



Mains Practice Question

Q. "Gender sensitization in public administration requires more than just policy changes." Discuss. **(150 words)**

09 Jan, 2025 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining Gender sensitization
- Give Importance of Gender Sensitization Beyond Policy Changes
- Highlight the Measures Required Beyond Policy Frameworks
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Gender sensitization in public administration refers to creating awareness, understanding, and responsiveness toward gender equity in governance processes. While policy changes like **reservations and legislations** are vital, real change requires addressing deeper social norms, workplace culture, and systemic challenges.

Body

Importance of Gender Sensitization Beyond Policy Changes:

- **Changing Mindsets and Attitudes:** Reservation for women in local governance (73rd and 74th Amendments) often **faces resistance due to patriarchal mindsets, leading to proxy leadership by male relatives (like Pradhan Pati)**.
- **Improving Workplace Culture:** Cases of sexual harassment in workplaces despite policies like the **Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act**.
- **Enhancing Gender-Responsive Service Delivery:** Policies alone cannot ensure inclusive service delivery without gender sensitivity among public servants.
 - **Example:** Women **facing harassment at police stations or health centers**, despite policies promoting access to justice and healthcare.
- **Addressing Intersectional Discrimination:** Gender policies often overlook the compounded challenges faced by women from marginalized communities (**e.g., Dalits, tribals, and minorities**).
 - Despite provisions for Scheduled Tribe women, lack of sensitivity among officials hinders their access to land rights or livelihood opportunities.

Measures Required Beyond Policy Frameworks:

- **Gender-Responsive Training for Public Officials**
 - Conduct regular gender sensitization workshops for bureaucrats, police, and other public servants at **both induction and in-service levels**.
 - Develop **training materials focusing on real-life scenarios**, unconscious bias, and case studies of effective gender-sensitive governance.

- **Community Engagement and Awareness:** Organize grassroots campaigns in collaboration with NGOs and local self-help groups to educate communities about gender equality and the roles of women in governance.
 - Empower grassroots women workers (**e.g., ASHA workers, Anganwadi staff**) through community awareness programs that promote respect for their contributions.
- **Leadership Development for Women in Administration:** Introduce mentorship programs where **senior women officers mentor and guide young women civil servants**.
 - Organize leadership and negotiation skills workshops to prepare women for decision-making roles.
 - Provide incentives or awards to recognize women leaders making a difference in administration.
 - **Example: IAS officer Smita Sabharwal of Telangana, known as the “People’s Officer,”** has inspired women in public administration through her citizen-centric reforms in healthcare and infrastructure.
- **Use of Technology for Gender Audits and Monitoring:** Develop gender dashboards that track women’s participation in governance, employment, and access to services across regions.
 - Use **mobile-based apps for real-time reporting of gender-based challenges** in service delivery.
 - Ensure **gender-disaggregated data collection** to analyze the impact of policies like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.
- **Creating Gender-Sensitive Infrastructure in Public Institution:** Ensure proper facilities like separate restrooms, child care facilities, and safe workplaces in government offices.
 - Introduce **flexible work arrangements like work-from-home options** for women officials in specific roles.

Conclusion

While policy changes lay the foundation, **transformative gender sensitization in public administration demands persistent efforts to change attitudes, workplace environments, and societal norms**. Only by addressing these systemic and cultural issues can public administration truly become a driver of gender equity and inclusivity.

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