Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the role of integrity in public service, citing examples. How can ethical leadership foster a culture of integrity in organizations? **(250 Words)**

14 Mar, 2024   GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Start the answer with a discussion that sets a context for the question.
- Discuss the role of integrity in public service, citing examples.
- Explain how ethical leadership fosters a culture of integrity in organizations.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Integrity is the cornerstone of public service, ensuring that officials act in the best interests of society. Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of integrity within organizations, setting the tone for ethical behavior.

Body

Role of Integrity in Public Service:

- **Foundation of Trust**: Integrity is the cornerstone of public service, essential for building trust between the government and the people. It ensures that public officials act in the best interests of society, maintaining transparency and accountability.
  - **Example:** Mahatma Gandhi, known for his unwavering integrity, inspired millions through his ethical leadership during India's independence movement.
- **Effective Governance:** Integrity enhances the effectiveness of governance by promoting fairness, justice, and adherence to the rule of law. It reduces corruption and ensures that decisions are made based on merit rather than personal gain.
  - **Example**: According to Transparency International, countries with higher levels of integrity in public service tend to have lower levels of corruption and better governance outcomes.
- **Public Confidence**: Integrity in public service boosts public confidence in government institutions, encouraging citizen participation and engagement. It helps in maintaining social cohesion and stability.
  - **Example**: The Singaporean government's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption has contributed to the country's high levels of public trust in government institutions.

Ethical Leadership and Integrity Promotion

- **Setting the Tone:** Ethical leaders set the tone for integrity within an organization by modeling ethical behavior and demonstrating a commitment to upholding moral values.
  - **Example**: Nelson Mandela's leadership in South Africa was characterized by his unwavering commitment to integrity, which helped in transitioning the country from apartheid to a democratic society.
- **Building a Culture:** Ethical leadership fosters a culture of integrity within an organization by

promoting ethical decision-making, encouraging open communication, and holding individuals accountable for their actions.
  - **Example:** Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of Singapore, exemplified ethical leadership and integrity. He transformed Singapore from a struggling city-state into a global economic powerhouse through his unwavering commitment to integrity and meritocracy.
- **Encouraging Transparency**: Ethical leaders promote transparency by ensuring that information is shared openly and that decisions are made in a transparent manner. This helps in preventing corruption and unethical behavior.
  - **Example**: Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft, has been praised for his ethical leadership, which has led to increased transparency and accountability within the company.
- **Addressing Ethical Dilemmas**: Ethical leaders are adept at addressing ethical dilemmas and conflicts by applying moral principles and values to find solutions that are fair and just.
  - **Example**: Kailash Satyarthi, the Nobel laureate and child rights activist, has demonstrated ethical leadership by tirelessly advocating for the rights of children and combating child labor.

Conclusion

Integrity is crucial for effective public service, and ethical leadership plays a vital role in fostering a culture of integrity within organizations. By upholding moral values and promoting transparency, ethical leaders can inspire trust and confidence, leading to better governance outcomes and a more just society.

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