



GS Advanced Program 2023

Generic Booklet

 Test Name/Code/No. : 692017

Name

Email ID.

Roll No.

Mobile No.

Date

Allotted Time : 60 Minutes

Instructions to Candidates -

- There are 7 Questions in this Question paper.
- All Questions are Compulsory.
- For all updates, please visit the noticeboard -
<https://noticeboard.forumias.com/gsap-2023/>

Important -

- Answers must be attempted in the QCA Booklet only.
- To upload the Answer Copies please visit to "My Course" section on -
<https://academy.forumias.com/>
- Only those copies will be evaluated which will be submitted before the next class.

Q. No.	Grade/Score
1	
2	
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Overall Grade/Score	

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Q.1)

Socio-Economic development has become a very much interrelated with e-governance in today's time.

E-governance as tool for Socio-Economic development.

- ↳ complexity of government responsibility & machinery
- ↳ Benefits of transparency, accountability & participation
- ↳ Remote areas & inaccessibility ~~has~~ can be abridged
- ↳ probity by reducing corruption
- ↳ citizen empowerment by governance redressal & quick response

Digital penetration & ICT accessibility in rural areas has been poor due to : —

- High cost of infrastructure
- Digital illiteracy
- Language barriers (Regional language)
- cyber crimes (Duplication of Accounts)

But illiteracy & poor accessibility has not hindered socio-economic development as various tools are deployed

- ↳ Involvement of panchayats in service delivery
- ↳ common service centres (CSC)
- ↳ Banking correspondents
- ↳ Visual cues & regional language adoption.

while digital divide is visible in rural areas, government has been taking steps to empower the citizens. Gradually the m-governance has gained prominence in rural areas such as UPI 123 in non-smartphones devices

Overall Grading (✓)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

This Generic OCA booklet can be used to attempt all GS Advanced Program Tests.

Q.2)

Right to Information act was passed in 2005 in order to empower citizens to seek information from the public authorities thereby upheld transparency and right of citizens.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT (2019)

- Removal of fixed tenure → Earlier the act provided 5 year tenure for chief & other information commissioners. But the amendment made central government empowered to decide tenure (even in states)
- Salaries & service conditions → Before amendments salary of chief Election Commissioner & Election Commissioner was basis for (equivalent) to chief & other information commissioners. Now central government is to provide for the same.

RATIONALE PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT

↳ ~~the~~ Election Commission of India (ECI) is a constitutional body while information commissioners are statutory body thereby their status and salaries could not be equalled

- ~~Election~~ ^{Chief} Information Commissioner and is given a status of Supreme Court judge but its decisions are challenged in High Court. It created legal hurdles
- Act provided for no provisions to regulate salary, service conditions which was needed

Issues with Amendments

- compromises with Independence & autonomy of the Information Commissioner
- Rationale is faulty as even decisions of President are challenged in High Court
- SC has equated Right to vote & Right to Information as equal crucial for citizens
- federal challenge as state information commissions too will be guided by central rules.

SC in SP Gupta vs Union of India, 1981 held right to information as part of 19(1) & reiterated the same in Koolwal case. The status could have been upgraded to Constitutional body in order to strengthen it.

Overall Grading (✓)

Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.3)

Social audit is a legally mandated process where beneficiaries evaluate the implementation of a programme by evaluating official records & their comparison with ground realities

POSITIVE IMPACT

Governance

(process of implementation)

- Reduces corruption & leakages which are most substantial challenge to the governance. Public hearing & grievances keeps check on such practices.
- Transparency & Accountability can be enhanced with social audit. Greater disclosures, checks & balances can be done with social audits.
- Participative approach → citizen participation in implementation provides feedbacks at each level at appropriate time leading to adequate monitoring & flexibility in approach, as per target
- Strengthens Gram sabhas thereby decentralisation gets boosted as per

aims of 73rd constitutional amendment.

- Improves responsiveness of the implementation machinery as more checks are kept in functioning

Issues with social audit

→ Rules not followed many social audit units (SAUs) don't seek records from Gram Sabhas regarding expenses (CAA Report)

- Lack of independence of SAUs
- poor awareness, capacity & incentive to people to participate

There is need for strengthening social audits for achieving objectives of governance by institutionalising social audits, involvement of civil society in training & educating local people for greater participation to achieve better implementation of schemes

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Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.4)

Citizen charter is a document or agreement that specifies the standards of performance that service provider intends to provide.

LIMITATIONS OF CITIZEN CHARTERS

- Non participative approach to designing the charter leads to one-way building of documents without consultation.
- Lack of precise, measurable standards leading to poor checks & accountability of the department
- Inflexible documents → which are rigid & non-updated leading to in-operativeness of such documents
- Poor awareness of public regarding such charters leading to lack of demands for quality services
- performance monitoring & implementation is not checked → leads to lack of discipline in the approach of human resources in the department.

Both 2nd ARC which recommended Sevottam model focussed upon citizen charter as an essential component for effective service delivery.

PREREQUISITES FOR PERFORMANCE

- Consultative process with all stakeholders in order to accommodate local considerations & making people party to the process
- periodic evaluation & monitoring of standards by making standards precise & measurable
- Involvement of Experts in order to generate a flexible document that could be updated as per feedback

Citizen charter is a means to achieve end of governance but it is an unwielded & underworked process..
Seven steps of 2nd ARC should be followed.

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Q.5)

RTI act was enacted in 2005 which provided information seeking rights to citizens from the public authorities. RTI act is a great tool for good governance.

PREREQUISITE FOR EXERCISE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

- Right to Information as part of Article 19(1) → Supreme court in SP Gupta case (1981) had declared it to be part of speech & Expression thereby making it a fundamental right
- Disclosure of Information thereby transparency → Section 4 of the Act provides for voluntary disclosure of information by public authorities
- Flags corruption issues → RTI have been instrumental in flagging of various scams, misappropriation of funds such as 2G, CWC, mafia in sand mining etc.
- citizen & civil society empowerment → along with media as fourth pillar of democracy.

ISSUES IN THE FUNCTIONING

- Security & Exclusions under section 8 of the act such as official secrets act, 1923 have led to dilution of the provisions.
- Severe Delays → As against 30 days on average 388 days are taken up for the disposal of RTI petitions.
- Pendency of RTI petition → 2.2 Lakh (as in 2020)
- penalties for non-disclosure is infrequent & inadequate to keep public authorities under check.
- vacancies in the Information commissioners at state & central level despite SC reprimanded on this
- Dilution of independence due to amendments in 2019

Despite the good intent to devolve information to the citizenry, the dawn of ~~some~~ transparency as not been fully realised.

NEED

- Voluntary disclosures under section 4 is needed to empower citizens & reduce the number of petitions & pendency. (Rajasthan has passed an act for this)
- ARC commission has called for ~~sec~~ requisite amendments to official secrets act. There is need for more objective interpretation of 'secrecy'
- Human & Technical capabilities of information commissioner must be built to ensure smooth functioning

RTI act is considered to be ^{not} best among 5 laws but 66th as performance. While the act is revolutionary, its functioning needs to be strengthened in order to realise the citizen empowerment in today's ICT age

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Q.6)

Citizen charters originated in England in 1992 which became an international revolutionary tool in safeguarding the citizen's trust on service quality & timelines.

Importance of citizen charters

- Objectivity in functioning of the government departments by providing vision, mission, targets of quality & quantity
- Inclusive & participative approach to deliver services by indulging into a two way process of communication
- Effective grievance redressal & feedback system by a knowledge of issues witnessed by the citizens
- Monitoring & performance evaluation on the basis of standards

This document of standards based delivery helps in solving the problems of citizens & effective service delivery

SHORTCOMINGS

- One size fits all approach followed by the departments without dealing with localised approach
- Lack of consensus based approach leads to an effective & inoperative document without accountability
- Awareness & literacy of people along with non-comprehensiveness of the character
- Poor evaluation & feedback system making the document defunct.
- Lack of Realistic & pragmatic standards that are not measurable leads to issues of poor collective measures

Charter's ~~are~~ have been reduced to the inoperative documents in departments.

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There is need for? →

- Localised, consensus based charter formation after adequate consultations
- citizen awareness of entitlements
A rights through involvement of civil society in making the charter's a revolution for accountability
- Independent agencies involvement for proper monitoring of standards achieved.

Charters should be precise, measurable, flexible in order to be effective.
Incentives should be attached to charter for better ~~return~~ morale of department

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Q.7)

Probity implies integrity, honesty of the people involved in service delivery. These moral principles are essential for efficient & effective governance.



TOOLS FOR PROBITY

↳ citizen charter ⇒ The agreement between citizen & government regarding service delivery and standards for the same

• PROBITY can be achieved by citizen charter.

- objectivity in the functioning of department
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Transparency though disclosure of standards achieved
- Adequate direction to the department by creating benchmarks so integrity is improved as ambiguity reduced



RTI → Right to Information

- voluntary disclosures helps in classification of information thereby checks the conduct of functionaries
- Grievances ensures accountability of the department as information commission can ensure the redressal, creates nationwide awareness leading to check on department

Social audit

- public hearing at Gram sabhas helps in checking corrupt practices & embezzlements

(Ex) Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan have achieved substantial gains by social audit process by involvement of NaoS

These 3 tools need to be strengthened as currently there are shortcomings in functioning. Citizen awareness is most effective in keeping all these tools operative for transparency. State must institutionalise social audit & charter while RTI functioning must improve through technical & human capacity building.

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Poor			Average			Good		
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