

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q7

At the international level, bilateral relations between most nations are governed on the policy of promoting one's own national interest without any regard for the interest of other nations. This leads to conflicts and tension between the nations. How can ethical consideration help resolve such tensions? Discuss with specific examples. (10 Marks).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS IV · 12 marks · Ethics and Human Interface

Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics - in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

Core demand of the question

- Bilateral relations often chase national interest with no regard for others, causing tension. How can ethical consideration help resolve such tensions? Discuss with specific examples

Revision summary

Unrestrained national interest treats other nations as obstacles and produces spirals of distrust.

Ethics does not erase self-defence; it sets reciprocity, kept promises, shared climate and civilian dignity as limits.

Examples include the Paris climate pact, the Indus Waters Treaty, refugee protection, and vaccine sharing versus vaccine nationalism.

Opaque debt and downstream river harm are interest without regard.

Institutions and verification stop ethics from becoming naive surrender.

Introduction

States are not saints. They seek security and advantage. Ethics does not abolish national interest. It asks that interest be pursued without treating another people as waste.

Body**The problem**

- Realist practice says a State may lie, squeeze a neighbour's river, or dump carbon if it gains. That practice produces arms races, refugee crises and climate harm that return as costs.
- "National interest without regard for others" is often a short-term factional interest wearing a flag: a contractor, a vote bank, or a general's prestige.

How ethical consideration helps

- **Reciprocity:** do not do to a neighbour's civilians what you would call a crime if done to yours. This lowers spiral revenge.
- **Pacta sunt servanda:** keep treaties. A broken water treaty or a broken border pact teaches the other side to arm.
- **Common goods:** climate, pandemics, and oceans cannot be won as zero-sum loot. Ethics names the shared duty.
- **Human dignity:** even in rivalry, prisoners of war, fishermen and students are not hostages of mood.
- **Justice in trade:** dumping and beggar-thy-neighbour tariffs create the next political crisis. Fair rules are ethics with a calculator.
- **Truth in diplomacy:** secret extra-territorial killing and fake maps may "work" for a season and poison trust for a generation.

Specific examples

- **Climate:** the **Paris Agreement, 2015** asks common but differentiated responsibility. Ethical consideration is why a high-emitting rich State cannot lecture a poor State while refusing finance. India's solar push and demand for climate finance sit in this frame.
- **Water:** the **Indus Waters Treaty, 1960** survived wars because both sides treated a river as a shared life system, not only as a tap to punish. Threats to walk away raise ethical and strategic cost.
- **Refugees:** the **1951 Refugee Convention** spirit (India is not a party but still hosts) says a drowning neighbour is not only a security file. Pushbacks that dump people into the sea fail that ethic and create lasting hate.
- **COVID-19:** vaccine nationalism and delayed COVAX supply showed interest without regard. Vaccine Maitri, when it was real supply and not only a headline, was the ethical counter-example - and it also built goodwill, which is interest rightly understood.
- **Development partnerships versus debt traps:** opaque loans that seize a port when unpaid are interest without regard. Transparent, demand-driven lines of credit are closer to justice.
- Humanitarian corridors in a war, and the Chemical Weapons Convention, show that even enemies can agree that some harms are not tools.
- River-linking or damming that ignores a downstream country's farmers is the environmental-ethics problem at the border. **Joint basin** institutions are the ethical instrument.

Limits

- Ethics is not appeasement of aggression. Self-defence remains a right. The point is that how you defend still has a ceiling: no targeting of markets as a method, no collective punishment of a minority across the fence.
- A State that is ethical alone while others cheat can be exploited. Hence institutions, verification and a public that will not cheer a cheap cruelty.

Flow diagram

Narrow national interest -> Conflict and tension

Ethical consideration -> Reciprocity treaties common goods dignity

Reciprocity treaties common goods dignity -> Lower tension and durable interest

Conflict and tension -> Lower tension and durable interest

Conclusion

National interest is not cancelled by ethics. It is civilised by reciprocity, kept treaties, shared climate and the refusal to treat another people as instruments. Paris, Indus, vaccines and basin talks are examples. Cruelty that looks clever usually returns as tension.

Facts & figures

Paris Agreement, 2015

Climate pact on nationally determined contributions and differentiated responsibility; an ethical frame for a shared atmosphere.

Indus Waters Treaty, 1960

World Bank-brokered water-sharing between India and Pakistan that outlasted wars; a rare ethic of a shared river.

COVAX and vaccine nationalism

The pandemic showed donors covering themselves first; delayed sharing was interest without regard for others' lives.

1951 Refugee Convention

Core international ethic against returning people to persecution; India is not a party but has hosted large refugee populations.

Pacta sunt servanda

The principle that treaties bind; breaking them for a season of advantage teaches the other side to prepare for betrayal.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2015/at-the-international-level-bilateral-relations-between-most-nations-are-governed-on-the-policy-of-promoting-ones-own-national-interest-without-any-regard-for-the-interest-of-other-nations-this-leads-to-conflicts-and/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com