



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the relevance of objectivity in the governance of modern day society. Is it desirable to attain absolute objectivity? (250 words)

02 Jul, 2020 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Define objectivity and describe its utility in the governance of modern day society.
- Evaluate objectivity as a fundamental value in governance.
- Discuss valid arguments and counter arguments on desirability of absolute objectivity.
- Conclude by assessing the premises of your answer.

Introduction

Objectivity in governance means adherence to rationality, legality and to proven standards, procedures and norms in institutions by the public authorities. It implies that the governance decisions should be taken based on merit and after rigorous analysis of evidence.

Objectivity is considered one of the most fundamental values in governance because it helps the public authorities to make correct decisions on the merit of evidence. It compliments other values like Integrity, impartiality, non partisanship, empathy, tolerance and compassion in governance.

Body

Objectivity in Governance

- Helps in taking right decisions in case of ethical moral dilemmas
- It helps to maintain impartiality and fairness
- Prevents injustice in governance
- Enhance professionalism
- Increase resource utilisation efficiency
- Improve public service delivery
- Enhance transparency in the public domain.

It also helps to overcome biases, favouritism and helps in management of conflict of interest.

Absolute Objectivity in Governance

- **Limit's the flexibility in decision making:** In real life it is almost impossible to maintain hundred percent rationality. Flexibility in decision making is essential in actual life.
 - Sometimes such situations and circumstances arise where in the spirit of taking justiciable decisions the objectivity needs to be compromised.
- **Hindrance to efficiency delivery of public services:** For example, recently due to making linking Aadhaar card mandatory with the ration card an adolescent girl died of hunger in Jharkhand due to not receiving any food ration from the public distribution for several weeks.

- **Decrease administrative capacity to deal with extraordinary situations:** Due to complexities in the nature of laws in India, it is sometimes impossible to attain hundred percent adherence to a law without breaching a few other laws.
 - In such a situation absolute objectivity in decision making is not suggested, a pragmatic approach becomes very necessary when such ethical dilemmas occur.
 - Maintaining basic flexibility in objectivity requires allowing exceptions in extraordinary situations.
 - For example: adopting violent methods is against the constitutional spirit of Justice but in extraordinary situations like terrorist attack and riots, sometimes it becomes necessary to issue orders of shoot at sight.
- **Eliminate administrative space for adjustment:** India society being pluralistic, it is necessary to give scope for implementation of laws according to diverse sociocultural and economic needs.
 - Absolute objectivity in governance would eliminate such administrative space for adjustment.
 - For example: absolute objectivity in adherence of central laws, the states would not have been able to form local self government suitable to its own social cultural needs.
- **Decrease the efficiency of delegated legislation:** Word to word adherence to the parent law would limit the powers of the civil servants to mould the provisions of the current law to make it implementable. In such a case absolute objectivity could cause administrative inefficiency.
- **Policy paralysis:** following absolute objectivity in governance could cause delays, inaction and inability to take policy decisions by the government or its various departments and agencies which run the country and the economy.

Conclusion

Although objectivity is a must in governance for maintaining accountability, transparency, neutrality and probity in governance. Careful deliberation and analysis of situations in public interest and an enlightened objectivity rather than absolute objectivity is more appropriate to add fairness and caters to the needs of the changing social paradigms.

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