

WELCOME

OFFICE ETHICS

M. Uma Shankar

*“Any law is as good as the integrity
(and capability) of the officer
implementing it” .*

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

- Professional ethics is defined as the personal and corporate rules that govern behavior within the context of a particular profession.
- Professionalism is all about success and influence.
- Professional is someone who exhibits professionalism under any circumstances.

ALWAYS STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

- Achieving greatness in whatever endeavor you undertake is the quality that makes you and your work stand-out.
- Excellence is a quality of service which is unusually good and so surpasses ordinary standards.
- It should be made a habit for it to make a good impression on your bosses and colleagues.

BE TRUSTWORTHY

- Trustworthiness is about fulfilling an assigned task and as an extension- not letting down expectations. It is being dependable, and reliable when called upon to deliver a service.
- In order to earn the trust of your bosses and colleagues, worth and integrity must be proven over time.

BE ACCOUNTABLE

➤ To be accountable is to stand tall and be counted for the actions you have undertaken; this is the blameworthiness and responsibility for your actions and its consequences- good or bad.

BE COURTEOUS AND RESPECTFUL

- Courteousness is being friendly, polite and well mannered with a gracious consideration towards others.
- It makes social interactions in the workplace run smoothly, avoid conflicts and earn respect.
- Respect is a positive feeling of esteem or deference for a person or organization; it is built over time and can be lost with one stupid or inconsiderate action.
- Continued courteous interactions are required to maintain or increase the original respect gained.

BE HONEST, OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

➤Honesty is a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as truthfulness, straightforwardness of conduct, loyalty, fairness, sincerity, openness in communication and generally operating in a way for others to see what actions are being performed.

➤This is a virtue highly prized by employers and colleagues, for it builds trust and increases your personal value to all.

BE COMPETENT AND IMPROVE CONTINUALLY

➤ Competence is the ability of an individual to do a job properly, it is a combination of knowledge, skills and behavior used to improve performance.

➤ Competency grows through experience and to the extent one is willing to learn and adapt.

➤ Continuous self development is a prerequisite in offering professional service at all times

ALWAYS BE ETHICAL

- Ethical behavior is acting within certain moral codes in accordance with the generally accepted code of conduct or rules.
- It is always safe for an employee to “play by the rules”.
- This is always the best policy and in instances the rule book is inadequate, acting with a clear moral conscience is the right way to go.
- This may cause friction in some organizations but ethical organizations will always stand by the right moral decisions and actions of their employees.

BE RESPECTFUL OF CONFIDENTIALITY

- Confidentiality is respecting the set of rules or promise that restricts you from further and unauthorized dissemination of information.
- Over the course of your career, information will be passed on to you in confidence – either from the organization or from colleagues- and it is important to be true to such confidence.
- You gain trust and respect of those confiding in you and increase your influence within the organization.

SET GOOD EXAMPLES

- Applying the foregoing rules helps you improve your professionalism within your organization but it is not complete until you impact knowledge on those around and below you.
- You must show and lead by good example.
- Being a professional is about living an exemplary life within and without the organization.

Real effectiveness of any legislation is reduced significantly, if officers entrusted with responsibility lack integrity.

MEANING OF THE TERM “INTEGRITY”

- In oxford dictionary, the term “integrity” means “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles” or “the state of being whole and not divided”.
- The World Customs Organization has defined the term “integrity” as “A positive set of attitudes which foster honest and ethical behavior and work practices”
- From the definition mentioned above, it may be noted that it is more than mere absence of abuse of power and corruption; and it includes delivering services to meet the organizational objectives.

IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY

The lack of integrity can have the following consequences:

- Revenue leakage
- Distortion of economic incentives
- Reduction in public trust & confidence in government institution
- Reduction in the level of trust & cooperation between the department & other government agencies
- Low personnel morale & “esprit de corps”
- Increased costs which are ultimately borne by the community
- Reduction in the level of voluntary compliance with the law & regulations
- Reduction in national security & community protection

Causes

- Regulation, protectionism and the licence raj
- Complex procedures
- Red tape and delay
- Lack of transparency
- Insufficient delegation and decentralisation
- Delay in investigation and inquiries
- Insufficient deterrence because of delay and low levels of conviction and punishment
- Decline in societal values because of consumerism and addiction to materialism
- Leadership across society inspired by greed for money and power

Remedies

- Deregulation and opening up of the economy
- Simplification of procedures –Automation
- Right to information - Proactive disclosure
- Delegation and decentralisation
- Less government – Privatisation of non-public goods
- Strengthening of institutions - Lokpal
- Strong action and setting of examples by quick and punitive action against the powerful but corrupt
- Training and education – transforming societal values

Perception about Government Servants

Personal Values

- Arrogant
- Unpleasant
- Inefficient and wasteful
- Indecisive
- Unable to deliver quality service
- Incompetent
- Sycophants
- Corrupt
- Self seeking



When I do good, I feel good; when I
do bad, I feel bad, and that is my
religion – Abraham Lincoln

If a man is called to be a streetsweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great streetsweeper who did his job well.

Martin Luther King

THE ETHICS CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Is it legal?
2. How will it make me feel about myself? Will it make me proud? Would I feel good if my action was published in the newspaper? Would I feel good if my family knew about it? Would I recommend such action to my child ?
3. Is it balanced? Does it promote win-win situations?

Moral Communities

Obligation to

self

family

friends

employer

clients

colleagues

profession

local community

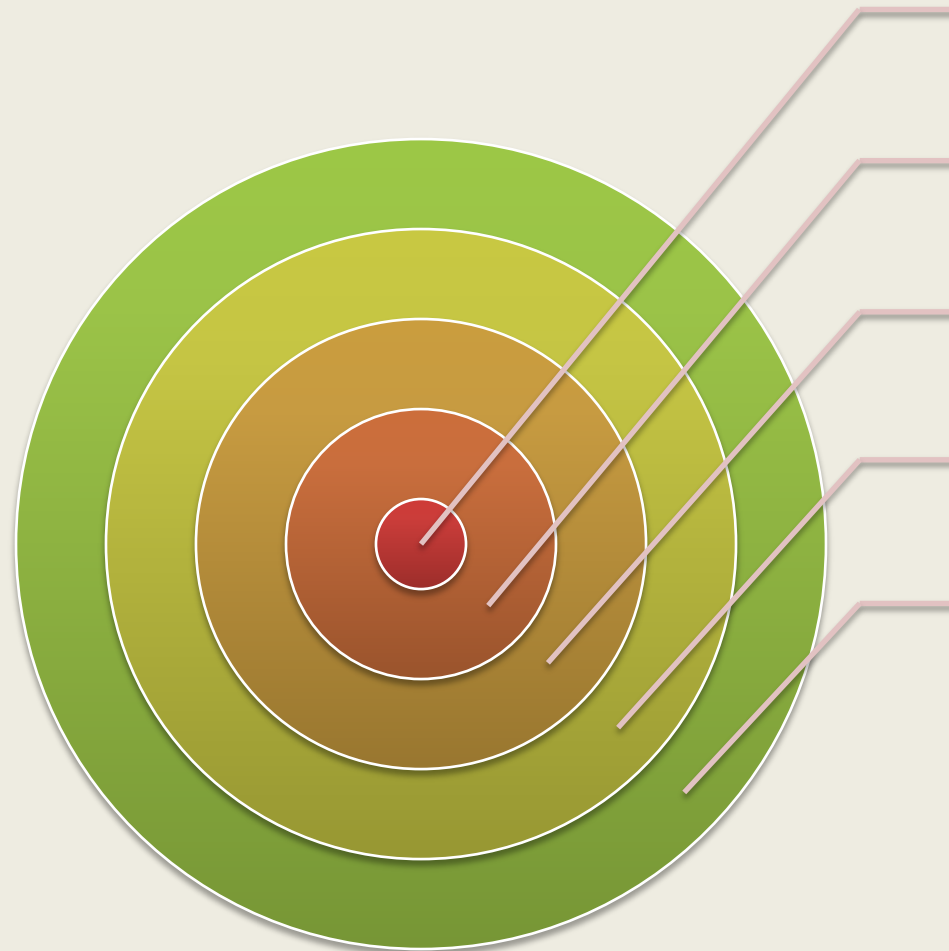
region

country

future generations

mankind

life



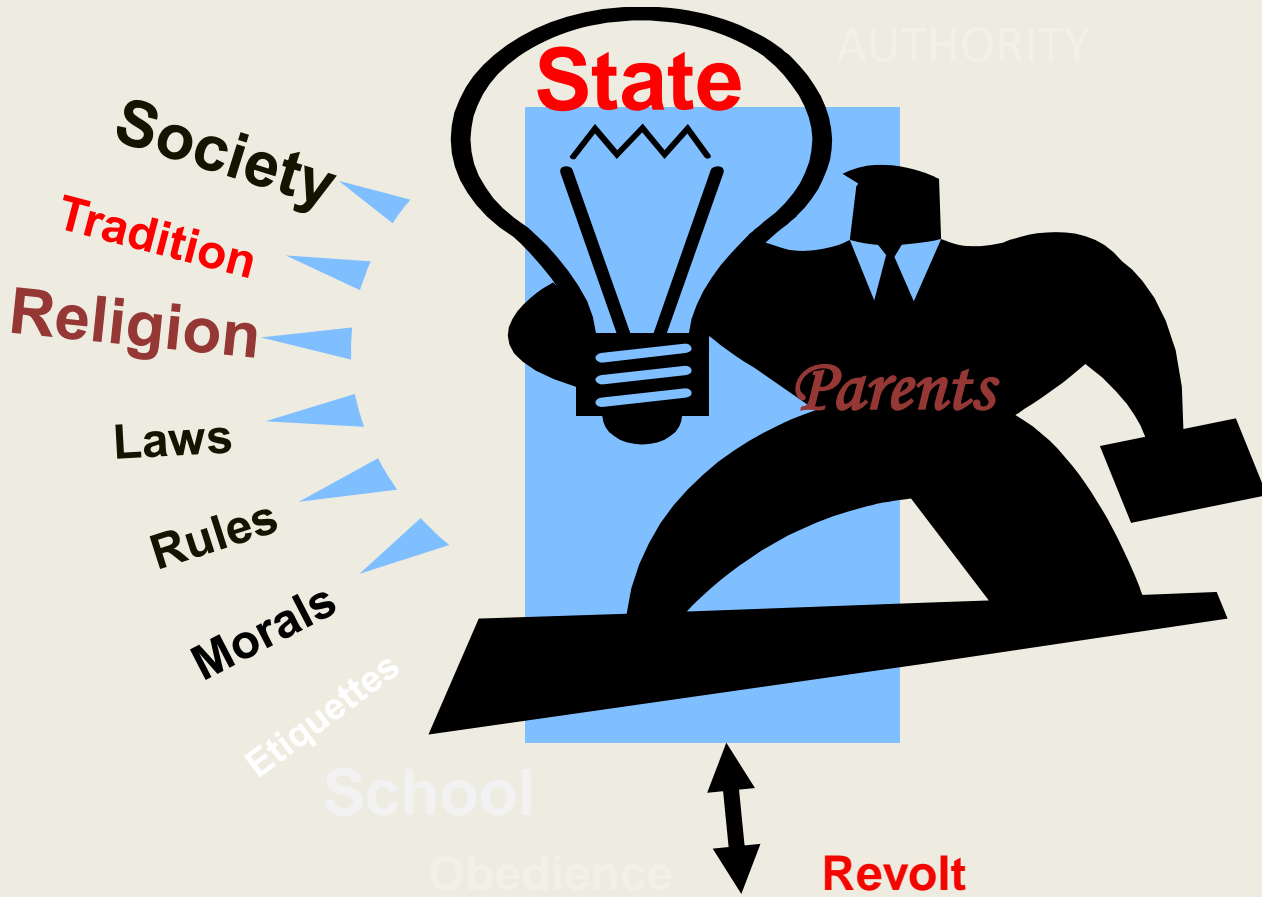
Self

Family

Friends

Professional
Stakeholders

Country



Authority and the Individual

THANK YOU

M. Uma Shankar, IRS