

Access to information leading to good governance

- It acts as a check on **favouritism and vested interests** that influence the process of decision-making. For example, procurement of goods through the Government e-Marketplace portal.
- It empowers citizens to **hold the government accountable** and upholds rule of law. For example, the Association of Democratic Reforms has pressed for electoral reforms by highlighting electoral malpractices.
- Free access to information also promotes **equal opportunity** to receive public service or participate in its delivery. For example, TRAI's invitation to public views in the case of Net neutrality.
- Rights-based access to information facilitates audits of government decisions helping in **highlighting corruption**. For example, the RTI Act brought to light Adarsh scam, CWG scam etc.
- Access to information builds **confidence and trust** of the people in the process and reduces the chances of frauds.

Good governance involves transformation of governance from an act of patronage to one of service for the weakest social link. An informed and participatory approach can act as a catalyst for this transition.

8. *It is sometimes believed that moral scrupulousness in one's private life automatically guarantees high moral stature in professional life. Do you agree? Justify your stand with logical arguments.* (150 words) 10

Approach:

- Differentiate between private and professional morality.
- Discuss instances where private morality diverges from public morality.
- Write about instances where private morality has led to public morality.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Private morality is the conduct of an individual in one's personal life whereas **professional morality** covers aspects of good conduct in a professional space such as an organisation or in the political sphere. **In personal life**, we deal with those with whom we are close such as family and friends while in the professional domain we deal with people with different social-religious-political-beliefs and with whom we have a formal relationship.

It may seem counter-intuitive but **private morality does not automatically guarantee public morality** or vice versa. **Self-aggrandizement may cause deviations** in the behaviours in public and private lives. For instance, Keshub Chandra Sen fighting against child marriage and yet marrying his own minor daughter to the King of Cooch Behar. Similarly, a person who has displayed professional morality may **slip in private matters**, such as Bill Clinton indulged in extra-marital relationship in private life while he is credited with ushering in economic reforms in the USA.

Though deviations in private and public lives are common, there are many cases where **people have shown oneness in conduct of both the lives**. Such persons have displayed **integrity, fortitude and courage of conviction** in their conduct. For example, Ratan Tata has led a value-driven business based on ethical corporate governance and has displayed humility, philanthropy and empathy in personal life. Similarly, Lal Bahadur Shastri asked his own family to fast for a day before asking the nation to do the same in times of food scarcity. APJ Abdul Kalam lived a very simple life and displayed highest standards of probity in his public life as the President of India and also afterwards.

Thus, there are many instances where **congruence as well as deviations between conduct of private and public moralities** have been found. A person may be moral in public life, yet he may indulge in immoral acts in private life. Similarly, a person showing piousness in private matters may totally be at odds with societal morality. To **resolve the conflict between private and professional moralities**, one needs to have integrity and consistency in character. Also, one should practice virtues such as honesty, transparency, selflessness, and accountability, among others in both personal and professional spheres.