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Q2

Examine the relevance of the following in the context of civil service: (150 Words, 10) (a) Transparency (b) Accountability (c) Fairness and justice (d) Courage of conviction (e) Spirit of service.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · GS IV · 10 marks · Probity in Governance

Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Core demand of the question

- **Examine the relevance of the following in the context of civil service:** (a) Transparency (b) Accountability (c) Fairness and justice (d) Courage of conviction (e) Spirit of service

Revision summary

Transparency is lawful openness of rules, queues and reasons so that bribes lose their dark room.

Accountability is the duty to explain a file to superiors, auditors, courts and citizens.

Fairness and justice are equal treatment plus hearing and reasons, rooted in **Article 14** and **natural justice**.

Courage of conviction is a recorded lawful no under pressure, not rude stubbornness.

Spirit of service is treating the citizen as the purpose of the post, which completes the other four.

Introduction

A civil servant holds other people's power. These five qualities are not decoration. They are how that power stays safe for a stranger at the counter.

Body**(a) Transparency**

- Transparency means the citizen can see the rule, the queue, the criterion and, where secrecy is not strictly required, the reason.
- In civil service it is relevant because darkness is where a bribe is priced and a cousin is inserted.
- The **Right to Information Act, 2005** and suo motu disclosure under **Section 4** make transparency a duty, not a favour.
- A published beneficiary list, an e-tender and a speaking order are transparency in daily form.
- Transparency is not gossip and not the leaking of a cabinet paper that the law still protects. It is openness with a lawful exception, not a locked cupboard as the default.

(b) Accountability

- Accountability means the officer can be asked, on the file and in public forums, why this person got the licence and that person waited.
- Upward accountability to a superior is old. RTI, audit, the legislature, courts and social audit add accountability to people who were never in the room.
- Without it, transparency is a pile of papers no one must explain.
- The **Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964** and disciplinary inquiries are accountability with a penalty. A media trial is not a substitute for a fair inquiry.

(c) Fairness and justice

- Fairness is the same rule for a friend and a rival. Justice is that rule plus a hearing for the person who will be hurt.
- **Article 14** of the Constitution of India is fairness in legal form. **Natural justice** - hear the other side, give reasons, do not be a judge in your own cause - is justice in procedure.
- In civil service this is relevant at the ration shop, the police station and the recruitment board. A clever officer who is unfair is still a failed trustee.
- Justice also means a bias toward the weakest when the law allows discretion, because they cannot buy a second visit.

(d) Courage of conviction

- Courage of conviction is the will to record a lawful no when a powerful person wants a yes.
- It is relevant because integrity without courage becomes a private feeling, and the file still moves the wrong way.
- It is not stubbornness. The officer must still listen, still cite the statute, and still accept a lawful contrary order from a competent authority on the note.
- Examples include refusing a false muster, refusing a communal targeting of a raid, and putting a dissent on a note rather than whispering in the corridor.
- The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** on Ethics in Governance treated this courage as part of integrity, not as optional heroism.

(e) Spirit of service

- Spirit of service is the habit of treating the counter as a public trust, not as a burden or a shop.
- It is relevant because a transparent and fair system still fails if the officer humiliates the applicant or delays out of disdain.
- **Gandhi's** talisman - recall the weakest face - is this spirit in one sentence.
- It shows in a disability pension that is not sent on a third trip, in a disaster camp that is run before the camera arrives, and in courtesy that the Conduct Rules already require.
- Spirit of service without the other four becomes sentimental theatre. The other four without it become a cold machine that the Constitution did not ask for.

Flow diagram

Civil service -> Transparency
Civil service -> Accountability
Civil service -> Fairness and justice
Civil service -> Courage of conviction
Civil service -> Spirit of service
Transparency -> Public trust
Accountability -> Public trust
Fairness and justice -> Public trust
Courage of conviction -> Public trust
Spirit of service -> Public trust

Conclusion

Transparency lets the public see. Accountability makes the officer answer. Fairness and justice keep the republic one. Courage of conviction protects the file from fear. Spirit of service keeps the human being in the queue. Civil service needs all five together.

Facts & figures

Right to Information Act, 2005

Statutory right of citizens to official information, with time limits and a Commission; the main legal engine of transparency.

Article 14, Constitution of India

Equality before the law and equal protection of the laws; the constitutional name for fairness in public power.

Natural justice

Hear the affected person, act without bias, and give reasons; the procedural core of justice in administration.

Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Ethics in Governance

The Fourth Report stressed integrity, transparency and ethical codes for ministers and civil servants.

Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964

Require integrity, courtesy and conduct becoming a government servant; they give accountability a disciplinary door.