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## Mains Practice Questions

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**Q.** What do you understand by ethical responsibility? What are the commonly recognised ethical responsibilities of government servants? (150 Words)

16 Sep, 2021 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

### **Approach**

- Start with explaining in brief about the term ethical responsibility.
- Discuss the commonly recognised ethical responsibilities for the government servants.
- Conclude suitably.

### **Introduction**

Ethical responsibility is the ability to recognize, interpret and act upon multiple principles and values according to the standards within a given field and/or context.

It reflects the organisation's notion of right and proper business behavior. These responsibilities are obligations that transcend legal requirements. Organisations are not required but expected to behave ethically.

### **Body**

#### **Commonly Recognised Ethical Responsibility**

- **Ethical and Sensitive Conduct:** The functions of government servants involve exercise of authority and the provision of services.
  - In discharging these functions, government servants should be considerate, friendly, polite, correct and accommodating to the public.
  - They should not divulge purely private matters; and should protect the privacy of citizens.
  - They should be sensitive to the needs, values, norms and expectations of people.
  - They should not behave in any way which infringes on human dignity.
  - They should perform their duties ethically.
- **Loyalty:** Employees' duty of loyalty implies that employees must act in the public interest.
  - They should not criticize the government in public.

- **Duty of Obedience:** This duty casts the following responsibilities on government servants.
  - They should comply with the legal rules and ethical guidelines that apply to their work.
  - They have to follow orders issued by superiors.
  - They need not follow orders to do anything illegal or unethical.
  - They can analyse matters thoroughly before the government takes a decision.
  - Once a decision is taken, it has to be implemented swiftly and efficiently within the established parameters, regardless of the public official's own views.
- **Duty of Efficiency:**
  - They have to use public resources economically.
  - They should prevent misuse and waste of public money and of office space, equipment and materials.
  - While achieving programme objectives, they have to maintain balance between efficiency, quality and good administrative practice. Efficiency should not be placed above important administrative principles.
  - Government officials have to create inclusive working conditions.
  - Government officers should create a healthy working atmosphere which prevents work related stress and burn out.
- **Transparency:**
  - Government officers need to promote transparency towards (a) citizenry; (b) within their own ranks; and between (c) different administrative branches.
  - They should diligently follow the RTI Act.
- **Impartiality:**
  - Public officials shall not behave in a manner that could impair faith in their impartiality.
  - A public official shall not decide any case in which he or his family members are either directly or indirectly interested. Public officials should not act in matters where their perceived interest can impair public trust in them.
  - There are other situations which lead to conflicts of interest or allegations of conflicts. These can affect their exercise of independence of judgement. Such situations need to be avoided.

## **Conclusion**

There is a heavy ethical responsibility on the public servants because they occupy positions of power, handle huge amounts of public funds, and their decisions have a wide-ranging impact on society and environment.