



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the significance of probity in governance. How does it ensure accountability and transparency in public administration? Explain with examples. **(250 Words)**

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Approach

- Start the answer by introducing the Probity.
- Illustrate the significance of probity in governance.
- Evaluate how it ensures accountability and transparency in public administration.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Probity in governance refers to the adherence to the highest ethical standards, integrity, and honesty in decision-making and actions by those in positions of authority. It is essential for maintaining the trust of the people in the government and ensuring the efficient functioning of public administration.

Body

Significance of Probity in Governance:

- **Upholding Ethical Standards:**
 - Probity ensures that public officials adhere to ethical standards in their decision-making processes, thereby promoting fairness and justice in governance.
 - This involves avoiding conflicts of interest, maintaining impartiality, and upholding the rule of law.
- **Building Public Trust:**
 - A government known for its probity gains the trust and confidence of its citizens, enhancing the legitimacy of its actions.
 - When citizens believe that public officials act with integrity, they are more likely to participate in the democratic process and comply with government policies.
 - The Satyam scandal in India highlighted the importance of probity in governance. It involved the chairman of Satyam Computer Services falsifying accounts to show inflated revenues and profits.
- **Curbing Corruption:**
 - Probity acts as a deterrent to corruption by creating a culture of answerability.
 - When public officials are held to high ethical standards, they are less likely to engage in corrupt practices such as bribery, embezzlement, or nepotism.
 - The establishment of the Lokpal at the central level and Lokayuktas at the state level in India is aimed at enhancing probity in governance by investigating complaints of corruption against public officials.

Ensuring Accountability and Transparency:

- **Transparency:**

- Probity leads to transparency in decision-making processes. For example, the Right to Information Act in India has helped in making government functioning more transparent and holding public officials accountable for their actions.
 - E-governance initiatives, such as online portals for government services and e-procurement, promote transparency and reduce corruption by minimizing direct contact between citizens and officials.

▪ **Holding Government Accountable:**

- Probity encourages public scrutiny of government actions. For instance, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India audits government expenditures to ensure that they are in line with established procedures and norms.
 - New Zealand's Integrity and Conduct Commissioner oversees the ethical conduct of public officials and investigates complaints of misconduct.
 - By promoting ethical behavior and accountability within the public sector, the commissioner contributes to the country's reputation for clean and transparent governance.

▪ **Whistleblower Protection:**

- Protecting whistleblowers who expose corruption or wrongdoing is an important aspect of ensuring accountability.
- The Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2011 in India, provides a mechanism for protecting whistleblowers from victimization.

▪ **Independent Oversight Bodies:**

- Independent oversight bodies, such as the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), play a crucial role in ensuring accountability in public administration by investigating cases of corruption and misconduct.

Conclusion

Probity in governance is essential for ensuring accountability and transparency in public administration. It enhances trust, prevents corruption, and leads to effective utilization of resources. The examples discussed demonstrate how probity can be instrumental in holding public officials accountable and ensuring good governance.