Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

In recent times, there has been an increasing concern in India to develop effective civil service ethics, code of conduct, transparency measures, ethics and integrity systems and anti-corruption agencies. In view of this, there is a need being felt to focus on three specific areas, which are directly relevant to the problems of internalizing integrity and ethics in the civil services. These are as follows:

- **- Anticipating specific threats to ethical standards and integrity in the civil services,**
- **- Strengthening the ethical competence of civil servants and**
- **- Developing administrative processes and practices which promote ethical values and integrity in civil services.**

Suggest institutional measures to address the above three issues.

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EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Ethical risk assessment; code of conduct; ethics training; institutional accountability; transparency; whistleblower protection; vigilance mechanisms; leadership by example; citizen-centric administration; ethical organisational culture

Model Answer

Introduction

Civil service integrity requires more than individual honesty; it needs institutions that prevent ethical violations, strengthen moral competence and embed integrity in everyday administrative practices.

1. Anticipating Threats to Ethical Standards and Integrity

1. **Ethical risk assessment:** Identify corruption-prone departments, discretionary powers, procurement processes and conflict-of-interest situations through periodic audits.

2. **Clear codes of conduct:** Establish enforceable standards concerning gifts, conflicts of interest, political neutrality, asset disclosure and use of public resources.

3. **Independent vigilance:** Strengthen vigilance units, the Central Vigilance Commission and departmental vigilance mechanisms to detect misconduct and ensure impartial scrutiny.

4. **Whistleblower protection:** Provide secure reporting channels and protection against victimisation for employees exposing corruption or unethical practices.

2. Strengthening Ethical Competence

1. **Ethics-based training:** Integrate integrity, constitutional values, emotional intelligence and case-study-based ethical decision-making into induction and in-service training.

2. **Leadership by example:** Require senior officers to demonstrate impartiality, accountability and transparency in their conduct.

3. **Mentoring and counselling:** Establish ethics officers or institutional mentoring systems to guide civil servants facing complex moral dilemmas.

4. **Merit-based career systems:** Ensure fair recruitment, promotion and performance appraisal to discourage patronage and reward ethical conduct.

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3. Developing Ethical Administrative Processes

1. **Transparency and digitisation:** Use e-procurement, digital records, online service delivery and audit trails to reduce discretion and opportunities for corruption.

2. **Social audits and citizen charters:** Encourage public scrutiny, time-bound service delivery and accessible grievance-redressal mechanisms.

3. **Independent accountability:** Strengthen internal audits, disciplinary procedures and anti-corruption agencies while ensuring due process and institutional autonomy.

4. **Ethical performance evaluation:** Assess officers on fairness, service quality, responsiveness and integrity alongside measurable administrative outcomes.

Conclusion

Institutionalising ethics requires preventive safeguards, continuous capacity-building and transparent administrative systems. A culture combining ethical leadership with fair accountability can make integrity a routine feature of governance rather than merely an individual virtue.

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