



Mains Practice Question

Q. Is conscience a more reliable guide when compared to laws, rules and regulations in the context of ethical decision-making? Discuss. (Answer in 150 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

07 Dec, 2023 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Begin by providing a brief overview of the significance of Laws, Rules, and Regulations and conscience in decision-making.
- Discuss both the strengths and limitations of both conscience and Laws, Rules, and Regulations.
- Conclude by emphasizing the importance of a thoughtful integration of conscience and legal frameworks in ethical decision-making.

Introduction

Law prescribes actions through due process for the common good and imposes obligations, while conscience is our innate ability to distinguish right from wrong. Each has strengths and limitations, with superiority context-dependent.

Body

- **Conscience:**
 - **Strengths:**
 - **Personal Morality:** An internal moral compass that can guide ethical decision-making based on one's personal sense of right and wrong.
 - **Flexibility:** Conscience values complexity and uniqueness, allowing for thoughtful consideration of individual situations beyond established laws.
 - **Limitations:**
 - **Influence of Bias:** Conscience influenced by biases, culture, upbringing can lead to questionable ethics.
 - **Inconsistent Application:** Conscience can evolve, leading to inconsistency in ethical choices.
- **Laws, Rules, and Regulations:**
 - **Strengths:**
 - **Clarity:** They establish ethical guidelines for society and organizations.
 - **Accountability:** They impose consequences for wrongdoing, discouraging unethical actions.
 - **Protection of Rights:** Laws and regulations can protect the rights and well-being of individuals and society as a whole.
 - **Limitations:**
 - **Rigidity:** Laws often struggle to keep pace with changing social norms and evolving ethics.
 - **Moral Blind Spots:** Legal systems may not fully address all ethical dilemmas.
 - **Enforcement:** Enforcing laws is tough, and unethical behavior can persist through loopholes.

Conclusion

Conscience and laws/rules/regulations play crucial roles in ethical decisions. Conscience relies on universal ethics and bias control, while laws offer structure but need regular updates to stay fair.

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/mains-practice-question/question-8065/pnt>

