



Mains Practice Question

Q. What are the ethical values and principles that guide the conduct of civil servants in India? How are they different from the moral values and principles of an individual? (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer with a brief introduction and Explain the Key Ethical Values and Principles.
- Write how they are different from the moral values and principles of an individual.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

Ethical value is a subjective or personal judgment of what is important or desirable in life. It reflects one's preferences, beliefs, feelings and emotions. Example, some people may value honesty, loyalty, freedom, happiness, etc.

Ethical principle is a rule or standard that guides moral behavior and decision making. It is more objective, universal and consistent than values. It informs and influences values by providing a framework for evaluating what is good or right. For example, some ethical principles are utilitarianism, universalism, justice, rights, virtue, etc.

Body:

As per Nolan Committee Some of the Key Ethical Values and Principles are:

- **Selflessness:**
 - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:**
 - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:**
 - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on objective criteria.
- **Accountability:**
 - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness:**
 - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take.
 - They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty:**

- Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

- **Leadership:**

- Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These ethical values and principles are different from the moral values and principles of an individual in the following ways:

- Ethical values and principles of civil servants are based on external sources of authority and legitimacy, such as the constitution, laws or codes, while moral values and principles are based on internal sources of conscience and conviction, such as religion, culture or personal beliefs.
- Ethical values and principles are universal, uniform and applicable to all civil servants, regardless of their personal or professional backgrounds, while moral values and principles are diverse, subjective and variable among different individuals, depending on their personal or professional contexts.
- Ethical values and principles are enforceable, measurable and sanctionable by the relevant authorities or mechanisms, such as courts, commissions or disciplinary actions, while moral values and principles are voluntary, intangible and unenforceable by any external authority or mechanism, except one's own self or conscience.

Conclusion:

Civil servants may face ethical dilemmas when they have to choose between two or more conflicting options (ethical values and principles). To resolve them, they need to prepare themselves by learning, consulting, analyzing, and finding alternatives.

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