Mains Practice Question

Q. Explain how e-governance can facilitate economic inclusiveness and bring social transformation in India. (250 words)
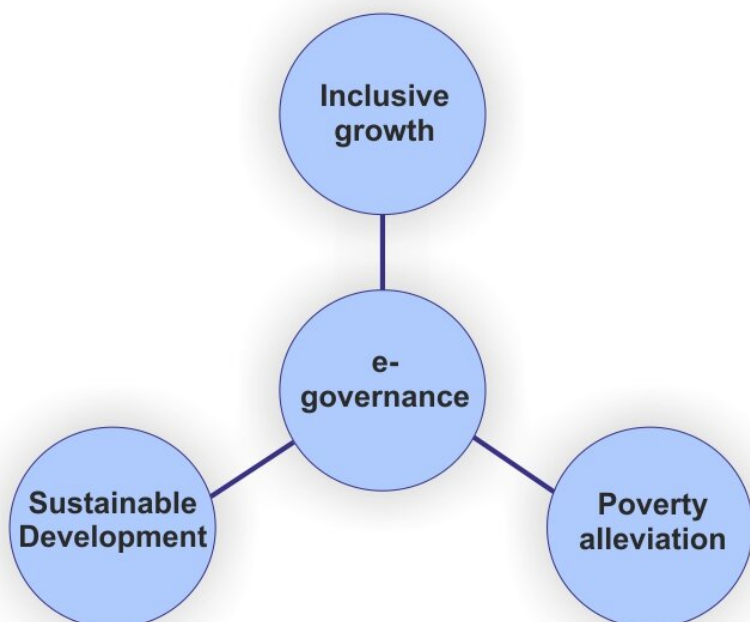
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Approach

- Introduce by defining and linking e-Governance and inclusive growth.
- Give examples of e-Governance initiatives with socio-economic dimensions.
- Conclude by mentioning the need for citizen-centric governance.

Introduction

- **E-Governance** is the application of Information and Communication Technology **(ICT)** to the processes of government functioning in order to bring about **'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) governance.**
- This SMART governance model should lead to **inclusive growth** that creates opportunity for all segments of population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity fairly across society. Thus, e-Governance helps in socio-economic development and sustainable growth for all.

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Body

Following are the applications of e-governance which illustrate economic inclusiveness in bringing social

transformation in Indian society:

Economic dimensions

- **Reviving agriculture sector:**

  - Digitization of land records via **Bhoomi Rashi** portal.
  - **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** has helped improve productivity, and empowered farmers by using sustainable, economical and eco-friendly technology.
- **Financial literacy and inclusion:**

  - **PMGDISHA** (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan) to make atleast one person per family digitally literate.
  - **Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS)** facilitates banking services and digital payment.
  - **Digital payment:** Many innovative digital payment tools, namely BHIM-UPI, Bharat QR Code, National Electronic Toll Collections, etc, have been implemented.
- **Quality employment:**

  - **UMANG** mobile application for availing government services through backend integration with several government application and databases.
  - **Digitization of EPFO records :** access to view one's pension amounts and deposits, people feel more assured that their funds are safe and can monitor their fund status.

Social dimensions

- **Affordable education:**

  - **National Scholarship Portal** as a single online platform integrating multiple scholarship schemes to facilitate application submission, verification and disbursal of funds through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
  - **SWAYAM –** a massive online open courses (MOOCs) platform which offers more than 2000 programmes.
  - **'National Knowledge Network (NKN)** to interconnect all institutions of higher learning and research with a high speed data communication network to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative research.
- **Quality Healthcare:**

  - **e-Hospital :** facilitates automation in hospitals through 20+ modules of Hospital Management Information System namely patient registration, IPD, pharmacy, blood bank, etc.
  - **`Mera Aspataal' Application :** Allows patients to provide feedback on service quality at hospitals and ultimately help establish patient driven, responsive and accountable healthcare system.
- **Inclusion of marginalized sections:**

  - **Non-visual display access (NVDA),** an open source screen reading software, available in 7 Indian languages facilitates the differently abled to access services.
  - **Jeevan Pramaan** facilitates pensioners to submit their life certificate digitally from anywhere, anytime basis.
- **Facilitating participatory governance/ Resolving citizens grievances:**

  - **MyGov** portal facilitates participatory governance by providing a common digital platform, where citizens can share their views on government programmes and schemes.
  - **Real Time Governance** initiative of **Andhra Pradesh government** to resolve citizen grievances and monitor infrastructure projects, incidents and weather & climatic events across the state in real time, leveraging technology services.

Thus, e-governance can facilitate economic inclusiveness and bring social transformation in India.

Conclusion

Digital India programme helped India harness digital technologies to bring about a positive change towards good governance. The aim of any e-Governance initiative should be to ensure citizen participation and empowerment with the technology that is transformative, affordable and sustainable. Thus, digital empowerment is necessary to achieve the motto of **'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government'.**

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