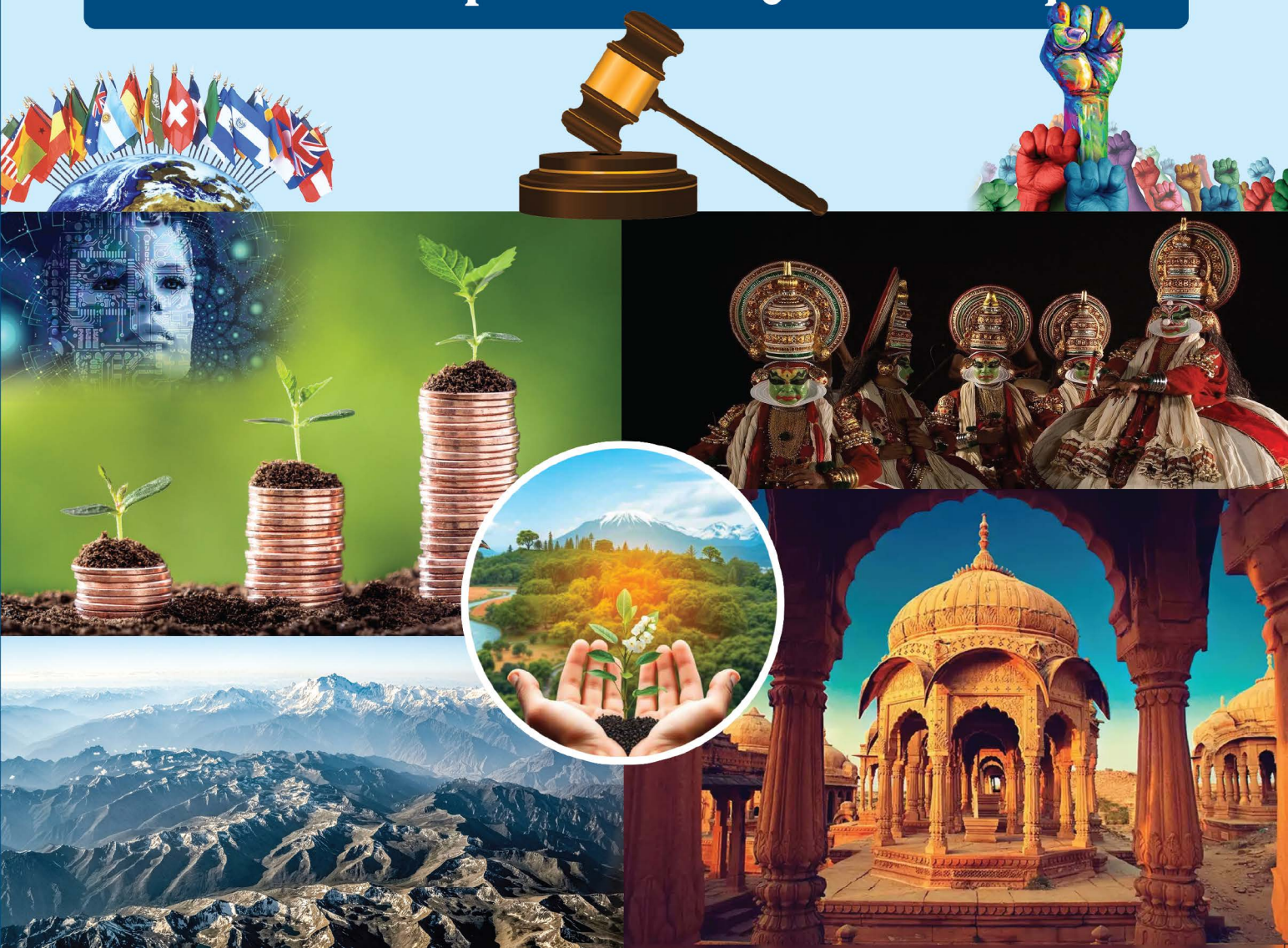


UPSC 6 YEARS
IAS Mains Q&A

GENERAL STUDIES

Paper I to IV

2019-2024 Topicwise PYQ Solved Papers



UPSC 6 YEARS
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GENERAL STUDIES
PAPER I to IV

2019-2024 Topicwise PYQ Solved Papers

The Papers have been Solved according to UPSC
Civil Services General Studies Syllabus. Also Useful
for All State Public Service Commissions'
and Other Examinations

Editor – N.N. Ojha
Solved by – Chronicle Editorial Team

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UPSC CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION

SYLLABUS

General Studies Paper-I

Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society

- ❖ Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.
- ❖ Modern Indian History from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.
- ❖ The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.
- ❖ Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.
- ❖ History of the world will include events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.- their forms and effect on the society.
- ❖ Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.
- ❖ Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.
- ❖ Effects of globalization on Indian society
- ❖ Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.
- ❖ Salient features of world's physical geography.
- ❖ Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India)
- ❖ Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location - changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

General Studies Paper-II

Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations

- ❖ Indian Constitution - historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
- ❖ Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.
- ❖ Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.
- ❖ Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.
- ❖ Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

- ❖ Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary, Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.
- ❖ Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.
- ❖ Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.
- ❖ Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- ❖ Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- ❖ Development processes and the development industry - the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
- ❖ Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
- ❖ Issues relating to poverty and hunger.
- ❖ Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.
- ❖ Role of civil services in a democracy.
- ❖ India and its neighborhood- relations.
- ❖ Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
- ❖ Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.
- ❖ Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

General Studies Paper-III

Technology, Economic Development, Biodiversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management

- ❖ Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.
- ❖ Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.
- ❖ Government Budgeting.
- ❖ Major crops cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.
- ❖ Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.
- ❖ Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.
- ❖ Land reforms in India.
- ❖ Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.
- ❖ Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways, etc.
- ❖ Investment models.
- ❖ Science and Technology - developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.
- ❖ Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.
- ❖ Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

- ❖ Disaster and disaster management.
- ❖ Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
- ❖ Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.
- ❖ Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.
- ❖ Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organized crime with terrorism.
- ❖ Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

General Studies Paper-IV

Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behaviour; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.
- ❖ Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker-sections.
- ❖ Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance.
- ❖ Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.
- ❖ Case Studies on above issues.



CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION, 2024

GENERAL STUDIES

PAPER-I

INDIAN HERITAGE & CULTURE

Q. Estimate the contribution of Pallavas of Kanchi for the development of art and literature of South India.

Ans: The Pallavas (4th to 9th century CE) fostered a cultural revolution that had a profound impact on the region and were instrumental in forming South India's literature and art. Both Tamil and Sanskrit civilizations flourished as a result of their sponsorship, which also had a long-lasting effect on literary and architectural traditions.

Contribution of Pallavas in the Development of Art and Literature

- ❖ The Pallavas fostered a bilingual atmosphere that aided in the development of Tamil and Sanskrit. In addition to ruling, monarchs like Mahendravarman I were also scholars who created works like the satirical play 'Mattavilasa Prahasana'. Literary growth was also aided by their inscriptions in both languages.
- ❖ The Pallavas' artistic inventions had a significant impact on other dynasties, especially the Cholas, who embraced their literary and architectural traditions and ensured the Dravidian aesthetic would endure.
- ❖ The Pallavas preserved important historical, theological, and cultural knowledge through manuscripts and stone inscriptions, which provided as an invaluable resource for researchers in the future.
- ❖ The rock-cut style found in places like Mahabalipuram was introduced and refined by the Pallavas, who were pioneers in temple architecture. Famous buildings with dynamic figures and elaborate carvings that convey deep stories are the Shore Temple and the Pancha Rathas.
- ❖ Appar and Sambandar, two significant religious and literary luminaries who influenced Tamil Shaiva Bhakti literature, were patronaged by Pallavas. Important intellectual works were produced during this time, enhancing Tamil devotional traditions.

Therefore, South Indian culture was influenced for a long time by the literary and artistic works of the Pallavas. Their intellectual and scholarly support guaranteed the survival of both Tamil and Sanskrit traditions, while their architectural achievements established the foundation for later temple styles.

Q. "Though the great Cholas are no more yet their name is still remembered with great pride because of their highest achievements in the domain of art and architecture". Comment.

Ans: The Cholas (9th–13th century CE) were among the greatest dynasties of South India, leaving behind an unparalleled legacy in art and architecture. Their achievements are still praised for their grandeur and artistic brilliance, especially in the areas of sculpting, bronze casting, and temple architecture. In addition to growing their empire, the Cholas left behind a rich architectural and cultural legacy that still exists today.

Major Contributions in Art and Architecture

(i) Temple Architecture

- The Cholas perfected the Dravidian style of temple architecture, evident in the Brihadeeswara Temple (Thanjavur), Gangaikonda Cholapuram, and Airavatesvara Temple, all UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- They introduced vimanas (tall temple towers), large gopurams, and intricately carved mandapas, setting benchmarks for later temple designs.

(ii) Bronze Sculptures

- The Chola period saw the flourishing of the lost-wax technique in bronze casting, producing iconic Nataraja (Dancing Shiva) and Parvati sculptures.
- These sculptures exemplify fluidity, grace, and spiritual symbolism, remaining highly valued in Indian and global art history.

(iii) Mural Paintings and Frescoes

- The Chola paintings at Brihadeeswara Temple depict deities, mythological narratives, and royal processions with intricate detail. These frescoes influenced later South Indian temple murals.

Bhakti Movement during the Chola Era

- ❖ During the Chola era, Shaivite Nayanars and Vaishnavite Alvars were given preference.
- ❖ For example, the hymn "Tiruktatotar tiruvantati," written by the Nayanara saint at the start of the 10th century, provides a thorough account of the lives of the 63 Nayanara saints.

CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION, 2024

GENERAL STUDIES

PAPER-II

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Q. The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China's political and economic dominance.' Explain this statement with examples.

Ans: The West's growing interest in India as an alternative to China in global supply chains and as a strategic ally, stems from China's increasing political and economic influence. India's robust economy, democratic values, and strategic location position it as a viable partner to counterbalance China.

Diversification of Supply Chains

- ❖ The West is increasingly looking to reduce dependence on China for manufacturing and trade. India's large and skilled labour force, alongside its growing infrastructure, makes it an attractive alternative.
- ♦ **Example:** The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes were launched to boost India's manufacturing capabilities in electronics and pharmaceuticals, encouraging companies like Apple and Samsung to shift production from China to India.

Strategic Partnership in the Indo-Pacific

- ❖ India's geographic location makes it a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region. The West sees India as a strategic ally to balance China's assertiveness in the region.
- ♦ **Example:** India's participation in the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), alongside the US, Japan, and Australia, aims to counter China's influence, especially in the South China Sea and the broader Indo-Pacific.

Economic Growth and Trade Opportunities

- ❖ India's rapidly growing economy presents numerous trade opportunities for Western countries. India's market potential and the recent India-EU Free Trade Agreement highlight India's growing economic influence.
- ♦ **Example:** The US-India Trade Policy Forum has facilitated increased trade in sectors like defense, technology, and renewable energy.

The West views India as a critical partner to counterbalance China's dominance. India's role in reshaping global supply chains and regional geopolitics enhances its strategic importance in the evolving international order.

Q. Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics.

Ans: India's diplomatic, economic, and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) have evolved in response to the changing geopolitical dynamics of the region. CARs, with their strategic location, abundant energy resources, and growing role in regional security, have become increasingly significant to India's foreign policy and global standing.

Diplomatic Relations

- ❖ **Strengthening Ties:** India has increasingly engaged with CARs through multilateral forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which provides a platform for regional cooperation, especially in countering terrorism.
- ♦ **Example:** India's active participation in the SCO-RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure) highlights its commitment to addressing regional security threats.
- ❖ **Cultural Diplomacy:** India has leveraged its soft power through cultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, and people-to-people ties to strengthen diplomatic relations.
- ♦ **Example:** Indian cultural centers in CARs promote educational exchanges, deepening historical ties with the region.

Economic Relations

- ❖ **Energy Security:** Central Asia is crucial to India's energy security. The region's natural resources, such as uranium, oil, and natural gas, are vital for India's growing energy needs.
- ♦ **Example:** India imports uranium from Kazakhstan, and projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline are intended to reduce dependency on traditional energy suppliers.

CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION, 2024

GENERAL STUDIES

PAPER-III

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Q. Examine the (pattern) and trend of public expenditure on social services in the post-reforms period in India. To what extent this has been in consonance with achieving the objective of inclusive growth?

Ans: Public expenditure on social services in India has been a crucial determinant of inclusive growth, particularly in the post-reforms period (post-1991 economic liberalization). With market-oriented policies, the government aimed to balance economic growth with social equity.

The pattern and trend of social sector spending have shown mixed results, impacting the objective of inclusive development.

Pattern and Trend of Public Expenditure on Social Services

- ❖ In the post-reforms period, public spending on social services (education, health, and social welfare) initially lagged due to fiscal consolidation measures. However, from the early 2000s, there was a significant increase, driven by welfare schemes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Rural Health Mission, and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- ❖ The share of social sector spending in total public expenditure has gradually increased, reaching around 7-8% of GDP in recent years. However, inter-state disparities persist, with some states allocating higher budgets for health and education while others lag behind.
- ❖ Additionally, expenditure efficiency remains a challenge due to leakages, corruption, and implementation bottlenecks.

Impact on Inclusive Growth

- ❖ While increased spending has improved literacy rates, life expectancy, and poverty alleviation, challenges remain in equitable distribution, quality of services, and last-mile delivery.
- ❖ The focus on targeted schemes has helped vulnerable groups, but broader structural issues like employment generation and healthcare access need further attention.

Therefore, public expenditure on social services has increased in the post-reforms period, but it has not fully achieved the objective of inclusive growth.

Strengthening governance, enhancing efficiency, and ensuring equitable resource allocation are crucial for making social spending more effective in fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

Q. What are the causes of persistent high food inflation in India? Comment on the effectiveness of the monetary policy of the RBI to control this type of inflation.

Ans: Persistent high food inflation in India is a major economic concern, affecting both consumers and policymakers. Food inflation is driven by structural, supply-side, and demand-side factors.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) primarily uses monetary policy to control inflation, but its effectiveness in addressing food inflation remains debatable due to the nature of price fluctuations in the agricultural sector.

Causes of Persistent High Food Inflation

- ❖ **Supply-Side Constraints:** Erratic monsoons, climate change impacts, and low agricultural productivity disrupt supply.
- ❖ **Structural Issues:** Weak supply chains, inadequate storage, and high post-harvest losses contribute to price volatility.
- ❖ **Rising Input Costs:** Increased prices of fertilizers, fuel, and labor add to production costs.
- ❖ **Changing Consumption Patterns:** Growing demand for protein-rich and perishable foods (milk, meat, vegetables) leads to sustained price increases.
- ❖ **Market Distortions:** Hoarding, speculative trading, and inefficiencies in distribution aggravate inflationary trends.
- ❖ **Global Factors:** Geopolitical tensions, commodity price shocks, and trade restrictions influence food prices.

Effectiveness of RBI's Monetary Policy

- ❖ The RBI primarily controls inflation through interest rate adjustments and liquidity management. However, food inflation is largely supply-driven, making monetary policy less effective.
- ❖ While higher interest rates can curb demand-side inflation, they do not address structural bottlenecks.

CIVIL SERVICES (MAIN) EXAMINATION, 2024

GENERAL STUDIES

PAPER-IV

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Q. The application of Artificial Intelligence as a dependable source of input for administrative rational decision-making is a debatable issue. Critically examine the statement from the ethical point of view.

Ans. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as the simulation of human intelligence in machines to perform tasks like learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. It is increasingly being used in administrative decision-making to enhance efficiency and rationality. However, its application raises significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding its reliability and implications on human values.

Merits of using AI

- ❖ **Evidence based Policy Making & Implementation:** AI enhances administrative efficiency by processing large data volumes swiftly, minimizing errors, and providing actionable insights for evidence-based policymaking.
 - ♦ **Example:** Automated data validation in tax filings reduces discrepancies.
- ❖ **Economic Efficiency & Precision Forecasting:** It reduces costs through automation, ensures consistent decisions, and aids scenario forecasting, such as urban planning.
 - ♦ **Example:** AI tools predict resource needs during disasters, aiding effective allocation.
- ❖ **Transparency:** Properly designed AI systems also improve transparency, as seen in blockchain-integrated public record-keeping tools.

Concerns of using AI

- ❖ **Bias in Algorithms:** AI systems may perpetuate or amplify biases present in their training data.
 - ♦ **Example:** Discriminatory outcomes in credit scoring or recruitment systems.
- ❖ **Accountability and Transparency:** Decisions made by AI can lack transparency due to “black box” algorithms.
 - ♦ **Example:** Autonomous systems in judicial sentencing raise accountability issues.
- ❖ **Erosion of Human Values:** Excessive reliance on AI may undermine empathy, discretion, and the human touch in governance.
 - ♦ **Example:** Automated welfare disbursement systems might fail to consider unique individual hardships.

- ❖ **Privacy and Data Security:** Extensive use of personal data raises ethical concerns regarding surveillance and misuse.

Way Forward

- ❖ Thus, addressing concerns of AI use requires maintaining human oversight in critical decisions, implementing ethical guidelines for accountability, and ensuring transparency through explainable systems to build trust.

While AI offers significant potential in administrative decision-making, its ethical implications must be addressed through balanced integration of technology and human values. *Answer Source: Lexicon 2024 Edition – Page No. 498*

Q. “Ethics encompasses several key dimensions that are crucial in guiding individuals and organizations towards morally responsible behaviour.” Explain the key dimensions of ethics that influence human actions. Discuss how these dimensions shape ethical decision-making in the professional context.

Ans. Ethics refers to a set of moral principles guiding human behaviour and decision-making. It encompasses key dimensions that influence individual and organizational actions and play a crucial role in shaping professional ethics.

Key Dimensions of Ethics

- ❖ **Moral Values:** It defines what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ – based on cultural, societal, or personal beliefs.
 - ♦ **Example:** Honesty and fairness in workplace interactions ensure trust and integrity.
- ❖ **Normative Ethics:** It establishes guidelines for acceptable behaviour, focusing on duty and consequences.
 - ♦ **Example:** Adhering to confidentiality policies in professions like healthcare.
- ❖ **Accountability:** It ensures individuals and organizations take responsibility for their actions.
 - ♦ **Example:** Transparent reporting in financial auditing builds stakeholder confidence.
- ❖ **Justice and Fairness:** It promotes equity and impartiality in decision-making processes.
 - ♦ **Example:** Equal pay for equal work in the corporate sector ensures fairness.