Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

“Public welfare cannot be used to justify the violation of individual rights.” Critically examine this statement in the context of ethical governance and reproductive health policies.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 19/10/2026	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Public interest, utilitarianism, deontological ethics, proportionality, constitutional values, accountability, rights-based governance.

Model Answer

Introduction

Governments formulate policies to promote public welfare, but ethical governance requires that such policies respect human dignity, liberty and equality.

Main Body

1. Ethical Perspective

- Utilitarianism: Policies should promote overall welfare, but their benefits must be assessed alongside the harm caused to individuals and vulnerable groups.
- Deontological ethics: Individuals must be treated as ends in themselves, not merely as instruments for achieving government targets.

- Rights-based approach: Personal autonomy, privacy and bodily integrity place ethical and legal limits on state intervention.
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2. Application to Reproductive Health

Population and healthcare policies should prioritise voluntary participation, informed consent, equal access and protection against discrimination. Coercive contraception cannot be justified merely by citing economic development or demographic objectives.

3. Role of Ethical Governance

Transparency, independent oversight, grievance redressal and accountability help ensure that public programmes operate fairly and lawfully.

Conclusion

Public welfare and individual rights should reinforce each other. Sustainable development requires policies that are effective, proportionate, inclusive and consistent with human dignity.

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