



Mains Practice Question

Q. Integrity and transparency are often cited as pillars of good governance. Discuss how these principles can sometimes conflict in real-world scenarios. **(150 words)**

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Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining Integrity and transparency
- Give key arguments where Integrity and Transparency Conflict In Real-world Scenarios
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Integrity is the **adherence to moral and ethical principles**, while transparency is the openness and honesty in communication and decision-making. They are often touted as the cornerstones of good governance. They **ensure accountability, public trust, and effective decision-making**.

- However, in the complex real-world scenarios, these principles can sometimes clash, leading to **ethical dilemmas and challenging trade-offs**.

Body

Integrity and Transparency Conflicting in Real-world Scenarios:

- **National Security vs. Public Right to Information:** In matters of national security, **complete transparency may compromise sensitive operations or intelligence**. However, lack of transparency can also enable corruption or rights violations.
 - **Example:** The **Rafale fighter jet deal controversy** in India highlights this tension. While the government cited national security to withhold certain details, opposition parties and activists argued that full disclosure was necessary for public accountability.
- **Protecting Individual Privacy vs. Ensuring Transparency in Public Office:** Public officials have a right to personal privacy, but excessive privacy protections can hinder transparency and accountability.
 - **Example:** The debate around **making politicians' asset declarations public in India**.
 - While asset disclosure promotes transparency, some argue it infringes on privacy rights and could expose officials to security risks.
- **Whistleblower Protection vs. Organizational Confidentiality:** Whistleblowers play a **crucial role in exposing corruption**, but their actions may breach confidentiality agreements or protocols.
 - **Example:** The Indian Whistleblowers Protection Act aims to protect those who expose corruption.
 - However, its implementation has been challenging, with some whistleblowers facing retaliation despite the law.
- **Rapid Decision-making vs. Thorough Consultation Processes:** In crisis situations, **leaders may need to act quickly**, potentially bypassing usual transparency procedures. However, this

can raise questions about integrity and accountability.

- **Example:** The **sudden demonetization decision in 2016** was made with minimal public consultation to prevent currency hoarding.
 - While this maintained the integrity of the operation, it was criticized for lack of transparency and preparedness.
- **Diplomatic Negotiations vs. Public Disclosure:** Diplomatic processes often require **confidentiality to build trust and achieve compromises.**
 - However, this can conflict with the public's right to know about international agreements.
 - **Example:** India's border negotiations with China **often happen behind closed doors.** While this allows for frank discussions, it has also led to public speculation and demands for greater transparency about the state of border issues.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Groups vs. Transparency in Social Programs:** Protecting the **privacy and dignity of vulnerable beneficiaries can sometimes** conflict with transparency requirements in social welfare programs.
 - **Example:** The **Aadhaar system in India** aims to streamline benefit delivery, but has faced criticism over privacy concerns.
 - The government has had to balance transparency in welfare distribution with protecting sensitive personal data.

Conclusion

While integrity and transparency are both crucial for good governance, balancing these principles requires careful consideration of **context, legal frameworks, and potential consequences.** The key lies in developing nuanced approaches that maximize both integrity and transparency to the greatest extent possible.

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