Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Online methodology is being used for day-to-day meetings, institutional approvals in the administration and for teaching and learning in education sector to the extent telemedicine in the health sector is getting popular with the approvals of the competent authority. No doubt, it has advantages and disadvantages for both the beneficiaries and the system at large. Describe and discuss the ethical issues involved in the use of online method particularly to the vulnerable section of the society.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

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Answer Hint

Online services improve convenience, speed and geographical reach, but raise concerns about digital exclusion, privacy, informed consent, cybersecurity, accessibility and accountability. Ethical digital governance requires inclusion by design, confidentiality, transparency, human oversight and accessible alternatives for vulnerable populations.

Model Answer

Introduction

Online administration, education and telemedicine can improve access and efficiency, but their ethical use requires protecting dignity, equality and individual rights.

Ethical Issues

Digital Divide: Poor households, rural communities, elderly people and persons with disabilities may lack devices, connectivity or digital skills, creating unequal access to services.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Online consultations and meetings may expose sensitive medical, educational or personal information through insecure platforms.

Informed Consent: Beneficiaries may not understand how their data are collected, stored or shared.

Accountability: Technical failures, automated decisions and unclear responsibility can make grievances difficult to resolve.

Equity and Human Contact: Digital-only services may disadvantage people who need personal assistance, local-language support or face-to-face consultation.

Way Forward

Government institutions should adopt secure platforms, data minimisation, informed consent and accessibility standards. Assisted digital centres, local-language interfaces, grievance redressal and offline alternatives should be available. Human oversight must remain essential in critical medical and administrative decisions.

Conclusion

Digital methods are ethically justified when they expand access without compromising privacy, fairness or dignity. A people-centred approach must ensure that technology supports vulnerable citizens rather than excluding them.

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