



## Aptitude and Foundational Values for Civil Service

**For Mains:** Essay, Foundational values for Civil Service, Integrity, Impartiality and non- partisanship, Objectivity, Dedication to public service, Empathy, Tolerance and Compassion.

### What is Aptitude?

- Aptitude is a **natural ability or innate potential to learn or acquire a skill**. It is a natural tendency for successful learning of some specific set of skills, which can be further enhanced with adequate knowledge and training. It indicates aptness/suitability to succeed in a particular field.
- In other words, aptitude is a natural talent or inborn ability that makes it easier for us to learn or do certain things/tasks.

### How is Aptitude Different from Interest, Skill or Intelligence?

- **Interest is something that attracts us without the need to have any particular skill** for a thing. A person may be interested in a particular activity, job or training, but may not have the potential/aptitude to perform well in that particular area and achieve success. For example, **one may have an intense interest in music, but not enough ability to succeed in a career as a performer**.
- Skill is the knowledge or ability to perform a given task with ease and precision, aptitude on the other hand, it denotes the potential to get skilled if training is done. While **skills are the abilities that can be acquired by way of reading, observation, practice, and training, aptitude is inborn and unique**.
- Intelligence is the **capacity for learning, reasoning, understanding, and similar forms of mental activity**. It is the ability to learn and apply skills. On the other hand, aptitude is the specific ability of a person to master a skill. However, aptitude requires a degree of intelligence to do the job well.

### What are Aptitude for a Civil Servant?

- With the advent of the new public administration and increasing diversity in the administrative field, an administrator needs to adorn both physical and mental aptitude.
- She should have both General Mental Ability (basic thinking capacity and learning ability to perform any intellectual task) as well as the desired value system of public administration to perform his duty, not only efficiently, but also effectively. Roughly the kinds of aptitude desired in a civil servant include:
  - Good communication/interpersonal skills
  - Leadership, management and organizational skills
  - Critical thinking and listening ability
  - Skill to effectively manage and raise resources
  - Ability to establish collaborative networks and successful teamwork
  - High level of professionalism
  - Ability to think on their feet and develop innovative solutions
  - Skill of persuasion and ability to negotiate with difficult people

## What are the Roles and Importance of Aptitude in Civil Services?

- The civil services form the permanent structure and backbone of the administration. A qualitative, professional, skilled and committed workforce is, hence, imperative to maintain the high standards of public administration.
- In Indian public administration, the civil servants are entrusted with a diverse set of responsibilities such as from simple administrative and clerical tasks to complex decision making, policy implementation and serving as a link between government and citizens. Hence, it is vital for civil servants to possess diverse skills such as grasping capabilities, good analytical skills, and the ability to establish collaborative networks and successful teamwork.
- In public administration, leaders face different kinds of problems and challenges every day such as high unemployment, insufficient government spending, fast changing socio-economic scenarios, etc. Laws and administrative rules cannot explain everything, and leaders cannot always mimic previous successes because the elements affecting each challenge change day to day. In such cases a civil servant needs an abundance of impromptu decision-making skills and critical thinking ability to exercise discretion with conviction.
- The emerging concept of e-governance and motto of 'Less Government More Governance', demand transformational changes in the machinery of government as well as in the work style and orientation of government officials.
  - With the role and functions of administrators having become swiftly changing and increasingly challenging, civil servants must be equipped with the necessary skills and capabilities to meet these new challenges.
  - They must have the aptitude to master new technologies and new styles of functioning. They should serve as the 'Agents of Change' to catalyze reform initiatives.
- In a diverse country like India, the civil servants often face complex and often contrasting socio-economic objectives and challenges often creating a deep sense of moral/ethical dilemma in them about their own duties and functions. This demands an inherent aptitude to prevail over contradictions, solve dilemmas and keep up the spirit to perform in spite of adverse circumstances.
- Under the framework of '**inclusive governance**' **administrators need to build teams** across diverse stakeholders. For example, to create a favorable business climate in a city, an economic development director needs to bring together local business leaders, the Chamber of Commerce and also environmental advocates. This demands a civil servant to possess an ability to receive and act upon feedback as well as effective interpersonal skills to bridge the gaps and encourage collaboration for a common objective.

## What is the Difference between Aptitude and Attitude?

- According to some experts, **success is 99% attitude and 1% aptitude**. As per research studies, recruiting people with the right skills can be costly if they do not have the right attitude, where there is a lack of 'fit'.
  - In a study by Leadership IQ (of over 20,000 new hirings over 3 years), it was found that 46% of the people hired fail within the first 18 months on the job and they did not fail for lack of skills, but rather for lack of attitude. Thus, having people with the right attitude is considered more important for organizational success than having people with high aptitude and a wrong attitude.
- Attitude is a **motor driving the acquisition and use of a specific ability**. If a person is fully equipped for a role, but lacks real enthusiasm, the best skill-set will count for very little.
  - For instance, a person having an aptitude for music, but lacking the desire to hone his/her skill will not make him/her a good musician no matter how greatly he might be gifted. It requires an attitude of competitive learning to develop and hone one's skills.
- When a positive mindset is undertaken, performance on nearly every level productivity, creativity and engagement improves. **Thomas Edison once said, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."** Therefore, to succeed in life, a positive attitude towards hard work and perseverance are extremely important.
- **We are not all equally talented in every task put before us:**
  - Another point of view is that not everyone has the ability to learn the skills, especially at a proficient level. A person who is keen, but has no natural talent, ability and skill can hardly excel in the field. For instance, a person who has the willingness and enthusiasm to start a new business venture but lacks the required business acumen will succumb to its pressure

and challenges. Thus, a person with a good attitude, but no aptitude, is no good.

- A person with a higher aptitude can outperform in learning a skill or performing a task while others struggle despite having a positive inclination towards it. For instance, sports are a common activity, but only an athlete or a sports person with unique talent and strength excels in the field. Excellent leaders like **Mahatma Gandhi and George Washington** had great skills and knowledge to capitalize on their strengths and develop the greatest potential in others.
- **Aptitude without Attitude is Blind; Attitude without Aptitude is Lame:**
  - As per this view, both the right skills (aptitude) and the disposition (attitude) are equally important to excel in a particular field. It is the right blend of the two inherited and acquired qualities respectively that go hand in hand in determining the gains and losses in a person's life.
  - For instance, a person who is hardworking and sincere in his job as well as committed to his organizational goals but lacks the initiative taking capabilities and the aptitude for leadership owing to his lack of soft skills, cannot be deemed fit for a higher-level post. Similarly, if one has smart, persuasive and team-building skills, but owing to the callous attitude towards work he cannot be trusted with a higher authority position.
  - The examples of famous scientists like **Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein show us that along with their specific abilities, they also had the right disposition/mental attitude** to face the challenges and not to give up even after successive failures.

## What are the Foundational Values of Civil Services?

- Civil/public service values are those values which are created and sustained by the government on behalf of the public. These are the principles on which government and policies should be based on. Adherence to foundational values such as **integrity, objectivity, non-partisanship, tolerance, compassion, dedication to public service**, etc., serve as guiding principles for civil servants in the discharge of public service duties. Moreover, they provide normative consensus about the rights and benefits to which citizens are entitled to.
- In India, civil service values have evolved over years of tradition. Values like integrity and devotion to duty, etc., have been mentioned in **Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 and the All-India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968** which a civil servant must follow in his/her tenure of service to the nation. Meanwhile, the Draft Public Service Bill, 2007 enumerated certain values which should guide the public servants in the discharge of their functions. These include allegiance to the various ideals enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution, apolitical functioning, good governance for betterment of the people to be the primary goal of civil service, duty to act objectively and impartially, accountability and transparency in decision-making, maintenance of the highest ethical standards, merit to be the criteria for selection of civil servants, avoidance of wastage in expenditure, etc.

## Nolan Committee Recommendation:

Nolan Principles for the benefit of people who serve the public in whatever capacity, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) defined seven guiding principles of behavior for public life in 1995 and advised that public entities create codes of conduct integrating these principles. The seven Nolan Principles are as follows:

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- **Selflessness:**
  - Decisions should only be made in the public interest by those holding public office. For the sake of obtaining money or other material advantages for themselves, their families, or other friends, they shouldn't do this.
- **Integrity:**
  - Holders of public office shouldn't obligate themselves in any way, whether financially or otherwise, to outside parties who could have an impact on how they carry out their official obligations.
- **Objectivity:**
  - Public officials should base their decisions on merit while doing public business, including public appointments, contract awards, and recommendations for incentives and perks.
- **Accountability:**
  - Civil servants are subject to the scrutiny that is appropriate to their position and must answer to the public for their choices and conduct.
- **Openness:**
  - All choices and acts that public office holders do should be as transparent as possible. When the larger public interest plainly requires it, they should provide justification for their choices and only restrict information when necessary.
- **Honesty:**
  - Public officials have a responsibility to declare any private interests that may conflict with their official obligations and to handle such conflicts in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:**
  - Leadership should be used by public authorities to promote and support these ideas.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Report of Second Administrative Reforms Commission:

- However, the most important guide for the development of a **Code of Ethics for public services** has been the recommendations made in **the 10<sup>th</sup> Report of Second Administrative Reforms Commission**. The Commission recommended that in addition to upholding the constitutional spirit, the civil servants shall be guided by the values which include adherence to the highest standards of integrity and conduct; impartiality and nonpartisanship; objectivity; dedication to public service; and empathy and compassion towards the weaker sections.
- **Integrity:**
  - **Integrity refers to the ability of an individual to remain consistent and dedicated to his personal and professional values and beliefs.** It means adopting similar standards or moral principles in similar situations across time and interested parties.
  - In other words, it means to be honest and consistent in thoughts, speech and action. It is a quality of **eliminating the gap between 'what we think, what we say, and what we**



**do'**. A man of integrity is never influenced by contentions and pressures from outside and would only respond to his conscience.

- **Impartiality:**
  - Impartiality is a kind **of characteristic or quality of making decisions without bias and prejudice**. An instance of impartiality is one in which there is no favoritism. It rejects granting an undue advantage to any individual, societal group, or organization. Being impartial means that all choices should only be based on merit.
- **Non-partisanship:**
  - Non-partisanship is known by its **act of not supporting any political party, even if one strongly agrees with its ideals**. Non-partisanship is the absence of adherence to ideals of any political party, organization, or group.
- **Objectivity:**
  - Objectivity is recognized as one of the most crucial characteristics in governance. It requires institutions to **adhere to logic, law, and established standards, practices, and norms**. Objectivity means being true in spite of one's feelings, ideas, and beliefs. It allows public officials to make wise judgments based on data.
- **Dedication to public service:**
  - Dedication is the **quality of being motivated in one's profession, purpose, vision, or actions**. Dedicated public servants strive to accomplish the goals set by the administration. An inner drive or excitement for working in the greater good of the public is implied by dedication to public service. Without any external formal technique to drive that desire, it is the commitment, passion, and sincere desire to achieve something that counts.
- **Empathy:**
  - The **capacity to perceive and appreciate other people's experiences and feelings** is known as Empathy. It is the potential to comprehend another person's mental status and creatively experience another person's sentiments.
- **Tolerance:**
  - **The ability to accept and tolerate differences in others**, even when you disagree with them, can be referred to as tolerance. Tolerance makes it possible for people to live in harmony. People's resilience in the face of a variety of ideas and beliefs demonstrates their tolerance. Learning more about other viewpoints and concepts from across the world can help you comprehend the world more clearly.
- **Compassion:**
  - It is a **deeper level of empathy**, demonstrating an actual desire to help the suffering person. It is a unique feeling of sympathy for the suffering of others that involves emotions and empathy towards others, a sense of understanding, and the drive to protect.

The Nolan Principles were innovative when they were first put forward because they placed more of a focus on culture and behavior than on methodology. Although the fundamental ideas are essentially acknowledged by everybody, there have always been challenges in putting them into reality, with certain sectors adopting and applying them more successfully than others. When making commissioning choices, the NHS has always exercised extra caution in implementing the principles.

### **UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)**

**Q1.** Identify ten essential values that are needed to be an effective public servant. Describe the ways and means to prevent non-ethical behavior in the public servants. **(2021)**