



Mains Practice Question

Q. Examine the relevance of 'honesty' and 'courage of conviction' in the context of civil service.

19 Feb, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach:

- Write in short about the two values- 'honesty' and 'courage of conviction' in the introduction part.
- Elaborate its relevance in the context of civil services.

Introduction

- **Honesty:** is being truthful and open. Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Courage of conviction:** To have the confidence to act or behave in accordance with one's beliefs or ideologies, especially in the face of resistance, criticism, or prosecution. It is during these difficult moments that courage of conviction helps a civil servant to choose the public interests rather than falling prey to any external pressure.

Body

Relevance of honesty:

- **Creating credibility (Building trust):** It helps a civil servant to be trustworthy and get lots of respect in the career because honest people are really trusted by others. People generally do not trust dishonest civil servants. Building trust and confidence requires an environment where there is a premium on honesty, transparency, openness, boldness, fairness and justice. We should encourage this.
- **Leadership:** This principle is articulation of the same idea as I referred in the context of Mahatma Gandhi's Experiments with Truth. A true leader will always lead by own example. If a leader is honest, sincere and committed to the task assigned to him, the vibes created percolate down the hierarchy cleansing the system that he controls. By bringing transparency in the system and standing against corruption
- A civil servant is required to implement the orders of government without bias, with honesty and without fear or favour. It is precisely in this area that a degree of a difference of opinion begins to emerge between the political executive and the civil servants
- **Other relevance:** Improve work culture and motivate subordinate officers to be honest, it makes sure effective delivery of the services, present day Nepotism problem can be reduced if honesty is followed in public service, Reduce inequalities in the organization.

Relevance of Courage of conviction:

- In public service, while facing different situations one may be buoyed by the circumstances, fear, passions, greed since the decisions at the helm would be affecting many interests, vested or non-vested. It is during these trying moments that courage of conviction helps a civil servant to stay on the best course of action despite various temptations and risks, staying firm in his beliefs, values

and duty. Hence, this quality assumes importance in public service.

- There are instances of key public officials failing to safeguard the Constitutional values and imperatives of national unity as they were afraid of victimization in the hands of a recalcitrant State Government. The officers will have the courage of conviction to face the onslaughts of arbitrary politicizations, and will be able to protect public interest without fear of victimization.
- Helps in taking bold decision: For example - Whistleblowers need courage of conviction to disclose information.

Conclusion

- Honesty and courage of conviction of civil servant in governance would have a major impact on the everyday lives of the people of India. An honest and corruption free regime would lead to a much higher rate of growth of our GDP, bring an overall improvement in the economy and lead to greater transparency in government actions in serving its people. All this, in turn, will lead to greater empowerment of the people - the core need of a vibrant democracy.

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