

**Q.1 Are citizen charters an effective tool to improve governance? Critically comment.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about citizen charters and how citizen charter is effective tool to improve governance

**Introduction**

The concept of a citizen's charter was initiated by former British Prime Minister John Major in the year 1991 intended to improve quality of public service. In India, the concept of citizen's charter was first adopted at a 'Conference of Chief Ministers of various States and Union Territories' held in May 1997 in the national capital.

**Body**

Citizen charter - The Citizen's Charter is a voluntary and written document that spells out the service provider's efforts taken to focus on their commitment towards fulfilling the needs of the citizens/customers.

Citizen's Charter Components –

- Organisation's vision and mission statements.
- A business carried out and other such details of the organisation.
- Explain who are citizens and clients.
- Statement of services including quality, time-frame, etc. offered to citizens and how to get those services.
- Grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Expectations from citizens/clients.
- Additional commitments like the amount of compensation in case of service delivery failure.

Citizen charter an effective tool to improve governance –

1. It augments the quality of services delivered by incorporating an internal and external monitoring entity.
2. It enhances good governance. It improves the effectiveness of organizations by having measurable standards.
3. Being citizen-centric, it creates a professional and customer-oriented environment for the delivery of services.
4. Citizen Charter increases participation of common man in efficient working of an organisation by making the citizens aware of the aims and goals of the organization.
5. Citizen Charter set standards of service, allowing high expectations from an organisation, pushing them to work diligently.
6. It reduces cost, prevents delay and red tapism and thus promote good governance. It encourages access and promote choice and thus, treat all fairly.

The Citizen charter, not an effective instrument in adding value to the governance because –

1. Poor design & content: Most organisations do not have adequate capabilities to draft meaningful & succinct citizen's charter drafted by government agencies that are not designed well. Critical information that end-users need to hold agencies accountable are simply missing from a large number of the charter.
2. Lack of public awareness: while a large number of public service providers have implemented citizen's charter only a small percentage of end-users are aware of the commitments made in citizen charter.
3. Inadequate groundwork: Government agencies often formulate citizens charter without undertaking adequate groundwork in terms of assessing & reforming its processes to deliver the promises made in the charter.
4. Charters was rarely updated: charters reviewed for this report rarely showed signs of being updated even though some documents dating back from the inception of the citizen charter programme nearly a decade ago.
5. End-users & NGOs are not consulted: when charters are drafted civil society organisations and end-users are generally not consulted with charter are being formulated.
6. Resistance to change: The new practices demand significant changes in the behaviour & attitude of the agency & its staff towards the citizen. At times, vested interests work for stalling the citizen's charter altogether or in making it toothless.

The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011 (Citizens Charter) seeks to create a mechanism to ensure timely delivery of goods and services to citizens. It requires every public authority to publish a CC within six months of the commencement of the Act and levies a penalty of up to Rs 50,000 for failure to render services.

Way forward –

- Include Civil Society in the process: to assist in improvement in the contents of the Charter, its adherence as well as educating the citizens about the importance of this vital mechanism.
- Hold officers accountable for results: fix specific responsibility in cases where there is a default in adhering to the CC.
- Drawing from best practice models such as the Sevottam Model (a Service Delivery Excellence Model) can help CC in becoming more citizen centric.

## Conclusion

A Citizens' Charter cannot be an end in itself, it is rather a means to an end - a tool to ensure that the citizen is always at the heart of any service delivery mechanism. Thus it is playing a prominent part in ensuring "minimum government & maximum governance", changing the nature of charters from non-justiciable to justiciable & adopting penalty measures that will make it more efficient & citizen friendly.

**2. Should 'code of conduct' or 'code of ethics be made legally enforceable for civil servants? Critically examine.**

**Approach** - It expects aspirants to write about – in first part write about code of conduct and code of ethics – in second part write about how making code of conduct and code of ethics legally enforceable would be beneficial – in third part write about limitations of Code of conduct and Code of ethics – in fourth part write way forward.

**Introduction**

Both Code of Ethics and a Code of Conduct are similar as they are used in an attempt to encourage specific forms of behaviour by employees. Ethics guidelines attempt to provide guidance about values and choices to influence decision making. Conduct regulations assert that some specific actions are appropriate, others inappropriate.

**Body**

CODE OF ETHICS	CODE OF CONDUCT
It include core ethical values, principles and ideals of the organisation.	It is a directional document containing specific practices and behaviour that are followed or restricted under the organisation.
Code of ethics is a set of principles which influence the judgement.	Code of conduct is a set of guidelines that influence employee's actions.
Code of ethics are wider in nature as compared to code of conduct.	Code of conduct are narrow.

Making code of conduct and code of ethics legally enforceable would be beneficial because:

1. Code of ethics acts as a moral compass during decision making.
2. Huge Prevalence of corruption and Lack of probity in public life can be reduced.
3. Officials taking prejudiced decisions or favouring a ideology while discharging official duties will affect the socio-economic justice as envisaged by our Constitution.
4. It increases the accountability and transparency of the officers in their work.
5. Helps to curb the politician- bureaucrat nexus which leads to favouritism, crony-capitalism, and conflicts of interest.
6. Code of ethics would enable employees to make independent judgments about the most appropriate course of action.
7. A particular rule in the Code of Ethics might state that all employees will obey the law.
8. Code of conduct would enable employees to work in compliance with rules and actions are guided by the codes.

9. A Code of Conduct might list several specific laws relevant to specific areas of organisational operations, which employees need to obey.

However, the limitations of Code of conduct and Code of ethics are –

- A forced Code of conduct and Code of ethics will have limited utility as there is a need for improvement of morals, bring in a behavioural change in the officials and politicians
- Non-compliance of code of conduct derived from Code of Ethics can add to litigations and burden the already judiciary.
- Not possible to define everything in a code as the scope is too vast leading to ambiguous situations.

Way forward –

- The 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) had proposed the inclusion of a Public Service Code in the draft Public Service Bill, 2007.
- The commission outlines the desirable qualities that make the civil services efficient. They include impartiality, integrity, dedication to public service, political neutrality, adherence to the highest standards of probity, objectivity, empathy for the weaker section of the public.
- It highlighted that efforts made by individuals in leadership positions in organization to inculcate these values in within the organization can make a difference.
- The Public Service code would facilitate the employees to discharge their official duties with competence and accountability, care and diligence, honesty, without discrimination and in accordance with law
- The statutory backing through Civil Services bill to the Code of Ethics would guide the civil servants towards behaviours, choices and actions that benefit the community.

### Conclusion

In a democracy, all persons holding authority derive it from the people. All public functionaries are trustees of the people. Thus, a code of ethics and code of donduct must be present, however the legal enforcement is a topic which must be well deliberated before implementation.

### 3. Critically evaluate the performance of the Right to Information (RTI) in improving governance in India.

**Approach** - It expects students to write about – in first part write about performance of the Right to Information (RTI) in improving governance in India – in second part write about challenges with respect to RTI – in third part write about measures needed to strengthen RTI.

#### Introduction

The path-breaking Right to Information Act came into effect in 2005 with the objective to ensure accountability and transparency in governance. It has been heralded as the most significant reform in public administration in India since Independence.

#### Body

RTI has the very active and vital role in the good governance as follows:

1. Accountability- Making departments, ministries accountable for each action. E.g.: accountability for any delay and seeking the reason
2. Responsibility: RTI ensures responsible government by keeping it under the toes.
3. Transparency: RTI ensures transparent process in information dissemination, eliminating information Asymmetry etc.
4. Equity: It strives towards eliminating any kind of Institutional Elitism. All people regardless of class gets opportunity to seek information.
5. Efficiency and effectiveness: RTI procedures ensures timely dissemination of information with suo-moto declaration by department or ministry.
6. Participation of people in democratic process, a bottom up approach. It helps people in making informed choice.
7. Trust built-up: RTI strengthens the relationship between Principal {Citizen} and Agent {government}.
8. RTI helps the government in self-introspection to improve the governance process.

Challenges with respect to RTI –

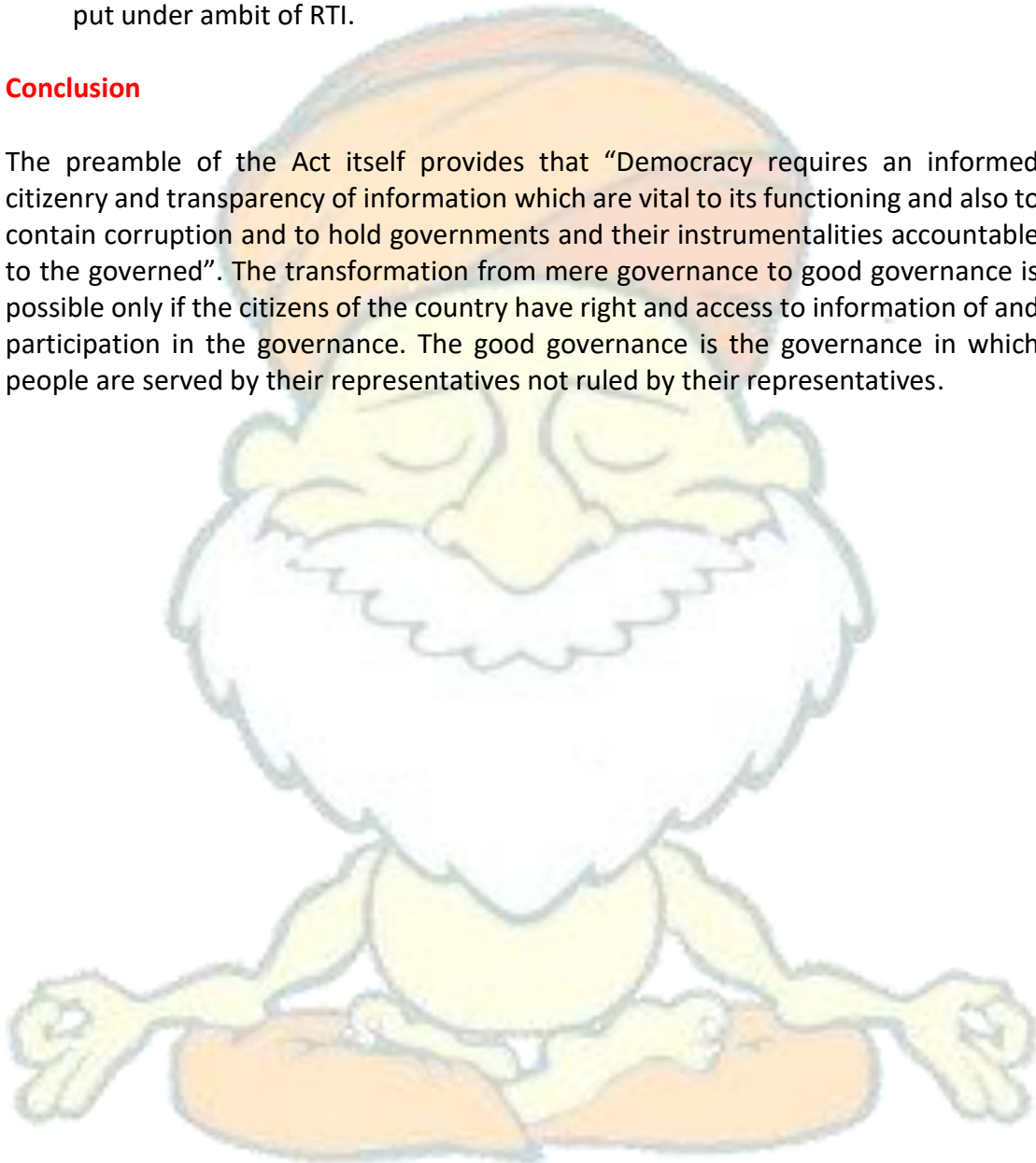
- Attacks on Activists: There have been quite a few cases where people were killed. Unless the whistle blower protection act is implemented by notifying the rules, things will not change on ground.
- Frivolous RTI have been used by politicians to settle score and waste time.
- Implementation of Section 4: Most studies confirm that more than 50% of the applications filed under the RTI act ask for information that should have been disclosed under Section 4. Like it is emphasized by a sub-committee of Information Commissioners, section 4 implementation is going to be a crucial piece in the success of the RTI act.

Measures needed to strengthen RTI –

- Reduce pendency: To begin with, the government could take steps to reduce pending appeals. In June 2019, about 31,000 appeals were pending, over 9,000 of those pending for over a year.
- CIC as a constitutional body: The currently statutory body must be made a constitutional body to uphold its sanctity.
- Political parties under RTI: All political parties claim to serve the public but are unanimous in their reluctance to share information with citizens. They must be put under ambit of RTI.

### Conclusion

The preamble of the Act itself provides that “Democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed”. The transformation from mere governance to good governance is possible only if the citizens of the country have right and access to information of and participation in the governance. The good governance is the governance in which people are served by their representatives not ruled by their representatives.



#### 4. What are your views on the idea of introducing domain specialisation in the Civil Services? Comment.

**Approach** - As the directive here is comment it is necessary to give your opinion on the issue. In the introduction you can explain in brief the context of issue of domain specialisation. In the first half of main body part you can argue in support of introducing domain specialisation in the civil service. In the next half you can argue in support of having a generalist in civil services. A brief about government initiative to address the issue of domain specialisation as a way forward will be an enrichment of the answer. Candidate can conclude by showing the importance of achieving a golden mean to address this issue.

#### Introduction

Centre decided to introduce lateral entry in the highest echelons of the Indian Administrative Service, bringing skilled individuals from the private sector and academia. The decision itself is a historical one. However, the atmosphere of bureaucracy stirred after this due to the growing debate about the work bureaucrats do and how it is perceived, which culminated in to the debate of generalist v. specialist.

#### Body

Introducing domain specialisation in the civil services:

1. Many within the IAS community have balked at the idea, but some believe that change is long overdue in one of India's oldest institutions. The lack of specialisation across the top tier of Indian bureaucracy is a concern that has remained unaddressed until now.
2. To counter the tag of "generalists" (lack of domain expertise) attributed to IAS officers, the IAS Association is thinking to lobby the government into posting and transferring officials "according to their technical expertise."
3. IAS officers are 'generalists' who hop from one ministry to another through their careers and do not necessarily have expertise in any area. Sometimes it leads to lacunas in policy formulation area.
4. For instance, renowned poet and writer Ashok Vajpayi was made the secretary of the culture department in Madhya Pradesh a long time ago. The initiative to open the Bharat Bhavan, which is the hub of creativity in the state, was taken by him. It might not had happened if he was posted in coal ministry.
5. Arbitrary postings can be debilitating and can affect the career trajectory of civil servants and the general administration. For instance, what is the point of deputing an officer to a ministry where he will learn and understand problems of that ministry in a year's time? And then when he will be transferred to some other ministry, he will take another year to understand problems of that ministry.
6. A parliamentary panel has also recommended that the government bring 'specialised generalists' who have domain-specific knowledge into the civil

services to increase the efficiency of the bureaucracy. For instance, introducing lateral entry in to civil services is a step in the right direction.

7. Besides, the first ARC also indicated, in broad terms, the knowledge and specialization required for staffing posts in each of these areas. The selection of personnel to the eight areas of specialization was to be made through a mid-career competitive examination.
8. In its 'Strategy for New India @75' document, the NITI Aayog has recommended bringing in "domain experts" into India's otherwise generalist bureaucracy by suggesting that recruits into the civil services be placed in a 'central talent pool', after which candidates can be allocated positions in the government based on their qualification and expertise.

Though having a specialist civil servant is the need of the hour, there are some pros of having a generalist in the civil services.

- The first is the argument that the best leadership is provided by generalists who have a breadth of understanding and experience. Specialists, no matter how competent, tend to have a tunnel vision and are not equipped to take a broader view.
- Sure, domain knowledge has to feed into policy-making, but that can be accomplished by domain experts advising the generalist leader in decision-making. In this worldview, a good IAS officer can head the Department of Agriculture as competently as she would the Department of Shipping.
- Young recruits join the IAS as generalists, acquire breadth and then go on to acquiring depth. Which makes them a more specialised person in the field of their respective work domain. Hence, recruiting a specialist who has narrowed vision to work on multidimensional problems will hamper the system.
- Also being a generalist doesn't mean that civil servants don't do a specialist kind work in their respective work domain. For instance, Nikhil Nirmal, the District Magistrate of Alipurduar a lawyer by profession, ably managed dengue outbreaks and enforced food security in the district.
- Managing specialisation can be a complex challenge. How much specialisation should there be? How should officers be allocated among the specialisations? What should be the weightages for expressed preferences and revealed competencies? Once allocated a specialisation, how should an officer's career be managed? It will make the task of recruitment more cumbersome.
- An IAS Officer never remains a 'generalist' as projected. They become specialists in public administration and governance; having unparalleled experience of managing every development scheme at the district and sub-district levels, interacting with people across different demographics, and ensuring coordination between different departments.

It is difficult to arrive at a conclusion, whether to introduce domain specialisation in the civil service or not. However, a golden mean has to be obtained. For instance, having a 'generalised specialised' should be a way forward. In this light Government of India recently launched 'Mission Karmyogi'.



- The mission is established under the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB). It is aimed at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India.
- The capacity of Civil Services plays a vital role in rendering a wide variety of services, implementing welfare programs and performing core governance functions.

### Conclusion

India's bureaucracy has long been criticised for being obstructionist, and that it has often been an impediment to implementing even well-intended policy initiatives. Bringing 'generalised specialist' in to civil services will strike a right balance while addressing the domain expertise question. Hence, it becomes imperative for India to achieve a golden mean while recruiting the civil servants who will supplement the transition of India in to 'New India'.



**Q.5 Should civil servants be active on social media platforms? Share and substantiate your views.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about use of social media platforms by civil servants. And highlight on whether civil servants should use social media.

**Introduction**

Social Media in recent times has become synonymous with Social Networking sites such as FaceBook or MicroBlogging sites such as Twitter. However, very broadly social media can be defined as any web or mobile based platform that enables an individual or agency to communicate interactively and enables exchange of user generated content.

**Body**

As Indian citizens, civil servants are free to express their views in public, subject to their specific service conditions. In this regard, the benefits of Social media use by civil servant can be seen from following points:

1. Show the human side: Social media offers a great opportunity to humanise your department or organisation. Tell stories and let your audience in behind-the-scenes to give your social media page a friendly, personal feel and improve engagement rates.
2. Use images and videos: Videos and images make your message more interesting and engaging, meaning your audience is more likely to listen to what you have to say. Visual content, therefore, tends to receive more engagement and so is prioritised by social media algorithms, making it more likely that your followers will see your post.
3. Create awareness: Social media can be used by them to create awareness about social welfare programmes as the audience are huge. Social media can help police and administrators to check on and control the mob in panic situation as well as early information about possible communal and ethnic clashes. For example -Bhima Koregaon riots incident check by Pune police commissioner by early information through social media.
4. Create accessibility: Social media also acts as platform to reach the sections which are untouched due to geographical locations, environmental conditions, educate and alarm of any Climatic or environmental hazards.
5. It breaks down boundaries and hierarchies: Social media cuts across traditional silos, making projects or themes more open and accessible. In government, for example, in moments we can access similar activities other civil service departments are doing and the people behind them. Social media is non-hierarchical it doesn't worry about geographical location, job title or government department.
6. Creates buzz around events: Twitter can hugely enhance how people experience an event. Attendees can ask questions, quote and connect with speakers, provide instant feedback and maintain connections afterwards.

7. Motivate, sharing new ideas: From motivational blogs and leadership tips to things there are heaps of articles out there that can provide new information or a different perspective and social media is the place to find them. Finding and sharing this kind of content benefits people, team and networks. For example IFS officers with popular Twitter accounts are beginning to highlight the nature of their jobs inside dense, remote forests, and the problems and roadblocks they face.

However civil servants are needed to be politically neutral and impartiality is the corner stone of the service. So some concerns arise when sensitive issues like communalism, casteist incidents are highlighted in social media because –

- It shows their bias and people would perceive it as the civil servant is favouring one community over the other leading to loss of trust in the administration.
- Even the proposed changes to the rulebook to explicitly treat criticism of government policies on social media as a violation of conduct rules.
- Public servants are sharing their days through daily and weekly notes; engaging in open dialogue with colleagues, stakeholders, and citizens; and sharing progress and updates in real-time. Endangers anonymity of service and civil servant.
- It is not the official way to resolve grievances and should be treated as the last resort. It undermines the bureaucratic due process and may open another channel of public service.
- Their comments might lead to further decisions in the society and violence can crop up. For example Bareilly DM in 2018 Facebook post, questioned the “trend” of raising anti-Pakistan slogans in Muslim localities to foment communal trouble later witnessed violence when 250 kaanwariyas allegedly clashed with Muslims residents.
- The personal behaviour of public servants can undermine public trust if it causes a reasonable person to conclude that they are unable to serve the government of the day impartially and professionally. For example Shah feasal tweet about rape culture in South Asia.

Public servants in their capacity as ‘officers of the state’ are bound by service civil service conduct rules. These rules are different today from what they were in colonial times but they fall far short of today’s digital expectations for sure.

### Conclusion

The invisible civil servant is now becoming more and more visible in this ever evolving complex ecosystem. A number of civil servants are wanting to become visible. The public conduct of any civil servant must uphold the values of the Indian republic and promote the spirit and letter of the Constitution. The higher the civil servant’s authority, the more stringent is the need to be consistent with constitutional morality.