.
4. **Ethical normalisation of wrongdoing:** Even routine leakages institutionalise dishonesty and create a culture of impunity.
Eg: Repeated **irregularities flagged by PAC** show how systemic tolerance sustains unethical behaviour.
5. **Harm to public welfare outcomes:** Leakage converts development expenditure into inefficiency, lowering human development and service quality.
Eg: Ghost beneficiaries in welfare systems led to the push for **DBT reforms** to ensure benefits reach the intended.

Ethical responsibilities of public officials to prevent wastage and misallocation

1. **Integrity and refusal to collude:** Officials must resist political/contractor pressure and prevent diversion at every stage.
Eg: Vigilance mechanisms and **CVC guidelines** aim to reduce discretion-based corruption in procurement.
2. **Accountability and audit discipline:** Ensure traceability of funds, proper documentation, and readiness for CAG/PAC scrutiny.
Eg: CAG audits + PAC review enforce standards of financial propriety and administrative responsibility.
3. **Due diligence and prudent planning:** Avoid idle funds, delayed projects, cost overruns, and wasteful expenditure.
Eg: CAG reports frequently highlight under-utilisation due to weak project planning and delayed execution.
4. **Transparency and citizen oversight:** Enable public scrutiny through proactive disclosure, RTI compliance, and open data.
Eg: RTI Act, 2005 (Section 4 proactive disclosure) strengthens transparency and reduces scope for fund diversion.
5. **Ethical responsiveness and corrective action:** Detect leakages early, act on complaints, and fix systemic gaps rather than deny.
Eg: Social audits under MGNREGA expose fake muster rolls and force recovery and disciplinary action.

Conclusion

Leakage is not just financial loss — it is **ethical failure against the poorest citizen**. Ethical public officials must treat every rupee as **a constitutional obligation**, ensuring **integrity, transparency, and outcome-based governance**.

Q. Distinguish between a Code of Ethics and a Code of Conduct. Explain why both are necessary for civil services. (10 M)

Introduction

Civil services demand more than technical competence because public power is exercised daily in situations involving discretion, conflict of interest and citizen vulnerability. Hence, ethical governance requires both a **value compass** and a **behavioural rulebook**.

Body

Code of ethics vs Code of conduct

Code of ethics (Coe)	Code of conduct (Coc)
Value-based framework that defines ideals like integrity, impartiality and compassion	Rule-based framework that specifies dos and don'ts for behaviour
Focuses on what is right and morally desirable	Focuses on what is permitted / prohibited
Acts as an internal moral compass guiding discretion	Acts as an external compliance mechanism ensuring discipline
Broad and principle-driven; helps in grey areas	Specific and action-oriented; applies in defined situations
Primarily enforced through culture, conscience and peer expectations	Enforced through disciplinary action and service rules
Encourages ethical excellence beyond minimum compliance	Ensures minimum acceptable behaviour through uniform standards
Example: Ethical values promoted in training and governance frameworks	Example: CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 for government servants

Why both are necessary for civil services

1. **Complements values with enforceability:** Ethics inspires officers to uphold integrity, while conduct ensures misconduct is punishable, preventing ethical standards from remaining symbolic.
Eg: CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 enable disciplinary action for misuse of official position, while ethical norms demand honesty even when rules cannot detect wrongdoing.
2. **Prevents “legal but unethical” public administration:** Officers may follow rules in letter but still violate fairness and public interest; ethics ensures adherence to the spirit of governance.
Eg: A procurement process may be procedurally correct but ethically compromised through **biased eligibility criteria**, undermining equal opportunity.
3. **Guides discretion in complex and grey-zone decisions:** Conduct rules cannot cover every dilemma; ethics helps balance competing duties like transparency, confidentiality and compassion.
Eg: During disasters, ethics supports prioritising **humanitarian relief** without compromising accountability.
4. **Builds citizen trust through predictable and principled behaviour:** Ethics ensures empathy and justice, while conduct ensures uniformity, neutrality and non-arbitrariness across the administration.
Eg: Ethical commitment to **Article 14 equality** combined with conduct rules on political neutrality strengthens credibility of civil services.
5. **Strengthens constitutional morality and institutional integrity:** Ethics aligns civil servants with constitutional values, while conduct rules operationalise integrity through standards and sanctions.
Eg: Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC, 2007) emphasised strengthening civil service ethics through both **values-based orientation** and enforceable behavioural norms.

Conclusion

A Code of Ethics builds the civil servant's conscience, while a Code of Conduct builds the system's discipline. Together, they ensure that discretion remains **constitutional, accountable and citizen-centric** rather than arbitrary or self-serving.

Q. Discuss how petty corruption differs from grand corruption in ethical impact. Propose targeted strategies to address both forms effectively. (10 M)

Introduction

Corruption is not only a financial crime but a direct assault on **justice, dignity and public trust**. In India, both petty and grand corruption weaken the ethical foundations of governance, though through different pathways.

Body

Difference in ethical impact of petty vs grand corruption

- Nature of harm and moral gravity: Petty corruption violates dignity daily, while grand corruption violates justice at scale.**
Eg: Bribe for police FIR, ration card, or hospital bed humiliates citizens; large procurement scams divert public resources meant for lakhs of beneficiaries.
- Victim profile and equity impact: Petty corruption hits the poor directly, grand corruption deepens structural inequality.**
Eg: Bribes in PDS, anganwadi, municipal services disproportionately burden low-income households; policy capture by corporate interests distorts allocation against public welfare.
- Trust erosion pathway: Petty corruption erodes trust through repeated everyday betrayal, grand corruption creates cynicism about the entire system.**
Eg: Citizens lose faith when basic entitlements require payment; repeated revelations of high-level scams create a belief that "everyone at the top is compromised".
- Accountability and deterrence: Petty corruption is visible but normalised; grand corruption is hidden but protected by power.**
Eg: Street-level bribes are often socially tolerated as "speed money"; high-level corruption may evade scrutiny due to political influence, weak prosecution and delayed trials.
- Institutional damage: Petty corruption weakens service delivery, grand corruption weakens institutions themselves.**
Eg: Bribes in land records, local permits delay services; grand corruption can distort regulators, procurement systems and investigative agencies, weakening institutional credibility.

Targeted strategies to address both forms effectively

- Reduce discretion at the cutting edge: Standardised service delivery and time-bound citizen charters.**
Eg: Sevottam model (2nd ARC) and service guarantee laws in States reduce scope for rent-seeking by fixing timelines and appeal mechanisms.

2. **Strengthen transparency and audit trails: Digitisation with grievance redress and social audit.**
Eg: MGNREGA social audits and **DBT-based delivery** reduce leakages; combining tech with **community monitoring** prevents corruption from shifting to new gatekeepers.
3. **Deterrence through swift and credible punishment: Speedy departmental action and case disposal.**
Eg: Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended 2018) strengthens legal framework; fast disciplinary action for petty bribes creates visible deterrence.
4. **Attack grand corruption through procurement and political finance reforms: Clean contracting and disclosure.**
Eg: GeM and e-procurement reduce cartelisation; stronger **public disclosure norms** and transparent funding reduce nexus-driven corruption.
5. **Institutional independence and protection of integrity actors: Lokpal + whistleblower safety + vigilance autonomy.**
Eg: Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 provides a national anti-corruption institution; strengthening **Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014** implementation can protect insiders exposing high-level wrongdoing.

Conclusion

Petty corruption corrodes the state from below, while grand corruption captures it from above. A credible anti-corruption strategy must combine **ethical leadership, institutional autonomy, transparency, and swift accountability** to rebuild trust in governance.

Q. Rule-following is not the same as ethical governance. Distinguish between the two. Illustrate how ethical discretion can be exercised without arbitrariness. (10 M)

Introduction

In public administration, rules are the **minimum moral floor**, not the full meaning of ethics. A state can be procedurally “legal” yet still be **unjust, insensitive, or exclusionary**, which is why ethical governance demands more than compliance.

Body

Distinguish between rule-following and ethical governance

1. **Nature of duty: Compliance vs conscience:** Rule-following focuses on obeying written procedures, while ethical governance applies **moral reasoning** to ensure actions are fair, humane and public-spirited.
Eg: A field officer may deny a genuine beneficiary due to a minor document mismatch, but ethical governance would enable **assisted compliance** instead of exclusion (seen in welfare delivery debates around **Aadhaar-based authentication failures**).
2. **Standard of legitimacy: Legality vs constitutional morality:** Rule-following may still produce outcomes violating the spirit of rights, whereas ethical governance aligns decisions with **constitutional values** like dignity and equality.
Eg: In **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**, the Supreme Court held **privacy** as part of Article 21, implying that “legal” data collection without safeguards can still be ethically illegitimate.

3. **Outcome orientation: Procedure-first vs justice-first:** Rule-following prioritises correct process, while ethical governance ensures the process does not defeat **substantive justice**, especially for vulnerable groups.
Eg: During COVID-19, many administrations used discretion to ensure **food and transport support** for migrants beyond narrow eligibility lists, reflecting ethical governance under crisis constraints.
4. **Accountability logic: File-based compliance vs reasoned decision-making:** Rule-following often becomes “covering oneself” through paperwork; ethical governance requires **reasons, transparency, and explainability** for choices made.
Eg: The Supreme Court in **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)** linked Article 21 to **fair, just and reasonable procedure**, reinforcing that governance must be reasoned, not merely formal.
5. **Moral risks: Rule-worship vs ethical judgement:** Rule-following can produce **moral evasion** (“I only followed orders”), whereas ethical governance requires ownership of decisions and moral courage.
Eg: The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)** emphasised that civil servants must uphold **integrity and public interest**, not merely procedural correctness (Ethics in Governance report).

How ethical discretion can be exercised without arbitrariness

1. **Anchor discretion in Article 14’s non-arbitrariness principle:** Ethical discretion must satisfy equality and avoid personal bias, ensuring similar cases are treated similarly.
Eg: The Supreme Court in **E.P. Royappa v. State of Tamil Nadu (1974)** held that **arbitrariness is antithetical to equality**, guiding administrators to justify differential treatment with reasons.
2. **Use “reasoned orders” and recorded justification:** Discretion becomes ethical when the official clearly documents the **public interest rationale** and proportionality behind the decision.
Eg: Many district administrations publish written criteria for **relief eligibility** during disasters to prevent favouritism and enable audit by higher authorities.
3. **Apply proportionality and least-harm approach:** Ethical discretion avoids extremes—choosing the option that achieves the objective with the **least rights-infringement**.
Eg: In **Modern Dental College v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2016)**, the Supreme Court affirmed the **proportionality doctrine**, relevant for balancing public purpose with individual hardship in administrative actions.
4. **Build safeguards through participatory and institutional checks:** Consultation with Gram Sabhas, committees, and multi-member decisions reduces individual arbitrariness and improves legitimacy.
Eg: **PESA Act, 1996** mandates community participation in Scheduled Areas, enabling ethically grounded discretion in resource decisions through **Gram Sabha consent**.
5. **Adopt rule-based flexibility with compassion protocols:** Ethical discretion should operate through pre-declared flexibility windows (hardship clauses, exception policies), not personal charity.
Eg: Many welfare schemes now include grievance redressal and relaxation mechanisms, reflecting the **2nd ARC** emphasis on **citizen-centric administration** and reducing exclusion errors.

Conclusion

Rule-following ensures order, but ethical governance ensures **justice with dignity**. Ethical discretion becomes non-arbitrary when it is **constitutionally anchored, reasoned, transparent, and institutionally checked**, turning power into public trust.

Q. Explain how social media visibility pressures can affect public servants' objectivity. Suggest ethical guidelines for digital conduct in public office. (10 M)

Introduction

In a digital age, a public servant's credibility is shaped not only by decisions, but also by how those decisions are perceived online. When visibility becomes a currency, the risk is that governance shifts from **constitutional objectivity to performative administration**.

Body

How social media visibility pressures affect objectivity

- 1. Popularity bias over public interest: Visibility incentives can push officials to choose "headline-friendly" actions rather than ethically sound decisions.**
Eg: A district officer prioritising "photo-op drives" (symbolic demolitions/raids) for viral content while neglecting long-term service delivery like **nutrition monitoring** or **PDS grievance redressal**.
- 2. Erosion of political neutrality: Public posts can be interpreted as alignment with a political narrative, reducing impartiality.**
Eg: A civil servant sharing posts praising a ruling party initiative may violate the spirit of political neutrality expected under **All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968**.
- 3. Fear of backlash leading to risk-averse decision-making: Objectivity suffers when decisions are shaped by trolling, outrage cycles, or "cancel culture".**
Eg: Officers delaying lawful action against illegal gatherings due to fear of trending hashtags, undermining **rule-based administration**.
- 4. Confirmation bias through echo chambers: Algorithms amplify agreeable content, reinforcing one-sided views and weakening evidence-based reasoning.**
Eg: An officer relying on viral narratives around crime or migration rather than verified data, weakening **fairness and non-discrimination (Article 14)**.
- 5. Confidentiality breaches and premature disclosure: The urge to "update" the public can compromise investigations and institutional integrity.**
Eg: Sharing operational details of raids or arrests online can affect due process, contrary to the constitutional requirement of **fair procedure under Article 21**.

Ethical guidelines for digital conduct in public office

- 1. Maintain constitutional neutrality in public communication: Public posts must reflect service to the Constitution, not political signalling.**
Eg: Following the ethical principle of neutrality recommended by **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance, 2007)**, officers should avoid content that can be read as partisan.
- 2. Separate official communication from personal branding: Governance must not become a personal PR exercise.**
Eg: Using only verified departmental handles for public updates, while personal accounts remain non-political and restrained, consistent with **AIS Conduct Rules, 1968**.

3. **Ensure legality, privacy and data minimisation: Do not post identifiable citizen data or sensitive case details.**
Eg: Applying the privacy principles affirmed in **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)** by avoiding posting beneficiaries' faces, Aadhaar-linked details, or medical information.
4. **Adopt “verification-first” and “no forward without authentication” rule: Accuracy is an ethical duty in public office.**
Eg: Countering misinformation using verified sources like **PIB Fact Check**, and refusing to share unverified viral clips during communal tension.
5. **Practice restraint and dignity in speech: Avoid provocative language, sarcasm, or engagement with online abuse.**
Eg: Following the civil service value of **temperance**, officers can adopt standard operating templates for public responses rather than reacting emotionally to trolling.

Conclusion

A public servant's digital conduct must reflect **constitutional morality, restraint and accountability**, not the chase for visibility. Ethical governance in the online era requires a shift from “being seen” to **being trustworthy**.

Q. Identify the key ethical issues involved in handling juvenile offenders. Suggest a balanced approach between compassion and deterrence. (10 M)

Introduction

A juvenile offender is not merely a “mini-adult criminal”, but a **child in conflict with law**, where the State's response must protect society while still preserving the child's chance for reform. The ethical challenge lies in ensuring **justice without cruelty** and **compassion without impunity**.

Body

Key ethical issues in handling juvenile offenders

1. **Child rights and dignity:** Juveniles must be treated with dignity, privacy and care, consistent with the constitutional morality of protection to children.
Eg: **Article 21** (life with dignity) and **JJ Act, 2015** require child-friendly procedures and confidentiality to prevent lifelong stigma.
2. **Accountability vs moral hazard:** Excessive leniency can normalise wrongdoing, while excessive harshness can harden criminal behaviour.
Eg: In repeat theft cases, mere “warning and release” without structured supervision may create a **low-cost crime mindset** among peer groups.
3. **Due process and non-coercive policing:** Interrogation and recovery must avoid coercion, intimidation or rights violations, especially with minors.
Eg: **DK Basu guidelines (1997)** on arrest safeguards and humane treatment become crucial when juveniles are questioned during patrol-based detection.
4. **Victim rights and fairness:** Ethical justice must consider victims' loss, fear and trust, not only offender reform.
Eg: Returning recovered property quickly and ensuring respectful communication with victims strengthens **procedural justice** and public trust.
5. **Risk of discrimination and profiling:** Preventive policing can become biased against poor/locality-based youth, harming legitimacy.

Eg: Repeated stop-checking of boys from certain neighbourhoods can create **collective stigmatisation**, weakening community cooperation with police.

Balanced approach between compassion and deterrence

1. **Restorative justice with measurable accountability:** Use apology, restitution, and structured community service to ensure learning, not mere forgiveness.
Eg: Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) can order supervised community-based correction under the **JJ Act, 2015**, ensuring consequences without incarceration.
2. **Structured family and school reintegration:** Correction must rebuild support systems—family counselling, school linkage, and behavioural monitoring.
Eg: ICPS/Mission Vatsalya framework supports rehabilitation through counselling and child protection services, reducing relapse into delinquency.
3. **Differentiated response based on risk:** First-time minor offenders need reform-first approach, while repeat offenders need closer supervision and stricter measures.
Eg: The JJ Act, 2015 allows graded responses, ensuring proportionality while protecting society from habitual offending.
4. **Ethical policing with child-friendly protocols:** Police should focus on prevention, counselling, and referral rather than intimidation and fear-based deterrence.
Eg: Training under BPR&D modules and use of **Child Welfare Police Officers** ensures sensitivity in handling juveniles.
5. **Community-based prevention and role modelling:** Long-term deterrence comes from moral education, mentorship, sports, and employability pathways.
Eg: City-level youth engagement programmes and NGO-police partnerships reduce idle time, peer pressure and criminal opportunity structures.

Conclusion

Handling juveniles ethically requires **firm accountability without dehumanisation**. A justice system that combines **restorative correction, family reintegration and fair policing** can protect society today while preventing hardened criminals tomorrow.

Q. “Administrative efficiency cannot override human dignity.” Examine this statement. Analyse its ethical implications in public policy implementation. (10 M)

Introduction

In a constitutional democracy, governance is not merely about speed and targets but about preserving the intrinsic worth of every individual. The Indian constitutional framework, particularly after **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)**, places **human dignity under Article 21** at the core of state action.

Body

Administrative efficiency cannot override human dignity

1. **Human dignity as a constitutional value:** Administrative efficiency must operate within the framework of **Article 21**, which guarantees life with dignity, not mere survival.
Eg: In Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985), the Supreme Court held that eviction without rehabilitation affects the **right to livelihood**, reinforcing that procedural efficiency cannot negate dignity.

2. **Ethics of means over ends:** Public administration guided only by outcome-based efficiency risks instrumentalising citizens as statistics rather than rights-bearing individuals.
Eg: The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007)** emphasised that governance must combine **efficiency with accountability and empathy**, underlining citizen-centric administration.
3. **Doctrine of proportionality and fairness:** Efficient decision-making must satisfy standards of **reasonableness and proportionality**, as evolved in constitutional jurisprudence.
Eg: In **K S Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**, the Court reiterated that state actions must be proportionate, balancing legitimate objectives with individual rights.
4. **Ethical obligation of due process:** Speedy enforcement without hearing affected persons violates natural justice and erodes moral legitimacy.
Eg: The principle of **audi alteram partem**, consistently upheld by the Supreme Court, mandates opportunity of hearing before adverse administrative action.

Ethical implications in public policy implementation

1. **Compassion as a governance virtue:** Ethical public policy requires sensitivity to vulnerable sections to avoid structural injustice.
Eg: The Supreme Court in **Francis Coralie Mullin v. UT of Delhi (1981)** expanded Article 21 to include dignity and humane conditions, shaping welfare-oriented policy interpretation.
2. **Balancing efficiency with inclusiveness:** Target-driven governance must integrate safeguards to prevent exclusion of marginalised groups.
Eg: The design of **Aadhaar-linked welfare delivery** was subjected to judicial scrutiny in **Aadhaar (2018)** to ensure that efficiency in subsidy transfer does not result in exclusion.
3. **Institutional credibility and trust:** Policies perceived as efficient but insensitive reduce long-term public confidence in institutions.
Eg: The **Second ARC Report on Ethics in Governance (2007)** highlighted that public trust depends on fairness and transparency, not merely administrative speed.
4. **Civil servant's moral responsibility:** Ethical leadership demands discretion guided by constitutional morality rather than mechanical compliance.
Eg: The concept of **constitutional morality**, invoked in **Navtej Singh Johar (2018)**, reinforces that governance must respect dignity even when law permits restrictive action.

Conclusion

Administrative efficiency is a tool of governance, but human dignity is its moral compass. Sustainable public policy must harmonise speed with sensitivity, ensuring that governance remains both effective and humane.

Case Studies on above issues.

Q. You are the Secretary of Defence, widely respected for your integrity and neutrality throughout your career.

Recently, a sensitive region in India experienced escalating violence and unrest. In response to the deteriorating situation, you supported the Army General's decision to deploy a special squad to restore peace and order in the region. Upon deployment, the squad successfully neutralized several key targets, resulting in a significant and sudden decline in violence. However, a controversy erupted

when a prominent media outlet accused the special squad of using unethical and inhumane methods, including physical violence, blackmail, and torture against local civilians. These allegations sparked a nationwide debate, dividing the media, opposition parties, and the public. Adding to the complexity, the international community has raised concerns about alleged human rights violations, putting further pressure on the Indian government. The government, army, and bureaucratic channels have categorically denied the allegations, labelling them as false rumours. Despite this, media outlets and opposition leaders are demanding the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the matter. As the Secretary of Defence, you are tasked with resolving the issue in a balanced manner that addresses domestic and international concerns while upholding the integrity of the armed forces. (20 M)

- a) Identify the ethical dilemma involved in the case.
- b) What are the options available to you in the given situation? Which option would you choose and why?
- c) Do you think providing the special squads with unlimited power to counter the anti-national issue is ethically justified?

Introduction:

This case exemplifies a conflict between the principles of utilitarianism, ensuring peace and order, and deontological ethics, upholding human dignity and rights, amidst national security concerns.

Body:

Stakeholders Involved:

- **Army and Special Squad:** Responsibility to restore order while adhering to ethical military conduct.
- **Civilians:** Directly affected by violence and alleged rights violations.
- **Government:** Balancing public order, national integrity, and human rights.
- **Media and Opposition Parties:** Acting as watchdogs, amplifying public concerns.
- **International Community:** Advocating human rights and monitoring India's actions.
- **Bureaucratic Institutions:** Ensuring unbiased investigation and policy alignment.

a) **Ethical dilemma involved:**

- **National Security vs. Human Rights:** Balancing the need to restore peace and protect citizens with the obligation to uphold human rights and avoid potential violations.
- **Accountability vs. Institutional Integrity:** Ensuring transparency and accountability for alleged misconduct without undermining the credibility and morale of the armed forces.
- **Expediency vs. Due Process:** Choosing between swift actions to quell unrest and adhering to legal and ethical protocols for addressing allegations.
- **Domestic Obligations vs. International Reputation:** Managing internal stability and national interests while addressing global concerns about human rights violations and governance standards.
- **Public Trust vs. Military Autonomy:** Addressing public and media demands for investigation without excessively interfering in military operations or compromising operational autonomy.

b) **Options available in situation are:**

Option 1: Form a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Merits:

1. Promotes transparency and restores public trust.
2. Provides a platform for unbiased investigation.

3. Aligns with international human rights expectations.

Demerits:

1. May demoralize the armed forces if allegations prove false.
2. Risk of prolonged unrest during the investigation.
3. Could be exploited politically by opposition parties.

Option 2: Conduct an internal inquiry within the Defence Ministry.

Merits:

1. Maintains institutional discipline and internal accountability.
2. Quick resolution with minimized public exposure.
3. Avoids potential political exploitation.

Demerits:

1. Perceived lack of transparency and fairness.
2. Might not satisfy international or domestic critics.
3. Potential conflict of interest undermines credibility.

Option 3: Dismiss the allegations and emphasize the governments and army's denial.

Merits:

1. Safeguards the morale and image of the armed forces.
2. Prevents immediate escalation of unrest or opposition-led disruptions.
3. Preserves the chain of command and governmental authority.

Demerits:

1. Risks losing public and international credibility.
2. Potential escalation of protests and opposition backlash.
3. May exacerbate distrust between civilians and the armed forces.

I would Chose Option: Form a Special Investigation Team (SIT). This option aligns with ethical principles of accountability, justice, and transparency, essential for upholding the integrity of democratic institutions.

• **Ethical Justification:**

- Adheres to the principle of impartiality, ensuring fairness.
- Upholds the rule of law, emphasizing accountability for actions.
- Restores trust among domestic and international stakeholders.
- Demonstrates India's commitment to human rights without compromising national integrity.

c) **Yes, it is ethical to provide special squads with unlimited power because:**

1. **Effectiveness:** Unlimited power allows swift action to neutralize threats.
 - **Example:** Operation Blue Star effectively addressed militancy but had ethical debates.
2. **National Security:** Prioritizes the nation's stability over individual concerns.
 - **Example:** Counter-terrorism squads in the US post-9/11.
3. **Deterrence:** Ensures fear of retribution among anti-national elements.
 - **Example:** Israeli Mossad's targeted operations discourage external threats.
4. **Operational Flexibility:** Avoids bureaucratic delays in crisis response.
 - **Example:** Russia's swift action in countering Chechen insurgencies.

No, it is not ethically justified because:

1. **Risk of Abuse:** Unlimited power increases the likelihood of human rights violations.
 - **Example:** Excesses during the Emergency in India (1975–77).
2. **Erosion of Public Trust:** Perceived misuse can alienate citizens from state institutions.
 - **Example:** Allegations against Chile’s Pinochet regime.
3. **Violation of Rule of Law:** Undermines constitutional principles of accountability.
 - **Example:** International condemnation of China’s handling of Uighurs.
4. **Moral Consequences:** Normalizing unethical means erodes societal values.
 - **Example:** Abu Ghraib prison scandal tarnished US credibility globally.

Conclusion:

As Mahatma Gandhi said, “**You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no result.**” Balancing security with human rights is paramount. Upholding accountability through transparent mechanisms ensures a just resolution that honors ethical governance and democratic values.

Q. As the Secretary of Minister of Sports in India, you introduced a ground breaking initiative called the Podium Scheme to enhance the country’s performance in international events like the Olympics.

The scheme aimed to provide athletes with financial support, access to specialized training, and world-class resources. Its purpose was to nurture talent and ensure athletes could focus solely on their preparation without financial constraints. Initially, the scheme was widely praised by athletes, the media, and the public for its potential to elevate India’s standing in global sports. Over time, however, complaints began to surface, particularly from junior athletes. They alleged that the scheme disproportionately favoured senior athletes with prior international exposure. These senior athletes, already backed by numerous sponsors, were accused of misusing the benefits. Reports emerged of some senior athletes availing funds for foreign coaches and extravagant facilities but neglecting rigorous training. Junior athletes, on the other hand, argued they were being overlooked despite consistent performances at national-level events. They claimed the scheme’s focus on international achievements created a hierarchy, denying deserving young athletes the opportunity to benefit from the resources critical for their growth. A group of junior athletes brought these concerns to your attention, requesting a revision of the scheme. They proposed that beneficiaries should be selected based on recent performance at both national and international levels, ensuring meritocracy and equitable access. As the Sports Ministry Secretary, you are now faced with a dilemma. [20M]

- a) Identify the ethical issue involved in the case.
- b) What are the consequences of giving priority to senior athletes while ignoring junior athletes?
- c) How will you balance the needs of junior athletes with the expectations of senior players without undermining the scheme’s original purpose?

Introduction:

India’s performance in the recent Olympics highlights the success and drawback of initiatives like the Podium Scheme. The imbalance in resource distribution raises questions about ensuring fairness and inclusivity while sustaining such schemes' efficacy.

Body:

Stakeholders involved in the case are:

- **Senior Athletes:** Beneficiaries of the scheme, accused of misuse in some cases.

- **Junior Athletes:** Talented individuals seeking equal access to resources.
- **Sports Ministry:** Responsible for policy implementation and addressing grievances.
- **Coaches and Trainers:** Key enablers of athlete performance, impacted by fund allocation.
- **Public and Media:** Observers of the scheme's effectiveness and fairness.
- **Sponsors and Investors:** Financial stakeholders expecting transparent resource utilization.

a) **Ethical issues involved in the case are:**

1. **Fairness in Resource Allocation:** Ensuring equitable access to resources for all athletes.
2. **Meritocracy vs. Hierarchy:** Balancing recent performance against seniority.
3. **Misuse of Funds:** Addressing alleged misappropriation of benefits by senior athletes.
4. **Transparency:** Ensuring accountability in fund utilization and selection processes.
5. **Neglect of Emerging Talent:** Risk of overlooking promising junior athletes.

b) **Consequences of giving priority to senior athletes while ignoring juniors are:**

• **Negative Consequences**

1. **Demotivation Among Juniors:** Lack of opportunities discourages upcoming talent.
E.g.: Talented athletes quitting due to financial constraints.
2. **Stagnation in National Talent Pool:** Overemphasis on seniors limits the growth of fresh talent.
E.g.: Underrepresentation in global sports categories.
3. **Resource Mismanagement:** Misuse by seniors reduces funds available for genuine needs.
E.g.: Extravagant spending on non-essential amenities.
4. **Public and Media Criticism:** Perceived bias tarnishes the credibility of the scheme.
E.g.: Headlines questioning fairness in fund distribution.

• **Positive Consequences**

1. **Enhanced Global Competitiveness:** Seniors' experience increases India's chances of winning medals.
E.g.: Seasoned athletes clinching medals at major events.
2. **Mentorship for Juniors:** Seniors' presence can inspire and guide younger athletes.
E.g.: Olympic medalists conducting training workshops.
3. **Immediate Returns on Investment:** Seniors with international exposure deliver quicker results.
E.g.: Experienced athletes winning high-stakes tournaments.

c) **I will balance the needs of junior athletes with senior expectations with following:**

1. **Merit-Based Selection:** Include recent performances at both national and international levels in evaluations.
E.g.: Consider athletes' scores over the past two years for eligibility.
2. **Proportional Resource Allocation:** Designate funds separately for juniors and seniors.
E.g.: Reserve 50% of resources exclusively for emerging talent.
3. **Performance Monitoring:** Implement a performance review mechanism to assess fund utilization.
E.g.: Annual audits tracking progress and outcomes.
4. **Mentorship Programs:** Pair senior athletes with juniors to foster guidance and collaboration.
E.g.: Joint training sessions promoting knowledge transfer.
5. **Transparency and Accountability:** Publicly disclose fund allocations and outcomes for credibility.

E.g.: Publish an annual report on the scheme's impact.

Conclusion:

As Nelson Mandela aptly said, “Sport has the power to change the world.” By fostering inclusivity and accountability in initiatives like the Podium Scheme, the Sports Ministry can ensure sustainable talent development while upholding the nation's sporting legacy.

INSIGHTIAS