



Mains Marathon

Day 37: What exactly do you mean by empathy? Discuss how it is an important characteristic for present Civil Servant. (150 Words)

16 Aug 2022 | GS Paper 4 | Theoretical Questions

Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Start the answer by defining the term empathy.
- Mention the importance of empathy for civil servants.
- Conclude Suitably.

Answer:

Empathy is the capacity to understand and share another's state of mind and emotions and is often characterised as the ability to "put oneself into another's shoes".

- Empathy is both a cognitive and an emotional skill, it can be used in two ways-
 - Firstly, it can mean a "thinking" response, or the ability to think about and describe how another being feels.
 - Secondly, it can also refer to the ability to "feel" and to experience another person's or animal's feelings and circumstances.
- Empathy can be exemplified by Mahatma Gandhi's advice to anyone who was in doubt if an action was good or not, was to put oneself in the situation of the poorest of the poor in the country and see how a particular policy and programme will impact him or her.

Importance for Civil Servants:

- Empathy is related to a sense of kinship and concern for others that is why it allows civil servants to feel connected and relatable to their problems.
- It is because of empathy and concern that civil servants exhibit their character as it is all about evincing interest in the welfare of human beings.
- Civil servants without empathy, may not survive for long because empathetic character induces some sort of belongingness in the citizens.
- Empathetic behaviour and belongingness naturally leads to personal affection which in turn solidifies the bond between the administrator and the administered.

Empathy, a term often used for a kind of concern for others, is one of the most important virtues and must be developed in all of us. It has greater implications because when empathetic people see someone in pain, they feel it with them instead of feeling it for them.

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