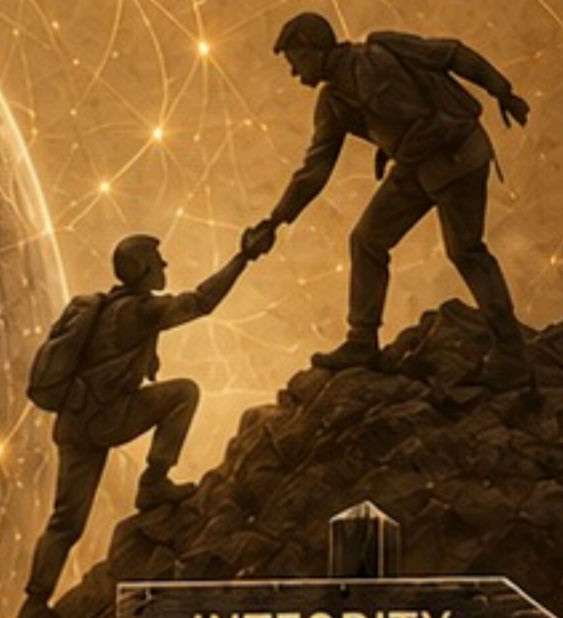
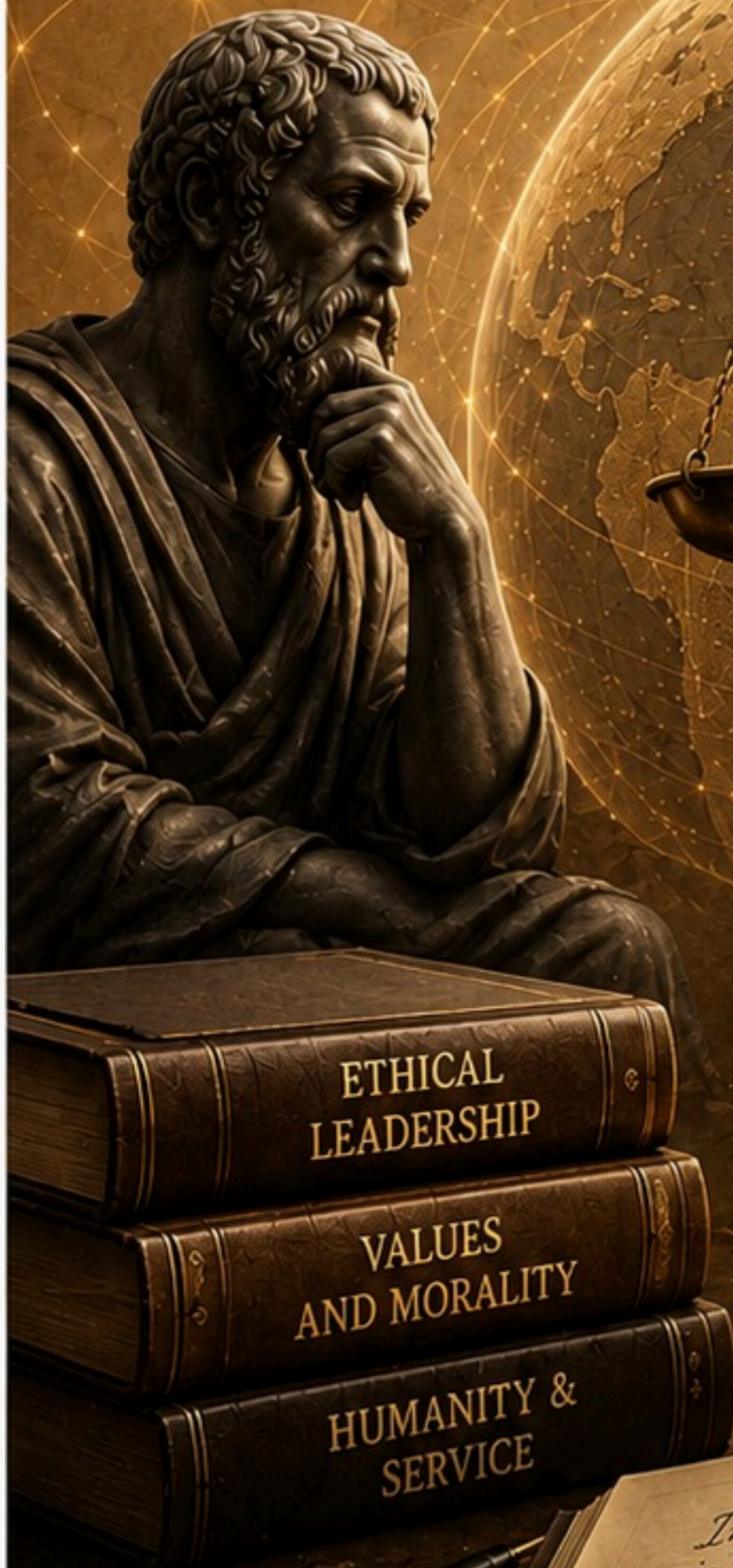


An Unacademy Initiative

UPSC CSE Mains Notes

Ethics



INTEGRITY

IMPARTIALITY

OBJECTIVITY

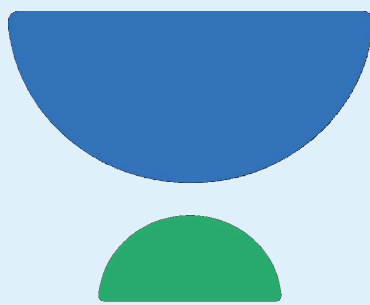
ACCOUNTABILITY

COMPASSION

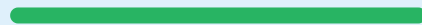


*Integrity
is doing the
right thing,
even when no one
is watching.*

*The true test of
character is how
you treat someone
who can do nothing
for you.*



ETHICS



Integrity · Aptitude · Public Service

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PART 1

Ethics and Human Interface

Ch 1: Ethics and Human Interface · Ch 2: Human Values

1 Ethics and Human Interface

What is Ethics?

“The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings.” – Albert Schweitzer

Ethics is the systematic study of what is right and wrong in human conduct. It answers the question: “How should I live?” Unlike laws, which are enforced by the state, ethics are guided by conscience, reason, and societal expectations. It provides a framework for answering: What ought I to do?

Ethics is not just a philosophical luxury; it is the operating system of civilised society. For a civil servant, ethics is the difference between a rule-following machine and a compassionate decision-maker.

PYQ Connect: “Crisis of ethical values in modern society is a result of absence of proper education.” Discuss.

Morals, Values, and Ethics: Clear Distinctions

Many use these terms interchangeably, but they are distinct. Understanding the difference is crucial for case studies.

Term	Meaning	Source	Example
Morals	Personal beliefs about right/wrong, often rooted in religion or culture	Individual / Community	A person believes lying is always wrong, even to save a life.
Values	Deeply held standards that guide behaviour	Family, Society, Education	Honesty, Compassion, Justice, Non-violence
Ethics	Systematic, reasoned principles applicable to a group (profession, society)	Rational inquiry, Professional codes	A doctor's duty is to save life even if the patient is an enemy (medical ethics).

Example to remember

Moral: “I personally feel corruption is disgusting.”

Value: “Integrity is important to me.”

Ethics: “The Civil Services Conduct Rules prohibit accepting gifts beyond a certain limit.”

Case Study – Satyendra Dubey (IITian turned civil servant):

He upheld ethics (whistleblowing against corruption in Golden Quadrilateral project) despite personal moral conflict (loyalty to employer) and value of truth. His sacrifice led to the Whistleblowers Protection Act.

PYQ Connect: “Values are not just rules; they are the compass of life.” Elucidate with examples.

Essence, Determinants and Consequences of Ethics in Human Actions

Essence of Ethics in Human Actions

Voluntary and conscious choice to do what is right, even when no one is watching.

Focuses on internal commitment rather than external fear of punishment or hope of reward.

Converts a simple action into a principled one; core of civil service integrity.

“You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions.”- Bhagavad Gita

Determinants of Ethics in Human Actions

Determinant	Description	Example
Biological	Genetic predispositions, empathy hormones	Mirror neurons – we feel others' pain
Cultural	Traditions, customs, community norms	Joint family system in India fosters care for elders
Social	Peer pressure, role models, social sanctions	Gandhiji's influence on non-violent protest
Legal	Laws define minimum ethical standards	IPC 304A punishes rash driving – promotes care
Religious	Scriptures, commandments, rituals	The concept of Zakat (charity) in Islam
Philosophical	Reasoned ethical frameworks	Utilitarianism, Deontology

Consequences of Ethics in Human Actions

Individual level: Inner peace, self-respect, trustworthiness (e.g., APJ Abdul Kalam's life)

Social level: Social capital, cooperation, reduced crime (e.g., Kerala's high social trust)

Professional level: Reputation, efficiency, reduced corruption (e.g., T.N. Seshan's election reforms)

Negative example: 2G/Coal scams (UPSC-related) caused huge economic loss and governance crisis.

Case Study – Nirbhaya Case (2012): The lack of ethical action by bystanders (apathy) and delayed police response led to nationwide outrage and legal reforms (Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013). Ethics inaction has severe consequences.

PYQ Connect: “Ethics cannot be enforced by law alone. It requires internalisation.” Comment.

Dimensions of Ethics (Normative, Meta & Applied Ethics)

Ethics is not a monolith. Philosophers divide it into three dimensions

Normative Ethics – “What Ought to Be Done?”

Normative ethics is the prescriptive dimension of ethics. It lays down standards, rules, principles and duties that tell us how one should behave in a given situation.

It focuses on developing general guidelines for moral conduct rather than describing what people actually do.

The three major normative theories — Virtue Ethics, Deontology and Utilitarianism — fall under this dimension.

Example: The Civil Services Code of Conduct (All India Services Rules) is a classic example of normative ethics — it prescribes impartiality, integrity and dedication as non-negotiable duties.

Meta-Ethics – “What is the Nature of Ethics Itself?”

Meta-ethics is the analytical and philosophical dimension. It does not tell us what is right or wrong; instead, it examines the very meaning, origin and nature of ethical statements.

It asks deeper questions such as: Is “good” an objective fact or merely a subjective opinion? Are moral values universal or culturally relative? It deals with the language and logic of ethics.

Example: When we say “Bribery is wrong”, meta-ethics asks — Is this statement a fact, an emotion, or a cultural belief? This helps differentiate between moral realism and moral subjectivism.

Applied Ethics – “How Do We Apply Ethics in Real Life?”

Applied ethics is the practical dimension. It takes the theories and principles of normative ethics and applies them to concrete, real-life situations in various fields such as medicine, business, environment, technology and public administration.

It deals with actual dilemmas and decision-making.

Example: “Should a civil servant leak classified documents to expose corruption?” – Applied ethics of whistleblowing.

Case Studies

A doctor deciding whether to disclose a patient’s terminal illness (medical applied ethics).

An IAS officer facing a conflict between personal friendship and official duty while awarding a contract (public administration applied ethics).

Case Study – The 2G Spectrum Scam (2008-2012):

Meta-ethical question: Is “first-come-first-served” a fair allocation principle?

Normative conflict: Duty to follow rules (deontology) vs. maximising revenue (consequentialism).

Applied ethics failure: No transparency, no public interest consideration.

Descriptive reality: Many officers knew but remained silent (groupthink).

PYQ Connect: “Discuss the dimensions of ethics that influence ethical decision-making in professional context.”

In a professional dilemma (e.g., pressure to clear a substandard project), normative ethics gives principles, meta-ethics clarifies terms like “public interest”, and applied ethics weighs conflicting duties.

Normative Ethics Theories – The Big Three

These are the three pillars of normative ethics.

Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)

Core Idea: Focus on the character of the actor, not just actions or consequences. A good person does good acts naturally.

Key Concepts: Golden Mean (balance between extremes), Eudaimonia (human flourishing), Cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, temperance, justice).

Example: A civil servant who is naturally compassionate will not need rules to be kind to the poor.

Indian Context: Gandhi’s emphasis on satyagraha (truth force) – building inner virtue to resist injustice.

Limitation: Doesn’t give clear guidance in a dilemma (e.g., which virtue wins – honesty or loyalty?).

Deontology (Immanuel Kant)

Core Idea: Duty-based ethics. Some actions are inherently right/wrong, regardless of consequences.

Key Concepts: Categorical Imperative (Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law). Humans are ends, not means.

Example: A civil servant must not take a bribe even if that bribe would be used to feed a starving family – because bribery is inherently wrong.

Indian Application: The Civil Services Conduct Rules are deontological – they prescribe absolute duties (e.g., no gifts above ₹25,000).

Limitation: Rigid – can lead to absurd outcomes (e.g., not lying to save a life).

Consequentialism / Utilitarianism (Bentham, J.S. Mill)

Core Idea: The moral worth of an action is determined by its outcome. Greatest good for the greatest number.

Key Concepts: Hedonic calculus (Bentham), Higher vs. lower pleasures (Mill), Rule vs. Act utilitarianism.

Example: A DM diverts funds from a school to a hospital because the hospital saves more lives (maximising utility).

Indian Example: During COVID-19, lockdown was a utilitarian decision – short-term economic pain for long-term health gain.

Limitation: Can justify injustice to minorities (tyranny of the majority).

Case Study – Uphaar Fire Tragedy (1997): The cinema owner illegally added seats, blocking exits. 59 people died.

Deontological view: Owner violated duty (rules on fire safety). Guilty.

Utilitarian view: Short-term profit for owner vs. massive loss of life – clearly wrong.

Virtue ethics: Owner lacked civic virtue (responsibility, care).

PYQ Connect: “Which of the three ethical theories – Virtue, Deontology, Utilitarianism – is most suitable for a civil servant?”

Ethical Relativism vs Universal Ethics

One of the most important debates in ethics is whether moral standards are relative (changeable according to context) or universal (fixed and applicable to all human beings at all times).

Aspect	Ethical Relativism	Universal Ethics
Basis of morality	Culture, society, individual	Reason, human nature, universal principles
Flexibility	High (context-dependent)	Low (fixed standards)
Risk	Can justify harmful practices	May ignore cultural realities
UPSC Application	Explains cultural tolerance	Explains constitutional values & human rights
Religious	Scriptures, commandments, rituals	The concept of Zakat (charity) in Islam
Philosophical	Reasoned ethical frameworks	Utilitarianism, Deontology

Ethical Relativism– “Right and Wrong Depend on Context”

Claim: Morality is culture-specific; no universal standards exist, no absolute moral truths.

Variants: Cultural relativism (different cultures, different morals), Subjectivism (each person decides).

Cultural Relativism: Morality is shaped by the norms of a particular society.

Subjectivism: Morality is purely personal — “what feels right to me is right.”

Strength: Promotes tolerance and cultural sensitivity.

Weakness: It can justify harmful practices (e.g., honour killings, female foeticide, or corruption as “part of the system”).

Real-life Example: In some traditional societies, dowry was once socially accepted. According to relativism, it was “ethical” in that cultural context. Today, most societies reject it as unethical.

PYQ Connect: Can a politician justify unethical means for electoral gains?

Problem for civil servants: If relativism is true, how can we condemn corruption, human rights abuses, or sati? It leads to moral paralysis.

Universal Ethics– “Certain Principles Apply Everywhere”

Claim: Certain moral principles apply to all humans, regardless of culture or context.

Examples: Prohibition of torture, genocide, slavery; right to life, liberty, and dignity.

Sources: Human rights declarations, religious commonalities (Golden Rule – do unto others...), rational intuition (Kant).

Strength: Provides a common moral foundation for global issues like human rights, anti-corruption and climate justice.

Weakness: It may appear rigid and insensitive to cultural differences.

Example: Practices such as slavery, child marriage and corruption are now considered universally wrong, even if some societies once accepted them.

Indian Constitution as Universal Ethics: Fundamental Rights (Article 14-32) are universal – apply to every citizen irrespective of religion, caste, or region.

Case Study – Honour Killings in India: Relativist argument: “It is our culture.” Universalist response: Right to life and choice (Article 21) overrides cultural practice. The Supreme Court has repeatedly struck down honour killings (e.g., Bhagwan Dass vs. State of NCT Delhi 2011).

PYQ Connect: “Ethical relativism is a threat to good governance.” Discuss.

Ethics in Private and Public Relationships

A person who compromises integrity in private life rarely upholds it consistently in public roles.

Aspect	Private Relationships (Family, Friends, Personal Life)	Public Relationships (Office, Society, Governance)
Guiding Principles	Love, loyalty, empathy, forgiveness, personal conscience	Impartiality, transparency, accountability, justice, public interest
Basis of Decisions	Emotional bonds, personal values	Laws, rules, codes of conduct, constitutional morality
Scope & Impact	Limited to close circle; consequences mostly personal	Affects large numbers; impacts public trust & governance
Tolerance for Deviation	Higher (e.g., helping family emotionally)	Very low (scrutiny by media, RTI, courts)
Accountability	Internal (guilt, relationships)	External (CVC, CBI, Parliament, public opinion)
Visibility	Mostly invisible	Highly visible

Ethics in Private Relationships (Family, Friends, Neighbourhood)

Private relationships—family, friends, and personal circles—are guided by emotions such as love, loyalty, empathy, and forgiveness. Decisions here are often driven by personal bonds and internal conscience, with limited external scrutiny.

Characteristics: Emotional closeness, loyalty, partiality, informality, reciprocity.

Key ethical issues

Nepotism: Favouritism towards relatives in jobs or contracts.

Confidentiality: Sharing family secrets with outsiders.

Care vs. autonomy: Caring for elderly parents vs. respecting their independence.

Example: A civil servant uses his influence to get his son a government contract. Private loyalty (family) conflicts with public duty (fairness).

A civil servant must ensure that private ethics reinforces, rather than undermines, public responsibilities. Weakness in one domain often spills into the other. Mahatma Gandhi’s austere private life lent unshakeable credibility to his public campaigns for truth and non-violence.

Ethics in Public Relationships (Colleagues, Citizens, Stakeholders)

Public relationships, especially in governance, are governed by formal rules, constitutional principles, and accountability mechanisms like RTI, CVC, and judicial review. Here, the focus shifts to justice, objectivity, and public interest, where even minor lapses attract widespread consequences.

Characteristics: Formal, rule-based, impartial, transparent, accountable.

Key ethical issues

Conflict of interest: Personal gain from official position.

Favouritism: Benefiting friends or caste-mates in transfers or promotions.

Confidentiality: Leaking official secrets to media or private entities.

Example: A DM's close friend applies for a tender. The DM recuses himself – that is ethical public conduct.

The Tension Between Private and Public Ethics

Private Ethics	Public Ethics	Conflict Example
Loyalty to family	Impartiality	Appointing unqualified relative
Confidentiality with friends	Transparency	Hiding friend's wrongdoing
Emotional empathy	Rule-based justice	Letting off a poor relative who broke law
Reciprocity (favours)	Non-partisanship	Returning political favour with official act

Case Study – The IAS Officer and the Relative's Land: An IAS officer's brother-in-law asks for a land permit that is legally questionable. The officer feels private loyalty but knows public duty demands rejection. Ethical resolution:

Explain the legal position to the relative.

Recuse from decision-making if possible.

Follow the rules and face family displeasure.

PYQ Connect: "What is conflict of interest? How does it affect public service?"

Mahatma Gandhi's View: "Public good should always override private good. A public servant cannot serve two masters."

Conflict between Private and Public Ethics

Private ethics (loyalty to family/friends) often clashes with public ethics (impartiality, public interest). Common flashpoints: nepotism, favouritism, confidentiality breaches, and use of official position for personal gain.

Nepotism

Private ethics: Help your relative get a job.

Public ethics: Merit-based selection, no favouritism.

Case Study: A senior IAS officer recommending his son for a district-level contract – violates All India Services Conduct Rules, 1968.

Favouritism

Private ethics: Reward those who helped you.

Public ethics: Equal treatment regardless of personal relationships.

Case Study: A block development officer allocating MGNREGA works to his caste members – leads to social audit complaints and suspension.

Confidentiality Breaches

Private ethics: Sharing information with spouse/friends in casual conversation.

Public ethics: Official secrets, data privacy, RTI exceptions.

Case Study: A revenue official leaking land acquisition compensation details to relatives before public announcement – leads to price speculation and corruption charges.

Use of Official Position for Personal Gain

Private ethics: Using what you have access to.

Public ethics: No misuse of office.

Case Study: The Noida land grab case (2022) – an IAS officer used his position to influence allotment of land to his family trust. He was arrested by CBI.

Ethics vs Religion

Ethics is reason-based, reflective, and universal in its core principles. Religion is faith-based, often tied to rituals, scriptures, and divine commands.

Overlap: Both promote goodness (e.g., compassion in Buddhism/Christianity aligns with ethical empathy).

Difference: Ethics allows questioning and reform (e.g., abolishing sati on ethical grounds despite religious sanction). Religion may demand unquestioned obedience.

Example: A doctor may personally believe (religion) that abortion is wrong, but professional ethics may require her to save the mother's life even if it ends the foetus – she follows ethical duty over religious belief.

Case Study – Jain monks and COVID vaccination (2021): Some Jain monks refused COVID vaccines citing religious beliefs (non-violence towards living beings in vaccines). However, public health ethics demanded vaccination to prevent community spread. The conflict highlighted that religious morality and secular ethics can diverge.

Ethics vs Law

Law is codified, enforceable by the state with sanctions. Ethics is internal, voluntary, and broader—guiding actions even where law is silent or inadequate.

Law can be unethical (e.g., colonial laws suppressing freedom).

Ethics can demand more than law (e.g., moral duty to help accident victims beyond legal minimum).

What is legal may not be ethical, and what is ethical may not be legal.

Example – Legal but unethical: Selling junk food to children (legal in India, but unethical for health).

Example – Ethical but illegal: A doctor providing off-label life-saving drug not yet approved by DCGI (technically illegal, but ethically justified).

Case Study – Satyendra Dubey (2002): He exposed corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral highway project. His actions were ethical but violated official secrecy rules. He was killed; the case exposed the gap between legal compliance and ethical duty.

If asked "Ethics vs. Law"

Begin with: "The Satyendra Dubey case exemplifies the gap – his actions were ethical but violated the Official Secrets Act. Law provides minimum standards; ethics demands higher."

Ethics vs Morality

Morality refers to personal or societal beliefs of right and wrong (individual conscience or cultural norms). Ethics is the systematic, philosophical study and application of those beliefs in a structured way.

Parameter	Ethics	Morality
Origin	External (society, profession)	Internal (personal beliefs)
Application	Group norms	Individual conscience
System	Codified (e.g., medical ethics)	Unwritten, subjective
Variation	Less variation within a profession	High variation across persons

Example: Lying to protect a friend from embarrassment – morality may permit (compassion), but professional ethics (as a judge or police officer) may forbid (duty to truth).

Case Study – K. S. Hegde (former Supreme Court judge): He disclosed his own mistake in a judgement, despite no legal compulsion. His personal morality (truthfulness) overrode professional ego – a rare alignment.

Universal Ethics – Three Basic Universal Values

Universal ethics refers to moral principles that transcend cultural, religious, and national boundaries. These values remain constant across time and societies, providing a common ethical foundation for human conduct, especially in public service. These values form the bedrock of ethical governance and help resolve dilemmas involving nepotism, favouritism, or misuse of power.

Value	Meaning	Indian Example	Global Example
Truth (Satya)	Honesty, accuracy, refusal to deceive	RTI movement (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan)	Edward Snowden (whistleblower)
Compassion (Karuna)	Empathy, desire to relieve suffering	Kerala flood relief volunteers (2018)	Mother Teresa in Kolkata
Justice (Nyaya)	Fairness, giving each their due	NALSA vs. UOI (right to shelter for homeless)	Nuremberg trials after WWII

Truth (Integrity and Honesty)

Truth demands adherence to facts, transparency, and moral uprightness. It means speaking and acting with consistency, free from deception or self-interest.

Importance in Civil Services

Integrity builds public trust and prevents corruption. Without it, institutions collapse under suspicion. It ensures decisions are based on evidence rather than personal gain or political pressure.

Compassion (Empathy and Humaneness)

Compassion involves understanding others' suffering and responding with kindness and care. It humanises administration, especially towards the vulnerable and weaker sections.

Importance in Civil Services

It balances rigid rules with sensitivity, making governance people-centric. Pure rule-based administration without compassion can become harsh and ineffective.

Justice (Fairness and Equity)

Justice ensures impartial treatment, equitable distribution of resources, and protection of rights. It demands decisions based on merit, without bias of caste, religion, or connections.

Importance in Civil Services

It upholds constitutional morality (Preamble values — Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity) and counters nepotism or favouritism. Justice maintains social harmony and legitimacy of the state.

Interconnection and Application in Professional Context

These three values are interdependent

Truth without compassion can become rigid and insensitive.

Compassion without justice may lead to favouritism.

Justice without truth lacks credibility.

Case Study – Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984) and the fight for justice:

Truth: Survivors demanded disclosure of toxic gas composition.

Compassion: Volunteers and NGOs provided medical aid when the government failed.

Justice: Decades of litigation led to only meagre compensation – a failure of universal ethics in practice.

PYQ Connect: "What are the three basic universal human values? Discuss their relevance in administration."

Politics and Ethics

Politics without ethics breeds corruption and populism. Ethics in politics ensures accountability and long-term public good. The relationship has been debated from Plato to Machiavelli to Gandhi.

Ethical Dilemmas in Indian Politics

Dilemma	Example	Ethical Question
Defection	Multiple MLAs switching parties before floor test	Is personal ambition more important than voter mandate?
Criminalization	Candidates with pending criminal cases winning elections	Can a "tough" leader be ethical?
Freebies	Announcing loan waivers before elections	Is it ethical to bribe voters with public money?

Balanced View: Politics is the art of possibility, but ethical politics makes governance sustainable. Machiavelli's "ends justify means" vs Gandhian ethical means. Civil servants must uphold ethics even under political pressure.

Case Study – Operation Kamal (Karnataka 2018): BJP allegedly used money and inducements to get Congress-JD(S) MLAs to defect, toppling the coalition government.

Political ethics (realist): It is legal (anti-defection law triggered only after vote, not before).

Moral ethics (idealist): It violates democratic mandate and voter trust.

Supreme Court intervention: Directed floor test to be held openly – upheld procedural ethics.

PYQ Connect: "Politics without ethics is a disaster." Discuss in the context of Indian democracy.

What is the Crisis of Ethical Values?

It refers to the widespread erosion of moral standards in society, politics, administration, and personal life. People increasingly prioritise material success, power, and self-interest over truth, compassion, justice, and long-term societal well-being. This creates an ethical vacuum where "ends justify means" becomes the norm.

Dimensions of the Crisis

Domain	Manifestation	Recent Example	Value Evolution
Political	Corruption, criminalization, dynastic politics	Electoral Bonds scheme (struck down by SC 2024)	From accepting money power in politics as "practical necessity" to recognising it as a serious threat to democracy
Public Administration	Bribery, transfer raj, favouritism	Rajasthan paper leak scam (2023) – multiple civil servants arrested	From tolerance of "chalta hai" culture to demanding higher integrity and accountability
Judicial	Allegations of bias, delayed justice	CJI impeachment motion (2018) – failed but raised questions	From unquestioned trust in judiciary to greater public scrutiny and demand for transparency
Corporate	Fraud, insider trading, tax evasion	IL&FS default (2018), Byju's governance failure (2023)	From "profit at any cost" mindset to increasing emphasis on ethical governance and ESG
Social	Erosion of trust, breakdown of community norms	Increasing litigation – loss of faith in local dispute resolution	From accepting social compromises to demanding justice and fairness
Media	Paid news, fake news, sensationalism	TRP scam (2020) – news channels faked ratings	From "any news for TRP" to growing demand for journalistic ethics and credibility
Educational	Cheating, donation-based admissions	NEET paper leak (2024) – nationwide protests	From "success by any means" to strong public outrage against unethical shortcuts

Causes of the Crisis

Weakening of institutions: Lokpal not fully functional, CBI autonomy questioned.

Lack of political will: No strong whistleblower protection law until recently.

Social acceptance: "Everyone does it" attitude normalises corruption.

Materialism and consumerism: Success measured by wealth, not integrity.

Globalization and anonymity: Large cities reduce social scrutiny.

Consequences

Loss of public trust in government

Poor quality of public goods (roads, schools, hospitals)

Brain drain (honest citizens exit the system)

Rise of populism and authoritarian solutions

If asked "Crisis of ethical values"

Begin with: "The Vyapam scam was not a failure of law alone – it was a failure of conscience at every level, from invigilators to ministers. This systemic collapse is the real crisis."

2 Human Values

Human Values – The Moral Compass for Civil Servants

Human values are the principles, standards, or qualities that guide human behaviour towards what is good, right, and desirable. They are the moral compass that distinguishes humans from mere biological beings. Unlike fleeting attitudes, they form the foundation of ethics and public service.

Human Values – Meaning and Classification

Human values are intrinsic preferences that promote individual and societal well-being. They are universal yet manifested differently across cultures. These overlap with the five-fold classification and directly support constitutional morality.

Everyday Example

Truth: Truth is the commitment to honesty, sincerity, and alignment between thought, word, and deed.

Admitting a mistake even when no one knows

Integrity: Integrity is moral uprightness, consistency between private and public behaviour, and adherence to ethical principles even under pressure. It includes honesty, incorruptibility, and wholeness of character.

Returning a lost wallet with cash

Peace: It is the willingness to accept and respect differences in opinions, beliefs, cultures, and lifestyles without prejudice or aggression. It includes patience and open-mindedness in the face of disagreement.

Staying calm during provocation

Love: It is an empathetic understanding of others' suffering combined with the desire to alleviate it. It goes beyond sympathy to active kindness and care, especially towards the vulnerable.

Caring for a sick stranger

Non-violence: Non-violence is the avoidance of harm in thought, word, or action. It is not mere passivity but active resistance to injustice through peaceful and ethical means.

Refusing to gossip about a rival

PYQ Connect: What are the three basic universal human values? Discuss.

If asked "Human values classification"

Begin with: "While the West often lists three universal values (Truth, Compassion, Justice), Indian tradition gives five – adding Peace and Non-violence. The difference reflects India's emphasis on inner harmony and ahimsa."

If asked "Integrity as a core value"

Begin with: "Ashok Khemka has been transferred 50+ times. He has not become a chief secretary. But he has become a symbol – that integrity is possible even when the system punishes it. That is its power."

Process of Value Inculcation

Values are not inherited genetically but acquired through conscious and unconscious processes:

Stage	Description	Mechanism	Example
1. Conditioning	Child learns by reward/punishment	Parents praise sharing, punish hitting	"Good boy for giving your toy"

Stage	Description	Mechanism	Example
2. Imitation	Copying role models	Observing parents, teachers, heroes	Child mimics father's honesty with shopkeeper
3. Internalization	Values become self-owned, not imposed	Understanding "why" behind the rule	Teen refuses to cheat even when no one watches
4. Habituation	Values become automatic responses	Repeated practice	Officer automatically declares assets without being asked
5. Integration	Values guide all life decisions	Holistic worldview	Person chooses career, marriage, friendships based on values

Case Study – The Making of T.N. Seshan (Chief Election Commissioner):

Conditioning: Grew up in a family that valued fairness.

Imitation: Admired Sardar Patel's integrity.

Internalization: Believed that free and fair elections are non-negotiable.

Habituation: Developed a reflexive action against any electoral malpractice.

Integration: His entire identity became synonymous with electoral reform.

Determinants: Family (primary), society (peer pressure), education (formal), media, and personal conscience.

Role of Family, Society, and Educational Institutions in Inculcating Values

Family: First school of values. Provides emotional security and models behaviour (e.g., parents practising honesty teach integrity unconsciously). Inculcates values like truth, sharing, respect and responsibility.

Society: Reinforces or dilutes values through norms, peer influence, and culture. Can promote tolerance or breed prejudice. Inculcates values like tolerance, joy of sharing, honesty, courage, service and conformity to norms.

Example: Community service during festivals builds compassion; caste-based discrimination weakens justice.

Educational Institutions: Systematic platform for value education. Curricula, teachers as role models, co-curricular activities (NCC, NSS), and NEP 2020 emphasis on holistic development. Provides values like moral science, punctuality, empathy, competition and hierarchy.

Lesson: Schools that reward only marks risk creating competitive, unethical individuals; value-based education produces empathetic leaders.

Integrated Example: A child witnessing family helping neighbours (love + compassion) and school teaching Gandhi's ahimsa internalises non-violence.

If asked "Role of family in value inculcation"

Begin with: "The family can produce a Gandhi or a Godse. The same institution that taught Mahatma to be truthful also taught Nathuram Godse to hate. The difference lies in the content, not the process."

Lessons from the Lives and Teachings of Great Leaders, Reformers, and Administrators

Mahatma Gandhi – The Seven Social Sins

Sin	Meaning	Contemporary Example
Politics without principle	Opportunism	Horse-trading of MLAs
Wealth without work	Unearned income	Black money, benami property
Pleasure without conscience	Hedonism without ethics	Substance abuse among youth

Sin	Meaning	Contemporary Example
Knowledge without character	Educated but unethical	Engineers building unsafe bridges
Commerce without morality	Profit above all	Pharmaceutical companies hiding side-effects
Science without humanity	Technology for harm	Facial recognition for mass surveillance
Worship without sacrifice	Ritual without compassion	Temple donations but no charity for poor

Truth & Non-violence: Satyagraha and Salt March showed ethical means to achieve just ends.

Simplicity & Integrity: Lived austerity; taught self-reliance (swadeshi).

For Civil Servants: Uphold public interest over personal comfort.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – Values of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

Value	Ambedkar's Interpretation	Administrative Application
Liberty	Freedom from oppression	No arbitrary detention, free speech at workplace
Equality	No discrimination	Fair recruitment, equal promotion chances
Fraternity	Sense of brotherhood	Respecting colleagues from all backgrounds

Case Study – Ambedkar's own life: Born an untouchable, he faced humiliation daily. Yet he studied law in London, drafted the Constitution, and ensured fundamental rights for all. His life teaches that values are not inherited – they are achieved through struggle.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel – Integrity and National Integration

Core Value: Unity above self-interest.

Lesson for Civil Servants: When Patel integrated 562 princely states, he used persuasion, pressure, and sometimes force – but never personal gain. His integrity was unquestionable.

Example: The case of Junagadh (1947) – Patel sent troops despite the Nawab's accession to Pakistan. He faced criticism but acted in national interest. A civil servant must similarly prioritise national good over popularity.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam – The Value of Humility and Vision

Core Values: Humility, hard work, patriotism, scientific temper.

Lesson: As President, he refused a government bungalow after retirement and lived in a modest house. He taught that power does not require pomp.

Quote: "Let me define a leader. He must have vision and passion, and must be able to travel into an unexplored path. He must be humble."

Mother Teresa – Compassion in Action

Core Value: Compassion without discrimination.

Case Study: She served the sick in Kolkata's slums regardless of their religion. When asked about criticism, she said: "I am a Catholic nun. But I don't serve Catholics. I serve humanity."

For Civil Servants: A district magistrate must treat a Muslim widow, a Dalit labourer, and a Brahmin farmer with equal compassion.

E. Sreedharan (Metro Man) – Discipline and Dedication

Core Values: Punctuality, transparency, accountability.

Lesson: He built the Delhi Metro without cost overruns or corruption. His secret – daily diary, weekly reviews, no political dinners.

Quote: "If you are honest, nothing is impossible."

Value Crisis in Contemporary Society

Modern society faces a value crisis due to materialism, consumerism, social media, and narrow perception of the "good life".

Manifestations

Rising intolerance, cyber-bullying, and hate speech (decline in tolerance & non-violence).

Corruption, nepotism, and favouritism (erosion of integrity & righteousness).

Declining empathy amid urban isolation (weak compassion).

Cheating in exams, paper leaks, and quick-success culture (weak truth & peace).

Causes: Overemphasis on economic values over social/moral values; weakening family bonds; commercialisation of education.

Consequences: Social disharmony, loss of public trust in institutions, ethical vacuum in governance.

Measures to Address Value Crisis

Level	Measure	Example
Individual	Self-reflection, journaling, role models	"One hour of silence daily" – Swami Vivekananda
Family	Family time, storytelling of ethical heroes	Grandparents telling Panchatantra
Educational	Value-based curriculum, mandatory ethics courses	NEP 2020's emphasis on Indian knowledge systems
Societal	Community awards for integrity, social audits	MKSS's social audit award in Rajasthan
Institutional	Strong enforcement, protection for whistleblowers	Whistleblowers Protection Act 2014 (rules notified 2022)
Technological	Transparency portals, e-governance	GeM portal reduced corruption in procurement

If asked "Value crisis in contemporary society"

Begin with: "The 2024 NEET paper leak is not an isolated failure of exam machinery. It is a symptom – 15-year-olds and their parents believing that cheating is acceptable if it secures a career. That is the real crisis."

PART 2

Attitude and Aptitude

Ch 3: Attitude · Ch 4: Aptitude and Foundational Values for Civil Services · Ch 5: Attitude, Aptitude and Values in Governance

3 Attitude

Attitude – The Invisible Driver of Behaviour and Governance

Attitude is a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, reflected in a tendency to behave in a particular manner. It acts as a psychological filter that influences perception, decision-making, and actions. It is a learned predisposition to evaluate people, objects, ideas, or events with favour or disfavour. It is not innate but acquired through experience and socialisation.

"Attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on behaviour." – Gordon Allport

For civil servants functioning under extreme stress, political pressure, and public scrutiny, attitude determines whether they become rule-bound bureaucrats or empathetic, solution-oriented administrators.

Characteristics of Attitude

Case Study – The Attitude of E. Sreedharan:

He was known for his attitude of zero tolerance for delays. When building the Delhi Metro, he would personally visit sites at 6 AM. His attitude was: "If I am punctual, my team will be." This learned, stable, evaluative predisposition shaped the entire project's success.

PYQ Connect: "Attitude is not innate; it is cultivated." Discuss with examples from public life.

Components of Attitude (CAB Model)

Psychologists agree that attitude has three components – often called the ABC Model (or CAB – Cognitive, Affective, Behavioural).

Component	Meaning	Question it answers	Example (Attitude towards "Honesty in public service")
Cognitive (Belief)	Knowledge, thoughts, beliefs about the object	"What do I think?"	"Honest officers get transferred frequently. Corruption is common."
Affective (Feeling)	Emotional response (like/dislike, fear, love)	"How do I feel?"	"I feel angry when I see corrupt officers go unpunished."
Behavioural (Action tendency)	Readiness to act in a certain way	"What will I do?"	"I will file an RTI, speak up, or avoid corrupt colleagues."

Case Study – The Attitude of IAS Officer Durga Shakti Nagpal:

Cognitive: Believes that land mafia and sand mining mafia destroy the environment and cheat the poor.

Affective: Feels intense anger and determination when seeing illegal mining.

Behavioural: Ordered bulldozers to demolish illegal structures, arrested mafia members, despite political pressure.

PYQ Connect: "Explain the components of attitude with suitable examples from administrative context."

Formation and Functions of Attitude

Formation

Social Learning: Family, peers, media, and role models.

Child sees father respecting police → develops positive attitude

Direct Experience: Stronger and more resistant to change.

A citizen harassed by a bribe-seeking clerk develops negative attitude towards bureaucracy

Classical/Operant Conditioning: Association of objects with emotion; Rewards and punishments.

Repeated news of terrorist attacks → negative attitude towards a particular religious group

Observation and Imitation: Adopting attitudes of admired groups

New IAS officer adopts senior's attitude towards public dealing

Functions (Katz's Functional Theory)

Utilitarian: Maximises rewards, minimises punishment.

Officer develops positive attitude towards citizen service because it brings recognition

Knowledge: Provides structure and meaning to the world.

Attitude that "rules are meant to be followed" helps navigate complex administration

Ego-defensive: Protects self-esteem (e.g., blaming others for failure).

Officer with negative attitude towards criticism – dismisses feedback to protect ego

Value-expressive: Expresses core values and self-identity.

An officer with integrity attitude refuses bribe – it expresses his self-concept

Case Study – The Attitude of Kiran Bedi (early career):

Utilitarian: She gained recognition for prison reforms.

Knowledge: Her attitude that "prisoners can reform" helped her redesign Tihar.

Value-expressive: She expressed her value of human dignity.

Ego-defensive: She resisted departmental pressure to follow old, harsh methods.

PYQ Connect: "Attitudes serve both personal and professional functions. Explain with reference to civil service."

Influence of Attitude on Thought and Behaviour

Attitudes do not always predict behaviour – there is a gap. Three key theories explain this relationship.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen)

Behaviour is best predicted by intention, influenced by

Factor	Meaning	Example (Attitude: "I should donate blood")
Attitude towards behaviour	Personal evaluation of the act	"Donating blood is good"
Subjective norm	Perceived social pressure	"My friends donate; they expect me to"
Perceived behavioural control	Belief in ability to perform	"I know where the camp is, I am healthy"

If all three are positive, intention is strong → behaviour follows.

Administrative Example: An officer wants to implement a new grievance portal.

Attitude: "It will help citizens" (positive).

Subjective norm: "My seniors support it" (positive).

Control: "I have IT staff and budget" (positive). → Behaviour likely.

LaPiere's Study (1934)

Finding	Implication
Survey: 92% of hotel owners said they would not serve Chinese guests.	Attitude stated = prejudiced.
Reality: Only one out of 250 Chinese couples actually faced refusal.	Behaviour = not prejudiced.

There is often a gap between expressed attitudes (questionnaire) and actual behaviour (real situation). Situational factors, social desirability, and specificity matter. Relevant for understanding why officers may hold egalitarian attitudes but show bias in practice.

Relevance for Civil Services: A citizen may say "I hate corruption" (attitude) but still pay a bribe to get work done (behaviour). An officer may claim "I am impartial" but favour his caste in recruitment.

PYQ Connect: "Attitudes do not always translate into behaviour. Examine the reasons with examples from public administration."

Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger)

Psychological discomfort arising from holding contradictory attitudes or from attitude-behaviour inconsistency. People reduce dissonance by changing attitude, behaviour, or rationalising.

Example: An officer who believes in merit but recommends a relative due to family pressure experiences dissonance. Resolution: Change behaviour (reject favouritism) or justify it ("everyone does it").

Moral and Political Attitudes

Moral Attitudes: Concern right/wrong, justice, and duty (e.g., integrity, compassion). They guide ethical decision-making in public service.

Aspect	Meaning	Example
Definition	Attitude based on concepts of right/wrong, justice, fairness	"Stealing is always wrong"
Source	Internalised moral principles (conscience, religion, philosophy)	Derived from Kant's categorical imperative
Strength	Usually strong, resistant to change	Gandhi's attitude of non-violence survived imprisonment
Administrative relevance	Guides discretion, public interest decisions	Officer refusing to give false certificate

Political Attitudes: Views on governance, ideology, power, and participation (e.g., patriotism, secularism, anti-corruption stance).

Aspect	Meaning	Example
Definition	Attitude towards political system, ideologies, policies	"I support decentralisation"

Aspect	Meaning	Example
Types	Left-wing (equality, state intervention), Right-wing (liberty, markets), Centrist	Left: higher taxes for welfare; Right: lower taxes for growth
Influence on civil servants	Should be neutral (non-partisan), but personal attitudes may colour decisions	Officer with left attitude may prioritise poverty schemes; right attitude may prioritise ease of business

Case Study – T.N. Seshan's Political Attitude:

He was seen as an anti-politician. His attitude was not left or right – it was a "democratic attitude" (fair elections, rule of law). He was non-partisan but fiercely democratic.

PYQ Connect: "What is political attitude? How is it different from democratic attitude? Discuss with examples."

Social Influence and Persuasion Three Types (Herbert Kelman)

Compliance: Power/reward → shallow (behavior only) → e.g., officer follows order to avoid transfer

Identification: Attraction to person/group → moderate (adopts attitudes) → e.g., junior copies senior's work ethic

Internalisation: Value congruence → deep (true belief) → e.g., officer believes in citizen service

Classic Experiments on Social Influence

Solomon Asch (Line experiment): Conformity even when group is wrong → bureaucratic groupthink

Stanley Milgram (Shock experiment): Obedience to harmful authority → "just following orders"

Philip Zimbardo (Stanford Prison): Roles shape behavior → misuse of power (e.g., police conduct)

Case Study – The Bhagalpur Blindings (1978)

Police blinded undertrials under senior orders

Shows extreme obedience (Milgram)

Illustrates how authority can drive unethical acts

Persuasion – The Art of Changing Attitudes

Technique	Meaning	Administrative Example
Reciprocity	Give something to get something	Officer helps a citizen with a small favour; citizen cooperates later
Scarcity	Limited availability increases desire	"Only 1000 forms left" – citizens rush to apply
Authority	People follow credible experts	A senior officer's advice is persuasive
Consistency	People want to be consistent with past commitments	Get a citizen to publicly support a scheme; they will defend it
Liking	People say yes to those they like	Officer who is friendly gets better cooperation
Social proof	People follow what others do	Displaying "95% of taxpayers have filed returns" increases compliance

Case Study – The Swachh Bharat Mission Persuasion:

The government used social proof (celebrity endorsements, PM himself cleaning), authority (PM's call), and consistency (pledge taking) to change citizens' attitudes towards open defecation.

PYQ Connect: "Social influence can be used for positive social change. Discuss with examples from government campaigns."

Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotypes

These are negative attitudes (prejudice) leading to negative behaviour (discrimination) based on cognitive oversimplifications (stereotypes).

Stereotypes: Over-generalised beliefs about groups (e.g., "Bureaucrats are lazy").

Prejudice: Negative attitude/pre-judgement toward a group.

Discrimination: Unfair behaviour based on prejudice.

Types of Prejudice in Indian Context

Type	Example	Administrative Consequence
Caste prejudice	Believing SC/ST are less capable	Denying promotion, posting in difficult areas
Gender prejudice	"Women cannot handle field postings"	Fewer women in district administration
Religious prejudice	Suspicion of minority communities	Delayed clearances, surveillance
Regional prejudice	"Bihari migrants are uncultured"	Harassment by local police

The Relationship

Stereotype → (may lead to) Prejudice → (may lead to) Discrimination

But not always: One can hold a stereotype without prejudice, or be prejudiced without discriminating.

Example in Governance: Caste or gender stereotypes leading to biased implementation of schemes. Changing them requires education, inter-group contact, and legal safeguards.

Case Study – The Kerala Model of Religious Harmony:

Kerala has a history of inter-religious contact through festivals, shared spaces, and left-wing politics that emphasised class over religion. Prejudice levels are lower than in many other states – reflected in peaceful coexistence.

PYQ Connect: "Prejudice is a learned attitude. It can be unlearned. Suggest measures for civil servants to overcome prejudice."

Undesirable Attitudes

Our attitudes are often unconsciously shaped by family and society. Some prevalent undesirable attitudes among educated Indians include:

Materialism and Consumerism: Prioritising wealth over ethics.

Casteism and Communalism: Despite education, subtle biases persist.

Individualism over Social Responsibility: "Chalta hai" mindset, apathy toward public issues.

Intolerance and Narrow-mindedness: Resistance to diversity or criticism.

Corruption Tolerance: Viewing bribes as "practical necessity".

Gender Bias: Patriarchal attitudes even among educated classes.

Harmful Effects of Undesirable Attitudes

Effect	Explanation	Example
Poor service delivery	Apathetic officer delays files	Passport not issued for months
Corruption	Cynicism normalises bribe	"Everyone takes – so will I"
Low morale	Authoritarianism kills initiative	Subordinates stop suggesting improvements
Injustice	Bias and nepotism deny deserving	Meritorious SC/ST officer sidelined
Policy failure	Resistance to change blocks reforms	Manual processes continue despite digital mandate

How to Change Them

Value education, role models, and training (Foundation Course, Mission Karmayogi).

Cognitive dissonance creation through exposure and reflection.

Positive reinforcement and persuasion campaigns.

Institutional mechanisms (code of conduct, ethical audits).

Case Study – Reforming the Attitude of Delhi Police (2012 post-Nirbhaya): After the gang rape, police attitude towards women complainants was found to be apathetic and victim-blaming. Reforms included:

Mandatory sensitivity training.

Female complaint helpdesks.

Strict action against officers who disrespected victims. Slowly, attitudes began to change – though much remains.

PYQ Connect: "What are the undesirable attitudes that affect the functioning of civil servants? How can they be corrected?"

Positive Attitude

A positive attitude is the tendency to focus on constructive, optimistic, and solution-oriented aspects of a situation, while maintaining realistic expectations.

Contributors

Strong value system and self-awareness.

Emotional intelligence and mindfulness.

Growth mindset (learning from failures).

Supportive environment and mentoring.

Reflection and gratitude practices.

Benefits of Positive Attitude in Administration

Benefit	Explanation	Evidence
Better decision-making	Broader thinking, not defensive	Positive officers explore more alternatives
Higher productivity	Less time wasted on cynicism	Teams with positive leaders finish projects faster
Lower stress	Resilience reduces burnout	Positive attitude correlates with lower BP, absenteeism
Citizen satisfaction	Friendly, helpful behaviour	Citizens rate positive officers higher in surveys

Benefit	Explanation	Evidence
Innovation	Willingness to try new methods	E-governance adoption higher among positive officers

Cultivating Positive Attitude (For Civil Servants)

Cognitive restructuring: Challenge negative thoughts → “Is it really true that no one works here?”

Gratitude practice: Note 3 good things daily → “A citizen thanked me today”

Role models: Learn from positive officers → e.g., E. Sreedharan’s punctuality

Controllable focus: Focus on what you can change → “I can improve my section”

Self-care: Sleep, exercise, hobbies → prevents burnout

Positive environment: Stay around optimistic peers → join motivated groups

Importance for Civil Servants: Helps manage stress, maintain equanimity, innovate under constraints, and inspire teams. Positive officers interpret challenges as opportunities, leading to better public service delivery.

Case Study – IAS Officer Armstrong Pame (Manipur): Known as the “Miracle Man,” he built a 100-km road without government funds – using donations from villagers and friends.

Positive attitude: “No budget” did not stop him.

Solution-focus: Crowdsourced money, mobilised labour.

Resilience: Faced opposition but continued.

PYQ Connect: “What do you understand by ‘positive attitude’? Discuss its role in public administration with examples.”

Categories of Attitude – Explicit vs. Implicit, Individual vs. Group

Explicit Attitude: Conscious, deliberately expressed, and easily reported (e.g., “I support gender equality”). Measured through surveys or interviews. Often influenced by social desirability.

Implicit Attitude: Unconscious, automatic preferences revealed through behaviour or indirect tests (e.g., Implicit Association Test). Harder to control and may contradict explicit views.

Case Study – Implicit Caste Bias in Hiring (IIT Study, 2018): Researchers sent identical CVs with different caste-sounding names (e.g., “Kumar” vs. “Lal”). Even when qualifications were identical, upper-caste names received 30% more callbacks. The recruiters explicitly denied bias, but implicit attitude surfaced in behaviour.

Administrative Relevance: A civil servant may explicitly follow reservation rules but implicitly favour own caste in confidential reports, posting decisions, or informal recommendations. Implicit bias training (e.g., stereotype replacement, counter-stereotypic imaging) is now part of Mission Karmyogi.

PYQ Connect: “Implicit attitudes often contradict explicit ones. How can civil servants identify and correct their implicit biases?”

Individual Attitude: Personal beliefs shaped by upbringing and experience (e.g., one officer’s strong anti-corruption stance).

Group Attitude: Shared by a collective, often reinforced by norms (e.g., departmental culture of “file-pushing” or team solidarity).

Case Study – The IAS Cadre Attitude (Group) vs. Individual Officer:

Group attitude (bureaucratic culture): “Maintain hierarchy, follow senior’s orders, don’t rock the boat.”

Individual officer's attitude: "I believe in transparency, even if seniors resist."

When the individual refuses to sign a file that seniors have cleared, conflict arises. The group may ostracise the individual (transfer, poor ACR). The officer must choose: conform (change behaviour) or resist (face consequences).

PYQ Connect: "Group attitude often overrides individual conscience in bureaucracy. Examine with examples."

Governance Link: Implicit biases and group attitudes can lead to systemic discrimination; training (Mission Karmayogi) aims to align them with constitutional values.

If asked "Explicit vs implicit attitude"

Begin with: "A recruiter may explicitly support reservation but implicitly favour upper-caste names on CVs. The IIT study (2018) proved that implicit bias persists despite explicit commitment to equality. Civil servants must undergo implicit bias training – not just policy awareness."

Bureaucratic Attitude vs Democratic Attitude

Aspect	Bureaucratic Attitude	Democratic Attitude
Core Focus	Rules, hierarchy, procedures, neutrality	People, participation, flexibility, empathy
Approach	Top-down, rule-bound, impersonal	Bottom-up, consultative, citizen-centric
Merits	Ensures consistency, accountability, efficiency in routine tasks, prevents arbitrariness	Promotes inclusion, innovation, trust, faster development through public ownership
Demerits	Rigidity, red-tapism, delays, alienation of public	Risk of populism, compromise on rules, inefficiency due to excessive consultation
Example	Strict adherence to procurement rules even if it delays urgent relief	Involving gram sabha in scheme implementation for better targeting

The Conflict – and the Balance Needed

Citizen lacks required document

Bureaucratic: "Come back with the document"

Democratic: "Let me see alternative proof"

Balanced: Accept valid alternatives under rules (e.g., Right to Information Act 2005 Section 6)

Minister orders illegal action

Bureaucratic: "I follow my minister"

Democratic: "I refuse even if transferred"

Balanced: Record dissent note → then refuse unlawful order

New technology introduced

Bureaucratic: "We've always done it manually"

Democratic: "Let's pilot and learn"

Balanced: Pilot project → evaluate → scale if effective

Case Study – The Balance in IAS Officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi (Haryana cadre): He exposed corruption in AIIMS, forced action against officers, and resisted political pressure.

Bureaucratic attitude would have said: "Don't embarrass seniors."

Democratic attitude said: "Public money is being stolen."

PYQ Connect: "The attitude of a civil servant should balance bureaucratic discipline and democratic responsiveness." Discuss.

If asked "Bureaucratic vs democratic attitude"

Begin with: "The traditional bureaucratic attitude says 'file must be perfect'; the democratic attitude says 'citizen must be served'. The 2nd ARC called for a shift from rule-orientation to result-orientation – that is the essence of democratic attitude in civil service."

Moral Policing

Moral policing refers to imposing one's moral standards on others through coercion, often violating individual rights and tolerance. It reflects undesirable attitudes of intolerance and self-righteousness.

Forms of Moral Policing in India

Inter-caste / inter-religious relationships

Example: "Love jihad" accusations, attacks on couples

Victims: Young couples, religious minorities

Clothing

Example: "Dress code" enforcement, attacks on women in western clothes

Victims: Women (especially in smaller towns)

Food habits

Example: Attacks over beef consumption, forced vegetarianism

Victims: Muslims, Christians, lower castes

Live-in relationships

Example: Harassment, police raids

Victims: Young urban couples

LGBTQ+

Example: Opposition to same-sex relationships, harassment

Victims: LGBTQ+ community

Entertainment

Example: Objections to films, songs, cultural events

Victims: Artists, filmmakers

Role of Civil Servants in Preventing Moral Policing

Action	Example
Preventive	Identify potential flashpoints (e.g., a couple of different religions in a conservative area) – provide security

Action	Example
Responsive	Quick police action when moral policing violence occurs Muzaffarnagar riots (2013) – delayed response led to deaths
Prosecution	Strictly enforce laws against hate speech, assault, unlawful assembly Supreme Court direction in Tehseen Poonawalla vs. UOI (2018)
Counseling	Sensitise police and public about individual freedoms Mission Karmyogi modules on constitutional values

Case Study – Kerala Police's 'Safe Couples' Initiative (2018): When the Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality, Kerala Police launched a helpline and protection scheme for LGBTQ+ couples and inter-faith couples facing moral policing. This proactive attitude changed the police's image from moral enforcer to rights protector.

PYQ Connect: "Moral policing violates the basic principles of democracy and liberty. How should civil servants respond to it?"

If asked "Moral policing"

Begin with: "When a mob attacks an inter-caste couple, it is not enforcing morality – it is violating the Constitution. The Supreme Court in Tehseen Poonawalla (2018) directed states to take proactive action. A civil servant's attitude must be: protect rights, not please the mob."

Administration and the Public

Attitude of administrators towards the public determines service delivery and trust.

Public's Attitude towards Administration (Indian Context – India)

Distrust: "Officers are corrupt/lazy" → Avoid interaction, pay bribes, don't complain

Fear: "Officer saheb can ruin my life" → Citizens don't assert rights

Resignation: "Nothing will change" → Low participation in governance

Instrumental: "Use him for my work" → Flattery, gifts, connections

Respect (rare): "Some officers are honest" → Willing cooperation

Administrator's Attitude towards the Public

"Public is ignorant" → "Public is the ultimate stakeholder"

"They are trying to cheat" → "Most citizens want to be honest"

"Why should I help?" → "My job is to serve"

"Too many people, can't serve all" → "Design systems to serve all"

"They don't understand rules" → "Simplify rules"

Ways to Improve Administration-Public Interface (Attitude Change)

Intervention	How it works	Example
Citizen Charters	Sets expectations, reduces arbitrariness	Sevottam model
Public hearings	Direct exposure changes officer attitudes	District-level grievance redressal
Social audits	Citizens question officials – power shift	MGNREGA social audits in Andhra
Training	Sensitisation, empathy building	Mission Karmyogi's "Public Interface" module
Rewards	Recognise citizen-friendly officers	Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence

Case Study – The 'Pratiksha' Initiative (Chhattisgarh): The state government set up a system where citizens could video-record their interaction with government officials and upload it for review. This changed officer attitude dramatically – politeness and efficiency improved because behaviour was now observable.

PYQ Connect: "The attitude of civil servants towards the public determines the quality of governance. Suggest measures to improve this attitude."

If asked "Administration and the public"

Begin with: "Rohit Kumar Singh held an open court every morning. Citizens stopped fearing the collector. The attitude change of one officer can transform public trust. The solution to 'administration vs public' conflict is not more rules – it is empathy and accessibility."

Social Behaviour and Attitude Change

Social behaviour is observable action influenced by attitudes, norms, and situations. Attitudes are not fixed – they can change through social processes. Attitude change occurs through:

Persuasion: Central (logic) or peripheral (emotions/credibility) routes.

Cognitive Dissonance: Creating discomfort to realign attitude-behaviour.

Social Learning: Observation of role models.

Contact Hypothesis: Inter-group contact reduces prejudice.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Richard E. Petty & John T. Cacioppo)

Central route: Careful thinking, weighing arguments → used when motivation & ability are high → long-lasting change

Peripheral route: Heuristics (celebrity cues, number of arguments) → used when motivation & ability are low → temporary change

Application to Governance

Deep attitude change (e.g., caste prejudice): Use central route → education, inter-group contact → durable impact

Simple behaviour change (e.g., mask-wearing): Use peripheral route → celebrity endorsements, fines → quick compliance

PYQ Connect: "Social behaviour can be changed through a combination of persuasion and social pressure." Discuss with examples from government campaigns.

If asked "Social attitude vs individual attitude conflict"

Begin with: "When Anand Swaroop wrote a dissent note against transferring an honest officer, his individual conscience fought the department's corrupt social norm. He was transferred but not broken. Civil services must protect such officers – they are the conscience-keepers of governance."

Factors and Contrasting Attitudes on Caste in India (Traditional vs. Modern, Urban vs. Rural)

Caste attitude is one of the most deep-rooted and contested in India.

Factors Shaping Caste Attitudes

Factor	Impact on Attitude
Upbringing (family)	Children absorb caste hierarchy from parents
Education	Higher education reduces explicit caste prejudice (but implicit bias may remain)
Urbanization	Anonymity reduces caste-based discrimination in public spaces
Economic status	Upper-caste poor may still hold caste pride; lower-caste rich may still face prejudice
Media	Progressive media reduces prejudice; caste-based OTT content may reinforce
Political mobilization	Caste-based parties reinforce identity; anti-caste movements reduce hierarchy
Inter-caste contact	Positive contact (equal status, common goals) reduces prejudice

Contrasting Attitudes – Traditional vs. Modern

Contrasting Attitudes – Urban vs. Rural (India)

Case Study – The Changing Attitude in Rural Tamil Nadu (Vellore District)

A 2019 study found that Dalit women in Vellore now refuse to do manual scavenging – a task traditionally assigned to them. When asked why, they said: "Our daughters go to school. We have seen on TV that no one should do this." Urban media and education changed rural attitudes.

Case Study – Persistent Prejudice in Urban Rental Market (Delhi, 2022)

Journalists posed as tenants from different castes and religions. Upper-caste names were offered flats easily; Dalit and Muslim names faced rejection. Urban attitude had changed from open to covert – but prejudice remained.

PYQ Connect: "Social attitudes in India are undergoing change, but deep-rooted prejudices persist. Analyse with reference to caste."

Social Attitude vs. Individual Attitude

Social Attitude: Shared norms of a group/society (e.g., societal tolerance of "speed money" or gender roles).

Individual Attitude: Personal conviction (e.g., an officer's strong integrity).

Source

Social attitude: Collective norms, traditions, peer pressure

Individual attitude: Personal values, reasoning, conscience

Example

Social attitude: “Marrying outside caste is wrong”

Individual attitude: “I love someone from another caste”

Pressure

Social attitude: Ostracism, violence, family rejection

Individual attitude: Internal moral conflict, fear

Types of Conflicts

Type	Description	Example
Conformity conflict	Individual wants to follow own attitude but group pressures conformity	An officer wants to be honest but department norm is bribe
Moral conflict	Social attitude is unethical, individual's moral attitude opposes it	Society accepts dowry; individual refuses to take or give
Role conflict	Individual's role in society (e.g., as parent) vs. personal attitude	Parent wants child to be happy but society demands caste marriage

Role of Civil Servants in Resolving Such Conflicts (Indian Context – India)

Caste-based discrimination in schemes

Social attitude: “SCs should get last priority”

Officer’s attitude: “All are equal”

Ethical resolution: Refuse discriminatory practice, document dissent, report violations, ensure delivery as per constitutional equality

Gender bias in police station

Social attitude: “Women’s complaints aren’t serious”

Officer’s attitude: “Every complaint matters”

Ethical resolution: Set up women’s help desks, sensitize staff, ensure prompt FIR registration and fair hearing

Religious minority harassment

Social attitude: Pressure to exclude minorities

Officer’s attitude: Commitment to equality and secularism

Ethical resolution: Enforce rule of law impartially, protect rights, take action against perpetrators, uphold constitutional values consistently

Case Study – The Police Officer Who Refused to Lathi Charge (Narmada Bachao Andolan, 1990s): A police officer was ordered to charge peaceful protestors. His individual attitude: “They are exercising democratic rights.” Social attitude of police force: “Orders must be obeyed.” He refused, was suspended, but later the Supreme Court praised his courage. Individual conscience triumphed over group conformity.

PYQ Connect: "Individual conscience often conflicts with social norms. How should a civil servant navigate this conflict?"

4 Aptitude and Foundational Values for Civil Services

Introduction to Aptitude

Aptitude is a natural talent or acquired skill that indicates potential for future performance. Unlike achievement (what one has already done), aptitude predicts what one can achieve with proper training. For civil servants, aptitude includes analytical thinking, decision-making under uncertainty, emotional resilience, and ethical judgement. Aptitude is the natural or acquired ability to learn, perform, or excel in a specific domain. It is not the same as intelligence (IQ) or attitude – it is the potential to develop skill.

Term	Meaning	Example
Intelligence (IQ)	General cognitive ability	Solving puzzles, reasoning
Attitude	Learned predisposition	"I want to serve people"
Aptitude	Potential to acquire a skill	Quick learner of languages, numbers, spatial relations
Skill	Competence after training	Speaking fluent Hindi, using software

Aptitude is trainable – a civil servant can develop administrative aptitude through practice, even if not born with it.

Aptitude Matters for Civil Services

Policy formulation: Requires analytical aptitude → interpret data, identify patterns, design effective policies

Crisis management: Needs decisive aptitude → take quick, sound decisions under pressure and uncertainty

Public dealing: Depends on interpersonal aptitude → communicate clearly with diverse groups, handle grievances sensitively

Resource allocation: Involves numerical aptitude → manage budgets, ensure proper auditing and efficient use of funds

Leadership: Calls for managerial aptitude → guide teams, delegate tasks, motivate personnel, and ensure accountability

PYQ Connect: "Aptitude is the raw material; training and values convert it into performance."

Categories of Aptitude and its Relationship with Other Qualities

Cognitive Aptitude: Logical reasoning, problem-solving, data interpretation (e.g., handling complex policy issues).

Emotional Aptitude: Empathy, self-awareness, stress management (links with Emotional Intelligence).

Ethical/Moral Aptitude: Ability to identify and act on ethical dilemmas (connects with Chapter 1 ethics).

Administrative Aptitude: Coordination, leadership, crisis management.

Relationship with Other Qualities

Case Study – The Three Officers

Officer	Aptitude	Attitude	Values	Outcome
A	High (all domains)	Negative (cynical)	Selfish	Efficient but corrupt – harms system
B	Average	Positive (motivated)	Service-oriented	Slow but honest – trusted by public
C	High	Positive	Service-oriented	Ideal officer – rare but exemplary

PYQ Connect: "Aptitude alone does not make a good civil servant. Discuss the interplay of aptitude, attitude, and values."

Aptitude for Civil Services and its Role in Governance

Civil services demand a unique blend of aptitudes

Analytical aptitude for policy formulation.

Interpersonal aptitude for stakeholder management.

Adaptive aptitude for changing socio-economic realities.

What Specific Aptitudes Does the Civil Service Require?

Domain	Required Aptitude	Why?
Policy making	Analytical, abstract reasoning	To interpret complex socio-economic data
Implementation	Managerial, clerical	To monitor schemes, ensure compliance
Public interface	Interpersonal, verbal	To listen, explain, persuade
Crisis response	Decision-making, spatial	To act fast under uncertainty (floods, riots)
Legal functions	Verbal, logical	To understand laws, write orders, defend in court
Financial management	Numerical	To manage budgets, audit, prevent fraud

Role in Governance

Enables efficient implementation of schemes (e.g., PMJDY, MGNREGA).

Facilitates innovation in service delivery (digital governance, DBT).

Supports crisis response (disaster management, pandemic handling).

Case Study – The Analytical Aptitude of IAS Officer Abhishek Singh (Bihar): He noticed that despite high PDS allocation, malnutrition was not falling. He analysed the supply chain and found that grain was being diverted at the last mile. He introduced GPS-tracked vehicles and biometric authentication – malnutrition rates dropped. His numerical + analytical aptitude solved a problem that goodwill alone could not.

PYQ Connect: "Identify the key aptitudes required for effective district administration. Illustrate with examples."

Foundational Values: Integrity, Impartiality, Non-partisanship, Objectivity

The 2nd ARC and the Civil Services Conduct Rules list these as non-negotiable

Integrity

Moral uprightness and consistency between private and public life. It means doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Dimension	Meaning	Violation Example
Financial integrity	No bribery, misappropriation	Accepting a bribe to clear a file
Moral integrity	Consistency between words and actions	Preaching honesty but taking favours
Intellectual integrity	Not twisting facts to please superiors	Falsifying a report to show progress
Data integrity	Maintaining accurate records	Manipulating attendance to show higher coverage

Case Study – Integrity of IAS Officer U. Sagayam (Tamil Nadu): He was the District Collector of Madurai when he discovered illegal granite mining worth thousands of crores. He did not accept the powerful miners' offers. He filed cases, seized machinery, and even sat on a protest with villagers. His integrity cost him promotions but earned him the reputation of "Mr. Clean."

Quote to Remember: "Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching." – C.S. Lewis

Impartiality

Treating all persons and groups equally without bias or favouritism based on caste, religion, gender, or political affiliation.

Aspect	Meaning	Administrative Example
Definition	Treating all persons equally, without favour or prejudice	Giving same hearing to a wealthy contractor and a poor farmer
Scope	Applies to decisions, not outcomes (outcomes may differ based on need)	Reservation policies are impartial because they apply a rule equally to all in a category
Limitation	Impartiality ≠ blind equality. Must consider vulnerability	A widow with a land dispute may need faster hearing

Difference from Non-partisanship

Impartiality: Applies to all actions and decisions — fair treatment of citizens, stakeholders, and colleagues.

Non-partisanship: Specifically refers to political neutrality — not favouring any political party or ideology while in service.

Example: Impartiality — awarding contract purely on merit; Non-partisanship — refusing to implement a party manifesto that violates rules.

Non-partisanship

Definition: Not acting in favor of any political party → implement schemes objectively, regardless of which party introduced them

Scope: Broader than impartiality → includes avoiding political expression → e.g., not attending party rallies, not posting political content on social media

Case Study – Non-partisanship of IAS Officer (post-retirement):

Many officers join political parties after retirement – that is their right. But while in service, an officer must not even appear to favour a party. The All India Services Conduct Rules explicitly bar political activities.

Objectivity

Basing decisions on facts, evidence, and analysis rather than personal opinions, emotions, or external pressure.

Aspect	Meaning	Administrative Example
Definition	Decisions based on verifiable facts, not personal feelings or biases	Choosing a vendor based on technical score, not recommendation
Tools	Data, evidence, rules, precedents	Using a weighted scorecard for recruitment
Threats	Confirmation bias, groupthink, pressure	Officer favouring own caste in promotions

Case Study – Objectivity in Disaster Relief (Odisha, Cyclone Fani 2019): The state government evacuated 1.2 million people based on weather models and vulnerability mapping. Decisions were not based on political considerations (which district voted for which party) – they were purely objective. Result: only 72 deaths, compared to 10,000+ in a similar cyclone in 1999.

PYQ Connect: "Differentiate between impartiality and non-partisanship with suitable examples. Why is objectivity essential for civil servants?"

Dedication to Public Service

Dedication means committing one's abilities wholeheartedly to the welfare of the people rather than personal advancement. It reflects the "spirit of service."

Dimension	Meaning	Manifestation
Time commitment	Beyond office hours when needed	DM working through the night during floods
Emotional commitment	Caring about outcomes, not just processes	Officer personally checking if widow received pension
Sacrifice	Putting public interest above personal comfort	Accepting a difficult rural posting
Continuity	Not abandoning post during crisis	Staying in a riot-affected area instead of going home

Case Study – Dedication of IAS Officer Ashok Khemka: He has been transferred over 50 times. He could have "behaved" and got a cushy posting. But his dedication to public service meant he kept exposing corruption, kept fighting for farmers, kept challenging illegal land deals. His dedication came at a personal cost (family instability, career stagnation) – but he never compromised.

Quote: "Public service is a trust, not a job."

PYQ Connect: "Spirit of service is the highest value for a civil servant." Discuss.

Empathy, Tolerance and Compassion towards Weaker Sections

While aptitude provides the potential, foundational values supply the ethical compass. These three values are essential for inclusive and people-centric governance, especially in a diverse country like India with deep socio-economic inequalities.

Empathy: The ability to understand and share the feelings of others by imagining oneself in their situation. It goes beyond sympathy to emotional connection.

Governance Role: Helps officers design and implement schemes that actually address ground-level problems.

Example: A Collector personally visiting flood-affected villages to understand livelihood loss before framing rehabilitation packages.

Tolerance: Respecting differences in culture, religion, caste, gender, and lifestyle without prejudice. It promotes social harmony.

Governance Role: Prevents bias in law enforcement and service delivery.

Example: Maintaining neutrality during religious festivals or handling inter-community disputes with fairness.

Compassion: Active concern for the suffering of others combined with a desire to help. It translates empathy into action.

Governance Role: Ensures sensitivity towards weaker sections (SC/ST, women, minorities, disabled, poor, elderly).

Example: Kiran Bedi's prison reforms in Tihar Jail — introducing education and vocational training with genuine care for inmates.

Case Study – Empathy in Action: IAS Officer Smita Sabharwal (Telangana): She is known as the "People's Officer." She initiated "Fund Your City" – asking citizens to contribute to development. But before that, she spent months visiting slums, sitting on the floor with residents, understanding their water and toilet problems. Her empathy led to practical solutions, not textbook ones.

Case Study – Compassion during COVID (DM of Aurangabad, 2021): When migrants were walking back home, the DM arranged buses, food, and medical checkups. He did not say "not my jurisdiction" – he said "a human is a human." That is compassion without discrimination.

PYQ Connect: "Empathy is not just a personal virtue but a professional requirement for civil servants." Discuss.

Neutrality, Anonymity, Discipline, Sincerity, Perseverance, Courage, Prudence, Temperance

These are indispensable supporting qualities for effective and ethical civil service

Neutrality

Political neutrality

Meaning: Serving any government with the same dedication

Limits: Not applicable when orders are illegal or unconstitutional

Administrative neutrality

Meaning: Not taking sides in departmental feuds

Limits: Must protect the weak, even if it means taking a side

Case Study – Neutrality vs. Conscience: A DM is ordered by the state government to transfer a honest officer who exposed corruption. Political neutrality would say "obey." But constitutional morality says "refuse." The officer who refuses is not violating neutrality – he is upholding higher values.

Anonymity

Traditional view

Meaning: Civil servants should remain invisible; ministers take credit or blame

Contemporary debate: Second Administrative Reforms Commission said anonymity is outdated in a democracy

Modern view

Meaning: Civil servants can be accountable to the public, not just ministers

Contemporary debate: Public hearings, social audits, and Right to Information Act have made anonymity increasingly impractical

Example: The Cabinet Secretary's press conferences during COVID – he was not anonymous. Anonymity is now limited to operational matters (e.g., who wrote which note), not policy responsibility.

Discipline

Self-discipline

Meaning: Personal punctuality, order, and control

Violation: Coming late, missing deadlines

Institutional discipline

Meaning: Following lawful orders and respecting hierarchy

Violation: Disobeying a lawful order of a senior

Case Study – Discipline of E. Sreedharan: He expected everyone to be at the site by 7 AM. He himself was there at 6:45. His discipline was not authoritarian – it was exemplary.

Sincerity

Definition

Meaning: Doing a task with genuine intention, not just to check a box

Contrast with “Mere Compliance”: A sincere officer files a report to improve policy; an insincere officer files it just to avoid a memo

Case Study – Sincerity in Small Things: A BDO in West Bengal personally called the families of 500 children who had dropped out of school. He was not required to; his sincere attitude brought them back. The district's literacy rate rose.

Perseverance

Definition

Meaning: Steady persistence despite difficulty

Example: Continuing reform efforts despite transfers and resistance

Case Study – Perseverance of IAS Officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi: He has exposed corruption in AIIMS, in the environment ministry, and in his home cadre of Haryana. He has been transferred, harassed, and sidelined. But he has not stopped. That is perseverance.

Courage (Moral vs. Physical)

Type	Meaning	Example
Physical courage	Facing bodily harm	DM standing between rioters and a minority community
Moral courage	Standing up for principles despite career/social harm	Writing a dissent note against a powerful minister

Which is harder for civil servants? Moral courage. Physical courage is rare; moral courage is rarer. The officer who refuses a bribe shows moral courage; the officer who exposes corruption in his own department shows even more.

Case Study – Moral Courage of Satyendra Dubey: He was a young engineer in the National Highways Authority. He wrote a letter to the PM exposing corruption. He knew the risks. He was killed. That is the highest form of moral courage.

Prudence: Wise judgement, foresight, and careful decision-making. Practical wisdom – knowing what to do in a given situation, balancing values Not exposing a minor fault if it causes major harm; exposing a major crime even if it causes inconvenience.

Prudence vs. Cowardice: Prudence is not running away – it is choosing the right time and method. A whistleblower who gathers evidence before exposing corruption is prudent, not cowardly.

Case Study – Prudence of a DM during a riot: He did not immediately impose curfew (which would have punished everyone). He negotiated with community leaders, deployed police at flashpoints, and only imposed curfew when violence started. That is prudence.

Temperance: Self-control, moderation, and avoidance of excess (greed, anger, impulsiveness). Like, not using an official car for personal trips, not accepting lavish dinners.

Power corrupts. Temperance is the brake. An officer who cannot control his appetite for status, money, or flattery will soon fall.

Case Study – Temperance of T.N. Seshan: As Chief Election Commissioner, he stayed in a modest house, travelled economy class when the government allowed business, and refused gifts. His temperance gave him moral authority to punish powerful politicians.

PYQ Connect: "Moral courage is more important than physical courage for a civil servant. Do you agree?"

Spirit of Service (UPSC 2013 & 2017)

Spirit of service is the selfless motivation to work for the welfare of the people and the nation. It is the emotional and ethical driving force behind all foundational values. Spirit of service bridges the gap between private ambition and public duty.

Dimension	Meaning	Manifestation
Motivation	Serving others as the primary goal, not money or power	Choosing a difficult rural posting over a comfortable urban one
Attitude	Seeing citizens as stakeholders, not subjects	"How can I help you?" not "What do you want?"
Sacrifice	Willingness to put public good before personal comfort	Working on a holiday during a disaster
Humility	Not seeking credit, not demanding deference	An officer who sits on the floor to talk to a farmer

Examples

Civil servants who pioneered rural sanitation (Bindeshwar Pathak – Sulabh), eye care (Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy – Aravind Eye Hospital), or women's empowerment (Ela Bhatt – SEWA).

Officers working round-the-clock during natural disasters without seeking rewards.

Case Study – IAS Officer K. S. Meena (Rajasthan): He was posted in a drought-prone district. He did not wait for funds. He mobilised MGNREGA, built water harvesting structures, and transformed the district. When asked why, he said: "I became an officer to make a difference. This is my chance."

Quote: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." – Mahatma Gandhi

PYQ Connect: "What do you understand by 'spirit of service'? How is it different from 'careerism'? Illustrate with examples."

Indispensable Qualities for Civil Servant – Synthesis

An ideal civil servant is a balanced synthesis of

Outcome of Synthesis

Efficient implementation of policies

Inclusive and equitable governance

High public trust and institutional legitimacy

Personal fulfilment and inner peace

Visual Synthesis Tip: Think of a civil servant as a tree — Aptitude (roots), Foundational Values (trunk), Supporting Qualities (branches), Spirit of Service (fruit).

Warren Buffett's Three Qualities (Modified for Civil Services)

Quality	Meaning
Integrity	Without it, nothing else matters
Intelligence	Ability to analyse and decide
Energy	Drive to implement

But Buffett said: "If you don't have the first, the other two will kill you."

The Civil Services Conduct Rules' Implicit Qualities

Political neutrality

Diligence

Confidentiality

Non-acceptance of gifts beyond prescribed limits

Prior permission for certain activities

Case Study: During a major flood, an officer coordinates rescue (aptitude + courage), ensures fair relief distribution without political bias (impartiality + non-partisanship), shows compassion to the displaced (empathy), and continues work despite personal loss (perseverance + spirit of service).

PYQ Connect: "A civil servant must possess both moral integrity and professional efficiency. Which is more important? Justify."

Difference between Impartiality and Non-partisanship

Aspect	Impartiality	Non-partisanship
Meaning	Treating all individuals and groups fairly without bias based on caste, religion, gender, region, or personal relations	Maintaining political neutrality — not favouring or opposing any political party or ideology
Scope	Broader — applies to all actions, decisions, and stakeholder dealings	Narrower — specifically related to political affiliations and government of the day
Focus	Equity and fairness in service delivery	Loyalty to the Constitution and the elected government, not to any party

Aspect	Impartiality	Non-partisanship
Example	Awarding scholarships or contracts purely on merit, ignoring caste or connections	Implementing manifesto promises of the ruling party without personal political leanings or sabotage
Violation	Favouring one community in law & order or welfare schemes	Leaking information to opposition or delaying files to harm the current government

Impartiality is about fairness to people; non-partisanship is about fairness to the political process. Both are essential to uphold constitutional morality and public trust.

Illustrative Scenarios

Quote: "The civil service is not merely an administrative machinery; it is the steel frame that holds the nation together with integrity and dedication." — Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Case Study – The Partisan Officer: A DM in Uttar Pradesh ordered the police to file a case against opposition party workers for a minor violation, while ignoring identical violations by ruling party workers. This violated both impartiality (unequal treatment) and non-partisanship (favour to ruling party). He was transferred after an election commission complaint.

PYQ Connect: "Distinguish between impartiality and non-partisanship. Why are both essential for civil servants?"

Attitude, Aptitude and Values in Governance – The Heart of Ethical Administration

Attitude and aptitude, when rooted in strong values, transform competent officers into nation-builders. The positive mindset, moral integrity, and foundational values drive effective, inclusive governance. The trinity of effective and ethical administration – right attitude, sharp aptitude, and unwavering values.

"The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people." — Theodore Roosevelt

What Constitutes a Suitable Attitude?

"The attitude of a civil servant should be like a doctor's – not to judge the patient, but to heal." – 2nd ARC Report

Case Study – The Proactive Attitude of IAS Officer Apoorva Oza (Madhya Pradesh):

As Collector of Alirajpur (a tribal district), she did not wait for complaints. She went to villages, found that children were dropping out because schools had no water. She built rainwater harvesting in every school – attendance skyrocketed. Her attitude: "If I wait for a grievance, I have already failed."

PYQ Connect: "What attitude should a civil servant possess to be effective in a democracy?"

5 Attitude, Aptitude and Values in Governance

Positive vs. Negative Mindset in Bureaucracy – Impact on Rational Decision Making

Aspect	Positive Mindset	Negative Mindset	Impact on Decision Making
Perception	Challenges as opportunities	Problems as threats	Positive → Innovative, evidence-based choices
Approach	Collaborative, proactive	Rigid, risk-averse	Negative → Delayed, biased, short-term decisions
Resilience	Learns from failure	Demotivated by setbacks	Positive enables long-term rational planning
Example	District officer innovating DBT during pandemic	Officer citing “rules” to delay disaster relief	Negative erodes public trust

The same pandemic, the same resources – different mindsets produced different outcomes. The ideal civil servant operates with realistic optimism — clear-eyed about constraints, but genuinely committed to working within and around them for citizen benefit.

Case Study: The Contrast Between Two DMs — Same District, Different Mindsets

Scenario: Bundelkhand drought crisis — two consecutive District Magistrates, same district, same resources.

DM with Negative Mindset

Viewed drought as an administrative burden and a potential career risk. Focused on filing compliance reports. Minimal field visits. Blamed farmers for not adopting modern techniques. Water conservation initiatives stalled in paperwork.

DM with Positive Mindset

Viewed drought as an opportunity to build long-term water resilience. Organized jan sabhas with farmers. Crowdsourced traditional water harvesting knowledge. Mobilized MGNREGS funds creatively for check dam construction. Partnered with CSOs. Three-year drought resilience improved measurably.

Same laws, same resources, same district. Different attitudes produced radically different outcomes.

PYQ Connect: "A civil servant's mindset is as important as his competence. Discuss with examples."

Moral Integrity and Professional Efficiency – Interdependence and Balance

Moral Integrity refers to consistency between values and action — doing what is right regardless of personal cost, social pressure, or temptation. It is the ethical core of public service.

Professional Efficiency refers to the effective, timely, and resourceful delivery of public services — achieving maximum outcome with minimum wastage of public resources.

The apparent tension between these two — "being ethical slows things down" — is one of the most persistent misconceptions in governance discourse.

Efficiency without integrity breeds corruption; integrity without efficiency leads to inaction.

The Efficiency WITHOUT Integrity Path	The Integrity WITH Efficiency Path
Short-term speed, long-term collapse	Measured pace, durable outcomes
Quick decisions, frequent reversals	Deliberate decisions, fewer corrections

The Efficiency WITHOUT Integrity Path	The Integrity WITH Efficiency Path
Fast projects, high corruption leakages	Slower projects, funds reach beneficiaries
Good quarterly numbers, bad decadal outcomes	Modest quarterly numbers, transformative decadal outcomes
High implementation, low legitimacy	Moderate implementation, high trust and legitimacy

The Balance – Not Trade-off, but Synergy

How Integrity Enhances Efficiency

Trust → faster decision-making (less scrutiny)

No corruption → no mental energy wasted on hiding

Ethical reputation → attracts good team members

How Efficiency Enhances Integrity

Competence → respect → moral authority

Swift action → citizens see results → trust in the system

Effective delivery → cynicism reduces → honest officers stay motivated

Case Study – The Ideal Balance: E. Sreedharan

Integrity: Never took a bribe, never used official car for personal trips

Efficiency: Completed Delhi Metro before deadline, within budget

Synergy: His integrity made contractors honest (they knew he would check). His efficiency proved that honesty is not slow.

"Honesty is not a handicap; it is a competitive advantage." – E. Sreedharan

PYQ Connect: "Moral integrity and professional efficiency are not mutually exclusive. They reinforce each other." Discuss.

Role of Ethics and Values in Human Capital, Soft Power and Social Harmony

Ethics and values enhance

Human Capital: Build skilled, motivated workforce through trust and training (Mission Karmayogi).

Value	Impact on Human Capital	Example
Meritocracy	Best people rise, not just connected	UPSC selection system
Integrity	Trust in institutions → people invest in skills	Honest police → citizens pursue careers without fear
Accountability	Performance improves	Teacher attendance rises when monitored

Soft Power: Project India's cultural ethos of tolerance and compassion globally (e.g., Yoga, Gandhian values).

"India's soft power lies in its values, not its weapons." – Shashi Tharoor

Case Study – India's COVID Vaccine Diplomacy (Vaccine Maitri): India sent vaccines to 150+ countries. While this was diplomatic, it was also ethical – the value of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (world is one family). This enhanced India's soft power even among nations that are not traditional allies.

Social Harmony: Peaceful, cooperative coexistence among diverse groups — is not a natural default. It is actively constructed through shared values, fair institutions, and ethical governance.

When Ethics Breaks Down — Social Harmony Collapses: The 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the 2002 Gujarat violence, and numerous instances of custodial deaths demonstrate that when ethical governance fails — when the state abandons its value commitment to equal protection — social harmony shatters rapidly and the repair takes decades.

Case Study: Kerala's Education-Values Model

Kerala's remarkable human development outcomes — literacy above 96%, low infant mortality, high life expectancy — are not purely the product of technical educational investment. They reflect a sustained values commitment:

Social reform movements under Sree Narayana Guru emphasized dignity and equality across caste lines

Teacher training integrated ethical citizenship alongside subject knowledge

Community participation in school governance built collective ownership

Women's empowerment as a values priority created multiplier effects across all development indicators

Lesson: Ethics and values are not additions to human capital investment — they are the foundation on which all other investments become productive.

Alignment with All-round Development (Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas)

India's development philosophy under the current governance framework is articulated through four interconnected principles. Each has a distinct ethical and values dimension:

Principle	Literal Meaning	Ethical Core	Values Dimension
Sabka Saath	Together with all	Inclusion — no one left behind	Solidarity, brotherhood
Sabka Vikas	Development for all	Equitable growth, not just aggregate growth	Justice, fairness
Sabka Vishwas	Trust of all	Legitimacy through transparency and respect	Trust, honesty, pluralism
Sabka Prayas	Effort of all	Participatory governance, collective ownership	Democratic participation

Each pillar requires a specific attitudinal orientation from civil servants

Sabka Saath — Inclusive Attitude

An officer with a genuinely inclusive attitude does not design programs that look inclusive on paper but effectively exclude the most marginalized in practice. Inclusion requires the emotional labor of asking who is being left out — and going to find them.

Example: The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana succeeded beyond expectations not just because of the scheme design, but because district-level officers with genuinely inclusive attitudes conducted door-to-door camps in remote areas, not just bank branches.

Sabka Vikas — Development Justice Attitude

Development is not just aggregate GDP growth. An officer aligned with Sabka Vikas measures success by whether the tribal family in the most remote village has clean water, not by whether the state's industrial output has grown.

Example: Himachal Pradesh's HIMCARE scheme extended health insurance to those left out of Ayushman Bharat — demonstrating an attitudinal commitment to closing the last-mile gap.

Sabka Vishwas — Trust-Building Attitude

Trust is earned through consistent, transparent, and non-discriminatory action. An officer aligned with Sabka Vishwas engages with minority communities, tribal groups, and religious others with equal respect — building the state's legitimacy across all communities.

Example: The success of Jammu and Kashmir's Back to Village Programme — where officers directly engaged with panchayats — was fundamentally a trust-building exercise requiring genuine attitudinal openness.

Sabka Prayas — Participatory Attitude

Governance designed without community participation is governance designed for failure. An officer aligned with Sabka Prayas treats community knowledge, local innovation, and citizen energy as assets to be mobilized — not obstacles to be managed.

Example: The Jal Jeevan Mission's village water and sanitation committees mobilized community participation in ways that created ownership and sustainability beyond what the government alone could achieve.

Gap Between Rhetoric and Reality

Aspiration	Ground Reality Gap	Values Failure
Sabka Saath	Dalits and tribals still face discrimination in program delivery	Attitude of caste-based hierarchy persists in implementation
Sabka Vikas	Economic growth concentrated in urban, upper-caste, male populations	Equity value not operationalized in metrics or incentives
Sabka Vishwas	Minority communities report fear and lack of procedural fairness	Pluralism value not consistently upheld in institutional behavior
Sabka Prayas	Gram sabhas often bypassed; top-down scheme design persists	Participation treated as compliance exercise, not genuine partnership

The gap between stated values and lived governance reality is itself an ethical issue — it represents a failure of attitudinal alignment at the implementation level.

Quote: "Development that excludes the weakest is not development – it is exploitation." – Mahatma Gandhi

PYQ Connect: "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas is not a slogan but an ethical framework for governance." Discuss.

Refusal to be Compromised – Inspiring Examples

In public service, compromise takes many forms

Direct corruption: accepting bribes

Indirect corruption: turning a blind eye to corruption by colleagues

Political capitulation: implementing politically motivated but legally questionable orders

Institutional cowardice: staying silent when speaking up is required

Ethical erosion: small daily compromises that collectively hollow out integrity

Refusal to be compromised means actively resisting all these forms — at personal cost, consistently, and on principle.

T.N. Seshan (Chief Election Commissioner): Enforced Model Code of Conduct strictly, introduced voter ID and indelible ink, cleaning electoral malpractices despite political pressure. Showed moral courage and integrity.

"I do not need your love. I need your fear – fear of the law." – T.N. Seshan (to politicians)

E. Sreedharan ("Metro Man"): Delivered Delhi Metro on time and under budget by maintaining transparency, rejecting shortcuts and political interference. Exemplified professional efficiency with integrity.

Ashok Khemka (IAS): Cancelled illegal land deals involving powerful figures, facing over 50 transfers. Upheld objectivity and non-partisanship throughout his career.

"I know I will be transferred again. But my conscience will not allow me to do otherwise."— Ashok Khemka

Quote: "The time is always right to do what is right."— Martin Luther King Jr.

PYQ Connect: "Refusal to be compromised is the highest form of integrity. Illustrate with examples from public life."

Perception of "Good Life" – Narrow Perception vs. Holistic Well-being

In governance, how administrators perceive the "good life" directly shapes what they build, what they prioritize, and whom they serve.

Dimension	Narrow Perception (Materialist)	Holistic Well-being (Humanistic)
Goal	Accumulation of wealth, status, consumption	Physical, mental, social, spiritual health
Measure	GDP, income, car, house size	HDI, happiness index, life satisfaction
Lifestyle	Fast, competitive, urban-centric	Balanced, sustainable, community-connected
Role of civil servant	Facilitate economic growth	Enable flourishing of all citizens
Success indicators	Promotions, big bungalows	Citizen gratitude, reduced suffering

Ethical Problem with the Narrow Perception

Exclusion

Explanation: Only those who can compete get the "good life"

Example: A tribal family's well-being is ignored in GDP numbers

Unsustainable

Explanation: Endless consumption destroys the environment

Example: Climate change caused by rich nations' lifestyles

Loneliness

Explanation: Material wealth without relationships

Example: Urban mental health crisis

"The good life is not the one with more possessions, but the one with more compassion." – Dalai Lama

What Holistic Well-being Means for Governance

Physical health

Governance indicator: Access to clean water, sanitation, healthcare

Example: Jal Jeevan Mission

Mental health

Governance indicator: Reduced stress, suicide prevention

Example: National Mental Health Programme

Social health

Governance indicator: Trust, community bonds, low crime

Example: Social capital surveys

Spiritual health

Governance indicator: Meaning, purpose, not just consumption

Example: Yoga and meditation in schools

Case Study – Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH):

Bhutan measures not GDP but GNH – including psychological well-being, health, education, cultural diversity, ecological resilience. India's NITI Aayog now publishes a "Happiness Index" for states (based on surveys). The paradigm is shifting.

PYQ Connect: "What is the ethical duty of a civil servant towards citizens' well-being beyond material growth?"

Enclaves of Modernity at Cost of Majority – Ethical Critique

Enclaves of modernity refer to concentrated pockets of development — gleaming cities, world-class airports, high-tech corridors, luxury consumption centers — that coexist with vast surrounding regions of deprivation, exclusion, and neglect.

"A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."— Mahatma Gandhi

Enclave	Majority Cost	Example
Gated communities	Segregation, unequal access to public spaces	Gurgaon – world-class malls next to slums
Special Economic Zones (SEZs)	Farmers displaced, land acquired cheaply	Nandigram, Singur (West Bengal)
IT corridors	Migrant labour exploited, local culture eroded	Hyderabad'sHITEC City vs. Old City
Luxury airports	Land acquisition, noise pollution, displacement	Navi Mumbai airport – farmers protested for decades

Ethical Critique

Smart Cities Mission — Enclave Development in Practice

The Smart Cities Mission, launched in 2015, aimed to develop 100 smart cities with world-class urban infrastructure. The governance ethics critique:

Stated Goal	Ethical Reality
Smart infrastructure for citizens	Benefits concentrated in wealthy neighborhoods with "Area-Based Development" model
Technology-driven governance	Surveillance infrastructure deployed without privacy frameworks
Citizen participation	Consultation processes favored already-organized, educated urban elite
Replication effect on other cities	Resources and attention drawn from smaller cities and rural areas
Jobs and economic growth	Informal sector workers displaced from smart city zones

The critique is not that smart cities are wrong — it is that smart development designed for the few at the cost of the many is ethically indefensible.

Case Study – The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA):

The Sardar Sarovar Dam created enclaves of modernity (electricity, irrigation for Gujarat's industrial belt) at the cost of displacing tribals from Narmada valley. Medha Patkar's NBA fought for rehabilitation. The Supreme Court eventually ordered better compensation. The civil servants involved had to navigate between development projects and human rights – a classic ethical dilemma.

PYQ Connect: "Development that creates enclaves of prosperity while leaving the majority behind is ethically indefensible." Discuss.

Importance of Shared Values

Governance structures (laws, institutions, procedures) can function only when there is a shared value framework among citizens and public officials. Without it, even the best systems collapse.

Shared values are the invisible architecture that holds diverse, complex societies together — creating the sense of common purpose, mutual obligation, and legitimate authority that makes governance both possible and durable.

When Shared Values Break Down

Symptom	Governance Consequence
Loss of institutional trust	Citizens exit formal channels; shadow economies grow
Legitimacy crisis	Laws followed only when enforced; compliance collapses when surveillance is absent
Social fragmentation	Identity-based mobilization replaces civic mobilization
Elite capture	Institutions serve the powerful; majority loses voice
Corruption normalization	Ethical violation becomes the norm; integrity becomes the aberration
Democratic backsliding	Elections become rituals; substantive democracy erodes

Shared Values Strengthen Governance

Examples: Power Without Values Collapses

The Soviet Union (1991): The USSR was a nuclear superpower with the world's largest army, vast natural resources, and a massive state apparatus. It collapsed within months when the shared ideological values that held it together — however coercive — disintegrated. Power without legitimating values cannot sustain itself.

The Weimar Republic (1933): The Weimar Republic had a sophisticated democratic constitution — formally one of the most progressive of its era. But it lacked shared democratic values among the population, the judiciary, the military, and political parties. Without those values, the constitutional architecture was easily dismantled by a demagogue who understood how to exploit value vacuum.

The East India Company: The British East India Company accumulated extraordinary power over India — military, economic, administrative. But it governed through exploitation rather than shared values. The result was the 1857 uprising — the near-total collapse of a governance system that had no legitimacy beyond coercive power.

Civil Servant as Guardian of Shared Values

In the Indian constitutional design, civil servants are not merely implementers of government policy. They are guardians of constitutional values — even when governments of the day may not prioritize those values.

This creates the most demanding attitudinal requirement of public service: loyalty to the Constitution above loyalty to the government — a distinction that requires both intellectual clarity and moral courage.

PYQ Connect: "Laws alone cannot govern a society. Shared ethical values are essential." Discuss with reference to India.

PART 3

Emotional Intelligence

Ch 6: Emotional Intelligence

6 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence – The Game-Changer for Ethical Leadership in Civil Services

What Is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence (EI or EQ) is the capacity to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use emotions — both one's own and those of others — to guide thinking, behavior, and decisions.

A District Magistrate managing a communal riot cannot outsource her composure to a computer. A police officer confronting a grieving family cannot delegate his empathy to an algorithm. A civil servant navigating a crisis of conscience cannot find the answer in a policy manual.

"Anyone can become angry — that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way — that is not easy."— Aristotle

At its core, EI answers a fundamental question: Why do some people with average intelligence outperform brilliant people? Why do some administrators with ordinary qualifications build extraordinary institutions? The answer, consistently, is emotional intelligence.

Key Terminology

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Meaning: Capacity to reason about emotions and use them to enhance thought

Emotional Quotient (EQ)

Meaning: Measure of EI (analogous to IQ for intelligence)

Emotional literacy

Meaning: Ability to name and express emotions accurately

Emotional regulation

Meaning: Managing emotional reactions appropriately

Quote: "Emotional intelligence is the ability to make your emotions work for you instead of against you."

Case Study – A Low-EQ Disaster (The 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy):

The Union Carbide executives lacked empathy for victims, failed to communicate transparently, and showed no emotional regulation under crisis. The result: decades of litigation, unresolved trauma, and a permanent scar on corporate governance. A high-EQ response would have included immediate apology, compensation, and transparent rescue — reducing human suffering.

PYQ Connect: "What is emotional intelligence? Why is it essential for civil servants?"

Concepts and Components of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman's Model)

Goleman's framework includes five core components (often grouped into four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management):

Component	What It Means	Failure Example	Excellence Example
Self-Awareness	Knowing one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and impact on others	Officer unaware that personal caste bias distorts her decisions	DM recognizing her impatience in public hearings and consciously slowing down
Self-Regulation	Controlling disruptive emotions and impulses; thinking before acting	Senior officer threatening a whistleblower out of personal anxiety	Officer receiving harsh criticism from media without retaliating impulsively
Motivation	Being driven by internal values beyond money or status; resilience under setbacks	Officer losing commitment after first political obstacle	E. Sreedharan maintaining project integrity through years of political interference
Empathy	Feeling and understanding others' emotions; considering them in decisions	Policy designed without understanding community's cultural concerns	DM attending funeral of flood victim before discussing rehabilitation
Social Skills	Managing relationships; inspiring, influencing, building networks	Officer alienating all stakeholders through arrogance	Collector building consensus among politicians, NGOs, and communities for a dam project

"Emotional intelligence is the ability to be smart about feelings – your own and those of others." – Daniel Goleman

The Ability-Based Model

Branches of Emotional Intelligence

Perceiving emotion

Skill: Identify emotions in faces, voices, and situations

Example: A District Magistrate reads anxiety on a farmer's face and asks what is wrong

Using emotion to facilitate thought

Skill: Use emotions to prioritize thinking

Example: A sense of urgency (anxiety) helps focus on disaster preparedness

Understanding emotions

Skill: Understand complex emotions and transitions

Example: Recognizing that grief can turn into anger and addressing it appropriately

Managing emotions

Skill: Regulate emotions in self and others

Example: Calming a panicked crowd after a building collapse

Case Study – High EQ in Crisis (DM of Chennai during Cyclone Vardah, 2016):

The DM sensed fear among coastal villagers (perceiving). He channeled that fear into action – moving people to shelters (using emotion). He understood that after loss, people would be angry – and arranged counseling (understanding). He kept his own team motivated despite exhaustion (managing). The result: zero casualties.

PYQ Connect: "Explain the components of emotional intelligence with examples from public administration."

EQ vs IQ for Success

Aspect	IQ (Cognitive Intelligence)	EQ (Emotional Intelligence)	Impact on Civil Services
Focus	Logical reasoning, analytical skills	Emotion recognition, management & interpersonal skills	EQ helps in stakeholder management & ethical decisions
Predicts	Academic & technical success	Leadership, resilience, happiness, long-term success	EQ crucial for crisis handling & team motivation
Percentage Contribution (Goleman)	~20% to life success	~80% to life & leadership success	Positive officers achieve more with limited resources
Example	Designing a perfect policy on paper	Persuading resistant villagers to adopt the policy	EQ turns policy into effective governance

Goleman's landmark study of 500 executives at global corporations found that EQ was twice as important as technical skills and IQ in predicting outstanding performance. At the senior leadership level, EQ accounted for up to 90% of the difference between average and star performers.

EQ and IQ are complementary, not competing. The ideal civil servant possesses a sufficiently high IQ to master domain knowledge, and sufficiently high EQ to translate that knowledge into genuinely humane, effective governance. The question is not which is more important in the abstract — it is which is most commonly the binding constraint on governance quality. And the answer to that, consistently, is EQ.

Quote: "IQ is the engine; EQ is the steering wheel. A powerful engine without steering will crash."

Case Study: A highly intelligent (high IQ) officer drafts flawless rules but fails due to poor public communication (low EQ). A balanced officer with moderate IQ but high EQ succeeds through empathy and persuasion.

PYQ Connect: "Which is more important for a civil servant – IQ or EQ? Justify your answer with examples."

Social Intelligence

Social Intelligence is the subset of EQ dealing with navigating social situations, reading non-verbal cues, building networks, and influencing positively. It overlaps with empathy and social skills. It is the applied, interpersonal dimension of emotional intelligence, operating not just between two people but within groups, communities, and institutions.

Aspect	EQ	Social Intelligence
Focus	Intra-personal (self) + inter-personal (others)	Primarily inter-personal (others, groups, social dynamics)
Key skill	Empathy, self-regulation	Social awareness, influence, collaboration
Output	Personal emotional health	Effective teamwork, networking, consensus-building

Key Components of Social Intelligence

Case Study: Nelson Mandela — Social Intelligence as Governance

Context: Post-apartheid South Africa in 1994 faced a genuine risk of civil war. Mandela's election created hope — but also fear among White South Africans about retribution.

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."— Nelson Mandela

Result: The "Mandela Miracle" — peaceful transition, no civil war, global moral authority. Created not by IQ or military power, but by extraordinary social intelligence applied with moral consistency.

Social Intelligence in Indian Administration

Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931): Gandhi negotiated with Lord Irwin not through legal argumentation alone but through authentic moral presence and emotional attunement — creating political agreement through social intelligence that legal processes had failed to generate.

Kerala's Janamaithri Suraksha Project: Kerala Police's community policing initiative succeeded because officers were trained to visit homes, build personal relationships, and attend community events — developing genuine social intelligence. Crime rates dropped significantly in pilot areas because police understood community dynamics, not just crime statistics.

Nagaland Peace Process: Decades of insurgency in Nagaland began to yield to dialogue when officers and interlocutors applied genuine social intelligence — understanding the emotional and historical texture of Naga identity claims, not just the legal and constitutional dimensions.

PYQ Connect: "How does social intelligence differ from emotional intelligence? Why is it critical for district administration?"

Role of EQ in Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

EQ prevents knee-jerk reactions and enables balanced judgement. Ethical dilemmas are not logic problems with correct solutions — they are situations where genuinely valid moral principles conflict, where all available options involve some harm, and where the humanity of multiple affected parties must be weighed simultaneously.

Pure logical analysis fails in ethical dilemmas for three reasons

It cannot assign relative weights to incommensurable values such as loyalty versus justice, or individual rights versus collective welfare

It processes information without feeling the weight of human consequences

It is vulnerable to motivated reasoning — using logic to justify what emotion has already decided

EQ provides what pure logic cannot: the emotional attunement to all affected parties, the internal stability to deliberate without panic, and the moral motivation to choose what is right over what is convenient.

Role of EQ

Step	EQ Component	Action
Recognise dilemma	Self-awareness	I feel torn. That means a value conflict exists.
Understand stakes for others	Empathy	How will the poorest be affected?
Manage own fear/anxiety	Self-regulation	Breathe, pause, do not rush to easy way out
Generate solutions	Motivation	Intrinsic drive to find ethical path, not just expedient
Implement with compassion	Social skills	Communicate decision respectfully, offer support

Example – IAS Officer Roopa Moudgil (Karnataka)

She exposed prison corruption (illegal phone usage, VIP treatment). She faced immense pressure to retract. Her EQ helped her:

Self-awareness: "I am scared, but my conscience is clear."

Self-regulation: She did not lash out on social media.

Empathy: She understood that whistleblowing would harm her career.

Motivation: She persisted because prison reform mattered.

"Ethical dilemmas are not just puzzles for the intellect. They are storms for the emotions. EQ is the umbrella."

PYQ Connect: "How can emotional intelligence help a civil servant resolve ethical dilemmas?"

Reliability in Ethical Decision-making – How EQ Enhances Reliability

In governance, reliability is not simply punctuality or administrative regularity. It is the deeper quality of ethical consistency — the assurance that an administrator will apply the same principles, with the same integrity, regardless of:

Who is watching and who is not

Whether the decision serves powerful or powerless stakeholders

Whether personal cost is high or low

Whether political pressure pushes in a different direction

This deeper reliability is what creates institutional trust — and institutional trust is what makes governance legitimate.

How EQ Makes Decisions More Reliable

Mechanism	Explanation
Consistent self-checking	High self-awareness means constant monitoring of biases
Emotional memory	Recalling past mistakes with emotional weight prevents repetition
Long-term perspective	Motivation beyond immediate reward favours ethical stability
Social feedback	Empathy allows hearing criticism without defensiveness – leads to course correction

Reliability Trap: High EQ Without Moral Backbone

An important caution: people-pleasers often display high social skills — they are warm, engaging, and apparently responsive. But their reliability is conditional — they are reliably aligned with whoever holds power at any moment.

True ethical reliability requires: Strong self-regulation combined with intrinsically held moral values — not the performance of reliability for an appreciative audience.

Quote: "Reliability is not about being perfect. It is about being predictable in your commitment to values."

Role in Crisis of Conscience – Managing Emotional Turmoil

A crisis of conscience occurs when a civil servant knows the right thing to do but faces severe personal or professional consequences for doing it. It is an emotional and moral storm. It is the experience of being pulled apart by genuine moral obligations that cannot both be fully honored. The anguish is not irrational — it is the appropriate human response to a genuine moral predicament.

Common Forms of Conscience Crisis in Governance

Type	Example
Orders vs. Ethics	Instruction to approve a project known to cause environmental damage
Loyalty vs. Integrity	Discovering that a mentor or respected colleague is corrupt
Law vs. Justice	Enforcing a legally valid but morally troubling order against a vulnerable community
Majority vs. Minority	Policy serving the many that demonstrably harms a few who have no political voice
Personal safety vs. Professional duty	Speaking truth at personal cost in a politically hostile environment

Type	Example
Institutional loyalty vs. Whistleblowing	Protecting the institution's reputation vs. exposing its failures

EQ as the Navigation Tool: Four-Phase Model

Recognition (Self-Awareness)

Name what is happening: "I am experiencing moral distress. This is a crisis of conscience. The turmoil I feel is appropriate — it reflects genuine value conflict, not personal weakness."

Self-awareness at this phase prevents two common maladaptive responses: suppression, which leads to moral numbing over time, and dramatization, which leads to paralysis and impulsive action.

Stabilization (Self-Regulation)

Create space between the discovery of the dilemma and any response to it. The amygdala's demand for immediate resolution is not to be trusted. Activate the prefrontal cortex: breathe, reflect, write, consult a trusted colleague.

Navigation (Empathy and Motivation)

With emotional stabilization achieved, return to the substantive question: Who is affected? What are their genuine needs? What do my core values require — not my situational preferences, but my deepest commitments?

Action and Integration (Social Skills and Learning)

Act with as much grace as possible given the constraints. Communicate decisions transparently. Accept consequences. Then, critically, integrate the experience: what did this crisis reveal about the system, about others, and about oneself?

Case Study – The DM Who Refused:

A district magistrate was ordered to transfer a honest police officer who had arrested a ruling party leader's relative. The DM knew it was wrong.

Turmoil: Sleepless nights, fear of transfer, wife worried.

EQ steps: He wrote a dissent note (self-awareness of duty). He calmed himself by meditating (self-regulation). He recalled his oath (motivation). He called his father (empathy for self).

Outcome: He refused to sign the order. He was transferred. But later the government fell, and the new government reinstated him with an award. His conscience was clean.

PYQ Connect: "What is a crisis of conscience? How can emotional intelligence help a civil servant navigate it?"

Utilities and Application of Emotional Intelligence in Administration and Governance

Citizen-Centric Service Delivery: Empathy, self-regulation, and social skills → understanding citizen pain, staying calm with complaints, and persuading adoption of schemes (e.g., Swachh Bharat Mission).

Team Management & Motivation: Self-awareness, empathy, and motivation → better delegation, supporting staff in distress, and inspiring teams during demanding situations.

Conflict Resolution: Social skills, empathy, and self-regulation → mediating disputes, hearing all sides, and de-escalating tense situations calmly.

Crisis Management: Perceiving, using, and managing emotions → identifying panic, channeling fear into action, and maintaining composure in emergencies.

Policy Formulation & Negotiation: Empathy and social skills → designing inclusive policies and building consensus across departments.

Ethical Leadership & Culture Change: Self-regulation, motivation, and empathy → modeling integrity, promoting values, and protecting whistleblowers.

Case Study – EQ in Action: The 2015 Chennai Floods (IAS Officer K. Phanindra Reddy) As Additional Chief Secretary, he coordinated rescue, relief, and rehabilitation.

Empathy: He visited flooded slums in a boat, not from an office.

Self-regulation: When criticised for slow response, he did not lash out at media.

Social skills: He got Navy, NDRF, volunteers, and private companies to work together.

Result: Thousands saved, trust restored.

PYQ Connect: "How can emotional intelligence be used to improve public service delivery? Illustrate with examples."

Issues and Challenges with Emotional Intelligence

Measurement Problems: Self-report bias, cultural limitations, and misuse → people overestimate EQ, Western models may not fully fit Indian contexts, and high EQ can be used manipulatively ("dark EI").

Dark Side of EI: Emotional skills can be weaponized → manipulation (e.g., charm for bribes), fake empathy to gain trust, and controlling others' emotions for exploitation.

Overemphasis on Emotion: Excess emotion can distort judgment → empathy paralysis, avoiding tough but necessary decisions, and emotional burnout without self-care.

Selection Issues (Low EQ): Systems like Union Public Service Commission focus more on cognitive ability → emotional competence remains under-tested and under-trained.

Training & Institutional Gaps: Lack of early-career EQ training and bureaucratic culture ("be tough") → officers learn EI through trial and error, sometimes too late.

Cultural & Contextual Nuances: Emotional expression varies across contexts → display rules differ, and high power distance can hide true emotions, limiting effective empathy.

The Hitler Problem

Adolf Hitler possessed several characteristics associated with emotional intelligence: extraordinary ability to read crowd emotions and mirror them back; deep understanding of German post-World War I trauma and how to channel it; intense personal loyalty generated through emotional attunement; and masterful use of voice, timing, and physical presence.

None of this was emotional intelligence. It was emotional manipulation — the precise opposite of EI in its ethical dimension.

Genuine Emotional Intelligence, properly understood, requires empathy that extends to all human beings — not just one's in-group. It requires motivation anchored in values that recognize universal human dignity. Hitler's empathy was tribe-selective. His motivation was destructive. His social skills served domination, not flourishing.

The lesson for governance: EQ metrics without ethical grounding and accountability mechanisms can select for sophisticated manipulators rather than genuine servant-leaders. EI must always be evaluated in conjunction with the values it serves.

Compassion Fatigue: The Silent Crisis

Compassion fatigue — the gradual emotional exhaustion of those who regularly engage empathetically with others' suffering — is the occupational hazard of high-EI public service.

Sector	Manifestation
Police officers	Emotional numbing after repeated exposure to crime and violence
Health administrators	Post-COVID burnout; inability to maintain patient empathy
Disaster managers	PTSD symptoms after major disasters
Child welfare officers	Emotional exhaustion from repeated child abuse case exposure

Sector	Manifestation
Social workers	Progressive detachment from beneficiaries after years of exposure

Systemic responses required

Mandatory psychological support for high-stress postings

Rotation policies that prevent indefinite assignment to traumatic work

Peer support networks within departments

Formal recognition that replenishing emotional resources is a professional responsibility, not a personal indulgence

Case Study – When High EQ Failed:

A DM tried to empathise with a violent mob by listening patiently. The mob interpreted his calm as weakness and became more aggressive. He had to call police. The lesson: EQ must be balanced with authority when needed.

PYQ Connect: "What are the limitations of emotional intelligence in administrative decision-making?"

Conclusion and Way Forward

Emotional Intelligence is not a soft skill — it is the essential multiplier that makes aptitude and values effective in real governance. EQ shapes character, happiness, and lifelong achievements far more than pure IQ. Civil servants with high EQ resolve ethical dilemmas reliably, manage crises of conscience wisely, and deliver inclusive governance aligned with "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas".

"We, the People of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity..."— Preamble to the Constitution of India

These words are a promise. Their fulfillment depends on administrators who feel the weight of the word "Justice," who experience the meaning of "Dignity," who are moved by the aspiration of "Fraternity."

Emotional Intelligence is what makes those words real in the daily encounter between a citizen and the state.

PART 4

Contributions of Moral Thinkers and Philosophers

Ch 7: Moral Thinkers and Philosophers from India and the World

7 Moral Thinkers and Philosophers from India and the World

Moral Thinkers and Philosophers from India and the World

Moral thinkers and philosophers provide the intellectual and ethical foundation for civil services. Their ideas shape normative ethics, help resolve dilemmas, and inspire administrators to uphold integrity, justice, and compassion. For a civil servant, knowing them is not decoration; it is the foundation of ethical reasoning.

Introduction

Philosophy literally means “love of wisdom.” Moral thinkers offer frameworks for right conduct (normative ethics), character building (virtue ethics), duty (deontology), and consequences (utilitarianism). Western thinkers emphasise reason and rights; Indian thinkers stress dharma, karma, and holistic well-being. Their teachings bridge private ethics and public duty, helping civil servants navigate conflicts like means vs ends or private vs public interest.

"Philosophy is not a luxury for the civil servant. It is the compass when maps fail."

The study of moral philosophy serves the civil servant in three concrete ways:

Function	How It Helps
Provides Decision Frameworks	When facing an ethical dilemma, philosophical frameworks — consequentialist, deontological, virtue-based — provide structured ways to analyze competing claims
Reveals Hidden Assumptions	Philosophical literacy helps administrators identify the unstated value assumptions embedded in policies, laws, and institutional practices
Builds Moral Resilience	Deep engagement with moral thought creates an inner conviction that sustains integrity under pressure — when rules alone provide insufficient guidance

Western Philosophers

Socrates (469–399 BCE) – The Examined Life

Socrates did not write; he questioned. The Socratic Method — systematic questioning to expose contradictions in moral beliefs.

Know thyself

Meaning: Self-awareness is the beginning of wisdom

Relevance: Regular self-reflection on biases and motives

Virtue is knowledge

Meaning: Wrongdoing is ignorance; educate, don't just punish

Relevance: Emphasize training and counseling before punitive action

Socratic method

Meaning: Questioning assumptions through dialogue

Relevance: Encourage consultative decision-making, not just top-down orders

Death over dishonour

Meaning: Upheld principles even at the cost of life

Relevance: Refusing a bribe even if it harms one's career

"The unexamined life is not worth living." – Socrates

Application: Socrates exemplifies the civil servant who refuses to abandon ethical standards despite institutional pressure. His death for refusing to compromise his intellectual integrity mirrors the moral dilemma of officers like Ashok Khemka facing systematic retaliation for honesty.

Plato (427–347 BCE) – The Philosopher King

Philosopher King

Meaning: Only the wise should rule, not the powerful

Relevance: Civil servants (experts) should advise, not just obey politicians

Justice as harmony

Meaning: Each part (ruler, soldier, worker) performs its role

Relevance: Departments working in coordination toward a common goal

Theory of Forms

Meaning: The world of ideas is more real than the material world

Relevance: Values like justice and truth are substantive, not merely symbolic

"Justice is having and doing what is one's own."— Plato

Critical Perspective: Plato's philosopher-king concept is elitist and anti-democratic — an important limitation. His ideal of wisdom-guided governance must be balanced with democratic accountability and citizens' rights.

Aristotle (384–322 BCE) – Virtue Ethics

Aristotle developed Virtue Ethics — the most influential alternative to rule-based and consequence-based ethical frameworks. Ethics, for Aristotle, is not about following rules or maximizing outcomes — it is about developing the character that naturally produces right action.

Golden Mean

Meaning: Virtue lies between extremes

Relevance: Courage lies between cowardice and recklessness

Eudaimonia

Meaning: Flourishing through virtuous living

Relevance: Success is not just promotions, but a life well-lived

Practical wisdom (Phronesis)

Meaning: Knowing what to do in specific situations

Relevance: Using discretion in applying rules

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit."— Aristotle

Application: Aristotle's virtue ethics directly answers the question: "What kind of person should a civil servant be?" Not merely someone who follows rules, but someone who has cultivated the character — the virtues — from which right action flows naturally.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) – Duty and the Categorical Imperative

Kant's deontological ethics holds that morality consists of absolute duties — not consequences, not outcomes, but the inherent rightness or wrongness of actions themselves.

Categorical Imperative

Meaning: Act only according to rules that could be universal laws

Relevance: "Would I want every officer to accept bribes?"

Humans as ends, not means

Meaning: Never treat people merely as tools for your goals

Relevance: Using citizens for political show is unethical

Good will

Meaning: Only actions done from duty (not inclination) have moral worth

Relevance: Doing the right thing because it is right, not for reward

Critical Strength: Kant protects minority rights absolutely — no utilitarian calculation can override fundamental human dignity.

Critical Weakness: Absolute rules can produce harsh outcomes. Kant would argue you must tell a murderer where your friend is hiding, because lying is absolutely wrong — an outcome most moral intuitions reject.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) — Utilitarianism

Bentham founded classical utilitarianism — the moral theory that the right action is the one that produces the greatest total happiness (utility) for the greatest number of people.

Utilitarian Ideas in Governance

Principle of Utility

Meaning: Maximize overall happiness and minimize suffering

Governance application: Cost-benefit analysis and welfare economics in policymaking

Hedonic Calculus

Meaning: Evaluating pleasure by intensity, duration, certainty, and extent

Governance application: Quantitative policy evaluation and impact assessment frameworks

Panopticon

Meaning: Surveillance-based system ensuring compliance

Governance application: Modern tools like CCTV and digital monitoring, along with ethical concerns

Felicific Calculus

Meaning: Everyone's interests count equally

Governance application: Democratic impartiality and equitable distribution of benefits

Weakness: Pure Benthamite utilitarianism can justify harm to minorities if it maximizes majority happiness — the fundamental flaw. Slavery could theoretically be justified if it maximized aggregate utility — which reveals the theory's deep limitation.

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) — Refined Utilitarianism and Liberty

Mill refined Bentham's utilitarianism, distinguishing between higher and lower pleasures, and developed the most influential liberal theory of individual liberty.

Higher and Lower Pleasures

Meaning: Intellectual and moral pleasures are superior to purely physical ones

Governance application: Prioritizing education, culture, and civic participation

Harm Principle

Meaning: Liberty can be restricted only to prevent harm to others

Governance application: Basis for limits on state power and protection of freedoms (speech, conscience, association)

Utilitarianism Refined

Meaning: Long-term, higher-quality happiness outweighs short-term pleasure

Governance application: Focus on sustainable human development over short-term gains

Representative Government

Meaning: Democracy develops citizens' moral capacities

Governance application: Participation seen as moral education, not just a political process

Women's Rights

Meaning: Strong philosophical defense of gender equality

Governance application: Gender justice as a core ethical principle, not merely policy choice

Case Study – COVID Lockdown (Utilitarian Dilemma): Lockdown benefited majority (lives saved) but harmed daily-wage workers. A pure utilitarian would weigh numbers; a Kantian would say workers cannot be used as mere means.

Social Contract Thinkers

Thomas Hobbes: Hobbes argued that without a powerful sovereign authority, human life degenerates into a "war of all against all."

View of state of nature: Nasty, brutish, short

Central idea: Need for an absolute sovereign

Relevance: Justification for strong state authority

Critical Note: Hobbes's absolute sovereign is philosophically dangerous — it justifies authoritarianism. His value lies in explaining the necessity of state authority, not in endorsing its unlimited exercise.

John Locke: Locke argued that humans possess natural rights — life, liberty, and property — that predate and limit government. The government derives authority from the consent of the governed and loses legitimacy when it violates natural rights.

View of state of nature: Generally peaceable but inconvenient

Central idea: Limited government and natural rights (life, liberty, property)

Relevance: Right to resist or overthrow tyranny

Connection: The Indian Constitution's Fundamental Rights (Part III) are deeply Lockean in their philosophical foundation — natural rights translated into constitutional guarantees.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Rousseau argued that civilization corrupts natural human goodness. The social contract should express the "General Will" — the common good of all citizens, not just the sum of individual preferences.

View of state of nature: Humans as "noble savages"

Central idea: General will (collective good above individual interest)

Relevance: Participatory democracy and focus on common good

John Rawls – Justice as Fairness

His Theory of Justice as Fairness provides a rigorous philosophical foundation for liberal democratic welfare states. Rawls asks: What principles of justice would rational people choose if they did not know their own position in society — their wealth, caste, religion, gender, or abilities? This is the Original Position with a Veil of Ignorance.

Veil of Ignorance

Meaning: Design society without knowing your own position in it

Relevance: Ensures policies are fair to the least advantaged

Difference Principle

Meaning: Inequalities are justified only if they benefit the worst-off

Relevance: Basis for measures like reservation and progressive taxation

Original Position

Meaning: Hypothetical situation of equal bargaining power

Relevance: Promotes impartial and unbiased decision-making

Application: The Difference Principle directly justifies affirmative action for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes — inequalities in opportunity are only justified if they benefit the historically disadvantaged. Rawls provides the philosophical foundation for India's reservations policy.

Case Study – Veil of Ignorance in Policy: Designing a land acquisition policy. If you didn't know whether you were a farmer or an industrialist, what would you prefer? That is Rawls's test.

Ancient Indian Ethics

The Purusharthas constitute the ancient Indian framework for human flourishing — with profound implications for governance philosophy:

Dharma is the most complex and important concept in Indian ethical thought. It simultaneously means righteousness, duty, cosmic order, social norm, and the inherent nature of things.

"Dharmo rakshati rakshitah — Dharma protects those who protect it." — Mahabharata

Karma means action and its consequences. The doctrine holds that every action produces corresponding results — creating a moral universe of accountability. Actions have consequences – morally, not just physically. Every corrupt act will bear fruit.

Governance Dimensions of Karma

Actions have consequences whether or not they are immediately visible — a powerful argument for long-term, sustainable governance over short-term, visible action

The civil servant is accountable not just to supervisors but to the moral law of consequences

Nishkama karma — action without attachment to fruits — is the Bhagavad Gita's prescription for public service: do your duty without attachment to personal reward or recognition

Rina (Debts): Debts to gods, sages, ancestors, humanity.

Application: The concept of Rina establishes that human beings exist within webs of obligation — not just as autonomous rights-bearing individuals. This relational ethics resonates with a governance philosophy that emphasizes civic duty, intergenerational responsibility, and the obligations of the privileged to the community.

Thiruvalluvar – Tirukkural

Virtue (Aram)

Meaning: Ethics of individual and family life

Relevance: Truthfulness, gratitude, hospitality, non-violence

Wealth (Porul)

Meaning: Statecraft and administration

Relevance: Justice, fairness, and avoiding oppression

Love (Inbam)

Meaning: Pre-marital and conjugal love

Relevance: Respect and fidelity

Selected Couplets (Application)

"The mark of a wise person is to understand what is right and act accordingly" → Policy must be implemented, not just designed

"The greatest wealth is absence of desire for others' possessions" → Integrity and anti-corruption

"Doing good even to enemies endures like a precious stone" → Compassion without vindictiveness

Relevance: Thiruvalluvar's ethics are strikingly contemporary. His rejection of caste-based ethics — virtue is defined by character, not birth — anticipates Ambedkar. His emphasis on education as liberation anticipates Savitribai Phule. His vision of a ruler as servant of the people anticipates modern democratic governance theory.

Quote: "Whatever living beings there may be, the truly wise one is he who knows and practices virtue."— Thiruvalluvar

Mahavira (599–527 BCE) – Jain Ethics

Ahimsa (Non-violence)

Meaning: Avoid harm in thought, word, and deed

Relevance: Compassionate policies (e.g., animal welfare, humane treatment of prisoners)

Anekantavada (Many-sidedness)

Meaning: Truth has multiple perspectives; no single view is absolute

Relevance: Tolerance, stakeholder consultation, and avoiding rigid thinking

Aparigraha (Non-attachment)

Meaning: Do not accumulate beyond need

Relevance: Promotes simple living, anti-consumerism, and discourages hoarding of power or wealth

Application: Anekantavada is the philosophical foundation for inclusive decision-making, multi-stakeholder consultation, and the rejection of dogmatic certainty in governance — all crucial for complex, diverse societies.

Case Study – Anekantavada in Governance: A land dispute has the landless labourer's perspective, the farmer's, the developer's. No single truth. The wise officer listens to all.

Quote: "One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence." – Mahavira

Guru Nanak (1469–1539) – Sikh Ethics

Naam Japo

Meaning: Meditate on God's name

Relevance: Self-reflection and mental discipline

Kirat Karo

Meaning: Earn an honest livelihood

Relevance: Rejects corruption and exploitation

Vand Chakko

Meaning: Share what you earn with others

Relevance: Foundation for welfare-oriented governance and compassion for the poor

Sarbat da Bhala

Meaning: Welfare of all

Relevance: Promotes universal brotherhood and inclusive, secular outlook

Governance Lessons from Langar

Universal basic services regardless of identity — the philosophical foundation of welfare state

Dignity in receiving — the design deliberately makes beneficiaries and servers indistinguishable

Community as the unit of moral concern — not just the individual

Service as spiritual practice — the volunteers who cook and serve exemplify Vand Chakko

Case Study – Vand Chakko in Governance: The mid-day meal scheme, PDS, public distribution – these are institutionalised Vand Chakko.

Quote: "He who has no faith in himself can have no faith in God." – Guru Nanak

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) – Service as Worship

Man-making education

Meaning: Education builds character, not just degrees

Relevance: Holistic development reflected in policies like National Education Policy 2020

Application: Vivekananda's educational philosophy anticipates the National Education Policy 2020's emphasis on holistic development, Indian knowledge systems, and character formation alongside academic achievement.

Service as worship

Meaning: Serving the poor is equivalent to worship

Relevance: Civil service seen as sadhana (spiritual discipline)

Application: The Swachh Bharat Mission's emphasis on dignity for sanitation workers; MGNREGS as recognition of labor as sacred; midday meal schemes as nourishment of the divine in children — all resonate with Daridra Narayan ethics.

Fearlessness

Meaning: Courage to face even the powerful without fear

Relevance: Moral courage to resist injustice and wrongdoing

Application: The fearlessness to speak truth to power; to file the dissent note; to refuse the corrupt order — these require the deep inner fearlessness Vivekananda articulated. T.N. Seshan, E. Sreedharan, Durga Shakti Nagpal — all exemplify Vivekananda's abhaya in administrative life.

Universal tolerance

Meaning: All religions lead to the same truth

Relevance: Basis for secularism and interfaith harmony

Application: Constitutional secularism is not merely legal neutrality — it is, in Vivekananda's framework, the recognition that all genuine spiritual paths lead to the same truth. This philosophical foundation for secularism is far more robust than mere legal tolerance.

Interpretation in Present Context: A civil servant who sees his work as seva (service), not just a job, embodies Vivekananda. He transfers not for comfort, but to serve where needed. He is fearless in speaking truth to power.

PYQ Connect: "Vivekananda's message of fearlessness is the greatest need of civil servants today." Discuss.

Quote: "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached." — Swami Vivekananda

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) – The Moral Architect of Modern India

Truth (Satya) "There is no God higher than Truth."

Meaning: Truth is God; it is experimental and lived, not abstract

Relevance: Basis for evidence-based policy and honest reporting

Non-violence (Ahimsa)

Gandhi expanded ahimsa beyond Jain tradition into a comprehensive political and social philosophy.

Meaning: Active love and resistance, not passive submission

Relevance: Conflict resolution through non-vindictive approaches

Sarvodaya

Meaning: Welfare of all, not just the majority

Relevance: Inclusive development and "Sabka Saath" governance

Application: Antodaya — serving the last person in the queue — is the administrative expression of Sarvodaya. Policies evaluated not by aggregate statistics but by their impact on the most marginalized.

Trusteeship

Meaning: Wealth is held in trust for society

Relevance: Ethical capitalism and CSR-oriented governance

Seven Sins (Self-audit framework for civil servants)

Politics without Principles

Manifestation: Electoral corruption; policy-making without a moral compass

Wealth without Work

Manifestation: Crony capitalism; rent-seeking through political connections

Pleasure without Conscience

Manifestation: Governance serving elite comfort while ignoring public suffering

Knowledge without Character

Manifestation: Technically competent but ethically hollow administration

Commerce without Morality

Manifestation: Business practices lacking environmental and social accountability

Science without Humanity

Manifestation: Technology developed without human impact assessment

Worship without Sacrifice

Manifestation: Ritualistic commitment without genuine public service orientation

"A civil servant's oath must be to Gandhi's seven sins – not just to the Constitution."

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

Meaning: Personal conduct must reflect desired societal change

Relevance: Ethical leadership through example-setting

Case Study – Seven Sins as Officer's Checklist

Politics without principle → Am I following rules only to avoid trouble, or because they are right?

Wealth without work → Do I accept bribes or unearned benefits?

Pleasure without conscience → Do I misuse official resources for personal comfort?

PYQ Connect: "Corruption is the manifestation of the failure of core values.' Discuss with reference to Gandhi's Seven Social Sins."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875–1950) – Iron Man of Integrity

National integration

Meaning: Unity above all

Relevance: Civil servants must avoid regional or communal bias

Administrative integrity

Meaning: No compromise on honesty

Relevance: Patel's strict action against corrupt officers as a model of clean governance

Civil service reforms

Meaning: Creation of All India Services as the “steel frame” of India

Relevance: Protecting bureaucracy from excessive political interference while ensuring accountability

His vision for the IAS remains the ethical standard against which actual administrative culture must be measured

Sardar Patel's Expectation → Modern Relevance

Political neutrality — serve the Constitution, not the party in power

Relevance: Clear separation between government (political executive) and governance (permanent executive)

Integrity as non-negotiable

Relevance: Zero tolerance for corruption in public administration

Meritocratic selection and advancement

Relevance: Transparent transfer and posting policies; performance-based career progression

“Steel frame” — resilient under pressure

Relevance: Moral courage and institutional resilience against political interference

Interpretation: Patel told ICS officers: "You are servants of the nation, not masters." He dismissed an ICS officer for corruption – a precedent that all civil servants must remember.

Quote: "Every citizen of India must remember that he is an Indian and he has every right in this country but with certain duties."— Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

A. P. J. Abdul Kalam (1931–2015) – The People’s President

Vision 2020

Meaning: Transform India into a developed nation

Relevance: Long-term planning and mission-mode governance

Ignited Minds

Meaning: Youth are the nation’s real strength

Relevance: Mentoring young officers and engaging students in nation-building

Values: humility, hard work, patriotism

Meaning: Simplicity and dedication despite holding high office

Relevance: Ethical leadership rooted in modesty and service orientation

Role of father, mother, teacher

Meaning: First three gurus shaping character and values

Relevance: Respect, gratitude, and importance of foundational guidance

Personal Values as Governance Model

Returned ₹1 lakh from Rashtrapati Bhavan to treasury after personal phone calls

Lesson: Public resources are public trust; no personal use of state funds

Visited poorest districts as President

Lesson: Governance must reach people directly, not expect people to approach institutions

Slept only 4 hours; worked the rest

Lesson: Public service as vocation, not just employment

Simplified Rashtrapati Bhavan protocol

Lesson: Power does not require pageantry; accessibility is a governance value

Case Study – Kalam's Visit to a Remote School: He spent hours with tribal children, asking them about their dreams. A civil servant can learn: your most important stakeholders are the weakest.

Quote: "Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts, thoughts result in action." – A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Savitribai Phule (1831–1897) – India's First Woman Teacher

Education for all

Meaning: Education for girls, Dalits, and Shudras; opened schools for them

Relevance: Inclusive education and initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

Caste equality

Meaning: Rejection of caste-based discrimination and Brahminical patriarchy

Relevance: Ensuring no caste bias in administration and service delivery

Reformist courage

Meaning: Continued work despite social abuse and hostility

Relevance: Moral courage to uphold justice despite social resistance

Quote: "Awake, arise, and educate – break the chains of caste and custom." – Savitribai Phule

Dalai Lama (b. 1935) – Compassion in Action

Compassion

Meaning: Rational and universal concern for all beings, not just emotion

Relevance: Policies for vulnerable groups and humane governance

Non-violence

Meaning: Active refusal to cause harm, not passive acceptance

Relevance: Peaceful conflict resolution and handling protests

Middle Path

Meaning: Avoiding extremes in thought and action

Relevance: Balancing development needs with environmental and social concerns

Tibetan Buddhist ethics

Meaning: Interdependence, karma, and mindfulness in action

Relevance: Self-awareness and consideration of long-term consequences in policymaking

Quote: "My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness."— The Dalai Lama

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) – Humanism and Universal Brotherhood

Humanism

Meaning: Faith in humanity rather than rigid dogma

Relevance: Citizen-centric and empathetic administration

Universal brotherhood

Meaning: Vision of a world “where the mind is without fear”

Relevance: Promotes secularism and rejection of xenophobia

Education for moral development

Tagore's Visva-Bharati (founded 1921) was a living experiment in his educational philosophy

Learning in nature — classrooms under trees

Arts and sciences integrated — no false hierarchy

Global and Indian knowledge in dialogue — not colonial subordination

Character development through community life — not examination performance

Application: Tagore's educational philosophy directly informs the National Education Policy 2020's vision of holistic, multidisciplinary education rooted in Indian knowledge traditions while engaging global learning.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) – Education as Moral Development

Education

Meaning: Not mere information, but transformation of character

Relevance: Value-based education

"The end product of education should be a free creative man, who can battle against historical circumstances and adversities of nature."

Secularism

Meaning: Not anti-religious, but equal respect for all faiths

Relevance: Constitutional secularism and neutrality of the state

Spiritual democracy

Meaning: Inner moral freedom complements political freedom

Relevance: Ethical governance rooted in self-discipline and integrity

Quote: "Teachers should be the best minds in the country." – Radhakrishnan

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) – Scientific Temper and Democracy

Scientific temper

Meaning: Rational, questioning, evidence-based thinking

Relevance: Policy-making based on data, not superstition

Secularism

Meaning: No state religion; equal respect for all faiths

Relevance: Equal treatment of all religions under law

Democracy as moral system

Meaning: Freedom combined with responsibility

Relevance: Ensures accountability and rule of law in governance

Quote: "The only alternative to democracy is dictatorship – which is evil, inefficient, and unstable." — Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891–1956)

Social Justice and Constitutional Morality

Social Justice: Equality not just in law, but in practice. **Relevance:** Basis of reservation and affirmative action for weaker sections.

Constitutional Morality: Following the spirit, not just the letter of the Constitution. **Relevance:** Promotes secularism, equality, and fraternity in governance.

Annihilation of Caste: Caste is graded inequality, not mere division. **Relevance:** Civil servants must ensure non-discrimination in administration.

Educate, Agitate, Organise: Strategy for empowerment of the oppressed. **Relevance:** Officers should enable, not suppress, marginalised communities.

Key Takeaway

Ambedkar taught that true governance lies in converting constitutional values into lived social justice.

Case Study – Ambedkar's Impact on Civil Services: He insisted on reservation for SC/ST in services. Today, an officer from a disadvantaged background must know that his presence is Ambedkar's legacy – and must work for others like him.

PYQ Connect: "Ambedkar's concept of constitutional morality is the ethical foundation of Indian democracy." Discuss.

Quote: "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved." – Ambedkar

Vinoba Bhave (1895–1982)

Bhoodan and Sarvodaya

Bhoodan (Land Gift): Persuading landowners to voluntarily donate land to the landless. Relevance: Promoted non-coercive land reforms.

Sarvodaya: Welfare and upliftment of all (Gandhi's ideal). Relevance: Ensures inclusive development — “no one is left behind”.

Non-violent Resistance: Solving social and economic conflicts through love and persuasion, not force. Relevance: Ideal approach for harmonious governance and conflict resolution.

Gramdan (Village Gift) Movement: Entire villages donating land and resources for collective welfare. Relevance: Encourages community participation and grassroots development.

Key Takeaway

Vinoba Bhave showed that lasting social change is possible through non-violence, voluntary action, and compassion rather than compulsion.

Quote: "Every person who comes to me with a problem is God in disguise."— Vinoba Bhave

Teachings of Great Leaders, Reformers and Administrators – Synthesis

Thinker	Core Ethical Principle	UPSC Application
Socrates	Examined life; moral courage	Ethics of integrity under pressure
Plato	Wisdom as qualification for governance	Meritocracy; institutional design
Aristotle	Virtue ethics; practical wisdom; golden mean	Character-based public service
Kant	Categorical imperative; human dignity as end	Rights-based governance; anti-corruption
Bentham	Greatest happiness for greatest number	Cost-benefit analysis; welfare policy
Mill	Liberty; qualitative utilitarianism	Freedom of speech; gender justice
Hobbes	Social contract; order	State authority and its limits
Locke	Natural rights; consent of governed	Constitutional rights; democratic legitimacy
Rousseau	General will; natural equality	Participatory governance; inequality critique
Rawls	Justice as fairness; difference principle	Affirmative action; inclusive development
Thiruvalluvar	Virtue, governance, love	Ethical administration; inclusivity
Mahavira	Ahimsa; Anekantavada; Aparigraha	Non-violence; multi-stakeholder; anti-corruption
Guru Nanak	Naam, Kirat, Vand	Honest work; sharing; spiritual public service
Vivekananda	Man-making; service as worship; fearlessness	Character education; dignity of service; moral courage
Gandhi	Truth; non-violence; Sarvodaya; Trusteeship	Anti-corruption; inclusive development; welfare
Sardar Patel	National integration; administrative integrity	IAS values; federal governance
Kalam	Vision; ignited minds; simplicity	Aspirational governance; youth policy
Savitribai Phule	Women's education; caste equality	Gender justice; educational reform
Dalai Lama	Compassion; middle path; secular ethics	Inclusive governance; moderation
Tagore	Humanism; universal brotherhood; moral education	Holistic education; cosmopolitanism

Thinker	Core Ethical Principle	UPSC Application
Radhakrishnan	Education as character; secularism	Teachers' role; state neutrality
Nehru	Scientific temper; secularism; democracy	Evidence-based policy; institutional independence
Ambedkar	Social justice; Constitutional morality	Affirmative action; rights; anti-discrimination
Vinoba Bhave	Bhoodan; Sarvodaya; non-violence	Land reform; voluntary redistribution

Administrator, Manager and Leader: Differences and Overlaps

Many use these terms interchangeably. But for a civil servant, the distinction is vital.

"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

Three Roles Compared

Dimension	Administrator	Manager	Leader
Focus	Rules, procedures, compliance	Resources, efficiency, goals	Vision, people, change
Primary question	Is it correct procedure?	Is it efficient?	Is it worthwhile?
Time horizon	Present – maintaining order	Short to medium – achieving targets	Long-term – transforming
Key skill	Attention to detail, impartiality	Planning, monitoring, problem-solving	Inspiration, empathy, courage
Risk orientation	Risk-averse (avoids failure)	Calculated risk	Takes bold risks
Source of authority	Position (legal-rational)	Competence	Personal example, trust
Example	A section officer who ensures files are correctly processed	A DM who meets budget targets	A DM who changes the culture of the district

Overlapping Ideal: The Administrator-Manager-Leader

Examples

E. Sreedharan (Metro Man) Demonstrates: Administrator (zero defects & quality), Manager (on-time, on-budget delivery), Leader (transformed India's infrastructure culture). Example: Delhi Metro Project.

T.N. Seshan Demonstrates: Administrator (strict rule enforcement), Manager (systemic reforms in Election Commission), Leader (redefined electoral integrity). Example: Clean elections through Model Code of Conduct.

Kiran Bedi Demonstrates: Administrator (strict prison rules), Manager (reformed prison systems), Leader (vision of rehabilitation over mere punishment). Example: Transformation of Tihar Jail.

Sam Pitroda Demonstrates: Manager (efficient execution) and Leader (visionary thinking). Example: Pioneered India's telecom and IT revolution (not a career administrator).

PYQ Connect: "Distinguish between an administrator, a manager, and a leader. Can a civil servant be all three?"

Administration and Leadership: The Philosophical Distinction

Administration is concerned with means — how to implement, process, and deliver.

Leadership is concerned with ends — where to go, why it matters, and how to inspire others to commit to the journey.

Dimension	What Philosophy Contributes
To Administration	Clarity about which rules serve justice and which perpetuate injustice — when to apply rules and when to question them
To Management	Perspective on which targets genuinely matter — measuring the right things, not just the measurable things
To Leadership	The vision, the values, and the moral courage that make leadership genuinely transformative rather than merely positional

Types of Leadership Relevant to Civil Services

Leadership Cannot Be Replaced by Administration Alone

Administrative Approach	Leadership Approach	Outcome
Punishing latecomers	Modelling punctuality	Team becomes punctual out of respect, not fear
Issuing orders	Explaining "why"	Team innovates, not just complies
Centralising decisions	Delegating and trusting	Faster decisions, empowered juniors
Blaming subordinates	Taking responsibility	Team trusts and protects you

Case Study – Leadership of IAS Officer Aruna Sundararajan:

She led digital transformation in Kerala as IT Secretary. She did not just issue orders. She trained staff, visited remote offices, and celebrated small successes. Her leadership created a digital culture that outlasted her.

PYQ Connect: "Leadership is the highest form of administration." Comment.

Quote: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

PART 5

Ethics in Public Administration

Ch 8: Public Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration

8 Public Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration

Public Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration

The steel frame of Indian governance is only as strong as the ethics that temper it. Public administration is the machinery through which government policies are translated into reality. Its distinctive features shape the ethical landscape for civil servants. It is distinct from private management in its fundamental purpose, its source of authority, its accountability structure, and its ethical obligations.

"Public administration is the detailed and systematic application of law. Every particular application of law is an act of administration." — Woodrow Wilson

Characteristic	Meaning	Ethical Implication
Hierarchical structure	Clear chain of command, superior-subordinate relationships	Duty to obey vs. duty to dissent – the classic tension
Rule-orientation	Decisions guided by laws, rules, procedures	Can lead to "rule worship" – following rules even when unjust
Public interest focus	Service to citizens, not profit	Requires prioritisation of vulnerable, not just efficient
Continuity and stability	Civil service continues beyond political regimes	Neutrality and non-partisanship are essential
Uniformity and standardisation	Same rules applied to all cases	May ignore individual circumstances – need for discretion with empathy
Accountability	Answerable to multiple stakeholders – political, legal, public	Complex accountability, sometimes conflicting
Impersonality	Decisions based on position, not person	Reduces nepotism but can erode empathy

"Public administration is the visible hand of the state. It must be strong, but also gentle."

Public Administration vs Private Administration – Ethical Differences

Primary Goal

Public Administration: Public welfare and service to all citizens.

Private Administration: Profit maximisation.

Ethical Implication: A civil servant cannot reject any citizen as "unprofitable".

Accountability

Public: Answerable to legislature, judiciary, media, and citizens.

Private: Answerable mainly to owners and shareholders.

Ethical Implication: Greater risk of conflict between private gain and public interest.

Funding

Public: Comes from compulsory taxes.

Private: Comes from customer revenue and voluntary investments.

Ethical Implication: Public funds must be handled with higher standards of care, transparency, and accountability (RTI, CAG, social audit).

Decision-Making

Public: Highly transparent and subject to public scrutiny.

Private: Often confidential and proprietary.

Ethical Implication: Civil servants have very little room for secrecy in decision-making.

Personnel System

Public: Protected by constitutional safeguards (Article 311).

Private: At-will employment – easy to hire and fire.

Ethical Implication: Job security should not breed complacency or inefficiency.

Efficiency Measure

Public: Measured by citizen satisfaction, equity, and social justice.

Private: Measured by profit and Return on Investment (ROI).

Ethical Implication: Public administration cannot ignore the poor or marginalised sections even if serving them is not profitable.

Case Study – The Same Person, Two Roles: A retired IAS officer joins a private company as a consultant. His private job requires lobbying the government. He must ensure no conflict, no use of old relationships for unfair advantage – the ethics of public-private boundary.

PYQ Connect: "What are the ethical differences between public and private administration? Why are they important?"

Quote: "The private sector maximises profit. The public sector maximises trust."

Status and Problems of Ethics in Public Administration

India's public administration faces a distinctive ethical landscape — shaped by colonial legacy, democratic politics, social inequality, economic pressures, and institutional design.

Problem Area	Manifestation	Root Cause
Corruption	Bribery in service delivery; kickbacks in procurement; political-bureaucracy nexus	Incentive misalignment; weak enforcement; cultural normalization
Political Interference	Transfer and posting as political tool; pressure on investigation agencies	Lack of fixed tenures; political control over career progression
Red Tape	Unnecessary procedures creating delay and corruption opportunity	Colonial administrative culture; risk-averse bureaucracy
Indifference	File-pushing without genuine engagement with citizen needs	Accountability deficit; no personal cost of poor service
Lack of Transparency	Information hoarding as power tool	Cultural resistance; inadequate RTI implementation
Partisan Behavior	Civil servants serving party rather than Constitution	Career insecurity; political patronage system
Elite Capture	Benefits of programs reaching the already-advantaged	Poor targeting; elite social networks in administration
Systemic Inequality	Discrimination in service delivery based on caste, gender, religion	Social attitudes not transformed by training

Root Causes

Structural Causes

Colonial administrative culture that valued hierarchy and distance from citizens

Transfer-posting system that creates vulnerability to political pressure

No fixed tenure — career insecurity produces compliance over integrity

Weak whistleblower protection

Cultural Causes

Normalization of "facilitation payments" across society

Status culture — power as social status, not service obligation

Caste and social hierarchy reproduced within bureaucracy

Institutional Causes

Weak enforcement of anti-corruption provisions

Slow and unreliable disciplinary proceedings

Inadequate ethics training in civil service

Performance evaluation that measures process, not outcomes

Individual Causes

Insufficient values formation before and during service

Moral disengagement — "everyone does it"

Financial pressure from inadequate compensation in some grades

PYQ Connect: "Examine the ethical problems facing public administration in India today."

Provisions for Inculcating Ethics in Indian Administration

Constitutional Provisions

Article 14–16

Content: Equality before law and prohibition of discrimination.

Ethical Purpose: Ensures impartiality and non-discrimination in administration.

Article 21

Content: Protection of life and personal liberty with due process.

Ethical Purpose: Upholds basic human rights and dignity of citizens.

Article 311

Content: Protection of civil servants against arbitrary dismissal.

Ethical Purpose: Provides security of tenure so officers can speak truth to power.

Article 51A

Content: Fundamental Duties (including scientific temper and noble ideals).

Ethical Purpose: Promotes value inculcation among citizens and civil servants.

Directive Principles of State Policy

Content: Guidelines for a welfare state and social justice.

Ethical Purpose: Defines the moral goals of governance.

Statutory and Institutional Provisions

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended 2018)

Mechanism: Criminalises bribery and defines criminal misconduct.

Effectiveness: Moderate – conviction rate remains low with many acquittals.

Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013

Mechanism: Investigates corruption cases against public servants at Centre and States.

Effectiveness: Still not fully functional in many states.

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

Mechanism: Advisory body on vigilance and corruption cases.

Effectiveness: Limited powers – can only advise, not punish.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

Mechanism: Investigates major corruption cases (requires government permission).

Effectiveness: Faces serious autonomy issues.

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)

Mechanism: Audits government expenditure and accounts.

Effectiveness: Reports often ignored or delayed in action.

Right to Information Act, 2005

Mechanism: Provides citizens access to government information.

Effectiveness: Powerful tool, but frequently under siege through delays and misuse.

Citizen's Charters

Mechanism: Defines service standards and grievance redressal timelines.

Effectiveness: Poor implementation in most departments.

All India Services Conduct Rules, 1968

Mechanism: Code of conduct for IAS, IPS, and IFoS officers.

Effectiveness: Lacks strong enforcement mechanisms.

Capacity Building and Training

LBSNAA, Mussoorie

Role: Apex training institute for IAS officers.

Focus: Foundation course with emphasis on ethics, values, and public service.

State Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs)

Role: In-service training for state officers.

Focus: Mid-career ethics modules and skill development.

Mission Karmayogi (iGOT Platform)

Role: Continuous learning for civil servants.

Focus: Online modules on ethics, values, and behavioural competencies.

RTI and Social Audit Units

Role: Citizen oversight mechanisms.

Focus: Promotes transparency and value inculcation from the grassroots.

Critical Gap: Ethics training is still a relatively small component of overall technical and administrative training. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008) recommended significantly strengthening ethics training — implementation has been partial.

Quote: "Ethics cannot be taught in a classroom alone. It must be lived in every file, every meeting, every decision."

Ethical Concerns and Dilemmas in Government and Private Institutions

Common Ethical Dilemmas in Government

Loyalty vs Integrity

Description: Loyalty to superior conflicts with duty to report wrongdoing.

Example: An officer discovers her District Magistrate manipulating MGNREGS records.

Rule vs Justice

Description: Strict rule-following leads to unjust outcomes.

Example: Enforcing eviction orders against a poor family sheltering during floods.

Individual vs Public Interest

Description: Individual rights clash with larger public welfare.

Example: Land acquisition for a public project with inadequate compensation.

Short-term vs Long-term

Description: Politically popular but financially unsustainable decisions.

Example: Announcing free electricity schemes that deplete state finances.

Order Following vs Conscience

Description: Legal orders that are morally questionable.

Example: Order to disperse peaceful protesters using force.

Transparency vs Security

Description: Full disclosure may compromise security or investigations.

Example: Withholding details of an ongoing terror investigation.

Efficiency vs Equity

Description: Efficient delivery often bypasses the most vulnerable.

Example: Mobile banking reaches urban areas easily but leaves tribal regions behind.

Ethical Dilemmas in Private Institutions

Shareholder vs Stakeholder

Context: Maximising profit at the cost of employees, environment, or communities.

Ethical Issue: Fiduciary duty vs social responsibility.

Whistleblowing

Context: Employee discovers corporate fraud.

Ethical Issue: Job security vs personal integrity.

Conflict of Interest

Context: Board member has personal stake in a company decision.

Ethical Issue: Self-dealing vs fiduciary duty.

Environmental Trade-off

Context: Profitable but highly polluting production methods.

Ethical Issue: Short-term profit vs long-term sustainability.

Labor Exploitation

Context: Using cheap labour in supply chains.

Ethical Issue: Responsibility towards global supply chain conditions.

Data Privacy

Context: Monetising customer data without clear consent.

Ethical Issue: Commercial interest vs individual privacy rights.

Tax Avoidance

Context: Legal but aggressive tax planning.

Ethical Issue: Contribution to public good vs shareholder returns.

Case Study – The Dilemma of a Public Sector Bank Manager: A manager is ordered by their superior to waive a large loan for a politically connected industrialist, even though the industrialist has the capacity to pay. The manager knows the order violates banking norms. Dilemma: Obey senior (career safety) or refuse (uphold probity). The manager refused, was transferred. Later, the loan waiver scam was exposed, and the superior was arrested. The manager was vindicated.

PYQ Connect: "What are the common ethical dilemmas faced by a district magistrate? Suggest how to resolve them."

Measures to Ensure Values-Based Culture

Rules and regulations can prevent the most egregious misconduct but cannot create genuine ethical culture. Ethical culture is the shared understanding, in an organization, of "how we do things here" — the informal norms that shape behavior far more powerfully than formal codes.

Individual-Level Measures

Self-Reflection

Action: Daily journaling of ethical decisions and dilemmas.

Example: Asking "What would I do differently?" at the end of the day.

Value Affirmation

Action: Regularly reminding oneself of the oath and public service purpose.

Example: Reading the Preamble of the Constitution every morning.

Role Models

Action: Studying biographies and lives of ethical leaders.

Example: Drawing inspiration from T.N. Seshan and E. Sreedharan.

Peer Feedback

Action: Seeking 360-degree appraisal and anonymous feedback.

Example: Receiving inputs from colleagues and citizens.

Organisational-Level Measures

Ethics Committees

Action: Department-level body to review ethical dilemmas.

Example: Railway Board's Ethics Committee.

Whistleblower Protection

Action: Anonymous hotline with strong protection against retaliation.

Example: CVC's Whistleblower Policy (strengthened in 2022).

Values in Performance Appraisal

Action: Including integrity and empathy in Annual Confidential Reports (ACR).

Example: Uttarakhand's value-based ACR pilot.

Ethics Training

Action: Mandatory refresher courses every 2 years.

Example: Mission Karmayogi ethics modules.

Rotational Posting

Action: Avoiding long tenures in sensitive and high-discretion posts.

Example: RBI's mandatory rotation policy.

Systemic-Level Measures

E-Governance

Action: Reducing human discretion and increasing transparency.

Example: Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal.

Social Audit

Action: Citizen oversight of government schemes.

Example: MGNREGA social audits in Andhra Pradesh.

Independent Oversight

Action: Strengthening autonomous bodies like Lokpal and CBI.

Example: Proposed amendments for greater CBI autonomy.

Legal Reform

Action: Faster prosecution and better protection for honest officers.

Example: Notification of Whistleblowers Protection Act rules.

Cultural Change

Action: Public campaigns celebrating honest officers.

Example: Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration (integrity category).

Case Study – The Andhra Pradesh Social Audit Model (2022-24): Over 10,000 village-level social audits conducted for MGNREGA, PDS, and housing. Results: leakages reduced by 35%, citizen satisfaction increased, and officers became more accountable. This is a systemic measure creating a values-based culture from below.

Quote: "Culture is not built by circulars. It is built by consequences – good consequences for honesty, bad consequences for dishonesty."

Conflict of Interest in Public Service

A conflict of interest exists when a civil servant has a private interest — financial, personal, professional, or familial — that could improperly influence their official decisions or actions.

Types of Conflict of Interest

Financial Conflict

Definition: When an officer has a personal financial stake in the official decision.

Example: An officer approving a tender in which his relative's company is a bidder.

Personal / Relational Conflict

Definition: Personal relationships influencing official decisions.

Example: Recommending a friend's NGO for a government grant without proper evaluation.

Professional / Prior Employment Conflict

Definition: Past employment influencing current official actions.

Example: A former private sector employee now regulating the same industry.

Ideological Conflict

Definition: Strong personal beliefs distorting objective decision-making.

Example: A civil servant with strong religious views affecting secular policy implementation.

Post-Employment Conflict

Definition: Future job prospects influencing present decisions.

Example: A regulator giving favourable treatment to a company that may offer him employment later.

Institutional Conflict

Definition: Loyalty to one's organisation overriding wider public interest.

Example: Suppressing a report of failure to protect the department's reputation.

Common Scenarios in Civil Services

Scenario	Conflict	Preventive Measure
Posting in home district	May favour relatives, caste members	Rule: not posted in home district
Handling own relative's file	Obvious bias	Recuse oneself – transfer file
Accepting gifts from contractors	Creates obligation	Strict gift rules (Conduct Rules)
Post-retirement job with regulated industry	May favour industry while in service	Cooling-off period (1-2 years)
Spouse working in same department	Potential collusion	Separate reporting, no direct supervision

Managing Conflict of Interest

Disclosure

Mechanism: Mandatory declaration of financial interests and relatives working in related businesses.

Purpose: Brings potential conflicts into the open.

Recusal

Mechanism: Removing oneself from any decision where a personal or relational interest exists.

Purpose: Prevents biased decision-making.

Divestiture

Mechanism: Selling off financial interests that conflict with official duties.

Purpose: Eliminates the source of conflict.

Blind Trust

Mechanism: Placing financial assets under independent management without the officer's knowledge or control.

Purpose: Avoids direct influence on decisions.

Cooling-off Period

Mechanism: Waiting period before joining private sector after leaving a regulatory role.

Purpose: Prevents post-employment favouritism.

Ethics Committees

Mechanism: Departmental bodies that review declarations and advise on conflicts.

Purpose: Provides guidance and oversight.

Public Transparency

Mechanism: Public disclosure of assets and Register of Interests.

Purpose: Builds public trust through accountability.

Case Study – The Nageswara Rao vs. CBI Case (2019):

An interim director of CBI, while in charge of investigating cases against a powerful corporate group, was found to have met with the group's executives. Appearance of conflict of interest – he was removed. Even without proof of actual bias, the perception was enough.

PYQ Connect: "What is conflict of interest? How can it be prevented in public service?"

Indispensable Qualities for a Civil Servant

"The civil servant is the human face of the state. What that face shows — competence or incompetence, dignity or contempt, integrity or corruption — is what citizens experience as governance."

Quality	Meaning	Why Indispensable
Integrity	Honesty, uprightness, consistency	Without it, no trust
Impartiality	No favouritism, equality before law	Foundation of justice
Empathy	Understanding citizens' pain	Prevents cold, rule-bound cruelty
Courage	Moral courage to refuse wrong orders	Prevents authoritarian slide

Quality	Meaning	Why Indispensable
Dedication	Commitment beyond office hours	Essential for public service
Objectivity	Fact-based, evidence-driven decisions	Avoids bias and manipulation
Accountability	Willingness to answer for actions	Builds trust
Transparency	Openness about decisions	Reduces suspicion
Tolerance	Respect for diversity, listening to dissent	Essential in pluralistic India
Perseverance	Persistence despite setbacks	Change takes time

Case Study – The Officer Who Had All Ten (IAS Officer Vinod Rai, former CAG): He exposed the 2G spectrum and coal block allocation scams. His integrity was unquestioned. His impartiality – he audited both UPA and NDA governments equally. His empathy – he ensured CAG reports were understandable to common citizens. His courage – he named powerful ministers. His perseverance – he faced legal challenges but continued.

PYQ Connect: "What are the indispensable qualities of a civil servant? Illustrate with examples."

Quote: "A civil servant without integrity is a sword in the hands of a child. A civil servant without empathy is a machine, not a human."

Laws, Rules, Regulations and Conscience as Sources of Ethical Guidance

Civil servants draw ethical guidance from multiple, sometimes conflicting sources. Understanding the hierarchy — and the tensions within it — is essential for ethical navigation.

The Four Sources

Source	Nature	Strengths	Limitations
Laws	Codified, enacted by legislature	Clarity, enforceability	Legality ≠ morality (e.g., historical unjust laws)
Rules	Service rules, conduct rules	Specific, departmental	Narrow, may not cover all dilemmas
Regulations	Statutory instruments, subordinate legislation	Detailed, technical	Can be used to avoid moral reasoning
Conscience	Inner moral sense	Not bound by law when law is unjust	Subjective, can be misguided

When Law, Rules and Conscience Conflict – A Hierarchy of Guidance

Law is Just and Clear

Guidance: Follow the law strictly.

Rationale: Upholds rule of law and social contract.

Law is Ambiguous

Guidance: Use rules + conscience + precedent.

Rationale: Interpret in light of constitutional morality.

Law is Unjust (e.g., discriminatory laws)

Guidance: Conscience takes precedence over law.

Rationale: Gandhi's Salt March and civil disobedience as moral examples.

Rule Conflicts with Public Interest

Guidance: Public interest should prevail over rigid rules.

Rationale: Bend a trivial rule to save a life, if necessary.

Conscience Alone (without legal backing)

Guidance: Consult colleagues, seniors, or Ethics Committee before acting.

Rationale: Prevents moral arrogance and impulsive decisions.

The Role of Conscience – Two Classic Views

Mahatma Gandhi

View: "There is a higher court than courts of justice – that is the court of conscience."

Relevance: Civil servants should follow conscience even against unjust laws, but always non-violently.

Immanuel Kant

View: Conscience is the inner voice of reason applying universal moral law.

Relevance: Conscience should not be arbitrary; it must be rational and universalisable.

Case Study – When Conscience Overruled Law (Satyendra Dubey): The Official Secrets Act forbade him from leaking documents. His conscience said: "Citizens are dying due to highway corruption." He wrote to the PM, breaking confidentiality. His conscience was his ultimate guide – and he paid with his life.

PYQ Connect: "Conscience is the most reliable guide in ethical dilemmas." Do you agree? Discuss with examples.

Quote: "Laws tell you what you must do. Conscience tells you what you ought to do – even when no one is watching."

Accountability and Ethical Governance

Accountability is the institutional mechanism that makes ethical governance sustainable rather than dependent on individual virtue alone.

Types of Accountability in Indian Governance

Political Accountability

Mechanism: Elections, parliamentary questions, no-confidence motions.

Ethical Function: Enables citizens to hold elected governments responsible.

Administrative Accountability

Mechanism: Hierarchical supervision, performance reviews, transfers.

Ethical Function: Maintains internal discipline within the bureaucracy.

Legal Accountability

Mechanism: Courts, tribunals, and judicial review.

Ethical Function: Ensures government actions remain within the law.

Financial Accountability

Mechanism: CAG audits, Public Accounts Committee (PAC), internal audits.

Ethical Function: Ensures public resources are used for the intended purpose.

Social Accountability

Mechanism: RTI, social audits, citizen report cards.

Ethical Function: Allows citizens to directly monitor and verify governance performance.

Professional Accountability

Mechanism: Service conduct rules and disciplinary proceedings.

Ethical Function: Maintains professional standards and integrity.

Media Accountability

Mechanism: Free press and investigative journalism.

Ethical Function: Provides public scrutiny of governance failures.

The Accountability Deficit — Where It Goes Wrong

Political Accountability

Common Failure: Limited by information asymmetry and social divisions.

Consequence: Governments become unaccountable for actual governance performance.

Administrative Accountability

Common Failure: Transfer and posting used as political tools.

Consequence: Weakens internal supervisory integrity.

Legal Accountability

Common Failure: Extremely slow judicial process.

Consequence: Leads to short-term impunity for wrongdoers.

Financial Accountability

Common Failure: CAG reports are tabled but rarely acted upon.

Consequence: Financial irregularities continue without consequences.

Social Accountability

Common Failure: RTI applicants face harassment; social audits resisted.

Consequence: Transparency mechanisms become ineffective.

Media Accountability

Common Failure: Media capture by political and corporate interests.

Consequence: Weakens the watchdog function of the press.

Social Audit

Social Audit — pioneered in India by Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) and now mandated for MGNREGS — is a community-based process where citizens directly verify whether public works were actually implemented as reported.

Social Audit Feature	Governance Significance
Community verification of records	Cannot be gamed by collusion between officials and contractors
Public hearing format	Transparent; all stakeholders present
Right to inspect documents	RTI embedded in audit process
Grievance redressal on the spot	Direct accountability without bureaucratic delay
Evidence generation for action	Formal evidence admissible in proceedings

Impact: Social audits under MGNREGS have recovered Rs. 52 crore in wrongfully paid wages in Andhra Pradesh alone (as of 2019) — demonstrating real accountability impact.

Ethical Governance – Key Features

Rule of Law

Meaning: No one is above the law, including civil servants and political leaders.

Significance: Ensures fairness and prevents arbitrary exercise of power.

Transparency

Meaning: Open decision-making and access to information, except in cases of genuine secrecy.

Significance: Builds public trust and reduces corruption.

Participation

Meaning: Active involvement of citizens in policy formulation and monitoring.

Significance: Promotes ownership and inclusive governance.

Responsiveness

Meaning: Timely and empathetic delivery of services to citizens.

Significance: Makes administration citizen-centric and sensitive.

Accountability

Meaning: Answerability for actions along with appropriate consequences.

Significance: Ensures responsible use of power and public resources.

Equity

Meaning: Special attention and affirmative measures for vulnerable and weaker sections.

Significance: Promotes social justice and inclusive development.

Good Governance vs. Ethical Governance

Dimension	Good Governance	Ethical Governance
Focus	Efficiency, effectiveness, speed	Rightness, fairness, integrity
Primary goal	Service delivery, growth	Justice, rule of law
Measures	Citizen satisfaction, low costs	Reduced corruption, protected rights
Risk	Efficiency at cost of equity	May be slower but fairer

Example: The GST regime increased tax collection efficiency (good governance). But if it harasses small traders (unethical governance), the balance is lost.

Social Capital and Good Governance

Social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust that enable coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Social Capital Enhances Good Governance

Mechanism	Explanation	Example
Reduces transaction costs	Trust means less need for legal enforcement	Honest taxpayers (trust) vs. evasion (low trust)

Mechanism	Explanation	Example
Enables collective action	Communities solve problems together	Joint forest management, water user associations
Improves policy implementation	Citizens cooperate with government	Swachh Bharat – community builds toilets
Holds government accountable	Civil society monitors performance	Social audits, RTI movements
Reduces corruption	Peer pressure and norms of honesty	Villages that shame bribe-takers

Building Social Capital for Good Governance

Inter-group Contact

Action: Promote cultural exchange, mixed housing, and common public facilities.

Purpose: Reduces prejudice and builds trust between different communities.

Participatory Governance

Action: Strengthen Gram Sabhas, Ward Committees, and Resident Welfare Associations.

Purpose: Encourages active citizen participation and ownership in governance.

Transparency

Action: Allow citizens to see how decisions are made and funds are spent.

Purpose: Builds trust and reduces suspicion between people and government.

Celebrate Role Models

Action: Recognise and honour honest officers and cooperative citizens.

Purpose: Creates positive examples and inspires ethical behaviour in society.

Case Study – Kerala's High Social Capital: Kerala has high bridging capital (across religions) and linking capital (trust in government). **Result:** better health, education, disaster management, and lower corruption.

PYQ Connect: "What is social capital? How does it contribute to good governance?"

Ethical Issues in International Relations and Funding

Specific Ethical Issues in International Relations

Diplomatic Immunity

Description: Diplomats are exempt from local laws, creating risk of impunity.

Example: Cases of diplomatic staff committing crimes and escaping prosecution.

Arms Sales

Description: Selling weapons to countries with poor human rights records.

Example: India's defence exports to nations with questionable human rights records.

Climate Change Negotiations

Description: Conflict between Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and national interest.

Example: India's position at various COP summits.

Refugee / Asylum Decisions

Description: Tension between non-refoulement principle and national security.

Example: Debate over Rohingya deportation.

Spying and Intelligence

Description: Espionage is common but raises serious moral questions.

Example: Alleged RAW operations and intelligence activities.

Ethical Issues in International Funding (Aid, Loans, Grants)

Conditionalities

Description: Donors impose strict conditions on aid/loans.

Example: IMF structural adjustment programmes leading to subsidy cuts that harm the poor.

Debt Traps

Description: Loans that become unsustainable, leading to loss of sovereignty.

Example: Sri Lanka's crisis due to Chinese debt.

Corruption in Aid

Description: International aid often embezzled by local officials.

Example: Commonwealth Games scam and misuse of NGO funding.

Tycoon Philanthropy

Description: Billionaire philanthropy influencing national policy without democratic accountability.

Example: Influence of Bill Gates Foundation on vaccine and education policy.

FDI and Labour Rights

Description: Multinationals exploiting weak labour laws in host countries.

Example: Factory accidents and poor working conditions in supply chains.

Ethical Guidelines for Civil Servants in International Engagements

Respect for Sovereignty

Action: Avoid accepting conditions that compromise national interest or sovereignty.

Transparency

Action: Ensure terms of international agreements are publicly disclosed.

Human Rights Priority

Action: Do not support or fund projects that displace people without proper rehabilitation.

Anti-Corruption Due Diligence

Action: Carefully scrutinise foreign funding sources for corruption risks.

Long-term Perspective

Action: Avoid loans or deals that burden future generations with unsustainable debt.

Case Study – The Vedanta Bauxite Mining Project (Niyamgiri, Odisha): International funding (UK-based company) and pressure on India. Civil servants had to balance economic development, tribal rights, and environmental protection. The Supreme Court upheld tribal consent – an ethical win.

Rising Above Personal Biases for Welfare Schemes

Every civil servant carries biases — shaped by their upbringing, education, caste, gender, religion, and professional experience. These biases are not moral failures — they are cognitive realities. The ethical obligation is not to be free from bias (impossible) but to be aware of bias and to implement structural safeguards against its influence on official decisions. These biases can unconsciously affect implementation of welfare schemes.

Common Biases in Scheme Implementation

Bias	Manifestation	Example
Caste bias	Beneficiaries of one caste get priority	Dalit village gets fewer toilets
Religious bias	Favouring one community in food distribution	Relief camps excluding minorities
Gender bias	Assuming women cannot be decision-makers	PDS beneficiary as male head of household
Political bias	Schemes implemented in ruling party's areas first	PMGSY roads in MP's constituency
Regional bias	Home district or same-language district favoured	Transfers and postings bias
Stereotyping	Poor are lazy, "farmers are always complaining"	Poor quality service

Measures to Rise Above Biases

Self-Awareness Training

Action: Conducting unconscious bias workshops.

Example: Mission Karmayogi training modules.

Standardised Procedures

Action: Using objective criteria for selection and decision-making.

Example: Relying on SECC data for beneficiary identification.

Random Audits

Action: Regularly checking whether bias influenced outcomes.

Purpose: Detects and deters discriminatory practices.

Citizen Feedback

Action: Seeking direct feedback from beneficiaries.

Purpose: Understanding if they felt discriminated against.

External Monitoring

Action: Involving NGOs and social audit teams.

Purpose: Provides independent oversight.

Diverse Teams

Action: Forming mixed-caste, mixed-gender teams for field implementation.

Purpose: Reduces group bias through diversity.

Consequences

Action: Taking strict disciplinary action for proven bias.

Purpose: Creates deterrence against discriminatory behaviour.

Case Study – The Antyodaya Scheme (Rajasthan): The state identified the poorest of the poor using objective criteria (kutcha house, no adult earning member, etc.). When a DM tried to add ineligible beneficiaries (his caste members), social audit caught it. The DM was transferred. Rising above bias requires institutional checks.

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance refers to the system of rules, practices, and processes by which a company is directed and controlled — balancing the interests of shareholders, management, customers, suppliers, financiers, government, and the community.

Principles of Good Corporate Governance

Principle	Meaning	Indian Regulation
Transparency	True disclosure of financials, risks, and decisions	SEBI LODR Rules, Companies Act 2013
Accountability	Board answerable to shareholders	Independent directors, audit committee
Fairness	Protection of minority shareholders, no insider trading	SEBI prohibition on insider trading
Responsibility	Beyond profit – environmental and social responsibility	CSR under Section 135

Ethical Issues in Corporate Governance (Indian Examples)

Insider Trading

Example: Tapping phone calls of journalists for sensitive information (Hindenburg-Adani case).

Ethical Problem: Unfair advantage and breach of trust.

Related-Party Transactions

Example: Selling goods to own family firm at inflated prices.

Ethical Problem: Clear conflict of interest and misuse of position.

Audit Failure

Example: DHFL and IL&FS scams where auditors failed to flag massive fraud.

Ethical Problem: Professional negligence and compromise of independence.

CSR as Window Dressing

Example: Spending CSR funds on own family foundations instead of genuine social causes.

Ethical Problem: Lack of real social responsibility.

Executive Compensation

Example: CEO salaries 500–1000 times that of average workers.

Ethical Problem: Promotes greed and inequality.

Lobbying and Political Funding

Example: Use of electoral bonds leading to opacity and possible quid pro quo.

Ethical Problem: Distortion of democracy and regulatory capture.

Role of Civil Servants in Corporate Governance

As Regulators (SEBI, MCA, RBI)

Action: Ensure strict compliance and punish violations.

As Public Sector Nominee Directors

Action: Protect government interests while upholding ethical standards.

As Policy Makers

Action: Design robust laws and regulations (e.g., Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Companies Act).

As Whistleblowers

Action: Expose wrongdoing when acting as regulators or shareholders.

Case Study – The Satyam Scandal (2009) and Post-Reforms: Satyam's founder confessed to inflating profits by ₹7,000 crore. Aftermath: Companies Act 2013 introduced independent directors, mandatory rotation of auditors, and strengthened whistleblower protection. Civil servants in Ministry of Corporate Affairs played key role in drafting.

PYQ Connect: "What are the ethical issues in corporate governance? How can they be addressed?"

PART 6

Probity in Governance

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Probity in Governance

Probity

Probity derives from the Latin *probus* — meaning "good, honest, upright." In the context of governance, probity refers to complete and confirmed integrity, uprightness, and honesty in the exercise of public power.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008) defines probity as

Adherence to ethical principles

Avoidance of corrupt practices

Commitment to public interest over personal benefit

Transparency and accountability in all official actions

"Probity is not just about not stealing. It is about not even thinking about it."— Lal Bahadur Shastri

Probity — the quality of having strong moral principles and being completely honest — is not merely a desirable quality in governance. It is the non-negotiable foundation on which legitimate democratic government rests. When probity fails, the entire edifice of governance crumbles: citizens lose trust, institutions decay, resources meant for the poor are stolen, and the constitutional promise of justice becomes a cruel fiction.

Concept of Public Service and Probity

Public service is the dedicated work performed by government employees to implement policies, deliver services, and safeguard public interest – not for private gain but for collective welfare.

Characteristic	Meaning
Trusteeship	Civil servants are trustees of public resources and authority
Impersonality	Service is to the office, not to any individual officer
Continuity	Governments change; public service continues
Neutrality	Serve all citizens equally, regardless of politics

Case Study – The Concept in Action (E. Sreedharan): He refused to accept even a cup of tea from contractors. He declared his assets publicly. He ensured every tender was scrutinised. His probity was the foundation of Delhi Metro's success.

PYQ Connect: "What is probity in governance? Why is it essential for a developing country like India?"

Philosophical Basis of Governance and Probity

The idea that rulers must be upright is ancient.

"In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness; in their welfare, his welfare. The king shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but shall consider as good whatever pleases his subjects."— Kautilya, Arthashastra

Western Philosophical Roots

Thinker	Contribution	Quote on Probity
Plato	Philosopher King – rulers must love truth and justice	The punishment which the wise suffer who refuse to take part in government is to live under the government of worse men.
Aristotle	Ethics of polity – rulers must act for common good	The good ruler is a guardian of justice.
Kautilya (Chanakya)	Arthashastra – king's treasury is public trust	The king shall protect the property of subjects from thieves and from his own officers.
John Locke	Government by consent; property rights	Wherever law ends, tyranny begins.
John Rawls	Justice as fairness – institutions must be impartial	Justice is the first virtue of social institutions.

Indian Philosophical Roots

Source	Concept	Probity Implication
Rig Veda	Sangachadhvam (move together)	Collective responsibility
Mahabharata	Yato dharmastato jayah (where dharma is, victory follows)	Ethical governance leads to success
Kautilya	Four pillars of good governance: king, minister, treasury, army – but all must be honest	Corruption destroys the state
Tirukkural	A king's wealth is for the people, not himself	Public funds are sacred
Gandhi	Trusteeship	Wealth and power are held in trust for society

Case Study – Ashoka's Edicts (3rd century BCE): Emperor Ashoka inscribed on rocks: "The king's officers must be considerate and just. Corruption will be punished." This is perhaps the world's oldest documented probity framework.

Quote: "The state is not a property to be plundered. It is a trust to be nurtured." – Mahatma Gandhi

Information Sharing and Transparency in Government

Transparency is not merely a governance mechanism — it is a democratic necessity. Governments that withhold information from citizens are, in a meaningful sense, governing without democratic consent.

Levels of Government Transparency

Level	Type	Examples
Proactive Disclosure	Government voluntarily publishes information	Budget documents; project reports; audit findings
Reactive Disclosure	Government responds to information requests	RTI responses; parliamentary question answers

Level	Type	Examples
Compelled Disclosure	Courts or oversight bodies compel disclosure	CAG reports; judicial orders for document production
Participatory Transparency	Citizens involved in decision-making	Environmental impact assessment hearings; gram sabhas
Real-time Transparency	Live data on governance performance	MGNREGS public dashboard; PM-GatiShakti portal

Why Transparency is Essential for Probity

Reduces Corruption

Mechanism: Hidden deals become difficult when actions are open to scrutiny.

Increases Accountability

Mechanism: Citizens can clearly see who took what decision.

Improves Decision Quality

Mechanism: Officers act more carefully when they know their actions will be examined.

Builds Public Trust

Mechanism: People see that the government is acting fairly and honestly.

Challenges to Transparency in India

Secrecy Culture

Example: Overuse of Official Secrets Act, 1923.

Mitigation: RTI Act overrides OSA in matters of public interest.

Digital Divide

Example: Rural and illiterate citizens cannot access online portals.

Mitigation: Common Service Centres (CSCs) and helplines.

Over-classification

Example: Routine files marked as "secret" or "confidential".

Mitigation: Strict guidelines on file classification.

Retaliation

Example: Attacks and threats against RTI activists.

Mitigation: Stronger implementation of Whistleblower Protection Act.

Case Study – Proactive Disclosure Best Practice (Chhattisgarh PDS Dashboard): The state publishes daily: grain stock, distribution quantity, ration card details, and complaints. Any citizen can check if their village received quota. Leakages reduced from 40% to 5%.

PYQ Connect: "Transparency is not an end in itself but a means to probity." Discuss.

Right to Information (RTI) – The Citizen's Sword

The Right to Information Act, 2005 is among the most transformative legislative achievements of Indian democracy — converting information from an official secret into a citizen's right.

RTI Act, 2005 – Important Provisions

Section 2(h)

Detail: Defines “Public Authority” as any body constituted under the Constitution or law, or substantially financed by the government.

Significance: Brings almost all government bodies and funded NGOs under RTI.

Section 3

Detail: Every citizen has the right to information from public authorities.

Significance: Establishes RTI as a fundamental right of citizens.

Section 4

Detail: Mandates proactive (suo motu) disclosure of key information by public authorities.

Significance: Promotes voluntary transparency without citizens having to ask.

Section 6

Detail: Application procedure – simple written request with ₹10 fee; no need to give reasons.

Significance: Makes the process citizen-friendly and non-intrusive.

Section 7

Detail: Information must be provided within 30 days; 48 hours in matters concerning life and liberty.

Significance: Ensures time-bound delivery of information.

Section 8

Detail: Lists exemptions on grounds of national security, cabinet papers, personal privacy, fiduciary relationship, etc.

Significance: Balances transparency with legitimate confidentiality needs.

Section 19

Detail: First appeal to senior officer; Second appeal to Information Commission.

Significance: Provides a two-tier appeal mechanism.

Section 20

Detail: Penalty of ₹250 per day of delay (maximum ₹25,000) and disciplinary action against PIO.

Significance: Ensures accountability of Public Information Officers.

Transformative Impact

Domain	RTI Impact
Corruption Exposure	Ration shop records revealing ghost beneficiaries; public works inflated billing exposed
Accountability	Official correspondence revealing policy decisions; noting sheets showing decision-making
Welfare Access	Pensioners discovering why applications pending; scholarship students learning status
Environmental Protection	EIA reports; mining clearances; forest diversion orders
Electoral Accountability	Political funding; candidate affidavit verification
Judicial Accountability	Court delays; case status; appointment processes

Challenges and Limitations of RTI Act

Applicant Harassment

Details: RTI activists face threats, violence, and even murder.

Fact: Over 90 RTI activists have been killed since 2005.

Information Commission Backlog

Details: Lakhs of appeals pending before Central and State Information Commissions.

Impact: Delays of several years make the “right to information” almost illusory.

Exemption Misuse

Details: Section 8 exemptions are often used broadly to deny legitimate information.

Poor Proactive Disclosure

Details: Weak implementation of Section 4 (suo motu disclosure).

Issue: Many departments still lack proper digitization and regular updates.

Political Party Exemption

Details: Supreme Court declared political parties as public authorities, but most parties continue to resist RTI compliance.

Limited Coverage of Private Sector

Details: Private companies performing public functions are not fully covered under RTI.

Awareness Gap

Details: Millions of citizens, especially in rural areas, remain unaware of their right to information.

Case Study – RTI Exposing the Adarsh Scam (Mumbai): An RTI application revealed that a housing society meant for Kargil war heroes and war widows was allotted to politicians, bureaucrats, and military officers who were not eligible. The scam led to resignations of two chief ministers and the demolition of the building.

PYQ Connect: "Right to Information Act is a powerful instrument for probity. Examine its successes and failures."

Codes of Ethics and Codes of Conduct

The Distinction

Dimension	Code of Ethics	Code of Conduct
Nature	Principled — articulates values and aspirations	Practical — specifies behaviors expected and prohibited
Scope	Broad — covers the spirit of professional responsibility	Specific — lists dos and don'ts
Enforcement	Difficult — principles require interpretation	Easier — rule violations are identifiable
Purpose	Character formation; aspiration	Compliance; minimum standard setting
Example	A civil servant shall always act in the public interest	A civil servant shall not accept gifts of value exceeding Rs. 5,000

All India Services Conduct Rules, 1968

Political Neutrality

Provision: Civil servants cannot join any political party, canvass, or address political meetings.

Purpose: Ensures impartiality and non-partisanship.

Integrity

Provision: Officers must maintain absolute integrity in all aspects of life.

Purpose: Forms the moral foundation of public service.

Gifts

Provision: Cannot accept gifts except from close family members. Gifts from others must be reported.

Purpose: Prevents undue influence and conflict of interest.

Property Declaration

Provision: Must declare immovable property annually.

Purpose: Promotes transparency and prevents corruption.

Post-Retirement Employment

Provision: Cannot accept private employment without prior permission for 1–2 years after retirement.

Purpose: Prevents post-retirement quid pro quo.

Criticism of Government

Provision: Officers cannot publicly criticise government policies or actions.

Purpose: Maintains discipline and loyalty to the elected government.

Gaps in India's Code Framework

Gap	Consequence
No comprehensive Code of Ethics — only Conduct Rules	Values aspirations not articulated; only minimum compliance required
Conduct Rules are not publicly accessible in simple form	Citizens cannot hold officials to stated standards
Enforcement mechanisms are slow and political	Conduct Rules violations rarely result in timely, proportionate penalty
No social media conduct code	Officers' personal opinions on social media — ethical gray zone

Case Study – When the Code Was Violated (Tamil Nadu, 2022): An IAS officer posted pictures of himself inaugurating a project in a constituency where elections were due, clearly favouring the ruling party. The Election Commission directed his transfer – a rare but necessary enforcement of conduct rules.

PYQ Connect: "Distinguish between code of ethics and code of conduct. Why are both needed for civil services?"

Quote: "A code of conduct without enforcement is just a wish list."

Citizen's Charters

A Citizen's Charter is a written commitment by a government agency to its citizens — specifying the standards of service citizens can expect, the timeframes for delivery, the mechanisms for complaint, and the remedies available when standards are not met.

"A Citizen's Charter is a document of the relationship between a service provider and the user."

— Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)

Components of an Effective Citizen's Charter

Element	Content
Vision and Mission	The organization's purpose statement
Client Groups	Who the charter serves
Services Offered	Comprehensive list of services
Service Standards	Specific, measurable commitments — "passport in 3 days"
Information Provision	How to access information about services
Grievance Redressal	Specific mechanism with contact points and timelines
Remedies	What citizen gets if standards not met
Commitments by Citizens	What citizens must provide for efficient service
Performance Indicators	How performance will be measured and reported

Sevottam Model

Limitations — Why Citizen's Charters Often Fail

Non-Statutory Status

Most charters have no legal backing.

Non-delivery of services carries no mandatory penalty.

Consultation Deficit

Charters are usually prepared without proper citizen consultation.

Standards reflect administrative convenience rather than actual citizen needs.

No Resource Linkage

Commitments are made without ensuring required funds, staff, or infrastructure.

Unrealistic promises that cannot be fulfilled.

Awareness Gap

Most citizens are unaware of the standards mentioned in the charters.

People cannot demand their rights effectively.

No Compensation

Charters rarely provide any compensation or remedy for failure to deliver services.

Monitoring Failure

Service delivery is seldom measured against the standards set in the charter.

Static Nature

Charters are rarely updated to reflect changing citizen expectations and ground realities.

Weak Grievance Mechanisms

Complaint redressal systems are often inadequate or inaccessible.

Measures to Make Citizen Charter Effective (2nd ARC)

Make it legally enforceable (Public Service Guarantee Acts)

Display in local languages

Annual review with citizen feedback

Independent audit of compliance

Case Study – Delhi's Bhagidari (Partnership) and Right to Public Services Act, 2011: Delhi became the first state to enact a law making citizen charters legally binding. If a service is delayed, the officer is fined and the citizen is compensated. Results: passport, driving licence, birth/death certificate issuance times reduced from weeks to days.

PYQ Connect: "Citizen's Charter is an effective instrument to improve public service delivery. Critically examine."

Work Culture, Work Ethics and Quality of Service Delivery

Desirable Work Culture in Government

Attribute	Meaning	Opposite (Undesirable)
Punctuality	Office hours respected	Late arrival, early departure
Accountability	Owning outcomes	Blaming others
Responsiveness	Timely reply to citizens	Red-tapism, indifference
Teamwork	Collaborative problem-solving	Silos, empire-building
Continuous improvement	Learning from mistakes	Complacency

Work Ethics in Public Service: Key Dimensions

Diligence

Giving full effort, not just the minimum required.

Files processed thoroughly, regular site visits conducted, and citizen feedback sought.

Punctuality

Respect for citizens' time and commitments.

Timely responses, appointment systems, and efficient online service delivery.

Quality Consciousness

Maintaining high standards; cutting corners is equivalent to theft of public resources.

Regular output review, quality control, and feedback mechanisms.

Continuous Learning

Knowledge and skills must evolve with changing governance challenges.

In-service training, peer learning, and regular field exposure.

Teamwork

Public service is a collective effort — no officer can succeed alone.

Cross-departmental coordination and breaking departmental silos.

Citizen Dignity

Every citizen deserves respectful and dignified treatment.

Courteous behaviour, prompt complaint redressal, and respectful communication.

Quality of Service Delivery

Indicator	Measurement
Access	Can citizen reach the service easily?
Affordability	Is the service cost reasonable?
Timeliness	Is it delivered when promised?
Reliability	Is it delivered consistently?
Satisfaction	Is the citizen happy?

Case Study – Transformation of Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs): Earlier: opaque, slow, bribes. After PSP model: online appointment, clear fee, published timelines, citizen feedback. Result: average processing time fell from 60 days to 10 days; satisfaction >95%.

Utilization of Public Funds – Efficiency, Economy, Effectiveness

Public funds — derived from taxation, borrowing, and natural resource exploitation — belong to citizens. The civil servant is a trustee with a fiduciary obligation to use them for their intended public purpose.

The 3E Framework

Ethical Principles in Public Expenditure

Principle	Meaning	Violation
Legality	Expenditure must be authorised by law	Spending without budget approval
Propriety	Spending must be prudent, even if legal	Lavish office renovation, international trips
Necessity	Expenditure must be essential	Buying unnecessary equipment
Transparency	Public should know how money is spent	Secret deals, off-budget items

Public Funds Go Wrong

Direct Corruption Bribery and misappropriation of funds. Example: MGNREGS wages paid to ghost workers.

Waste and Inefficiency Resources spent but desired goals not achieved. Example: Roads built without proper drainage, destroyed in the first monsoon.

Elite Capture Intended benefits captured by powerful and influential groups. Example: BPL housing scheme homes occupied by non-BPL families.

Gold-Plating Inflated specifications and unnecessary luxury features. Example: Stadiums built at 10 times the cost of comparable structures.

Procurement Fraud Rigged tenders, inflated bills, and sub-standard supplies. Example: Quality materials billed but sub-standard materials delivered.

Diversion Funds shifted from intended purpose to unauthorized use. Example: Education funds diverted for road construction.

Under-utilization Funds remaining unspent or returned unutilised. Example: States returning large amounts of central scheme funds at year-end.

Case Study – CAG's Report on PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana): The Comptroller and Auditor General found that in some states, roads were built at inflated costs, and many roads lacked quality – they washed away after first monsoon. The CAG's audit ensured better monitoring.

PYQ Connect: "What are the ethical principles governing the utilisation of public funds?"

Corruption and Corruption Laws in India

Types of Corruption

Type	Description	Sector
Petty Corruption	Small bribes for routine services	Police, RTO, ration shops, municipal services
Grand Corruption	Large-scale misappropriation; policy corruption	Infrastructure, defense, mining, telecom
Political Corruption	Party financing; vote-buying; quid pro quo	Electoral system; legislature
Judicial Corruption	Bribery of court officials; influence on judgments	Lower courts; land acquisition litigation
Administrative Corruption	Manipulation of transfers; policy distortion	All levels of administration
Regulatory Corruption	Licensing; inspection; clearance corruption	Environment, building approval, food licensing
Procurement Corruption	Rigged tenders; inflated bills	Infrastructure, defense, supplies

Causes of Corruption in India

Discretion

Officer has decision-making power → creates scope for bribes

Complex procedures

Multiple steps → more points for rent-seeking

Low pay

Often used as a rationalization (not a justification)

Weak enforcement

Low probability of detection and punishment

Social acceptance

Normalization of corruption (“everyone does it”)

Lack of transparency

Opaque processes with little public scrutiny

Key Anti-Corruption Laws

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (Amended 2018)

Criminalizes bribery by and of public servants; protects bona fide decisions

Primary anti-corruption law

Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016

Prohibits holding property in benami names

Tackles concealment of corruption proceeds

Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002

Criminalizes laundering of illicit funds

Addresses disposal and circulation of corruption money

Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999

Regulates cross-border financial transactions

Checks illegal capital flight

Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013

Establishes independent anti-corruption ombudsman

Investigates senior officials and political leaders

Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014

Protects individuals reporting corruption

Encourages disclosure and safeguards informants

Gaps in Implementation

Slow prosecution (avg. 7–10 years)

Leads to low conviction rates

Prior sanction required for prosecuting senior officials

Can act as a political shield

Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate under government control

Raises concerns about autonomy

Incomplete whistleblower protection

Creates fear of retaliation among informants

Prevention of Corruption Act Amendment: Key Changes

Change	Significance
Bribe-giver also criminalized	Both sides of corruption transaction made criminal
Bonafide decision protection	Good faith decisions immune even if suboptimal outcome
Prior sanction for prosecution of serving officers	Retains protection against frivolous prosecution
Commercial organization liability	Companies liable for failing to prevent bribery
International cooperation provisions	Asset recovery from foreign jurisdictions

Case Study – The 2G Spectrum Scam (2010): CAG estimated loss of ₹1.76 lakh crore. Supreme Court cancelled 122 licences. The then Minister was arrested but later acquitted (2017). This case showed that corruption can be grand, and prosecution can fail despite massive evidence.

Institutions for Dealing with Corruption

Central Vigilance Commission

Mandate: Advise and supervise vigilance and anti-corruption efforts

Powers: Advisory; can recommend inquiry and prosecution

Weaknesses: No direct prosecution powers; recommendations not binding

Central Bureau of Investigation

Mandate: Investigate corruption, economic offences, special crimes

Powers: Investigation and filing of chargesheets

Weaknesses: Requires sanction for senior officials; concerns of political interference

Lokpal of India

Mandate: Probe corruption against high public functionaries

Powers: Search, seizure, prosecution

Weaknesses: Not fully effective in practice; special procedures for probing PM

Lokayuktas (State level)

Mandate: State-level anti-corruption ombudsman

Powers: Vary across states

Weaknesses: Uneven strength; some states lack effective institutions

Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Mandate: Audit government expenditure

Powers: Reports submitted to Parliament

Weaknesses: Findings are recommendatory, not enforceable

Enforcement Directorate

Mandate: Investigate money laundering and forex violations

Powers: Asset attachment, arrest

Weaknesses: Criticized for selective targeting

Public Accounts Committee

Mandate: Examine CAG reports and public expenditure

Powers: Can summon officials and make recommendations

Weaknesses: Cannot prosecute offenders

Autonomy Challenge – Vineet Narain Case (1997)

The Supreme Court directed that CBI and CVC must be given functional autonomy. Yet, repeated allegations of political interference remain.

Case Study – The Rafale Deal (2019): The CAG submitted a report to Parliament. The PAC examined it, but the government refused to share certain documents citing national security. The Supreme Court closed the case. This shows the limits of institutional checks.

PYQ Connect: "Examine the effectiveness of anti-corruption laws in India. What reforms are needed?"

Quote: "Institutions are only as strong as the political will that supports them."

Approaches to Improve Quality of Service Delivery

Quality service delivery improvement requires simultaneous action on multiple fronts — technology alone, or training alone, or accountability alone is insufficient.

Framework for Service Delivery Reform

Approach	Mechanism	Example
Process Reengineering	Eliminate unnecessary steps; redesign around citizen needs	Passport Seva Kendra — from 40-step to 10-step process
Technology Deployment	Digitize; automate; enable self-service	Aadhaar-based direct benefit transfer; UMANG app
One-Stop Service Centers	Multiple services at single location	Common Service Centres (CSCs); e-Mitra in Rajasthan
Time-Bound Service Laws	Legal obligation to deliver within specified time	Rajasthan Guaranteed Delivery of Public Services Act, 2011
Third-Party Audit	Independent assessment of service quality	Independent evaluation of scheme outcomes
Grievance Redressal Systems	Fast, accessible complaint mechanisms	CPGRAMS; state CM helplines
Social Accountability	Community monitoring and feedback	Social audit; citizen report cards
Outcome Budgeting	Budgets linked to service outcomes, not inputs	Performance-linked expenditure allocation

Right to Public Services Movement

Several states have enacted Right to Public Services Acts — creating legal entitlements to time-bound service delivery with compensation for failure.

Madhya Pradesh – MP Loksevas Guarantee Act, 2010

Compensation: ₹250 per day for delay

Rajasthan – Rajasthan Guaranteed Delivery of Public Services Act, 2011

Compensation: Monetary compensation + disciplinary action against officials

Bihar – Bihar Right to Public Services Act, 2011

Compensation: Defined compensation mechanism for delays

Delhi – Delhi Right of Citizen to Time Bound Delivery of Services Act, 2011

Compensation: Compensation + appeal provisions

Himachal Pradesh – HP Public Services Guarantee Act, 2011

Compensation: Penalty imposed on defaulting officer

Case Study – Aadhaar-enabled PDS in Chhattisgarh: Biometric authentication reduced leakages from 40% to 5%. Efficiency improved. Citizen satisfaction rose. This is technology-driven quality improvement.

E-Governance and Probity

E-governance — the use of information technology in public administration — has profound implications for probity, extending beyond efficiency to fundamentally restructuring the corruption opportunity landscape.

How E-Governance Enhances Probity

Mechanism	How It Works	Example
Eliminates Discretion	Automated processes remove the human gate-keeper who can extract a bribe	Aadhaar-linked pension payment — no human mediator
Creates Audit Trail	Every digital transaction is recorded — enables accountability	GeM procurement — complete transaction history
Real-time Monitoring	Dashboards expose delays and anomalies instantly	MGNREGS dashboard — live data on work and payment
Reduces Information Asymmetry	Citizens can verify status without intermediary	Passport status; PF balance; scholarship payment status
Geo-tagging	Physically verifies work was done at claimed location	MGNREGS work geo-tagged; road construction verified
Biometric Attendance	Ensures personnel actually present	School teachers; government office attendance
Direct Benefit Transfer	Eliminates intermediary; benefits reach bank account directly	LPG subsidy; PM-KISAN; scholarship payments

Success Stories

Aadhaar

Probity impact: Eliminated ghost beneficiaries across welfare schemes

Scale: ~1.36 billion enrolled

Direct Benefit Transfer

Probity impact: Removed middlemen; reduced leakage

Scale: ~₹28 lakh crore transferred (2014–2023)

Government e-Marketplace

Probity impact: Transparent procurement and competitive pricing

Scale: ₹2 lakh crore+ annual procurement

MGNREGS Management Information System

Probity impact: Real-time work and payment tracking; supports social audits

Scale: ~15 crore active workers

Public Financial Management System

Probity impact: Real-time tracking of central scheme expenditure

Scale: Covers virtually all central scheme funds

eBiz Portal

Probity impact: Simplifies licensing; reduces “inspector raj”

Scale: Nationwide business facilitation platform

DigiLocker

Probity impact: Prevents document fraud through secure digital records

Scale: 200 crore+ documents issued

VAHAN and Sarathi

Probity impact: Reduces RTO corruption via tamper-proof records

Scale: Nationwide vehicle and driving license database

Limitations of Digital Governance

PYQ Connect: "E-governance is a powerful tool against corruption." Discuss with examples.

Quote: "E-governance is not about computers. It is about reducing the human discretion where corruption breeds."

Balancing Development and Environmental Protection

One of the most consequential and difficult governance ethics challenges of the 21st century is the tension between development — needed to lift populations from poverty — and environmental protection — needed to sustain the natural systems on which all life depends.

Ethical Tension

Constitutional and Legal Framework (Environment)

Article 48A

State shall protect and improve the environment; safeguard forests and wildlife

Article 51A(g)

Fundamental duty to protect and improve the environment and show compassion for living creatures

Environment Protection Act, 1986

Comprehensive framework for environmental protection

Forest Conservation Act, 1980

Requires prior Central Government approval for diversion of forest land

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

Protection of wildlife and their habitats

Forest Rights Act, 2006

Recognizes rights of tribal communities over forest land

EIA Notification, 2006

Mandates Environmental Impact Assessment before major projects

National Green Tribunal Act, 2010

Establishes a specialized tribunal for environmental disputes

Balance – Ethical Principles

Principle	Action
Precautionary principle	When scientific uncertainty exists, err on side of environmental safety
Polluter pays	Industry must compensate for damage
Public participation	Informed consent (e.g., Niyamgiri SC case)
Sustainable development	Meet needs of present without compromising future generations

Case Study – The Niyamgiri Hills (Odisha) – Supreme Court (2013):

Vedanta wanted bauxite mining on a hill sacred to Dongria Kondh tribals. SC said: "Get consent of villagers through gram sabha." Villagers refused. Development stopped. This is balancing by giving voice to the affected.

PYQ Connect: "How should a civil servant balance development and environmental protection?"

Ethics of Global Governance

Global governance refers to the collective management of shared global problems — climate change, pandemic response, nuclear proliferation, global financial stability, terrorism — that no single nation can solve alone. Ethical issues include:

Issue	Ethical Question
Climate change	Who should bear the cost – rich nations (historically high emitters) or poor (suffer more)?
International aid	Does aid create dependency? Should unconditional aid be given?
Global health (vaccine distribution)	Is hoarding vaccines by rich nations ethical?
Refugee crisis	Principle of non-refoulement vs. national security
International criminal court	Should powerful nations be above justice?
Tax havens	Is it ethical for some nations to enable tax evasion?

India's Ethical Position in Global Governance

Climate

India's position: CBDR, right to development, just energy transition

Ethical evaluation: Principled — acknowledges historical responsibility and equity

UN Reform

India's position: UNSC reform and permanent membership demand

Ethical evaluation: Seeks representation justice for the Global South

Trade

India's position: IP flexibilities for public health

Ethical evaluation: Pro-development and access-oriented approach

Digital Governance

India's position: Data sovereignty and cyber regulation

Ethical evaluation: Emerging framework with strong national interest focus

G20 Summit 2023

India's position: "One Earth, One Family, One Future" (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam)

Ethical evaluation: Aspirational vision with implementation challenges

Global South Leadership

India's position: Voice for developing nations

Ethical evaluation: Consistent advocacy for equity and inclusiveness

How to Bring Probity in Governance

The Five-Level Reform Strategy

Level 1: Individual — Character and Values

Values-based recruitment: UPSC interview strengthened with genuine EI and values assessment

Ethics training: Mandatory and continuous through LBSNAA, state academies, and in-service programs

Mentoring systems: Senior officers model probity for juniors

Reflective practice: Journaling, peer supervision, ethics case discussions

Adequate compensation: Reduce financial pressure that may drive petty corruption

Level 2: Institutional — Incentives and Structures

Fixed tenures: Minimum 2-year tenure in substantive posts to reduce transfer vulnerability

Integrity-linked promotion: Probity record weighted in promotion decisions

Protection of honest officers: Whistleblower protection and safeguards against retaliatory transfers

Performance evaluation reform: ACR includes citizen satisfaction and integrity indicators

Asset declaration: Public, online disclosure with cross-verification through tax records

Level 3: Process — Reducing Corruption Opportunity

E-governance expansion: Digitization of all citizen–government interactions

Random case assignment: Prevents selective allocation to compliant officers

Transparent procurement: GeM, e-tendering, and open competition systems

Simplification: Removal of unnecessary rules and steps that create rent-seeking opportunities

Social audit: Community verification of public works

Level 4: Accountability — Enforcement

Independent anti-corruption agencies: Statutorily autonomous CBI and effective Lokpal

Fast-track courts: Dedicated courts with time-bound (2-year) trial limits

Asset recovery: Strong enforcement of PMLA and international cooperation

Whistleblower protection: Includes witness, career, and personal safety safeguards

Independent audit: Strengthened CAG with institutionalized performance audits

Level 5: Cultural — Long-term Transformation

Ethics education in schools: Constitutional values and civic responsibility from early education

Role model promotion: Public recognition of honest officers

Narrative change: Media and civil society reinforcing integrity as norm

Social accountability culture: Community monitoring as civic practice

Political will: Essential foundation enabling all other reforms to function

Case Study – The 'I Paid a Bribe' Website (Transparency International):

Citizens anonymously report bribe demands. Data helps identify corruption hotspots. A simple, citizen-driven measure for probity.

PYQ Connect: "Suggest practical measures to bring probity in governance in India."



Practice Questions

1. "Some people feel that values keep changing with time while others believe in universal and eternal human values." Discuss in the context of three basic universal values Truth, Compassion and Justice. (150 words)
2. Differentiate between Ethics, Morality and Law with suitable examples. How does this distinction help a civil servant in resolving day-to-day dilemmas? (150 words)
3. "Narrow perception of the good life is at the root of the crisis of ethical values." Examine. (150 words)
4. In the digital age, the conflict between transparency and privacy has intensified. Analyse the ethical dilemmas for civil servants in handling data privacy versus public interest. (150 words)
5. Welfare schemes in India often fail to reach the most marginalised due to biases embedded in administrative systems and personal prejudices of implementing officers. Identify the nature of such biases and suggest measures for civil servants to rise above them for equitable welfare delivery. (150 words)
6. Artificial intelligence is increasingly being deployed in public administration for decisions ranging from bail recommendations to welfare eligibility. Examine the key ethical dilemmas this raises and the role civil servants must play in ensuring algorithmic accountability and constitutional safeguards. (150 words)
7. "Humans should be treated as ends in themselves, not as means." Critically analyse this Kantian principle in the context of development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas. (150 words)
8. "A positive attitude is an essential characteristic of a civil servant functioning under extreme stress." Identify the major contributors to a positive attitude. (150 words)
9. Differentiate between bureaucratic attitude and democratic attitude with examples. Which one is more suitable for good governance? (150 words)
10. Given below are three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context? (150 words each) (a) "Those who in trouble untroubled are, will trouble trouble itself?" — Thiruvalluvar (b) "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind." — William James (c) "The strength of a society lies not in its laudable ideals, but in the morality of its people."
11. Mahavira's teachings of Ahimsa, Anekantavada, and Aparigraha offer a timeless ethical framework for resolving conflicts in governance. Discuss how these major teachings remain relevant for a civil servant navigating competing stakeholder interests in development administration today. (150 words)
12. Rising above personal and unconscious biases is critical for impartial implementation of welfare schemes. Suggest concrete measures for civil servants. (150 words)
13. "Positive vs Negative mindset significantly impacts rational decision-making in bureaucracy." Discuss with suitable examples. (150 words)

14. "Punishment should restore, not merely retaliate." How would you shift the focus from punitive disciplinary action to restorative justice for a young civil servant who made an honest but costly mistake? (150 words)
15. A female civil servant posted in a remote area faces sexual harassment from a local politician and resistance from her own department. What specific measures will you take to address her challenges and empower her for grassroots delivery? (150 words)
16. Differentiate with an example: reliability in ethical decision-making vs consistency in administrative decision-making. Can a decision be reliable but unethical? (150 words)
17. "Empathy without integrity is sentimental; integrity without empathy is brutal." What essential traits must a civil servant possess for good governance and inclusive development? (150 words)
18. A bureaucrat becomes preoccupied with peripheral metrics (number of toilets built) rather than core outcomes (actual usage and behavioural change). Why does this happen ethically, and how would you correct it? (150 words)
19. Two families approach you — one from your own community and one from a community you dislike. As a district magistrate, how will you ensure empathy and compassion are not compromised by personal biases in welfare distribution? (150 words)
20. What do you understand by 'Spirit of Service'? How can it be inculcated among young civil servants? (150 words)
21. Merely codifying rules does not guarantee ethical conduct in public organisations. Discuss the measures required to institutionalise a values-based culture across levels of government, with reference to both structural reforms and attitudinal transformation. (150 words)
22. Sustainable development cannot be realised without an ethical framework that balances growth, equity, and environmental stewardship. Critically examine why an ethical framework is indispensable for sustainable growth and how India's policy landscape reflects or neglects this imperative. (150 words)
23. Examine the ethical considerations that should govern the conduct of powerful nations in contemporary geopolitical conflicts. (150 words)
24. Examine the ethical obligations of present generations toward future ones and suggest a values-based framework for ending global warming and restoring ecological equilibrium. (150 words)
25. Justice and injustice are not absolute categories — what is just in one cultural, historical, or social context may be unjust in another. Examine the contextual nature of justice with suitable examples from Indian governance and discuss how civil servants should navigate this ambiguity. (150 words)
26. Contrast positive mindset vs negative mindset in bureaucracy with an example from a failed monsoon and subsequent drought relief operations. Which mindset leads to ethical outcomes? (150 words)
27. The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) initiative has reduced leakage but excluded many poor without digital literacy. What ethical issues arise for vulnerable sections, and how would you mitigate them? (150 words)
28. "Ethics is needed in every sphere of public service – from peon to principal secretary." Do you agree? Argue with an example where ignoring ethics at lower rungs caused a systemic failure. (150 words)

- 29.** What is the role of ethics and values in building human capital, enhancing India's soft power, and maintaining social harmony? Illustrate each with one specific measure. (150 words)
- 30.** Critically examine the claim that EQ matters more than IQ for success in civil services, with suitable examples. (150 words)
- 31.** Public institutions derive their legitimacy not only from legal authority but from the trust and confidence of those they serve. Examine how reliability in ethical decision-making (consistency, predictability, and trustworthiness) is essential for governance and democratic development. (150 words)
- 32.** Discuss why ethical governance is an essential precondition for sustainable development, with Indian examples. (150 words)
- 33.** Guru Nanak's three teachings — Naam Japo, Kirat Karo, and Vand Chakko — offer a framework for ethical living that transcends religious identity. Discuss how these teachings remain relevant today, particularly for those in public service. (150 words)
- 34.** Examine the philosophical basis of probity in governance and discuss why its erosion — even in seemingly minor decisions — has cascading consequences for institutional trust. (150 words)
- 35.** Examine the essence, determinants, and consequences of ethics in human actions, illustrating how the same action can carry different ethical weight depending on intent, context, and consequence. (150 words)
- 36.** The distinction between ethics in private relationships and ethics in public relationships is not merely one of scale — it reflects a fundamentally different structure of obligation, accountability, and power. Examine this distinction, drawing from real examples of how private ethical failures translate into public governance crises. (150 words)
- 37.** Transparency is frequently sacrificed for administrative convenience, political protection, or institutional self-preservation. Examine the ethical case for radical transparency in governance and its limits, with reference to specific Indian institutional failures. (150 words)
- 38.** Analyse the role of social influence and persuasion in shaping the moral and political attitudes of civil servants, and discuss what institutional countermeasures can protect ethical independence. (150 words)
- 39.** What are the three essential determinants of ethical human action? Illustrate each with a concrete administrative decision such as granting a permit or rejecting a bribe. (150 words)
- 40.** From the lives of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar or Mother Teresa, identify one ethical value that every civil servant must imbibe. How would you inculcate that value in a newly recruited officer? (150 words)
- 41.** "The Citizen's Charter in most districts is a formality, not a commitment." What specific work culture reforms would you introduce to make service delivery accountable and citizen-centric? (150 words)
- 42.** Draft a four-point code of conduct specifically for public servants handling disaster relief funds, where speed often compromises probity. (150 words)
- 43.** "Right to Information is a powerful tool for ensuring probity in governance, yet its effectiveness remains limited." Critically examine. (150 words)

44. What are the major challenges of corruption in utilisation of public funds? Suggest measures to strengthen transparency and accountability. (150 words)

45. Examine the structural dimensions of corruption in Indian public administration and evaluate whether the present anti-corruption architecture — CVC, Lokpal, PMLA, whistleblower protection — is structurally adequate or merely cosmetically effective. (150 words)

46. Given below are three quotations. What do each of them convey to you in the present context of ethics in human interface and governance? (150 words each) (a) “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors — we borrow it from our children.” (b) “The measure of a country’s greatness is its ability to retain compassion in times of crisis.” — Thurgood Marshall (c) “It is not enough to do good; one must do it the right way.” — John Morley

PYQ

Ethics

Case Studies

by

Ashok Khemka Sir



REAL-LIFE
SITUATIONS



ETHICAL
DECISION MAKING



VALUES IN
ACTION



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Part C: One-Page Revision Sheet

Quotable lines & maxims

Keyword toolkit for answers

The five-step answer skeleton

Khemka Sir's closing words

How to use this for Mains

Internalise Part A first — these recurring principles are what you actually apply; the case is only the wrapper.

For each case, cover the right column and write a 150–250 word answer using the 5-step skeleton (Part C), then compare.

Group your practice by theme so you build a default approach for each family of dilemmas.

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Core Ethical Toolkit

Ten ideas that recur across almost every answer. Make them your default reasoning kit.

- 1 The difficult-choice rule.** Of two or three options, the harder one is almost always ethical; the easy, convenient (suvadhavadi) option usually slides toward corruption. Ethical conduct is measured by the benefit you forgo and the hardship you accept.
- 2 The Sunshine Test.** Do only what you could state openly, in public, and still feel proud of. If you wouldn't say it in the open, don't do it.
- 3 Public interest is supreme.** A public servant is paid by the public and is its servant; public interest can never be sacrificed for private interest. Working against public interest is itself corruption, even with no bribe.
- 4 No 'big' vs 'small' corruption.** Corruption is corruption; 'petty corruption oils the engine' is a rationalisation. But don't be a rigid rule-bound 'lakeer ka fakeer' — judge by your larger intent.
- 5 Without fear or favour.** The Constitution requires it. Paying a goonda tax out of fear, or bending a decision for a favour, both fail this test.
- 6 Recusal — justice must be seen to be done.** Where a relative or personal interest is involved, step away; disclose the conflict. In a private firm, disclose to top management and act only if they still entrust you.
- 7 Whistleblowing belongs to the private sector.** It is loyalty to the company vs the larger loyalty to the public. In the public sector the same act is simply duty, because a public servant already owes loyalty only to the public.
- 8 Resistance reduces injustice.** Against entrenched wrongdoing, surrender lets it grow; resistance — even in defeat — shrinks the wrongdoer's power. Stay optimistic that truth prevails.
- 9 Dignity is non-negotiable.** An individual's dignity — especially of women at the workplace — cannot be exchanged for profit; a high-performing harasser still faces action.
- 10 Speed and fairness in process.** 'Justice delayed is justice denied' — but 'justice hurried is justice buried' too. False complaints should carry the same punishment as the offence they falsely allege.

Theme-wise Case-Study Bank

Theme 1 — Office & Work Culture (RTI · Whistleblowing · Secrecy)

1.1 · 2016

Your boss is beating his wife at home; you witnessed it while dropping files. Do you intervene in this private matter?

Khemka Sir's Response: Intervene. Violence is never justifiable, least of all between spouses, and mere intervention usually de-escalates the aggressor. Stay out only of a non-violent verbal quarrel.

● **Principle:** Human dignity & duty to protect override the 'private matter' framing.

1.1 · 2023

A woman employee with two children is harassed by 9:30 pm WhatsApp messages from her boss to finish file-work. Work-life balance.

Khemka Sir's Response: No file-work needed at 9:30 pm; 9-to-5 is enough and late demands reflect the boss's poor time management. She should voice her difficulty; routine file-work can always wait till morning.

● **Principle:** Work-life balance; reasonable working hours; situational human judgement.

1.2 · 2023

A foreign-educated woman architect's talent makes her boss insecure; he repeatedly humiliates her in public and she has lost confidence. What should she do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Never lose self-confidence; a mature professional must learn to handle the boss and let deliberate insults pass without internalising them. Document a pattern of harassment and use grievance channels if it persists.

● **Principle:** Emotional intelligence; protect self-worth; use redressal for sustained harassment.

1.2 · 2021

Pawan's boss is toxic and humiliates him before everyone though Pawan's work has no fault — the boss is only venting frustration on him.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Separate the behaviour from your competence: it is the boss's failing, not yours. Respond with composure, keep a record, seek a candid one-to-one, and escalate to HR/grievance redressal if the conduct continues. Don't absorb misplaced blame.

● **Principle:** Emotional intelligence; dignity at work; structured grievance redressal.

1.3 · 2013

A high-performing male director is accused of harassment; a woman employee resigns saying he molested her. As company head, how do you handle it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Act against the harasser regardless of his performance; a woman's dignity cannot be traded for company profit. Trigger the Internal Complaints Committee (PoSH Act) and follow due process — 100% lawful action.

● **Principle:** Dignity over profit; PoSH due process; sexual harassment is non-negotiable.

1.3 · 2019

A loss-making textile firm with many women workers is turned profitable by a new male manager; a woman files a sexual-harassment FIR; owners offer her a large sum to withdraw. What should she do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Hush money cannot buy away dignity or wrongdoing. She should refuse the inducement and pursue the complaint through the ICC/PoSH and law; profitability of the accused is irrelevant. The owners' attempt to buy silence is itself unethical and obstructive.

● **Principle:** Dignity is not for sale; refuse inducement; integrity of complaint process.

1.3 · 2014

An honest officer transferred to a new office tightens lazy staff; one woman files a FALSE caste-harassment complaint with the Women's Commission. What now?

Khemka Sir's Response: Be patient, state your case truthfully and stay optimistic that truth prevails; the complainant must furnish proof. A false complaint, if proved false, should attract the same punishment as the alleged offence, since the falsely accused suffers real mental torture and risk.

● **Principle:** Due process + patience; symmetry of punishment for proven-false complaints.

1.4 · 2023

A woman bank employee needs Rs 10 lakh for her father's treatment; her boss arranges money from a customer's dormant account, promising to repay it quietly later.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Refuse. However sympathetic the motive, this is misappropriation of a customer's funds — a fraud and breach of fiduciary duty; a compassionate end cannot justify illegal means. Seek legitimate routes instead: salary advance, bank welfare/loan, CM relief or health schemes (PMJAY), or transparent crowdfunding.

● **Principle:** Ends don't justify means; fiduciary duty; integrity of public trust in banking.

1.5 · 2020

As Finance Secretary you can fund only one of two announced projects — a housing scheme for the poor, or a new SEZ — and the unfunded one will invite heavy criticism of the government.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Decide on merit and constitutional values, not on fear of criticism. Weigh distributive justice (housing for the weakest, DPSP Articles 38/39) against growth and employment (SEZ); prioritise the basic need of the poorest while exploring phased funding, PPP or external aid for the other. Place a transparent, reasoned note on record.

● **Principle:** Distributive justice; decision on objective merit, not optics; Rawlsian priority to the worst-off.

1.6 · 2022

Illegal mining in the Aravallis; journalist Ashok writes the report, but his TV-channel owner colludes with the mafia and offers Rs 10 lakh + promotion to bury it.

Khemka Sir's Response: Straightforward bribery — no two views. A journalist serves only the public interest; suppressing truth out of greed or fear is itself corrupt conduct, arguably worse than the crime he conceals.

● **Principle:** Public interest is supreme; integrity and independence of the press.

1.6 · 2018

Snowden, a CIA contractor, leaked classified documents to the media/WikiLeaks; he broke the law but believes the public had a moral right to know about wrongdoing. Your view?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: A genuine dilemma between the public's right to know and national security plus rule of law. His moral conviction is real, but the ideal route is disclosure through protected, legitimate channels rather than wholesale leaks; a conscientious whistleblower should also be willing to face lawful consequences. Strong whistleblower-protection laws reduce the need for such extreme acts.

● **Principle:** Whistleblowing via lawful channels; transparency vs security; civil disobedience accepts consequences.

1.6 · 2016

New job at a chemical factory (good salary); you discover untreated toxic chemicals are dumped into a river and villagers are falling ill. Speaking up may cost your job; conscience won't rest.

Khemka Sir's Response: Whistleblowing is hard because you act against your own livelihood for a higher motive, but your supreme duty is to bring the pollution to public notice in the larger public interest. There must be a protective law shielding the whistleblower from retaliation.

● **Principle:** Loyalty to public interest > loyalty to employer; whistleblower protection.

1.7 · 2017

Activists misuse RTI to 'dig up graves' and extort officials; many are puppets of land mafia/politicians, and frivolous applications clog administration. How to separate genuine from non-genuine (with pros & cons)?

Khemka Sir's Response: RTI flows from Article 19 free expression, a foremost fundamental right, so curbs must be careful. Use Section 8 / public-interest provisions to refuse where there is no public interest or the intent is to harass, via a brave, reasoned 'speaking order'; appeals and courts remain the safeguard. (Pro: deters blackmail; Con: risk of misuse to deny genuine information — hence reasoned orders and appellate checks.)

● **Principle:** Balance transparency with preventing abuse; reasoned speaking orders; appellate safeguards.

1.7 · 2013

As PIO, a truthful RTI reply will expose a colleague's honest (unintentional) error and may get him severely punished; delaying/wrong reply risks a smaller penalty on you. What advice?

Khemka Sir's Response: Advise the colleague to own up and seek forgiveness — 'to err is human', and genuine mistakes are usually pardoned. Answer the RTI truthfully as per record; never refuse or distort an RTI merely to shield a colleague.

● **Principle:** Transparency over personal loyalty; owning honest mistakes.

1.7 · 2013

In the Finance Ministry, a builder (a favourite of your seniors, with a good track record) wants advance knowledge of an upcoming construction policy before others.

Khemka Sir's Response: Corrupt act — this is insider information leakage akin to insider trading and falls under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Secrecy that benefits one person at the public's cost must never be breached.

● **Principle:** No leakage of privileged information for private gain; equal access.

Theme 2 — Land & Development Projects

2.1 · 2015

A government plot acquired for a school involved irregularities in its purchase; siting the school there would force children to travel a long distance.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Treat as two distinct issues. Investigate and act on the procurement irregularity (rule of law), but separately protect the children's right to education — arrange an accessible interim site/transport so their schooling isn't held hostage to the corruption inquiry.

● **Principle:** Integrity in procurement + the child's best interest; don't let one wrong block a public good.

2.1 · 2016

For mining/dam projects, villagers' land is acquired; the one-time cash soon runs out and they become low-wage labourers in the same factories. Design a better R&R policy.

Khemka Sir's Response: Their income-generating asset is lost, so design rehabilitation that restores livelihoods: (1) a job for one family member in the project; (2) binding employable-skills training for adult/adolescent members; (3) instead of a lump sum, a stake in the project or a lifetime annuity (e.g. pay part in cash, convert the rest to annuity) so families don't end up destitute.

● **Principle:** Rehabilitation must restore livelihoods, not merely compensate.

2.1 · 2018

A minister wants the new highway re-aligned to pass beside his 20-acre farmhouse to raise its real-estate value (and offers you a commission); this means felling much more forest.

Khemka Sir's Response: Unethical and corrupt — refuse. The sound general remedy: when a project will raise nearby land values, the government should acquire that land and capture the appreciation for the public, rather than let officials and politicians profit. Alignment must follow technical and environmental merit, not private gain.

● **Principle:** Without fear or favour; publicly-created value belongs to the public; environmental duty.

2.2 · 2016

A company (given tax breaks) wants a project in 'Vikaspuri'; some locals fear social-economic disruption and want to go to court despite the firm's CSR offers to the displaced. What should the company do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Engage in genuine, prior consultation (FPIC-style), strengthen R&R beyond tokenism, and honour CSR commitments transparently. Respect the locals' right to legal recourse rather than suppressing dissent; sustainable development means carrying the community along, not over-riding it.

● **Principle:** Stakeholder consultation; sustainable development; right to peaceful dissent.

Theme 3 — Municipal Administration

3.1 · 2013 / 2021

A bridge is incomplete; intense public pressure to open it; your boss/minister scolds you and wants an early ribbon-cutting.

Khemka Sir's Response: Do not fast-forward at the cost of construction quality (natural processes like cement curing have their own time), and never open an unsafe structure for an occasion. But there is no justification for delay either — delay causes huge cost escalation; timely completion (à la DMRC under Sreedharan) is the goal.

● **Principle:** Quality must not be compromised; but no avoidable delay either.

3.1 · 2020

As Municipal Commissioner, an under-construction mall collapses, killing four workers; the inquiry reveals your own juniors gave illegal permission for a second basement. You are pressured to slow the inquiry, or a false PoSH/caste complaint will be filed against you.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Accountability for four deaths is paramount: run a fair, thorough and timely inquiry and let the guilty juniors face due process — do not shield them. Treat the threat of a false complaint as intimidation; act without fear or favour, document everything, inform superiors/vigilance, and proceed.

● **Principle:** Accountability for loss of life; moral courage; without fear or favour.

3.1 · 2017

Why are illegal/unsafe buildings constructed in urban areas, causing deaths of workers and residents, and how to prevent it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Two root causes: developers' greed / quick-money syndrome leading to unauthorised, unsafe construction without precautions (barricading, signage, illumination), and poor, often compromised, regulation. Fix both — strict, technology-aided enforcement of building and safety norms, and accountable regulators.

● **Principle:** Avoidable disasters stem from greed + weak regulation; enforce both.

Theme 4 — Corruption (General)

4.1 · 2014

Rameshwar cracks UPSC but within months is demoralised by pervasive corruption and wants to resign. What do you advise?

Khemka Sir's Response: Don't surrender the field to the corrupt by quitting — that hands them victory. The honest are not a helpless 10%; if even 20-30 in 100 push back, corruption cannot persist. Stay, build a clean record, use the Sunshine Test, and remember the easier option usually slides toward corruption while the harder one is ethical.

● **Principle:** Inaction by the good enables evil; resistance works; persevere.

4.1 · 2017

'If 90% of the system is corrupt, the honest 10% make no difference; petty gifts and small corruption as the oil that keeps the engine efficient are fine.' Your view?

Khemka Sir's Response: Reject the premise — the system is not 90% corrupt, and there is no big vs small corruption: corruption is corruption. The 'efficient corruption' argument is a rationalisation. But avoid rigid rule-bound conduct (lakeer ka fakeer); judge by your larger intent using the Sunshine Test.

● **Principle:** No big/small corruption; reject 'efficient corruption'; Sunshine Test.

4.2 · 2016

Saraswati returns from the US to start an NGO but, frustrated by corrupt and apathetic officials denying clearances, abandons the project and leaves. Regulation is needed, but should there be a middle path so honest social workers aren't discouraged?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Yes — governance should enable, not harass, honest citizens. Keep oversight (FCRA, audit, transparency) to prevent misuse, but make it a middle path: single-window, time-bound, online clearances with clear criteria and accountability for delay. A system that drives away the well-meaning fails its own purpose.

● **Principle:** Enabling, citizen-centric governance; balanced regulation; accountability for delay.

Theme 5 — Medical, Public Health & Disaster

5.1 · 2023

A landslide blocks the road; a woman in childbirth is bleeding heavily and the blood bank is far. A colleague will donate, but there's no time for HIV/other tests — only a group match. Allow the transfusion?

Khemka Sir's Response: Choose the lesser of two evils — allow it. Without blood she faces serious risk of death; the chance of infected blood is low and even HIV is now treatable. Save the life first.

● **Principle:** Lesser-evil reasoning; right to life prioritised under genuine emergency.

5.1 · 2018

A service-minded doctor with a small clinic wants to build the area's only big hospital. As an Income-Tax officer you find minor, inadvertent discrepancies in his TDS/tax papers that could stall the project. Ignore them, or be a stickler?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Neither extreme. Apply the law proportionately: allow rectification of bona fide, minor and inadvertent errors (most tax statutes permit this) rather than weaponising technicalities to block a genuine public-good project — but never grant an illegitimate favour or overlook real evasion.

● **Principle:** Proportionality; rule of law without rigidity; serve public interest, not technicality.

5.1 · 2017

You are heading to your UPSC interview when you witness a road accident and no one is helping. What do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Practically: dial 112/100 and report it, then proceed. But the highest ethical conduct is to get the victim to hospital within the golden hour yourself and request UPSC to reschedule — a request the Commission should accommodate.

● **Principle:** Golden-hour duty vs realistic action; honesty about the gap between the two.

5.1 · 2024

As a senior pharma scientist, hiding select negative clinical-trial data would win fast approval for a drug against a rapidly spreading new virus and could save many lives. Do it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Absolutely not — it is unethical. A molecule may enter clinical use only after complete testing and clearance by an independent regulator, without fudging data; belief or urgency is no substitute for evidence. Follow the entire procedure.

● **Principle:** Scientific integrity; no fudging of clinical data, even to save lives.

5.1 · 2015

A drug your firm makes for animals could, with more research, cure a human liver disease — but that disease afflicts only poor tribal communities, so even after spending Rs 50 crore you would never profit. Pursue it?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Pursue the research — the right to health and corporate ethics outweigh pure profit, especially for a neglected, marginalised group. Profit is not the only metric: seek government, CSR, PPP, philanthropic or orphan-drug funding to make it viable. Abandoning a possible cure purely because the sufferers are poor is ethically indefensible.

● **Principle:** Right to health; beneficence over profit; equity for the marginalised.

5.2 · 2020

Covid lockdown: migrant workers have no food, money or transport home. As District Magistrate, how do you manage the mass?

Khemka Sir's Response: The migrant worker is the most destitute, ignored by both home and host states. First secure food, medicine and shelter so they need not leave; then arrange trains/buses for a dignified journey home. Forcing them to walk highways in harsh weather without resources was deeply inhuman.

● **Principle:** Security of basic needs + dignity; humane crisis administration.

5.2 · 2021

As administrator of a government hospital at the very first arrival of Covid (lethality unknown), hundreds of patients pour in daily and staff face uncertain, possibly fatal infection risk. Your decision — and would it differ in a private hospital?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: You cannot abandon patients — that is the core duty of a public health institution. Treat them, while owing a parallel duty of care to staff: provide PPE, protocols, rotation, rest, insurance and incentives, and informed consent. The duty would be the same in a private hospital, but a public institution carries a higher, non-discretionary obligation to serve.

● **Principle:** Twin duty of care (patients and staff); public duty over self-interest.

5.2 · 2019

After a landslide your relief team arrives very late; angry villagers scuffle with and assault your colleagues, who now say these people 'don't deserve our help' and want to leave.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Acknowledge the villagers' genuine anguish and your team's lapse, but never abandon relief out of ego or anger — their suffering does not make them unworthy. De-escalate, ensure team safety, apologise for the delay, and resume work; public service is measured precisely in such moments.

● **Principle:** Empathy and perseverance; public service above ego; impartial duty.

5.2 · 2015

A cloudburst has stranded many pilgrims and local residents. How do you evacuate them?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Run textbook disaster management: triage and prioritise by vulnerability (injured, elderly, women, children), coordinate NDRF/state forces and resources, set up relief camps with food/medicine/communication, and treat pilgrims and locals impartially. Restore links and account for the missing.

● **Principle:** Prioritisation by need; impartiality; coordinated disaster response.

Theme 6 — Empathy for the Weaker Sections

6.1 · 2018

A very poor, gravely ill elderly man can get free treatment under a government scheme only if he belongs to a reservation category. As District Magistrate, what do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Do not let a category technicality cost a life. Treat first, then explore every alternative — BPL/economically-weaker provisions, Ayushman Bharat (PMJAY), CM/PM relief funds, hospital welfare or your discretionary powers. The spirit of welfare schemes is to reach the needy, not to exclude on a technical bar.

● **Principle:** Right to life/health; compassionate administration beyond the letter of the rule.

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6.1 · 2016

A very poor elderly woman has no documents to prove her eligibility for any scheme. As DM, what do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Get her documents made on priority — Aadhaar (now near-universal) and ration card; once identity is established, all benefits flow. Giving a poor person her identity papers is the greatest single service you can render.

● **Principle:** Identity documents as the gateway to entitlements; proactive administration.

6.2 · 2020

Children work in cotton fields, harming their schooling and health; their poor parents need the income and the local NGO is inactive. As District Development Officer, what can you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Rescue the children (child labour is illegal and harms their future) while tackling the root cause: link parents to livelihood/MGNREGA/SHG schemes so the family doesn't depend on child income, enrol children with mid-day meals and scholarships, and activate or replace the inactive NGO with monitoring.

● **Principle:** Child rights; address root causes; holistic, sustainable rehabilitation.

6.2 · 2013

A Sivakasi firecracker factory owner uses child labour; on a raid he produces papers claiming the children are relatives doing 'a little housework', not factory work.

Khemka Sir's Response: It is not credible that 10-20 'relatives' happen to be present; in such hazardous occupations the presumption runs against the owner — he must prove the children are relatives there for non-work purposes. Send the children to the Social Welfare Board and act against the owner.

● **Principle:** Presumption against the owner in hazardous child labour; child protection.

Theme 7 — Education

7.1 · 2023

As an IAS officer you counsel the classmates bullying your son; mischief-makers post a video/clip on social media falsely claiming you threatened the children.

Khemka Sir's Response: Distinguish your duty as a father from your official role: go in a private capacity (own vehicle, no insignia) to counsel the children. Against the false propaganda, take lawful action — ask for removal, then pursue legal remedy and action against those spreading the falsehood. Don't abandon a genuine family need merely to protect your image.

● **Principle:** Separate official from private role; lawful remedy against misinformation.

7.1 · 2015

Villagers stop sending children (girls) to school because some loiterers harass them on the way. As the officer, what do you do?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Safety is the precondition for education. Ensure safe passage — police patrolling on the route, community-volunteer escorts, a complaint mechanism — and act firmly against the harassers under law. Engage parents and the community so children, especially girls, return to school.

● **Principle:** Safety + right to education; gender sensitivity; community engagement.

7.1 · 2015

As village sarpanch, a Dalit cook is appointed for the mid-day meal; some parents stop sending their children to school over it.

Khemka Sir's Response: Untouchability is a constitutional offence — the Dalit cook stays and cannot be wronged or removed. The only real solution is sustained Information-Education-Communication (IEC) to dismantle the prejudice; leaders may publicly share the meal to set an example, but persistence is key, since caste is a man-made construct, not God-given.

● **Principle:** Untouchability is an offence; persuade via IEC; never appease prejudice.

7.2 · 2021

As college Vice-Principal, a surprise exam check catches a lecturer helping a local leader's daughter cheat. You act; trustees pressure you to hush it up (with an instant promotion), while student leaders threaten agitation unless strict action is taken.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Academic integrity is paramount: proceed against both the lecturer and the candidate strictly per rules. Resist the trustees' inducement — a promotion bought by burying malpractice is corruption; and a transparent, rule-bound process is exactly what will satisfy the agitating students too. Act without fear or favour.

● **Principle:** Academic integrity; courage against inducement; transparency; without fear or favour.

Theme 8 — Environment

8.1 · 2024

Amid severe water scarcity all borewells are banned; farmers protest that a nearby factory runs its borewells day and night, and demand you stop it — but closing the factory would render many local youth unemployed.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: The rule must apply equally — there cannot be one rule for farmers and another for the factory. Audit the factory's water use, enforce the ban or a fair, metered allocation, and invest in sustainable solutions (recharge, recycling, efficiency). Weigh employment honestly, but equity in a scarce common resource comes first.

● **Principle:** Equity in common resources; rule of law applied uniformly; sustainability.

8.1 · 2022

As a Pollution Control Board officer you tighten enforcement on polluting small industries; they pressure you, warning of unemployment if shut, and their workers protest — but the local NGO backs you.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Enforcing environmental norms is your statutory duty (polluter-pays, precautionary principle). Pursue a 'just transition': time-bound, phased compliance with support for cleaner technology and worker re-skilling, rather than abrupt closure or surrender. Use the NGO's support to build community consensus.

● **Principle:** Environmental duty; polluter pays; just transition protecting workers.

8.1 · 2018

You shut a polluting factory; many lost jobs, and downstream factories that used its chemical as input also stalled. How do you solve this?

Khemka Sir's Response: Think in systems — closure had ripple effects. The answer is not no-action but a holistic, sustainable design: cluster-level common effluent-treatment plants and shared facilities, cleaner-tech upgrades, and phased compliance, so environment and economy are reconciled rather than traded off bluntly.

● **Principle:** Systems thinking; sustainable industrial policy; phased compliance.

8.2 · 2021

Posting amid a powerful mining mafia that stalks/harasses your wife and children and murdered the previous officer 10 years ago; locals work in the mines and won't complain, and some of your own staff take commissions.

Khemka Sir's Response: Hardest of tasks, but the only answer is to act against the illegal mining. If you surrender, the mafia thrives; if you resist — even at personal risk — their wrongdoing shrinks (100 becomes 60, then 50). Secure your family, build clean intelligence, weed out compromised staff, use higher authorities and the courts, and never give up against injustice.

● **Principle:** Resistance reduces injustice; courage; never surrender to mafias.

8.3 · 2024

As CEO of an AI company whose data servers have raised greenhouse-gas emissions 50% in five years, investing in solar etc. cuts profit and angers shareholders, while rivals racing ahead ignore such 'idealism'.

Khemka Sir's Response: Environmental sustainability is supreme over profitability — climate change is scientifically proven, and you cannot do wrong merely because others do. Set a clear renewable-energy target and move toward it. Work on two levers: reduce consumption (Gandhian restraint) and make production efficient via green technology.

● **Principle:** Sustainability over profit; 'others do wrong' is no licence; clear green targets.

Theme 9 — Policing & Internal Security

9.1 · 2019

Posted in a border state where a drug mafia is nexused with local politicians (opium cultivation, arms smuggling, trafficking of minors); locals get employment from it and no one complains.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Combine firm policing of the mafia and its political nexus with addressing the root cause — alternative, legal livelihoods and development — so locals stop depending on crime. Build community trust and protected intelligence/witness mechanisms, and show courage against the political nexus while acting strictly within the law.

● **Principle:** Rule of law + development; courage against nexus; community policing.

9.1 · 2018

In a prohibition state your raids and arrests don't stop illegal liquor; the area lacks irrigation, education and industry, so jobless, dejected people seek solace in drink.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Enforcement alone fails without tackling demand and despair. Pair supply-side action with development (livelihoods, irrigation, education), de-addiction and rehabilitation, and community awareness. Treat addiction as a public-health and socio-economic problem, not merely a law-and-order one.

● **Principle:** Root-cause, holistic governance; demand + supply side; public-health lens.

9.1 · 2024

As DIG you find most local youth unemployed and being radicalised online by terror groups; even those who don't join spend the day denouncing government policy.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Counter-radicalisation works on roots: create employment/skilling and engagement, run credible counter-narratives and community outreach, and de-radicalisation programmes. Monitor online incitement, but protect lawful free speech and civil liberties — over-reach itself fuels alienation. Mere criticism of policy is not a crime.

● **Principle:** Counter-radicalisation via root causes; balance security with civil liberties.

9.1 · 2024

During a raid on Naxals they push rural women forward as human shields and fire at you indiscriminately; with no network you cannot summon backup. Do you return fire or not?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Do not fire indiscriminately — the lives of the innocent human shields are paramount and cannot be sacrificed. Apply the principles of distinction and proportionality: hold position, take cover, attempt to retreat or negotiate, and avoid any action that would harm the women, even at tactical cost. Restraint here is the ethical and lawful course.

● **Principle:** Protection of innocents; distinction and proportionality; restraint.

9.1 · 2022

Posted in the Home Ministry, you report illegal cross-border entry and fake Aadhaar racket; your boss tells you to withdraw it (to avoid embarrassing the government) or face a distant transfer — even as your mother's treatment is ongoing in the city and your promotion is at stake.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: National security and integrity outweigh career and personal pressure: do not withdraw a truthful report. Document it, route it through proper channels (and, if needed, higher/oversight authorities), and stand by the facts. Address your mother's care separately rather than letting it coerce a dishonest act.

● **Principle:** Integrity and national interest over self-interest; moral courage.

Theme 10 — Private Sector, Favoritism & Conflict of Interest

10.1 · 2013

As college Dean during a professor recruitment, the minister's PA calls: select our relative and your institute's pending funding will be cleared fast.

Khemka Sir's Response: Never do it — act strictly on merit. This is plain bribery; the 'greater good' justification fails because the briber never pays more than the favour is worth, so it is never a genuine donation.

● **Principle:** Merit only; quid-pro-quo is bribery whatever the framing.

10.1 · 2024

As manager of a private hospital buying new X-ray machines, your own brother — a known supplier in financial difficulty — has bid; a big order would rescue him, but selecting him risks a nepotism charge. The trustees say they'll back any decision you make.

Khemka Sir's Response: Recuse yourself. Where a close relative is involved, deciding for him invites a nepotism charge and against him invites family resentment — 'justice must not only be done but be seen to be done'. Disclose the conflict to the trustees/top management; only if they still entrust you after full disclosure may you proceed, strictly impartially.

● **Principle:** Recusal; disclosure of conflict; justice must be seen to be done.

10.2 · 2022

A government bus driver dies in a roadside scuffle after an accident; the transport department decides to deny his family compensation, and all drivers strike demanding both compensation and a job for the family.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: The dependants are innocent and the driver died in connection with his duty — compensation is just on humanitarian grounds, and a compassionate-grounds appointment should be considered per policy if eligible. Engage the union, examine facts fairly, and resolve through dialogue rather than a blanket denial.

● **Principle:** Welfare of innocent dependants; compassion; fair dialogue with the union.

10.2 · 2017

As HR chief of a private firm, a worker dies through his own negligence after coming to work drunk; other workers strike demanding compensation for his family.

Khemka Sir's Response: Pay the compensation. Even if he was at fault, the family he left behind committed no wrong and cannot be punished; he died on your premises and your duty (dharma) is to support the family. The agitation is justified.

- **Principle:** Employer/labour-welfare duty to the innocent family.

10.2 · 2023

As MD of a road-transport corporation, the chairman is corrupt (takes a cut on everything down to bus tyres). Some board members will help you expose him — but from political ambition (they'll gain power, and reward you); if the campaign fails, you may be transferred far away.

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Act against corruption on the strength of evidence and lawful process, not as an instrument of anyone's political game. Build a clean, documented case through audit/vigilance/CVC channels; accept the board members' factual help but keep your motives and methods above the politics, and bear the transfer risk with courage.

- **Principle:** Integrity; without fear or favour; refuse to be instrumentalised.

10.3 · 2022

As quality-control officer in a shoe company, a consignment rejected for poor quality in Europe is sent back; owners want you to sign off so it can be sold to local Indian buyers, hinting you'll be sacked if you refuse.

Khemka Sir's Response: Foreign standards are often higher than India's, so if the goods genuinely meet Indian quality standards you may certify and sell them domestically. But if the only way to pass is to manipulate or manage the Indian test, refuse — selling sub-standard goods by manipulation is unethical and illegal, and a job threat doesn't change that.

- **Principle:** Meet the applicable standard honestly; no manipulation of certification.

10.3 · 2021

A food company sent good-quality samples to the food-safety regulator but actually sells inferior goods in the market. What should the government do — and, after being penalised, how should the firm recover its damaged brand?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: This is fraud on the regulator and consumers: the government must penalise it (FSSAI action), recall products and publicise the finding to protect public health. The firm recovers its brand only through genuine reform — accountable leadership, a real quality overhaul, third-party audits and transparency — not PR spin.

- **Principle:** Consumer rights; deterrent action; authentic reform over image-management.

10.4 · 2022

As CEO of a loss-making weapons firm under a board ultimatum, a rival's manager offers you secret tender/insider information in exchange for a job — a 'Mir Jafar'. Hire him?

Khemka Sir's Response: No. It is an unethical act, and a Mir Jafar will betray you too at the next better offer. This isn't whistleblowing (which serves the public interest) — he serves only private interest. Beat the rival ethically, through better quality and lower prices, not betrayal.

● **Principle:** Reject betrayal-based gains; compete ethically; integrity over short-term profit.

10.5 · 2017

A major client drove you home fast after a party and caused an accident through his own fault; you are the sole eyewitness. Truthful testimony jails him and may hurt your company's business. Do you testify truthfully?

Khemka Sir's Response: Clear answer — truthful testimony is the ethical act; withholding or giving false testimony is a corrupt act. The line is sharp here: truth may cost you, falsehood may profit you — choose truth.

● **Principle:** Honesty in testimony; a clear ethical-vs-corrupt line; rule of law.

10.6 · 2014

As CEO of an electronics firm with superior products, a government official demands a bribe to clear your tender; losing it may shut a unit and cost many jobs. Pay the bribe?

Khemka Sir's Response: Paying to win the tender is a corrupt act. From an armchair it's easy to say 'refuse', but it is genuinely difficult; remember that of two choices the harder one is usually ethical. The choice — and how much loss you will bear — is yours; maximum sacrifice of unfair gain is the most ethical conduct. Pursue lawful remedies (vigilance, complaint, appeal) instead.

● **Principle:** Difficult-choice rule; ethical conduct = sacrifice accepted; lawful remedy.

10.7 · 2015

As a company owner, ~40 local political-party workers gherao you demanding jobs — really a monthly 'goonda tax' — and the police/municipality stay indifferent because you don't gift them at festivals.

Khemka Sir's Response: Never pay the goonda tax — it is the easy, fearful option and clearly unethical; act 'without fear or favour'. Build genuine community goodwill through CSR (the mandatory 2% under the Companies Act), pursue lawful protection persistently, and don't normalise either extortion or festival 'gifting' of officials.

● **Principle:** Without fear or favour; build legitimate goodwill via CSR; no normalising bribery.

11 · 2020

Is it ethically right or wrong for the Government of India to sell some of its weapons to friendly nations?

Khemka Sir's Response: Suggested approach: Present both sides. For: a sovereign right that supports strategic autonomy, the defence-industrial base and jobs, and helps allies meet legitimate defence needs and regional stability. Against: arms can fuel conflict, be misused or diverted, and raise human-rights concerns. The ethical position is responsible transfer — strong end-use monitoring, no sales to aggressors or rights-violators, and compliance with international law — rather than a blanket yes or no.

● **Principle:** Responsible arms transfer; strategic autonomy balanced with do-no-harm and end-use control.

One-Page Revision Sheet

Quotable lines & maxims

- When two options exist, the more difficult one is usually the ethical one.
- Sunshine Test: do only what you could state openly and still feel proud of.
- Public interest is supreme; a public servant can never sacrifice it for private gain.
- There is no big or small corruption — corruption is corruption.
- Act without fear or favour.
- Justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done.
- Justice delayed is justice denied — but justice hurried is justice buried.
- Whistleblowing is loyalty to the company vs the larger loyalty to the public (a private-sector concept; in the public sector it is simply duty).
- Dignity cannot be exchanged for profit.
- Evil triumphs because the good do nothing — resistance, even in defeat, shrinks the wrongdoer's power.
- Ends do not justify the means; a compassionate motive cannot legitimise an illegal act.

Keyword toolkit for answers

Recusal • conflict of interest • PoSH / Internal Complaints Committee • whistleblower protection • insider information • presumption against the owner (hazardous child labour) • golden-hour duty • Ayushman Bharat / PMJAY • CSR (2% under Companies Act) • lesser of two evils • proportionality (employment-intensity vs resource depletion) • just transition • polluter-pays & precautionary principle • IEC (Information–Education–Communication) • rehabilitation = job + skilling + annuity/stake • reasoned 'speaking order' (RTI Section 8 public-interest) • Article 19 free expression • untouchability as a constitutional offence • distinction & proportionality (use of force) • end-use monitoring (arms transfer) • distributive / Rawlsian justice • environmental sustainability over profitability.

The five-step answer skeleton

Stakeholders: list everyone affected.

Ethical conflict: name the clash (private vs public interest, profit vs dignity, loyalty vs law, security vs liberty).

Decision: state your clear choice up front.

Justification: anchor it to a principle from Part A and a relevant provision/keyword.

Trade-off: acknowledge the cost you accept — that honesty is itself ethical maturity.

Khemka Sir's closing words to aspirants

These armchair answers are theoretical; in real life you must bear the cost. Ethics is like cricket — easy to comment from the stands, hard on the crease. The more you practise the ethical act, the stronger you become. The ethical path is always the difficult path — and that difficulty is the point.



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