

**1. A bureaucracy that is amenable to novel ideas and can adapt to new developments are essential for good governance. Comment.****Approach**

Since the question is asking you to comment you have to express an opinion or reaction. It is important to pick out the main points/core and give one's opinion based on the information or the arguments originated from the reading. One should take a neutral ground and write facts and viewpoints.

**Introduction**

Since time immemorial bureaucracy has been the lifeline of any nation. It is responsible for translating the policies and programmes formulated by the political authority. The quality of the citizen's life depends on the attitude and performance of bureaucracy. Moreover, in all walks of life of a person, bureaucracy plays a very significant role. There is no denying that an effective, efficient, flexible and responsive bureaucracy are a requisite to good governance. The competence of bureaucracy at all levels determines the performance and efficacy of an administrative system. They should be bold, honest and assertive in the discharge of their responsibilities. They should not hesitate to give right advice to the political authority no matter whether they accept it or not. They are the "catalytic agents of change by virtue of their education and exposures".

**Body****A BUREAUCRACY THAT IS AMENABLE TO NOVEL IDEAS AND CAN ADAPT TO NEW DEVELOPMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE**

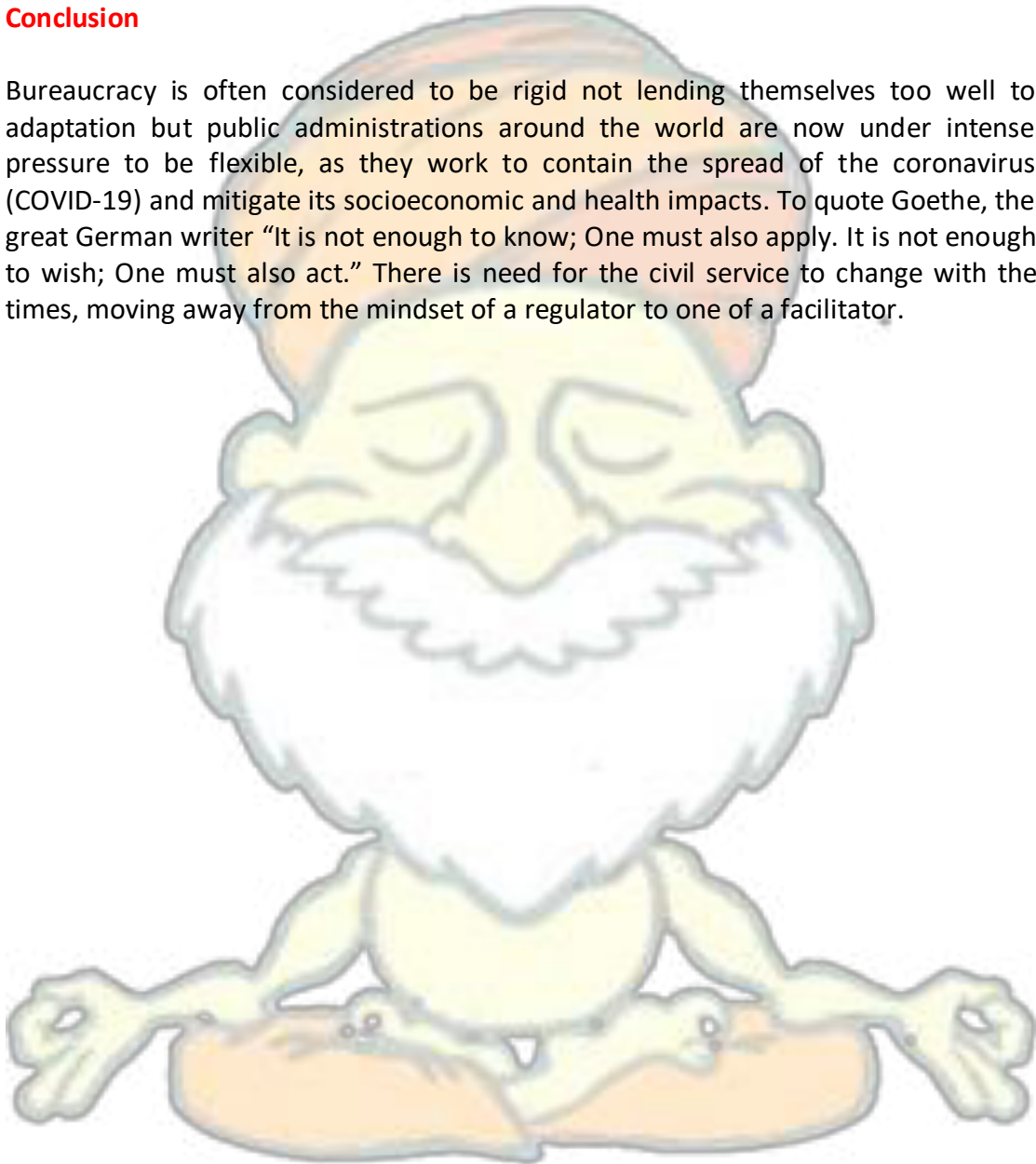
- No civil service structure can be static in its character. It has to be dynamic and has to change with the times. As models of governance or politico-economic environments change, it has to adapt and re-engineer itself.
- Building in "redundancy," or excess capacity and back-up systems, can help protect core functions of government in times of crisis.
- Resilient bureaucracy proactively plans for a wide variety of emergencies yet maintain the adaptive organizational capacity to shift course quickly based on evolving needs.
- It can also help governments adapt to different working modalities such as home-based work, and authorize remote access to key information systems.
- The country has to ensure that rapid growth and welfare measures are inclusive for all sections of society. This necessitates an impartial, dynamic and accountable civil service which can ensure that these objectives are actually achieved.
- While coordination structures vary from one country to the next, what matters most for effective good governance is that their bureaucracy is amenable to novel ideas and their effectiveness in allowing government

actors to align priorities, implement joint responses, support one another, and foster day-to-day information sharing.

- Flexibility and adaptation can exist even within rigid bureaucratic cultures. Flatter organizational structures, with devolved but clear decision-making authority, can promote resilience and an enabling environment for innovation and strategic action.

### Conclusion

Bureaucracy is often considered to be rigid not lending themselves too well to adaptation but public administrations around the world are now under intense pressure to be flexible, as they work to contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and mitigate its socioeconomic and health impacts. To quote Goethe, the great German writer “It is not enough to know; One must also apply. It is not enough to wish; One must also act.” There is need for the civil service to change with the times, moving away from the mindset of a regulator to one of a facilitator.



**2. How does transparency deter corruption? Illustrate.****Approach:**

Candidates are expected to write about the transparency in the administration and the government. Also illustrate how the transparency deter the corruption.

**Introduction**

The term 'transparency' refers to the 'increased flow of timely and reliable information, which is accessible to all the relevant stakeholders'. In other words, transparency is the dissemination of regular and accurate information. It is about making decisions and actions visible and about sharing and disclosing the necessary information to the stakeholders involved.

**Body****Transparency in Governance:**

- Transparency in governance is the idea that the people have a right to know, what their government is doing, and the government has an obligation to provide that information. It means that the criteria, process and systems of decision-making are openly known to all in a public manner.
- Thus, transparency is about shedding light on rules, plans, processes and actions. It is about knowing why, how, what, and how much. It ensures that public officials, civil servants, managers, board members and businessmen act visibly and understandably, and report on their activities and it means that the general public can hold them to account.
- The declaration of Right To Information Act (2015) set the stage for transparency in the functioning of the government and its various agencies. Under this Act, access to information from a public agency has become a statutory right of every citizen.
- Corruption is a key driver of the growing inequality, persistent poverty and the exclusion of the most vulnerable from the gains of economic growth. Transparency deterring corruption:
  - Open government increased disclosure of information and enhanced citizen participation in government decision-making is a powerful way to address the complex governance and corruption we have faced for so long.
  - Promoting open government and empowering grassroots' communities to increase transparency and accountability at the local level and improve service delivery. Mitigating integrity risks which is cause of corruption in key sectors for human development such as water, health, education, and the judiciary.
  - Citizen 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 prevents corruption in the organisation.

- Transparency allows stakeholders to collect information that may be critical to uncovering abuses and defending their interests. Likewise, transparency increases the accountability of Government officials both enhance the efforts against the corruption.
- Transparency makes sure that people know exactly what is going on and what is the rationale of the decisions taken by the Government or its functionaries at different levels maintains the propriety in the administration.
- However, sheer knowledge of what entitlements are, and who is responsible for fulfilling them, is also sufficient to ensure that public services are passably and effectively delivered to the 'intended' recipients and curb leakages and corruption.
- Greater transparency may bring about lower rates of political corruption because it can facilitate legal, administrative or electoral mechanisms of punishment. Formal and informal mechanisms of transparency and accountability encourage government officials to act in the public interest. Without public access to records of governance and other information, public resources may be squandered and mismanaged.
- E-Governance initiatives for providing transparency in administration include a framework for efficient handling of public grievances through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System which is already in place.
- Major Initiatives to Enhance Transparency in India include – Right to Information Act, Public Services Bill, Citizens Charters, e-Governance, e-Bhoomi, e-Choupal, e-procurement.

### Conclusion

Transparency is necessary to guarantee good governance. Information is valuable to the electorate for democratic processes to function successfully. Citizens have an interest in knowing about government actions and processes, allocation and redistribution decisions, market barriers and restrictions, tax and subsidy incidences and so on.





**3. Should the civil servants be made accountable for the recent surge in COVID cases? Critically comment.****Approach**

The candidate needs to comment on the aspect of whether civil servants should be held accountable for the recent surge in COVID cases in India and also critically comment on the aspect with proper substantiation.

**Introduction**

Almost overnight, the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has transformed the work and workplaces of the civil servants. Civil servants are playing a leading role in the response to the pandemic. Civil Servants are finding novel ways to design and channel unprecedented economic stimulus spending and manage severe spikes in unemployment.

**Body**

Recently, India's COVID tally climbed to 1,32,05,926 with a record spike of 1,45,384, according to the Union Health Ministry. There is no clarity on why the numbers are rising so sharply, with a section of people blaming the civil servants for the recent rise. Their arguments can be seen from the following points –

- Civil servants are important actors at the forefront of framing, implementing and evaluating the state's response to the pandemic, and uniquely positioned between the political executive and India's massive frontline state, which necessitates them towards being pro-active in controlling a pandemic.
- There was a lowering of guard and complacency in the approach of executive under civil servants, after the first wave of pandemic subsided. Poor implementation of mask and social distancing norms are a case in point. Allowing of Kumbh Mela in the middle of a pandemic can also point to failure of civil servants as well as executive, where the event risks turning into a super spreader event.
- Civil servants have control over the testing capacity and proactive testing approach would've helped in avoiding this massive surge. Consistently high TPR (Test Positivity Rate) in some states is a clear example of the same.
- Information dissemination by the authorities diminished as compared to last year, when there used to daily/weekly briefings, which helped in creating scientific awareness in media and public. Information regarding vaccines and newer variants, as well as COVID appropriate behaviour was not effectively communicated to the larger public.
- Control over vaccine production and distribution is another factor where civil servants played a major role, which saw poor performance. Centralising

tendencies and red tapism led to slow roll out of essential vaccination drive, which would've curtailed the second wave.

- At the same time, it is important to remember that the abrupt and brutal disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the public service and civil servants into a frenzy, forcing them to not only deal with fighting its spread but trying to manage its accompanying socioeconomic fallout. Here, the second wave's rapid spread has many other factors, some of which include –
- People not following COVID-19 protocol, including people not continuing with precautions even after being vaccinated, and a sluggish vaccination drive are responsible.
- A new factor is emerging mutants -- both imported and home-grown. Here, the UK strain is considered more virulent and is one of the reason for rapid spread.
- Flaunting of rules and protocols by the political executive, especially in election rallies and religious congregation, which involve huge crowds as well as capacity to spread virus far and wide.
- Population which escaped the first wave of pandemic is one of the reason for present rapid growth as earlier unaffected population provides a fertile ground for the virus and the spread in second wave shows similar pattern.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, the civil service's role in India's governance and administration increased further. With most people including politicians staying home for their safety, the health, economic and social crises were handled by collectors/magistrates at the district level, chief secretaries at the states and union territories' level, and empowered groups of secretaries at the national level.
- Further, the Indian state and bureaucracy rose to the occasion and responded well in time of crisis, demonstrating capabilities to mobilise, motivate, innovate and communicate that are unfortunately missing in action in its routine functioning.
- The civil servants felt the autonomy given to them due to lack of political interference in administrative actions, and the consequent ability to deploy all resources to a single cause, enhanced their performance.
- Associations representing officers of central civil services, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), have formed an initiative called 'Caruna' to support and supplement the government's efforts in fighting coronavirus.

### **Conclusion**

In the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, civil servants are working under life-threatening circumstances where they are both expected to deliver services despite the pandemic while at the same time suffering its impact, either by being directly infected or having family members who are. Recognising this fact becomes

important as also the fact that civil servants are also the frontline warriors or COVID warriors and people to collaborate and co-ordinate to fight this virus menace to emerge victorious.

#### **4. What are the key objectives of good governance? Also, discuss the principles of good governance.**

##### **Approach:**

Candidates are expected to write about the good governance and its objective first and then discuss the principle of the good governance.

##### **Introduction**

According to a document released by the World Bank in 1992 titled, 'Governance and Development', good governance is an essential complement to sound economic policies and is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development.

##### **Body**

###### **Good governance:**

The World Bank defines governance as 'how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.'

Objectives of good governance:

To provide the foundation for a high-performing organisation the achievement of goals and sustainable success requires input and support from all levels of an organisation.

To ensure the organisation is well placed to respond to a changing external environment business today operates in an environment of constant change.

To encompasses the processes by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It includes the authority, accountability, leadership, direction and control exercised in an organisation.

###### **Principles of the good governance:**

- **Consensus oriented:** Consensus oriented decision-making ensures that even if everyone does not achieve what they want to the fullest, a common minimum can be achieved by everyone which will not be detrimental to anyone. For this, a proper understanding of the society's historical, cultural and social contexts is needed; along with sustainable human development.
- **Participation:** A vital cornerstone of good governance is participation by all sections of society. This includes men and women, vulnerable sections of society, backward classes, minorities, etc. Representative democracy does not necessarily translate into the representation of all people. This is where good governance comes into play.



- **Transparency:** This means easy access to information to all concerned and especially to those being affected by the decisions made. This also implies information is available to the media. Another important facet is that all decisions are taken and enforced in such a manner that all rules and regulations are followed.
- **Rule of Law:** Rule of law warrants that fair legal frameworks are implemented impartially. It also means protection of human rights. This also requires an adequate and impartial judiciary and police force.
- **Responsiveness:** This implies that processes and institutions should serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame.
- **Equity and inclusiveness:** Good governance assures an equitable society. In such a society, no one or no section feels left out and marginalized. Opportunities should be given to all irrespective of their backgrounds, and no one should be discriminated.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Good governance implies that institutions and processes create results that meet the wants of society while making optimal use of resources at their disposal. This also encompasses the sustainable use of natural resources and the conservation of the environment.
- **Accountability:** This is a key trait of good governance. Accountability is not possible without the rule of law and transparency. Accountability should be there not just for the government, but also for citizens, the private sector, industry, NGOs, and all stakeholders.

**Challenges in India for pursuing the good governance:**

- **Criminalization of Politics:** According to the Association of Democratic Reforms, 43% of Members of Parliaments of Lok Sabha 2019 are facing criminal charges. It is a 26% increase as compared to 2014.
- **Centralisation of Administrative System:** Governments at lower levels can only function efficiently if they are empowered to do so. This is particularly relevant for the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), which currently suffer from inadequate devolution of funds as well as functionaries to carry out the functions constitutionally assigned to them.
- **Corruption:** According to the Corruption Perception Index - 2019 (released by Transparency International, India's ranking has slipped from 78 to 80).

**Conclusion**

There is a need to reformulate our national strategy to accord primacy to the Gandhian principle of 'Antyodaya' to restore good governance in the country. India should also focus on developing probity in governance, which will make the governance more ethical.



**5. Why good governance at the local level is imperative for the realisation of national aspirations? Examine.**

**Approach-**

Candidate can define good governance and then outline the importance of grassroots level institutes in the process of realisation of national aspirations.

**Introduction**

According to world bank, good governance is defined as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”. It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law.

**Body**

**What constitutes good governance?**

- Consensus Oriented – Mediates differing interests to meet the broad consensus on the best interests of a community. Example: GST council-centre and states together.
- Participation – People should be able to voice their own opinions through legitimate immediate organizations or representatives. Example: MP’s, Pressure Groups.
- Equity and Inclusiveness – People should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being. Example: affirmative policies for women, children and backward classes.
- Accountability – Governmental institutions, private sectors, and civil society organizations should be held accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders. Example: elections.
- Transparency – Information should be accessible to the public and should be understandable and monitored. Example: RTI, Draft bills made public to get feedback.
- Responsiveness – Institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders, respond to their grievances. Example: GST council rationalising tax structure and slew of measures keeping in mind MSME sector, PRAGATI Platform.

**Importance of good governance at grassroots level**

- Panchayati raj institute was introduced after undergoing structural adjustment programme. India was under compulsion to introduce good governance.
- Good governance required transparency and accountability, which cannot be achieved without citizen centric governance.
- But there has been a massive failure of this experiment and the empowerment remains temporary without much financial powers to local levels.

#### **Why local good governance imperative for realisation of national aspiration?**

- Grassroots involvement is important for social accountability. It helps in civic engagement to promote conservation and sustainable development.
- Deeper outreach of grassroots organizations and SHGs helps information dissemination easier. Moreover, most of them are women centric which provides opportunity to bring behavioural change.
- Grass roots governance would allow proper distribution of funds and resources of any scheme and would help in better implementation of laws and rules.
- Thus grass root governance can ensure effective strategies for conservation and development efforts. 'Citizen-centric governance' (2nd ARC) is important for inclusive development and people's participation would ensure democratic way of tackling problems.
- Faster decision making- Every small decision to be taken on ground level will take lots of time if directions have to arrive from the top most level. By decentralisation of power, smaller decision can be implemented easily without waiting for directions unnecessarily.
- Precision- The decentralisation allows the authorities to focus on the group of beneficiaries more precisely. This precision can ensure that welfare measures of the government reaches every citizen without any discrimination.

#### **Conclusion**

Local level governance forms backbone of our development process. If they are not empowered enough and not made financially independent we might loose on a big asset. For realisation of true potential we have to decentralise more powers and more funds to local institutes of governance and make them agents of development, through good governance.

