

Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration.

EXAM YEAR

2018

PAPER

GS - IV

SUBJECT

Ethics & Morality

MARKS

10

WORD LIMIT

~150 words

Answer Hint

Identification of ethical conflict; stakeholder analysis; constitutional values; ethical principles; alternative evaluation; consequences assessment; consultation and transparency; reasoned decision; accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

An ethical dilemma in public administration arises when a public servant faces competing moral obligations, values, or duties, making it difficult to choose the most appropriate course of action.

Process of Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

- 1. Identify the Dilemma:** Clearly define the ethical conflict and distinguish relevant facts from assumptions, personal preferences, and emotional responses.
- 2. Identify Stakeholders:** Determine who will be affected, including citizens, vulnerable groups, government institutions, and society at large.
- 3. Apply Constitutional and Ethical Values:** Examine the issue through constitutional morality, justice, impartiality, integrity, compassion, accountability, and the rule of law.
- 4. Develop Alternatives:** Identify all feasible courses of action, including compromise or consultation where appropriate.

5. Evaluate Consequences: Assess the short-term and long-term effects of each option on public interest, individual rights, social welfare, and institutional credibility.

6. Seek Guidance: Consult relevant laws, service rules, codes of conduct, senior officers, ethics committees, or legal experts when necessary.

7. Make a Reasoned Decision: Choose the lawful and ethically defensible alternative that best protects public interest while minimising harm.

8. Implement and Review: Communicate the decision transparently, maintain records, accept accountability, and review the outcomes.

Conclusion

Ethical dilemmas require reasoned judgement rather than personal convenience. A systematic, transparent, and constitutionally guided approach strengthens public trust and administrative integrity.