



Mains Practice Question

Q. Outline briefly the views of any two modern public administration thinkers on the ethical ideas for civil servants. (150 words)

08 Dec, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Start your answer by briefly introducing ethical ideas.
- Discuss views of David K Hart's and John Rohr views on ethical ideas.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- 'Ethics' is a system of accepted beliefs, mores and values, which influence human behaviour. More specifically, it is a system based on morals. Thus, ethics is the study of what is morally right, and what is not. Since the early 17th century, ethics has been accepted as the "Science of morals; the rules of conduct, the science of human duty." Hence, in common parlance, ethics is treated as moral principles that govern a person's or a group's behaviour. It includes both the science of the good and the nature of the right.

Body

- **David K Hart's Views on Ethical Ideas:**
 - He propounded the idea of '**benevolent bureaucrat**' and '**moral exemplar**'. According to him the moral exemplar is one who serves as a model of ideal morality.
 - He distinguishes public administration from business enterprise. Public servants, as compared to business managers, strive for a higher purpose.
 - He describes public administration as a moral endeavour and distinguishes it from business enterprise and suggest public servant to adopt different personal traits and higher moral qualities than those of business managers.
 - Therefore, public servants need a unique moral character and commitment to certain moral duties.
 - The list of moral qualities which Hart mentions include:
 - Superior prudence,
 - Moral heroism,
 - Love of humanity,
 - Trust in common people,
 - Continuing effort towards moral improvement.
- **John Rohr's views on Ethical Ideals:**
 - He suggested that public servants should base their decisions on constitutional principles. They should internalize the principles of the constitution which is the founding law of any State.
 - He identified freedom, equality and property as the three main values.
 - **Rohr makes four points in this context:**
 - Public officials take an oath of office to defend the constitution and are bound by it.
 - Constitution can be regarded as the founding principle of any State.

- Constitution is far more important than any current, transient government set up.
- Administrators have to remain faithful to the constitution and not to any incumbent government.
- Usually, a general consensus exists around the Constitution. Constitution stands as a kind of universal moral order. It follows that public servants should seek moral guidance from Constitution than from political masters.

Conclusion

A model public servant must act voluntarily and of his own volition; his acts should not just be the results of rules or compulsion from higher levels in administration.

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