

Qn: In the context of improving public policies, the use of social media by civil servants of the country act as a double edged sword.

EXAMINE.

The civil servant is like the foundation of a grand building that never gets the credits for the grandeur though it is the steel structure that holds the building together.

- Anil Swarup.

While anonymity is part of being a civil servant, social media, in recent times, has been a platform to come out of this cocoon for social good.

POSITIVES :

- * Social media provides an opportunity for bureaucrats to shape the public discourse and engage with the public while being politically neutral. Eg: Brexit Debates in UK.
- * Many civil servants have become accessible to the common people & public service delivery issues have been resolved through the use of social media.

↳ For example, during Covid-19, social media proved effective in mobilising essential items to help the needy.

- * Social media has also created a positive outlook towards an institution long perceived as opaque & inaccessible.

Social media has also increased awareness among people about government policies & programs.

Issues :

* Often used for Self-Promotion :

Social media is getting used by civil servants for self-promotion & justifies that in the name of accessibility & accountability.

* When any views of the civil servant is posted, in the eye of the common man, it may not be seen as the view of an individual but more, ^{as} ~~of~~ the view of the office that he/she holds, which would appear as if the bureaucrat is not being neutral.

For Example : IAS officer Ajay Gangwar 'liked' a facebook post critical on the Prime Minister - was seen as a bureaucrat expressing his views rather than an individual's perspective.

WAY FORWARD :

* Bureaucrats should use social media to improve & shape public policies.

* If not used properly, social media might Threaten their role as independent advisers

* After all Bureaucracy is all about evolving brilliantly as a part of this instituition & system rather than shining individually.