



Mains Practice Question

Q. How can civil servants promote integrity and probity in public life? (150 words)

16 Mar, 2023 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Start your answer by briefly explaining the importance of integrity and probity.
- Discuss ways to promote integrity and probity.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- Integrity and probity are essential elements of public life. They ensure that the government is **accountable, transparent, and efficient** in delivering services to the citizens. Civil servants play a critical role in upholding these values as they are the ones who implement policies, administer public funds, and provide services to the people. Therefore, it is essential that civil servants demonstrate integrity and probity in their conduct and decision-making.

Body

- **Ways to Promote Integrity and Probity:**
 - **Developing Ethical Guidelines:** Civil servants should be provided with clear ethical guidelines that define the standards of behavior expected of them. These guidelines should be communicated effectively to all employees, and training should be provided to help employees understand the implications of the guidelines.
 - **Encouraging Whistleblowing:** Civil servants should be **encouraged to report any wrongdoing or unethical behavior they observe within the organization.**
 - Whistleblowing mechanisms should be established to ensure that employees can report such instances without fear of retaliation.
 - **Implementing a Code of Conduct:** Civil servants should be required to adhere to a code of conduct that outlines the standards of behavior expected of them. The code should be **regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing circumstances.**
 - For example, in India, the **Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964** outlines the conduct expected of civil servants, including provisions on gifts, conflicts of interest, and financial integrity.
 - **Promoting Transparency:** Civil servants should be transparent in their decision-making processes and ensure that their **actions are guided by the public interest.**
 - **Public access to information should be encouraged,** and public servants should be held accountable for their actions.
 - For example, **The Right to Information Act, 2005**, in India allows citizens to access information held by the government and promotes transparency and accountability in government functioning.
 - **Strengthening Anti-Corruption Measures:** Civil servants should be required to disclose their assets, liabilities, and financial interests. Anti-corruption measures should be put in place to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure that civil servants do not engage in corrupt practices.

Conclusion

- Integrity and probity are essential for the effective functioning of the public sector. Civil servants play a critical role in promoting these values and upholding ethical standards. By developing ethical guidelines, civil servants can ensure that they serve the public interest and maintain public trust.
- While examples from different countries have been used to illustrate these points, it is essential to note that promoting integrity and probity in public life is a global challenge that requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders.

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