



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the role of ethics and values in enhancing the following three major components of Comprehensive National Power(CNP) viz. human capital, soft power(culture and policies), and social harmony. (150 words) (UPSC GS-4 Mains 2020).

14 Jan, 2021 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly mentioning the importance of ethics and values.
- Separately discuss the role of ethics and values in enhancing human capital, soft power and social harmony.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Ethics is a system of principles that helps us tell right from wrong, good from the bad. Ethical values (like honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility) can help to make rational decisions, whether at the individual, societal or national level.

Body

Role of Ethics & Values in Enhancing Human Capital:

- Ethics is all about the choices that an individual makes. People always face many dilemmas and choices that affect the quality of their lives.
- Ethics & values make an individual aware that their choices have consequences, both for themselves and others.
- Thus, ethics & values build credibility, improves decision making, and provides long term gains.

Role of Ethics & Values in Enhancing Social Harmony:

- Ethics & values are about character; the sum of qualities that defines a person. The same principle applies to society.
- Ethics & values develop norms of behaviour that everyone should follow in society. If every person acts with a selfish motive, society might fall into chaos & anarchy.
- There is nothing wrong with pursuing one's interests. However, an ethical person must be willing – at least sometimes – to place others' interests ahead of self-interest because of our responsibility to society.
- Moreover, often ethics succeeds law in safeguarding society. The law machinery is often found acting as a mute spectator, unable to save the society and the environment.

Role of Ethics & Values in Enhancing Soft Power:

- International relations are largely driven by the ideology of realism, which propagates national interest precedes every action of a nation.
- However, pursuance of national interest must not always be fulfilled with Hard' power (Military

power, economic power). The soft power (a country's image due to its culture & values) also secures national interest without compromising others' interest.

- In this regard, ethics & the country's ancient values (for example, Idea of Vasudeva kutumbakam in India) revive national pride and project a country's peaceful image.

Conclusion

As stated by India's current president, 'Nations are not built by governments alone, each citizen is a nation-builder', there is an immense role of ethics and values in enhancing the comprehensive national power of a country.

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