



Mains Marathon

Day 39: "Public service is a public trust," explain the significance of the basic principles of public services in light of this statement. (150 words)

18 Aug 2022 | GS Paper 4 | Theoretical Questions

Approach / Explanation / Answer

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing the essence of Public Service.
- Discuss the major principles of Public Service.
- Conclude Suitably.

Answer

The commonly stated principles of public service include avoiding use of public office for private gain (integrity), displaying impartiality in performing duties (objectivity), and the concept of public service being a public trust (probity and effectiveness).

Hence, the essence of public service imposes special obligations and restrictions on civil servants regarding the exercise of public power and authority.

One famous example of an Ethics Code comprises the Seven Principles of Public Life which the Committee on Standards in Public Life in Great Britain formulated.

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take.
 - They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

- **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Public service is a public trust that recognizes that compared to ordinary citizens, public servants enjoy many powers and privileges. Thus, while performing their official duties and exercising their powers, officers have to act in their best judgment.

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