



Mains Practice Question

Q. What do you understand by "value pluralism"? How does it complicate ethical decision-making in a multicultural democracy like India? **(150 words)**

30 Jan, 2025 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

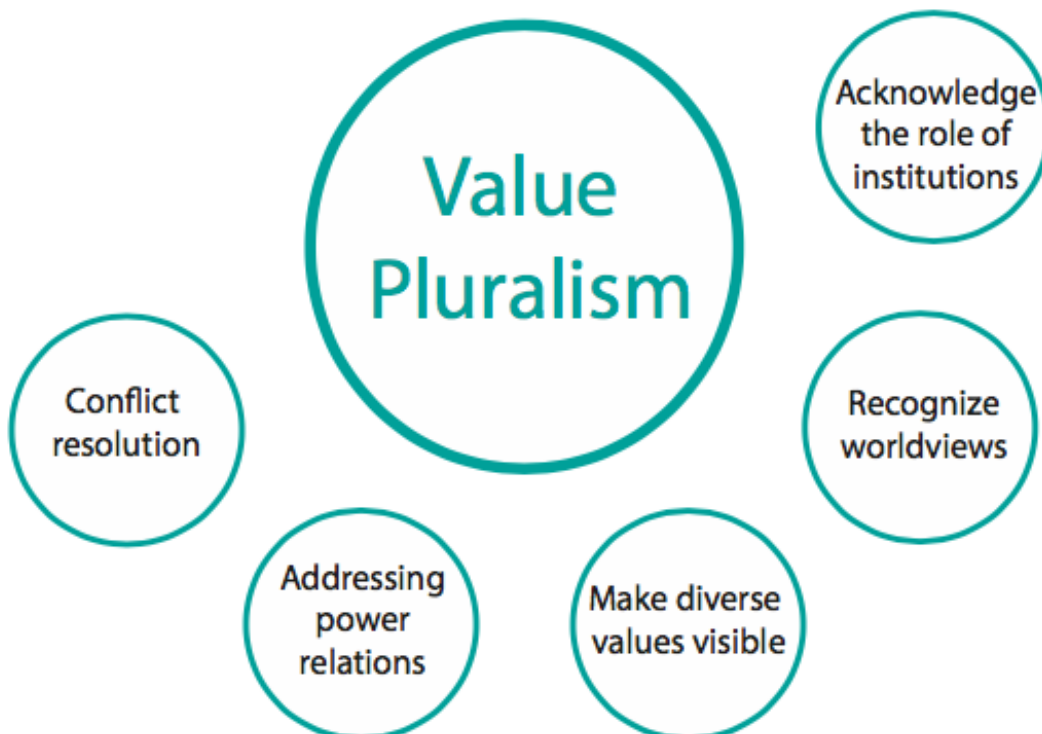
Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining value pluralism
- Give arguments how Value Pluralism Complicates Ethical Decision-Making in India
- Suggest a way forward
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Value pluralism is the ethical concept that **multiple moral values can coexist, even if they sometimes conflict**. In a diverse country like India, different communities and individuals prioritize different values, leading to ethical complexities in decision-making.

//



Body

How Value Pluralism Complicates Ethical Decision-Making in India:

- **Conflict Between Individual Rights and Cultural Traditions**
 - Constitutional values like **gender equality often clash with religious customs**. Legal reforms aimed at ensuring equality may be opposed as an infringement on traditional beliefs.
 - **Example:** The **Supreme Court's Sabarimala temple entry verdict (2018)** allowed women of all ages to enter the temple, but it faced strong resistance from devotees citing religious traditions.
- **Religious Freedom vs. State Intervention**
 - While personal laws are meant to **preserve religious autonomy, some practices may violate fundamental rights**. Legal interventions to reform such practices are often seen as government overreach.
 - **Example:** The **Triple Talaq ban (2019)** was considered a step toward gender justice, but some sections viewed it as interference in Muslim personal law.
- **Freedom of Expression vs. Social Harmony**
 - **Freedom of speech can sometimes offend religious or cultural sentiments**, leading to social unrest. Governments often have to regulate expression to maintain public order.
 - **Example:** Films like **Padmaavat** and books like **The Satanic Verses** faced bans and violent protests due to perceived religious or historical distortions.
- **Economic Development vs. Environmental Protection**
 - Industrialization and infrastructure projects boost economic growth and employment but often lead to **environmental degradation and displacement of communities**.
 - **Example:** The **Vedanta Sterlite Copper Plant in Tamil Nadu** was shut down due to widespread protests over environmental pollution, despite its economic benefits.
- **Majoritarianism vs. Minority Rights**
 - Policies aimed at national integration sometimes overlook the cultural autonomy of minority communities, creating fears of cultural assimilation.
 - **Example:** The **proposal for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** seeks to establish common personal laws, but minority groups argue that it threatens their religious identity.

Way Forward

- **Dialogue and Deliberation:** Encouraging inclusive discussions to balance competing interests.
- **Contextual Decision-Making:** Implementing policies that respect both diversity and fundamental rights.
- **Educational Reforms:** Promoting ethical pluralism to foster mutual respect and tolerance.

Conclusion

Value pluralism is both a strength and a challenge in a multicultural democracy like India. While it allows for diversity, it also complicates decision-making by creating conflicts between competing moral perspectives. The **key to resolving such dilemmas lies in constitutional principles, inclusive governance**, and a balanced approach that ensures justice while respecting cultural diversity. **Judicial Interpretation:** Courts playing a key role in harmonizing conflicting values (**e.g., Kesavananda Bharati Case, 1973**).