



APTI PLUS

Academy for Civil Services Pvt. Ltd.

CREATING CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE NATION

OPSC OAS MAINS EXAMINATION ANSWERS 2024

GS-IV

GS IV -2024

GROUP A

Q1. "The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts." – Bertrand Russell. In the light of this quote, examine the importance of two qualities, viz., open-mindedness and intellectual humility, for a public servant. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Bertrand Russell's quote highlights a paradox of human behaviour: those with limited understanding often display excessive certainty, while truly knowledgeable individuals recognize complexity and uncertainty. For public servants, this underscores the importance of **open-mindedness** and **intellectual humility**.

Body

Why Open-Mindedness is Essential

Open-mindedness is the willingness to consider diverse perspectives and new evidence before forming judgments.

- **Improves decision-making:** Encourages consideration of multiple stakeholders and policy alternatives.
- **Promotes inclusivity:** Helps address the needs of marginalized groups, consistent with **Article 38** of the Constitution.
- **Facilitates innovation:** Openness to new ideas aids adoption of initiatives such as Digital Governance and AI-based service delivery.
- **Strengthens conflict resolution:** Understanding diverse viewpoints helps manage social and communal tensions.

Example: The success of Kerala's participatory planning and Odisha's disaster management model reflects openness to community knowledge and local feedback.

Importance of Intellectual Humility

Intellectual humility is the recognition that one's knowledge is limited and that mistakes are possible.

- **Prevents administrative arrogance** and misuse of authority.
- **Encourages evidence-based policymaking** through consultation with experts and citizens.
- **Enhances accountability and transparency**, key principles of good governance.
- **Promotes continuous learning**, crucial in a rapidly changing technological and socio-economic environment.

The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** emphasized citizen-centric governance, which requires officials to listen, learn, and adapt rather than act with unquestioned certainty.

Relevance in Public Administration

A public servant dealing with issues such as climate change, public health, or urban planning faces complex and evolving realities. Excessive certainty may lead to policy failures, whereas humility combined with openness enables adaptive and responsive governance.

Conclusion

Open-mindedness broadens understanding, while intellectual humility tempers power with wisdom. Together, they foster ethical, democratic, and citizen-centric administration, embodying the constitutional vision of responsive and accountable governance.

Q2. Ram and Shyam are twin brothers raised in the same family. They both study in the same school. Ram is a bright student and excels academically. Shyam is not good at studies but is a keen learner otherwise. Later in life, Ram clears a competitive civil services examination and joins Government service in a senior position. Shyam blooms as a successful businessman. Within a few years, Shyam has grown rich, owns a mansion, and lives a life of luxury. Ram, who is an honest civil servant, receives a modest salary and cannot afford the luxurious lifestyle enjoyed by his brother Shyam. Colleagues and friends of Ram cajole him to turn corrupt and make money. Ram, however, remains convinced that he is a 'servant' of the public and his duty is to serve the nation and people selflessly. His friends dismiss his argument as 'impractical idealism'. With whom do you agree and why? Would a handsome increase in the salary of public servants be an appropriate response to the problem of corruption in the bureaucracy? Discuss. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Public service is founded on the values of integrity, accountability and commitment to public welfare. The case presents a conflict between material success and ethical duty in public administration.

Body

Why I Agree with Ram

Ram's position reflects the essence of **civil service ethics**. A public servant is a trustee of public resources and authority, not its owner.

- **Constitutional morality** demands adherence to the principles of justice, equality and rule of law.
- Corruption violates citizens' trust and weakens governance.
- The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** emphasized integrity as the cornerstone of good governance.
- Honest officers such as **T.N. Seshan, E. Sreedharan and Armstrong Pame** demonstrated that ethical conduct can coexist with professional success.
- Public service cannot be judged solely by wealth accumulation; it must be assessed by its contribution to society.

Therefore, Ram's conduct represents **practical idealism**, not impractical idealism.

Are Ram's Friends Entirely Wrong?

Their argument highlights a genuine concern:

- Rising aspirations and social comparison may create financial pressures.
- Low remuneration can sometimes increase vulnerability to corruption.
- The **Efficiency Wage Theory** suggests that better salaries may reduce incentives for unethical behaviour.

Will Higher Salaries Reduce Corruption?

A handsome salary increase alone is **not a sufficient solution**.

Advantages

- Improves financial security.
- Enhances job satisfaction.
- Raises the cost of losing a government job due to misconduct.

Limitations

- Corruption often stems from greed, power and weak accountability.
 - Evidence shows salary hikes without strong monitoring may not reduce corruption significantly.
 - Transparency, vigilance, e-governance and strict punishment remain essential.
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Conclusion

Integrity is the true strength of public service. While fair salaries are desirable, corruption can be curbed only through a combination of ethical leadership, institutional accountability, transparency and strong enforcement mechanisms.

Q3. Manish is an upright officer of the Forest Department. He clears the licence application of a rich timber merchant after observing due procedure. A few days later, the timber merchant sends an expensive wooden sofa-set and a dining table set to the residence of Manish when Manish is away on tour. When Manish returns home, he is upset that the furniture has been gifted to him by the merchant without even mentioning it to him. He immediately telephones the merchant and conveys his displeasure, asking the merchant to take the furniture away. The merchant explains that the furniture is a 'small gift' and there is nothing unusual about it, being a common practice. Manish's wife, who is overhearing the conversation, suggests that the timber merchant can be paid the price of the furniture as the house badly needed some good furniture. Accordingly, Manish offers to pay the price. The timber merchant reluctantly agrees to accept payment from Manish. He quotes a ridiculously low price for the furniture. The merchant explains that he runs a huge furniture-making factory and the costs incurred by him are really low. Manish agrees to the offer and pays the quoted price to the timber merchant. What are your views about the ethicality of Manish's conduct in this incident? Do you think Manish should have acted differently? Has Manish acted in a corrupt manner? Discuss with reasons. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

The case involves a conflict between **procedural correctness** and the higher standards of **integrity, propriety, impartiality, and avoidance of conflict of interest** expected from a public servant.

Body

Ethical Issues Involved

- The timber merchant had **official dealings** with Manish and obtained a licence from his department.
- The expensive furniture was clearly not a social gift but a **benefit arising from an official relationship**.
- Public service ethics require not only actual integrity but also the **appearance of integrity**.
- Acceptance of valuable gifts from interested parties can create a perception of favouritism and erode public trust.

Positive Aspects of Manish's Conduct

- He followed due procedure while granting the licence.
- He immediately expressed displeasure and asked the merchant to take back the furniture.
- He did not initially seek any personal benefit.
- His reaction indicates a commitment to ethical values and public accountability.

Ethical Concerns in His Final Decision

- Manish should have insisted on returning the furniture completely.
 - By retaining the furniture and accepting the merchant's artificially low price, he indirectly received a benefit from a person having official dealings with him.
 - Civil service conduct rules require officers to maintain **absolute integrity and impartiality** and avoid gifts or hospitality from persons with official dealings.
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- Even if no quid pro quo is proven, the transaction creates a **conflict of interest** and a perception of undue advantage.
- According to the Prevention of Corruption framework, even non-cash benefits may be viewed as an **undue advantage** if linked to official functions.

What Manish Should Have Done

- Refuse the gift outright.
- Return the furniture immediately.
- Inform departmental authorities and record the incident.
- Maintain complete professional distance from the merchant.

Conclusion

Manish's conduct was ethically better than outright acceptance, but not fully appropriate. While it may not conclusively establish corruption, retaining the furniture at a nominal price compromised the standards of integrity, propriety, and public trust expected from a civil servant.

Q4. Mohan is an upright and honest Block Development Officer. But, his honest style of working has generated bad blood with some junior officers who are corrupt. One morning, a destitute woman appears before Mohan and requests him to approve her Ration Card application. She has already approached a junior officer but her request has been turned down as she does not have an Aadhaar Card, which is a requirement as per rules. After examining the case, Mohan realises that the woman is entitled to have a Ration Card and the non-availability of an Aadhaar Card is a mere paper formality. Mohan has the administrative power to grant a Ration Card without an Aadhaar Card in exceptional cases, using his discretionary powers. He, however, apprehends that in case he approves the Ration Card, he would be accused of using his power for making money through corrupt means. The junior officers who hold a grudge against Mohan are looking for such an opportunity when they can paint Mohan as a corrupt officer. Mohan is wondering if he should run the risk of sully his reputation for the sake of a poor woman. What advice would you tender to Mohan in this situation and why? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

The case presents a classic conflict between **procedural compliance and substantive justice**, testing the values of **integrity, compassion, accountability, courage, and public service** expected from a civil servant.

Body

Ethical Issues Involved

- Denial of welfare benefits to a genuinely eligible destitute woman.
- Fear of reputational damage versus duty to serve citizens.
- Misuse of procedural requirements by subordinate officials.
- Need to exercise discretionary powers fairly and transparently.
- Balancing **rule of law** with **administrative responsiveness**.

Advice to Mohan

Mohan should **approve the ration card application** using his legally sanctioned discretionary powers.

Reasons

1. Primacy of Public Interest

- As a welfare state, India's administration exists to serve vulnerable citizens.
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- Denying food security due to a procedural deficiency violates the spirit of **Article 21** and **National Food Security Act, 2013**.

2. Aadhaar is Not Mandatory for Entitlement

- The Supreme Court in the **Puttaswamy (Aadhaar) Judgment, 2018** held that genuine beneficiaries should not be denied welfare benefits merely due to the absence of Aadhaar.

3. Duty-Based Ethics

- Following **Kantian ethics**, Mohan's duty is to do what is morally and legally right, irrespective of personal consequences.

4. Administrative Courage

- Integrity requires not merely avoiding corruption but also taking difficult decisions in the public interest.

Safeguards Against Allegations

- Record detailed reasons in writing.
- Conduct field verification of eligibility.
- Obtain supporting documents and witness statements.
- Route the file through proper channels.
- Maintain complete transparency and audit trail.

Conclusion

Mohan should grant the ration card while ensuring full procedural documentation. Ethical governance demands that a civil servant combine **compassion with accountability**, placing public welfare above personal apprehensions while safeguarding institutional integrity.

Q5. The Right to Information Act entitles every citizen of the country to seek information from any Government entity, without giving any reason for seeking the information. This has arguably cast a huge burden on the Government departments to satisfy the information seekers. Are you in favour of or against this arrangement? Justify your answer with supporting examples. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

The **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005** operationalizes citizens' right to know, flowing from **Article 19(1)(a)**. Section 6(2) specifically states that an applicant need not provide any reason for seeking information.

Body

Why I Support This Arrangement

The provision is essential for ensuring **transparency, accountability, and participatory democracy**.

1. Strengthens Democratic Accountability

- Citizens can scrutinize government decisions without fear or intimidation.
- RTI has exposed irregularities in welfare schemes, recruitment processes, and public procurement.
- The Act was designed to bring government actions conducted "behind closed doors" into public view.

2. Protects Citizens from Arbitrary Rejection

- Requiring reasons would allow Public Information Officers (PIOs) to judge the "worthiness" of requests.
- Section 6(2) prevents discrimination based on identity, profession, or motive.

3. Enhances Good Governance

- Fear of public scrutiny encourages record maintenance and responsible decision-making.
 - RTI has improved transparency in programs such as **MGNREGA**, **PDS**, and local government expenditure.
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Concerns Regarding Administrative Burden

The criticism is not entirely unfounded.

- Government departments receive lakhs of RTI applications annually.
- Repetitive, voluminous, or frivolous requests consume administrative resources.
- Public authorities often face staff shortages and poor record digitization.
- Excessive RTI requests may divert officials from core governance functions.

Way Forward

- Strengthen **Section 4 proactive disclosure** to reduce unnecessary RTI applications.
- Expand digitization and e-governance platforms.
- Improve record management and public information portals.
- Enhance capacity of Information Commissions and PIOs.

Conclusion

The burden created by RTI is a necessary cost of democracy. Rather than restricting citizens' rights, governments should improve transparency systems so that accountability and administrative efficiency progress together.

Q6. Do you think that emotional intelligence is a significant factor in the making of a good public servant? Why? Between intellectual prowess and emotional intelligence, which should get priority while selecting a public servant? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI), popularized by **Daniel Goleman**, refers to the ability to understand, manage, and effectively use one's own emotions and those of others. In public administration, where officials constantly engage with citizens, EI is a critical determinant of effective governance.

Body

Why Emotional Intelligence is Significant for a Good Public Servant

1. Enhances Citizen-Centric Governance

- Enables empathy towards vulnerable groups.
- Improves responsiveness in welfare delivery and grievance redressal.

2. Improves Conflict Resolution

- Helps manage social tensions, protests, and communal situations with sensitivity.
- Facilitates consensus-building among diverse stakeholders.

3. Strengthens Ethical Decision-Making

- Prevents impulsive actions and misuse of authority.
- Promotes integrity, compassion, and fairness in administration.

4. Effective Crisis Management

- During disasters, pandemics, or law-and-order situations, emotionally intelligent officers inspire public confidence.
- Example: Many district collectors during the COVID-19 pandemic combined administrative efficiency with empathetic outreach.

5. Enhances Team Leadership

- Motivates subordinates, improves workplace morale, and fosters collaborative governance.

Intellectual Prowess vs Emotional Intelligence

Intellectual Prowess	Emotional Intelligence
Ensures analytical ability and policy competence	Ensures humane implementation of policies

Helps solve complex administrative problems	Helps manage people and emotions
Measures cognitive skills	Measures interpersonal and intrapersonal skills

Which Should Get Priority?

Public service requires both. However, **emotional intelligence should receive relatively greater weight once minimum intellectual competence is ensured**. A highly intelligent officer lacking empathy may become insensitive, whereas an emotionally intelligent officer can translate knowledge into citizen-oriented outcomes.

Conclusion

The **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission** emphasized ethics, empathy, and emotional competence in governance. Therefore, the ideal public servant combines intellectual excellence with emotional intelligence, with the latter serving as the bridge between administration and humanity.

Q7. Several decisions taken by the Government are declared to have been taken in the 'public interest'. Many laws, regulations, and rules provide that the Government can act in a certain manner if warranted by the 'public interest'. What do you understand by the term 'public interest'? Can there be any objective criterion to decide what is in the public interest and what is not? Explain with an example. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Public interest refers to the welfare, well-being, and collective good of society rather than the interests of any individual, group, corporation, or political party. In a constitutional democracy, it guides governmental action and policy-making. The Supreme Court has emphasized that public interest is not synonymous with government interest; it must advance accountability, transparency, and public welfare.

Body

What Constitutes Public Interest?

Public interest seeks to:

- Promote **social welfare** and inclusive development.
- Protect **constitutional values** such as equality, justice, and dignity.
- Safeguard **public resources** and environmental sustainability.
- Ensure **national security, public health, and public order**.
- Balance competing interests for the greatest public benefit.

Can There Be an Objective Criterion?

Though public interest is context-specific, certain objective criteria can help determine it:

Criterion	Indicator
Legality	Consistent with Constitution and law
Public Benefit	Benefits a large section of society
Equity	Protects vulnerable groups
Transparency	Decision-making is open and accountable
Proportionality	Public gains outweigh private losses
Sustainability	Protects long-term societal interests

The **Public Trust Doctrine** also requires the State to act as a trustee of resources for present and future generations, preventing their misuse for narrow private interests.

Example

The expansion of a national highway may require acquisition of private land. While affected individuals incur losses, the project may improve connectivity, reduce logistics costs, generate employment, and promote regional development. If compensation is fair, environmental norms are followed, and benefits accrue to society at large, the decision can be justified as being in the public interest.

Conclusion

Public interest is a dynamic concept rooted in constitutional morality and collective welfare. Objective criteria such as legality, equity, transparency, and proportionality help ensure that claims of public interest serve society rather than sectional or political interests.

Q8. Conduct rules governing public servants put certain restrictions on them covering social, financial, and personal matters. Their right to participate in political activities and right to expression is also circumscribed. Do you think that the Government is justified in curtailing the civil rights of Government servants? Discuss. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Government servants enjoy fundamental rights as citizens. However, to ensure **political neutrality, integrity, and public trust**, service conduct rules impose reasonable restrictions on certain civil rights. Articles 19(2) to 19(6) permit such restrictions in the larger public interest.

Body

Restrictions Imposed on Government Servants

Under the **Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964** and **AIS Conduct Rules**:

- Prohibition on membership of political parties and participation in political activities.
- Restrictions on public criticism of government policies.
- Limitations on strikes, demonstrations, and unauthorized disclosure of official information.
- Mandatory disclosure of assets, financial transactions, and conflict-of-interest situations.
- Regulations regarding gifts, investments, and outside employment.

Why the Government is Justified

Ensures Political Neutrality

- Civil servants serve governments of different political ideologies.
- Political activism may compromise impartial decision-making.

Maintains Administrative Integrity

- Conduct rules prevent corruption, favoritism, and misuse of official position.
- Supports the constitutional values of **equality and rule of law**.

Protects Confidentiality and National Interest

- Unrestricted expression may expose sensitive information affecting governance and security.

Preserves Public Confidence

- The **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission** emphasized neutrality and non-partisanship as essential attributes of civil services.

Concerns Regarding Excessive Restrictions

- Civil servants remain citizens with fundamental rights.
 - Overbroad restrictions may discourage constructive criticism and innovation.
 - Social media regulations sometimes create ambiguity regarding freedom of expression.
 - Democratic governance benefits from informed feedback by experienced public officials.
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Balanced Approach

The Supreme Court has held that reasonable restrictions on public servants are permissible when linked to efficiency and discipline in public administration.

Conclusion

The Government is justified in imposing reasonable restrictions on civil servants to preserve neutrality, integrity, and public trust. However, such restrictions must remain proportionate, transparent, and consistent with constitutional freedoms in a democratic state.

Q9. What do you understand by environmental ethics and our duty towards maintaining biodiversity, non-human life on earth, and the responsible self-sustaining use of natural resources? The Constitution lays down the duty to protect and improve the natural environment as one of the Fundamental Duties for every citizen of India. Is this an absolute duty, or does it admit exceptions in consideration of practicality? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Environmental ethics is a branch of applied ethics that governs the relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing ecological balance, inter-generational equity, and respect for all forms of life. It underpins the idea of **sustainable development**.

Body

Environmental Ethics and Our Duties

Towards Biodiversity

- Conserve ecosystems, forests, wetlands, and wildlife.
- Prevent species extinction and habitat destruction.
- Support conservation initiatives such as **Project Tiger** and community-based conservation.

Towards Non-Human Life

- Recognize the intrinsic value of animals and plants beyond their utility to humans.
- Promote compassion towards living creatures, as envisaged under **Article 51A(g)**.
- Prevent cruelty and unsustainable exploitation of fauna and flora.

Towards Natural Resources

- Follow sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Reduce pollution through the **Polluter Pays Principle** and the **Precautionary Principle**.
- Preserve resources for future generations through the **Public Trust Doctrine**.

Is Environmental Protection an Absolute Duty?

The Constitution under **Article 51A(g)** imposes a fundamental duty on citizens to protect and improve the natural environment, while **Article 48A** places a similar obligation on the State.

However, it is **not an absolute duty**:

- Developmental needs such as infrastructure, energy security, and livelihoods require balanced resource utilization.
- Courts have adopted the principle of **sustainable development**, reconciling environmental protection with economic growth.
- In cases like **M.C. Mehta** and subsequent environmental jurisprudence, the Supreme Court has emphasized balancing ecological preservation with public interest.

Conclusion

Environmental protection is a constitutional and moral obligation, but its implementation must balance ecological integrity with developmental necessities. The guiding principle should be **sustainable and responsible stewardship**, not absolute preservation.

Q10. While India is not a signatory to the International Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, several persons who have entered India without valid documents keep seeking refugee status in India. In this context, the issue of allowing basic facilities to Rohingya refugees from Myanmar has been before the Supreme Court of India. Do we have a moral obligation to provide shelter to refugees on humanitarian grounds, particularly when a section of our own population is living in poverty? Discuss. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, yet it has historically provided shelter to Tibetans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Afghans and others. The Rohingya issue raises a complex ethical dilemma between humanitarian obligations and national responsibilities.

Body

Arguments Supporting a Moral Obligation

Humanitarian and Ethical Considerations

- The Indian civilizational ethos of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” advocates compassion towards distressed populations.
- Refugees flee persecution, violence and threats to life; denying basic shelter may violate fundamental human dignity.
- The principle of **non-refoulement**, widely regarded as customary international law, discourages returning persons to places where they face persecution.

Constitutional Perspective

- **Article 21** guarantees protection of life and personal liberty to all persons, not merely citizens.
- Indian courts have often extended basic human rights protections to non-citizens on humanitarian grounds.

Global Responsibility Sharing

- As an emerging global power and member of the international community, India cannot remain indifferent to humanitarian crises.

Arguments Against an Unqualified Obligation

Priority to Vulnerable Citizens

- Despite progress, multidimensional poverty and deprivation persist among sections of India's population.
- The State's primary responsibility remains the welfare of its own citizens.

National Security Concerns

- Unregulated migration may create security, demographic and administrative challenges.
- The Supreme Court has observed that foreigners are subject to Indian law and due process regarding deportation.

Resource Constraints

- Housing, healthcare, education and employment resources are finite and already under pressure.

Conclusion

India should adopt a **balanced humanitarian approach**: provide basic shelter, healthcare and education to genuine refugees while ensuring rigorous security screening and a comprehensive national refugee law. Such a policy would uphold both **compassion and national interest**.

Q11. Some thinkers argue that gender equality is not innate to Indian society as the mainstream cultural values and religious beliefs promote misogynist attitudes. How far do you agree with this view? What role can ethical governance play in ensuring gender justice and women's empowerment? Suggest some steps that the Government can take to promote gender equality in the country. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Gender equality implies equal rights, opportunities, and dignity irrespective of sex. Although Indian civilization contains egalitarian ideals, patriarchal social structures and certain conservative interpretations of cultural and religious practices have often perpetuated gender inequality.

Body

Is Gender Inequality Embedded in Indian Society?

The view is **partially valid**.

Evidence supporting the view:

- Patriarchal norms have promoted son preference, dowry, and restrictions on women's mobility.
- Low female labour force participation and underrepresentation in leadership positions reflect structural barriers.
- India ranked **131st out of 148 countries** in the Global Gender Gap Report 2025, indicating persistent gender disparities.

However, the view is not absolute:

- Ancient texts revered women through the concept of *Shakti* and the dictum "**Yatra Naryastu Pujyante**".
- Constitutional provisions (Articles **14, 15, 16, 39, 42**) guarantee equality and affirmative protection.
- Women-led achievements in politics, science, sports, and governance demonstrate evolving social attitudes.

Role of Ethical Governance in Gender Justice

Ethical governance promotes **fairness, accountability, empathy, and inclusiveness**.

- Ensures gender-sensitive policymaking and budgeting.
- Strengthens implementation of laws against discrimination and violence.
- Enhances representation of women in decision-making institutions.
- Promotes transparency in recruitment, wages, and public service delivery.
- Advances substantive equality rather than mere legal equality.

Steps Government Can Take

- Effective implementation of the **Women's Reservation Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)**.
- Universal access to quality education, nutrition, and healthcare for girls.
- Strengthen schemes such as **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**, Mission Shakti, and women SHGs.
- Expand childcare facilities and safe public transport.
- Promote gender-responsive budgeting and periodic gender audits.
- Implement recommendations of the **Justice Verma Committee** on women's safety.
- Integrate gender-sensitization in school curricula and civil service training.

Conclusion

Gender equality requires transforming both institutions and social attitudes. Ethical governance, backed by constitutional values and effective implementation, can accelerate the realization of a just, inclusive, and gender-equal India.

Q12. In the modern age, several corporate houses have grown huge with their financial outlay being bigger than the budgets of many countries. In this context, explain the necessity of ethical decision-making in corporate governance. Would your answer be different in the case of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

In the era of globalization, many multinational corporations possess revenues larger than the GDP of several countries. Such enormous economic power makes **ethical decision-making** central to effective corporate governance, sustainability, and public trust.

Body

Necessity of Ethical Decision-Making in Corporate Governance

Corporate governance refers to the system by which companies are directed and controlled. Ethical governance ensures that decisions serve not only shareholders but also stakeholders.

1. Ensures Accountability and Transparency

- Prevents fraud, financial manipulation, and insider trading.
- Strengthens investor confidence through transparent disclosures.
- Example: Corporate scandals such as **Enron** and **Satyam** highlighted the costs of unethical governance.

2. Protects Stakeholder Interests

- Balances interests of employees, consumers, suppliers, communities, and shareholders.
- Aligns with the **stakeholder-centric model** advocated by the **G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance (2023)**.

3. Promotes Long-Term Sustainability

- Ethical decisions reduce environmental and social risks.
- Supports **ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance)** goals and responsible business conduct.

4. Enhances Corporate Reputation

- Ethical firms attract investments, skilled talent, and consumer trust.
- Strengthens resilience during crises.

5. Supports Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Reduces litigation, penalties, and reputational damage.

Is the Answer Different for PSUs?

The core ethical principles remain the same, but the expectations are higher for PSUs.

Corporate Houses	PSUs
Primarily accountable to shareholders	Accountable to citizens and Parliament
Profit maximization is a major objective	Public welfare and socio-economic objectives are equally important
Market discipline is dominant	Public accountability through CAG, CVC, and parliamentary oversight

Further, the **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) Corporate Governance Guidelines** mandate transparency, ethical conduct, stakeholder protection, and board accountability in CPSEs.

Conclusion

Ethical decision-making is the foundation of good corporate governance. For PSUs, it assumes greater significance because public resources, taxpayer trust, and national development objectives are directly involved.

GROUP B

Q13. "It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets." – Voltaire. In the light of the above statement by Voltaire, discuss whether war as a state policy can be justified in the modern age. Can there be a just war? Discuss with reference to Operation Sindoor. (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

Voltaire's statement exposes the moral paradox of war: society condemns individual killing but often legitimizes mass violence when conducted by states. This raises the ethical question of whether war can ever be morally justified.

Body

Voltaire's Critique of War

Voltaire highlights the contradiction whereby states glorify violence under the banner of nationalism, security, or ideology.

- Wars cause large-scale loss of life, displacement, and humanitarian crises.
- Modern warfare increasingly affects civilians despite international humanitarian law.
- Nuclear weapons, cyber warfare, and autonomous weapons have amplified the destructive potential of conflicts.

Hence, war as an instrument of power politics or territorial expansion lacks ethical legitimacy.

Can War as State Policy be Justified?

Under contemporary international law, war is generally prohibited except under limited circumstances:

- **Article 51 of the UN Charter** recognizes the right of self-defence.
- Military action may be justified to protect sovereignty, territorial integrity, and citizens.
- Humanitarian intervention and the doctrine of **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** seek to prevent genocide and mass atrocities.

Thus, war cannot be justified for conquest, but may be justified for legitimate defence and protection of innocent lives.

Concept of Just War

The **Just War Theory** (St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas) lays down ethical conditions:

Principle	Requirement
Just Cause	Self-defence or protection of innocents
Right Authority	Legitimate state authority
Last Resort	Peaceful options exhausted
Proportionality	Response proportionate to threat
Discrimination	Avoid civilian casualties

Operation Sindoor and the Idea of Just War

Operation Sindoor was launched by India in May 2025 following the Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed civilians. India described the operation as a targeted action against terrorist infrastructure rather than against the Pakistani state. Reports indicate that strikes focused on identified terror sites and avoided Pakistani military facilities, reflecting an attempt to maintain proportionality and limit escalation.

From a Just War perspective:

- **Just Cause:** Response to terrorism.
- **Right Authority:** Authorized by the sovereign state.
- **Proportionality:** Limited and targeted action.
- **Last Resort:** Followed repeated concerns over cross-border terrorism.

Conclusion

In the modern age, war cannot be an acceptable tool of domination. However, a carefully restrained use of force for self-defence, consistent with international law and Just War principles, may be ethically justified. The ultimate objective must remain peace, justice, and human security.

Q14. "Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through." Examine this quote by Jonathan Swift in the light of our nation's objective to emerge as a fair, just, and egalitarian society. What effective and practical steps would you take as a public servant to ensure that the law is applied to all in an impartial and non-partisan manner? (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

Jonathan Swift's observation that "*Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through*" highlights the danger of unequal application of law, where the weak face punishment while the powerful evade accountability. This directly challenges India's constitutional vision of **justice, equality, and rule of law** embodied in the Preamble and Articles 14 and 21.

Body

Meaning of the Quote in the Indian Context

The quote reflects structural inequalities that may undermine legal justice:

- **Economic influence:** Wealthy offenders often access better legal representation and procedural advantages.
- **Political patronage:** Powerful individuals may attempt to influence investigations and prosecutions.
- **Social hierarchies:** Marginalized communities frequently face barriers in accessing justice.
- **Delay in justice delivery:** As noted by the **India Justice Report 2025**, judicial pendency continues to affect timely justice.
- **Selective enforcement:** Uneven implementation of laws weakens public trust in institutions.

Such tendencies contradict the constitutional ideal of an **egalitarian society** and the Supreme Court's principle that "*Be you ever so high, the law is above you.*"

Steps as a Public Servant to Ensure Impartial Application of Law

1. Uphold Constitutional Morality

- Treat every citizen equally irrespective of status, caste, religion, wealth, or political affiliation.
- Strict adherence to **Article 14 (Equality before Law)**.

2. Strengthen Transparency

- Digitize administrative processes and investigations.
- Use e-governance platforms to reduce discretionary abuse.

3. Ensure Evidence-Based Decision Making

- Base actions solely on facts, records, and legal provisions.
- Maintain detailed documentation of decisions.

4. Protect Institutional Independence

- Resist undue political or external pressure.
- Encourage professional autonomy of investigative agencies.

5. Improve Access to Justice

- Strengthen legal aid under **Article 39A**.
 - Conduct outreach programmes for vulnerable groups.
-

6. Promote Accountability

- Regular audits, social audits, vigilance mechanisms, and citizen grievance redressal.
- Swift action against corruption within the administration.

Conclusion

A fair society emerges not merely from good laws but from their impartial enforcement. A public servant must act with **integrity, neutrality, and constitutional commitment** so that law becomes a shield for the weak and a restraint on the powerful, thereby advancing India's goal of a just and egalitarian republic.

Q15. "I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, ..., apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away." – Mahatma Gandhi. In the light of the above quote, discuss the role of a public servant in a welfare state. Do you think that the test suggested above by Gandhi can be applied in all situations faced by a public servant in the present-day complex world? (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi's **Talisman** advocates evaluating every decision from the perspective of the poorest and weakest person. It embodies the principles of **Antyodaya, Sarvodaya, and ethical public service**, which are foundational to a welfare state.

Body

Role of a Public Servant in a Welfare State

A welfare state aims to secure **social, economic, and political justice** as envisaged in the Preamble and Directive Principles of State Policy.

1. Ensuring Inclusive Development

- Prioritize marginalized groups such as SCs, STs, women, elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- Ensure effective implementation of schemes like **PM-JANMAN, Ayushman Bharat, and Mission Shakti (Odisha)**.

2. Last-Mile Service Delivery

- Bridge gaps in healthcare, education, nutrition, and social security.
- Uphold the principle of **"leaving no one behind"** under the SDGs.

3. Ethical Use of Public Resources

- Ensure transparency, accountability, and value for money.
- Prevent leakages through DBT and digital governance.

4. Empowerment Rather Than Charity

- Promote self-reliance through skill development, livelihood creation, and participatory governance.
- Reflect Gandhi's vision of **Swaraj**, where citizens gain control over their lives.

5. Administrative Justice

- Act impartially while protecting vulnerable sections.
- Balance legality with compassion and public interest.

Can Gandhi's Test Be Applied in All Situations?

Applicability

- Welfare policies, poverty alleviation, disaster relief, food security, and social justice programmes directly benefit from the Talisman.
- It serves as a moral compass during ethical dilemmas and helps curb elitist decision-making.

Limitations in the Contemporary World

- Public servants often face competing interests involving national security, fiscal prudence, environmental sustainability, and technological regulation.
- For example, decisions on AI governance, strategic defence projects, or pandemic restrictions may not immediately benefit the poorest but remain necessary for the larger public good.
- Administrators must consider **constitutional morality, rule of law, intergenerational equity, and national interest** alongside Antyodaya.

Conclusion

Gandhi's Talisman remains an enduring ethical guide for public servants. However, in a complex governance environment, it should complement constitutional values, evidence-based policymaking, and long-term public welfare to achieve **inclusive and sustainable development**.

Q16. Can scientific temper and traditional cultural values coexist in a society? What can possibly be areas of conflict? Has Indian society been able to reconcile the two? Give some examples. (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

Scientific temper refers to a rational, evidence-based and inquiry-driven approach to understanding reality, while **traditional cultural values** embody inherited beliefs, customs and ethical norms. Article 51A(h) of the Constitution enjoins citizens to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.

Body

Can Scientific Temper and Traditional Values Coexist?

Yes. The two are not inherently contradictory because culture is dynamic and many traditions have evolved through observation, adaptation and collective wisdom.

Areas of Complementarity

- **Ayurveda and Modern Medicine:** AYUSH systems increasingly undergo scientific validation.
- **Environmental Ethics:** Sacred groves, Bishnoi traditions and tribal conservation practices align with biodiversity conservation.
- **Yoga:** Once viewed as a traditional practice, it now enjoys global scientific recognition for physical and mental health benefits.
- **Community Values:** Respect for elders, family cohesion and social solidarity complement modern development goals.

Possible Areas of Conflict

Superstition vs Rational Inquiry

- Practices such as witch-hunting, black magic and miracle claims contradict scientific reasoning.
- The **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** continues to report cases linked to witchcraft-related violence.

Gender Inequality

- Patriarchal customs, child marriage and restrictions on women's agency conflict with constitutional values of equality.

Public Health Concerns

- Vaccine hesitancy, faith-based medical claims and resistance to scientific treatment may undermine health outcomes.

Caste-based Practices

- Untouchability and hereditary discrimination violate scientific temper, humanism and constitutional morality.

Has Indian Society Reconciled the Two?

Significant Progress

- India simultaneously celebrates **ISRO's Chandrayaan missions** and traditional festivals.

- Scientific agriculture coexists with traditional farming knowledge.
- The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** advocates integrating Indian Knowledge Systems with modern scientific education.
- Courts have increasingly distinguished between **essential religious practices** and practices violating constitutional values.

Continuing Challenges

- Persistence of pseudoscience, misinformation and superstition.
- Tensions between evidence-based policymaking and identity-based assertions.

Conclusion

Indian society has largely pursued a path of **synthesis rather than rejection**. The objective is not to replace tradition with science, but to retain culturally valuable practices while reforming those that conflict with reason, constitutional morality and human welfare.

Q17. A doctor with expertise in organ transplants comes across five different patients needing organ donation. These patients badly need five vital body organs, one each, to survive. The doctor meets a perfectly healthy person, and without obtaining his consent, removes five organs from his body and transplants the organs into his five patients, thereby giving them the gift of life. When questioned, the doctor claims his action to be completely ethical as he saved five lives by sacrificing just one life. He quotes the utilitarian theory of ethics given by philosopher Jeremy Bentham that the highest good of the highest number is the essence of an ethical action. Do you agree with the argument of the doctor? Give your reasons. (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

The case presents a classic ethical dilemma between **utilitarianism (consequences)** and **rights-based ethics (duties and human dignity)**. While saving five lives appears beneficial, the morality of the means employed remains questionable.

Body

Why the Doctor's Argument Appears Justifiable

According to **Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian Theory**, an action is ethical if it produces the **greatest happiness of the greatest number**. The doctor may argue that:

- Five lives were saved at the cost of one life.
- Overall social welfare increased.
- The outcome maximized collective benefit.
- Medical resources were utilized efficiently.

From a narrow **act-utilitarian perspective**, the action may appear morally acceptable. Bentham's principle evaluates actions primarily by their consequences.

Why the Doctor's Action is Unethical

I do not agree with the doctor's argument for the following reasons:

1. Violation of Human Dignity

- Every individual possesses **intrinsic worth** and cannot be treated merely as a means to an end.
- The healthy person was reduced to an instrument for saving others.

2. Absence of Informed Consent

- Medical ethics rests on the principle of **autonomy**.
- Organ removal without consent constitutes assault and murder.

3. Breach of Medical Ethics

The doctor's conduct violates the four pillars of medical ethics:

- **Autonomy** – patient's choice ignored.
- **Beneficence** – benefit to some cannot justify harm to another.
- **Non-maleficence** – "First, do no harm."
- **Justice** – unequal treatment of the healthy individual.

4. *Rights-Based and Kantian Ethics*

- **Immanuel Kant** argued that humans must always be treated as ends in themselves.
- Fundamental rights cannot be sacrificed merely for aggregate welfare.

5. *Dangerous Social Consequences*

If such actions were accepted:

- Public trust in doctors would collapse.
- People would fear hospitals and organ donation systems.
- Rule of law would be undermined.
- Minority rights could be sacrificed in the name of majority welfare.

6. *Limits of Utilitarianism*

Even Bentham's principle faces criticism because it can justify sacrificing a minority for the benefit of a majority, raising concerns about justice and fairness.

Conclusion

The doctor's action is ethically indefensible. Ethical decision-making must balance **utility with justice, rights, consent, and human dignity**. In a constitutional democracy, saving lives cannot justify violating the fundamental rights of an innocent individual.
