



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** "Compassion without competence in public service can lead to greater harm than good." Discuss this statement with reference to emotional intelligence in governance. **(150 words)**

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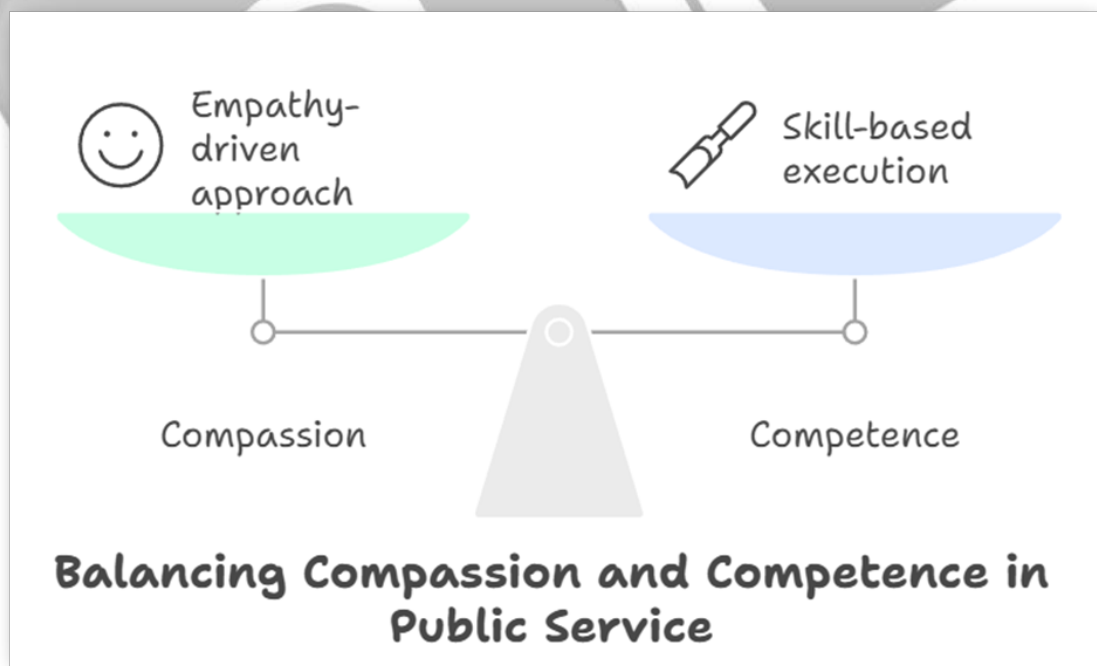
### Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining compassion, competence and emotional intelligence
- Give Importance of Compassion in Governance
- Highlight the Risks of Compassion Without Competence
- Delve into the Consequences of Neglecting Competence
- Give Role of Emotional Intelligence in Governance
- Conclude suitably.

### Introduction

Compassion ensures **responsiveness to societal needs, while competence guarantees the ability to execute solutions effectively.** Emotional intelligence (EI), the ability to balance empathy, self-awareness, and pragmatic decision-making—**is crucial to avoiding the pitfalls of compassion without competence in governance.**

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## Body

### Importance of Compassion in Governance

- **Building Trust:** Compassionate policies help build trust between citizens and the administration.
  - **Free Covid-19 vaccinations** demonstrate concern for public health.
- **Addressing Vulnerability:** Policies designed with empathy reach those most in need.
  - The **PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** provided food security during the pandemic.
- **Fostering Inclusivity:** Compassionate governance ensures inclusivity and representation of marginalized groups.
  - Initiatives like **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** promote gender equality.
- **Encouraging Citizen Participation:** People are more likely to cooperate with compassionate governance.
  - **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** saw widespread citizen involvement due to its people-centric approach.

### Risks of Compassion Without Competence

- **Inefficient Implementation:** Compassionate but poorly planned initiatives fail to achieve desired outcomes.
  - **Unregulated loan waivers** strain state finances without addressing farmers' root problems.
- **Unintended Harm:** Emotional decisions may cause harm due to lack of foresight or expertise.
  - **Free power schemes** led to groundwater depletion in Punjab.
- **Misallocation of Resources:** Resources are diverted to emotionally-driven but unsustainable policies.
  - **Excessive subsidies** without reforms weaken fiscal health.
- **Erosion of Accountability:** Overemphasis on compassion without competence fosters dependency, reducing individual agency.
  - **Persistent aid in disaster zones** without development plans hinders local self-reliance.

### Consequences of Neglecting Competence

- **Harmful Outcomes: Emotional but poorly executed interventions** can lead to greater public distrust.
  - **Example: Failure in providing relief packages post-disaster** can cause protests and worsen community suffering.
- **Erosion of Public Trust:** Citizens lose faith in the government if compassionate promises fail due to lack of execution.
  - **Example: Delayed rollout of unemployment benefits** during crises can exacerbate economic challenges.

### Role of Emotional Intelligence in Governance

- **Self-Awareness:** Recognizing one's biases and emotional impulses to ensure rational decision-making.
  - **Example:** A bureaucrat resisting populist pressure to implement sustainable welfare programs.
- **Empathy with Pragmatism:** Balancing care for citizens with a focus on long-term effectiveness.
  - **Example: Aspirational Districts Program** ensures targeted development through empathy and performance monitoring.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Managing disputes with emotional intelligence to foster harmony.
  - **Example:** Effective dialogue in **resolving farmers' protests with empathy and competence.**
- **Transparent Communication:** Building trust through clear and honest engagement.
  - **Example:** Kerala's transparent disaster management during floods balanced compassion with systemic response.

## Conclusion

**Compassion without competence risks inefficiency and harm in public service.** Emotional intelligence bridges this gap, enabling balanced, effective governance that responds to citizens' needs while ensuring sustainable outcomes.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/mains-practice-question/question-8613/pnt>

