



Mains Practice Question

Q. What are different types of personal qualities desirable in civil servants? Why has civil service ethics become prominent in public administration? (250 words)

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Approach:

- Briefly explain the personal qualities of civil servants.
- Discuss the desirable qualities that should be possessed by civil servants.
- Discuss the importance of civil services ethics in public administration.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

- The personal qualities of civil servants consist of personality, character and intellectual abilities. According to Aristotle there are **four qualities -prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance**, further, it's believed that if any one of the qualities is fully developed in an individual, it will also signal the presence of the other three.

Body:

- **The civil servants should follow the personal qualities which are as follows:**
 - **Prudence:** It refers to the ability to **find out the most suitable, politic, or profitable course of action** in actual conduct; it also signifies practical wisdom and discretion.
 - Civil service involves decision-making in public sphere. Civil servants are supposed to be men of practical affairs. They are in fairly regular contact with people. Civil servants have to deal with matters anonymously and discreetly. For all these reasons, prudence is an **eminently desirable quality** in civil servants.
 - **Fortitude:** It is **moral strength or moral courage in enduring pain or adversity**. Fortitude is often associated with soldiers facing tough battle field situations. At times, men of conscience also put up with hardships while upholding principles.
 - In the context of civil service, fortitude stands for less heroic but still important attitude of coping with work challenges and hostile situations over long periods.
 - **Temperance:** Temperance or moderation is especially important for public servants. It signifies the **ability to control one's anger, emotions and desires**. It can be regarded as **rational self-restraint**. But temperance can connote somewhat different behavioural characteristics. While taking decisions or responding to situations, civil servants have to be moderate. They should not swing to extremes but act judiciously in a balanced manner.
 - **Justice:** Justice is a generic conception. When we use the term 'justice', its meaning is often vague, that's why we have to indicate its concrete content or what its exact meaning is.
- **Importance of civil services ethics in public administration:**
 - To check the arbitrary actions of Civil Servants.
 - To promote the sense of administrative responsibility.
 - To establish and promote the good relations between the citizen and civil service.
 - To preserve and promote social wellbeing, public interest, and common good.

- To control that part of administrative power and discretion which cannot be controlled by formal laws methods and procedures.
- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative process.
- To strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of public administration.

Conclusion:

- The key qualities such as prudence, fortitude, temperance etc, explains goodness of one's character and aid in becoming a good and successful civil servant. The prominence of ethics in public administration theory help in fostering and maintaining high morals among civil servants.

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