

Civil Services Conduct Rules

Why in news?

Being a civil servant comes with many perks and benefits, but it also brings with it its own limitations and various rules surrounding an officer's conduct.

What are the civil services?

- The civil services recruited by Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) are categorised into two types.
- **All India Services** - the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service and the Indian Forest Service.
- All India Services are governed by [Article 312](#) of the Constitution of India.
- These services are selected by the central government with officers allotted to various state cadres.
- The bureaucrats who work directly for the Centre are from each state on central deputation.
- **Central Civil Services** - Indian Foreign Service, the Indian Revenue Service, Customs and Central Excise Service and several others.
- These services are under the central government itself with no state cadre system.

What are the rules for civil servants?

Conduct rules for civil servants are the set of rules for the standards of behaviour of people working in the civil services.

- Civil servants are governed under two sets of rules for the two types of services. They are
 - The All India Services (AIS) Conduct Rules, 1968
 - Central Civil Services (CCS) Conduct Rules, 1964
- These rules were framed based on recommendations of the [Committee on Prevention of Corruption](#), headed by [K.Santhanam](#).
- The committee was constituted by then Minister of Home Affairs Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1962.

What are the restrictions for civil servants under these rules?

- **Vague** - The Conduct Rules cover a wide range of issues, some rules are vague and some rules are more specific.
- Rule 3(1) states 'shall do nothing which is [unbecoming of a member of the Service](#)' and gives the ambiguous idea of personal integrity.

- **Political neutrality** - Rule 5(1) states civil servants are not allowed to be part of or assist political parties.
- While members can hold personal political beliefs, these rules restrict the degree to which they can act on them.
- **Personal opinion** - Expressing personal opinions also has similar restrictions.
- Rule 7 of AIS Rules restricts expressing personal opinion over public media in any form which has adverse criticism on government activities is restricted.
- **Dowry** - Both giving and receiving dowry is strictly prohibited under rule 11 (1-A) of the AIS Rules on 'Giving or taking of dowry'.
- **Gifts** - Rule 11(1) deals with the receiving of gifts under certain conditions.
- Any gift whose value exceeds Rs.25, 000 by a civil servant needs to be reported to the Government.

What are the newly added rules?

- Though the conduct rules are from the 1960s, the rules are amended and added from time to time.
- In 1979, the government added that, 'The direction of the official superior shall ordinarily be in writing.'
- In 1998, the government added that 'No member of the Service shall employ to work any child below the age of 14 years.'
- In 2014, few sub-rules were added to the Conduct Rules.
- Every member of the Service shall maintain -
 - High ethical standards
 - Political neutrality
 - Integrity and honesty
 - Accountability and transparency
 - Responsiveness to the public
 - Courtesy and good behaviour with the public.
- The threshold of Rs 25,000 for receiving gifts was last fixed in 2015.

How about the coverage of the rules and the penalty?

- **Coverage** - Officers are covered under the rules as soon they join training.
- Certain rules continue to apply post retirement as well.
- **Penalty** - Failing to comply by the rules invite penalties.
- Transgressions can attract two kinds of penalties - major and minor.
- Major penalties can include 'dismissal' from the service as well.

References

[The Indian Express | Code of conduct for civil servants: A review](#)