



Mains Practice Question

Q. In a world driven by efficiency and results, do virtue ethics still hold relevance in governance? Critically analyze with suitable examples. **(150 words)**

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Approach

- Introduce the answer by briefing the significance of virtue ethics
- Give Relevance of Virtue Ethics in Governance
- Delve into Challenges to Virtue Ethics in Governance
- Give Key Points Integrating Virtue Ethics with Efficiency
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

In today's world focused on **efficiency and results**, governance often emphasizes outcomes over ethical considerations. However, amid challenges like **corruption and inequality**, **virtue ethics**, which highlights the importance of moral character in leadership, **provides a framework for fostering trust, integrity, and long-term societal well-being**, which are crucial for sustainable governance.

Body

Relevance of Virtue Ethics in Governance

- **Ensuring Ethical Leadership and Decision-Making:** Virtuous leaders prioritize **public good over personal gains**, fostering trust and accountability.
 - **Example:** Lal Bahadur Shastri – resigned as **Railway Minister** after a major train accident, taking moral responsibility, thereby demonstrating integrity and accountability in leadership.
- **Balancing Efficiency with Justice and Fairness:** Purely result-driven governance may overlook **equity and inclusivity**, that necessitates virtue ethics.
 - **Example:** **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** ensures employment for the poor, balancing economic efficiency with social justice by prioritizing vulnerable sections.
- **Preventing Ethical Erosion in Bureaucracy:** An efficiency-driven approach may encourage **corruption, short-termism, and lack of empathy**, that can be curtailed with virtue ethics.
 - **Example:** **Ashok Khemka (IAS Officer), known for exposing land scams** despite political pressure, demonstrating resilience against corruption and short-termism in governance.

Challenges to Virtue Ethics in Governance

- **Pressure for Quick Results and Economic Growth:** Market-driven governance often prioritizes **efficiency over ethical deliberation**.
 - **Example:** **Fast-tracking environmental clearances** for industries, compromising

ecological sustainability.

- **Bureaucratic Red Tape and Resistance to Change:** Ethical governance requires **moral courage**, which may conflict with rigid bureaucratic structures.
 - **Example: Whistleblower cases** like Satyendra Dubey (exposing corruption in NHAI) show the risks of ethical governance.
- **Subjectivity and Cultural Variations in Virtue Ethics”:** What constitutes "virtue" may vary across societies and political ideologies.
 - **Example: Western individualistic vs. Eastern collectivist ethical frameworks** influencing governance differently.

Integrating Virtue Ethics with Efficiency

- **Ethical training for civil servants** (e.g., **Mission Karmayogi**) to instill moral reasoning in governance.
- **Institutional frameworks** like **Lokpal, RTI, and Citizen’s Charters** to embed ethical governance.
- **Technology-driven transparency**, such as **Aadhaar and DBT**, ensures both efficiency and ethical delivery.

Conclusion

While efficiency and results are crucial for governance, virtue ethics remain **indispensable for justice, inclusivity, and long-term societal well-being**. A balanced approach that integrates efficiency with ethical governance can lead to **sustainable and people-centric administration**.

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