



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss how ethical egoism and ethical altruism influence decision-making in a professional setting. **(150 words)**

04 Jul, 2024 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce the answer by highlighting contrasting perspective of Ethical egoism and ethical altruism
- Delve into Ethical Egoism and its Influence
- Highlight Ethical Altruism and its Influence
- Conclude positively.

Introduction

Ethical egoism and ethical altruism represent contrasting ethical perspectives that significantly impact decision-making in professional settings. While **ethical egoism prioritizes self-interest, ethical altruism emphasizes the welfare of others.**

Body

Ethical Egoism and its Influence:

- **Focus:** In a professional context, Ethical egoism could translate to prioritizing personal gain - **seeking promotions, taking credit for team achievements, or engaging in actions that benefit one's career** even if they are detrimental to colleagues or the organization.
- **Potential Benefits:** Ethical egoism can **foster ambition and drive employees to excel**, leading to increased productivity and innovation. It can also promote a sense of self-reliance and responsibility for one's career trajectory.
- **Potential Pitfalls:** Unfettered self-interest can lead to **unethical behavior such as cutthroat competition, deception, and exploitation** of others. It can create a **toxic work environment** and erode trust among colleagues.

Ethical Altruism and its Influence:

- **Focus:** Ethical altruism emphasizes acting in the best interests of others, even at a personal cost.
 - In a professional setting, this could **manifest as prioritizing the organization's success over individual gain**, sacrificing personal time for the benefit of a project, or advocating for the welfare of colleagues and clients.
- **Potential Benefits:** Ethical altruism fosters teamwork, collaboration, and a commitment to shared goals.
 - It can create a more positive and supportive work environment, leading to increased employee satisfaction and loyalty.
 - Ultimately, it **aligns individual actions with the organization's mission.**
- **Potential Pitfalls:** Unrestrained altruism can lead to **burnout**, resentment if sacrifices are not reciprocated, and exploitation by others who take advantage of one's willingness to help.
 - It can also create **challenges in setting boundaries and saying "no" to**

unreasonable requests.

Conclusion

Balancing ethical egoism and altruism in professional decision-making involves recognizing that individual well-being is linked to the well-being of colleagues and the organization. Adopting **enlightened self-interest and cultivating virtues like honesty and respect** can ensure decisions benefit everyone. By doing so, public servants can foster a **more ethical and productive work environment.**

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