

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

Q3

(a) What is meant by the term 'constitutional morality'? How does one uphold constitutional morality? (10 marks) (b) What is meant by 'crisis of conscience'? How does it manifest in the public domain? (10 marks).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · GS IV · 10 marks · Ethics in Public Administration

Public / Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.

Core demand of the question

- (a) Explain constitutional morality and how one upholds it
- (b) Explain crisis of conscience and how it manifests in the public domain

Revision summary

Constitutional morality is loyalty to the Constitution's values over popular or sectarian morality.

Ambedkar warned that democracy needs that habit; courts have used it to protect dignity and liberty.

One upholds it by impartial files, speaking orders and refusal of illegal commands.

A crisis of conscience is a sharp clash of duties, not a mild inconvenience.

In public it shows as illegal tenders, withheld FIRs, whip versus conviction, and the choice between recorded dissent and silence.

Introduction

A republic needs more than a clever reading of clauses. Part (a) asks for the spirit that makes the Constitution a living standard. Part (b) asks what happens when an inner sense of right clashes with an outer order, and how that clash shows on the street and in the office.

Body**(a) Constitutional morality**

- Constitutional morality is loyalty to the Constitution's values - liberty, equality, fraternity, dignity, and limited power - even when a crowd, a party, or a personal faith wants the opposite.
- Dr B. R. **Ambedkar** used the phrase in the Constituent Assembly to warn that democracy in India needed a habit of respecting the Constitution, not only a text.
- It is different from popular morality. A majority may wish to exclude a caste, a faith, or a gender; constitutional morality still protects that person under **Articles 14, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 25**.
- It is different from religious morality. A personal code may govern diet or marriage; a public officer may not enforce that code as if it were the Penal Code.

- The Supreme Court has invoked constitutional morality in cases on liberty and dignity, including **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)** on **Section 377**, and in debates on institutional propriety.
- **How one upholds it:** take the oath seriously; apply the same rule to friend and critic; write speaking orders; refuse an illegal direction; and correct oneself when a prejudice is pointed out.
- In office, uphold it by protecting a lonely complainant, by not using a bulldozer as a substitute for a notice, and by not asking a citizen's faith before a ration card.
- In civic life, uphold it by accepting an election loss, by not celebrating a mob, and by treating the opposition as legitimate.
- Institutions uphold it when the **Election Commission**, the Comptroller and Auditor General, and the judiciary act as umpires, not as factions.
- Education upholds it when schools teach the Preamble as a work rule, not as a recitation.
- Constitutional morality is therefore a daily practice of self-restraint by those who hold power.

(b) Crisis of conscience

- Conscience is the inner judgement of right and wrong, formed by upbringing, reason, faith, and experience.
- A crisis of conscience is a sharp conflict in which every available path wounds a value the person holds: obey an order and harm a person, or disobey and harm duty, career, or family.
- It is not ordinary inconvenience. It is the night when sleep breaks because the file and the self no longer fit.

How it manifests in the public domain

- A civil servant asked to transfer a honest subordinate, to pass an illegal tender, or to go slow on a ruling-party worker's crime faces a crisis: loyalty to the minister versus loyalty to the oath.
- A soldier or a police officer ordered to fire on an unarmed crowd, or to pick up a person without a record, faces the same split between command and the right to life.
- A doctor in a public hospital asked to hide a death, or to prefer a VIP over a dying poor patient, meets the crisis at the ward door.
- Whistle-blowers who use the **Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014** path, or who go to the **Central Vigilance Commission**, are people who resolved a crisis by speaking; those who resign quietly have resolved it by exit; those who obey and later drink have not resolved it at all.
- In politics, a legislator who must vote against a personal conviction because the whip is issued shows the crisis in the House.
- In society, a family that knows a child marriage is being planned, or a village that knows a lynching rumour is false, faces a public-domain crisis: speak and risk boycott, or stay silent and share the guilt.
- **Gandhi's** civil disobedience was a public method of living with conscience against an unjust law; for a sitting officer with coercive power, the lawful first path is written dissent and refusal of the illegal, not a private veto of every policy.
- **Manifestation is therefore visible:** delay, leak, resignation, suicide, a press conference, a riot, or a quiet signature. Ethics prefers the recorded refusal and the competent forum, not the leak that destroys a fair trial.
- Training should rehearse these crises so that the first time is not the live file.

Flow diagram

Constitutional morality -> Liberty equality fraternity

Liberty equality fraternity -> Oath and equal rule

Crisis of conscience -> Order versus inner right

Order versus inner right -> Written dissent

Order versus inner right -> Guilty obedience

Conclusion

Constitutional morality is fidelity to liberty, equality and dignity against crowd and clan. One upholds it by oath, equal rule and institutional restraint. A crisis of conscience is an inner clash of duties; in public it appears as illegal orders, silenced FIRs, and the choice between recorded dissent and guilty obedience.

Facts & figures

Ambedkar on constitutional morality

In the Constituent Assembly he argued that Indian democracy needed a constitutional morality of restraint and respect for institutions, not only a written text.

Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, 2018

The Supreme Court read down **Section 377**; the reasoning leaned on dignity, privacy and constitutional morality over majoritarian morality.

Preamble values

Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are the short map of the morality the Constitution asks of public power.

Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014

A statutory route to disclose public-interest wrongdoing; one lawful way to resolve a conscience crisis without a reckless leak.

All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968

Require integrity and devotion to duty; they do not require obedience to an illegal order.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-4/2019/a-what-is-meant-by-the-term-constitutional-morality-how-does-one-uphold-constitutional-morality-10-marks-b-what-is-meant-by-crisis-of-conscience-how-does-it-manifest-in-the-public-domain-10-marks/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com