Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Distinguish between laws and rules. Discuss the role of ethics in formulating them.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2020	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Legal authority, formal enactment, general principles, administrative procedures, moral values, justice, fairness, public interest, accountability, ethical governance

Model Answer

Introduction

Laws and rules regulate human behaviour and maintain order. While both guide conduct, they differ in scope, authority and purpose.

Difference between laws and rules

- **Laws:** Formal legal provisions enacted by a competent legislature or other legally authorised body. They establish rights, duties and obligations and are enforceable by courts.
- **Rules:** Specific directions or procedures framed under laws by authorised institutions, organisations or authorities to implement broader legal provisions. Rules may also exist within schools, workplaces and other organisations.

Role of ethics in formulating laws and rules

- **Justice and fairness:** Ethical principles ensure that legislation treats individuals equitably and protects vulnerable groups.

- **Public interest:** Laws should promote collective welfare rather than serve narrow political or commercial interests.
- **Human dignity:** Respect for liberty, equality and dignity prevents arbitrary or discriminatory provisions.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Ethical lawmaking requires consultation, evidence-based decisions and clear justification.
- **Proportionality:** Restrictions and penalties should be proportionate to the harm being addressed.
- **Practical wisdom:** Rules should be clear, implementable and sensitive to ground realities.

Example

Environmental laws and their implementing rules should balance development with ecological protection, intergenerational justice and the livelihoods of affected communities.

Conclusion

Law provides enforceable standards, while rules translate legal objectives into practical procedures. Ethics gives both their moral legitimacy by ensuring that they serve justice, dignity and the public good.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP