

# UNIT 84 – UPSC - Strengthening of Ethical and Moral Values in Governance

Ethics is an effort to direct human conduct and it helps individual in leading good life by applying moral principles. Ethics is elucidated as well based standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. In present scenario, ethics in governance are attracting attention of researchers, people who talk of good governance. The spread of democracy in various countries of the world has highlighted the issue of ethics in governance. The Overall purpose of ethics is to ensure good governance with prime concern for ethical principles, practices and behaviour. Governance is described as the way an organization takes itself and the processes and structure that are used to realise its goals. Governance is also crucially concerned with how organizations relate to each other, how they relate to citizens and the way in which citizens are given a voice. The essential duty of governance is to effectively and equitably implement what is called the social contract. Changeover to liberalization and economic reforms, and to new types of managerial set-ups is a complex and difficult task which demands a highly competent, well informed and caring administration.



In prehistoric time of India, good governance was conceptualized as Ram Rajya. The cardinal aphorism of be good and do good was applied to all the monarchies, whether personal or professional; and the governmental system was no exception. Kautilya in his magnum opus (Arthashastra) urged the rulers to be compassionate to their subjects. In contemporary India, more and more inhabitants are becoming educated, progressive and aware of their rights. Therefore, ethics in governance are attracting attention of all the people who talk of good governance. The general objective of morality is to ensure good governance with prime concern for moral values, practices and behaviour. These moral values are inculcated in an individual by her parents, teachers, religion, society and the environment of workplace.

The important duty of governance is to effectively and impartially implement what is called the social contract. Hence, it demands a highly competent, well informed administration. It envisages the government institutions to become innovative, participatory and have a good deal of sound policy formulation, open-mindedness, and distinct citizen orientation.

The advancement of ethics and moral values in good governance suggests legality of government action, rationality in policy and decision making, evolving a sense of responsibility, ensuring accountability, strengthening work commitment, creating excellence, facilitating spirit of individual and organizational goals, developing responsiveness, showing compassion, protecting the national interests, protecting the spirit of justice, bringing transparency and elevating integrity. Actually, these values expect the controllers of ancient India to be the civil servants of modern India that are guided by a spirit of service.

Role of ethics and moral values is significant in bringing good governance. There are numerous ways to strengthen the moral values in governance.

1. **Principle of Selflessness:** Officers of public offices should take decision solely in terms of public interest. They should not do anything to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. **High Integrity:** Holders of public life should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. **Objectivity:** In conducting public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices only on merit.
4. **Accountability:** Owners of public offices should be as open as possible on all the decisions and actions that they take. They should record reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interests clearly demand.
5. **Honesty:** Holders of public offices have a duty to declare any private interest relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.
6. **Leadership:** Holders of public offices should promote and support these principles by way of leadership and examples.
7. **Sense of belongingness with the Public:** In order to implement ethics in governance, the elected representative like village Panchayat members, Block Samiti members, Zilla Parishad members, Elected members to the local bodies, MLA's and MPs should develop a sense of belongingness with voters of their constituencies; and listen and redress their grievances by visiting them periodically . There should not be any communication gap between the two.
8. **Responsible and Responsive Civil Servants:** Each Ministry is headed by a senior level bureaucrat who is a link between the public and the government. These high level officers should give proper feed-back on the problems faced by the public to the concerned Minister and suggest the feasible measure which can be taken to solve the problem within the ambit of law. If possible they can also suggest to amend the law to address the problem properly.
9. **Friendly relation with people:** If there are cordial relations between the government and the people at different levels, then governance will transform into good governance. People

will feel that they are part of the administration, and they shall better understand the position of the government if any of their critical demand is not met with, due to any technical reason.

It is said that ethics and moral values can bring good governance and maximum public welfare therefore government and private employs must promote ethical practices in administration.