



Ethical Mode of Governance for India

For Mains: Ethical Mode of Governance for India

Why in News?

The Former Governor of West Bengal has spoken about the significance of ethical governance in India.

What is Ethical Governance?

- Ethical governance is a **way of governing which infuses high standards of moral values** and behaviour in the governance process.
 - **For example**, a bureaucrat is bound to serve the people that come to his office, but he couldn't be penalized if he doesn't make provisions for a glass of water to an elderly couple who might be tired after waiting too long in the queue. Those will be the ethics of public service and altruism that will make him do that.
 - Similarly, an official should allow disbursement of [Public Distribution System \(PDS\)](#) ration to beneficiaries particularly for women and senior citizens, even if there is a failure of Aadhaar identification due to mismatch of biometric data. It is important to understand that denial of such services may cost a person his life. Hence, **compassion and human dignity forms the basis of ethical governance.**
- **Ethical governance is the much-needed approach for establishing trust** and mutual cooperation between citizens and public servants.

What are the Key Elements of Ethical Governance?

- Ethical governance means **governance based on a certain value premise**, which is also “good”. For example, **probity, integrity, compassion, empathy, responsibility**, social justice etc. without which ethical issues can't be upheld.
 - **Probity would ensure that the sole purpose of administration is public interest**, thereby devoid of any wrongdoing.
 - **Responsibility**, not merely accountability, ensures the inculcation of internal accountability for every act of omission or commission in the form of judgement based on one's conscience. If this is attained then there would be no question of corruption.
- In order for a nation to compete globally, **eliminating corruption is not just a moral imperative, but also an economic necessity.**
- **Rule of law should be one of the most important elements of ethical governance** in order to eliminate corruption and reduce bureaucratic delays.
 - Rule of law checks arbitrariness in governance, thereby reducing chances of misusing discretion.

What are the Ethical Issues in the Indian Governance?

- **A Violation of Authority or Rank Position:** Officials make actions that are out of their position, responsibilities and rights that, finally, **cause damage to the interests of the state or certain**

citizens.

- **Negligence:** A public official either does not perform his professional responsibilities or performs them in a delinquent manner, causing damage to the state or community.
- **Bribery:** Corruption and bribery have become acceptable parts of society, lubricating the wheels of commerce.
- **Complacency:** There is a core of exceptionally hardworking, dedicated and conscientious officers, but they are overwhelmingly outnumbered by the complacent, who are obsessed with status, rank, and emoluments and addicted to habits of personal luxury.
- **Patronization:** The post-retirement assignment of senior officers to Regulatory bodies and other important posts is largely done on patronage with no set guidelines.
- **Administrative Secrecy:** The purpose of administrative secrecy is to serve the public interest while maintaining private interests. Therefore, transparency is one of the most important virtues of ethical governance
- **Nepotism:** Neglecting the merit principle by appointing relatives or friends to public positions may degrade the quality of public services.
- **Lack of Compassion:** Indifference towards the feelings or the convenience of individuals and by an obsession with the binding and inflexible authority of departmental decisions, precedents, arrangements or forms, regardless of how badly or with what injustice they work in individual cases.

Way Forward

- **Effective Laws:** Effective laws will require civil servants to give reasons for their official decisions.
- **New Management Approaches:** To encourage all public officials and civil servants to deal positively with corruption and unethical practice when encountered.
- **Strengthening the Whistleblower Protection Regime:** Whistle-blower' protection law to protect appropriate 'public interest disclosures' of wrongdoing by officials.
- **Ethics Audits:** To identify risks to the integrity of the most important processes.
- **Second ARC Recommendation:** In Its wide-ranging recommendations, it has suggested partial state funding of elections; tightening of anti-defection law and code of ethics for ministers, legislatures, judiciary and civil servants.
- **To Check Corruption:** Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) proposed tightening the provision of Prevention of Corruption Act,1988 making corrupt public servants liable for paying damages, confiscation of property illegally acquired and speedy trials.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Distinguish between “Code of ethics” and “Code of conduct” with suitable examples. **(2018)**

Q. Explain the process of resolving ethical dilemmas in Public Administration. **(2018)**

Q. Suppose the Government of India is thinking of constructing a dam in a mountain valley bond by forests and inhabited by ethnic communities. What rational policy should it resort to in dealing with unforeseen contingencies. **(2018)**

[Source: HT](#)