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Q4

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

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · GS IV · 10 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

- (a) Welfare needs reason plus ethics: targeting, exclusion errors, dignity - examples
- (b) Mahavira's **anekantavada**, ahimsa, **aparigraha**, satya - relevance now

Revision summary

Social re-engineering through welfare needs hard thinking about targeting and exclusion, inside a frame of dignity.

Portal worship without a humane override can starve a rights-holder.

Mahavira taught ahimsa, satya, **aparigraha** and **anekantavada** - non-violence, truth, non-possessiveness and many-sidedness.

Those ideas check hate speech, corruption, ecological harm and one-sided files.

Examples from PDS, MGNREGA and forest housing show the mix of reason and ethics.

Introduction

A welfare scheme can **starve the right household** with a wrong list, or **humiliate** the right household with a wrong tone. Part (a) says the officer must **think** inside an **ethical frame**. Part (b) asks what **Mahavira** still teaches a noisy republic.

Body**(a) Reason and critical thinking in an ethical frame**

Reason is: Does this DBT reach the widow? Is the Aadhaar failure an **exclusion error**? Is the quarry a **false work**? **Ethics is:** Do not treat the beneficiary as a thief by default; do not leak her data; do not take a cut from the contractor. **Critical thinking is:** a dashboard can lie; a field visit is a moral act.

- **Examples.** PDS after NFSA: biometric failure that turns a hungry person away is a **rights failure**, not a tech glitch. An officer who only "follows the portal" without a **manual override**

with record has abandoned both reason and compassion. **MGNREGA**: a fake muster is a crime; delaying a genuine wage is also a **justice** failure. **Housing**: clearing a forest without **FRA** to show a "makan" target is **unethical social engineering**. **Scholarship**: a caste certificate mill is fraud; a **harassing** verification of a Dalit student is another wrong.

- **Kant**: treat persons as **ends**. **Rawls**: **design the scheme as if you might be the least advantaged**. The Gita's nishkama is not laziness; it is **not farming a photo** as the fruit.

(b) Teachings of Mahavira and today

Ahimsa is non-violence of **act, word and even intent**. **Today: communal speech, custodial cruelty, and ecological violence**. **Satya** is truth: an honest FIR, an honest EIA. **Aparigraha** is non-possessiveness: against corruption and consumer greed. **Anekantavada** is many-sidedness of truth: the administrative gold against **echo chambers** and against a file that sees only the ministry's side. **Syadvada** (conditional predication) trains **intellectual humility**. **Brahmacharya** in a public sense is **self-restraint**.

- **Relevance**: a polarised feed needs **anekantavada**; a climate crisis needs ahimsa toward the **future person**; a scam needs **aparigraha**. Jain thought is not only a diet. It is a **discipline of harm-reduction and many-sided seeing** - exactly what a district in conflict requires.

Flow diagram

Reason and field truth -> Welfare
 Dignity Kant Rawls -> Welfare
 Mahavira: ahimsa anekanta -> Reason and field truth

Conclusion

Welfare without critical, ethical reason becomes either leak or cruelty. Mahavira's non-violence, truth, non-greed and many-sided truth still train that reason for a civil servant.

Facts & figures

Anekantavada

The Jain teaching that reality has many aspects; no single view owns the whole truth.

Exclusion error

When a genuine poor household is left out of a list; ethically as serious as an inclusion of a rich ghost.

Aparigraha

Non-possessiveness; in public life it is the inner brake on bribes and on endless acquisition.