

Transparency in Administration

Transparency in Public Administration – Background

- The administration of Kautilya during the Mauryan period was more or less centralized with an effective system of intelligence gathering.
- During the Mughal period, the concept of centralised administration continued with greater vigour. Accountability and transparency in this centralised administration were conspicuous by their absence.
- Then came the colonial administration of the British. Here again, the basic format was of a centralized administration. There was a vertically controlled administrative setup with a District Magistrate and Collector as the key figure. The Collector in the eyes of the people was “MaiBap” whose job was to maintain law and order and collect revenue.
- While the administration was efficient, it had hardly any room for being responsive, accountable and transparent. It was not responsive and not citizen-friendly.
- These concepts, however, underwent a sea change in later years with token participation of people at various levels.
- Many administrative innovations were no doubt brought about in various fields like social, economic and technological, but these were mere cosmetic changes and primarily intended to suit the colonial requirements.

Need of Transparency in Public Administration

- Transparency is required to make the system of public service delivery effective. However, sheer knowledge of what entitlements are, and who is responsible for fulfilling them, is not sufficient to ensure that public services are passably and effectively delivered to the ‘intended’ recipients.
- The primary concern of the citizens in a good civil society is that their government must be fair and good. For a Government to be good it is essential that its systems and sub-systems of Governance are efficient, economic, ethical and equitable.
- In addition, the governing process must also be just, reasonable, fair and citizen-friendly. For these and other qualities and good governance, the administrative system must also be accountable and responsive, besides promoting transparency and people’s participation.
- 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. Accountability makes sure that for every action and inaction in government and its consequences there is a civil servant responsible and accountable to the government, the society and the people.

Aspirants can check out the following links for comprehensive preparation of the upcoming Civil Services Exam –

[Citizen-Centric](#)

[National Register of Citizens](#)

[Grievance Redressal Mechanism](#)

Administration		
Barriers to good governance	Government to Government (G2G) Initiatives	Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI)
Sound Legal Framework	Administrative Reforms In India	Citizenship in India – Articles 5,6,7,8,9,10 and 11
Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019	Overseas Citizenship Scheme – OCI Card and Eligibility	Fundamental Rights

Significance of Transparency in Public Administration

- Transparency is broadly accepted as a major principle of good governance. Good governance implies accountability to the citizens of a democratic polity and their involvement in decision making, implementation and evaluation of projects, programs and public policies. Know in detail about the [Good Governance](#) on the given link.
- The test of good governance lies in the goals and objectives of the government, in its policies and programs, in the manner of their execution, in the result achieved, and above all in the general perception of the people about the quality of functioning of various agencies, their attitude and behavior towards the people, their sincerity, honesty and their commitment towards the public duties. In this perspective, transparency and accountability become invaluable components of good governance as well as of good administration.
- 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.
- Transparency means that the criteria, process and systems of decision-making are openly known to all in a public manner. Citizens charter becomes an important measure for transparency in institutional setup.
- 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.

Major Initiative to Enhance Transparency in Public Administration in India

Some of the initiatives taken by the Indian Public Administration to ensure transparency in its working include – Right to Information Act, Public Services Bill, Citizens Charters, e-Governance, e-Bhoomi, e-Choupal, e-procurement.

- **Right to Information Act** – It is the freedom to know the details of the steps and measures taken by the different elements of the system. It can be better called the right of public access to the key information. It induces deep trust in the actions of the system. Whenever the public finds the decisions are forced or manipulated, they can seek the details of the matter. Go through the details of the [Right to Information](#) on the link provided here.
- **Citizens Charters**- Citizens Charter Bill 2011 aims at providing rights to citizens for time-bound delivery of goods and services and provide a Grievance Redressal Mechanism. 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/customers. Check out the detailed information on [Citizen's Charter](#) on the link provided here. Such a bill was previously recommended by the Second Administrative Reforms Commission. Also, dive deep into the information about the [Administrative Reforms Commission \(ARC\)](#).
- **Elimination of Corruption** – Lokpal and Lokayuktas aims at reducing corruption by setting up a separate institution of Lokpal at the Central level and Lokayuktas at the State level. These organizations investigate cases of corruption against public servants in the respective Government organizations. Candidates can check out further information on [Lokpal and Lokayuktas](#) on the given link.

You must also read about, [Components of the redressal mechanism](#) on the linked page.

- **e-Governance** – E-Governance initiatives for providing an accountable administration include a framework for efficient handling of public grievances through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System which is already in place. Check the information on [Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System \(CPGRAMS\)](#).
 - Aspirants should check the details on
 - [e-governance and its significance](#)
 - [Stages of e-governance](#)

Hindrances in Transparency in Public Administration

The governance involving transparency and accountability suffers from the weakness that disclosed Information's genuineness can also be a dubious and wrong interpretation of available information can give detrimental results to an organization. Further, the abundance and availability of information mean that the user needs the skill to determine what it is that they want. The user of information has a major role to play in affecting information sharing.

- Change in the mindset of the government employees is necessary as it becomes a great hindrance in the process of ensuring transparency and accountability in governance structures in India.
- Limited digitalization of government offices and inadequate infrastructure has further been a stumbling block in ensuring effective transparency and accountability measures.

Way Forward with Transparency in Public Administration

- There is an imperative need to strengthen and widen the national public information infrastructure through developing information networks for wider access of digital information through wider use of information technologies.
- Changing the mindset of the government employees is important. This will be addressed to organizing programs for orientation, training, and capacity building.
- States may be advised to establish an independent public grievance redressal authority to deal with complaints of delay, harassment, and corruption.

