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Q8

The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS II · 10 marks · Governance and Policy

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Core demand of the question

- Link democratic governance to public trust in the civil service
- Show why integrity and commitment must be perceived, not only claimed
- Discuss instruments that build or wreck that perception
- Admit politicisation without making cynicism the last word

Revision summary

Democratic governance depends on daily trust in those who implement the law.

Perception of integrity and commitment is part of that trust, not an optional brand.

- **Instruments:** conduct rules, CVC, RTI, asset declarations, **Mission Karmayogi**, cleaner recruitment.

Politicised transfers and exam leaks destroy the perception faster than a training module can rebuild it.

Open postings and visible punishment are how a cadre earns the doctrine the question names.

Unseen integrity does not sustain a republic that now films the tehsil.

Introduction

Democratic governance is not only a vote every five years. It is the daily belief that the file will move without a bribe and that the order is not a faction's errand. Civil servants are the face of that belief. If the public thinks they are neither honest nor committed, the doctrine collapses into elections plus cynicism. The question is about **perception**, which is harsher than a vigilance statistic.

Body

Perception as a democratic input

A republic cannot watch every clerk; it relies on reputational capital.

- **Peg:** Nolan's principles - selflessness, integrity, accountability, openness - and the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** ethics chapter said standards must be **seen**.
- **Peg:** Right to Information, social audits and smartphones mean that a rude tehsil is a video, not a rumour.
- **Peg:** Perception is therefore a governance input, not a public-relations campaign.

Integrity and commitment

Integrity is the file; commitment is presence.

- **Peg:** Integrity needs conduct rules, asset declarations, **Central Vigilance Commission** and lokayukta paths, and a transfer policy that is not a marketplace.
- **Peg:** Commitment is competence plus presence: the officer who stays in the district, knows the scheme, and does not outsource the poor to a contractor.
- **Peg:** **Mission Karmayogi** tries to rebuild capacity; capacity without integrity is a more efficient rent-seeker.

What wrecks the picture, and what repairs it

The steel frame's self-image will not wait out a leak or a transfer market.

- **Peg:** Pliable postings, unions that defend the indifferent, and paper leaks in recruitment tell the young that even the gate is rigged.
- **Peg:** Media trials can be unfair; they are also how a democracy audits a closed cadre.
- **Peg:** Repair is public: transparent transfer boards, reasoned speaking orders, live service-delivery dashboards, protection for honest officers, and visible punishment that is not only for the unconnected.

Flow diagram

Democratic governance -> Trust
Trust -> Integrity seen
Trust -> Commitment seen
Integrity seen -> RTI CVC conduct
Commitment seen -> Karmayogi field presence
Transfer market leaks -> Trust

Conclusion

Democratic governance needs a civil service the public believes is honest and at work. That belief is built by open process and punished deviance, not by a lecture on the steel frame.

Facts & figures

Second Administrative Reforms Commission (Ethics in Governance)

Asked for a code of ethics, a public-service law, and protection of honest officers.

Mission Karmayogi

National programme for civil-service capacity building, competency-based rather than only seniority.

Right to Information Act, 2005

Turns official action into a public record and is a main driver of integrity perception.

Central Vigilance Commission

Apex integrity institution for the Union; perception still depends on whether its advice is seen to bite.

All India Services (Conduct) Rules

The everyday code on gifts, property returns and political neutrality - integrity as a file, not a speech.

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