

Role of Civil Services – Issues and Challenges

#1 What is the importance of civil services in the governance process?

- (1) All India character; binding; Administrative + managerial capacity
- (2) Recruitment → independent /autonomous [UPSC]; rigorous training & selection process.
- (3) Effective policymaking + regulation + effective coordination + leadership role → governance
- (4) Service delivery → Technological adoption & adaptability + high integrity + code of conduct.
- (5) Permanent executives - 'continuity & change' → administration [stability/certainty in policies + repository of new ideas]

#2 How do civil servants act as an agent of socio-economic and political transformation?

- (1) Social – policy formulation/ implementation; protection to vulnerable sections; equality, justice and equal protection of law.
- (2) Economic – Impartial public service delivery; Identification of beneficiaries [welfare schemes]; food security; tax collection + wealth redistribution; employment/ livelihood; financial bodies → recommendatory [Finance Commission] /regulatory [SEBI, IRDA]/ taxation [IT, GST]
- (3) Political – unity & integrity; participatory democracy; fair and transparent elections; guide to political executives; continuity in governance/policies; Protect national interest in international arena.

#3 What are the various issues plaguing the civil services?

- (1) **Structural impediments** – (a) poor capacity building + professionalism; (b) mismatch → skills/tasks [generalists v specialists]; (c) outdated rules/procedures; (d) promotions → years of service/reservation [dis-incentivize merit]; (e) simultaneous instances of vacancy + overstaffing;
- (2) **Operational impediments** – (a) Lack of incentives/motivation [job-security; Article 311 – Dismissal/removal] (b) arbitrary transfers; (c) upright and outstanding civil servants → not rewarded/recognized; (d) Political interference/ pressure/patronage [committed bureaucracy]; (e) ethical code of conduct/ misappropriation of funds.