



Be Mains Ready

What is Administrative Ethics? Explain its importance for public administrators. (150 words)

21 Dec 2020 | GS Paper 4 | Theoretical Questions

Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Define administrative ethics and highlight its dimensions.
- Discuss the importance of ethics for public administrators.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Administrative ethics refers to well-based standards of right and wrong that prescribe what public administrators ought to do in terms of duty to public service, principles, virtues, and benefits to society.

Body

Administrative ethics four dimensions, one based on the nature of public service and three based on the philosophical perspectives to ethics:

- **Duties:** The behaviors expected of persons who occupy certain roles; that is, the obligations taken on when assuming a role or profession
- **Virtues:** Qualities that define what a good person is; moral excellence
- **Principles:** Fundamental truths that form the basis for behavior; “kinds of action that are right or obligatory”
- **Benefits to society:** Actions that produce the greatest good for the greatest number.

Importance of ethics for public administrators

- The issue of ethics in public service is as old as the government itself. Ethical considerations are of fundamental importance to the quality of democracy and its administration. At the roots of laws and codes of ethics lie morality.
- Administrative ethics is crucial to ensure ‘Good Governance’ with a prime concern for ethical principles, practices, orientations and behaviour.
- The crux of wisdom is that the public administrators are the “guardians” of the administrative state. Hence, they are expected to honour public trust and not violate it

According to the Nolan Committee, there are seven principles of public life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership.

- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support the principles of public life by leadership and example.
 - For eg. Lal Bahadur Shastri used to fast every Monday to save grains for poor people of the country and he gave a call for the nation to follow it. Thus exhibiting a true example of how leaders should lead from the front.
- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
 - For eg. Tukaram Omble of Maharashtra police tackled Kasab one of the terrorists of Mumbai attack so that he couldn't attack his fellow servicemen. Thus showing exemplary courage and the highest degree of selflessness by giving away his life for the cause of his nation.
 - Gita also in one of its shloka- karmanye vadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana reiterates the principle of selflessness which means one should only focus on our actions and should not worry about the result.
- **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.
 - For eg. Vikram Sarabhai accepted the failure of ISRO first mission without actually putting it on the mission head (APJ Abdul Kalam). Thus taking full accountability for the failure of his team.

Conclusion

- Thus it can be established that principles of public life are important for every democracy. Guidelines of public behaviour arising from such principles can play a crucial role in creating trust between the public functionaries and common public.
- Therefore any person who is privileged to guide the destiny of the people must not only be ethical but must be seen to practice these principles of public life.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/be-mains-ready-daily-answer-writing-practice-question/papers/2020/bmr-be-mains-ready-administrative-ethics-importance-for-public-administrators/print>