ETHICS INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

for Civil Services Examination

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With **Case Studies** and **Practice Questions** based on Latest Pattern

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Top Civil Services Educator

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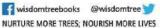- ☑ Sample Papers for Practice

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He is the Founding Director of Awdhesh Academy, an online learning platform. He is also a top educator of the civil services courses on Unacademy.

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Preface

The paper of 'Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude' was introduced in the year 2013 in the Civil Services Examination after the new pattern of the Mains examination was finalised. It is a matter of great pride and honour for me that this paper was introduced by the UPSC under the Chairmanship of Prof D. P. Agrawal, who was my PhD guide as the Director of the ABV-Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management (IIITM) Gwalior.

We know that the civil servants in India enjoy tremendous power in government. While the politicians are always in the limelight for running the government, they are actually responsible only for making laws, procedures and policies. The actual job of implementation of the policies is done by the civil servants on the ground. A politician can't enjoy any power that the civil servants like IAS, IPS or IRS officers do. They only have power of superintendence of the civil servants and at best, they can transfer an officer from one post to another. The job, service condition, promotions etc. of the civil servants are protected by the Constitution of India and they enjoy the real power within the government and carry out the real business of governance.

We know the famous quote of John Acton: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." The more is the power, the more are the chances of corruption. It is no surprise, therefore, that the civil servants in India are not particularly known for their honesty and integrity. We have seen in recent years the declining standards of morality in the civil services. A large number of top IAS, IPS and IRS officers are facing serious corruption cases. Many of them have been arrested for corruption and compulsorily retired due to inefficiency and corruption. Don't we deserve civil servants in India who are honest, knowledgeable and efficient?

While the civil services examination has been selecting the most brilliant candidates for the top positions in India, it had no mechanism to check the integrity, efficiency and decision-making power of the candidates. Some of these officers did not perform well in the field since they failed to take decisions while others lacked integrity. Many of the officers became corrupt soon as they tasted power. The only way to stop the misuse of power and use it in the public interest is to select the civil servants who possess integrity and good character. Abraham Lincoln had rightly said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." If we have people with character in civil services, they would never misuse their powers for selfish ends, and instead always use their powers for the development of the nation and for the welfare of people.

The purpose of the 'Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude' paper is to assess the ethical competence of the candidates and select the candidates possessing highest level of integrity and decision-making abilities. This paper tests the aptitude of the civil servants to find out if they possess the foundational values of public servants like impartiality, empathy, compassion, justice etc. The paper also tests the decision-making ability of the aspirant by using the case-study approach.

My journey with 'Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude' paper started when I started posting online courses on this paper on Unacademy after I took voluntary retirement from Indian Revenue Service (C&IT) in October 2016. Soon my course on the subject became the top online course on the topic 'Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude' according to Google search results. Later I set up my own online learning platform 'Awdhesh Academy' and posted my video lessons on this topic. This course has already benefited thousands of students so far. I started teaching this course on Unacademy in December 2018 and taught almost a dozen courses on this topic with 99%+ approval ratings by the students.

There are already many books available today on this subject. I, however, found that they don't cover the syllabus comprehensively or present the content in an interesting and simple manner. I have already published five books on various topics like leadership, spiritual intelligence, GST, mythology and happiness. I have, therefore, decided to write this book in a manner that presents the learning content in most interesting and lucid way to clear your fundamentals in all the topics pertaining to this paper. I have used my experience of more than twenty-five years in government, over fifteen years of experience as a writer and the long experience of teaching 'Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude' online to the students.

When this paper started in 2013, no writer had any idea about the course material; all they had was the syllabus of the paper. However, today after seven years of the introduction of this paper, we know what types of questions are asked in the paper. We also know which topics are more important from the examination point of view. This book has been written based on the latest trends of the examination. Once you read this book carefully, you should be able to internalise the foundational values of a civil servant including ethics and integrity and develop decision-making skills, which will help you attempt this paper naturally and effortlessly.

I hope that you find this book useful and you can score the highest marks in the civil services examinations. If you wish to make any suggestions, you are welcome to send them at my email aksinghirs@gmail.com

With best compliments

AWDHESH SINGH

SECTION I
Ethics and Human Interface

Ethics and Philosophy

'From the deepest desires often come the deadliest hate.'

—SOCRATES

The word philosophy comes from the Greek *philosophia*, which literally means 'love of wisdom'. Wise people are those who not only have knowledge but also know how to use it to lead a good life. Philosophy is thus the study of general and fundamental problems concerning existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. Philosophical methods to solve these problems include questioning, critical discussion, rational argument and systematic presentation. American poet and philosopher Henry David Thoreau explained the importance of philosophy as, 'To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity and trust.'

A philosopher tries to find answers to the following questions:

- What is the meaning of life?
- What is the nature of reality?
- Why people do what they do?
- Why something happens when it happens?
- What is the best way to live a life?
- What is right and what is wrong?
- What is just and what is unjust?

Philosophers are independent thinkers who try to find the meaning of life using their own experiences and observations. Famous philosopher Robert Browning believed, 'Life has meaning. And to find its meaning is my meat and drink.'

Philosophers are usually not successful by worldly standards as they refuse to become part of the rat race as common men are and also because they question the very basis of the rat race to seek money, power, name and fame. They question everything that is accepted by the common man as truth. The *Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, summarised the endeavour of the philosophers, '(Philosophers are) one of those who don't want millions, but an answer to their questions.'

Philosophers search for the ultimate truth of life. If one understands the greatest truth of the world, one may not become rich but will surely become free of seeking worldly values and the inherent misery that is integrated in their pursuit. Francis Bacon, widely considered among the world's greatest philosophers, had aptly said, 'Seek ye first the good things of the mind and the rest will either be supplied or its loss will not be felt.'

Branches of Philosophy

Western philosophy can be divided into six branches that have assumed importance over time. These are as follows:

1. Epistemology

   The theory of knowledge—derived from the Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (word/speech)—is a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature, origin, scope and possibility of knowledge. Epistemology-categorised questions arise with 'what is'. For example, 'What is life?' There is no standard answer to this question and everyone is free to put forth his own understanding of his question. The answers provided cannot be proved, they can only be experienced.

2. Metaphysics

   Metaphysics is derived from the Greek words '*meta*' and '*physika*', meaning 'after physics'. This branch of philosophy studies the 'first principles' and 'being', that is, the source of physical reality. It is the study of reality—visible and invisible. It explores what lies beyond the physical reality. It studies the most general aspects of reality pertaining to subjects such as substance, identity, the nature of the mind and free will. In other words, it is the study of nature and the nature of the world inhabited by human beings.

3. Logic

   The origin of the word 'Logic' is from the Greek word *logos*. It is the study of arguments. Logic is thus the study of correct reasoning. The task of the logician is to advance an account of valid and fallacious inference to allow one to distinguish. It provides methods to differentiate between good and bad.

4. Ethics

   Ethics is a general term for what is often described as the 'science (study) of morality'. In philosophy, ethical behaviour studies what is 'good' or 'right'. The Western tradition of ethics is sometimes called moral philosophy. Ethics and morality help philosophers to study and evaluate human behaviour.

5. Aesthetics

   As a branch of philosophy, 'Aesthetics' explores the creation and appreciation of beauty through critical analysis and reflection. It helps in understanding the value of arts, evaluating feelings, judging beauty and measuring human emotions.

5. Political Philosophy

Political philosophy is the study of concepts such as liberty, justice, property, rights, law and the enforcement of a legal code by authority. It deals with questions such as what makes a government legitimate, what rights and freedoms it should protect and why, what form it should take and why, what is law and what duties citizens owe to a legitimate government and when it may be legitimately overthrown. Political philosophy has three central concerns, namely, the political economy by which property rights are defined and access to capital is regulated, the demands of justice in distribution and punishment and the rules of truth and evidence that determine judgments in law.

Science and Philosophy

While philosophy is extremely important to lead a happy and fulfilling life, only a handful of individuals seek to become philosophers or develop their own philosophy to lead their lives. Most people find philosophy confusing and often unnecessary because they are unable to understand its immediate benefit.

Philosophy is not exact like science, but abstract and dynamic. Just like two human beings are not the same, similarly two philosophers also don't agree on any given theory. On the other hand, scientific theories are widely accepted the world over as they deal with inert matter whose behaviour does not change with time and space. For example, a drop of water would hold the same composition irrespective of the country from where it is drawn. However, two people don't exhibit the same behaviour even when they belong to the same family.

The comparative analysis of science and philosophy can be done as:

- Science is analytical description; philosophy is synthetic interpretation.
- Science wishes to resolve the whole into parts, the organism into organs and the obscure into the known. Philosophy does the reverse.
- Science gives us knowledge, but philosophy can help us attain wisdom.
- Science tells us how to heal and how to kill; it reduces the death rate in retail and then kills us wholesale in war; but only wisdom—desire coordinated in the light of all experiences—can tell us when to heal and when to kill.

In order to live a good life, man needs the knowledge of both science and philosophy. Science has contributed in the physical well-being of humanity by developing technologies that have increased the production of food and consumer items. Medical science has increased the longevity of human lives by developing cures for various diseases. Philosophers have discovered that ethical standards have improved the mental and spiritual health of the people.

1. What is the role of philosophy in improving the quality of human life? (150 words)
2. What are the types of questions the answers to which are sought by philosophers? (150 words)
3. What are the different branches of philosophy? (150 words)
4. How do science and philosophy differ from each other? (100 words)

Dimensions of Ethics

The term ethics is derived from the Ancient Greek word *ethikos* or ethos, meaning 'habit' or 'custom'. We may, therefore, call ethics as the habit or the custom of a society. Ethics is also termed as the moral philosophy, which involves systematising, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. Ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and injustice.

Ethical principles are not similar to scientific principles—which are objective and universal. Science deals with innate material objects; whose behaviour remains the same everywhere and at all times. A drop of water drawn from any source in the world would have exactly the same proportion of Hydrogen and Oxygen, that is, H_2O. It will also exhibit the same properties of freezing and boiling points. Hence, the material properties of innate objects can be codified and are well defined. All scientific laws can be expressed in the form of mathematical formulae.

The behaviour of each human being is, however, different; two siblings born from the same parents and brought up in the same environment exhibit different behaviour and ethical values. This shows that no mathematical formula or scientific law can be used to explain human behaviour. Interestingly, even the behaviour of an individual does not remain consistent throughout his life, as he evolves with experience gathered throughout his life and modifies his behaviour. Oscar Wilde had said it so wisely, 'Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.'

Societies, too, are like living organisms—having evolved over millions of years. Therefore, each society has different sets of values and moral standards. For example, in some societies, it is acceptable to have multiples wives; while in others, it is not. Yet, there are some values that are practiced in all human societies across the globe. These form the core values around which human beings form their groups, societies and live harmoniously. These core values are common all over the world and we may call them human or ethical values.

Definition of Ethics

Ethics is used interchangeably with 'morality' and sometimes it is used more narrowly to mean the *moral principles of a particular tradition, group or individual*. It varies from one society to another. It is, therefore, difficult to find an exact definition of ethics accepted by all experts of the world.

Rushworth Kidder, an academic-turned-journalist who founded a research institute, dedicated his life to mapping approaches to ethical dilemmas, defined ethics as, 'the science of the ideal human character' or 'the science of moral duty'. Authors Richard William Paul and Linda Elder, in their book *The Miniature Guide to Understanding the Foundations of Ethical Reasoning* defined ethics as 'a set of concepts and principles that guide us in determining what behaviour helps or harms sentient creatures'.

Ethics is also associated with behaviour in accordance with social conventions, religious beliefs and the law and it is not a standalone concept.

Ethics try to answer the dilemma of 'how one should live.' An ethical person has the capacity to think critically about moral values and direct his actions in accordance with these values. Ethics is often confused with terms that help to determine what is right and wrong. These terms are religion, moral and legal. We do so because these terms help us to determine what is right and wrong, what we should do and shouldn't do, thereby governing our behaviour.

Religion is perhaps the oldest source of ethics. All scriptures provide dos and don'ts for the followers of every religion. Certain activities that are prohibited in religious scriptures like murder, theft, lying, etc. are considered unethical. These unethical activities are often considered *paap* (sin or vice) in religion while the good deeds are often called *punya* (virtues). However, no religion provides any reason or justification for an action to be called virtue or vice. The words of the scriptures are accepted as gospel truths or as the words of God that can't be discussed or altered. However, these words, doctrines or ethics are different in different religions and are applicable only to the people of a particular religion. For example, idol worship is considered a sin in Islam and Judaism, but it is a holy practice in Hinduism. Consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited in Islam but is prescribed in Christianity.

Dimensions of Ethics

Ethics deals with the basic concepts and fundamental principles of a good human conduct. It studies the universal values that are necessary for living a good life in this world. However, unlike religions where concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, are said to have been decided by God, hence immutable; in ethics, the concept of right and wrong is based on logical discussions, evidence and investigations. Hence, the concept of ethics changes with time.

There are four dimensions of ethics:
1. Meta-ethics: It examines the origin and meaning of ethical principles.
2. Descriptive ethics: It deals with people's belief about what is morally right or wrong.

3. Normative ethics: It is the study of ethical action/s in a given situation.
4. Applied ethics: It involves examining specific controversial issues related to ethics in society.

1. Meta-ethics

Meta-ethics is coined from two words: 'meta' (means beyond) and 'ethics'. Hence, meta-ethics delves into what is beyond ethics, i.e. why ethics exist at all. Accordingly, meta-ethics can be defined as 'the study of the origin and meaning of ethical concepts'. It broadly covers two issues: metaphysical issues and psychological issues.

A. Metaphysical issues

Metaphysics, as a branch of philosophy, is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and being. It deals with matter that is beyond objective experience. It addresses the most fundamental concepts relating to ethics. There are two fundamental metaphysical issues in ethics.

(i) Absolutism

There are some ethical principles that are absolute and universal in nature. They don't change with time and space. These ethical principles can be compared with the universal laws of gravity or magnetism that have existed since time immemorial, but we don't know why they are there and we can't create them according to our wishes. We may also call these ethical principles as universal, absolute, eternal, spiritual, otherworldly and divine.

Plato believed in the divinity of moral values, which, in his opinion, were absolute truths—abstract and spiritual. In Indian tradition, 'Dharma' is synonymous with the universal code of morality and follows the divine laws.

The philosophers, who follow this approach of ethics, believe that morality is nothing but divine commands emanating from God's will. The medieval philosopher William of Ockham believed that God wills moral principles, such as '*murder is wrong*' and these exist in God's mind as commands. God instructs human beings about these by implanting us with moral intuitions and by revealing these commands in the scriptures. Some examples of these universal principles are:

- Don't steal
- Don't kill
- Don't lie
- Don't cheat
- Don't be unfaithful to your spouse

(ii) Relativism

Many philosophers don't believe in the divinity of ethics. They believe that ethics is this-worldly and has been created by human minds only. They deny the

universality of any moral principle. They are often called sceptics—those who question all moral values.

Sceptics don't reject moral values per se but deny the spirituality and the divinity of moral values. They argue that moral values are strictly human inventions and hence quite subjective. This position of philosophers is termed as *moral relativism*. There are two distinct forms of moral relativism.

(i) ***Individual relativism:*** According to this view, individuals create their own moral standards. Individual morality depends upon what suits one the best. Moral values of the poor and the rich, the weak and the strong and the young and the old are all different according to an individual's requirement. According to the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, great people are like superhuman beings, who create their own moral values that are quite distinct from the slave-like value system of the general masses.

(ii) ***Cultural relativism:*** According to this view, the basic principles of morality are decided by the society through evolutionary process. Moral principles thus need the approval of one's society. They can't be decided by the individuals as per their convenience. This view was advocated by philosophers like Sextus Empiricus, Michel de Montaigne and William Graham Sumner.

The philosophers of relativism morality don't accept that there is an absolute or universal nature of morality. They believe that moral values keep changing with time from one society to another. Hence, there are different ethical values in different parts of the world. They argue that ethical values are largely a product of the society and its culture. For example, polygamy may be considered as ethical in many societies but not in others. In the same way, different societies take different views in the matters of abortion, homosexuality or marriage among close relatives.

B. Psychological Issues

Why do some people behave morally while some others don't, when they had been brought up in the same society and often in the same family? Is being ethical a matter of faith, our genetics, or based on some reasoning?

Psychologists, therefore, ask the fundamental question: Why be moral?

- Are we moral because it gives us certain benefits like happiness, honour or connection with people?; or
- Are we moral because we want to avoid punishment, social isolation, or hatred from fellow human beings?

The psychological aspect of Meta-ethics can further be divided into the following dimensions:

1. Egoism

The term 'egoism' is derived from 'ego', the Latin term for 'I' in English. It means that men are inherently selfish. They do everything to please themselves. It claims that the ultimate aim of every individual is his own welfare. People take actions that maximise their self-interest. Even when they are helping others, doing some charity or social work, their main purpose behind doing it all is to please themselves.

2. Altruism

The word 'altruism' was coined by French philosopher Auguste Comte as an antonym for 'egoism'. He had derived it from the Italian word *altrui*, having its roots in the Latin *alteri.* It means 'other people' or 'somebody else'.

Altruism is a traditional virtue in many cultures and is a core aspect of various religious traditions and secular worldviews. Altruism or selflessness is the opposite of selfishness. It states that human beings are social creatures and cannot be termed as purely selfish. No one would perhaps ever choose to live alone in this world. We naturally feel empathy and sympathy for other people. When we see injustice in the world, we feel pain for the victim. We cry when others cry and laugh when others laugh. A Swedish proverb beautifully captures this sentiment: 'Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half sorrow'.

It is common to see strangers coming to the rescue of a victim and often sacrificing their lives attempting to save a stranger. Hence, some psychologists believe that man has an inherent capacity to show benevolence towards others. Psychological altruism thus states that we are driven by nature to help others without any self-interest in our mind.

3. Emotion

British philosopher David Hume argued that moral assessments involve our emotions and not our reason. We do things that make us feel good and we later justify our actions by finding suitable reasons for the same. Thus, reasons alone would not constitute a moral assessment. We need a distinctly emotional reaction in order to make a moral pronouncement. Reasons, however, might give us the relevant data to justify our emotions. Hume had said it wisely, 'Reason is and ought only to be, the slave of the passions.'

4. Reason

Some philosophers, however, don't agree with Hume that emotions alone drive ethical judgements. They believe that emotions are temporary and keep changing with time. If an individual's action is based on emotions, he can't remain ethical for long. When negative emotions like anger, hatred and envy overpower the mind of an individual, he is likely to commit unethical actions.

Hence, many philosophers believe that all ethical principles are rational and we can derive them purely through our reasons. While emotions play an important role in our decision-making, they are temporary; hence, a majority of our actions are done under the guidance of reason. German philosopher

Immanuel Kant was the most prominent philosopher advocating this thought process. He believed that true ethics is guided by reason instead of emotions.

2. Descriptive Ethics

Descriptive ethics is also known as comparative ethics. It is the study of people's beliefs about morality. It is a form of empirical research into the attitudes of individuals or groups of people to ascertain what people consider moral i.e. what they consider good or evil, right or wrong. It also investigates people's ethical ideals, or which actions societies reward or punish in law or politics.

Descriptive ethics is thus dynamic because it keeps changing with time and place. What may be considered moral in one country may not be so in others. For example, it may be moral for a man to marry up to four women in many Islamic countries as their religion allows it, but this practice is not considered moral in other countries that are guided by different values and traditions. Many practices like premarital sex, live-in relationships, etc. are not considered immoral in most of the Western world while they are considered immoral in traditional societies like India. Value systems also change with each generation and every new generation comes with its own set of morality.

Descriptive ethics thus provides authentic empirical information about what is considered ethical by the society. Instead of judging whether an action is ethical or unethical based on a logic given by philosophers long ago, it takes into account the ground reality of the society and provides the true picture of morality. Descriptive ethics thus tells us which actions are moral based on the popular perceptions within a society rather than what they ought to be. Once philosophers ascertain what is ethical from a society's point of view, they can also find the reasons to justify the prevalent social behaviour and thus come up with newer theories of ethics that are in tune with the times.

Since descriptive ethics involves empirical investigation, it is used in different scientific fields like evolutionary biology, psychology, sociology or anthropology.

3. Normative Ethics

Normative ethics is the study of ethical actions. It deals with 'ethical dilemma' and scrutinises a set of questions that arise while considering how one ought to act in a given situation. Normative ethics is also considered as *prescriptive*, rather than *descriptive*, because it guides us on *how to act morally*, rather than *what morality* is as ascertained in 'descriptive ethics'. It is like a doctor prescribing a medicine to a patient suffering from a particular illness without actually explaining to him the cause of his illness or the chemical composition of the prescribed medicine.

Normative ethics can be divided further into four branches:
1. Virtue Ethics

2. Deontology
3. Consequentialism
4. Ethics of Care or Relational Ethics

1. Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics was advocated by philosophers like Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. It focuses on the inherent character and 'integrity' of a person, rather than on specific actions. The objective of this approach is to be a good person. It means that if someone is virtuous or a good person, his actions will be ethical. For example, a hero in a movie is considered to be virtuous in whatever he does. Even if he lies, kills, or cheats, his actions are still perceived to be good since he does not do anything for his own sake but for the society. In *Mahabharata*, Lord Krishna followed some proscribed methods in the killing of Bhishma, Dronacharya, Karna and Duryodhan. Yet, his actions are not considered unethical because he was virtuous and his actions were aimed for the establishment of Dharma.

There is, however, no universal definition of virtue. Different philosophers have defined virtues differently.

Aristotle defined virtue as a desirable characteristic trait, such as courage, that lies between two extremes—heroism and cowardliness. Thus, a virtuous agent does not follow a single principle all the time and avoids all extremes. He tries to find a balance in ethical decision-making. He does not apply any specific 'rules' to take ethical decisions, but rather attempts to make decisions that are consistent with the pursuit of a particular kind of excellence, which entails exercising of sound moral judgement guided by virtues like courage, wisdom, temperance, fairness, integrity and consistency. According to Aristotle, 'The virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well.' The aim is to perform the right action, with the right person, to the right extent, at the right time and in the right manner.

Most philosophers agree that a virtuous person must possess the four cardinal virtues. These virtues derive initially from Plato in *The Republic* (Book IV). These virtues were expanded later by philosophers like Cicero, Ambrose, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. These virtues are also recognised in the *Bible*, *Old Testament*, classical antiquity and in traditional Christian theology. These virtues are:

1. **Prudence:** It is the ability to discern the appropriate course of action to be taken in a given situation at the appropriate time.
2. **Courage:** It is the ability to confront fear, uncertainty and intimidation. It is also called fortitude, forbearance, strength, endurance.
3. **Temperance**: It means moderation in action, thought or feeling. It is also known as restraint, the practice of self-control, abstention, discretion, moderation or tempering the appetition.

4. **Justice:** Justice is fairness in the way that people are treated. It is often considered the most extensive and most important virtue. It also means righteousness, equitableness or moral rightness.

According to virtue ethics, we must focus on building our character by cultivating these virtues, which is possible only if we are doing the virtuous acts as a matter of habit and avoid doing any evil deeds. Aristotle summarised his philosophy of virtue as: Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.

Criticism of Virtue Ethics

The virtue ethics is criticised by modern philosophers for the following reasons:
1. Virtues are subjective and keep changing with time.
2. A virtuous woman in ancient times was someone quiet, servile and productive. However, this does not hold good today.
3. Action and consequence of the action is more important than the inherent quality of the person.
4. A true virtue is one that is universally applicable. However, most virtues have cultural and social bias.
5. Servility may be considered a female virtue but is not so for men. Hence, what is right for one gender isn't considered right for another.

2. Deontology

The word 'deontology' has Greek roots in the words *deon* (duty) + *logos* (reason). It means that an action is moral if it can be considered a duty with the reason that is universally acceptable. This theory proposes that the ethical position of an action should be judged based on rules. It is sometimes described as 'duty-based' or 'obligation-based' or 'rule-based' ethics, because a moral person must follow the ethical rules at all times. According to it, an action is more important than its consequences. This theory argues that decisions should be made considering one's duties and rights without paying heed to the consequence arising out of that action.

Some deontological theories are:

(i) Categorical imperative: This theory was given by Immanuel Kant, which roots morality in humanity's rational capacity and asserts certain inviolable moral laws. A categorical imperative denotes an absolute, unconditional requirement that must be obeyed in all circumstances and is justified as an end in itself. According to this theory, 'one must act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law'. For example, one should always speak truth irrespective of the consequences. It means that even if the truth is bitter or may harm someone, it is always preferable to a lie that might lead to some benefits.

We shall learn more about categorical imperative in the chapter 'Immanuel Kant'.

(ii) Gandhian ethics: Mahatma Gandhi believed in the righteousness of action. He did not justify the noble ends by following evil means. He categorically said, 'For me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life… We have always control over the means but not over the end…I feel that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means… They say, "means are after all means." I would say, "means are after all everything." As the means so the end.'

He believed in the principle of truth and non-violence. For him, these principles were non-negotiable and immutable. He called his religion a 'religion of truth' and transformed the concept from 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God'. He believed that being truthful is to be close to God. He also said, 'I am devoted to nothing but truth and I owe no discipline to anybody but truth.'

(iii) Nishkam karma: The principle of 'selfless action' or *Nishkam karma* was taught by Lord Krishna in his discourse to Arjuna. Lord Krishna said:

> You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. You should never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction. You must be steadfast in the performance of your duty abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called *Yog* (Integrity). You must seek refuge in divine knowledge and insight and discard reward-seeking actions that are certainly inferior to works performed with the intellect established in Divine knowledge. Miserly are those who seek to enjoy the fruits of their works. One who prudently practices work without attachment can get rid of both good and bad reactions in this life itself.

The concept of *Nishkam karma* emphasises on the performance of one's duty rather than working for the result of the action. If your actions are good, the fruits of your actions will be naturally noble.

3. Consequentialism

The ethics of consequentialism is also called 'teleology'. The word 'teleology' comes from Greek *telos* (end) and *logos* (reason). This principle states that the final outcome or consequence of an action decides the ethical value of an action. If the outcome of an action is good, it is ethical and if it is bad, it is unethical. For example, if in a certain situation, speaking lies may spread more happiness and positive outcome, then it shall be treated as the right action.

This principle sometimes comes in conflict with the principle of Deontology, which stipulates that the righteousness of an action is the only important thing and the consequences resulting from that action are immaterial for determining the ethical value of an action. Consequentialist theories include:

- **Utilitarianism:** An action is right if it maximises happiness for the greatest number of people.

- **Welfarism:** An action is right if it leads to state welfare through order, material wealth and population growth.
- **Egoism:** An action is right if it maximises good for the self.
- **Altruism:** An action is right, when it promotes someone else's welfare, even at the cost to one's own happiness.

4. Ethics of Care or Relational Ethics

Relational ethics or 'ethics of care' is defined as an 'action ethic' that is placed within the interpersonal relationships. The action ethic includes engagement, mutual respect, embodiment and interdependent environment.

Relational ethics was founded by feminist theorists, notably Carol Gilligan. She argued that morality arises out of the experiences of empathy and compassion. It emphasised on the importance of interdependence and relationships in achieving ethical goals. According to this principle, ethics is about how we should live together in a family, in a society or in a state.

Traditional, the human society has been dominated by men and almost all great philosophers had been men. Hence, the popular philosophy is predominantly a 'masculine philosophy', which ignores the views on morality of half of the population of the world—that is, women. In masculine philosophy, there is more emphasis on power and on rigid moral rules like rights and duties. However, women practice a different type of morality, which can be called 'feminine morality'.

According to this view, women traditionally have had a nurturing role, raising children and overseeing domestic life. These tasks required less adherence to rules and involved more spontaneous and creative actions. Hence, the basis of morality would spontaneously be caring for others as would be appropriate in each unique circumstance. On this model, the agent becomes part of the situation and acts with care within that context. This stands in sharp contrast to the male-modelled morality, where the agent is a mechanical actor who performs his required duty but can remain distant from and unaffected by the situation. A care-based approach to morality, as it is sometimes called, is offered by feminist ethicists as either a replacement for or a supplement to traditional male-modelled moral systems.

However, it would be incorrect to associate the ethics of care to female philosophers alone. It was preached by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago when he asked people to follow non-violence and learn to forgive others. He had emphatically stated:

> You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

We don't handle the errors of our family members, the way society deals with an individual. If a child commits some error, a mother may sometimes

punish the child or forgive him, or she might sometimes even punish herself by refusing to talk to him or take food. Her ultimate purpose in adopting either of these courses is to reform the child and to make him realise his mistake. Such non-violent actions are much more useful in transforming a person than going for heartless punishments following the rule of law.

Hence, according to this philosophy, we must deal with every person with kindness and compassion. Our actions should be such that they reform the person rather than transform him to a criminal and a delinquent. This type of morality has been practiced by women within the family system since time immemorial. If this can be expanded to the societal level, we can perhaps create a better society with much more love, compassion and morality.

1. What are normative ethics? Describe the different theories in brief. (150 words)
2. In which way is the concept of normative ethics different from descriptive ethics? (150 words)
3. What is more important for deriving moral principles—reason or emotions? (150 words)
4. What is the meaning of virtue ethics? Who are the main proponents of virtue ethics? (150 words)
5. Aristotle said, 'Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.' Explain the meaning of this sentence in the context of civil services. (150 words)
6. What is 'Ethics of Care'? Why is it called feminine ethics? Explain. (150 words)
7. What are the different theories of Consequentialism? (150 words)
8. What is Deontology? Describe the three main theories of Deontology. (150 words)
9. Some people feel that values keep changing with time and situation, while others strongly believe that there are certain universal and eternal human values. Share your views on this with appropriate justification. (150 words) (CSE 2013)
10. Given below are two quotations from moral thinkers/philosophers. For each of these, bring out what it means to you in the present context.
(a) 'The weak can never forgive; forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.' (150 words)
(b) 'We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.' (150 words) (CSE 2015)
11. The crisis of ethical values in modern times is traced to a narrow perception of the good life. Discuss. (150 Words) (CSE 2017)

Applied Ethics

Applied Ethics, as a branch of ethics, is concerned with the analysis of particular moral issues in private and public life. It deals with specific controversial moral issues such as abortion, animal rights, or euthanasia. In order for a matter to be undertaken by Applied Ethics, (i) it should be controversial, (ii) it should involve moral dimensions, and (iii) it should have substantial impact on society.

The first requirement of Applied Ethics is that the issue, as has been stated earlier, must be *controversial*. It means that a significant number of people are for and against the issue at hand. The common moral issues like theft, murder, rape, etc.—which are considered by almost everyone as immoral—are not part of Applied Ethics. Similarly, the issue of shooting someone using a gun is not an applied ethical issue, since everyone agrees that this practice is grossly immoral. However, the issue of gun control would be an applied ethical issue since there are significant groups of people both for and against gun control.

The second important requirement for an issue to be considered as an applied ethical issue is that it must be distinctly moral in character. Some issues like reservation, affirmative action, rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community, capitalistic versus socialistic practices, public versus private health care systems, or energy conservation are controversial. They also have a substantial impact on the society and yet they don't have a moral dimension. They are only issues of social policy, which are undertaken by the concerned states for creating a better society.

Sometimes, social policy and morality overlaps, as with murder—which is both socially prohibited and immoral. However, some moral issues may not overlap. For example, many people would argue that sexual promiscuity is immoral but may not feel that there should be social policies regulating sexual conduct, or laws punishing people for promiscuity or adultery.

It is not easy to resolve the issues of Applied Ethics because there is no consensus amongst humanity over ethical issues. There are several normative principles in ethics and for every principle, there may be an opposite principle. People use different philosophies to defend their case and it becomes extremely difficult to find a solution that is acceptable to all.

Applied Ethics can be divided into different branches like medical ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, sexual ethics and human right ethics.

Normative Principles in Applied Ethics

The following normative principles are most commonly used in applied ethical discussions:

 (i) **Personal benefit:** An action must produce beneficial consequences for the individual to some extent who is performing the act.

 (ii) **Social benefit**: An action must also produce beneficial consequences for society. If the action produces only personal benefit without benefiting the society, it can't be said to be ethical.

 (iii) **Principle of benevolence**: We must help the people who are poor and in need.

 (iv) **Principle of paternalism**: We must assist others in pursuing their best interests when they are unable to help themselves.

 (v) **Principle of harm:** We must not harm others except for self-defence.

 (vi) **Principle of honesty:** We must speak truth, be honest and should not deceive others.

 (vii) **Principle of lawfulness:** We must try to follow the laws, rules and procedures prescribed by the nation.

 (viii) **Principle of autonomy:** We must give people freedom to what they consider right for them unless they break the law or interfere in other's freedom.

 (ix) **Principle of justice:** We must acknowledge every person's right to due process, fair compensation for harm done and fair distribution of benefits.

 (x) **Principle of Rights:** We must acknowledge a person's rights to life, information, privacy, free expression and safety.

The Fields of Applied Ethics

Applied Ethics principles are applied in almost all kinds of professional fields or social practices. While medical ethics, environmental ethics, business ethics and legal ethics are major subfields, Applied Ethics is also used in relation to human rights, war, media, communication, sports, academic research, publication and other areas as well. Here, we shall be dealing with the main subfields of Applied Ethics.

Business ethics

Business ethics examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment or economic activities. Business ethics discusses ethical questions in marketing, accounting, labour laws including child labour and abusive labour practices, human resource management, political contributions, business acquisitions such as hostile take-overs, production, use

of toxic material, intellectual property, information management including information leak and others.

Legal ethics

Legal ethics refers to an ethical code governing the conduct of people engaged in the practice of law. Each country promulgates model rules that provide the code of ethics for the people in legal profession. The model rules address the client-lawyer relationship, duties of a lawyer as advocate in adversary proceedings, dealings with persons other than clients, law firms and associations, public service, advertising and maintaining the integrity of the profession. Some of the defining features of legal ethics includes respect of client confidences, honesty toward the tribunal, truthfulness in statements to others and professional independence.

Environmental ethics

According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 'Environmental ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to and also the value and moral status of, the environment and its nonhuman contents.' It exerts influence on a large range of disciplines including law, sociology, theology, economics, ecology and geography. It rests on the principle that there is an ethical relationship between human beings and the natural environment. Human beings are a part of the environment just as the other living beings, including plants and animals. They cannot be denied their right to live. They need to be considered as entities with the right to co-exist with human beings.

The main topics included in the environmental ethics are global warming, pollution and issues that are closely tied to poverty, sustainability and economic and social justice. Furthermore, since environmental problems often affect beyond the boundaries of nation-states, the issues are tied to the fields of international relations and global governance.

The main issues in environmental ethics are as follows:

a) **Consumption of natural resources:** The unscrupulous depletion of our natural resources is detrimental to our well-being. We are cutting down forests to make our homes. The excessive use of our available resources is resulting in their depletion, risking the life of our future generations.

b) **Destruction of forests:** Large-scale industrial activities lead to destruction of forests and other natural resources. Mining processes disrupt the ecological balance of nature and harm the plant and animal life in those regions. Even the land used for agriculture is unable to compensate the loss of so many trees and animal life.

c) **Environmental pollution:** Most human activities lead to environmental pollution. As the population is exceeding the carrying capacity of our planet, animal and plant habitats are being destroyed to make space for

human habitation. Large-scale constructions of roads and buildings are causing damage to the environment. The animals that inhabited these habitats lose their home and eventually their lives. The ever-increasing use of automobiles, burning of crops and use of coal to generate electricity results in a polluted environment.

   d) **Harm to animals:** When human inhabitation grows, the animals lose their homes. They sometimes enter human settlements posing a threat to the people living there. In some cases, these animals are killed. Animals are also killed to serve as a food source for humans. Animal studies also cause harm to animals and sometimes even leads them to their deaths. This destruction has led to the extinction of many animal species.

It is therefore important to that the development of human civilisation should not cause any permanent damage to the environment. We can adopt the following strategies for sustainable development of man and environment together.

   a) Clean up the environment by employing more people for collection of garbage from different places and segregating them appropriately.
   b) Create social awareness in the society for cleaning the environment and its benefit to their own health and happiness.
   c) Use part of the *Swachch Bharat Abhiyan* tax for funding the environmental NGOs and enable them to act as citizen's representatives and watchdogs.
   d) Prescribe strict emission norms for vehicles and other polluting industries.
   e) Stricter penalties must be imposed for the violation of the environmental norms.
   f) Make the process of complaining simpler and easy and reward the people appropriately for reporting the matter to the government.
   g) Create detailed environmental databases and make it accessible to all citizens.
   h) The pollution control boards should be adequately funded, staffed and empowered.
   i) Indian universities must include environmental studies in all the courses to sensitise the future citizens of India about their role and responsibility towards the environment.
   j) Higher rates of GST may be imposed on those vehicles and other goods that increase pollution during its manufacture of operations. This would motivate the automobile companies to develop better technologies to manufacture vehicles that cause less pollution.

Medical ethics and Bioethics

Medical ethics deals with the study of moral values and judgments in the field of medication and healthcare. It encompasses its practical application in not only clinical settings but also works on its history, philosophy, theology and sociology.

Medical ethics shares many principles with other branches of healthcare ethics, such as nursing ethics.

Medical ethics is narrow term and is understood as an applied professional ethics, whereas the scope of bioethics is much wider as it encompasses within itself the philosophy of science and the critique of biotechnology and life science.

Bioethics deals with the ethical implications of biological research and applications especially in medicine. Bioethics includes the study of what is right and wrong in the new discoveries made and techniques in biology, such as genetic engineering and the transplantation of organs.

These two fields often overlap and the distinction between the two is a matter of style rather than professional consensus. Some other topics include abortion, cloning, euthanasia, eugenics and others.

Resolution of Issue of Abortion in Medical Ethics

Controversy

The issue of abortion is one of the most controversial issues of Applied Ethics.

- Some people think that abortion is always wrong.
- Some think that abortion is right when the mother's life is at risk.
- Others think that there is a range of circumstances in which abortion is morally acceptable.

The ethical question is: *Is it morally right to terminate a pregnancy before normal childbirth?*

Discussion

Let us now discuss the various aspects of the issue in detail.

The people who are against abortion often put up the following arguments:
- All actions that kill a human being are morally wrong.
- All abortions are actions that kill a human being.
- Hence, all abortions are morally wrong.

This argument suffers from the following flaw:
- In many situations, killing people is acceptable and even moral (like in the case of terrorists, rapists or drug-traffickers)
- Abortion may sometime save the life of the mother.
- Hence, all abortions may not be morally wrong.

Hence, we can't accept the premise 'All abortions are wrong'.

Some people argue that most abortions are wrong. Their arguments are:
- All actions that kill an innocent person without resulting in saving the life of another person or something of similar moral importance are morally wrong.

- Most abortions are actions that kill an innocent person without resulting in saving the life of another person or something of similar moral importance.
- Hence, most abortions are morally wrong.

This argument can be accepted because it is more logical.

Let us now consider the arguments advanced in favour of abortions
- It is the right of the mother to bear child and give birth.
- Dowry is required to be paid for marrying the girl.
- The mother's life may be at risk, in some situations.
- It would be a trauma to give birth to a child conceived during rape.
- It would be a trauma for the parents and the child, if the child is mentally or physically deformed since birth.

Conclusions

When we analyse the pros and cons of abortion rationally, we come to the following conclusions:
- Female infanticide is not permissible due to social evil like dowry.
- Mothers can't have absolute right on the lives of her children.
- Abortion may be justified to save the life of the mother, in rape cases or in cases with serious deformity of the child.

Case of Baby Doe (Medical Ethics)

Issue Involved

In 1982, a couple from Bloomington, Indiana, gave birth to a baby with severe mental and physical disabilities. Among other complications, the infant—known as Baby Doe—had its stomach disconnected from its throat and was thus unable to receive nourishment. Although this stomach deformity was correctable through surgery, the couple did not want to raise a severely disabled child and therefore chose to deny surgery, food and water to the infant. Local courts supported the parents' decision and six days later, Baby Doe died.
Question: Should corrective surgery have been performed for Baby Doe?

Discussion

The case can be argued both in favour and against the surgery.
- Arguments in favour of corrective surgery derive from the infant's right to life and the principle of paternalism which stipulates that we should pursue the best interests of others when they are incapable of doing so themselves.
- Arguments against corrective surgery arise from the personal and social benefits that would result from such surgery. If Baby Doe would have survived, its quality of life would have been poor and in any case,

it probably would have died at an early age. Also, from the parent's perspective, Baby Doe's survival would have been a significant emotional and financial burden.

After examining both sides of the issue, the parents and the courts found that the arguments against surgery were stronger than the arguments for surgery. They concluded—

(i) Foregoing surgery was in the best interests of the infant, given the poor quality of life it would endure.

(ii) The status of Baby Doe's right to life was not clear given the severity of the infant's mental impairment.

However, all such decisions pertaining to Applied Ethics are quite subjective and another judge or another set of parents might have taken an alternate or opposite view in an identical case. Hence, these decisions can't be seen as binding to people or enforceable by law.

1. What are the different fields of Applied Ethics? Describe any one field in detail. (150 words)

2. What are the different 'normative principles' in Applied Ethics? (150 words)

3. What are the main issues pertaining to environmental ethics? (150 words)

4. Explain the salient features of medical ethics and Bioethics. How can India improve ethics in the medical profession? (150 words)

5. Explain the various ethical issues relating to abortion. How can we justify abortion in certain situations? (150 words)

6. In the case study of Baby Doe, it was decided to deny surgery to the child. If you have to advance the arguments for permitting surgery to Baby Joe, which normative principles would you use to justify your stand? (150 words)

7. Now-a-days, there is an increasing thrust on economic development all across the globe. At the same time, there is also an increasing concern about environmental degradation caused by development. Many a time, we face a direct conflict between developmental activity and environmental quality. It is neither feasible to stop or curtail the developmental process, nor it is advisable to keep degrading the environment, as it threatens our very survival. Discuss some feasible strategies which could be adopted to eliminate this conflict and which could lead to sustainable development. (200 words) (CSE 2014)

8. What is meant by 'environmental ethics'? Why is it important to study? Discuss any one environmental issue from the viewpoint of environmental ethics. (150 words) (CSE 2015)

9. Suppose the Government of India is planning to construct a dam in a mountain valley bound by forests and inhabited by ethnic communities. What rational policy should it resort to in dealing with unforeseen contingencies? (150 words) (CSE 2018)

Determinants of Ethics

Ethics is the study of moral principles. Ethics attempt to explain questions like 'what is good and evil' or 'what is virtue and vice'. It is easy to see that many people today don't follow the ethical life and lead an immoral life. However, the ignorance of ethics does not save a person from the consequences of being unethical just as the ignorance of the law of gravitation does not save a person's life, if he jumps from a high-rise building.

Ethics seeks to provide a path that is good for the individuals and also for the society. If a person is only concerned about his own personal interest without any consideration towards society, he is unlikely to follow the moral path. However, it is not easy to find a single path that can be called ethical for every individual in every situation because an ethical action is determined based on several factors.

Determinants of Ethics

Determinants are the factors in human behaviour that determine whether an action is ethical or not. There are three such determinants of ethics, namely—

1. Object
2. End
3. Circumstances

1. Object

When we have to take any decision, we usually have multiple options before us. We are free to choose what we consider best for us. It is a fact that different people when facing a similar situation will choose differently because they have different objectives in life. Object is thus what we choose to do in thought, word, or deed of our own free will and also choose not to do something.

2. End

All actions done by us seek to achieve some end. End thus means the purpose for which the act or action is willed. Sometime one likes the work itself and does everything for the sake of work itself. For example, one may pray because he loves praying to God. However, sometimes, we take actions to achieve for some

other ends. For example, some people pray to God to achieve success, glory, wealth, peace of mind, etc. Thus, our end is usually the motive or the reason for an action to be performed.

3. Circumstances

Circumstances are the elements and environment that surround a human action and affect it. We can't decide the ethical value of an action without knowing the circumstances under which the action was taken. For example, it may be unethical in a normal situation to speak a lie. However, if we lie to save a life, or to protect our country or to help a depressed person, it can't be said to be wrong.

In order to ascertain if an action is ethical or not, we have to take into account all these three factors viz. object, end and circumstances. In other words, an ethical action must satisfy all the three determinants.

Factors of Ethics

The factors that determine the ethical conduct of a person are—
1. Person
2. Place
3. Law
4. Organisation
5. Religion
6. Time

1. Person

Every human being is unique and possesses different types of attributes. He lives in the same world as others, but he absorbs different types of values according to his experience in and with the world. In the same family, two siblings may possess different types of ethical values though they have been brought up by the same parents, had gone to the same school etc. Some traits acquired by a human being are inborn while others are acquired during his upbringing.

The children of ethical parents are likely to be more ethical in comparison to the children of parents who had been unethical, criminals or corrupt. Children observe their parents from their childhood and they tend to imitate their behaviour as they grow up. However, sometimes the children may develop aversion to the unethical conduct of their parents and become ethical.

We also develop ethical values while in schools and colleges. Children learn from their teachers and often change their conduct under peer pressure. Many bad habits like smoking, drinking and making physical relationships are the result of peer pressure in schools. If a child is in good company, he may acquire good ethical values and become moral.

2. Place

The ethical values are also determined by the culture, tradition and values of the society or country in which a person is brought up or lives. For example, corruption is quite common in India but not in many developed countries like Singapore or Australia. Hence, a child born in a country that accepts corruption as a part of life may not find much problem with corruption. Similarly, adultery, extramarital and premarital relationships are quite common in the Western world; and hence, a person may not find them as immoral as it is considered in India, where it is less prevalent.

3. Law

The legal structure of any nation plays an extremely important role in shaping the ethical values of the society. The government of a state makes laws that prohibit certain actions and allows others. Laws provide the concept of right and wrong to the citizen of a country and also guide them to follow the right path and avoid the actions prohibited by the law. In the past, laws like prohibition of *Sati Pratha* (Custom of Sati) played an important role in stopping the evil practice of burning the wife along with the dead husband on his pyre. Similarly, laws made relating to inter-caste and inter-religion marriage, prohibition of dowry, divorce provision, etc. had also transformed ethical values of the society.

Sometimes, laws are also laid down by the courts. For example, recently the Supreme Court (SC) declared Section 377 of the IPC unconstitutional, which gave boost to LGBT rights. Similarly, the SC judgments in the case of 'Triple Talaq' and 'Sabarimala' are likely to transform the values of the society in future and empower the women in India.

4. Organisation

Every organisation has a culture of its own and the people who work in it tend to develop the ethical values of the organisation. For example, the ethical values of the police department may be quite different from the ethical values of a retail store. People try to adjust with the environment of an organisation and adopt the ethical values that they uphold, gradually.

The Stanford Prison Experiment

Philip George Zimbardo, a psychologist and professor Emeritus at Stanford University, conducted a unique experiment in 1971 called 'The Stanford Prison Experiment' to understand how our roles in real life affect our thoughts.

He picked twenty-four male students to participate in a psychological study of the prison life. The experiment was conducted in a makeshift prison located in the basement of the Stanford Psychology Department and each participant was paid $15 per day. Half of them were randomly assigned the role of 'prisoners' and the remaining half were to act as 'prison guards'. The experimenter tried to

expose the participants to real-life conditions of prisoners, including fake arrest at the participant's home.

Initially, the prisoners did not take the guards seriously. Soon the guards began to impose their authority. They blew whistles to force the prisoners to wake up at 2.30 in the morning; when the prisoners refused to obey, the guards used power against them. The next day, the prisoners rebelled. They ripped their uniform and locked themselves in the prison. The guards forcibly opened the prison doors, stripped the inmates naked, tore apart the beds and put the rebels in solitary confinement, forced them to do press-ups and subjected them to public humiliation. They separated the 'good' prisoners who did not rebel and rewarded them by giving them permission to lie in bed, wash themselves, brush their teeth and eat, while those who had started the riot were not allowed to do so.

Within a few days, the students who were merely 'acting' as guards began to behave like real prison guards and became sadistic. The students playing the role of prisoners became extremely stressed and developed symptoms of acute depression. The experiment was originally planned for two weeks but had to be called off within six days due to its extreme effects on the participants.

This experiment revealed the power of organisation in transforming the ethical and moral values of people.

5. Religion

Most people in the world are religious and believe in God according to their scriptures. All religions prescribe dos and don'ts to their followers. Often religions have Commandments, which must be followed religiously by the members of the faith. Hence, religion is one of the most important determinates of ethical values. For example, alcohol is prohibited in Islam while permitted in Christianity. Similarly, divorce is not allowed in Hinduism, but permitted in Christianity and Islam. While some religions allow only one marriage, others allow polygamy. Some religions like Jainism prohibit killing of animals, even insects, while religions like Islam and Judaism have made killing animals a part of their religious ceremony.

Hence, the ethical value of a person is influenced deeply by the religion he/she belongs to.

6. Time

Ethical values keep changing with time. What was ethical in the ancient or medieval period is not considered ethical in the modern period. For example, it was ethical to conduct war in the ancient and medieval times for whatever reason, but it is considered immoral in modern times. It was immoral to be gay in ancient times, but it is permissible in modern times. In ancient times, if a man or woman married against the wishes of their parents, it was considered

unethical as children were necessarily expected to obey their parents. However, today, individuals are considered free to make their own decisions and it would be wrong to force your children to marry against their wishes.

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1. In order to ascertain if an action is ethical or not, we have to take into account three factors viz. object, end and circumstances. Explain. (150 words)
2. What are the factors that determine the ethical conduct of a person? (150 words)
3. What has been the learning from 'The Stanford Prison Experiment'? Why was it abandoned early? (150 words)

Ethics in Private and Public Relationships

'It is forbidden to kill; therefore, all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.'

—VOLTAIRE

People practice different standards of moralities in their personal and private lives. Some people may be extremely corrupt in their official matters, but are honest with their family members. Some people are quite honest in their office, but follow immoral activities like having extra-marital relationship in their private lives. In developing countries like India, most government officers are perceived to be corrupt and indulging in immoral deeds. However, the same government officers may be faithful to their spouse, a loving parent to their children and an obedient son or daughter to their parents. On the contrary, many people in developed countries may be quite honest and moral in discharging their official duties, but otherwise be quite immoral in their personal lives.

The principles of morality thus vary in private and public life. German sociologist Max Weber had said, 'It is not wise to apply to public administration the sort of moral and ethical norms we apply to matters of personal conscience. It is important to realise that the state bureaucracy might possess its own independent bureaucratic morality.' We often change our moral values in public in order to suit the requirements of the organisation and the society.

Difference between Public and Private Ethics

When we travel on the roads in a big metropolitan city, the most irritating thing, perhaps, is the 'Red Light' at the crossings that forces us to stop our vehicle. We are delighted to find a green light while travelling, as it allows us to travel without stopping. We thus find the red light 'undesirable' while we consider green light as 'desirable'.

However, if the red light is removed and only the green light to allowed all the time in a big metropolitan city, it will result in total chaos. If people think that they lose precious time stopping at a red light, imagine the chaos it will be if only green signals are allowed, leading to traffic jams lasting for hours.

However, in rural areas or in less busy areas of the city, there is often no need for traffic lights. It is so because when the traffic is less, people usually find

a way to cross the road by mutual understanding whenever more than one vehicle is trying to cross the road.

In a similar manner, in our own private world that includes our family and friends, we solve the problems by mutual agreement because we know each other quite well and are connected with each other by the bond of love, compassion and trust. However, when the size of members in a group (like in the society, organisation or country) becomes large, we have to follow different standards of ethics where rules and regulations are prescribed for all the members of the society which are more rigid and non-observance of which may lead to punishment.

Ethics in Private Relationships

We have intimate and informal relationship with our friends, family and relatives. They are our own small world as their relationship with us matters much more to us than with our relationship with the rest of the world. We spend most of our time with them and we will be unhappy if we don't have a good relationship with them.

In our personal domain, we act like a sovereign. We can make our own rules and laws for ourselves. Everyone tries to help each other due to their mutual feelings of love and compassion. They follow the words of Karl Marx: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.'

In private life, we practice love and compassion. We forgive when someone commits a mistake and sometimes we punish ourselves for the mistake of our loved ones. For example, it is common for a mother to stop eating when her children do something wrong. Such kind of self-punishment moves the heart of the children and they mend their ways because they can't see their mother suffering due to their fault. In a family, we are more likely to follow the loving philosophy of Jesus, Buddha or Gandhi. We also tend to follow the 'golden rule' in our family: 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you'.

In the matter of private relationships, the virtue ethics and relationship ethics play more important roles. We expect our loved ones to be virtuous and caring, honest and truthful to us. We also admit only good people in our private domain as we wish to maintain a lasting relationship with them.

Private relationships may also be inherited and they are more durable. Our family relationships like those amongst our parents, children, uncles, etc. are based on birth and can't be broken easily. We choose our friends by our own choice and we can unfriend them if our relationship gets sour. We expect loyalty, love, affection, kindness, forgiveness from the people in our private relationships.

Ethics in private relationships also depend on the social culture and tradition, religion, law of the land and the culture within the family. If we don't follow ethical principles in our private life, we lose love, compassion, trust and

faith of the people whom we love, which is far more painful to us than the punishment meted out by the state for breaking a certain law of the land.

Public Relationship

Public Relation (PR) is a management function that involves monitoring and evaluating public attitudes and maintaining mutual relations and understanding between an organisation and its public. Public could include shareholders, government, consumers, employees and the media. Public relationship is the act of getting along with people we constantly come in touch with.

Public relationship is spread over a much larger number of people compared to our family and friends. PR officers guarantee internal unity in the company by maintaining a clear communications network between the management and the various personnel. Its major objective is to improve channels of communication within an organisation and to establish new ways of setting up a two-way flow of information and understanding.

We, as human beings, learn to develop public relationships from early childhood, as we have to deal with a large number of people as soon as we step out of our homes. We have to deal with our schoolmates and teachers in schools. We have to deal with our neighbours. Later, on joining a profession, we have to deal with colleagues in the office and also different stakeholders like suppliers, consumers, etc.

Ethics in Private and Public Interest

Private relationships involve relation between individual and close family members of friends. Private relationships lead to self-interest where the person in interested in benefiting the people who are related to him. Ethics in private relations help in humanising public relations and play an important role in forming the base for the moral values of a person.

However, when we are dealing with public, we have to take care of public interest as well. A civil servant is a public servant and he must keep public interest in mind when dealing with public as a public servant. We have to learn to balance the self-interest and public interest in our life because both are extremely important for our well-being.

Self-interest

Self-interest is a concern for one's own well-being. Selfishness means being concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself. It means seeking one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without any regard for others. Self-interest is essential for one's happiness and well-being as it enables the person to take care of the basic needs of food for the self and the family. Self-interest also includes caring for each other for mutual benefit.

Public Interest

Public interest means the welfare or well-being of the general public in contrast to the selfish interest of a person, group or firm. The principles of public interest are as follows:

1. Principle of Participation: People must participate in decision-making of the government. Draft proposals may invite public opinion before they are finalised.
2. Principle of Charity: The government's resources should be distributed in a way that they benefit the maximum number of people in the society.
3. Principle of Subsidiarity: The decisions should be taken as close as possible to the communities involved and not at the top level.
4. Principle of Autonomy: The government must allow the people to live life how they want.
5. Principle of Transparency: All the decision-making of the civil servant must be transparent and explicit.

Ethics in Public Relationships

It is difficult to use the private morality in public domain. If you follow the 'golden rule' and do good to other people as you want others to do good to you and the other person does bad to you instead, you can't remain good to him forever. In such a situation, it is only natural that you retaliate by paying him with the same coin and make him reap what he had sown. It would then be difficult to follow the *Bible* where it is written: 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good'.

Doing good to even a wrongdoer or ungrateful person is possible in the private domain since there is love and trust between the family members. However, it is extremely difficult to follow the same principle in public life since in that domain people don't have love and affection for each other, and returning good for something bad will only encourage the evildoer to go on doing what he does and seek benefits for himself. When love and trust are missing, only appropriate punishment for the committed misdeeds works and prevents such acts by causing more pain to the person committing them than the pleasure he had attained while doing them.

Where a large number of people are required to be governed, you have to develop ethical codes of conduct for them and prescribe penalties for violating those codes. All employees of the organisation must follow the ethical standards prescribed by the employer. The organisation also prescribes a code of conduct where specific activities are prohibited and the penalty is also prescribed for violating them. For example, a government officer may be prohibited to take gifts beyond a prescribed value or join a political party. These codes of conduct help the employee avoid the possibility of conflict of interest and moral degradation. Moreover, when government officers follow these codes of conduct, they develop confidence in the public regarding their integrity, morality and fair play.

According to Dwight and Waldo, there are twelve areas of ethical claim on public officials. These are as follows:

1. Constitution
2. Law
3. Nation
4. Country or people
5. Democracy
6. Organisational/Bureaucratic norms
7. Profession and professionalism
8. Family and friends
9. Self
10. Public interest and general welfare
11. Humanity
12. Religion or God

The ethical obligations become especially complex when there is a conflict between different principles. For example, it is easy to argue that the public administrator should remain consistent with the organisation, bureaucratic norms and subordinate all else when on the job. However, it is difficult to follow them when they conflict with the law, or the values of one's profession, or one's commitment to family, or one's professional judgment, or to one's professional judgment of the public interest, or to one's own professional or personal interests.

Now, a police officer is required to curb crime by arresting and prosecuting the criminals. However, if people are not willing to give evidence against the criminal or if the justice delivery system is too slow or corrupt, an upright police officer then has to sometimes choose between his professional commitment to curb the crime by following extra-legal methods like using third-degree interrogation or killing a criminal in an encounter; and to follow all laws and procedures to get the criminal punished in the court of law.

Unethical Practices in Public Relationships

The role of public relationship has grown tremendously in recent years. All top businessmen, celebrities and political parties are using PR to enhance their image, which sometimes misleads people. Some unethical practices prevalent in public relations are:

- Spreading false and malicious news about opponents
- Suppressing the unfavourable information of self
- Trolling and defaming the opponents on social media platforms
- Paid news to get publicity in newspapers
- Making false claims about their products and services

However, once the lie of the fraudulent PR is detected, people lose trust in them and may never gain trust again. Abraham Lincoln had said this wisely, 'You

can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.'

1. Ethical Standards Prescribed by the Nolan Committee

The most notable recommendations have been put forth by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, an independent advisory non-departmental public body to the Government of United Kingdom. The committee was initially established in October 1994 by the then Prime Minister John Major in response to arising concerns that conduct of some politicians was unethical. The terms of reference were:

> To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life.

The term 'public office' was defined to include ministers, civil servants, advisers and MPs. The committee's first report in 1995 established 'The Seven Principles of Public Life', also known as the 'Nolan Principles'. They are as following:

1. **Selflessness:** The holders of public office should act solely in terms of public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or friends.
2. **Integrity:** The holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. **Objectivity:** The holders of public office should make choices on merit and facts and not on personal judgements while carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.
4. **Accountability:** The holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
5. **Openness:** The holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
6. **Honest:** The holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects public interest.
7. **Leadership:** The holders of public office should promote and support these principles through their leadership and by setting example.

These principles are quite important for maintaining good public relationships of the public servants by following the highest level of ethical standards.