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Q4

(a) One of the tests of integrity is complete refusal to be compromised. Explain with reference to a real life example. (150 Words, 10) (b) Corporate social responsibility makes companies more profitable and sustainable. Analyse. (150 Words, 10).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · GS IV · 10 marks · Ethics and Human Interface

Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics - in private and public relationships. Human Values - lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

Core demand of the question

- (a) One of the tests of integrity is complete refusal to be compromised. Explain with a real-life example
- (b) Corporate social responsibility makes companies more profitable and sustainable. Analyse

Revision summary

Integrity is tested by a complete refusal to sell the file, the tender or the truth, including the small gift.

Real-life pictures include moral responsibility after a railway disaster, an **Election Commission** that would not be soft, and officers who accept transfer rather than a crooked land deal.

CSR under the Companies Act, 2013 can cut conflict, attract talent and protect a social licence, which supports profit over time.

CSR as a brochure over unpaid labour or pollution is not sustainability.

The core business must itself be lawful; CSR is not a detergent.

Introduction

Integrity is what remains when a price is offered for the yes. Part (a) asks for that refusal in a real life. Part (b) asks whether corporate social responsibility is only charity or also a way a firm lasts.

Body**(a) Integrity as complete refusal to be compromised**

- Integrity means the public or professional role is not for sale, not in a large envelope and not in a small "facilitation".
- Complete refusal is the test because a half-compromise trains the next demand. The first gift is a hook, not a thank you.
- Compromise here is not ordinary negotiation over a lawful alternative. It is trading the truth of a file, a tender or a diagnosis for private gain, fear or belonging.

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri** resigning as Railway Minister after a serious accident, taking moral responsibility that the law did not strictly force, is integrity as honour, even though the stem's harder test is refusal of a corrupt bargain.
- **A clearer refusal:** S. R. Sankaran, as a civil servant, was known for siding with the landless and for not bending a welfare file to a local notable; the point is the habit, not a statue.
- Ashok Khemka's repeated transfers after acting against irregular land deals is often cited as the cost of refusal; whether every file is agreed or not, the public lesson is that integrity may be punished by posting, and still must not sell the stamp.
- **T. N. Seshan** as **Chief Election Commissioner** used the office to enforce the model code against parties that were used to a soft Commission; the compromise refused was the idea that elections are a private arrangement of the powerful.
- In daily life, a junior engineer who will not certify a weak culvert for a contractor's Diwali gift is the same test without a headline.
- **Complete refusal needs a system:** asset rules, a whistle-blower path, and colleagues who do not isolate the one person who said no. Integrity is personal, but it dies faster in a lonely office.

(b) CSR, profit and sustainability

- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in India is, after **Section 135** of the Companies Act, 2013, a statutory spend for eligible companies, not only a voluntary smile.
- The claim in the stem is that CSR makes firms more profitable and more sustainable. Analyse, do not recite.
- **How it can help profit:** a firm that is trusted on labour, environment and local consent faces fewer shutdowns, fewer court stays and a more stable workforce. That is risk reduction, which is a form of profit over time.
- **Brand and talent:** buyers and skilled staff prefer a firm that is not famous for a dead river. In export markets, social and environmental standards are often a ticket to the shelf.
- **Shared value**, as later business writing named it, is when a company solves a social problem that is also its supply chain - water for a beverage plant, skills for a factory town - rather than a random donation.
- **How the claim is overstated:** a two-per-cent spend can be a brochure while the core business still evades tax, poisons a stream or cheats a contract worker. That is not sustainability; it is makeup.
- Forced CSR can become a political slush or a favourite-trust pipeline if governance is weak. Profit then is a politician's, not the community's.
- Sustainability is environmental, social and financial at once. A CSR well that is photographed while groundwater is mined unsustainably fails the test.
- **The honest analysis:** CSR, done as strategy and as compliance with a clean core business, can support long-run profit and a social licence. CSR as a substitute for paying taxes, wages and effluent standards does not.

Flow diagram

Integrity -> Complete refusal
Complete refusal -> Unbought file
CSR -> Lower social risk
CSR -> Makeup if core is dirty
Lower social risk -> Sustainability
Makeup if core is dirty -> Licence to operate fails

Conclusion

Integrity is a complete no to the sale of a role; Shastri's responsibility, Seshan's enforcement and a junior's unbought signature are the same virtue at different heights. CSR can aid profit and endurance when it is tied to a clean core; it cannot wash a dirty one.

Facts & figures

Companies Act, 2013, Section 135

Requires eligible companies to constitute a CSR committee and spend a prescribed share of profits on scheduled social activities, with disclosure.

T. N. Seshan

As **Chief Election Commissioner** in the 1990s he tightened enforcement of the model code, showing an office that refused political compromise of the poll.

Lal Bahadur Shastri

Resigned as Railway Minister taking moral responsibility after a major accident, a public example of honour above a comfortable chair.

Social licence to operate

The informal acceptance a firm needs from neighbours, workers and regulators; lost faster by a disaster than it is bought by a donation.

Shared value

The idea that some social investments also strengthen the firm's own inputs and markets, as distinct from purely decorative charity.

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