



Mains Practice Question

Q. There is a need for global standards of ethics, but their application will have to be adapted to local conditions. Comment. (150 words)

17 Oct, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Explain the foundational basis of global standard of ethics i.e the human nature.
- Mention the factors which determine the application of global standards to local levels.

Introduction

Ethics determines the behaviour of individuals. As it is linked to human nature, there should be a uniform standard of ethics for all humans which has foundations on humanity, generosity and respect towards human dignity. Thus, there is a need for a global standard of ethics which shall determine the behaviour of individuals in a morally acceptable manner.

Body

However, there are **several determinants of ethics** of society at large. Mentioned below are a few factors which indicate that the application of such global standards of ethics will have to be adapted to local conditions:

- **Socialization:** A person forms his ethical standards from social institutions like family, school, society, etc.
 - For ex: A child born in a tribal society might be more sensitive towards environment protection than an urban dweller.
- **Role of institutions:** The institutions which govern the people also shape their ethical bent.
 - For ex: Chinese authoritarianism is reflected in the relative lack of dissent in the Chinese media and civil society groups. On the other hand, Indian democratic governance gives chance to people to raise dissenting voices.
- **Role of leaders:** Leaders influence the moral and social acceptability of ideas and norms.
 - For ex: Prosecution of Jews was carried out by the common people in Germany under the influence of Hitler.
- **Role of culture:** Culture of a region is evolved by shared history, geography, beliefs and rituals. What may be ethical in a specific culture may be unethical in other.
 - For ex: Nudity might be common among primitive tribes in Andaman but it might amount to obscenity in a small village in Bihar.

Conclusion

Ethics may have subjective standard as there is no absolutism in ethics. However, the global standard of

ethics should be applied adapted to the local conditions. For example, respect for human dignity, non violence and peace can be promoted in a different societies through awareness generation, modification or reforms in the local rituals and cultures, picking up the right stories and mythologies to connect with the local beliefs etc.

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