**The Role of Transparency and Accountability in Administration**

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**Abstract:**

real and substantial meaning A well-informed citizenry that is able to intelligently and actively contribute to national policymaking is essential to the success of any democracy. To keep a democratic government functioning, openness and responsibility are necessities. Information accessibility is a vital weapon for social change. The publication of “Right to Information Act and governance” has therefore, made timely contributions to the growth of awareness of this vital element of our democratic polity. Democracy is the best instrument for good governance provided that democracy is real, which means that there is public participation in governance.

***Keywords:*** Accumulation of Power, Effective Mechanisms, Public Information Officer, Landmark Decision, Business Enterprises, Data Security

In a world of 195 countries, every country, big or small, is governed by some or the reform of government. By government we mean a group of people/institution who control and make decisions for a country, state, etc. These bodies have the power to choose the best course of action for keeping the peace and advancing the common good. In this post, we'll take a look at the many facets of effective governance, with an emphasis on openness and responsibility.

**Classification of Governments**

Government can be of three major categories- monarchy, aristocracy and democracy; depending upon the accumulation of power by one, a few, or many.

 India is home to 1.3 billon people, reflecting diverse cultures, languages and beliefs, united under one nation. Governing such an immensely populated and diverse land is challenging, and demands a proactive, visionary and an all-inclusive approach.

**Dictatorship Vs. Democratic Government**

 We have adopted the system of parliamentary democracy, which means that the people of India have the right to elect their representatives and the executive branch of government is held responsible to the legislative branch.

 Authoritative governance, on the other hand, refers to the concentration of power in the hands of a single individual or a tiny elite that is not legally bound to serve the public interest.

 Democratic governance is synonymous with good governance. It holds people as the natural claimants of power. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines good governance as the availability of effective systems, processes, and institutions through which individuals and groups can make their voices heard, claim their rights, fulfill their responsibilities, and resolve conflicts. This is the method through which power is used to make choices and provide for the public.

**Objectives**

 Transparency, accountability, rule of law, responsiveness, equity, etc, are some of the essential characteristics of good governance.

 Transparency ensures that the policy makers must provide comprehensive and accessible information to those concerned, and accountability ensures that the decision makers are accountable to the public as well as institutional stakeholders. These along with other features lead the way to good governance. Good governance must ensure inclusive growth, employment generation, equal opportunities, empathetic approach and poverty alleviation. It is based on the joint efforts of government and nongovernment institutions.

**Divices to Ensure Transparency and Accountability in Governance**

**Right to Information Act, 2005**

 **RTI is a** Article 19(1) basic right of the Indian Constitution. The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in this article for all Indian citizens. According to a ruling by the Supreme Court in Raj Narain v. State of UP, ignorance prevents the people from freely expressing themselves via speech or other forms of political expression. a guaranteed under the Indian Constitution Article 19(1) basic right. The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in this article for all Indian citizens. In the case Raj Narain v. State of UP, the Supreme Court ruled that citizens have no right to free speech until they are informed. This Judgement paved the way to the introduction of a transparency law which entitles the citizens with the right to know or seek information on any matter. Enactment of this Act enables anybody to ask for any information on a payment of Rs. 10 to the Public Information Officer (PIO). To keep tabs on the progress of various government initiatives, it guarantees citizens the right to view government work and request certified copies. Depending on the specifics of the inquiry, the PIO may potentially want more money. This kind of request must be backed up with valid reasons. Within 30 days after the request, the applicant must be given the requested information.

 **Filling an RTI**

* To submit an RTI electronically, go to rtonline. gov.in and sign in.
* By Mail – Use either regular mail or expedited mail to deliver your application to the correct bureau.
* In Person: Go to the office of the department's public information officer and fill out the RTI form there.

 However, it is to be noted that information can also be restricted. Issues demanding high confidentiality, for example, subjects of defence, intelligence and security, international relations, internal deliberations of the government, etc, do not fall under the purview of this Act.

 Supreme Court in a landmark decision **(*RBI Vs Jayantial Minstry*)** declared that RBI too falls under the ambit of RTI Act, to ensure transparency in its working.

 So that citizens don't have to file formal requests under the RTI Act, Section 4 (2) of the law mandates that all government agencies disseminate information to the public in a timely manner through Suomoto.

 On 31 st March 2017, certain amendments, known as RTI rules, were proposed to the RTI Act, 2005. They introduced the following concerning and debatable clauses.

* The appellant can withdraw his/her RTI application in case he is no longer seeking that information.
* The application of an RTI applicant will stand withdrawn after his death, implying that no information shall be provided to anybody after the death of the applicant.

These clauses call for concern as they directly or indirectly endanger the life of an applicant. There have been enough instances of RTI applicants or whistle blowers being murdered by the other party. These amendments can further intensify the issue of an applicant’s security, as the party involved in any kind of a scam or forgery might murder or blackmail the applicant to safeguard its interest. Debates continue to take place on these propositions and the fate of this Bill is yet to be decided.

**Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**

The Lokpal Act, passed by the Indian Parliament in an effort to combat corruption, proposes to create the institution of Lokpal to investigate complaints of wrongdoing by public officials. The concept was initially proposed in the first ARC proposal and is modeled after the British ombudsman system. A Lokpal at the federal level and a Lokayukta at the state level are proposed to investigate these claims. A measure that was first submitted in Loksabha in 2011 and ultimately approved by both houses in December 2013 and obtained presidential assent in January 2014 is described.

Public servants in categories A, B, C, and D, companies and trusts created by an Act of Parliament or receiving Central government funding, religious organizations, non-governmental organizations receiving foreign funding via the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), and many more fall under this institution's broad scope of jurisdiction. Lokpal establishes a timetable for the disposal of matters, including trial, and calls for the establishment of special courts to carry it out.

* **Appointment Panel:** The Prime Minister, the Speaker of the LokSabha, the Leader of the Opposition in the LokSabha, the Chief Justice of India or a sitting Supreme Court Judge nominated by the Chief Justice of India, and an eminent jurist nominated by the President shall make up the five-member lokpal Appointment panel (or selection committee). To aid in the appointment of a Lokpal, the selection committee will form a search committee comprised of seven individuals.
* **Guidelines for Removal:** After an investigation by the Supreme Court, the President may fire Lokpal members.

Theinstitution of Lokpal is a statutory body and shall consist of a Chairperson and a maximum of 8 members of which 50% should be from the judicial background. Further, at least 50% of the members shall be from SC/ST/OBCs, other minorities and women.

Since the enactment of this act, no Lokpal has been appointmented as the selection committee reserves a seat for the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and this position is currently vacant in the Parliament of India

**The Lokpal and Lokayuktas (Amendment) Bill, 2016** on July 27, 2016, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions, submitted it before the House of Representatives (Lok Sabha). Under the requirements of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, public officials are now obligated to reveal additional information about their financial assets. As soon as the Act is passed in 2013, its provisions will go into force. According to the Lokpal Act, after 30 days of taking office, a public servant is required to make a statement of assets and liabilities to the competent authority, including those of his spouse and any dependent children. The new law does not eliminate the obligation that public employees declare their assets and liabilities; however, the burden of doing so is lessened since the government will be responsible for supplying the appropriate form and method for this declaration.

The bill also seeks to make the head of the single biggest opposition party in the Lok Sabha the new Leader of the Opposition. It has been approved by both houses of Parliament, but the Lokpal and Lokayuktas (Amendment) Bill, 2016 has not yet become law.

**E-Governance**

 According to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, "e-governance" is the "rapid, easy, and transparent use of information and communication technology by all levels of government to meet the needs of people, engage with businesses, and share information."

 This platform links us, as citizens, to the different schemes announced by the Government and enable the different Government departments to ensure a transparent and easy exchange of information between them.

 The Government has launched multiple apps to invite participation of the citizens in Nation building. MyGov, eGov Connect, e-Sampark are some the popular e governance apps that empower the public with awareness of the different schemes and surveys in place.

 To ensure efficiency in the delivery of services, Government of India has also implemented the ***Aadhaar Act 2016.*** This enables the government to transfer subsidies directly into the citizen’s bank account by using the data in his/her Aadhaar card. The Government of India (GoI) provides its residents with a random 12-digit identifying number called Aadhaar. UIDAI is in charge of issuing and managing these. This is a multi-utility document which can act both as identification and address proofs. This act was put in place to identify the beneficiaries of government’s welfare schemes and deliver services efficiently to ensure transparency in governance. However, this has been a debatable Act having some reasonable benefits as well as concerns.

 **Advantages**

* This is a multi-utility document which can be used as a proof of identity as well as address.
* Eased the process of opening a bank account as an Aadhaar card alone can be used to do so, therefore making the process hassle free.
* Easy filing of tax returns.
* Keeping a track of financial records using the Aadhaar card of a person can help to check the flow of black money.
* Accurate identification of beneficiaries and effective delivery of services to them.

**Concerns**

* Contradictory to the Right to Privacy, as this fundamental right empowers us to choose the extent of personal information we would like to disseminate to the government. This act however mandates us to provide any information asked by the UIDAI.
* Issues of data security; monitoring of the regional centres to ensure date safety.
* Threat of data leakage.

All these tools, along with many others are working towards building a transparent and accountable government.

**Conclusion**

 Good governance and administration does not depend only on good laws, rules and procedures but more on the goodness of the human beings in-charge of implementing these laws, rules and procedures. Proper shaping and training of the administrative personnel who are the instruments of governance and administration deserve much greater attention. But persons manning administration are not to be looked upon mechanistically as tools as they constitute value in themselves. A conscious, confidence and proud public service, which is not denigrated day in and day out, is an asset for any nation. The adage that a bad workman quarrel with his tools does hod true. But the callousness, indifference and rudeness towards the ***common man*** has to be removed through appropriate training and good examples set by the seniors. It has to be borne in mind by public servants that they exercise authority on behalf of the people and that authority is limited by time and space. They cannot be oblivious of the fact that they themselves are part and parcel of the citizenry

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