Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

"For any kind of social re-engineering by successfully implementing welfare schemes, a civil servant must use reason and critical thinking in an ethical framework." Justify this statement with suitable examples.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Critical thinking, evidence-based policy, ethical reasoning, welfare targeting, exclusion errors, inclusion errors, social audit, behavioural insights, last-mile delivery

Model Answer

Introduction

Welfare schemes seek behavioural and social transformation, not merely expenditure. Therefore, civil servants require critical reasoning to identify real needs while using ethical principles to ensure dignity, justice and inclusion.

Role of Reason and Critical Thinking

1. Need assessment: Data and field verification help distinguish genuine deprivation from assumptions.
2. Evidence-based design: Programme implementation should be modified when evidence reveals unintended consequences.
3. Ethical targeting: Officials must balance efficiency with distributive justice and avoid exclusion of vulnerable groups.

4. Local adaptation: Uniform schemes may require contextual modification according to geography, culture and social behaviour.
5. Impact evaluation: Social audits, grievance data and outcome indicators can identify leakages and exclusion.

Examples

Under welfare programmes, biometric authentication may improve accountability but can exclude elderly or technologically disadvantaged beneficiaries. An ethical administrator would retain alternative authentication mechanisms.

Similarly, sanitation campaigns require behavioural communication and community participation rather than merely constructing toilets.

Conclusion

Reason determines what works; ethics determines what ought to be done. Their integration enables civil servants to implement welfare programmes that are efficient, inclusive and genuinely transformative.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP