

Q-1-Evaluate the impact of institutional measures such as Right to information act and the Lokpal and lokayukta act on enhancing transparency and accountability in the public sector .

Approach -

In this question candidates need to write about impact of RTI act and Lokpal and lokayukta act on enhancing transparency and accountability in public sector .

Introduction -

Right to Information Act 2005 (RTI Act), Lokpal and lokayukta act was enacted to empower the citizens to seek information from Public Authorities. Thereby it promotes transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, and makes Indian democracy work for the people in real sense.

Body -

Major impact of achievements of RTI Act, 2005.

- Increased responsiveness: Greater access of the citizen to information, led to increased responsiveness of government to community needs.
- For example, for about two years, every time, Suvarana Bhagyawant case in which she got the certificate within eight days.
- Awareness of rights: RTI has led to awareness of rights and responsibilities as citizens among people.
- This led to increased accountability of officials through RTI and litigation.
- In 2007, data obtained under RTI inspired citizens to question elected representatives to stop a scam worth over Rs. 6,000 crores in the Crawford Market redevelopment issues in Mumbai.
- Discharge of duties: Information through RTI has led to legitimate discharge of their duties by officers. It raised the standards of public services
- Led to Culture of obligation: RTI has developed an obligation at village, district, state or national level to disclose information to the people.
- Thus it enhanced transparency among various government bodies at all levels of the government.
- For e.g Villagers in Madhubani district, Bihar used RTI to expose a solar-light scam, leading to charges against 200 corrupt officials.
- Empowered poor communities: RTI empowered poor communities to raise their voices on the basis of information and demand for their rights from the government.
- This ensured the government being answerable to the poor.
- It plugged the incidence of corruption and plugged leakages.
- Proper grievance mechanism: RTI provided for Central and the State Information Commissions to hear grievances related to RTI.
- Informed Citizenry: RTI enabled healthy democracy and also contained corruption and held Governments accountable to the people.

- In the model district of Mocha, Chhattisgarh, people are using RTI to secure employment, scholarships and pensions for the elderly.

Impact of lokpal and lokayukta act -

- This Bill was passed by Parliament in July 2016 and amended the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013.
- It enables the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha to be a member of the selection committee in the absence of a recognized Leader of Opposition.
- It also amended section 44 of the 2013 Act that deals with the provision of furnishing of details of assets and liabilities of public servants within 30 days of joining the government service.
- The Bill replaces the time limit of 30 days, now the public servants will make a declaration of their assets and liabilities in the form and manner as prescribed by the government. 2/5
- It also gives an extension of the time given to trustees and board members to declare their assets and those of their spouses in case of these are receiving government funds of more than Rs. 1 crore or foreign funding of more than Rs. 10 lakh

Way forward -

- In order to tackle the problem of corruption, the institution of the ombudsman should be strengthened both in terms of functional autonomy and the availability of manpower.
- The appointment of Lokpal in itself is not enough. The government should address the issues based on which people are demanding a Lokpal. Merely adding to the strength of investigative agencies will increase the size of the government but not necessarily improve governance. The slogan adopted by the government of “less government and more governance”, should be followed in letter and spirit.
- Moreover, Lokpal and Lokayukta must be financially, administratively and legally independent of those whom they are called upon to investigate and prosecute. Lokpal and Lokayukta appointments must be done transparently so as to minimize the chances of the wrong sorts of people getting in.
- There is a need for a multiplicity of decentralized institutions with appropriate accountability mechanisms, to avoid the concentration of too much power in any one institution or authority.

Conclusion-

Since the implementation of the RTI, lokpal and lokayukta act it has established itself as an important tool in handling corruption and inefficiency in the Government. Issues and loopholes in RTI, lokpal and lokayukta should be removed through proper amendment to further the objectives of transparency and accountability.

2. Analyse the role of civil services in promoting democratic values and practices and suggest ways to improve their performance in this regard.

Approach

Candidates can start the answer with giving basic idea about election process and the involvement of the technology in it then highlight some measures to improve with use of technology.

Introduction

The important role of civil services in a democracy are administration, policy formulation, and policy implementation for the betterment of society and the nation.

Body

Civil service promoting democratic values:

- **Implementing Policies and Programs:** Civil servants are responsible for implementing policies and programs that are in line with democratic values and practices, such as ensuring equal treatment for all citizens and protecting individual rights and freedoms.
- **Ensuring Transparency and Accountability:** Civil servants play a critical role in promoting transparency and accountability in government operations, including providing access to information and responding to public inquiries.
- **Upholding the Rule of Law:** Civil servants are expected to uphold the rule of law and ensure that all citizens, including those in positions of power, are held accountable to the same legal standards.
- **Providing Neutral and Impartial Services:** Civil servants are required to provide neutral and impartial services to all citizens, without regard to political beliefs or affiliations.
- **Promoting Public Trust:** Civil servants must act in the public interest and demonstrate integrity, impartiality, and a commitment to serving all citizens, in order to promote public trust in government and democratic institutions.
- **Instruments of Social Change and Economic Development:** Effective policy execution will result in beneficial improvements in ordinary people's lives. A government can only declare a scheme successful when the promised goods and services reach the intended recipients.
- **Welfare Services:** The services provide a variety of welfare programs, including social security, the welfare of the weaker and more vulnerable members of society, old-age pensions, poverty reduction, and so on.

Measures to improve the role of civil services:

- **Encouraging Public Engagement:** Encouraging civil servants to engage with the public and actively seek out public input in policy and program development, to ensure that government services are responsive to citizens' needs and expectations.
- **Fostering a Culture of Service:** Promoting a culture of service within the civil service, encouraging civil servants to view their role as serving the public, rather than just following orders.

- Ensuring Diversity and Inclusiveness: Encouraging diversity and inclusiveness within the civil service, and ensuring that all citizens, regardless of background or beliefs, are treated fairly and equitably.
- Professional Development and Training: Providing ongoing professional development and training programs to civil servants, including training in democratic values and practices, to ensure they are equipped to serve the public effectively.
- Encouraging Political Neutrality: Implementing measures to ensure that civil servants maintain political neutrality and impartiality, including strict codes of conduct and measures to prevent political interference in their work.
- Strengthening Transparency and Accountability: Implementing measures to increase transparency and accountability in government operations, including regular reporting and monitoring mechanisms, and providing citizens with access to information and opportunities to provide feedback.
- Protecting Whistleblowers: Providing protection for whistleblowers and ensuring that civil servants are able to report unethical or illegal behavior without fear of retaliation.

Conclusion

Improving the role of civil services in promoting democratic values requires a combination of policy and cultural changes, as well as ongoing training and support for civil servants. It is important to create an environment in which civil servants are empowered to serve the public effectively and in line with democratic values and practices.

3. Analyse the challenges faced by the civil services in promoting transparency and accountability in governance and suggest ways to overcome them.

Approach

Candidates can start the answer with giving basic idea of E governance and then write the positive outcome of the E governance also mention some of drawbacks in the end suggest some measures.

Introduction

There are several challenges faced by civil services in promoting transparency and accountability in governance such as red-tapism, ineffective implementation of rules and laws, very low level of awareness of rights and duties among citizens.

Body

Challenges:

- **Political Interference:** Political interference in the work of civil servants can undermine their ability to act in the public interest and promote transparency and accountability in government operations.
- **Lack of Resources:** Civil services may lack the resources needed to implement effective transparency and accountability mechanisms, including staff, funding, and technology.
- **Resistance to Change:** Some civil servants may be resistant to changes in the way they work that are aimed at promoting transparency and accountability, including new reporting and monitoring requirements.
- **Lack of Public Awareness:** Civil services may struggle to promote transparency and accountability if citizens are not aware of their rights and how to access information and provide feedback.
- **Inadequate Legal Framework:** The legal framework for promoting transparency and accountability may be inadequate in some countries, making it difficult for civil servants to implement effective measures.
- **Corruption:** Corruption can undermine transparency and accountability in governance, as civil servants may be influenced by bribery, nepotism, or other forms of corruption.
- **Cultural Attitudes:** Cultural attitudes and norms may discourage transparency and accountability in some countries, making it difficult for civil servants to promote these values.

To overcome the challenges:

- **Strengthening Legal Framework:** Strengthening the legal framework for transparency and accountability, including the right to information and freedom of expression, to ensure that civil servants have the tools they need to promote these values.
- **Enhancing Public Awareness:** Raising public awareness about transparency and accountability in governance, including the rights of citizens to access information and provide feedback, to help citizens hold their government to account.
- **Encouraging Political Will:** Encouraging political will to support transparency and accountability initiatives, including measures to prevent political interference in the work of civil servants and to protect whistleblowers.
- **Providing Adequate Resources:** Providing adequate resources to civil services, including staff, funding, and technology, to ensure that they are able to implement effective transparency and accountability mechanisms.
- **Fostering a Culture of Transparency:** Fostering a culture of transparency within civil services, encouraging civil servants to be open and transparent in their work, and to welcome public scrutiny.
- **Encouraging Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration between civil services, government leaders, and citizens, to promote transparency and accountability, and to ensure that all stakeholders have a role to play in promoting these values.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives, and to make changes as needed.

Conclusion

Overcoming the challenges requires a sustained effort from all stakeholders, including civil servants, government leaders, and citizens. It is important to take a comprehensive approach, addressing legal, cultural, and resource challenges, and working together to create a more transparent and accountable government.

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