Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

What are the basic principles of public life? Illustrate any three of these with suitable examples.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; leadership; public interest

Model Answer

Introduction

The basic principles of public life guide individuals exercising public authority to act ethically, fairly and in the interests of society. The Nolan Principles provide an influential framework for ethical public conduct.

Three Basic Principles

1. Selflessness

Public servants should take decisions solely in the public interest rather than for personal gain.

Example: A minister allocates funds according to developmental needs instead of favouring a relative's constituency for private benefit.

2. Integrity

Public officials must avoid obligations to individuals or organisations that could improperly influence their official duties.

Example: An officer refuses a bribe offered to manipulate a public tender and follows transparent procurement procedures.

3. Objectivity

Decisions should be based on merit, evidence and established rules rather than personal preferences or political pressure.

Example: A recruitment board selects candidates according to published eligibility criteria and examination performance.

Importance

These principles strengthen public trust, prevent corruption, promote impartial administration and ensure that public power is exercised responsibly.

Conclusion

Ethical public life requires consistent adherence to integrity, fairness and public interest. By practising these principles, public servants strengthen democratic governance and institutional legitimacy.