Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Explain the term social capital. How does it enhance good governance?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Social capital refers to networks, trust, shared norms and relationships that enable collective action. By strengthening cooperation between citizens and institutions, it improves participation, accountability, information flow, policy implementation and trust-based governance.

Model Answer

Introduction:

Social capital refers to the **networks, relationships, trust, shared norms and reciprocity** that enable people to cooperate for collective goals. It constitutes an important informal foundation of good governance.

How Social Capital Enhances Good Governance:

Trust and cooperation: Trust between citizens and institutions facilitates voluntary compliance with laws and public programmes.

Citizen participation: Community networks encourage people to participate in local decision-making, social audits and development initiatives.

Accountability: Strong community relationships enable citizens to monitor public institutions and expose irregularities.

Better information flow: Local networks help government understand community needs and improve targeted delivery.

Collective action: Self-help groups, resident associations and community organisations can cooperate with administration in areas such as sanitation, disaster response and welfare delivery.

However, social capital can also become exclusionary when networks are based on caste, religion or closed-group interests. Therefore, **inclusive social capital** is essential.

Conclusion:

Social capital converts citizens from passive recipients into **active partners in governance**. Building trust, inclusion and civic cooperation can therefore make governance more participatory, responsive and accountable.

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