1. Information sharing is the most important pillar of modern day governance. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

Modern day governance is based on fundamental principles of good governance and the integrating fiber of these fundamental bodies is free and authentic flow of information.
It must be understood that the false complain to lord Rama was the reason for behind atrocities to Devi Sita. Thus information, which must be authentic, should flow across stakeholders. It instills a sense of trust. It encourages participation and empowers the citizens.

Body

Information sharing also act as disinfectants to corrupt offices and officials. It incorporates internal as well as external check in governance system. Internal check in the form of awakening conscience and fear of high cost and risk of corruption. On the other hand external check is in the form of enabling and empowering various stakeholders to scrutinize the actions, commission and omissions of government.

It is because of information sharing that rate of participation of masses in democracy has increased rapidly. It has helped us to realise the true value of " government by the people".

The role of civil societies is increasing just because the information regarding the areas where their cooperation is required is publicly disposed.

The importance of information sharing can be gauged from the fact that even supreme court has been balancing need of this pillar and it's primacy of independence. Recently, cji has accepted mandatory information sharing by his office.

Lack of information sharing or partial sharing or ill information, all lead to chaos anarchy, distress, disgruntled and dissociated citizenry. The recent country wide protest against CAA AND NRC is nothing but communication gap between masses and government.

Information sharing ensures that accountability and answerability is fixed. This can be seen in case of various scams exposed using powers RTI act.

Information sharing increases the risk of corruption and thus provides ambient atmosphere for masses to remain honest and deliver service with integrity. Information sharing also synchronizes the efforts of various stakeholders. It clears up the prejudices and superstition. This tool of sharing information is crucial as gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore said to end my country into heaven it is must that mind is free

and head of held high. It is only information sharing which can keep our mind free and empower us to hold head high.

Conclusion

To conclude it can be said that in this age where data is new oil and gold, information sharing has emerged as inevitable caring practice. So a welfare government must adopt legal and institutional measures to promote authentic and free information sharing. Efforts like RTI are right steps in this direction. More is to be done to achieve true goals stated in RTI.

2. What are the legal and institutional measures to ensure transparency in governance? Examine.

Introduction

Governance as per World Bank is practice of using political and economic resources for the welfare of people by exercising power.
Transparency means being open. It is a political practice in which the thought process as well as deeds of governments is open for scrutiny by masses.

To promote good governance, transparency is strongest bidding force; as it develops trust between various stakeholders.

Body

It instills internal as well as external checks in governance. While incorporating internal check transparency, one of fundamental pillar of governance as per Nolan committee, invokes the conscience of individual. On the other hand in external check it empowers the beneficiary and other stakeholders with government's actions and inaction along with the reason behind them. Transparency has demonstrative, addictive, inductive and bandwagon effect in governance system. This the reason that this tool of good governance is rapidly extending its existence and is having disinfectant effect on corrupt governance practices.

In order to promote transparency two pronged approach has been adopted across the globe based on the role of various stakeholders.
While government is expected to promote transparency through legal and institutional measures. The civil society and masses are expected to teach their conscience to draw like between national security and privacy on one hand and transparency on the other hand.

Various legal and institutional measures taken by government reinforce the efforts of masses to maintain their integrity despite temptations and allures. These increases the risk associated with the corrupt practices.

Legal measures taken are

- RTI ACT has been biggest effort taken by government. It has exposed various scams and has forced governments to adopt latest technological and institutional measures to being in element of accountability and responsibility in decision making.
- The public service delivery act adopted by various governments is another wheel of chariot of transparency. It gives enforcing effect on promises stated in citizen charters. These charters are adopted by governments at all level containing details of services provided along with their standards.
- PIL AND Judicial activism are other bulwarks of transparency in legal sense where government is bound to explain its deeds to masses through institution of judiciary.

Institutional measures

- May I help you counter at various service delivery institutions.
- Disclosure of data on websites in an organized manner along with FAQs
- Cpgram, janta durbar, etc. expose government to scrutiny
- 4.) Efforts to liberalise media and civil societies. These have integrating effect between government and governed.
- 5.) Educating official conscience to accept and promote openness rather than secrecy. Yearly self-disclosure of assets by officials and even judicial bodies and its members

Conclusion

Tough efforts taken by government are remarkable in move towards adopting democracy through transparency in true spirit. Yet a lot has to be done. With increasing monologues from government and ignoring media scrutiny there are trends of reduction in faith in element of transparency. Introduction of CAA bill without previous public discussion indicates toward this.

3. The Right to Information Act is a marvel that has breached the barriers between the ruler and the ruled. Elucidate.

Introduction

RTI act came into force in 2005 with an objective of bringing transparency in administration and empower the citizens through information. It has made the governance participative and has brought the administration closer to the government.

Body

Breaching the barrier between the ruler and the ruled:

- Participative governance: RTI enables the citizens to participate in governance with the information they obtain. They can give feedback, petition them through courts and ask for rationale of official decisions. E.g. The changes in MGNREGA projects in a village of Alwar, Rajasthan was changed by villagers after getting information about them through RTI.
- Psychological Barrier: Clouded with secrecy, administration was seldom in reach of the public. RTI has removed this barrier where in irrespective of power, status, one can obtain the required information from the administration which has taken away the unnecessary fear and distance of public with the government. E.g. Information of loan frauds by RBI (which hitherto seemed beyond reach) was obtained through RTI.
- Effective grievance: RTI has bridged the hitherto cumbersome grievance mechanism which was difficult due to the unavailability of information. E.g. In Tamilnadu, a road accident victim received compensation only after they showed relevant documents obtained from RTI.
- Empowered citizens: It ensures the right of the citizens to acquire as much information they want regarding the governmental activities, rules and regulations, etc. This creates a room for better communication between the public authorities and the citizens. E.g. It was through RTI commonwealth scam, 3G scam was unearthed.
- Citizen centric approach: As Aruna roy observed, 'when any official holds a pen, he/she will have RTI in his mind. This is the best form of deterrence against corruption'. The possibility of official decisions sought out by public has bridged the phycological barrier between the officials and the citizens.
- Greater accountability: RTI has enabled citizens to unearth several scams and hold officials accountable. E.g. Adarsh society scam
- Proactive disclosure: The sec 4 of RTI which calls for suo moto disclosure of information has also removed the communicational barrier between citizens and administration.

Conclusion

RTI is depicted as the Master Key to Good Governance by the 2nd ARC. Informed, vibrant citizens are the key to any good administration and RTI ensures the same by strengthening of government-public relation due to the increase in communication. Thus, strengthening the act to empower the citizens more is vital.

4. The currency of leadership is transparency. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

On today's global stage, transparency, accountability and sustainability are becoming the most important factors in leadership where transparency has been termed as currency of leadership with present digital age further increasing the need to be transparent in one's professional field. Nolan Committee's seven principles of public life also includes openness as one of the principles.

Body

- The leadership fundamentals of trust and transparency are probably the most important fundamentals of leadership that stands between ordinary results and extraordinary results. Transparency starts with opening up the lines of communication and sharing. Offering and receiving information leads to increased mutual trust.
- Transparent leaders allow their direct reports to give them feedback and respond soon by making adjustments where needed according to the feedback. In fact, they'll make sure the people know and thank them for their feedback. For example, Rahul Dravid's captaincy of Indian cricket team is remembered for its transparent functioning which continued in the future.
- Transparent leaders show respect for everyone, always. Being personable, approachable, and respectful promotes the reciprocation of the same and establishes a trust connection. For example, in administration in traditional society like India, a younger senior official respecting a subordinate, who is elder, goes a long way ensuring transparency.
- The digital age has allowed people to learn more about their leaders. As such, social media has suddenly given people the permission to enter a leader's personal space; a place they were previously prohibited from entering. The digital age has changed the levels of transparency that we expect from people too.
- Employees want to work for leaders who are authentic and transparent -- who openly seek new solutions and ideas. However, many leaders struggle with consistency in this area. Trust takes commitment. Embracing transparency requires leaders to openly share both good and bad news. For example, Gandhiji led India's struggle for Independence in a transparent manner sharing both good and bad news while being a leader.
- Also, it isn't enough to just be consistently truthful. Transparent leaders also communicate well and often. They are often visible throughout the organization, and are approachable and personable. For example, the present Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, is seen as displaying this quality of leadership where he is visible and approachable through programs like Mann ki Baat, etc.
- The need for transparency in present society is at an all-time high. People want access to leader's facial expressions, eye contact and body language to gauge their intentions. People want to evaluate whether someone is acting or being genuine. People want leaders who can deliver balance between knowledge (the head) and wisdom (the heart).
- In the modern world, the scientist has sway, not because of the white lab coat and letters after his (or her) name, but by virtue of the inbuilt transparency of science; the scientist presents his/her theory, produces evidence to that effect and references studies to support his/her findings, so manifesting his/her authority through transparency, and the same could be said of effective leadership.

- Conversely, a lack of transparency will produce distrust and insecurity within people and will, over time, negatively affect how attractive one's leadership qualities are.
- In this era of transparency, despite being subject to increased scrutiny and regulation, leaders can effect change that would otherwise prove difficult. It's no longer possible for leadership just to bury a problem, as the experienced leader knows, issues must be dealt with head on in a straightforward way.

Conclusion

The importance of transparency can be seen from Thomas Jefferson's quote, where he remarked that he'd rather have a free press without a government than a government without a free press. In a rapidly changing world, transparency matters. During times of turmoil, people want to know what is happening and how they are going to be impacted. So they want and need honest, candid, clear and detailed information from the people they look up to.

5. How does lack of accountability affect the public services? Illustrate with the help of suitable examples.

Introduction

It is widely recognized that governance in India today faces a serious crisis of accountability. The very fact that despite significant economic growth, and substantial increases in social sector expenditures, India continues to perform far worse than countries much poorer than her on key development parameters is an indicator of just how deep the problem of accountability is. Accountability failures have meant that absenteeism, incompetence, inefficiency and corruption characterize every core service that the state is obliged to deliver to its citizens.
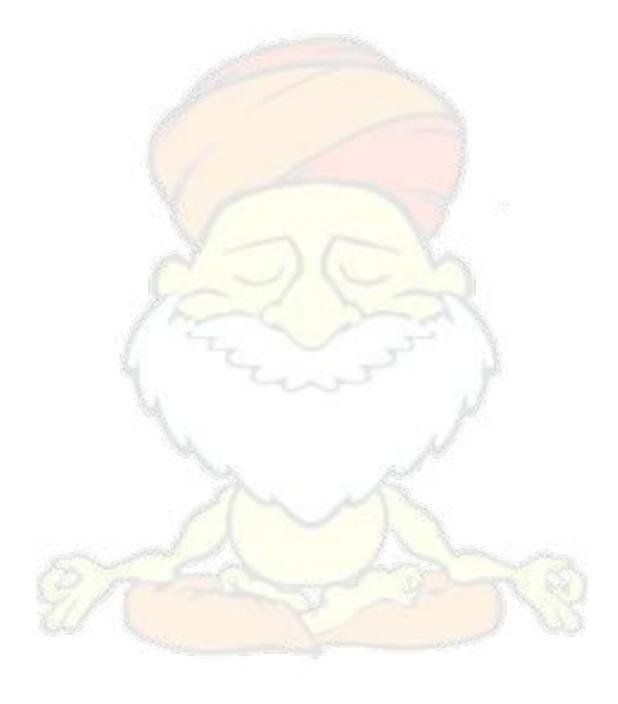
Body

- Accountability can broadly be defined as the obligation of those holding power to take responsibility and be held answerable for their behavior and actions. This obligation might stem out of a moral-ethical need to account for one's behavior, or out of a legal requirement.
- In India, mechanisms for ensuring external accountability of policy makers are extremely limited. Emanating in part as a consequence of its colonial legacy which necessitated an opaque administration that was distanced from its people - administrative or civil service accountability in India has always been internal.
- External accountability is conceptualized in the narrow framework of elections and demanded specifically of elected representatives. In this framework, civil service accountability to the people is at best 'indirect' through accountability to the political class. This notion has two problems worth highlighting -

- First, it erodes accountability of the civil services for policy related decisions and relevant outcomes.
- Moreover, the hierarchical nature of the bureaucracy which privileges a top down approach to policy making.
- The failure of Parliament to enforce governmental compliance with audit findings has led to ineffectiveness. Parliamentary procedure requires that all audit reports be tabled in parliament. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) scrutinizes these reports and recommends action to be taken. In practice, the PAC has failed to ensure enforcement. The figures show that more than 1/3rd are yet to be responded to.
- Further, with regard to the public health care system, the central feature of the current public health care system is a network of primary health care centers (PHC) and sub centers where vacancies, absenteeism, incompetence and corruption show the failure to monitor performance and enforce sanctions. All doctors appointed to PHCs are hired, paid, monitored and therefore accountable only to state governments.
- The rising impunity by those in public service who are expected to safeguard our resources and provide services with utmost humility, accountability and integrity has eroded public confidence. The growing anxiety is fueled by pervasive mega corruption and apparent indifference by those elected to rule over people. Corruption exists in every society but in varying degrees. For example, the Adarsh housing scam in India.
- The electoral process is an exercise in vertical accountability that citizens can exercise when their elected leaders failed the accountability test. Public servants are accountable to those elected to represent the citizens. Where both the public servants and elected representatives are not accountable, the result is impunity. Failure of effectiveness of electoral process leads to this.
- While strong accountability is not a panacea for solving the numerous challenges that government faces in a complex environment, it can improve government. It generates incentives for responsible individuals to act in the interests of the public. Sometimes this means that 'heads must roll' following a major failure; but a healthy system of accountability also promotes improvements in how government works. This should include:
- proportionate rewards for good performance
- proportionate sanctions for failure
- a greater degree of learning than the current system contains
- support for responsible individuals to develop, so that they are able to innovate and take appropriate risks.

Conclusion

There is little doubt the civil service accountability to the people is both desirable and necessary. Ensuring this accountability is arguably one of the greatest challenges that confront India's civil services. For accountability to take root, incentives need to be built in to the system. To be sure, greater transparency and resultant public scrutiny do create incentives for better performance.