Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Saraswati was a successful IT professional in USA. Moved by the patriotic sense of doing something for the country she returned to India. Together with some other like minded friends, she formed an NGO to build a school for a poor rural community. The objective of the school was to provide the best quality modern education at a nominal cost. She soon discovered that she has to seek permission from a number of Government agencies. The rules and procedures were quite confusing and cumbersome. What frustrated her most was delays, callous attitude of officials and constant demand for bribes. Her experience and the experience of many others like her has deterred people from taking up social service projects. A measure of Government control over voluntary social work is necessary. But it should not be exercised in a coercive a corrupt manner.

What measures can you suggest to ensure that due control is exercised but well meaning, honest NGO efforts are not thwarted?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
25	~300 words

Answer Hint

NGO regulation; transparency; anti-corruption; single-window clearance; proportional regulation; accountability; social service; digital governance; risk-based inspection; civil society partnership

Model Answer

Introduction

Voluntary organisations contribute to education, healthcare and social welfare, particularly in underserved communities. Regulation is necessary to protect beneficiaries and ensure lawful use of funds, but excessive bureaucracy and corruption discourage genuine initiatives.

Measures to Ensure Effective and Fair Control

1. Single-Window Clearance

Create an integrated portal for registrations, permissions and renewals, with clearly defined requirements and time limits.

Merit: Reduces duplication, delay and opportunities for bribery.

Demerit: Poor digital access or coordination may disadvantage smaller organisations.

2. Transparent Rules and Checklists

Publish standardised eligibility criteria, required documents, fees and reasons for rejection.

Merit: Improves predictability and limits arbitrary discretion.

Demerit: Uniform procedures may not fully accommodate the diverse needs of different NGOs.

3. Risk-Based Regulation

Use proportionate scrutiny based on funding, activities and risks to beneficiaries. Conduct stronger audits where credible concerns arise rather than burdening every organisation equally.

Merit: Directs regulatory resources towards genuine risks.

Demerit: Risk classification may be biased unless based on objective criteria.

4. Digital Tracking and Accountability

Provide application tracking, electronic payments and recorded decisions. Establish independent complaint channels for bribery and administrative delay.

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Merit: Creates audit trails and strengthens accountability.

Demerit: Requires secure systems, trained staff and safeguards against digital exclusion.

5. Outcome-Based Monitoring

Assess educational quality, financial transparency, child protection and actual community benefits, rather than relying solely on procedural compliance.

Merit: Focuses regulation on public interest.

Demerit: Poorly designed indicators may overlook local realities.

6. Partnership and Capacity Building

Offer guidance, training and regular consultations to help honest NGOs comply with legal requirements.

Conclusion

Effective regulation should prevent fraud and protect beneficiaries without obstructing legitimate social work. Transparent procedures, proportionate oversight and accountable officials can create an enabling environment for responsible civil society action.

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