

UNIT 85 – UPSC - Ethics in Private and Public Relationships

Humans have diverse role in society. The role playing defines their role in society. With each social role, one adopts one's behaviour changes befitting the expectation of one's own self and of others (Reddy, et, al., 2015). Ethics is related to the concepts like right or wrong, or good or bad human behaviour in different social and organizational settings. In specific term, it is set of criteria by which the decisions are being made about what is wrong (Gower, 2003). Since ancient times, many different views about ethics were made. Utilitarians theoretical models advocated that the ethical act is one that produces the greatest possible balance of good over bad for anyone affected. This is also called Robin Hood ethics.



Eminent theorists of utilitarian, John Stuart Mill believed that neither the intent behind the action nor the fundamental rightness or wrongness of the action is at issue, only the consequences. In the view of people, this approach often results in the position that the end justifies the means. It appears that the principle might be useful way to distribute the greatest good to greatest number, if and only if the decision-makers are able to make an accurate judgment about the potential outcomes and that those outcomes go beyond the self-interest of those making the moral choice (Parsons, 2008). Knowing this, it looks that many PR approaches are utilitarian in nature. Conversely, deontology experts asserted that certain principles are right or wrong regardless to their consequences. A moral person not only must achieve just results through acts but also must employ the proper means and act with good intentions.

Immanuel Kant contended that moral principles could be known as a result reason alone, for him our actions are moral only when they are done out of our sense of duty to be fair and honest. These philosophies are often disparaged as representing the truth as an absolute rule even if it leads one to ignore situations in which lying might as well be justified. In business, it is not about choosing between right or wrong, but about choosing between two rights or two obligations. Law and moralities are related, but they are certainly not the same thing. Organizations that follow law do nothing more than clearly look out for their own needs without considering the possibilities that their responsibilities to their communities might be morally rather than simply legally dictated.

Private Relationship:

In role playing, an individual's private relationship such as marriage, family, kinship, friendship differ from his/her public relationship such as relationship of politicians, bureaucrats with people at large, and a doctor's relationship with his patients. Private relationships are more intimate relationships (Reddy, et, al., 2015).

Attributes of private relationship (Reddy, et, al., 2015):

1. Private relationships are often given or inherited.
2. They are relatively permanent.
3. More tolerance for imperfections.
4. Expectations of loyalty, love, affection from one's partner.

Ethics in private relationship are generally directed by individual virtues, universal human values, religion, social norms and law of land. Therefore they comprise limited influencing factor. Ethic makes for action that one can defend publicly and comfortably. These actions are those that not only owns oneself but also the community can live with (Reddy, et, al., 2015). Ethics in private relationship are also checked by private religious law. Individual familial and community obligations have long been written into law and supported by serious sanctions from ancient time to today's inheritance divorce, marriage and other law. In India, along with moral codes, religious institutions and constitution provision governs ethical issues in private relationship (Reddy, et, al., 2015).

Ethics in Public Relationships

Public relationship are more instrumental such as organizational colleagues, politicians, strangers, and other outside of one's relatively narrow circle of intimacy (Reddy, et, al., 2015). Public Relation is a management function that engages monitoring and evaluating public attitudes and maintaining mutual relations and understanding between an organization and its public. Public could include shareholders, government, consumers, employees and the media. It is the action of getting along with people we constantly come in touch with. Public relation officers guarantee internal unity in the company by maintaining a clear communications network between the management and personnel. Its major objective is to improve channels of communication and to establish new ways of setting up a two-way flow of information and understanding.

Private and public relationship (Source: Reddy, et, al., 2015)

Private relationship	Public relationship
Family	Teacher- Student
Friends	Politician- citizen

Oneself	Co-worker- Colleagues
	Doctor- Patients
	Bureaucrats-Citizen

Subject of Public relations is a management function that assists organization to successfully deal with challenges and compete effectually in the competitive and global age. To be competent and efficient, specialists must develop holistic skills and knowledge. It is well understood that human beings can never live in isolation. They need someone to talk, and share their views. In this way, they practice public relations from childhood. Basically Public Relations are the practice of doing the right thing of performing and communicating the substance of that very performance. The distinctive thing about public relations is that it is deliberate. Theoretically it can be said that public relations are the management function that evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of the organization, and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and recognition.

Public relation is often understood as an occupation that is always working behind the scenes, gliding in and out troubled situations. But Public relation is also often considered to be a corporate conscience which fits well with the business ethics of social responsibility. There are code of professional standards for the practice of public relation to meet goals. Such as

1. To provide behavioural guidelines to its members.
2. To educate management on public relations standards.
3. To distinguish public relations professionals from those individuals (Gower, 2003).

Characteristics of public relationship (Reddy, et, al., 2015):

1. In public, there are people who are different from dealing person.
2. Public relationships are likely to be instrumental.
3. Engagements due to work or benefit.
4. Expectation for respect.
5. Particular kind of role to be played in public relationship therefore responsible for what person says.
6. Accountability vis a vis what person says and person does.

Ethical in public relationship are governed by power. They comprise contradictory values and influence ethical decisions in public relationships (Reddy, et, al., 2015). It is well recognized that major fact of professional survival is personal integrity such as, follow the sincere and moral standard. Integrity is also important because it is necessary to build self-confidence. It is significant to follow ethical standard in public setting to sustain authority, develop confidence among people about the system, and to accomplish social wellbeing of society (Reddy, et, al., 2015). According to Dwight and Waldo, there are 12 areas of ethical claim on public officials. These are as under:

1. Constitution
2. Law
3. Nation
4. Country or people
5. Democracy
6. Organization-Bureaucratic norms
7. Profession and professionalism
8. Family and friends
9. Self, middle range, collectivises, such as class, race, union, interest group, and church.
10. Public interest and general welfare
11. Humanity
12. Religion or God

There are other ethical values set by independent sector such as:

1. Commitment to public goods.
2. Accountability to the public.
3. Commitment beyond the law.
4. Respect for the worth and dignity of individual.
5. Inclusiveness and social justice.
6. Respect of pluralism and diversity.
7. Transparency, integrity and honesty.
8. Responsible stewardship of resources.
9. Commitment to excellence and to maintain the public trust (Reddy, et, al., 2015).

It is important emphasize that ethic codes are not widespread, because it cannot be expected that everyone, regardless to the situation and culture, abides by the same moral standards. It can be difficult to balance the interests of all of these publics with the interests of the organization itself. Ethics need to have main role in communication because unprincipled communications are not as obvious as false advertising. Proper selection of words and good communicator can affect other, change their expectation and behaviour. Good strategies can create an influential message that tells people to take action. Skills and knowledge, as that are very powerful and easy to abuse (Rouse Michael and Sandra, 2005). Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life:

Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life:

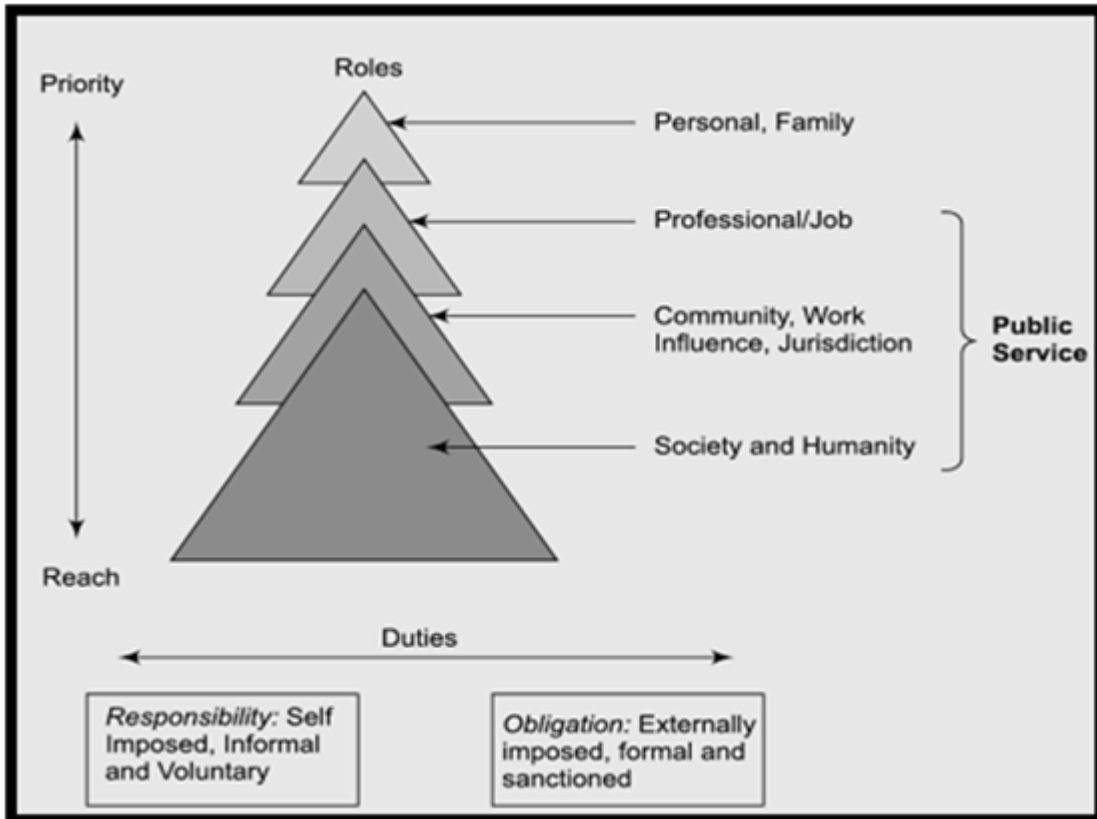
Selflessness:	Public officials should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends
Integrity:	Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
Objectivity:	In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make their choices on merit.
Accountability:	Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
Openness:	Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest demands it.
Honesty:	Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
Leadership:	Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The power of public relation to form opinions is one of the most convincing reasons to consider duties to society, and to take care not to abuse that power by dishonest use of manipulation. Public relation enhances an organization's status and are, at the same time, its morality. It is a very powerful position that they hold and also face different challenges as misleading information, influence of management actions, and promotion of inferior products, discrimination or political influence. Public Relation Ethics are the knowledge, understanding and reasoning to questions of right or wrong behaviour in the professional practice of public relations (Fox, Renata, 2006).

In public relationship, public officials need to cope with five primary cluster of roles which are (Reddy, et, al., 2015):

1. His role in his personal and family sphere.
2. His role as a professional.
3. His role for the job.
4. His role towards his jurisdiction and work influence.
5. His role towards society and humanity at large.

Public servant must have to adjust with cluster of roles. Each role in the cluster has different concerns, values, and standards of behaviours. Each is marked by mix of ethical claim. Some duties are responsibilities and informal. Others are obligation and formal (Reddy, et, al., 2015).



To summarize, ethics are vital for society to maintain harmony. In private relationships, ethics are confined to close relations such as family. Ethics in Public relations is the practice to manage the spread of information between an individual and an organization. Public relations may include an organization or individual gaining exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment. The main goal of public relations is to inform the public, prospective customers, investors, partners, personnel and other stakeholders and ultimately persuade them to maintain a certain view about the organization, its leadership, products, or political decisions. It includes planning communications campaigns, writing news releases and other content for news, working with the press, organizing interviews for company spokespeople, and website.