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## Mains Practice Questions

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**Q.** Discuss the importance of public services reforms in ensuring good governance in India. (250 words)

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### **Approach**

- Briefly define public services reforms in the introduction and establish its relationship with Good Governance.
- Elaborate some of the important public services reforms initiated in India. Also, highlight their importance in achieving some of the components of good governance.
- Mention the challenges that impede these reforms.
- Conclude with some valid suggestions about what more efforts are needed to make public services reform ensure Good Governance.

### **Introduction**

Public services reforms refer to efforts to change the rules, processes, and values of public organizations. The purpose of such reforms is to ensure good governance through efficient, effective, and responsive delivery of public administration and public policy.

### **Body**

#### **Importance of Public Services Reforms in India**

In India, various public services reforms have been initiated from time to time to improve upon all the major components of good governance: **Accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equitability, participation, consensus-oriented, inclusiveness and rule of law.**

#### **Some of these reforms are**

##### **Right to Information**

- **Right To Information Act, 2005** marked a significant shift in Indian democracy. Besides providing legal access to the information to citizens it also improved the **responsiveness** of the government to community needs.
- It promotes **openness, transparency and accountability** in administration by making the government more open to public scrutiny.

##### **Citizen's Charter (CC)**

- Citizen's Charter is a document which represents a systematic effort to focus on the commitment of the Organisation towards its Citizens in respects of Standard of Services, Information, Choice and Consultation, Non-discrimination and Accessibility, Grievance Redress, Courtesy and Value for Money.

- To ensure this Sevottam model was proposed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> **ARC (Administrative Reforms Commission)** which provides a **quality management framework** applicable to public service delivery organisations and in all its departments.
- It emphasises on citizens as customers by ensuring that public services are **responsive to the citizens** they serve.

### **E-Governance**

- To make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs, **the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)** has been initiated by the Government of India.
- It has a direct impact on its citizens who derive benefits through direct transactions with the services offered by the government.

### **Good Governance Index**

- It is a uniform tool across the States to assess the status of Governance and impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and Union Territories.
- It enables states and Union Territories governments to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result-oriented approaches and administration.

### **Challenges that impede these reforms include**

- Digital Divide i.e. unequal access to communications technologies hinder uniform public service delivery.
- Illiteracy especially in the backwards states it is difficult to disseminate information to the citizens about public services.
- Lack of awareness among citizens about their rights.
- Due to corruption, allocated resources are often siphoned off before it reaches the intended beneficiaries.
- Red tape that necessitates excessive paperwork and tedious procedures before official action further weakens the reform initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

In order to ensure the ethos of good governance and participative democracy, there is a need to bring holistic reforms. In this context, public service delivery reforms should be complemented by Police & legal reforms, financial inclusion, improvement in social infrastructure, etc.