

Qn. In the context of improving public policies, the use of social media by civil servants of the country acts as double-edged sword. Examine

The civil servant is like the steel frame that holds a grand building together. While anonymity is a part of their services, the age of social media has heralded in changes, with bureaucrats using social media for the social good.

### Merits

- (i) Social media allows bureaucrats in informing people about various government initiatives.  
eg. Covid vaccinations are advertised for achieving the goal of full vaccination
- (ii) Discards the long perceived view of bureaucrats being opaque and inaccessible
- (iii) Bureaucrats can shape public discourse while being politically neutral
- (iv) It allows citizens to have a positive outlook on the various schemes and public policies since delivery issues are resolved through use of social media

### Demerits

- (i) Often used for self promotion
- (ii) Bureaucrats choose what they want to say and what they want to reply to → leads to



- creating a misguided narrative of his/her performance
- (iii) Unethical to use social media during office hours
  - (iv) Not an alternative to citizen centric & institutional accountability

### Way forward

- (i) Institutionalise use of social media. eg. During Brexit debate, civil servants used this forum while being political neutral.
- (ii) In an age of fake news and systemic propaganda, social media may be used shaped by the bureaucrats, the storehouse of facts and epitome of values, while being politically neutral.
- (iii) Use of social media can be restricted to publicising government schemes and policies.
- (iv) Civil servants must consider this public forum and same considerations should apply as would to speaking in public or publishing a material.
- (v) Emphasis must be given to attending to citizens who have travelled long distances for solving their problems.