

UPSCprep Free Daily Answer Writing Initiative

Subject: GS 2

Syllabus: Governance

Questions

Q1. How can we ensure that the bureaucracy functions as a strong support system and makes decisions that prioritise the best interests of the people, aligning with the motto of "minimum government and maximum governance"?

(150 words)

10

Q2. E-governance is an important tool to ensure citizen friendly services in a time bound manner. What are the challenges in e-governance and enumerate a few initiatives taken by the government?

(150 words)

10

Model Structures

Q1. How can we ensure that the bureaucracy functions as a strong support system and makes decisions that prioritise the best interests of the people, aligning with the motto of "minimum government and maximum governance"?

(10 marks)

Introduction:

- Civil servants are the 'steel frame of India,' connecting the government with the public. They formulate and implement policies, always prioritising the public interest. With the aim of 'minimum government and maximum governance,' they make decisions that ensure effective and welfare-oriented governance. *or*
- The mantra of "minimum government and maximum governance" implies that the purpose of government is to serve the public interest through governance. In this, the

Public is at the system's core rather than the government. The said purpose can be achieved by solving the following issues in governance.

Main Body

Bureaucracy supporting the System but lagging in Public Interest:

- **Rule-based civil services** with a negligible connection between civil servants and citizens often become complex and cumbersome for the average citizen.
- **Red Tapism and apathy of civil servants** towards the receiver (public) and blind loyalty towards political masters often lead to the ineffective formulation and implementation of public policies.
 - For example, A tribal woman in Jharkhand died due to hunger, she was denied ration due to the absence of required documents.

It's not all dark and gloomy. There are many examples of various programmes and schemes which were designed in the larger public interest, such as MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and JAM Trinity etc. But more needs to be done for minimum government and maximum governance.

Prerequisites for minimum government and maximum governance:

- **Accessibility:** Bureaucratic red-tapism, the complexity of the paperwork, a multiplicity of authorities, etc., often make it difficult for an average citizen to access public services.
- **Affordability:** Public service fees, paperwork, the complexity of the procedure (leads to agent involvement) etc., make it unaffordable for an average citizen to access public services.
 - For example, to get a loan of Rs. 1 Lakh, a poor man has to go through an expenditure of 10,000 for bribes, agents, travel and wage loss, etc.
- **Accountability:** For a citizen-centric governance system, there is a need for accountability at the individual as well as organisational levels.

Steps that can be taken:

- **Digitisation:** Digitisation of governance also brings transparency, further pushing for the priority of the public interest.
 - The UMANG app is a good example of this direction from which citizens can avail of various services.
- **Citizen Charter:** It will bring transparency and reduce the time for service delivery.
- **Objectivity and simplification of the system:** Simplification of the documentation requirement will ease up the task for both civil servants as well as citizens.
- Inculcating **Nolan's Principles** can make Indian Bureaucracy more in the public interest.
 - These principles are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Also, **Mission Karmyogi** aims to radically improve the steel frame of India and bring public interest to the centre stage through maximum governance.

Conclusion:

- The trusteeship relationship between the public and the officials requires that the authority entrusted to the officials be exercised in the best interest of the people or the 'public interest'.
- The Nolan Committee, in its seven principles of public life, has emphasised serving "the public interest". Therefore the motto of "minimum government and maximum governance" is to serve the public interest by supporting the system.

Q2. E-governance is an important tool to ensure citizen friendly services in a time bound manner. What are the challenges in e-governance and enumerate a few initiatives taken by the government? (10 marks)

Model Structure

Introduction

- E-governance involves the use of internet connection and communications devices which can be portable like smartphones and tablets or non-portable like computers. It is used to deliver goods and services to citizens in an efficient and time bound manner.

Main Body

- It is an evolving area which offers new and innovative opportunities for delivering services with a feedback mechanism. It ensures a participatory approach where services can be customized based on the target audience.
- But due to some challenges, e-governance has not achieved its potential. **Some of these challenges are:**
 - There is less human interaction in the e-governance process due to more mechanization which leads to less value integration and more rule following.
 - Lack of digital infrastructure, connectivity and speed issues in rural hinterland and inhospitable terrain is a big glitch.
 - Lack of computer literacy is a big issue as the majority doesn't know how to operate devices to access e-governance benefits. Even if they know, many are not aware of how to use applications and processes to get benefits.
 - Efficient e-governance can at times become inefficient due to technical glitches, server issues or poor internet speed.
 - Due to rising risks of cyber crimes and data theft, huge amounts of data are at the risk of being sabotaged.
- **Government initiatives:**
 - Common Services Centres
 - MyGov Initiative
 - National Scholarships Portal (NSP)
 - Darpan Portal
 - DigiLocker
 - National Center of Geo-informatics
 - National e-Governance Plan
 - Unified Payment Interface (UPI)

Conclusion

- E-governance is the way forward to deliver goods and services to a growing population which is going to surpass China and become the most populated country in the world.

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