

Lesson One

Ethics in Public Administration

Ethics in public administration refers to the set of moral principles and standards that guide the conduct of government officials and public servants in the discharge of their duties. Ethics ensures that public administrators act in the interest of the public, maintain impartiality, uphold justice, and remain committed to democratic values. Ethical governance is essential because public servants operate with significant discretionary powers, and their decisions can deeply affect the lives of citizens. Therefore, ethical behavior not only fosters public trust but also strengthens the legitimacy of public institutions. Ethics also serves as a preventive tool against corruption, arbitrariness, and misuse of power.

Public Service Values

Public service values are the fundamental principles that shape the culture and conduct of public administrators. These values serve as benchmarks for expected behavior and guide decision-making processes. Among the most significant values are **integrity**, which implies honesty, consistency, and moral uprightness; **impartiality**, which demands fairness and objectivity in dealing with the public; **accountability**, which requires public servants to be answerable for their actions; and **transparency**, which ensures openness in administrative processes to allow scrutiny by stakeholders. Other values such as respect for the rule of law, service to the public, and commitment to equity and social justice are equally vital. These values are often codified in civil service conduct rules or professional codes of ethics and are reinforced through training, institutional culture, and public expectations.

Integrity in Public Administration

Integrity is the ethical backbone of public service. It involves adhering to moral and ethical standards even in the face of personal or institutional pressures. A public official with integrity resists corruption, favoritism, and conflicts of interest and prioritizes public welfare over personal or political gains. Integrity also implies consistency between words and actions and upholding the principles of justice, fairness, and respect for individuals' rights. In practice, integrity is fostered through a combination of personal character, professional ethics, and institutional mechanisms. Governments can promote integrity by establishing clear codes of conduct, offering ethics training, setting up whistleblower protection laws, and creating a work culture where ethical behavior is rewarded and unethical conduct is sanctioned. High integrity not only improves service delivery but also enhances citizens' confidence in governance.