Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

‘Public institutions gain legitimacy not merely from legal authority but from citizens’ trust in their fairness.’ Discuss with reference to electoral administration. (150 words)

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
Daily Practice 05/10/2026	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

- **Ethics in public administration; impartiality; transparency; integrity; procedural justice; accountability; public trust.**
- **Use election administration as a case study; show how fairness, neutrality and explainability create legitimacy.**

Model Answer

Legal authority gives a public institution formal power, but ethical legitimacy depends on how that power is exercised. Electoral administration is a particularly important example because elections determine political representation and therefore public confidence in democracy.

Fairness requires impartial application of rules, irrespective of political affiliation or social status. Transparency allows citizens to understand procedures and decisions, while accountability provides remedies when mistakes occur. Integrity requires officials to resist political pressure, conflicts of interest and personal gain. Procedural justice is equally important: even an adverse decision can command greater acceptance when citizens receive notice, an opportunity to be heard and a reasoned explanation.

In electoral-roll revision or election management, therefore, efficiency cannot substitute for fairness. Technology may improve accuracy, but opaque algorithms or inaccessible digital procedures can weaken trust. Officials must

combine competence with empathy, especially when administrative decisions affect vulnerable citizens.

Ultimately, public trust is built through consistent conduct over time. An institution perceived as neutral, transparent and citizen-oriented develops moral authority beyond its statutory authority. Ethical administration thus strengthens both institutional legitimacy and democratic stability.

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