The Moral Authority of Countries in Global Governance

Morality-based global governance refers to a system of international cooperation and decision-making that is guided by **universal ethical principles** such as justice, fairness, human dignity, and responsibility.

However, the moral authority of nations in global governance is often undermined when their **actions contradict the ethical standards** they promote. Western countries, especially in the Global North, claim ethical leadership but engage in actions like **funding wars** and resource exploitation. Similarly, the Global South faces **ethical issues like corruption and human rights** abuses, complicating its stance in pushing for fairness. These dilemmas affect the pursuit of just and accountable global governance.

What are the Ethical Dimensions of Global Governance?

- **Justice and Fairness:** Global governance should ensure that all nations have an **equal say in decision-making,** regardless of power. For example, the dominance of powerful countries in the **UN Security Council** raises concerns about fairness, as smaller nations have limited influence .
- **Accountability and Transparency**: Institutions like the **International Monetary Fund(IMF)** and **World Bank** must operate transparently, ensuring that powerful nations do not control global decisions for their own benefit.
- **Protection of Human Rights:** Global governance must **uphold human dignity and rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** sets a global standard, but issues like the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar reveal failures in enforcement .
- **Global Solidarity:** In crises like **climate change and pandemics,** wealthier nations have a responsibility to support poorer ones.
    - During the COVID-19 pandemic, wealthier countries hoarded vaccines, leaving poorer nations with fewer resources .
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Global governance must protect the environment. The **Paris Agreement** is an example of nations coming together to combat climate change, although some countries have been criticised for not meeting their commitments .

What are the Ethical Issues in Global Governance?

- **Double Standards in Global Governance:**
    - **Selective Intervention:** Powerful nations intervene in conflicts that serve their interests but often ignore crises where intervention does not benefit them.
    - **Inconsistent Human Rights Advocacy:** Western countries criticise human rights violations in other nations but overlook abuses within their own borders.
- **Ethical Responsibility of Powerful Nations:**
    - Lack of Ethical Global Leadership: Powerful nations often fail to set ethical examples by disregarding international laws. Forexample, **Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014** violated international agreements and was widely condemned by the international community.
    - **Failure to Support Vulnerable Nations:** Wealthy countries have an ethical responsibility to help developing nations through **climate action and fair trade**. However, their actions often prioritise **profit over equity.**
- **Justice vs. Power Politics:**
    - **Imbalance in International Justice:** International courts like the **International**

Criminal Court (ICC) disproportionately target leaders from weaker nations while powerful countries evade accountability, undermining global justice.

- **UN Security Council Veto Power:** The **veto rights** of the permanent members (e.g., U.S., Russia) prevent meaningful actions on justice when their own interests are involved, stalling interventions and allowing violations to continue.

- **Corruption and Governance Issues:** Many nations in the Global South face deep-rooted corruption, which undermines efforts toward equitable governance.
  - In countries like Venezuela, **corruption** has led to **economic collapse** and suffering for ordinary citizens. Corruption within governments perpetuates inequality and injustice .
- **Environmental Exploitation**: While the Global South demands climate justice from wealthier nations, some countries within these regions also engage in **environmentally destructive practices.**
  - **Deforestation in the Amazon,** driven by industries in Brazil, contributes to global environmental degradation .

What are the Philosophical Perspectives on Global Governance?

- **Cosmopolitanism:** Cosmopolitanism believes that all people belong to a **global community,** regardless of nationality. It argues that ethical duties extend beyond borders, promoting universal human rights and justice for all.
- **Liberal Internationalism:** This perspective supports **global cooperation, democracy**, and strong international institutions like the United Nations. It seeks peace through collective efforts, promoting free trade, human rights, and international laws.
- **Global Justice Theories:** These theories focus on **fairness in the distribution of resources** and opportunities worldwide.
  - Thinkers like **John Rawls** argue that wealthier nations should help poorer ones to achieve a **more just and equitable global system.**
- **Constructivism:** Constructivism says that global governance is **shaped by shared beliefs and values,** not just power. International cooperation on issues like climate change arises from evolving global norms and collective ideas.
- **Utilitarianism**: Utilitarianism advocates for actions that bring the **greatest good to the greatest number of people.** In global governance, policies should be judged by how well they serve the majority, though they may sometimes harm vulnerable groups.

How Do International Institutions Promote Ethical Governance in a Multipolar World?

- In a multipolar world, where power is shared among many countries, international institutions **help maintain fairness and justice**. These institutions provide a space for all nations to **come together and solve global problems**. Here's how they help promote ethical governance:
  - **Building Global Cooperation:** International organisations like the **United Nations (UN)** bring countries together to discuss issues like human rights and climate change. In a multipolar world, decisions are made with **input from many countries,** not just the most powerful ones .
  - **Encouraging Regional Solutions:** Regional organisations, like the **African Union (AU),** tackle problems specific to their regions. This allows **solutions to be tailored to local needs,** creating **more ethical and culturally sensitive** outcomes. These regional solutions are often supported by the UN .
  - **Ensuring Accountability:** Institutions like the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** hold all countries responsible for **crimes against humanity.** In a multipolar world, there is increasing pressure to ensure that not only weaker nations are held accountable but powerful ones as well .
  - **Promoting Fair Economic Practices**: The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** creates rules for global trade. As emerging economies like India and China gain influence, they push for **fairer trade agreements.** This helps create a more balanced global economy .
  - **Strengthening Multilateral Responses:** International institutions coordinate global efforts on issues like pandemics and climate change. Organisations like the **World Health Organization (WHO)** make sure that all countries work together, sharing responsibility

and benefits .

What Should Be the Way Forward?

- **Strengthen Cooperation**: Nations should **collaborate** through international organizations to solve global problems like climate change and pandemics.
- **Promote Fairness:** Both the Global North and South must **ensure fair actions,** with powerful countries respecting international laws and weaker nations improving governance.
- **Reduce Power Imbalances:** Reform global institutions to give developing countries a **stronger voice** in decision-making.
- **Encourage Ethical Leadership:** Countries, especially in the Global North, should **align their foreign policies** with justice, fairness, and human rights.
- **Support Sustainable Development:** Wealthier nations should help developing countries with resources and technology for **sustainable growth.**
- **Improve Transparency:** Global institutions must be more **transparent and accountable** to ensure fairness in global governance.
- **Protect Human Rights:** Both the North and South should prioritize **human rights and social justice,** especially in conflict areas.

Conclusion

Global governance must focus on **cooperation, fairness, accountability**, and respect for human rights. Both the **North and South must work together** to address power imbalances, promote sustainable development, and uphold ethical leadership. Only by addressing these challenges can global governance become more **just, equitable, and effective** in solving shared global problems.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q1. How do international institutions help uphold ethical accountability and global justice in a multipolar world? Discuss with relevant examples. (150 words, 10 marks)

Q2. Discuss the ethical implications of powerful nations with questionable practices imposing global moral standards. How can institutions like the UN and ICC contribute to international fairness? (250 words, 15 marks)

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