



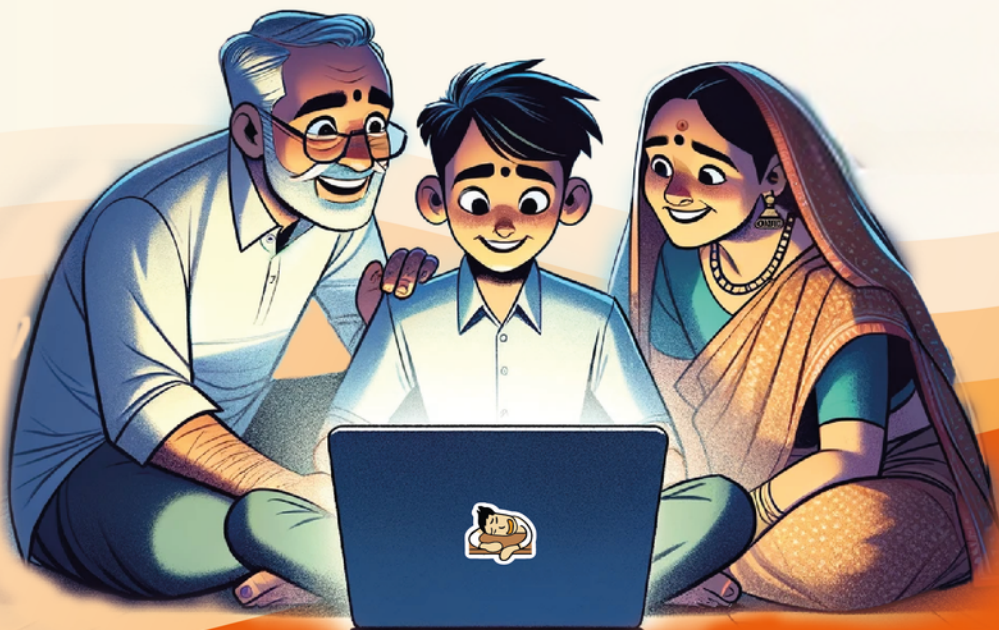
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UPSC MAINS

Solved PYQs

2023

General Studies Paper 4



How to Maximize Your UPSC Mains Score Using These PYQs

Transform Your Preparation into Your Success Strategy

✗ "I solve PYQs but still struggle in mock exam"

Your Problem: You're treating PYQs like MCQs - solving for the sake of solving without strategic analysis.

Strategic Solution: After solving each question, spend 10 minutes analyzing: What was the examiner testing? Which keywords were crucial? How can I improve my answer structure? Create a "mistakes point list" to track recurring weaknesses.



"I can't finish questions within time limits"

Your Problem: You know the content but struggle with time management and answer structuring under pressure.

Time-Bound Practice: Set strict timers - 7 minutes for 10-mark questions, 12 minutes for 15-mark questions. Practice writing concise, impactful answers. Use bullet points and subheadings to save time while maintaining clarity.



"My answers lack depth and examples"

Your Problem: Your answers are generic and don't stand out among thousands of similar responses.

Content Enhancement: For each PYQ, create a "example bank" - collect 2-3 specific case studies, data points, or contemporary examples. Practice weaving these naturally into your answers to demonstrate comprehensive understanding.



"I don't know which topics to prioritize"

Your Problem: Without pattern analysis, you're studying everything equally instead of focusing on high-weightage areas.

Smart Analysis: Create a frequency chart of topics from last 7 years. Identify recurring themes and question patterns. Allocate 60% of your time to high-frequency topics, 40% to emerging trends. Also Sleepy Classes has a video on complete pattern analysis of UPSC mains.

⚠ Critical Mistake to Avoid

Don't just read solved answers and move on. The real learning happens when YOU attempt the question first, then compare with model answers to identify gaps.



Remember: PYQs are your blueprint, not just practice material

Every question tells you exactly what UPSC expects. Use this collection to decode the examiner's mindset, not just to test your knowledge. Your success lies in understanding the 'why' behind each question.

FREE - GS Mains PYQs Discussion

Date	Day	Topic	Year
02 June 2025	Monday	General Studies Paper 1	2024
03 June 2025	Tuesday	General Studies Paper 2	2024
04 June 2025	Wednesday	General Studies Paper 3	2024
05 June 2025	Thursday	General Studies Paper 4	2024
15 June 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2023
22 June 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2022
29 June 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2021
06 July 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2020



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Ethics Theory + Case Studies

1. (a) What do you understand by 'moral integrity' and 'professional efficiency in the context of corporate governance in India? Illustrate with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10

Approach

- Start by explaining both terms.
- Connect them to corporate governance.
- Discuss their importance in the context of corporate governance
- Use real examples from India to support the points.
- Conclude by emphasising significance of these values.

Solution:

- Moral integrity means being honest, fair, and guided by strong ethical values.
- In corporate governance, it ensures that business decisions are made responsibly and not influenced by personal gain or bias.
- Professional efficiency refers to working in a skilled, timely, and effective manner.
- In a corporate setting, this includes making smart decisions, meeting deadlines, and running operations smoothly while following rules.

Importance in Indian Corporate Governance:

- **Maintaining Ethical Standards:** When company leaders have moral integrity, they avoid actions like insider trading or fraud and ensure fairness in decision-making.
- **Building Stakeholder Trust:** Honest and efficient leadership helps gain the trust of investors, employees, regulators, and the public.
- **Following Rules and Regulations:** Professional efficiency ensures that companies follow laws like the Companies Act, SEBI guidelines, and CSR rules properly.

Examples:

- **Infosys:** The company is known for ethical business practices and internal systems to protect whistleblowers. Narayana Murthy, its founder, promoted both honesty and efficiency in business decisions.
- **Satyam Scam (2009):** The company's founder, Ramalinga Raju, admitted to inflating profits. This was a serious failure of both moral conduct and corporate discipline.

Uday Kotak Committee Recommendations:

- The committee constituted by SEBI in 2017, suggested reforms like stronger roles for independent directors and better audit systems to promote integrity and better performance in companies.

Conclusion:

- Moral integrity and professional efficiency are like two strong pillars of good corporate governance.
- Integrity gives direction to do what is right, and efficiency ensures things are done well. Together, they help Indian companies grow in a way that is responsible, fair, and beneficial to all.

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1. (b) 'International aid' is an accepted form of helping 'resource-challenged' nations. Comment on 'ethics in contemporary international aid'. Support your answer with suitable examples.

(Answer in 150 words)10

Approach

- Define international aid
- Highlight ethical concerns in today's global context.
- Provide real-world examples to substantiate your point.
- Just mention some principles that should govern aid.
- Conclude with quote a on aid/help/service.

Solution:

- International aid refers to financial, technical, or humanitarian assistance provided by one country or organization to another, especially during crises or for long-term development.
- Such an aid is based on principles of human solidarity, however, in recent times, the ethics of international aid have come under question.

Ethical Issues in Contemporary International Aid:

- **Conditional Aid:** Aid is often given with conditions that benefit the donor country more than the recipient (e.g., requiring the purchase of donor-country goods). This raises concerns about exploitation and neo-colonialism.
- **Geopolitical Interests:** Aid is sometimes used as a political tool to gain influence. For instance, both China's Belt and Road Initiative and US aid packages have been seen by critics as serving strategic interests more than humanitarian goals.
- **Lack of Local Participation:** When aid programs are designed without input from the people they aim to help, they risk being ineffective or even harmful.
- **Aid Dependency:** Long-term aid can sometimes reduce a country's motivation to build its own capacity, leading to dependency, which undermines the value of self-reliance and dignity.
- **Corruption and Misuse:** Aid without strong monitoring often ends up in the wrong hands.

Examples:

- **India's Vaccine Maitri initiative (2021):** India sent COVID-19 vaccines to over 90 countries, guided by humanitarian values rather than profit or political gain.
- **Haiti Earthquake Relief (2010):** Billions in aid were pledged, but due to poor coordination, corruption, and donor control, much of the aid failed to reach those in need effectively.

- **USAID Pause (2025):** The United States' decision to pause USAID operations for 90 days raised ethical concerns, as it disrupted essential health, education, and livelihood programs in several developing countries.



Conclusion:

- Ethical international aid should be grounded in dignity, not dominance – uplifting, not exploiting.
- As Mahatma Gandhi aptly said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

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2. (a) "Corruption is the manifestation of the failure of core values in the society." In your opinion, what measures can be adopted to uplift the core values in the society? (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Explain the quotation in brief.
- Link corruption to erosion of core values.
- Suggest concrete measures to revive and institutionalize these values.
- Conclude with a value-based insight.

Solution

- **Corruption** is not merely a legal or administrative failure - it is a reflection of a deeper ethical crisis.
- It emerges when core societal values like honesty, integrity, fairness, and public service are compromised or devalued.

Corruption Reflects Erosion of Core Values:

Corruption type	Erosion of Values	Example
Normalization of Bribery	Loss of Integrity	Use of middlemen for services
Impunity for Wrongdoing	Decline in Accountability	PDS scam (Uttar Pradesh)
Unequal Access to Resources	Weak Sense of Justice	Karnataka PSI recruitment scam
Rent-Seeking Behaviour	Collapse of Public Service Ethic	Puja Khedkar case
Cynicism and Complicity	Decline of Trust	Bribes for land/ pension claims

Measures to Uplift Core Values in Society:

- **Value Re-orientation through Education:** We must go beyond textbooks to real-life application - through community service, and critical thinking.
- **Role Modelling and Ethical Leadership:** Ethical administrators like TN Seshan have shown how personal integrity can drive institutional reform and build public trust.
- **Institutionalizing Ethics:** Create and empower institutions like the Lokpal, enforce RTI, and protect whistleblowers to embed values into the system.
- **Citizen Participation and Social Audits:** Initiatives like MGNREGA social audits promote collective responsibility and bring transparency to local governance.

Conclusion

- Restoring core values is not merely about resisting corruption—it's about reimagining public life where ethical behaviour is normalized, not exceptional.
- Institutions must become enablers of this shift, and citizens active participants in demanding integrity.

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2. (b) In the context of work environment, differentiate between 'coercion' and 'undue influence' with suitable examples.

(Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Introduce with some current event related to toxic work culture
- Define both terms in the workplace context.
- Explain the distinction using key parameters.
- Illustrate with clear examples.
- Conclude by mentioning some ethical principles that should govern workplace.

Solution:

- The tragic death of Anna Sebastian Perayil in 2024 sparked national debate on toxic work culture and mental health.
- Her mother's letter alleged that persistent overwork and emotional pressure—despite repeated pleas—contributed to her breakdown.
- This case underlines how modern workplaces may blur the line between coercion and undue influence, making it crucial to differentiate the two.

Coercion:

- **Coercion** refers to compelling someone to act against their will by using threats, force, or intimidation.
- It creates a hostile work environment and violates autonomy through overt pressure.
- For instance, a manager threatening to fire an employee unless they work overtime without pay is an example of coercion.

Undue influence:

- **Undue influence**, on the other hand, is a subtler form of manipulation where a person uses their position, trust, or emotional closeness to influence another's decision for personal or organizational benefit.
- For example, a senior official subtly suggesting that a junior employee "volunteer" for a politically sensitive assignment—implying it would help their promotion prospects—illustrates undue influence.
- Thus in a professional setting, coercion and undue influence are both unethical practices that compromise free decision-making, but they differ in nature, method, and intention.

Aspects	Coercion	Undue Influence
Method	Force or threat	Manipulation of trust or position
Nature	Overt and aggressive	Subtle and persuasive
Consent	Involuntary, forced	Technically voluntary, but improperly influenced
Example	Threat of job loss for non-compliance	Pressure based on loyalty or obligation

Conclusion

- While both practices are unethical, coercion violates dignity through threats, while undue influence undermines autonomy through persuasion.
- Ethical work environments require transparency, informed consent, and respect for professional boundaries to prevent both.

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3. Given below are the three quotations of great thinkers. What do each of these quotations convey to you in the present context?

(a) “The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.” – Mahatma Gandhi

(Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Interpret the core message of the quote.
- Compare real actions with symbolic gestures.
- Show the relevance of kindness in public and personal life with examples.
- Conclude by re-emphasising the core message.

Solution:

- This quote by Mahatma Gandhi means that kind actions are more meaningful than empty rituals.
- While prayer may show devotion, real kindness (i.e. helping others in need) creates a greater positive impact on society.

Kindness as Moral Action:

- Kindness is not just about good feelings. It is about doing something that helps others.
- Small acts like helping someone in distress, comforting a friend, or offering food to the needy can have more ethical value than performing rituals without action.

Relevance Today:

- **During COVID-19:** Common people like delivery agents and volunteers supported the elderly and patients. Their quiet service was more powerful than public speeches or online prayers.
- **In Administration:** Collector Jasmeet Singh Sandhu's *Sambal Abhiyan* brought multiple welfare services to persons with disabilities at a single location in Salumbar (Rajasthan), ensuring on-the-spot delivery of aid.
- The initiative turned compassion into action and earned the Indian Express Governance Award (2025).
- **In Business:** Companies like Zomato supported their workers during lockdowns even when there were no profits. This showed responsibility and kindness beyond business interests.
- **In Education:** Delhi government's Happiness Curriculum prioritizes emotional well-being and kindness over rote learning, fostering compassion from a young age.
- **In Disaster Relief:** Civil society volunteers who risked their lives during floods (e.g. in Assam or Kerala) rescued the stranded, exemplifying service over ritualistic sympathy.

Conclusion:

- In today's times, acts of kindness – no matter how small – are the real foundation of ethics. Gandhi's words teach us that values like compassion and service are more important than showy devotion. True morality is lived through daily actions, not rituals.

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3. (b) “To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Ones she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves.” – Jawaharlal Nehru (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Interpret the quote and explain its core message.
- Link the empowerment of women to broader social transformation.
- Use contemporary examples from India and the world.
- Highlight relevance across sectors – family, governance, economy, and society.
- Conclude by emphasizing significance of woman empowerment.

Solution:

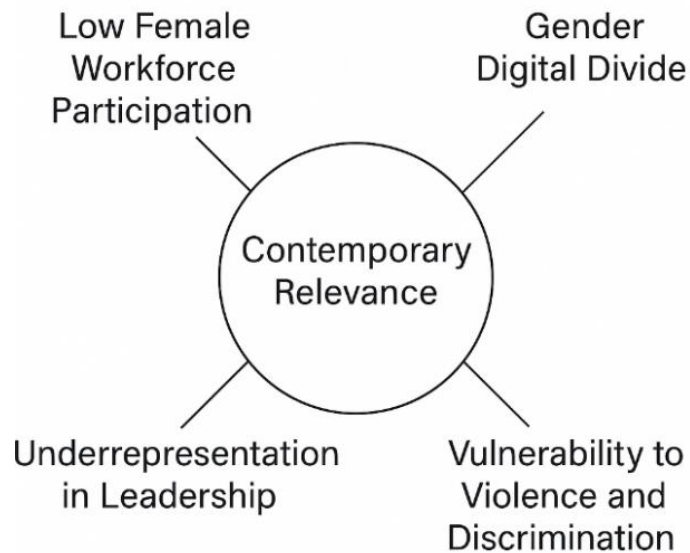
- Jawaharlal Nehru’s quote emphasizes that true national progress begins with the empowerment of women.
- He suggests that women’s upliftment is not merely a matter of justice but a prerequisite for awakening families, communities, and ultimately the nation.

Women as Catalysts of Change:

- **In the Family:** An educated and economically independent woman makes informed decisions about health, education, and nutrition, leading to healthier and more aware families.
- **In the Economy:** Studies show that India’s GDP could rise by nearly 27% if female labour force participation matched that of men.
- **In Administration:** Female civil servants like Fouzia Taranum empowered women SHGs through the Kalaburagi Roti cooperative, ensuring control over production and profits. Her initiative earned the Indian Express Governance Award (2025) for community empowerment.
- **In Social Movements:** Women have been at the forefront of anti-liquor movements, environmental protests (e.g., Chipko movement), and campaigns for justice and equality.

Relevance Today:

- While the transformative role of women is evident, the urgency to empower them has become even more pressing in today’s context, as reflected in below contemporary challenges



Conclusion

- Besides Nehru even Gandhi talked about importance of empowering woman in his word, "If you educate a man, you educate an individual. If you educate a woman, you educate an entire family."
- The true awakening of India lies in making women equal stakeholders in its progress.

3. (c) Do not hate anybody, because that hatred that comes out from you must, in the long run, come back to you. If you love, that love will come back to you, completing the circle.” – Swami Vivekanand.

(Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Interpret the quote's core ethical message.
- Explain the consequences of hate and benefits of love in personal and social life.
- Link the quote to contemporary public life and global events.
- Conclude by reemphasising the significance of core message of the quote.

Solution:

- Swami Vivekananda's quote conveys the idea of moral reciprocity – what we send out into the world, whether love or hatred, eventually returns to us.
- It emphasizes that positive emotions like compassion, empathy, and goodwill create constructive relationships, while hatred and resentment harm both the individual and society, ultimately circling back in destructive forms.

Consequence of Love and Hate:

- **Hatred** breeds division, fuels cycles of violence, and corrodes emotional wellbeing. It returns as social unrest, alienation, or personal anguish.
- **Love**, on the other hand, fosters mutual respect, harmony, and trust - returning as social cohesion, emotional peace, and stronger communities.

Relevance Today:

- **Social Media and Polarization:** Hate speech and online trolling intensify divisions, often leading to real-world violence and mental distress. Conversely, kindness-based digital movements (e.g., #KindnessMatters) spread empathy and support.
- **Communal Harmony:** Incidents of hate-fueled violence (e.g., mob lynchings) reveal how collective hatred destabilizes societies. Interfaith and peace-building initiatives restore trust and shared humanity.
- **Leadership and Administration:** As District Collector of Kozhikode, Prasanth Nair launched "Operation Sulaimani" to provide free meals by redistributing excess food for the hungry. His empathetic leadership earned him the public's affection as "Collector Bro."
- **Workplace Culture:** Toxic work environments built on hostility reduce productivity and morale. Compassionate leadership fosters loyalty and well-being, creating a virtuous cycle.

Conclusion

- In today's divided and emotionally reactive world, Vivekananda's message reminds us that love and hate are not private emotions but public forces. Choosing empathy over hostility not only elevates others but safeguards our own ethical well-being.

4. (a) What really matters for success, character, happiness and lifelong achievements is a definite set of emotional skills – your EQ- not just purely cognitive abilities that are measured by conventional IQ tests.” Do you agree with this view ? Give reasons in support of your answer. (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Interpret the quotation and define EQ and IQ.
- Argue why Emotional Quotient (EQ) plays a crucial role in success, character, and happiness.
- Provide supporting examples from administration, personal life, and leadership.
- Conclude with a balanced insight.

Solution:

- The statement emphasizes that emotional intelligence (EQ) which is the ability to understand, manage, and express emotions effectively is more crucial to overall success and well-being than intellectual intelligence (IQ) alone.
- I strongly agree with this view, especially in the context of holistic human development and public leadership.

EQ Matters More Than IQ:

- **Decision-Making and Leadership:** High EQ enables empathetic and ethical decision-making. For instance, civil servants working in conflict zones need emotional regulation and empathy more than academic brilliance.
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** Success in life and leadership depends on how well we relate with others. EQ helps build trust, resolve conflicts, and motivate teams.
- **Resilience and Mental Health:** Emotionally intelligent individuals cope better with failure, criticism, and stress which is critical for long-term happiness and achievement.

Examples:

- **Public Administration:** IAS officer Armstrong Pame mobilized communities for road construction in Manipur without government funds. His emotional intelligence fostered trust and cooperation.
- **Workplace Success:** IAS officer Prasanth Nair showed strong emotional intelligence by using humor and informal communication to break rigid hierarchies, boosting team morale. Through empathy and emotional regulation, he created a positive work culture, motivated innovation, and built strong public rapport.
- **Education and Parenting:** Children taught emotional regulation and empathy perform better in the long run academically and socially than those with just cognitive excellence.

Conclusion

- As Daniel Goleman claims IQ contribute 20% to success, the remaining 80% are attributable to EI.
- IQ may help one get a job, but EQ determines how well one performs, leads, and lives.

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4. (b) Differentiate 'moral intuition from 'moral reasoning' with suitable examples. (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Define both moral intuition and moral reasoning.
- Explain the key differences between them.
- Support with relevant examples.
- Conclude with their significance in ethical decision-making.

Solution:

- **Moral intuition** refers to the immediate, instinctive judgment about what is right or wrong, often driven by emotions or social conditioning.
- **Moral reasoning**, on the other hand, is a deliberate, logical process of evaluating ethical choices based on principles, consequences, or duties.

Differences:

Aspect	Moral Intuition	Moral Reasoning
Nature	Instinctive and automatic	Reflective and analytical
Basis	Emotions, upbringing, social norms	Ethical theories, logic, evidence
Speed	Quick, spontaneous	Slow, deliberative
Example	Feeling it's wrong to lie without thinking why	Arguing that lying is wrong because it violates trust or Kantian duty-based ethics

Examples:

- **Moral Intuition:** A civil servant may instinctively feel discomfort approving a mining project that displaces tribal communities, even before analysing its legality or benefits.
- **Moral Reasoning:** The same officer might later reason that denying approval is right because it violates Article 21 (right to life) and principles of environmental justice.

Conclusion

- While moral intuition provides a quick ethical compass, moral reasoning ensures consistency, fairness, and accountability in complex decisions.
- Both play complementary roles in ethical leadership and responsible public service.

5. (a) Is conscience a more reliable guide when compared to laws, rules and regulations in the context of ethical decision making ? Discuss.

(Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Define conscience and explain its role in ethical decision-making.
- Compare it with laws, rules, and regulations.
- Discuss situations where conscience may be more reliable or where rules must prevail.
- Use relevant examples.
- Conclude with a balanced ethical insight.

Solution:

- **Conscience** is an individual's inner sense of right and wrong, shaped by moral values, social norms, and personal experiences. It often acts as a moral compass, guiding behavior even when external laws are absent or unclear.
- In contrast, laws, rules, and regulations are formal, codified norms created by institutions to ensure uniformity, accountability, and justice in society.
- While both are essential, conscience can be a more reliable guide in certain ethical dilemmas.

Conscience May Be More Reliable:

- **Unjust Laws:** Mahatma Gandhi defied British colonial laws using Satyagraha, driven by moral conviction rather than legality.
- **Gaps in Rules/Discretion:** A bureaucrat aiding a stranded migrant worker beyond official timings acts on human conscience when formal processes are insufficient.
- **Whistleblowing:** Civil servants like E.A.S. Sarma exposed corruption despite institutional resistance, guided by moral obligation.
- **Conscientious Objection:** Tal Mitnick, an 18-year-old Israeli, was sentenced to 30 days in prison for refusing to serve in the Israeli military due to his opposition to operations in Gaza. His stand, rooted in conscience and a desire for peace, demonstrates how internal moral beliefs can drive ethical action even at personal cost.

Laws Are Essential:

- **Subjectivity of Conscience:** What feels ethical to one person might be harmful to another.
- **Need for Uniformity:** Laws ensure consistency, fairness, and accountability in governance.
- **Preventing Arbitrary Action:** The Supreme Court's condemnation of "bulldozer justice" – where properties were demolished without following due legal process – underscores the importance of laws. The Court emphasized that officials must respect Article 300A (Right to Property) and laid down clear procedures for eviction, highlighting that conscience cannot override procedural justice.

Conclusion

- While laws provide a structured framework, conscience ensures moral sensitivity.
- Ethical decision-making requires a balance – using conscience to uphold justice when rules fall short, and laws to maintain fairness when personal judgment risks bias.

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5. (b) 'Probity is essential for an effective system of governance and socio-economic development.' Discuss. (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Define probity and its importance in public life.
- Explain how probity strengthens governance.
- Explain how probity leads to socio-economic development.
- Support with relevant examples from administration and public policy.
- Conclude with ethical and practical significance.

Solution:

- **Probity** refers to integrity, honesty, and uprightness in public and professional conduct.
- In governance, it means acting in the public interest with transparency, fairness, and accountability.
- Probity is a functional necessity for effective governance and sustainable socio-economic development.

Probity and Effective Governance:

- **Prevents Corruption:** Probity ensures that public resources are used efficiently and not diverted for private gain.
- **Strengthens Accountability:** Probity allows institutions like the CAG, Lokpal, and Vigilance Commissions to function effectively and deter misconduct.
- **Builds Trust:** Citizens are more likely to follow rules and participate in democratic processes when officials act with integrity.

Probity and Socio-Economic Development:

- **Efficient Resource Utilization:** Schemes like MGNREGA, when implemented with probity, ensure that funds reach beneficiaries, creating employment and reducing rural distress.
- **Investor Confidence:** Clean governance attracts domestic and foreign investment, which is crucial for economic growth.
- **Inclusive Welfare Delivery:** Probity ensures that marginalized communities receive the intended benefits, reducing leakages in schemes like PDS or pension disbursements.

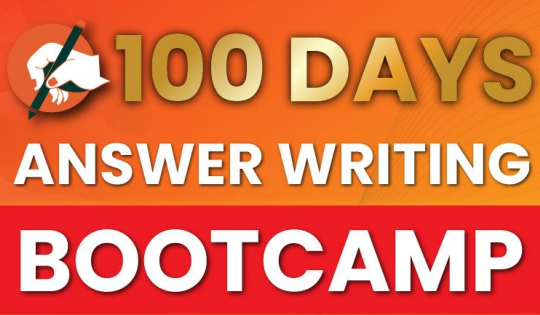
Examples:

- **Administrative Integrity:** IAS officer Durga Shakti Nagpal cracked down on illegal sand mining in Uttar Pradesh despite facing political pressure and suspension. Her unwavering commitment to lawful duty and resistance to corruption reflects exemplary probity, reinforcing the rule of law and public trust in administration.

- **Policy Reforms:** Digital platforms like Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) reduce corruption in subsidy delivery, ensuring probity in welfare administration.

Conclusion

- Probity is the ethical backbone of governance. In a developing country like India, where governance challenges are complex, probity is not optional – it is essential for inclusive growth, public trust, and long-term national progress.



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6. (a) What were the major teachings of Guru Nanak? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world. (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Briefly introduce Guru Nanak and his role.
- List his core teachings.
- Explain their relevance in today's world.
- Conclude with a moral insight.

Solution:

- Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the founder of Sikhism, was a spiritual reformer who advocated a just and egalitarian society rooted in devotion, ethics, and compassion.

Major Teachings:

- **Oneness of God (Ik Onkar):** Promoted devotion to one universal creator.
- **Equality:** Denounced caste, gender discrimination, and untouchability.
- **Kirat Karo:** Earn livelihood through honest work.
- **Naam Japo:** Meditate and stay connected with divine truth.
- **Vand Chhako:** Share earnings and serve the community.
- **Rejection of rituals:** Urged inner spirituality over hollow formalism.

Contemporary Relevance:

- **Equality:** Guru Nanak's message underpins laws like the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act and campaigns like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.
- **Honest living:** Civil servants like Ashok Khemka reflect his ideal by upholding integrity against corruption.
- **Community service:** The Sikh practice of langar (free meals) was vital during COVID-19 relief.
- **Religious harmony:** His teachings inspire interfaith dialogues to counter communalism today.

Conclusion

- Guru Nanak's teachings are a moral compass for modern India – promoting justice, integrity, and harmony in a divided world.

6. (b) Explain the term social capital. How does it enhance good governance? (Answer in 150 words)10

Approach:

- Define social capital
- Explain its key components: networks, trust, relationships, and norms
- Then explain how it enhances good governance with examples
- Conclude with emphasising significance of Social Capital.

Solution:

- **Social capital** refers to the networks, norms, relationships, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation among individuals and institutions for mutual benefit.
- **Networks:** Formal and informal associations (like SHGs, RWAs, cooperatives) that connect citizens and institutions.
- **Trust:** Confidence in others and in institutions, which lowers transactional and enforcement costs.
- **Relationships:** Bonds of kinship, friendship, or community that support collaboration and social cohesion.
- **Norms:** Shared rules of behaviour like honesty, cooperation, and respect that regulate social interaction.

Enhancement of Good Governance through Social Capital:

- **Trust in Institutions:** High social capital builds trust between citizens and government, leading to smoother policy implementation.
 - Example: Kerala's success in COVID-19 management was aided by strong community trust and participation.
- **Citizen Participation:** It encourages participatory governance and public accountability.
 - Example: Gram Sabhas in tribal regions of Odisha have effectively used Forest Rights Act due to strong community networks.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Dense networks improve whistleblowing and reduce corruption.
 - Example: Social audits under MGNREGA reflect community-led accountability.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Strong social bonds help resolve local disputes peacefully, reducing the burden on formal institutions.

Conclusion

- Social capital strengthens the democratic fabric and enhances the effectiveness, responsiveness, and legitimacy of governance systems.

Case Study – 1

You are working as an executive in a nationalized bank for several years.

One day one of your close colleagues tells you that her father is suffering from heart disease and needs surgery immediately to survive. She also tells you that she has no insurance and the operation will cost about Rs. 10 lakh. You are also aware of the fact that her husband is no more and that she is from a lower middle class family. You are empathetic about her situation. However, apart from expressing your sympathy, you do not have the resources to fund her.

A few weeks later, you ask her about the well-being of her father and she informs you about his successful surgery and that he is recovering. She then confides in you that the bank manager was kind enough to facilitate the release of Rs. 10 lakh from a dormant account of someone to pay for the operation with a promise that it should be confidential and be repaid at the earliest. She has already started paying it back and will continue to do so until it is all returned.

- What are the ethical issues involved ?
- Evaluate the behaviour of the bank manager from an ethical point of view.
- How would you react to the situation ? (*Answer in 250 words*)²⁰

Approach:

- Introduce by highlighting the premise and central problem in concise manner.
- Identify the ethical issues involved.
- Evaluate behaviour of bank manager using an ethical framework.
- Lay out your response (stepwise manner).
- Provide conclusion with a solution-oriented outlook.

Solution:

- An executive in a nationalized bank learns that her colleague's family medical emergency was resolved through the unauthorized release of funds from a dormant account. While the situation evokes empathy, it brings forth a deeper ethical concern - the tension between personal compassion and professional integrity within institutional boundaries.

(a) Ethical Issues Involved:

- Misuse of Authority** – Unauthorized access to customer funds violates banking rules.
- Influence Peddling** – Personal closeness may have influenced the manager's biased decision.
- Breach of Trust and Confidentiality** – Erodes the ethical obligation to protect depositor interests.
- Conflict Between Emotion and Duty** – A dilemma between moral sympathy and procedural adherence.
- Lack of Transparency and Accountability** – Action taken without formal approval undermines governance.
- Precedent for Misconduct** – Normalizes irregular practices, weakening institutional discipline.

(b) Ethical Evaluation of the Bank Manager's Behaviour:

- **Care Ethics** – Reflects genuine concern and moral sensitivity in responding to suffering.
- **Utilitarian Viewpoint** – Positive short-term outcome (life saved), but long-term harm to institutional trust and accountability.
- **Deontological Viewpoint** – Breaches duty-bound ethics that prioritize procedure and rules over outcomes.
- **Fairness Approach** – Violates principles of equal treatment. Others in similar need weren't offered such assistance.
- **Slippery Slope** – Sets a dangerous precedent, risking repeated misuse of discretion under emotional justification.

(c) My Response:

- **Acknowledge Compassionate Intent** – Recognize the humanitarian motive without justifying the method.
- **Report Internally with Sensitivity** – Inform the ethics/vigilance body while providing full context.
- **Recommend Leniency** – Suggest proportional punishment considering repayment and good intent.
- **Propose Long-Term Reforms** – Encourage setting up institutional mechanisms for emergency staff support within policy limits.

Conclusion:

- Ethical public service demands that empathy and compassion be exercised within the framework of law and accountability.
- To handle such dilemmas effectively, institutions must build systems that allow flexible yet transparent support mechanisms.
- Clear ethical guidelines, periodic training, and avenues for addressing emergencies within rules can help ensure that human needs are met without compromising integrity or fairness.

Case Study – 2

A landslide occurred in the middle of the night on 20th July, 2023 in a remote mountain hamlet, approximately 60kilometers from Uttarkashi. The landslide was caused by torrential rains and has resulted in large-scale destruction of property and life. You, as district magistrate of the area, have rushed to the spot with a team of doctors, NGOs, media and police along with numerous support staff to oversee the rescue operations.

A man came running to you with a request for urgent medical help for his pregnant wife who is in labor and is losing blood. You directed your medical team to examine his wife. They return and convey to you that this woman needs blood transfusion immediately. Upon enquiry, you come to know that a few blood collection bags and blood group test kits are available in the ambulance accompanying your team. Few people of your team have already volunteered to donate blood.

Being a physician who has graduated for AIIMS, you know that blood for transfusion needs to be procured only through a recognized blood bank.

Your team members are divided on this issue; some favour transfusion while some others oppose it. The doctors in the team are ready to facilitate the delivery provided they are not penalized for transfusion. Now you are in a dilemma. Your professional training emphasizes on prioritizing service to humanity and saving lives of individuals.

- a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
- b) Evaluate the options available to you, being District Magistrate of the area. (Answer in 250 words)20

Approach:

- Briefly state the emergency and central dilemma – saving a life vs following medical/legal protocol.
- List the key stakeholders.
- Identify the ethical issues involved.
- Evaluate possible options and their ethical implications.
- Lay out your response (very briefly).
- Conclude with a balanced, principle-based resolution.

Introduction:

- A devastating landslide has created a life-threatening emergency in a remote village. As the District Magistrate and a trained physician, you face a moral dilemma between strictly adhering to medical regulations and acting swiftly to save a pregnant woman's life with available but unregulated resources.

Stakeholders

- District Magistrate
- Pregnant woman in need of blood transfusion
- Her husband
- Doctors and medical team
- Support staff and blood donors

- Victims of the landslide
- NGOs involved in relief
- Government and legal system

(a) Ethical Issues Involved:

- **Right to Life vs Legal Compliance** – Choosing between saving a life and adhering to rules requiring blood only from licensed banks.
- **Professional Ethics vs Humanitarian Duty** – As a physician and public servant, balancing procedural discipline with the moral obligation to prevent loss of life.
- **Consent and Accountability** – Ensuring informed consent of donors and patient's family while also protecting medical staff from potential legal penalties.
- **Resource Constraints in Disaster Response** – Ethical obligation to adapt under crisis without compromising safety.
- **Public Trust and Responsibility** – Maintaining credibility and acting transparently under public and media scrutiny.

(b) Evaluation of Options:

Option 1: Wait for Blood Supply from Recognized Bank

- **Pros:** Legally compliant; protects medical staff and administration from accountability issues.
- **Cons:** Delay may lead to maternal or infant death (violates the Right to Life and professional duty to save lives which as per Kant is a categorical imperative).

Option 2: Permit Immediate Transfusion from Volunteers

- **Pros:** Saves lives; responds ethically to a time-sensitive emergency; upholds Care Ethics and Utilitarianism principle.
- **Cons:** Technically violates blood safety norms; may set an irregular precedent.

Option 3: Allow Controlled Transfusion with Informed Consent and Full Documentation

- **Pros:** Balances urgency with ethical caution; ensures safety using test kits; aligns with Virtue Ethics and Public Service Values.
- **Cons:** Still outside standard protocol, but justified under emergency provisions.

My Response:

- Medically Assess the Woman's Condition
- Verify Donor Compatibility
- Obtain Written Informed Consent from both the patient's family and blood donors.
- Document the Entire Process

- Permit Transfusion as a One-Time Humanitarian Exception
- Communicate with Higher Authorities
- Submit a written justification report to safeguard the medical staff involved.

Conclusion

- In disaster scenarios, ethical decision-making must be guided by urgency, compassion, and accountability.
- While regulations are essential for safety, they must be applied with flexibility in life-and-death situations, supported by proper documentation and informed consent.
- Going forward, disaster preparedness policies should include legal provisions for emergency transfusions with safeguards. Ethical governance requires not just compliance, but courage to act responsibly when rules and reality collide.

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Case Study – 3

At 9 pm on Saturday evening, Rashika, a Joint Secretary, was still engrossed in her work in her office. Her husband, Vikram, is an executive in an MNC and frequently out of town in connection with his work. Their two children aged 5 and 3 are looked after by their domestic helper. At 9:30 pm her superior, Mr. Suresh calls her and asks her to prepare a detailed note on an important matter to be discussed in a meeting in the Ministry. She realises, that she will have to work on Sunday to finish the additional task given by her superior.

She reflects on how she had looked forward to this posting and had worked long hours for months to achieve it. She had kept the welfare of people uppermost in discharging her duties. She feels that she has not done enough justice to her family and she has not fulfilled her duties in discharging essential social obligations. Even as recently as last month she had to leave her sick child in the nanny's care as she had to work in the office. Now, she feels that she must draw a line, beyond which her personal life should take precedence over her professional responsibilities.

She thinks that there should be reasonable limits to the work ethics such as punctuality, hard work, dedication to duty and selfless service.

- Discuss the ethical issues involved in this case.
- Briefly describe at least four laws that have been enacted by the Government with respect to providing a healthy, safe and equitable working environment for women.
- Imagine you are in a similar situation. What suggestions would you make to mitigate such working conditions? (*Answer in 250 words*)²⁰

Approach:

- Provide a short introduction to set the context
- List the key stakeholders.
- Discuss the Ethical issues involved
- Describe relevant laws for women.
- Suggestions to mitigate working condition
- A general forward looking conclusion

Solution:

- Rashika, a committed civil servant, finds herself torn between the demands of her high-responsibility government position and her family duties as a mother. Her case highlights the growing ethical tension faced by many working women – how to balance professional excellence with personal well-being and social responsibilities.

Stakeholders Involved:

- Rashika (Joint Secretary)
- Rashika's Children
- Vikram (Husband)
- Domestic Helper/Nanny

- Mr. Suresh (Superior Officer)
- Public/Citizens
- Human Resource/Administrative Wing

(a) Ethical Issues Involved:

- **Work-Life Balance Dilemma** – Rashika’s struggle reflects the ethical conflict between public service commitment and personal responsibilities.
- **Duty to the Public vs Duty to Family** – Balancing the larger good with immediate family care duties poses a moral challenge.
- **Burnout** – Continuous overwork risks health and productivity, decision-making.
- **Gendered Expectations** – Highlights the unequal burden many women face in managing both home and career roles.
- **Organizational Responsibility** – Ethical obligation of the employer/superior to ensure humane and realistic work demands.

(b) Four Relevant Laws for Safe and Equitable Working Environment for Women:

- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended 2017)** – Provides 26 weeks of paid maternity leave and mandates crèche facilities in large establishments.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013** – Ensures protection against workplace harassment and provides mechanisms for complaint redressal.
- **Factories Act, 1948 (Provisions for Women Workers)** – Includes rules for working hours, night shifts, and workplace safety for women.
- **Equal Remuneration Act, 1976** – Ensures that men and women are paid equally for the same work and prohibits gender discrimination in recruitment and service conditions.

(c) Suggestions to Mitigate Such Working Conditions:

- **Promote Flexibility** – Use technology to allow some tasks to be completed remotely.
- **Institutionalize Support Structures** – Government offices should provide child care support, emergency leave options, and mental health services.
- **Leadership Sensitization** – Train senior officials to respect the personal space and well-being of their subordinates, especially during weekends or emergencies.
- **Expectation Management** – Officers should communicate personal limitations professionally without compromising accountability.

Conclusion

- As Mahatma Gandhi said, *“There is more to life than increasing its speed.”* Institutions must therefore create environments where efficiency does not come at the cost of human dignity, and where personal life is seen not as a hurdle to service, but as a foundation for ethical action.

Case Study – 4

Vinod is an honest and sincere IAS officer. Recently, he has taken over as Managing Director of the State Road Transport Corporation, his sixth transfer in the past three years. His peers acknowledge his vast knowledge, affability and uprightness.

The Chairman of the State Road Transport Corporation is a powerful politician and is very close to the Chief Minister. Vinod comes to know about many alleged irregularities of the Corporation and the high-handedness of the Chairman in financial matters.

A Board Member of the Corporation belonging to the Opposition Party meets Vinod and hands over a few documents along with a video recording in which the Chairman appears to be demanding bribe for placing a huge order for the supply of QMR tyres. Vinod recollects the Chairman expediting clearing of pending bills of QMR tyres.

Vinod confronts the Board Member as to why he is shying away from exposing the Chairman with the so-called solid proof he has with him. The member informs him that the Chairman refuses to yield to his threats. He adds that Vinod may earn recognition and public support if he himself exposes the Chairman. Further, he tells Vinod that once his party comes to power, Vinod's professional growth would be assured.

Vinod is aware that he may be penalized if he exposes the Chairman and may further be transferred to a distant place. He knows that the Opposition Party stands a better chance of coming to power in the forthcoming elections.

However, he also realizes that the Board Member is trying to use him for his own political gains.

- a) As a conscientious civil servant, evaluate the options available to Vinod.
- b) In the light of the above case, comment upon the ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy. *(Answer in 250 words)* 20

Approach:

- Provide a short introduction to set the context
- List the key stakeholders.
- Evaluate possible options and their ethical implications.
- Discuss the Ethical issues that may arise due to the politicization of bureaucracy.
- Lay out your response (very briefly).
- A general forward looking conclusion

Solution:

- Vinod, an honest IAS officer, receives evidence of corruption against a powerful Chairman but suspects it is being used for political manipulation.
- Vinod in such a situation faces ethical dilemma between upholding public integrity and avoiding becoming a political tool – all while safeguarding his career.

Stakeholders:

- Vinod (IAS officer)
- Chairman of the Corporation
- Board Member from Opposition Party
- Chief Minister
- Employees of the Corporation
- Public/Citizens (who rely on the Corporation's services)
- State Government
- Media and civil society

(a) Options Available to Vinod:

1. Ignore the evidence and maintain status quo:

- **Pros:** Maintains safety, avoids conflict and possible transfer.
- **Cons:** Enables corruption, compromises ethics of public service, violates public trust and professional responsibility.

2. Accept the opposition member's proposal and expose the Chairman in exchange for political assurance:

- **Pros:** Gains public recognition; potential career benefits.
- **Cons:** Violates neutrality, encourages politicization of bureaucracy.

3. Leak the information anonymously to media or external forums:

- **Pros:** May trigger public pressure and corrective action; protects anonymity.
- **Cons:** Bypasses due process, can damage institutional credibility, may backfire.

4. Report the Chairman through official channels (e.g., Vigilance, Lokayukta):

- **Pros:** Upholds public duty, ensures accountability and rule of law, demonstrates moral courage.
- **Cons:** May face political backlash or transfer leading to personal inconvenience.

(b) Ethical Issues Due to Politicization of Bureaucracy:

- **Erosion of Administrative Neutrality** – Officers may be pressured to act based on political allegiance.
- **Manipulation of Honest Officials** – Integrity is exploited for political gain, weakening morale.
- **Unfair Transfers and Punishments** – Good officers are penalized for resisting corrupt practices.
- **Misuse of Public Institutions** – Governance machinery is diverted for private or party benefit.
- **Collapse of Merit and Integrity** – Career growth becomes tied to loyalty rather than ethical conduct or competence.

Course of Action:

- **Verify the authenticity** of the documents and video through neutral sources.
- **Document any internal irregularities** observed in official decision-making processes.
- **Report the matter confidentially** to relevant oversight institutions.
- **Avoid political alliances** or endorsement from any party.
- Encourage internal audit or systemic reform to prevent future misuse of power.

Conclusion

- Only when bureaucracy is shielded from political interference can it truly serve the democratic and ethical interests of society. Hence, strengthening whistleblower protection, fixing minimum tenure in a role for officers, enforcing transparent transfer policies, and conducting regular audits are essential systemic safeguards.

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Case Study – 5

You have just been appointed as Additional Director General of Central

Public Works Department. The Chief Architect of your division, who is to retire in six months, is passionately working on a very important project, the successful completion of which would earn him a lasting reputation for the rest of his life.

A new lady architect, Seema, trained at Manchester School of Architecture, UK joined as Senior Architect in your division. During the briefing about the project, Seema made some suggestions which would not only add value to the project, but would also reduce completion time. This has made the Chief Architect insecure and he is constantly worried that all the credit will go to her. Subsequently, he adopted a passive and aggressive behaviour towards her and has become disrespectful to her. Seema felt it embarrassing as the Chief Architect left no chance of humiliating her. He would very often correct her in front of other colleagues and raise his voice while speaking to her. This continuous harassment has resulted in her losing confidence and self-esteem.

She felt perpetually tensed, anxious and stressed. She appeared to be in awe of him since he has had a long tenure in the office and has vast experience in the area of her work.

You are aware of her outstanding academic credentials and career record in her previous organisations. However, you fear that this harassment may result in compromising her much needed contribution in this important project and may adversely impact her emotional well-being. You have also come to know from her peers that she is contemplating tendering her resignation.

- What are the ethical issues involved in the above case?
- What are the options available to you in order to complete the project as well as to retain Seema in the organization?
- What would be your response to Seema's predicament? What measures would you institute to prevent such occurrences from happening in your organization? (Answer in 250 words)20

Approach:

- Provide a short introduction to set the context
- Discuss the Ethical issues involved.
- Evaluate possible options and their ethical implications.
- Lay out your response.
- Mention the preventive measures.
- A general forward looking conclusion

Solution:

- In this case, a promising young architect faces professional harassment and emotional distress due to the insecurity of a senior colleague. As Additional Director General, the central challenge is to ensure a fair, respectful workplace while preserving team cohesion for a critical project.

(a) Ethical Issues Involved:

- **Workplace Harassment and Dignity** – Disrespectful behaviour toward Seema violates her right to a safe and respectful workplace.
- **Gender insensitivity** – The conduct may also carry undertones of gender-based discrimination.
- **Abuse of Seniority** – The Chief Architect misuses his experience and authority to suppress a junior colleague's contributions.
- **Prejudice** – The Chief Architect may be subconsciously biased due to Seema's gender, youth, or foreign education, impacting his professional behavior.
- **Intellectual Dishonesty** – The attempt to suppress Seema's ideas and deny her rightful credit reflects dishonesty in acknowledging merit and contributions.

(b) Options Available to You:

- **Initiate Formal Disciplinary Action Against the Chief Architect**
 - **Pros:** Sends a strong institutional message; protects Seema and future employees; upholds justice and accountability.
 - **Cons:** May demoralize a nearing-retirement officer if not handled with sensitivity.
- **Reassign Project Roles to Ensure Independent Contribution**
 - **Pros:** Allows both architects to contribute distinctly, reducing friction; protects Seema's ideas and well-being; supports meritocracy and fairness without confrontation..
 - **Cons:** May be seen as a workaround rather than solving the root problem.
- **Mediate a Constructive Dialogue Between Seema and the Chief Architect**
 - **Pros:** Encourages mutual understanding, preserves team spirit, and avoids escalation.
 - **Cons:** May be slow to resolve if resistance persists.

(c) Response to Seema's Predicament and Preventive Measures:

Immediate Response:

- **Personally meet Seema** – Acknowledge her concerns empathetically and reaffirm her value to the organization.
- **Offer support** – Encourage her to stay, offer to mediate the situation, and assure corrective steps.
- **Facilitate structured feedback** – Set up regular reviews where her inputs are formally considered.

Preventive Measures:

- **Zero-Tolerance Policy for Workplace Harassment** – Clearly define acceptable behaviour and consequences.
- **Internal Committee for Conflict Resolution** – Create safe, confidential, and responsive mechanisms for reporting and addressing grievances.
- **Training and Sensitization** – Conduct workshops on workplace ethics, gender sensitivity, and respectful communication.

- **Mentoring Culture** – Encourage senior officers to mentor juniors instead of competing with them.
- **Credit-Sharing Norms** – Introduce a structured system for transparent credit distribution in project documentation.

Conclusion

- Workplace ethics must prioritize dignity, fairness, and emotional safety alongside professional excellence. By establishing transparent systems, grievance redressal mechanisms, and ethical norms, institutions can ensure that individual aspirations are fulfilled without compromising collective goals.

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Case Study – 6

You hold a responsible position in a ministry in the government. One day in the morning you received a call from the school of your 11-year-old son that you are required to come and meet the Principal. You proceed to the school and find your son in the Principal's office. The Principal informs you that your son had been found wandering aimlessly in the grounds during the time classes were in progress. The class teacher further informs you that your son has lately become a loner and did not respond to questions in the class, he had also been unable to perform well in the football trials held recently. You bring your son back from the school and in the evening, you along with your wife try to find out the reasons for your son's changed behaviour. After repeated cajoling, your son shares that some children had been making fun of him in the class as well as in the WhatsApp group of the students by calling him stunted, duh and a frog. He tells you the names of a few children who are the main culprits but pleads with you to let the matter rest.

After a few days, during a sporting event, where you and your wife have gone to watch your son play, one of your colleague's son shows you a video in which students have caricatured your son. Further, he also points out to the perpetrators who were sitting in the stands. You purposefully walk past them with your son and go home. Next day, you find on social media, a video denigrating you, your son and even your wife, stating that you engaged in physical bullying of children on the sports field. The video became viral on social media. Your friends and colleagues began calling you to find out the details. One of your juniors advised you to make a counter video giving the background and explaining that nothing had happened on the field. You, in turn posted a video which you have captured during the sporting event, identifying the likely perpetrators who were responsible for your son's predicament. You have also narrated what has actually happened in the field and made attempts to bring out the adverse effects of the misuse of social media.

- Based on the above case study, discuss the ethical issues involved in the use of social media.
- Discuss the pros and cons of using social media by you to put across the facts to counter the fake propaganda against your family. (Answer in 250 words)20

Approach:

- Provide a short introduction to set the context
- List the key stakeholders.
- Discuss the Ethical issues involved.
- Discuss the pros and cons of using social media .
- A general forward looking conclusion

Solution:

- This case highlights the misuse of social media to spread misinformation and its impact on personal and professional life. As a public servant and parent, the central issue involves balancing emotional response, ethical conduct, and responsible use of digital platforms to safeguard dignity and truth.

Stakeholders:

- The officer (you)
- The son (victim of bullying)
- Wife

- School authorities and students
- Bullies and their parents
- Society/viewers of viral content

(a) Ethical Issues Involved in the Use of Social Media:

- **Cyberbullying** – Social media becomes a tool for humiliating and emotionally harming children, affecting their mental well-being.
- **Privacy Violation** – Personal and family details are shared without consent, breaching individual dignity and safety.
- **Misinformation** – Manipulated content distorts the truth and misleads public opinion.
- **Social Media Trial** – Public judgment without due process undermines fairness and justice.
- **Private Ethics vs Public Ethics:** As a parent, you feel compelled to defend your child, but as a public servant, you're expected to act with restraint and uphold institutional decorum despite personal provocation.

(b) Pros and Cons of Using Social Media to Respond:

Pros:

- **Clarifies the Truth** – Helps correct the false narrative and present factual events.
- **Protects Family Reputation** – Counters defamation and reassures professional and social circles.
- **Raises Awareness** – Highlights the broader issue of bullying and misuse of social media in schools.
- **Demonstrates Responsible Citizenship** – Shows a calm, fact-based response rather than emotional retaliation.

Cons:

- **May Involve Children Publicly** – Sharing names or videos risks violating children's right to privacy, even if they are bullies.
- **Legal and Institutional Risks** – Might be perceived as misuse of official stature or breach of child protection norms.
- **Perpetuates Online Conflict** – Can lead to further trolling, divide, or sensationalism.
- **Emotional Toll** – Reliving or replaying such incidents can further affect the mental health of the child and family.

Conclusion

Social media must be used with caution, empathy, and responsibility. In cases of bullying or defamation, it is essential to combine **legal remedies, institutional mechanisms (such as school authorities and cyber cells), and mature public communication**. Families and institutions must educate young users on digital civility to build a more responsible online culture.