2025 – General Studies Paper 4

Total time: 3 Hours **Total Marks: 250 marks**

All Questions are compulsory.

Keep the word limit in mind while answering the question.

1. (a) In the present digital age, social media has revolutionised our way of communication and interaction. However, it has raised several ethical issues and challenges. Describe the key ethical dilemmas in this regard. (Answer in 150 words)

1. (b) "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment but a product of civil education and adherence of the rule of law." Examine the significance of constitutional morality for public servant highlighting the role in promoting good governance and ensuring accountability in public administration. (Answer in 150 words)

2. (a) Carl von Clausewitz once said, "War is a diplomacy by other means." Critically analyse the above statement in the present context of contemporary geo-political conflict. (Answer in 150 words)

2. (b) Keeping the national security in mind, examine the ethical dilemmas related to controversies over environmental clearance of development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas in the country. (Answer in 150 words)

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

3. (a) "Those who in trouble untroubled are, Will trouble trouble itself." – Thiruvalluvar (Answer in 150 words)

3. (b) "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes." – William James (Answer in 150 words)

3. (c) "The strength of a society is not in its laws, but in the morality of its people." – Swami Vivekananda (Answer in 150 words)

4. (a) "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. (Answer in 150 words)

4. (b) What are the major teachings of Mahavir? Explain their relevance in the contemporary world. (Answer in 150 words)

5. (a) "One who is devoted to one's duty attains highest perfection in life." Analyse this statement with reference to sense of responsibility and personal fulfilment as a civil servant. (Answer in 150 words)

5. (b) To achieve holistic development goal, a civil servant acts as an enabler and active facilitator of growth rather than a regulator. What specific measures will you suggest to achieve this goal? (Answer in 150 words)

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6. (a) It is said that for an ethical work culture, there must be code of ethics in place in every organisation. To ensure value-based and compliance-based work culture, what suitable measures would you adopt in your work place? (Answer in 150 words)

6. (b) India is an emerging economic power of the world as it has recently secured the status of fourth largest economy of the world as per IMF projection. However, it has been observed that in some sectors, allocated funds remain either under-utilised or misutilised. What specific measures would you recommend for ensuring accountability in this regard to stop leakages and gaining the status of third largest economy of the world in near future? (Answer in 150 words)

7. Vijay was Deputy Commissioner of remote district of Hilly Northern State of the country for the last two years. In the month of August heavy rains lashed the complete state followed by cloud burst in the upper reaches of the said district. The damage was very heavy in the complete state especially in the affected district. The complete road network and telecommunication were disrupted and the buildings were damaged extensively. People's houses have been destroyed and they were forced to stay in open. More than 200 people have been killed and about 5000 were badly injured. The Civil Administration under Vijay got activated and started conducting rescue and relief operations. Temporary shelter camps and hospitals were established to provide shelter and medical facilities to the homeless and injured people. Helicopter services were pressed in, for evacuating sick and old people from remote areas. Vijay got a message from his hometown in Kerala that his mother was seriously sick. After two days Vijay received the unfortunate message that his mother has expired. Vijay has no close relative except one elder sister who was US citizen and staying there for last several years. In the meantime, the situation in the affected district deteriorated further due to resumption of heavy rains after a gap of five days. At the same time, continuous messages were coming on his mobile from his hometown to reach at the earliest for performing last rites of his mother.

(a) What are the options available with Vijay?

(b) What are the ethical dilemma being faced by Vijay?

(c) Critically evaluate and examine each of these options identified by Vijay.

(d) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why? (Answer in 250 words)

8. In line with the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the government has a constitutional obligation to ensure basic needs – *"Roti, Kapda aur Makan (Food, Clothes and Shelter)"* – for the under-privileged. Pursuing this mandate, the district administration proposed clearing a portion of forest land to develop housing for the homeless and economically weaker sections of the society.

The proposed land, however, is an ecologically sensitive zone densely populated with age-old trees, medicinal plants and vital biodiversity. Besides, these forests help to regulate micro-climate and rainfalls; provide habitat for wildlife, support soil fertility and prevent land/soil erosion and sustain livelihoods of tribal and nomadic communities.

Inspite of the ecological and social costs, the administration argues in favour of the said proposal by highlighting that this very initiative addresses fundamental human rights as a critical welfare priority. Besides, it fulfils the government's duty to uplift and empower the poor through inclusive housing development. Further, these forest areas have become unsafe due to wild-animal threats and

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recurring human-wildlife conflicts. Lastly, clearing forest-zones may help to curb anti-social elements allegedly using these areas as hideouts, thereby enhancing law and order.

(a) Can deforestation be ethically justified in the pursuit of social welfare objectives like, housing for the homeless?
(b) What are the socio-economic, administrative and ethical challenges in balancing environmental conservation with human development?
(c) What substantial alternatives or policy interventions can be proposed to ensure that both environmental integrity and human dignity are protected? (Answer in 250 words)

9. Subash is Secretary, PWD in the State Government. He is a senior officer, known for his competence, integrity and dedication to work. He enjoys the trust and confidence of Minister Incharge of PWD and Programme Implementation. As a part of his job profile, he is responsible for policy formulation, execution of projects relating to infrastructure initiatives in the State. Besides, he oversees the technical and administrative aspects relating to planning, designing and construction etc.

Subash's Minister is an important Minister in the state and significant growth in urban infrastructure development and road network has been registered during his tenure. He is very keen for launching of ambitious road construction project in the near future.

Subash is in regular touch with the Minister and is working various modalities of road construction project. Regular meetings, interactions and presentations are made by him to the Minister before a formal public announcement of the project is made by the Minister. Subash's only son Vikas is in real estate business. His son from his own sources is aware that a mega road project is on the anvil and announcement in this regard is expected anytime. He is very keen to know from his father the exact location of the upcoming project. He knows that there would be quantum jump in the prices of land in the vicinity. Buying land at this stage at cheaper prices would pay him rich dividends. He is pleading with him (his father) day in and day out to share him location of the proposed project. He assured him that he would handle the matter discreetly as it would not attract any adverse notice as he in the normal course, keeps on buying land as a part of his business. He feels pressurised because of constant pleadings by his son.

Another significant aspect of the matter pertained to the extra/undue interest in the above project by the Minister PWD. His nephew was also having big infrastructure project company. In fact, the Minister has also introduced his nephew to him and indicated to him to take care of his nephew's business interest in the forthcoming project. The Minister encouraged him to act fast in the matter as early announcement and execution of mega road project would enhance his status in the party and public life.

In the above backdrop, Subash is in a fix as to the future course of action.

(a) Discuss the ethical issues involved in the case.
(b) Critically examine the options available to Subash in the above situation.
(c) Which of the above would be most appropriate and why?

10. Rajesh is a Group A officer with nine years of service. He is posted as Administrative Officer in an Oil Public Sector undertaking. As an Administrative Officer he is responsible for managing and coordinating various administrative tasks to ensure smooth functioning of office. He also manages office supplies, equipment etc.

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Rajesh is now sufficient senior and is expecting his next promotion in JAG (Junior Administrative Grade) in the next one or two years. He knows that promotion is based on examination of ACRs/Performance Appraisal of last few years (5 years or so) of an officer by a DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) and an officer lacking requisite grading of ACRs may not be found fit for promotion. Consequences of losing promotion may entail financial and reputational loss and set-back for career progression. Though he also puts his best efforts in official discharge of his duties, yet he is unsure of assessment by his superior officer. He is now putting extra efforts so that he gets thumping report at the end of financial year.

As Administrative Officer, Rajesh is regularly interacting with his immediate boss, who is his reporting officer for writing his ACR. One day he calls Rajesh and wants him to buy computer-related stationery on priority from a particular vendor. Rajesh instructs his office to initiate action for procuring these items. During the day, the dealing Assistant brings an estimate of Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs covering all stationery items from the same vendor. It is noticed that as per delegated financial powers, as provided in the GFR (General Financial Rules) as applicable in that Organisation, expenditure for office items exceeding Rupees Thirty Lakhs requires sanction of the next higher authority (boss in the present case). Rajesh knows that immediate superior would expect all these purchases should be done at his level and may not appreciate such lack of initiative on his part. During discussions with office, he learns that common practice of splitting of expenditure (where large order is divided into a series of smaller ones) is followed to avoid obtaining sanction from higher authority. This practice is against the rules and may come to the adverse notice of Audit.

Rajesh is perturbed. He is unsure of taking decision in the matter.

(a) What are the options available with Rajesh in the above situation?
(b) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
(c) Which would be the most appropriate option for Rajesh and why? (Answer in 250 words)

11. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, MGNREGA was earlier known as National Rural Employment Scheme, NREGA. It is an Indian Social Welfare Program aimed at fulfilling the 'Right to Work' provisions made in the Constitution. MGNREGA was launched in 2006 under Rural Employment Sector by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Main objective of the program is to give legal guarantee of wage employment to the adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour work subject to a maximum of 100 days per year for every household. Every rural household has the right to register under the scheme, job card is issued to the registered, Job Card holder can seek employment; State Government shall pay 25% of minimum wage for the first 30 days as compensatory daily unemployment allowance to the families and of wage for remaining period of the year. MGNREGA work was undertaken by various Gram Panchayats.

You have been appointed as an Administrator Incharge of the District. You have been given the responsibility of monitoring MGNREGA work undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You are also given the authority to give technical sanctions to all MGNREGA works.

In one of the Panchayats in your jurisdiction, you notice that your predecessor has mismanaged the Program in terms of:

(i) Money not disbursed to actual job-seekers.
(ii) Muster Rolls of the Labourers not properly maintained.
(iii) Mismatch between the work done and payments made.

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(iv) Payments made to fictitious persons.
(v) Job Cards were given without looking into the need of person.
(vi) Mismanagement of funds and to the extent of siphoning of funds.
(vii) Approved works that never existed.

(a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how do you restore the proper functioning of MGNREGA Program in this regard?
(b) What actions would you initiate to solve the various issues listed above?
(c) How would you deal with the above situation? (Answer in 250 words)

12. Ashok is Divisional Commissioner of one of the border districts of the North East State. A few years back, Military has taken over the neighbouring country after overthrowing the elected civil government. Civil war situation is prevailing in the country especially in last two years. However, internal situation further deteriorated due to rebel groups taking over control of certain populated areas near own border. Due to intense fight between military and rebel groups, civilian casualties has increased manifold in recent past. In the meantime, in one night Ashok got information from the local police guarding the border check post that there are about 200–250 people mainly women and children trying to cross over to our side of the border. There are also about 10 soldiers with their weapons in military uniform part of this group who wants to cross over. Women and Children are also crying and begging for help. A few of them are injured and bleeding profusely need immediate medical care. Ashok tried to contact Home Secretary of the State but failed to do so due to poor connectivity mainly due to inclement weather.

(a) What are the options available with Ashok to cope with the situation?
(b) What are the ethical and legal dilemmas being faced by Ashok?
(c) Which of the options, do you think would be more appropriate for Ashok to adopt and why?
(d) In the present situation, what are the extra precautionary measures to be taken by the Border Guarding Police in dealing with soldiers in uniform? (Answer in 250 words)

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