Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~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.

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