



Mains Practice Question

Q. Public service must evolve to a level where probity becomes a way of life and honesty is a routine expectation. Comment. (150 words)

24 Sep, 2020 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce by defining the terms probity and honesty.
- Explain the purpose the two values seek to fulfil in governance.
- Discuss how it can be inculcated among the public servants as well as other people.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- **Probity** stands for **impeccable standards of morality in public life**. It goes beyond financial honesty or non-corrupt behaviour. Probity means that public servants will take no undue advantage of any sort from their office.
- **Honesty is being truthful and open**. Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Body

Probity and honesty in Governance seeks to fulfil the following purposes:

- Probity in Governance additionally elucidates that rather than the conventional civil service values of performance, integrity and patriotism, it's vital for civil officials to adopt as well as undertake ethical and integrity values, which includes **respect for human rights, morality in public life** and **compassion for the downtrodden** and dedication to their welfare.
- The two values preserve public confidence in Government processes, maintain integrity in public services, ensure accountability in governance, ensure compliance with processes, and seek to avoid the potential for misconduct, fraud and corruption.
- **Creating credibility (Building trust):** It helps a public servant to be trustworthy and get lots of respect in the career because honest people are really trusted by others.
 - Building trust and confidence requires an environment where there is a premium on honesty, transparency, openness, boldness, fairness and justice.
- **Leadership:** If a leader is honest, sincere and committed to the task assigned to him, the vibes created percolate down the hierarchy cleansing the system that he controls.

How to inculcate the probity among the public servants:

Lack of probity in governance has become one of the biggest menaces to society. To inculcate probity & adherence to ethical practices among them certain strides could be taken:

- A dedicated unit to oversee violations of Code of ethics & Code of conduct by government officials

be set up both at state and centre level.

- Information must be made accessible to the common public through websites.
- Mandatory declaration of assets and liabilities of government employees, accompanied by proper auditing.
- Establishment of Independent Anti-Corruption Agency
- Citizens Advisory Boards to incorporate ideas of the common public in improving governance.
- Mandatory Social Audit of all government programs, for example: Meghalaya has passed a law for social audit of government programs.
- An important requisite for ensuring probity in governance is absence of corruption. The other requirements are effective laws, rules and regulations governing every aspect of public life and, more important, an effective and fair implementation of those laws, etc
- Apart from laws and policies, the government should also focus on bringing **behavioural change** in government employees so that they can easily empathize with the problem of masses.

Conclusion

- Probity and honesty in governance are essential and vital requirements for an efficient and effective system of governance and for socio-economic development.
- Thus, it is an urgent need of the time that not only the public servants but the whole society adopts such values in their day to day life.

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