

## Lesson Three

### Challenges to Ethics and Accountability

Despite the existence of well-established principles and mechanisms, the implementation of ethical governance and effective accountability faces several challenges. Political interference often weakens the autonomy of administrative agencies, compromising their ethical standards. Bureaucratic inertia and the culture of impunity can hinder transparency and responsiveness. Lack of ethical leadership, inadequate training, and insufficient protection for whistleblowers also create an environment where misconduct may go unpunished. Moreover, administrators frequently face **ethical dilemmas**—for example, choosing between loyalty to political superiors and fidelity to the law or the public interest. In resource-scarce settings or highly politicized environments, public officials may also face pressures that conflict with ethical behavior.

### Strengthening Ethics and Accountability

To reinforce ethics and accountability, a multifaceted approach is necessary. On the **policy level**, governments can strengthen oversight institutions, improve grievance redressal mechanisms, and introduce stricter enforcement of conduct rules. **E-governance tools**—such as digital service delivery platforms and online grievance portals—reduce discretion and enhance transparency. On the **cultural and organizational level**, it is essential to promote ethical leadership, instill public service values through continuous training, and reward ethical conduct through recognition and career progression. Encouraging open dialogue, fostering internal checks and balances, and ensuring the independence of accountability institutions are also vital for creating a culture of integrity. Ultimately, building public trust depends not only on punishing wrongdoers but also on creating an environment where ethical behavior is the norm and not the exception.