



Mains Practice Question

Q. "Moral courage is the highest form of accountability." Discuss the ethical dilemmas faced by civil servants in challenging administrative environments. **(150 words)**

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Approach:

- Introduce the answer by defining moral courage
- Delve into Key Ethical Dilemmas Faced by Civil Servants
- Highlight the Importance of Moral Courage in Addressing These Dilemmas
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Moral courage entails standing up for what is right despite risks such as career setbacks, public criticism, or personal harm. Civil servants, as the backbone of governance, often encounter ethical dilemmas where personal integrity clashes with institutional pressures, vested interests, or public demands.

Body:

Ethical Dilemmas Faced by Civil Servants

- **Conflict Between Law and Justice:** Upholding legal frameworks versus ensuring social justice.
 - **Example:** Eviction drives in slums may adhere to legal orders but displace vulnerable populations, creating a conflict for civil servants.
- **Pressure from Political Masters:** Politicians may exert undue influence to favor vested interests or electoral gains.
 - **Example:** Ashok Khemka, a Haryana IAS officer, faced transfers for exposing corruption in high-profile land deals.
- **Resource Allocation:** Limited resources necessitate tough choices, often at the cost of equitable distribution.
 - **Example:** A District Collector may face the dilemma of prioritizing funds for immediate disaster relief versus long-term development projects.
- **Whistleblowing Against Corruption:** Reporting unethical practices within the administration may lead to alienation or retaliation.
 - **Example:** Satyendra Dubey, a young civil engineer, lost his life after exposing corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral project.
- **Public Expectations vs. Administrative Realities:** The public often expects immediate action, which may not align with procedural or resource constraints.
 - **Example:** Delay in flood relief efforts may lead to public criticism despite logistical challenges faced by the administration.

Importance of Moral Courage in Addressing These Dilemmas:

- **Safeguarding Democratic Values:** Upholding Moral Courage strengthens the democratic fabric of governance.

- **Example:** IAS officer **Harsh Mander** resigned to protest against communal violence, prioritizing human rights over his career.
- **Preventing Systemic Decay:** Courageous actions expose corruption and inefficiencies, preventing the normalization of unethical practices within the administration.
 - **Example:** **Sanjiv Chaturvedi, an IFS officer, uncovered multiple corruption cases** despite facing transfers and challenges.
- **Encouraging Ethical Leadership:** By setting examples of principled conduct, morally courageous civil servants inspire colleagues and subordinates to adopt ethical behavior.
 - **Example:** **E. Sreedharan, the “Metro Man of India,”** consistently upheld high ethical standards, ensuring project efficiency and integrity.
- **Preventing Abuse of Power:** Resisting undue political or societal pressure ensures that the administration remains impartial and people-centric.
 - **Example:** **Durga Shakti Nagpal, an IAS officer,** took action against illegal sand mining despite facing suspension, ensuring natural resources were safeguarded.

Conclusion:

Moral courage serves as the highest form of accountability, guiding civil servants to navigate complex ethical dilemmas while ensuring public welfare. By fostering integrity, transparency, and resilience, moral courage strengthens democratic governance and inspires confidence in public institutions.

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