Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Wisdom lies in knowing what to reckon with and what to overlook. An officer being engrossed with the periphery, ignoring the core issues before him, is not rare in the bureaucracy. Do you agree that such preoccupation of an administrator leads to travesty of justice to the cause of effective service delivery and good governance? Critically evaluate.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Administrative wisdom requires distinguishing substantive public issues from procedural distractions. Excessive focus on paperwork and formalities can delay justice and weaken service delivery, although procedures remain essential for legality, fairness and accountability. Effective administrators balance rules with outcomes and prioritise citizens' genuine needs.

Model Answer

Introduction

Administrative wisdom lies in identifying priorities and directing limited time and resources towards issues that most affect public welfare.

Body

An administrator preoccupied with peripheral matters may prioritise files, protocol and routine compliance over urgent problems such as delayed pensions, public-health emergencies or delivery of essential services. This can cause injustice, increase citizens' transaction costs and weaken public trust. Vulnerable groups, who depend heavily on public services, suffer disproportionately.

For example, an officer who repeatedly seeks minor documentation instead of resolving a genuine pension grievance may deny an elderly citizen timely financial support.

However, procedures cannot simply be overlooked. They safeguard legality, transparency, equal treatment and protection against arbitrary decisions. Ignoring due process can itself cause injustice.

Therefore, administrators should distinguish essential safeguards from avoidable procedural delays, use evidence-based prioritisation, delegate routine work and establish time-bound grievance redressal.

Conclusion

Good governance requires neither mechanical rule-following nor arbitrary discretion, but a balanced, citizen-centric approach that combines procedural integrity with timely and effective outcomes.

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