

Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma is a situation where one must choose between two or more conflicting moral principles or courses of action, none of which is a perfect solution. Obeying one ethical principle might mean transgressing another.

Principles for Ethical Dilemmas

- **Core Values:** Answers must be grounded in the foundational values of civil services: integrity, impartiality, non-partisanship, objectivity, accountability, transparency, empathy, tolerance, and compassion.
- **Ethical Frameworks:** Use these theories to provide a reasoned analysis:
 - **Utilitarianism:** Focuses on the greatest good/happiness for the greatest number of people. Helps in policy decisions impacting a large population.
 - **Deontology (Duty-Based):** Emphasizes moral duties and rules, regardless of consequences (e.g., upholding the law, human rights).
 - **Virtue Ethics:** Focuses on character and virtues (honesty, courage, justice). Asks what a virtuous person would do.
 - **Gandhian Ethics:** Emphasizes truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa), and Sarvodaya (welfare of all).
- **Constitutional Values:** Link your decisions to constitutional principles like justice, equality, freedom, and the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) to add weight to your arguments.

Common Ethical Dilemmas in Public Administration

Dilemma Theme: Political Pressure vs. Integrity
Example Scenario: A political leader pressures you, a District Collector, to divert welfare funds for a personal project
Conflicting Values: Integrity vs. Career progression; Public interest vs. Political demands
Key Action Points: Refuse politely but firmly; Document all communication; Escalate the matter through proper channels (e.g., vigilance commission)

Dilemma Theme: Whistleblowing vs. Loyalty and Self-Preservation
Example Scenario: You discover a senior officer involved in significant corruption within your department
Conflicting Values: Loyalty to colleagues/hierarchy vs. Accountability/Transparency; Personal risk vs. Public interest
Key Action Points: Collect credible evidence confidentially; Report to appropriate authorities following due process; Ensure protection under the Whistleblowers Protection Act.

Dilemma Theme: Development vs. Environment
Example Scenario: A proposed infrastructure project will create jobs and boost the economy but destroy a fragile ecosystem and displace tribal communities
Conflicting Values: Economic growth vs. Environmental sustainability; Public welfare vs. Indigenous rights; Utilitarianism vs. Deontology/Ecology ethics
Key Action Points: Conduct thorough Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); Consult all stakeholders (especially tribal groups); Explore sustainable alternatives (e.g., eco-tourism, use of non-forest land); Ensure fair compensation and rehabilitation if diversion is unavoidable

Dilemma Theme: Personal Duty vs. Professional Duty
Example Scenario: As a Deputy Commissioner during a major natural disaster, you must manage rescue operations, but your critically injured mother also needs immediate care
Conflicting Values: Personal/familial obligation vs. Professional duty to the public; Emotional vs. Rational choice
Key Action Points: Ensure immediate medical aid for mother; Entrust a reliable subordinate/doctor while you oversee critical public operations; Prioritize the greater public good while balancing personal responsibility as much as possible

Dilemma Theme: Rules vs. Compassion
Example Scenario: An old, illiterate, and destitute woman needs benefits from a social scheme, but lacks the necessary documentation to prove eligibility
Conflicting Values: Adherence to rules/legality vs. Compassion/Social Justice

Key Action Points: Use administrative discretion to find a solution (e.g., conduct a quick ground verification); Help her acquire the necessary documents; Leverage local NGOs or field workers to assist with the process; Ensure the intent of the scheme (helping the needy) is met

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