

UPSC Preparation

Probity in Governance Questions (Year-Wise)

2019 – Probity in Governance Questions Theory-Based

1. Explain the basic principles of citizens' charter movement and bring out its importance.
2. There is a view that the Official Secrets Act is an obstacle to the implementation of the Right to Information Act. Do you agree with the view? Discuss.
3. What do you understand by probity in governance? Based on your understanding of the term, suggest measures for ensuring probity in government.

2019 – Probity in Governance Questions Case Study

1. In recent times, there has been an increasing concern in India to develop effective civil service ethics, code of conduct, transparency measures, ethics and integrity systems and anti-corruption agencies. In view of this, there is a need being felt to focus on three specific areas, which are directly relevant to the problems of internalizing integrity and ethics in civil services. These are as follows:
 1. Anticipating specific threats to ethical standards and integrity in the civil services
 2. Strengthening the ethical competence of civil servants and
 3. Developing administrative processes and practices which promote ethical values and integrity in civil services.

Suggest institutional measures to address the above three issues.

2018 – Probity in Governance Questions Theory-Based

1. Distinguish between "Code of Ethics" and "Code of Conduct" with suitable examples.
2. "The Right to Information Act is not all about citizens' empowerment alone, it essentially redefines the concept of accountability. Discuss.

2017 – Probity in Governance Questions Theory-Based

1. Examine the relevance of the following in the context of civil service:
 - Transparency
 - Accountability
 - Fairness and justice
 - Courage of conviction
 - Spirit of service
2. Discipline generally implies following the order and subordination. However, it may be counter-productive for the organisation. Discuss.

2017 – Probity in Governance Questions Case Study

1. A building permitted for three floors, while being extended illegally to 6 floors by a builder, collapses. As a consequence, a number of innocent labourers including women and children died. These labourers are migrants of different places. The government immediately announced cash relief to the aggrieved families and arrested the builder. Give reasons for such incidents taking place across the country. Suggest measures to prevent their occurrence.
2. You are a Public Information Officer (PIO) in a government department. You are aware that the RTI Act 2005 envisages transparency and accountability in administration. The act has functioned as a check on the supposedly arbitrarily administrative behaviour and actions. However, as a PIO you have observed that there are citizens who filed RTI applications not for themselves but on behalf of such stakeholders who purportedly want to have access to information to further their own interests. At the same time, there are these RTI activists who routinely file RTI applications and attempt to extort money from the decision-makers. This type of RTI activism has affected the functioning of the administration adversely and also possibly jeopardizes the genuineness of the applications which are essentially aimed at getting justice.

What measures would you suggest to separate genuine and non-genuine applications? Give the merits and demerits of your suggestions.

2016 – Probity in Governance Questions Theory-Based

1. What do you understand by the terms 'governance', 'good governance' and 'ethical governance'?
2. Discuss the Public Services Code as recommended by the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission

2016 – Probity in Governance Questions Case Study

1. Land needed for mining, dams and other large-scale projects is acquired mostly from Adivasis, hill dwellers and rural communities. The displaced persons are paid monetary compensation as per the legal provisions. However, the payment is often tardy. In any case, it cannot sustain the displaced families for long. These people do not possess marketable skills to engage in some other occupations. They end up as low paid migrant laborers. Moreover, their development goes to industries, industrialists and urban communities whereas the costs are passed on to these poor helpless people. This unjust distribution of costs and benefits is unethical. Suppose you have been entrusted with the task of drafting a better compensation-cum-rehabilitation policy for such displaced persons, how would you approach the problem and what would be the main elements of your suggested policy?

2015 – Probity in Governance Questions Theory-Based

1. Some recent developments such as the introduction of RTI Act, media and judicial activism, etc. are proving helpful in bringing about greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government. However, it is also being observed that at times the mechanisms are misused. Another negative effect is that the officers are now afraid to take prompt decisions. Analyse the situation in detail and suggest how the dichotomy can be resolved. Suggest how these negative impacts can be minimised.

2. Today we find that in spite of various measures of prescribing codes of conduct, setting up vigilance cells/commissions, RTI, active media and strengthening of legal mechanisms, corrupt practices are not coming under control.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of these measures with justifications.
 - Suggest more effective strategies to tackle this menace

2015 – Probity in Governance Questions Case Study

1. There is a disaster-prone state having frequent landslides, forest fires, cloudbursts, flash floods and earthquakes, etc. Some of these are seasonal and often unpredictable. The magnitude of the disaster is always unanticipated. During one of the seasons, a cloudburst caused devastating floods and landslides leading to high casualties. There was major damage to infrastructure like roads, bridges and power generating units. This led to more than 100000 pilgrims, tourists and other locals trapped across different routes and locations. The people trapped in your area of responsibility include senior citizens, patients in hospitals, women and children, hikers, tourists, ruling parties, regional presidents along with his family, additional chief secretary of the neighboring state and prisoners in jail.

As a civil services officer of the state, what would be the order in which you would rescue these people and why? Give Justifications

2014 – Probity in Governance Questions Case Study

1. Nowadays, there is an increasing thrust on economic development all around the globe. At the same time, there is also an increasing concern about environmental degradation caused by development. Many a time, we face a direct conflict between development activity and environmental quality. It is neither feasible to stop or curtail the developmental process, nor it is advisable to keep degrading the environment, as it threatens our very survival. Discuss some possible strategies which could be adopted to eliminate this conflict and which could lead to sustainable development.

2013 – Probity in Governance Questions Case Study

1. A Public Information Officer has received an application under RTI Act. Having gathered the information, the PIO discovers that the information pertains to some of the decisions taken by him, which were found to be not altogether right. There were other employees also who were party to these decisions. Disclosure of the information is likely to lead to disciplinary action with the possibility of punishment against him as well as some of his colleagues. Non-disclosure or part disclosure or camouflaged disclosure of information will result in lesser punishment or no punishment. The PIO is otherwise an honest and conscientious person but this particular decision, on which the RTI application has been filed, turned out to be wrong. He comes to you for advice. The following are some suggested options. Please evaluate the merits and demerits of each of the options:
 - The PIO could refer the matter to his superior officer and seek his advice and act strictly in accordance with the advice, even though he is not completely in agreement with the advice of the superior.
 - The PIO could proceed on leave and leave the matter to be dealt with by his successor in office or request for transfer of the application to another PIO.

- The PIO could weigh the consequences of disclosing the information truthfully, including the effect on his career, and reply in a manner that would not place him or his career in jeopardy, but at the same time, a little compromise can be made on the contents of the information.
- The PIO could consult his other colleagues who are party to the decision and take action as per their advice.

Also please indicate (without necessarily restricting to the above options) what you would like to advise, giving proper reasons.

1. You are working as an Executive Engineer in the construction cell of a Municipal Corporation and are presently in-charge of the construction of a flyover. There are two Junior Engineers under you who have the responsibility of day-to-day inspection of the site and are reporting to you, while you are finally reporting to the Chief Engineer who heads the cell. While the construction is heading towards completion, the Junior Engineers have been regularly reporting that all construction is taking place as per design specifications. However, in one of your surprise inspections, you have noticed some serious deviations and lacunae which, in your opinion, are likely to affect the safety of the flyover. Rectification of these lacunae at this stage would require a substantial amount of demolition and rework which will cause a tangible loss to the contractor and will also delay completion. There is a lot of public pressure on the Corporation to get this construction completed because of heavy traffic congestion in the area. When you brought this matter to the notice of the Chief Engineer, he advised you that in his opinion it is not a very serious lapse and may be ignored. He advised for further expediting the project for completion in time. However, you are convinced that this was a serious matter which might affect public safety and should not be left unaddressed. What will you do in such a situation? Some of the options are given below. Evaluate the merits and demerits of each of these options and finally suggest what course of action you would like to take, giving reasons.
 - Follow the advice of the Chief Engineer and go ahead.
 - Make an exhaustive report of the situation bringing out all facts and analysis along with your own viewpoints stated clearly and seek for written orders from the Chief Engineer.
 - Call for an explanation from the Junior Engineers and issue orders to the contractor for necessary correction within targeted time.
 - Highlight the issue so that it reaches superiors above the Chief Engineer.
 - Considering the rigid attitude of the Chief Engineer, seek transfer from the project or report sick.
2. Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu is known for its manufacturing clusters on firecrackers and matches. The local economy of the area is largely dependent on the firecrackers industry. It has led to tangible economic development and an improved standard of living in the area. So far as child labour norms for hazardous industries like the firecrackers industry are concerned, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has set the minimum age as 18 years. In India, however, this age is 14 years. The units in industrial clusters of firecrackers can be classified into registered and non-registered entities. One typical unit is household-based work. Though the law is clear on the use of child labour employment norms in registered/non-registered units, it does not include household-based works. Household-based work means children working under the supervision of their parents/relatives. To evade child labour norms, several units project themselves as household-based works but employ children from outside. Needless to say that employing children saves the costs for these units leading to higher profits for the owners. On your visit to one of the units at Sivakasi, the owner takes you around the unit which has about 10-15 children below 14 years of age. The owner tells you that in his household-based unit, the children are all his relatives. You notice that several children smirk when the owner tells you this. On deeper enquiry, you figure out that neither the owner nor the children are able to satisfactorily establish their relationship with each other. Bring out and discuss the ethical issues involved in the above case. What would be your reaction after your above visit?

