

 PRABHAT

ETHICS INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

FOR CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION
with Solved Case Studies



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ETHICS INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

FOR CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATIONS

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ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

by Ashok Kumar IPS & Gaurav Talwar

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Dedicated

*to all
those who stand
for ethics and integrity,
who have persistently fought
against unethical practices
around us and dedicated their lives
for the cause against corruption,
and to our parents, teachers,
colleagues and seniors who inspired
us to withstand all kinds of
pressures and temptations to
stick to our morals, values
and ethical principles.*

Preface

Ethics integrity and aptitude has been included as a separate topic under General Studies by UPSC since 2013. The background to this could be the report of 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission, which has expressed deep concern over falling ethical standards of public servants.

The 2nd ARC report says that corruption is an important manifestation of the failure of ethics and unfortunately it has become a matter of habit for many people. It further says that Anti Corruption interventions made so far are seen to be ineffective and there is widespread public cynicism about them. Though there is a stray legal and institutional framework to control corruption but protection under Article 311 of the constitution has been practically misused to shield corrupt officials, which is hampering the accountability of public servants. Therefore a strong need is felt to include the topic of ethics in General Studies Syllabus.

Also, last decade has seen rising public awareness against corruption in public life. Therefore recognition of the importance of ethics and integrity by UPSC is a widely welcome step.

The idea of writing this book came to our mind while guiding a student for preparation of Mains Exam of Civil Services. We went through the G.S Question papers from 2013 to 2019 main examination and found that UPSC wanted to test aspirant's ethical aptitude and inherent ethics ingrained in them. On the other hand, study material that is available in the market on the subject only provides a heavy dose of philosophy of ethics to the extent that the aspirant gets bogged down by a herd of definitions, philosophers and their theories. The emphasis appears to be on defining ethics and philosophy of ethics while it should be on the practical aspects of the ethics and on how ethics can be used to improve governance. How ethics can be used to sensitize future administrators towards public needs and to bring transparency /empathy/ honesty in administration is the focal point behind introduction of this chapter in the syllabus.

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We believe that the purpose of including Ethics and Integrity in G.S paper is to sensitize the aspirants about ethics and inculcate ethical values in them. The purpose of UPSC is not to test how many philosophers one has read, instead it is to test whether or not the aspirant has imbibed good ethical values or not and whether he or she would display impeccable integrity when faced with an ethical dilemma while discharging professional duties. Therefore, the focus in the present book has been to define what ethics is and its importance in life and in public administration.

The USP of the book is to guide the aspirants about how to approach the case studies. One full question paper IV of general studies (125 Marks) is devoted to case studies. Even the other half has some questions on case studies pattern.

Therefore right approach to solving case studies is most crucial to succeed in this exam. We have made an attempt to deal with case studies in most practical manner, like identify the key issues involved in a particular case study and then weighed various options and then suggested a way out to go for the most ethical alternative.

Through this book we have only tried to give Ethical concepts in the shortest possible way. It is up to the aspirants to internalize these concepts and then approach the problem in their own style, as we feel that the answer should not be tutored, instead it should come from within.

We wish all readers the best in their endeavour. Suggestions for further improvement are welcome and can be sent to ashokips89@gmail.com

**Ashok Kumar IPS
Gaurav Talwar**

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Ethics & Corruption—Excerpts from 2nd ARC Report

Ethics is a set of standards that society places on itself and which helps guide behaviour, choices and actions. The second Administrative Reforms Commission observed that standards do not, by themselves, ensure ethical behaviour; that requires a robust culture of integrity. The crux of ethical behaviour does not lie in bold words and expressions enshrined as standards, but in their adoption in action, in sanctions against their violations, in putting in place competent disciplinary bodies to investigate allegations of violations and impose sanctions quickly and in promoting a culture of integrity.

Corruption is an important manifestation of the failure of ethics. The word 'corrupt' is derived from the Latin word 'corruptus', meaning 'to break or destroy'. The word 'ethics' is from the original Greek term *ethikos*, meaning 'arising from habit'. It is unfortunate that corruption has, for many, become a matter of habit, ranging from grand corruption involving persons in high places to retail corruption touching the everyday life of common people.

Anti-corruption interventions so far made are seen to be ineffectual and there is widespread public cynicism about them. The interventions are seen as mere posturing without any real intention to bring the corrupt to book. They are also seen as handy weapons for partisan, political use to harass opponents. Corruption is so deeply entrenched in the system that most people regard corruption as inevitable and any effort to fight it as futile. This cynicism is spreading so fast that it bodes ill for our democratic system itself.

In our society, corruption and abuse of office has been aggravated by three factors. *First, there is a colonial legacy of unchallenged authority and propensity to exercise power arbitrarily.* In a society which worships power, it is easy for public officials to deviate from ethical conduct. *Second, there is enormous asymmetry of power in our society.* Nearly 90% of our people are in the unorganized sector. Quite a number of them lead a precarious existence, depending on subsistence wages with no job security. And nearly 70% of the organized workers with job security and regular monthly wage are employed by the state directly or through public sector undertakings. Almost all these employees are 'educated' in a largely illiterate and semiliterate society and economically even the lowliest of public servants are better off than most people in the country.

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What is more, their employment in government comes with all the trappings of power. Such asymmetry of power reduces societal pressure to conform to ethical behaviour and makes it easy to indulge in corruption.

Third, as a conscious choice, the Indian state in the early decades after Independence chose a set of policies whose unintended consequence was to put the citizen at the mercy of the State. Over regulation, severe restrictions on economic activity, excessive state control, near-monopoly of the government in many sectors and an economy of scarcity all created conditions conducive to unbridled corruption.

Corruption is a global phenomenon and has also become a serious global concern. The United Nations Convention against Corruption was adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 2003, providing an international instrument against corruption. The ADBOECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan, which has been signed by the Government of India, is a broad understanding to further the cause of inter-regional cooperation in the matter of prevention of corruption. The World Bank has also declared war against corruption by refusing to fund projects whose implementation is tainted by corrupt practices. At the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group in Singapore in 2006, a joint statement was issued with major multilateral financial institutions agreeing on a framework for preventing and combating fraud and corruption in the activities and operations of their institutions.

In India, some recent anti-corruption initiatives are steps in the right direction. The Supreme Court has ruled that candidates contesting elections should file details regarding their wealth, educational qualifications and criminal antecedents along with their nomination papers. The Right to Information Act, which has recently been enacted, is a potent weapon to fight corruption. The introduction of information communication technologies, e-governance initiatives and automation of corruption prone processes in administration have succeeded in reducing corruption.

Much more remains to be done however, and beyond the realm of existing regulation. The escalating levels of corruption in various segments of our economy resulting in large scale generation of black money, serious economic offences and fraud, and money laundering leading even to the funding of terrorist activities against the State, have created a grave situation which needs to be dealt with severely. Benami properties of corrupt public servants need to be forfeited, as also the assets illegally acquired from corrupt practices.

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Whistle-blower legislation has to be put in place to protect informants against retribution. Also, we have to suitably strengthen the institutional framework for investigating corrupt practices and awarding exemplary punishment to the corrupt thereby raising the risk associated with corrupt behaviour.

Ethics in governance, however, has a much wider import than what happens in the different arms of the government. An across-the-board effort is needed to fight deviations from ethical norms. Such an effort needs to include corporate ethics and ethics in business; in fact, there should be a paradigm shift from the pejorative 'business ethics' to 'ethics in business'. **There is need for ethics in every profession, voluntary organization and civil society structure as these entities are now vitally involved in the process of governance. Finally, there should be ethics in citizen behaviour because such behaviour impinges directly on ethics in government and administration.**

Understanding G.S. Paper-IV of Civil Services Examination

*“The Greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged
by the way its animals are treated.”*

—Mahatma Gandhi

The GS paper IV is a completely new paper in the civil services examination added since the change of pattern in 2013. This is a very important and pertinent addition to the GS syllabus. A civil servant’s moral ethics and aptitude are put to test in almost all aspects of his/her duty. It is only appropriate that the prospective civil servants should have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of, *ethics, integrity and aptitude*.

The GS paper IV is not a material intensive study where one has to remember countless facts, figures and principles. GS paper IV requires understanding of basic issues pertaining to Ethics, Integrity and aptitude, and also other bureaucratic, social values. The GS paper IV is more rewarding in terms of marks. Last three years trend shows that the successful aspirants in top ranks are able to score 100 to 120 marks in this paper, which is quite high as compared to remaining three GS papers.

According to above analysis we can definitely say that the GS paper IV gives a greater output (in terms of marks) with lesser input (in terms of time and effort). Therefore we should make our best efforts in this paper, as a small compromise in efforts may cause sharp decline in marks.

Few Important Points Regarding GS IV

- The UPSC syllabus designates a name for the paper. It calls it GS paper IV. What does it mean? That we should prepare it as the other three GS papers. Should we start making notes of all the terms and terminologies, views and ideas of thinkers and philosophers, psychological theories related to attitude and aptitude, principles of

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governance? But the last three years' pattern of questions shows that aspirants need not study complex ethical terminologies and heavy philosophical stuff.

- You should know only what is needed to handle day to day ethical dilemmas of an administrative job. You should not start mugging up quotes, thinkers etc. just to impress the examiner. Examiner is looking for your understanding and point of view. It is however no harm in quoting others once or twice in your answers. You should focus more on a practical and logical writing style rather than a deeply twisted philosophical one. **The examiner is looking for your views, your ideas, how you handle the dilemmas and not that of philosophers.**
- Another important point is that you should not appear to be preaching morality in your answers. Your ethical beliefs would automatically reflect in your answers.

Analysis of the Syllabi of GS Paper-4

While analyzing the syllabus one can notice four different aspects of the subject of Ethics; philosophical, psychological, governance related and sociological. The philosophical part deals with moral values and ethics and various philosophers across the world and great moral thinkers and leaders of India, while the psychological part of the syllabus consists of Attitude, Aptitude and Emotional Intelligence; the governance part of the syllabus deals with civil services values, ethics in public administration and probity in governance while role of family, society and educational institutions can be called sociological. While going through the G.S Question papers of 2013 to 2019 it is evident that UPSC has focused more on the practical aspects of ethics. It does not want the paper to become a paper of philosophy or psychology or public administration or sociology. Instead the focus seems to be on practical aspects of Ethics. **A candidate with clarity on various concepts and issues of Ethics will answer the questions better than the one who has gone deep into philosophy and psychology.**

The Syllabus and Topics

The syllabus of GS paper IV is detailed and exhaustive, aspirants must go through it carefully. You need to ensure that all topics that are enlisted are duly covered. In this paper UPSC's specific instructions are - **this paper will include questions to test the candidates' attitude and approach to issues relating to**

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integrity, probity in public life and his problem solving approach to various issues and conflicts faced by him in dealing with society. Questions may utilize the case study approach to determine these aspects. The aspirants should keep the above instructions from UPSC in mind before starting their preparation for this paper.

Subject - (I) PHILOSOPHY

(A) Ethics and Human Interface:

- Essence, determinants and consequences of ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics in private and public relationships.
- Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and World.
- Human values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators.

Subject - (II) SOCIOLOGY

The syllabus and topics

(B) Ethics and Human Interface:

- Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

Subject - (III) PSYCHOLOGY

The syllabus and topics

(C) Attitude:

- Content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behavior; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.

(D) Aptitude and Foundational Values for Civil Service:

- Integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker sections.

(E) Emotional Intelligence:

- Concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.

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Subject - (IV) GOVERNANCE/PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The syllabus and topics

(F) Public/Civil Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration:

- Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance.
- Ethical issues in International relations and funding; corporate governance.

(G) Probity in Governance:

- Concept of public service; philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information (RTI), codes of ethics, codes of conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilisation of public funds, challenges of corruption.

(One important thing is that this paper does not constitute a standard university level subject such as History, Geography and Philosophy etc. Different segments of this paper have been taken from different subjects like Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology and Public Administration. Some questions in part A of this paper may be based on theoretical knowledge whereas part B involving case studies is purely based on practical life events and the attempt will be to judge the ethical standards and values of the aspirants through their answers.)

Detailed Analysis of the Syllabus

Since the syllabus is new, here is an attempt to define the syllabus in detail, topicwise-

A-Philosophical

Ethics-Essence

- Definition, Significance of ethics in human lives; Difference between Ethics, morality & Values; Ethics v/s Laws, Principles, Norms & Rules; Conscience, Social norms, Religion and Ethics.
- Objective and subjective ethics.

- Meta-ethics (assumptions behind ethics), Comparison with Darwin's theory of evolution.
- Ultimate goal of human life, Cardinal human virtues, Evaluation of human actions.

Determinants of Ethics

- Micro-determinants, Macro-determinants, Responsibility of moral agents, Freedom of will, Moral consciousness.
- Human Rights, Self-defence, Majority interest v/s minority interest, Societal interest v/s individual interest.
- Love as the existential basis for moral order, Constant v/s dynamic morality, Humanism.

Consequences of Ethics in Human Actions

- Criteria for evaluation, Mental Act v/s Physical Act, Psychological suffering inflicted v/s physical suffering.
- Suffering of animals v/s happiness for mankind, Self-defence, Majority interest v/s individual interest.
- Societal interest v/s individual interest, Double effects of actions (Both Positive and Negative).

Dimension of Ethics

- Ethics in personal life, ethics in Public Sphere, International ethics.
- Bio-ethics.
- Media ethics/Environmental ethics/Cyber ethics.

Ethics in Private and Public Relations

- Public life values, Handling dilemmas in both (Private and Public Relations).
- values in Private relations. Inculcating values- role of family, society and education institutions.

Moral Thinkers

- Western thinkers (Just get an Idea), Indian thinkers (Don't get into too many details).
- Understand the significance of their ideas.

Human Values - Lessons from Lives of Great Leaders

- Ethics in Indian Philosophy.
- Ethics in Buddhism, Jainism and others.

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- Ethics during Bhakti movement like Kabir, Guru Nanak etc.
- Gandhian ethics.
- Vivekananda, Kautilya, Dayanand Saraswati, Raja Ram Mohan Roy etc.

B-Psychological

Attitude

- Content, Structure, Functions.
- Its influence and relation with thought and behaviour, Negative social attitudes.
- Factors influencing attitude change, Implications of individual's attitude, Attitude shaping factors.

Attitude - Social Influence

- Social facilitation, Social loafing, Social identity, Pro-Social behaviour.
- Inter-group conflict, art of persuasion, Cooperation v/s Competition approach.

Factors that affect behaviour, Group behaviour

Moral and Political Attitude

- Fundamental moral attitudes, Perspectives, Political attitudes.

Aptitude and Values for Civil Services

- Foundational values - Definition and significance.
- Competency framework for administration, other values and concepts.

Emotional Intelligence

- Definition, significance, Traits of Emotionally Intelligent people.
- Role of Emotional Quotient (E.Q.) v/s I.Q.
- Utility and application of EI in administration and governance.

C-Public Administration

Accountability and Ethical Governance

- Instruments of accountability, Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.
- All-India Service Rules, Strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance, Obstacles to ethical accountability.

Values/Ethics in Public Administration

- Laws and Rules, Role of Constitutional values.
- Conscience, Administrative ethics in Indian History and Scriptures.
- Status and Problems, Issues with Principles, Ethical concern (Public/Private Institutions).

Strengthening Moral and Ethical Values in Governance

- Right Training, Right recruitment, Media accountability, Code of conduct and Ethics.
- Any other ideas that you may have, Participatory Governance, Citizen's Charter, RTI.

Corporate Governance and Issues

- Definition and Concept, Values involved, Basic structure and Process of Companies.
- Related Government bodies, Basics of companies Act, Issues in corporate governance.
- Recent scams, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Ethics in International Relations and Funding

- Competition and inequality between Nations: Defence, Trade, Environmental degradation etc.
- Conditional Aids, Skewed governance structures of International organizations, Internet governance, State-Sponsored Terrorism.

Probity in Governance

- Probity, Concept of Public Service, Codes of Ethics.
- Information Sharing and Transparency in government, Philosophical basis of governance and Probity.
- Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture.
- Utilization of Public Funds, Quality of Service delivery.

Corruption

- Exact definition, Roots and Causes of corruption, Institutions to fight corruption.
- Issue of constitutional protection to civil Servants, Whistleblowers, Reforms to tackle corruption.

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D-Case Studies Based on these Issues

Case studies are normally related to Ethical dilemmas. The field of case studies could be unlimited. Given below are few such areas for case studies:

- Organized Crime, Extremism and Terrorism, Communalism (Riots etc.)
- Migration, unemployment, Tribal issues, Inequality across several dimensions.
- Corruption, Criminalization of Politics, Lack of Participatory governance (Youths especially).
- Quality of education and research, Untouchability in rural regions, Reservation, Elite bias in Policies, Politics and Administration.
- Environmental degradation issues, Uneven and Unplanned Urbanization, Regional imbalance, Land acquisition related issues, Mal-Governance, Gender issues, Degradation of moral values by Cinema, TV etc.
- Brain drain, Disaster management, Fisherman issues, NGOs and Stalling of development.
- Reforms in Indian Police, Red-Tapism, Ineffective implementation of Schemes.

Analysing the Previous Years' Questions of GS Paper IV

According to previous years analysis we can say that the GS paper IV contains nearly 14 questions all of which are compulsory. The paper is divided into two sections A and B.

The Section A of the paper contains questions worth 120 to 125 marks and this section tests aspirant's theoretical understanding of the topics of the syllabus. The questions may be asked to elucidate the concepts of the terms such as integrity, voice of conscience, perseverance, commitment, probity in governance, emotional intelligence, accountability, etc.

Some questions asked by UPSC in this paper are as- 'The values as reflected in the teachings and lives of great moral thinkers, philosophers, etc'. And some questions require elaboration of ethical or moral values as contained in some famous quote of a philosopher, thinker, etc. Some examples of previous years questions are as follows- "There is enough on this earth for every one's need but for no one's greed." (Mahatma Gandhi, 2013). "The weak can never forgive;

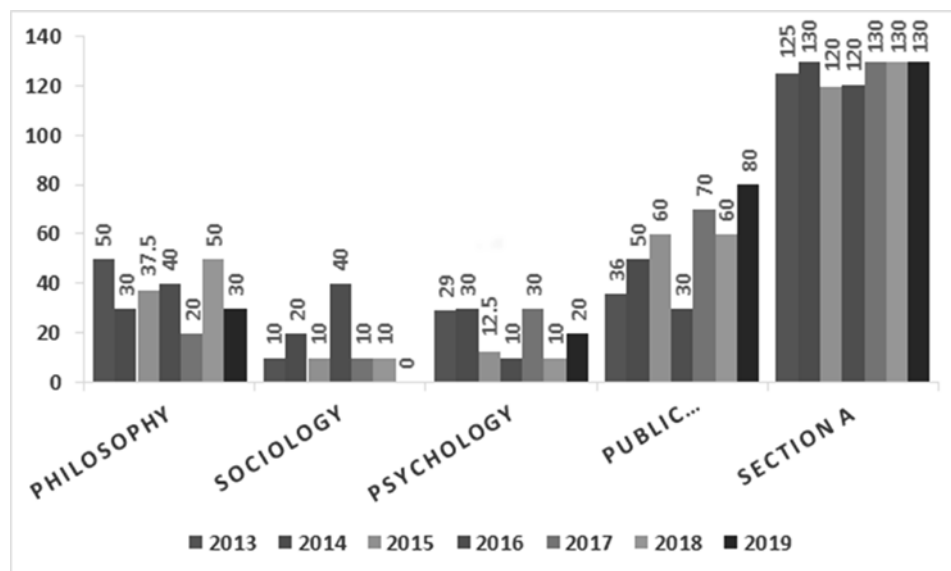
forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.” (2015). What does this quotations mean to you in the present context: Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding. “ Mahatma Gandhi” (2018).

Some questions may be asked from aspirant to dwell upon a social issue in an ethical context, viz. “There is a heavy ethical responsibility on the public servants because they occupy positions of power, handle huge amounts of public funds, and their decisions have wide-ranging impact on society and environment. What steps have you taken to improve your ethical competence to handle such responsibility?” “Non-performance of duty by a public servant is a form of corruption.” Do you agree with this view? Justify your answer. (2019).

The Section B of GS Paper IV contains five to six case studies each of 20 to 25 marks. The case studies put up a practical situation in which one’s role is defined. The situation puts up an ethical and moral dilemma to the aspirants as to what correct course of action is to be adopted within the practical and situational constraints.

Now we are introducing the above analysis in the graphical form. It helps the aspirants in making a better strategy from the examination point of view.

Graphical Analysis of Section-A of GS Paper-4



Note: The numerical values on the bars indicate total number of marks from year 2013 to 2019, topic-wise Section A.

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- **Philosophical:** In this section the questions are asked by UPSC to test the aspirants ethical and moral approach and their knowledge about great moral thinkers/philosophers of India and world.
- **Sociology:** Generally the questions in this section test the aspirants' social values.
- **Psychology:** All the questions are related to Judge the aspirants attitude and emotional intelligence.
- **Public Administration:** This is the most important portion of syllabus in section A. Maximum questions have been asked from this portion every year.
- **Total (Section-A):** The section A of the GS Paper IV contains 120 to 130 marks.
- **Case Studies (Section-B):** The section B of GS Paper IV contains five to six case studies each of 20 to 25 marks.

Ethics—An Introduction

1.1 Introduction – Ethics

Ethics is basically a set of moral principles or rules of behaviour based on ideas about what is morally good and bad. Sometimes, it also known as moral philosophy - a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong. The term comes from the *Greek* word 'ethikos', which means customs and habits.

The study of ethics is also often called “moral philosophy.” What is good? What is evil? How should I behave - and why? How should I balance my needs against the needs of others? These are some of the questions asked in the field of ethics.

Ethics plays an indispensable role in our lives and helps us in deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be directionless, purposeless and random. In the absence of ethics, there would be no way to pick between an unlimited numbers of goals. With ethical values in our mind, we are able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our objectives in life. Any divergence from ethical path will reduce our ability to be successful in our endeavours.

1.1.1 Definition of Ethics

*“A body of prescriptions and prohibitions, do's and dont's”
“Ethics concentrates on human actions or on the consequences of human”
“Ethics refers to well based standards of right and wrong that prescribe
what human ought to do, usually in terms of duties, principles,
specific virtues, or benefits to society.”*

'Ethics' is a system of accepted beliefs, morals and values, which influence human behaviour. More specifically, it is a system based on morals. Thus, ethics is the study of what is morally right, and what is not. The Latin origin of the word 'ethics' is ethicus that means character. Since the early 17th century,

2 ■ Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude

‘ethics’ has been accepted as the “Science of morals; the rules of conduct, the science of human duty.” Hence, in common parlance, ethics is treated as moral principles that govern a person’s or a group’s behaviour. It includes both the science of the good and the nature of the right.

The ethical concerns of governance have been underscored widely in Indian scriptures and other treatises such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagvad Gita, Buddha Charita, Arthashastra, Panchatantra, Manusmriti, Kural, Shukra Niti, Kadambari, Raja Tarangani, and Hitopadesh. At the same time, one cannot ignore the maxims on ethical governance provided by the Chinese philosophers such as Lao Tse, Confucius and Mencius.

In the Western philosophy, there are three eminent schools of ethics. The first, inspired by Aristotle, holds that virtues (such as justice, charity and generosity) are dispositions to act in ways that benefit the possessor of these virtues and the society of which he is a part. The second, subscribed to mainly by Immanuel Kant, makes the concept of duty central to morality: human beings are bound, from knowledge of their duty as rational beings, to obey the categorical imperative to respect other rational beings with whom they interact. The third is the Utilitarian viewpoint that asserts that the guiding principle of conduct should be the greatest happiness (or benefit) of the greatest number. The Western thought is full of ethical guidelines to rulers, whether in a monarchy or a democracy. These concerns are found in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Penn, John Stuart Mill, Edmund Burke, and others.

1.1.2 What is Ethics?

Ethics is the philosophical study of morality. It is a study of what are good and bad ends to pursue in life and what it is right and wrong to do in the conduct of life. It is therefore, above all, a practical discipline. Its primary aim is to determine how one ought to live and what actions one ought to do in the conduct of one’s life. It thus differs from studies in anthropology, sociology, and empirical psychology that also examine human pursuits and social norms.

These studies belong to positive science. Their primary aim is not to prescribe action but rather to describe, analyze, and explain certain phenomena of human life, including the goal-directed activities of individuals and groups and the regulation of social life by norms that constitute the conventional morality of a community. They do not, in other words, seek to establish conclusions about what a person ought to do but are only concerned with

establishing what people in fact do and the common causes and conditions of their actions. Nor is this difference between ethics and certain social sciences peculiar to these disciplines. It can be seen as well in the contrast between medicine and physiology, or between agriculture and botany. The former in each pair is a practical discipline. Both are studies of how best to achieve or produce a certain good, health in the one case, crops in the other, and each then yields prescriptions of what one ought to do to achieve or produce that good. By contrast, the latter in each pair is a positive science whose studies yield descriptions and explanations of the processes of animal and plant life but do not yield prescriptions for mending or improving those processes.

The definition of ethics as the philosophical study of morality gives the chief meaning of the word. It has other meanings, to be sure, some of which are perhaps more usual in general conversation. In particular, the word is commonly used as a synonym for morality, and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the moral code or system of a particular tradition, group, or individual. In philosophy, too, it is used in this narrower way to mean a particular system or theory that is the product of the philosophical study. Thus philosophers regularly refer to the major theories of the discipline as Humes ethics, Kants ethics, utilitarian ethics, and so forth.

Ethics covers the following dilemmas:

- How to live a good life?
- Our rights and responsibilities
- The language of right and wrong
- Moral decisions - what is good and bad?

1.1.3 History of Ethics

Ethics is as old as humanity. The first ethical precepts were certainly passed down by word of mouth by parents and elders, but as societies learned to use the written word, they began to set down their ethical beliefs. These records constitute the first historical evidence of the origins of ethics.

In as much as it is the study of human behaviour, we cannot really trace the history of ethics. However, as a systematic study of human behaviour, we can point out how ethics evolved as a discipline. It is not that we have first a straightforward history of moral concepts and then a separate and secondary history of philosophical comment. To set out to write the history of moral philosophy involves a careful selection from the past of what falls under the heading of moral philosophy as we now conceive it. We have to strike a balance

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between the danger of a dead antiquarianism, which enjoys the illusion that we can approach the past without preconceptions, and the other of believing that the whole point of the past was that it should culminate with us. However, we can observe a gradual development in the ethical thought from the beginning to our day.

In the Western Philosophy, the history of ethics can be traced back to the fifth century BC with the appearance of Socrates. As a philosopher among the Greeks his mission was to awaken his fellow humans to the need for rational criticism of their beliefs and practices. It was the time when the philosophers began to search for reasons for established modes of conduct.

The medieval period was dominated by the thoughts of Christian philosophers and theologians like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The influence of Christianity dominated the ethical scenario. So much so that during this period philosophy and religion were nearly indistinguishable. The rise of Christian philosophy produced a new era of history of ethics. In St. Augustine, the most prominent philosopher of the early medieval period, ethics became a blend of the pursuit of earthly well-being with preparation of the soul for eternal salvation. The next towering figure of medieval philosophy is Thomas Aquinas. He brought about a true reconciliation between Aristotelian science and philosophy with Augustinian theology. Aquinas greatly succeeded in proving the compatibility of Aristotelian naturalism with Christian dogma and constructing a unified view of nature, human, and God.

The contemporary ethical scenario is a further complex area of study. The contemporary European ethics in the broadest sense attempts to cover a generous range of philosophies running from phenomenology to theories of communicative action. The conditions of contemporary civilization forced philosophers to seek for a genuine ground for ethics and moral life. In much of the English speaking world G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) is taken to be the starting point of contemporary ethical theory. Others like Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Levinas, Max Scheler, Franz Brentano and John Dewey too have made significant contributions to the ethical thinking in other parts of the world.

1.1.4 Scope of Ethics

Ethics deals with voluntary actions. We can distinguish between human actions and actions of human: human actions are those actions that are done by human consciously, deliberately and in view of an end. Actions of human may not be wilfully, voluntarily, consciously and deliberately done but all the same they are

done by human (e.g. sleeping, walking, etc.). It is the intention which makes the difference between human action and action of human. In ethics we deal only with human actions.

1.1.5 Approaches to Ethics

Philosophers nowadays tend to divide ethical theories into three areas: meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics.

- **Meta-ethics** deals with the nature of moral judgment. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles. Meta-ethics is described by thinkers as the study of the origin and meaning of ethical concepts. The term “meta” means after or beyond, and, consequently. Meta-ethics is associated with the nature of ethical properties, statements, attitudes and judgements. Meta-ethics examines such themes as what moral questions mean, and on what basis people can know what is ‘true’ or ‘false’.

In Meta-ethics, there are two major issues. First are the metaphysical issues concerning whether morality exists independently of humans, and second is psychological issue concerning the underlying mental basis of our moral judgements and conduct. It can be established that Meta-ethics is the study of what ethical terms and theories actually refer to. It determines the validity of theories advanced in Normative Ethics.

- **Normative ethics** is concerned with the content of moral judgements and the criteria for what is right or wrong. It is the study of ethical action and is the branch of philosophical ethics that investigates the set of questions that arise when considering how one ought to act. Normative ethics is distinct from meta-ethics because it examines standards for the rightness and wrongness of actions, while meta-ethics studies the meaning of moral language and the metaphysics of moral facts.

Normative ethics is also distinct from descriptive ethics, as the latter is an empirical investigation of people’s moral beliefs. To put it another way, descriptive ethics would be concerned with determining what proportion of people believe that killing is always wrong, while normative ethics is concerned with whether it is correct to hold such a belief. Hence, normative ethics is sometimes called prescriptive, rather than descriptive.

- **Applied ethics** looks at controversial topics like war, animal rights and capital punishment, as well as moral issues such as abortion, animal rights and euthanasia. It helps to use knowledge of moral principles to present dilemmas. There are certain issues which arise due to newly adopted