



Mains Practice Question

Q. What do you understand by Probity? Explain its importance in governance with relevant examples? (150 Words)

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Approach

- Define the term Probity
- With relevant examples, state its importance in governance
- Briefly conclude while mentioning some challenges associated with it in governance

Ans.

- Probity means integrity, uprightness, and honesty. It means ethical behaviour that upholds public values and ensures impartiality, accountability, and transparency. In public service, It is the presence of procedural integrity with high standards of ethical behaviour. It balances service to the community against the self-interest of individuals.
- The principle of probity in public life is the cornerstone of good governance. It is at the center-stage of Sustainable Development Goals. Probity in governance is the antithesis of corruption in public life. It is emphasised by the UN Convention against corruption.

There are several accepted probity principles which are -:

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Confidentiality
- Management of Conflicts of Interest

Importance of probity in governance -:

- To prevent unethical practices like misconduct, fraud, and corruption in governance. It also helps in regaining the lost public trust. E.g.- When 'Coal Scam' was brought to light by CAG it was nothing but the probity of this institution which enabled it to do so.
- To ensure public interest and cooperation in governance which is the essence of participatory governance.
- To cater to the needs of all sections of society, so that inclusive growth is achieved.
- To ensure the equitable distribution of resources.
- To bring a strong image of the country around the globe. E.g.- Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway, in general, perform very well in public administration which shows the probity of their governments and it makes their image very strong globally.
- To bring in good governance (Accountability, transparency, integrity, Confidentiality, etc.)

Challenges associated with probity in governance -

- Though good governance requires probity by public officials however its application is not devoid of various challenges which are -

- Absence of transparency and accountability
- General disintegration of ethics in the society
- Unrealistic code of conduct
- Toothless laws and institutional arrangements
- Unholy nexus of politicians bureaucrats and businessmen
- Growth of materialism as a result of globalization
- Slow and tardy case disposals and justice delivery
- Evils of a coalition government
- Corruption
- Probity is a crucial feature of governance which endows government to act ethically and perform its duties as per the norms only. It also ensures an efficient and effective system of governance and brings socio-economic development. Hence, probity and its principles must be adhered to for the creation of a new India.

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