



Mains Practice Question

Q. "Ethical leadership often requires making difficult decisions that may be unpopular in the short term but beneficial in the long run." Discuss this statement with relevant examples. **(150 words)**

03 Oct, 2024 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce the answer by mentioning the significance of ethical leadership justifying the given statement
- Give key arguments related to Balancing Short-Term Challenges with Long-Term Societal Gains
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Ethical leadership is a cornerstone of **good governance and responsible management in both public and private sectors**. It involves making decisions based on moral principles, fairness, and the greater good, even when these choices may not be immediately popular or advantageous.

Body

Ethical Leadership: Balancing Short-Term Challenges with Long-Term Societal Gains:

- **Prioritizing Long-Term Benefits Over Short-Term Gains:** Ethical leaders make decisions focused on long-term growth, despite short-term disruptions.
 - The **1991 economic liberalization under Dr. Manmohan Singh** was initially unpopular but opened India to global markets, fostering long-term economic growth.
- **Promoting Equality and Social Justice** Ethical leadership challenges cultural norms to advance fairness and equality.
 - The **abolition of Triple Talaq in 2019** faced opposition from conservative groups, but protected Muslim women's rights, promoting gender justice and constitutional equality.
- **Environmental Responsibility for Future Generations:** Ethical decisions may inconvenience industries in the short term but ensure environmental sustainability.
 - The **2022 ban on single-use plastics** faced industry resistance, but is vital for reducing pollution and safeguarding ecosystems.
- **National Security and Territorial Integrity:** Leaders may take politically risky decisions that ensure national security and unity.
 - **Indira Gandhi's integration of Sikkim in 1975** faced international criticism but secured India's strategic interests and contributed to the region's development.
- **Reforming Entrenched Systems for Long-Term Efficiency:** Ethical decisions often require reforming longstanding systems for greater fairness and efficiency.
 - The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) of 2016**, despite initial resistance from defaulters and banks, has enhanced credit discipline and led to quicker resolutions of stressed assets.
- **Protecting Public Health Against Industry Opposition:** Ethical leadership involves decisions that protect public welfare, even when they face opposition from powerful lobbies.

- The **implementation of pictorial warnings on tobacco products**, despite strong resistance from the tobacco industry, aims to reduce smoking-related diseases and protect future generations.

Conclusion

Ethical leadership that prioritizes long-term benefits over short-term popularity is **crucial for sustainable progress and development in India**. While such decisions may face initial resistance, they often lead to more significant positive outcomes for society as a whole.

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