



## Mains Practice Question

Q. "A public servant should be politically neutral but not morally indifferent." Justify this statement with examples. (150 words)

07 Aug, 2025 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

### Approach :

- Start with a crisp explanation of political neutrality and moral indifference.
- Discuss the significance of political neutrality and moral sensitivity.
- Highlight the dangers of moral indifference.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

### Introduction:

A **public servant** plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of democratic governance. While **political neutrality** ensures that decisions are not influenced by partisan considerations, moral sensitivity ensures that such decisions align with principles of justice, fairness, and **human dignity**. Being neutral in political matters is essential for administrative objectivity, but moral indifference can lead to inhumane, unjust, or ethically questionable outcomes.

### Body

**Political Neutrality:** Political neutrality refers to **impartiality** in public decision-making, regardless of which party is in power.

- It ensures **continuity** in governance despite political changes.
- It builds public trust by preventing bias toward any political ideology.
- It upholds constitutional supremacy over party agendas.
- Example: During elections, district magistrates ensure the **Model Code of Conduct** is applied equally to all parties, showing neutrality while enforcing the law.

**Moral Sensitivity:** While political neutrality prevents bias, **moral sensitivity** prevents the erosion of **human values** in administration.

- It requires **empathy, ethical judgment**, and a **commitment to public welfare**.
- It prevents the "I was just following orders" mindset that can justify injustice.
- Example: A bureaucrat refusing to clear a polluting industry's clearance despite political pressure, citing environmental sustainability and public health concerns.

**The Danger of Moral Indifference:** Moral indifference can lead to **dehumanized governance**, where rules are applied mechanically without regard for consequences.

- **Historical Example:** Blind compliance with discriminatory laws in colonial India worsened public suffering.
- **Contemporary Example:** Denying welfare benefits to vulnerable groups due to minor

documentation errors without exploring compassionate alternatives.

### **Balancing Neutrality and Morality:**

- **Separate political influence from decision-making** to protect democratic fairness.
- **Incorporate ethical reasoning** to ensure decisions benefit citizens and uphold justice.
- Follow the Constitution as the guiding moral compass rather than political dictates.
  - **Example:** During communal tensions, an officer must act against instigators from all communities (neutrality) but also provide special protection to vulnerable groups (moral duty).

### **Conclusion:**

A public servant's legitimacy rests on **political impartiality** guided by **moral responsibility**. Neutrality ensures fairness, while morality ensures justice. True governance lies in serving the Constitution, especially the ideals of Article 14, the Directive Principles, and Civil Services Conduct Rules, without bias, yet with compassion and ethical conviction.

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