GOVERNMENT



What is ethical leadership?

Introduction

Ethical leadership is the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making.

Ethical leadership in government is the bedrock upon which a just and transparent society is built. In an era when public trust in institutions is critical, ethical leadership is a driving factor behind good governance. Leaders that promote ethics serve as beacons, pushing nations toward equitable policies, encouraging accountability, and strengthening the social contract between citizens and the state. Ethical leaders negotiate governance's difficulties with integrity, fostering fairness and justice while preserving the rule of law. Their adherence to moral principles not only protects public trust, but also generates an atmosphere suitable to long-term development and societal well-being. In the crucible of government, where decisions affect the lives of millions, ethical leadership is more than a virtue; it is the foundation of a resilient, responsible, and peaceful society. As we face modern-day difficulties, the need for ethical leadership resounds as an unstoppable force altering the course of nations and defending the democratic ideals on which they are founded. (Mehreen Malik, 2022)

So, what are some of the key characteristics of ethical leadership?

Ethical leaders need to possess key characteristics in order to use them in for proper leadership and governance. They need to be considerate and thoughtful. They prioritize well-being of citizens and public interest over personal progression. They are always willing to demonstrate humility, concern for others and honesty in their dealings. They fulfil commitments, strive for equity and equality among all people without discrimination. Ethical leaders act with kind and respect, especially towards their subordinates. They listen to their problems and grievances, therefore avoiding dictatorial and arrogant behaviour. They are always willing to go ahead to offer support and assistance to individuals who may find their job duties challenging. In the context of government, leaders act as public servants, who prioritize the needs and requirements of citizens. They, therefore, should cater for the needs of the public employing adequate strategies to ensure effective public service.

Ethical leaders demonstrate courage in the face of conflicts, disputes and challenging situations. They are always able to face difficulties confidently, implementing effective time management to handle demanding roles. Courage also involves standing for what is right and proper in the best interest of the public. Ethical leaders closely align with the ethical values, principles and norms. They emphasize the importance of following ethical values and norms in all government operations, projects, reports and meetings. Values-based leadership strengthen ethical values within government institution.

Ethical leaders also maintain positive mindset, overcoming disappointments and failures by identifying pros and cons. They implement policies and procedures to address challenges without forgetting to consider factors such as finances, intelligence, aptitude, flexibility and rationality. Ethical government leaders use solid judgement in practical matters(prudence) and persevere in their efforts for the public good. Even in difficult conditions, they shun unethical activities and continue to take necessary actions to attain government objectives. Ethical government leaders are honest with themselves and others. They learn from their mistakes, set a good example and take responsibility for major decisions. Integrity based approaches describe administrative values, goals, objectives and patterns of thought and conduct. Ethical leaders stay current on improvements and developments within the government institution. They attend training and seminars to increase awareness and knowledge ensuring that the staff have the tools they need to provide successful public service. For ethical leaders to accomplish their commitments, they use excellent time management to fulfil their responsibilities balancing the demands of public service with personal and family obligations. Efficient time management adds to job happiness and effective governance. (Kapur, 2018)

What are the impacts of ethical leadership in government?

Ethical leadership is able to build public trust and confidence. When people or citizens in a country believe that government officials are operating with integrity and are adhering to ethical standards, they are more likely to trust decisions and policies implemented by their leaders which builds a stable and functioning democracy. Moreover, ethical leadership reinforces the importance and value of rule of law. Leaders who adhere to ethical standards are more inclined to follow juridical frameworks and constitutional principles. This will contribute to stability of legal institutions and fair application of law. When leaders are ethical, they promote accountability and transparency in government operations. They are transparent about their decision-making process, financial transactions, and policy formation, which helps to combat corruption, and this keeps the government accountable to the people it serves. Ethical leadership ensures that leaders prioritize social justice and equity. They make an effort to ensure that government acts and policies are fair and just, and that no segment of the population is discriminated against. This commitment to justice helps ensure inclusivity and harmony among the public. Ethical leaders set the tone for the entire government agency. Employee behaviour is greatly influenced when leaders display ethical behaviour. Employee morale, commitment and productivity tend to improve in an atmosphere built in integrity and ethical values. And proper ethical standards. Leaders that are ethical make judgments based on principles rather than selfish benefit. As a result, policies that reflect the broader interests of society rather than the interests of a select few become more effective and sustainable. Ethical decision-making benefits the nation's long-term well-being. Ethical leadership improves a country's global reputation. Countries with

ethical administrations are more likely to attract foreign investment, cooperation, and excellent diplomatic ties. Ethical leadership helps to maintain a positive image on the global stage. Ethical leaders assess how government actions will affect the environment, economy, and society in the long run. They are more inclined to seek sustainable development goals that consider future generations' demands as well as the preservation of natural resources. (Dimitrov Peteraf, n.d.)

What are some of the challenges in Practicing Ethical Leadership?

Ethical leaders often face a lot of challenges when disseminating their services with honesty and fairness characteristics that they possess. Ethical leaders in government are frequently faced with dilemmas regarding ethics originating from divergent personal and corporate ideals. When a leader's personal values clash with those prescribed by the organization, implementing corporate values can result in discontent and frustration on the part of both the leader and subordinates. Striking a balance between personal views and organizational ethics necessitates deliberate decision-making and good communication. Leaders must manage these ethical problems by encouraging open dialogue, encouraging diversity of thought, and finding methods to match personal convictions with overarching public service aims. Managing ethical dilemmas in government leadership requires developing a culture that acknowledges and respects different points of view while ensuring that decisions prioritize the public interest and adhere to organizational values, reducing potential unhappiness within the organization. (Kabeyi, 2018)

Another challenge they face is resistance and criticism. Resistance and criticism present significant obstacles for ethical government leaders. Leaders may face opposition from individuals who disagree with the selected course of action when implementing ethical principles or making decisions that affect stakeholders. This opposition might be attributed to differing perspectives, competing interests, or a lack of awareness about the ethical reasoning behind decisions. Critics may question the leader's decisions, thereby generating a hostile climate and weakening the leader's legitimacy. To navigate these hurdles, good communication, transparency, and the ability to express the ethical concepts that guide decisions are required. Ethical leaders must engage dissenting views constructively, cultivating a culture that embraces multiple perspectives while emphasizing the importance of ethical standards. Ethical leaders may reduce criticism, develop trust, and foster a common commitment to the ideals guiding government actions by responding to opposition with empathy and clarity. (Rahaman et al., 2020)

What is the role of communication in ethical leadership?

Fair treatment, role clarity, power sharing, people orientation, integrity, ethical direction, and concern for sustainability are all manifestations of open and honest communication in ethical leadership. Transparent communication, ethical leaders recognize, provides a symmetrical internal communication system within the organization. This approach, which is defined by fairness and clarity, is critical in properly engaging people.

Open communication serves as a conduit for creating and reinforcing trust among team members in the context of ethical leadership. Fair treatment and power sharing contribute to leaders' perceived credibility, developing trustworthiness and expertise. Employees feel informed and respected in a workplace where honesty and integrity are valued.

Furthermore, the study reveals that symmetrical communication functions as a bridge between ethical leader behaviours and increased employee engagement. When leaders communicate information honestly and sincerely prioritize their employees' problems, they help to foster a positive company culture. This underlines the need of open and honest communication in ethical leadership as a vital driver of employee satisfaction, trust, and organizational success. (Men, 2015)

Effective communication is a vital tool for addressing and resolving ethical concerns in government leadership. According to views supplied by business executives and senior government workers, communication skills are essential for managerial success. Prioritizing persons with strong communication skills becomes critical when choosing government officials, realizing that excellent communication is critical for persuasion, responsibility, strategic collaboration, establishing a value system, and offering support to teams.

Government leaders, like their commercial counterparts, spend a significant amount of time engaging with teams and stakeholders. Leaders must be able to communicate effectively in order to encourage, inspire, and manage teams in order to achieve both governmental and organizational goals. Leaders express ethical requirements through clear and accurate communication, ensuring that team members understand and adhere to the government's principles.

Leaders must use excellent communication to articulate and reinforce ethical principles when dealing with ethical concerns within government institutions. Transparent communication makes it easier to communicate ethical requirements, provides assistance on ethical decision-making, and develops an environment in which public servants feel supported and inspired to act ethically. As a result, good communication is a pillar of ethical leadership in government, enabling leaders to navigate and address ethical challenges through influential and honest discourse. (Luthra, 2015)

Case Study of ethical leader

On August 8, 2017, David Maraga, a Seventh-day Adventist Christian and Chief Justice of Kenya's Supreme Court, made global headlines when he decided that President Uhuru Kenyatta's re-election had been tainted by "irregularities and illegalities." The Supreme Court ordered a new election within 60 days due to the fraudulent election and subsequent overturning of the results. In Kenya, trust in the justice system is generally poor. Because of the country's lengthy history of corruption, many citizens regard political leaders as dishonest. Many elected officials in positions of dignity and trust abuse their positions of authority, using their influence for personal benefit rather than the betterment of the country. During the 2017 election, for example, even the president's opponent, Raila Odinga, did not believe that the tainted election results would be reversed. Maraga has a reputation for being reasonable and fair; his folks are aware of and respect his lack of corruption. According to Maraga (2019), public opinion is "the greatest thing I could ever have." Maraga has also been known to let his faith guide his art. He is notable for never hearing a case on the Sabbath; also, when accused of receiving a bribe, he went on live television and swore on a Bible that it was not so.

Maraga's election ruling in 2017 was the first of its sort in Africa. As a result, many Kenyans hailed what they saw as a triumph for the country's institutions. Regardless of their political beliefs, many people expressed a desire for the election to be a clean, transparent process rather than for their candidate to win. "We're heading towards the right direction," said one Kenyatta fan, David Kiema, who backed the court's judgment despite the fact that it hurt his presidential candidate. Kiema saw this election as an opportunity for Kenya to set a good example for other African countries. "They'll say, 'Kenya has done it, why not us?" he went on to remark. "We're one step ahead of others in Africa, and we're proud of it". Maraga's beliefs undoubtedly influenced his decision to run in the national election. As he prepared to deliver the verdict, he said, "The greatness of any nation is determined by its fidelity to the Constitution, adherence to the rule of law, and, above all, fear of God". On the Sabbath after the verdict, Justice Maraga went to church as normal, accompanied by his wife, Yucabeth Nyaboke. His local Seventh-day Adventist Church members were happy to be associated with such a man. "I am sure he (Maraga) slept peacefully last night knowing that he made a judgment in accordance with what God had asked him and the law," one worshipper said. "I am a proud Adventist who is honoured to be associated with him.(Cincala et al., 2019)

How can we develop ethical leadership in government institutions?

It is critical to utilize tactics that resonate with the specific issues and dynamics of public administration in order to create ethical leadership in government. The methodology described above, which involves video-based case-scenarios drawn from regular public administration experiences, can be a valuable instrument for developing ethical leadership.

Realistic Scenario-Based Training: Government personnel should get realistic scenario-based training that addresses specific difficulties and conflicts that arise in public administration. This method improves their ability to detect and address role-related issues, fostering a more sophisticated knowledge of ethical considerations in real-world circumstances.

Models of Structured Decision-Making: Implementing structured decision-making models is critical for analysing the nature of government ethics challenges. This allows authorities to weigh multiple standards and beliefs while making ethical decisions. The use of such models ensures a successful outcome.

A diversified approach is required to promote ongoing progress in ethical leadership across government institutions:

- Establishing New Standards of Ethics and Integrity: Establishing new standards of ethics
 and integrity should be understood as a continuous process of gaining institutional knowledge.
 To design, execute, and internalize ethical norms as part of organizational culture, government
 organizations must take a consistent, comprehensive, critical, and long-term approach.
- 2. **Evaluation and Adaptation:** To measure the success of training approaches, regular evaluations, such as the one conducted in Bulgaria, should be conducted. Governments should invest in techniques and instruments that may be used to assess the impact of ethical leadership training, enabling for continual improvement based on evaluation outcomes.
- 3. **Cultural Integration:** Ethical leadership should be infused into organizational culture so that it becomes the norm in how things are done. This necessitates consistent alignment of institutional structures, management practices, consequences, and incentives to support and maintain ethical standards.
- 4. **Ongoing Training and Development:** Government personnel should participate in chances for ongoing learning cantered on ethics and integrity. Training sessions, workshops, and seminars on a regular basis help keep officials up to date on changing ethical concerns and effective leadership techniques. (Whitton, n.d.)

Conclusion

Finally, ethical government leadership is essential for establishing a just and transparent society. To manage problems and serve the public good, leaders must exemplify fundamental characteristics such as consideration, courage, devotion to ideals, positive thinking, and persistence. The effects of ethical leadership are considerable, as they foster public trust, reinforce the rule of law, promote accountability, and improve global reputation. However, ethical leaders encounter problems such as conflicting personal and organizational values, as well as the need to deal with resistance and criticism. Transparency, trust, and employee engagement are all enhanced by effective communication. Examining Chief Justice David Maraga's case demonstrates the transforming power of ethical leadership in Kenya's Supreme Court. Realistic scenario-based training organized decision-making models, and a commitment to continual review, cultural integration, and training are critical tools for developing ethical leadership in government. Collectively, these activities lead to resilient, responsible, and ethical government that benefits society.

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