



# UPSC

# Mains

**Union Public Service Commission**

**Volume - 3**

**Governance & International Relations**

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## Previous Year Questions

Year	Question
2025	E-governance projects have a built-in bias towards technology and back-end integration than user-centric designs. Examine
2025	Civil Society Organisations are often perceived as being anti-state actors than non-state actors. Do you agree? Justify.
2025	What are environmental pressure groups? Discuss their role in raising awareness, influencing policies and advocating for environmental protection in India.
2025	“In contemporary development models, decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities are not located close to the source of information and execution, defeating the objectives of development.” Critically evaluate.
2024	Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India’s development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment.
2024	The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss.
2024	The Citizens’ charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them.
2024	e-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in the service delivery process. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context evaluate the role of the ‘Interactive Service Model’ of e-governance.
2023	e-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features?
2022	To what extent, in your opinion, as the decentralisation of power in India changed the governance landscape at the grassroots?
2021	“Pressure groups play a vital role in influencing public policy in making in India.” Explain how the business associations contribute to public policies.
2021	Can civil society and Non-Government Organisations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative method.
2020	“Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance”. In this context suggest reforms in the Civil Service for strengthening democracy.
2020	“The emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of the government”. Discuss.
2019	What are the methods used by the farmer’s organizations to influence the policy-makers in India and how effective are these methods?
2019	Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based projects/programmes usually suffers in terms of certain vital factors. Identify these factors and suggest measures for their effective implementation.

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<b>2019</b>	'In the context of the neo-liberal paradigm of developmental planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost-effective and remove many implementation blockages'- Discuss
<b>2019</b>	The need for cooperation among various service sectors has been an inherent component of development discourse. Partnership bridges the gap among the sectors. It also sets in motion a culture of 'collaboration' and 'team spirit'. In the light of statements above examine India's development process.
<b>2018</b>	"Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate protection and prevention of degradation to the environment." Comment with relevant illustrations.
<b>2018</b>	E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about the critical importance of the 'use value' of information.
<b>2016</b>	"In the Indian governance system, the role of non-state actors has been only marginal." Critically examine this statement.
<b>2016</b>	"Effectiveness of the government system at various levels and people's participation in the governance system are interdependent" Discuss their relationship in the context of India.
<b>2016</b>	Has the Indian governmental system responded adequately to the demands of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization started in 1991? What can the government do to be responsive to this important change?
<b>2015</b>	Examine critically the recent changes in the rules governing foreign funding of NGOs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976.
<b>2015</b>	The Self-Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP), which is India's own innovation, has proved to be one of the most effective poverty alleviation and women empowerment programmes. Elucidate.
<b>2015</b>	In the light of the Satyam Scandal (2009), discuss the changes brought in corporate governance to ensure transparency, accountability.
<b>2014</b>	Has the Cadre based Civil Services Organization been the cause of slow growth in India? Critically examine.

# 1

## CHAPTER

# Important Aspects of Governance

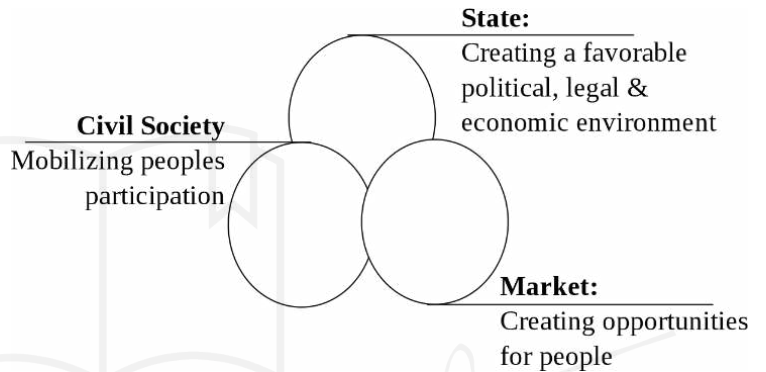
## Important Aspects of Governance

### Governance

- The **UNDP (1997)** defines Governance as the use of economic, political & administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It involves the institutions and processes through which citizens express interests, exercise rights, fulfill duties & resolve conflicts.
- Government is about who holds power and makes decisions (e.g. elected officials, bureaucracies), whereas governance is about how decisions are made and implemented, often involving collaboration between state and non-state actors.

### Stakeholders of Governance:

1. **State:** Comprises the Legislature, Judiciary, Political Executive & Bureaucracy.
2. **Market:** Refers to the Private Sector & business enterprises.
3. **Civil Society:** Includes NGOs, media, voluntary groups & pressure groups.



### Dimensions of Governance in India

Governance in India is a multifaceted concept that goes beyond just the functioning of the government. In the Indian context, governance operates across multiple dimensions, political, administrative, legal, economic, social, environmental, and digital, each playing a crucial role in delivering justice, equity, transparency, and sustainable development.

- **Political Governance:** Involves the functioning of political institutions, electoral systems, and democratic processes. Example: The Election Commission of India ensures free and fair elections, upholding democratic legitimacy.
- **Administrative Governance:** Refers to the quality, efficiency, and accountability of the bureaucracy and public administration. Example: Mission Karmayogi aims to reform the civil services through capacity-building and performance-based evaluation.
- **Economic Governance:** Focuses on fiscal management, market regulation, ease of doing business, and economic policy implementation. Example: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code promotes financial discipline and a faster resolution of bad debts.
- **Legal and Judicial Governance:** Concerns access to justice, rule of law, judicial independence, and legal reforms. Example: e-Courts Project enables virtual hearings and faster disposal of cases through digitization.
- **Social Governance:** Ensures inclusion, equity, welfare delivery, and protection of vulnerable groups. Example: PM POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal Scheme) ensures nutritional security and school attendance among children.

- **Environmental Governance:** Involves sustainable development, pollution control, climate action, and conservation efforts. Example: The National Green Tribunal plays a key role in adjudicating environmental disputes efficiently.
- **Digital Governance:** Leverages ICT to make public service delivery more transparent, accessible, and efficient. Example: DigiLocker offers digital storage for official documents like marksheets, Aadhaar, and licenses.
- **Participatory Governance:** Encourages citizens' involvement in decision-making, planning, and monitoring of governance processes. Example: Gram Sabhas under the 73rd Amendment empower rural citizens to participate in local development planning.
- **Fiscal Governance:** Relates to prudent financial management, transparency in budgeting, and fiscal accountability. Example: Public Financial Management System enables real-time monitoring of government expenditures.
- **International Governance:** Refers to India's role in global institutions and adherence to international norms. Example: India's participation in the G20 Presidency (2023) showcased its commitment to global governance and multilateralism.

### **Decentralisation of Power - Changed governance landscape at Grassroots**

#### **Positive Changes**

- **Empowerment of Local Governments:** The 73rd & 74th Amendments have enhanced autonomy of Panchayats & Municipalities for more local governance.
- **Improved Decision-Making:** Decentralisation allows local bodies to make decisions tailored to community needs.
- **Increased Public Participation:** Grassroots decentralisation fosters greater citizen engagement in local governance.
- **Enhanced Local Accountability:** Gram Sabhas and Ward Committees ensure local governments are accountable to the people.
- **Increased Transparency:** Local governments are mandated to ensure transparency in budgeting, planning, and implementation.
- **Challenges in Implementation:** Limited resources and capacity issues hinder the effective execution of decentralised policies.
- **Focus on Social Inclusion:** Decentralisation promotes representation and participation of marginalized groups like women and Dalits.
- **Financial Autonomy:** Local governments receive direct funding, ensuring better resource allocation to grassroots programs.
- **Tailored Development Plans:** Local bodies can create customized development policies that meet regional and cultural needs.
- **Conflict Resolution at Local Level:** Decentralisation enables quicker local conflict resolution, as issues are addressed directly at the community level.

#### **Negative Changes**

- **Resource Constraints:** Local governments often lack sufficient financial resources to effectively implement policies and schemes.
- **Political Interference and Corruption:** Political manipulation and corruption remain challenges despite decentralisation efforts.

- **Bureaucratic Delays:** Inefficiencies in local administration can result in delayed decision-making and poor service delivery.
- **Limited Public Awareness:** Low literacy levels and lack of awareness about local governance mechanisms reduce effective participation in rural areas.
- **Fragmented Governance:** Too many independent local bodies can result in fragmented governance, reducing coordination on broader national issues.

### **Governance Issues in India:**

Governance in India is challenged by a complex web of political, legal, administrative, economic, and socio-environmental issues. These issues hinder inclusive development, democratic accountability, and efficient public service delivery. The issues include:

#### **1. Political Issues:**

- ✓ **Criminalization of Politics:** ADR analysis of 763 sitting MPs show 306 (40%) have criminal cases.
- ✓ **Misuse of Power:** Government machinery used to influence elections.
- ✓ **Weak internal democracy in political parties:** Law commission → weakens democratic accountability.
- ✓ **Electoral funding opacity:** Over 12000 crore of political donations received via electoral bonds (2018-2024), with >90% going to ruling parties. The Supreme Court struck it down for violating the right to know.

#### **2. Legal and Judicial Issues:**

- ✓ **Delayed Justice:** As per National Judicial Data Grid → Over 4.5 crore pending cases in all levels of Indian judiciary
- ✓ **Judicial Accountability Gaps:** India's Judge to population ratio is just 21 per million, far below the recommended 50 per million → 20% vacancies persist, leading to overburdened courts and reduced quality of judgements.
- ✓ **Undertrial Overcrowding in Prisons:** NCRB 2022 reports that 77% of India's 5.5 lakh prisoners are undertrials, many detained for petty crimes without timely bail.
- ✓ **Lack of Digitization & E-Courts:** Only 18000+ courts are digitized out of over 25000. This led to poor access to justice, especially during crises like COVID-19.

#### **3. Administrative Issues:**

- ✓ **Insensitive Public Services:** Inadequate disaster relief and bureaucratic apathy often result in poor response during emergencies like floods or pandemics. This leads to human suffering, loss of trust in institutions.
- ✓ **Bureaucratic Delays:** India ranks 163/190 for enforcing contracts (World Bank) pointing to procedural inefficiencies in commercial justice. This hampers business climate and investor confidence.
- ✓ **Token Decentralization:** Local bodies lack proper teeth, despite constitutional backing leading to service delivery failures.
- ✓ **Corruption:** India scored 39/100 and ranked 93/180 in the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International which also points towards declining institutional credibility.
- ✓ **Vacancy Crisis in Civil Services:** As of 2024 approx. 15,000 IAS officer positions remain vacant (DoPT data), leading to administrative overload..

- ✓ **Poor Urban Governance:** Indian cities perform poorly in urban planning capacity indices like the ASICS Index. Impacts include traffic congestion, pollution and housing crises.
- ✓ **Citizen Grievance Redressal Gaps:** Over 80 lakh complaints registered on CPGRAMS, pending for a month, leading to public frustration and reduced engagement with governance systems.

#### 4. Economic Issues:

- ✓ **Policy Mismanagement:** The 2016 demonetization policy faced criticism for poor planning, leading to economic disruption without clear long-term benefits.
- ✓ **Fiscal Imbalance:** Repeated breaches of the FRBM Act show weak fiscal discipline at both central and state levels.
- ✓ **Regional Inequality:** States like Bihar (per capita GDP: \$1,004) lag far behind richer states like Maharashtra (\$4,426).
- ✓ **Jobless Growth:** Despite robust GDP figures, youth unemployment stood at 17.5%, reflecting structural flaws in the economy.
- ✓ **High Informality:** As per NSSO data, 90% of India's workforce remains in the informal sector without social security.
- ✓ **GST complexity:** GSTs multi-rate structure and compliance burden continue to challenge small businesses.

#### 5. Social and Environmental Issues:

- ✓ **Denial of Services:** Millions lack access to safe drinking water, toilets, and hygiene facilities, despite schemes like Swachh Bharat.
- ✓ **Marginalization of SC/STs:** Despite affirmative action, these communities remain underrepresented in education and employment.
- ✓ **Voiceless Poor:** Low literacy, lack of awareness, and digital illiteracy keep poor citizens out of welfare and justice systems.
- ✓ **Environmental Degradation:** Cities like Delhi face hazardous air quality due to unregulated construction, vehicular emissions, and stubble burning.
- ✓ **Digital divide:** NFHS-5 (2019–21): Only 33% of women have used the internet compared to 57% of men.
- ✓ **Climate Vulnerability:** According to the Global Climate Risk Index, India ranks 7th, frequently facing extreme weather events like floods and droughts.

### Good Governance

It refers to the fair, transparent, accountable, and effective management of public affairs and institutions. It ensures that the needs, rights, and interests of all citizens, especially the marginalized are addressed in a just and inclusive manner. It is not just about making decisions, but about how decisions are made, implemented, and monitored.

#### UNDP's 8 Characteristics of Good Governance:

- 1. Participation:** Citizens engage in decision-making, implementation & monitoring. Ex: Gram sabhas under 73rd amendment act empower villagers to participate in local planning and budgeting, empowering grassroots democracy.



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- 2. Consensus-Oriented:** find common ground between different views for sustainable outcomes. Ex: India's GST Council brings centre and states together to make unified tax decisions.
  - 3. Rule of Law:** Ensures fair, impartial, and consistently enforced legal frameworks. Ex: Independence of the supreme court ensures fair interpretation and application of the Constitution and laws.
  - 4. Transparency:** Freely accessible & clear information for informed public scrutiny. It helps build trust and enables citizens to hold authorities accountable. Ex: RTI Act (2005).
  - 5. Accountability:** Institutions and individuals in power are answerable to those impacted by their decisions. Ex: Social audit of schools in Bihar.
  - 6. Responsiveness:** Timely, citizen-friendly services and effective grievance redressal, which enhances citizen satisfaction and trust in governance. Ex: CPGRAMS portal for citizens grievance redressal.
  - 7. Effectiveness & Efficiency:** Optimal resource use with environmental sustainability. Ex: Digital India and e-governance initiatives.
  - 8. Equity & Inclusiveness:** Inclusive development, ensuring the well-being of the vulnerable sections. It helps promote social justice and reduces inequality. Ex: Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.

### Strategies for Good Governance:

- 1. Redirecting State Priorities:** The state must prioritize basic human needs, sanitation, healthcare, education & housing to promote inclusive and equitable development. Ex: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan → over 11 crore toilets built since 2014.
  - 2. Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups:** Establishing robust safety nets ensures dignity and security for the elderly, disabled, widows, and other marginalized groups. Ex: National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) provides pension support to 3.09 crore beneficiaries, offering financial assistance to the poor and elderly.
  - 3. Fortification of State Institutions:** Strong institutions are essential for efficient service delivery, reducing leakages, and improving accountability. Ex: UIDAI has enabled 130+ crore enrollments, helping eliminate ghost beneficiaries in welfare schemes through biometric verification.
  - 4. Legislative Reforms:** Modernize laws to enhance transparency and efficiency. Ex: RTI Act → over 2.2 crore RTI applications filed since inception.
  - 5. Civil Services Enhancement:** Civil servants must be equipped with modern skills, digital tools, and performance incentives to enhance governance outcomes. Ex: Mission Karmayogi aims to transform bureaucracy by training 46 lakh central government employees with a focus on role-based competency.
  - 6. Collaborative Governance Framework:** Foster cooperation between state, civil society & private sector. Ex: Midday Meal Scheme → Covers 12 crore children across 11.5 lakh schools, implemented in collaboration between NGOs and local bodies.
  - 7. Digital Governance:** Use of ICT, AI for transparent time bound service delivery. Ex: DigiLocker → Over 17 crore users, stores digital academic & identity records, promoting paperless governance.
  - 8. Empowering Local Governance:** True decentralization involves transferring funds, functions, and functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies. Ex: The 14th and 15th Finance Commission allocated ₹3+ lakh crore to strengthen grassroots governance and service delivery.
  - 9. Climate-Responsive Governance:** Integrate sustainability and climate resilience in planning and service delivery. Ex: NGT → Over 32000+ cases disposed till 2023.
  - 10. Judicial Reforms:** Promote faster, tech-enabled justice & citizen legal empowerment. Ex: e-Courts → ₹7,210 crore allocated (2023) for digitization, AI tools, virtual courts to streamline justice delivery.
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## Benefits associated with Good Governance

Benefits	Explanation	Example
<b>Efficient Public Service Delivery</b>	Ensures timely and accessible services.	e-Sanjeevani - National Telemedicine Platform
<b>Reduction in Corruption</b>	Promotes transparency and minimizes leakages.	GeM Portal- Transparent govt. procurement.
<b>Strengthening Rule of Law</b>	Ensures equal and fair legal treatment.	Fast-track special court for POSCO cases.
<b>Citizen Participation</b>	Encourages people's involvement in governance.	MyGov Platform allows citizens to contribute ideas to govt policies.
<b>Inclusive Development</b>	Benefits reach all, especially the marginalized.	One Nation, One Ration Card- migrant workers access to food anywhere.
<b>Economic Growth &amp; Investor Trust</b>	Creates a stable environment for businesses and investments.	Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code- Streamline resolution of business debt.
<b>Political Stability</b>	Reduces unrest and builds trust in institutions.	Delimitation Commission- maintain fair representation and electoral balance.
<b>Optimal Resource Utilization</b>	Prevents waste and improves efficiency in governance.	POSHAN Tracker- real time monitoring of nutrition services for better outcomes.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Balances economic growth with environmental care.	FAME- promotes eco-friendly mobility.

### Key Schemes/Initiatives:

- **Digital India:** Empowers citizens through digital infrastructure and e-governance.
- **PM - Jan Dhan Yojana:** Promotes Financial inclusion by providing bank accounts, insurance, and pension to all, especially the unbanked.
- **GST:** Unifies indirect taxes for efficient and transparent tax administration. Eliminates cascading taxes, improves ease of doing business.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer:** Transfers subsidies directly to beneficiaries to curb leakages. Curbs corruption, ensures targeted delivery
- **Swachh Bharat Mission:** Eliminate open defecation, improve sanitation and waste management. Promotes cleanliness as a civic duty.
- **RTI Act:** Enhances transparency by giving citizens access to government functioning. It empowered whistleblowers and enabled investigative journalism.
- **Decentralization & People's Participation:** 73rd & 74th Amendments introduced decentralized governance via panchayati raj institutions and urban local bodies.
- **Fiscal Management:** Strengthens budgetary discipline & transparency. This ensures fiscal prudence, reduces fiscal deficit and increases public accountability.
- **MyGov Platform:** Encourages participatory governance, public consultation, policy suggestions through citizen engagement.
- **Aadhaar Enabled Services:** Uses biometric ID for targeted service delivery. In a way eliminates duplication and ghost beneficiaries.
- **UMANG & DigiLocker:** Provide digital access to public services & documents. Enhances document authenticity and access.

- **Pragati Platform:** Real-time grievance redressal & project monitoring by PMO. It has accelerated project execution and reduced bureaucratic delay.
- **JAM Trinity:** Synergistic model for financial inclusion & targeted welfare delivery. It has enabled DBT, reduced leakages and increased transparency.
- **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP):** Digital delivery of services via Common Service Centres (CSCs) across rural areas. It has bridged the rural-urban service delivery divide.
- **Swamitva Scheme:** Drone-based property survey scheme to streamline rural land revenue and reduce disputes. It also enables credit access for the rural population.
- **FutureSkills:** Empower emerging tech skills among rural and digital entrepreneurs.
- **BharatNet Connectivity:** Provides high-speed optical-fibre internet to Gram Panchayats. Enables access to telemedicine, e-education in remote areas.

### **Effectiveness of Government and People's Participation in India**

In a democracy, governance is a two-way process where the state implements policies and citizens engage through voting, feedback, and local decision-making. In India, effective governance and active public participation are closely linked, each reinforcing the other.

#### **Interdependence between Governance and Participation**

- **Enhances Accountability:** Active citizen participation (e.g., public hearings, RTI, social audits) ensures that government actions are transparent and accountable.
- **Improves Responsiveness:** Local feedback helps tailor policies to actual needs, enhancing program effectiveness.
- **Builds Trust:** Efficient government delivery increases public confidence, encouraging further engagement and compliance.
- **Resource Utilization:** Participatory governance ensures better targeting and use of resources, reducing corruption and wastage.

#### **Illustrations from India**

- **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs):** Local self-governance with citizen participation has improved rural development outcomes in many states.
- **MGNREGA Social Audits:** Community-led monitoring ensures timely payments and prevents corruption.
- **Urban Local Bodies:** Citizen engagement in municipal planning leads to better sanitation, water supply, and infrastructure delivery.
- **Digital Platforms:** E-governance initiatives like UMANG or MyGov increase citizen feedback and policy responsiveness.

**Kofi Annan** "Good governance is ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law; strengthening democracy; promoting transparency and capacity in public administration. It is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.

### **E-Governance**

- **World Bank** – "E-Governance is the use of information & communication technologies, such as the Internet, mobile computing, and wide area networks, by government agencies to transform their relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government."
- **United Nations** – "E-Governance is the application of ICT to deliver government services, exchange information, communication transactions, and integration of various stand-alone systems and services."

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- **OECD** – "E-Governance refers to the use of ICTs, particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better government."
  - **Miglani's 5C Model of E-Governance (2001)** outlines five key pillars:
    1. **Computer** – Refers to the digital infrastructure, including hardware and software, required to run government operations.
    2. **Connectivity** – Encompasses the digital networks and bandwidth that enable smooth data exchange.
    3. **Content** – Represents the actual information shared and accessed within the system.
    4. **Consumer** – Includes the end-users, citizens, businesses & intermediaries, who interact with the digital services.
    5. **Confidence Building** – Focuses on creating trust in the system through transparency, security, and user-friendly design to promote greater citizen participation.

### **Key Stakeholder Interactions in e-Governance:**

E-Governance in India functions through structured digital interactions between the government and its key stakeholders: other government bodies, citizens, businesses, and employees. These are categorized into four main models:

1. **G2G (Government to Government):** Facilitates inter-departmental coordination, data sharing & administrative efficiency across various levels of government- central, state, and local.
    - ✓ **PARIVESH:** Online system for monitoring environmental clearances.
    - ✓ **PRAGATI:** A real-time, video conferencing and dashboard-based monitoring system launched by PMO.
    - ✓ **e-Office:** Digital workflow system for file movement and decision tracking in ministries- enabling a paperless, efficient bureaucracy.
    - ✓ **NICNET:** The backbone network managed by NIC, connecting central and state governments for integrated communication and data exchange.
  2. **G2C (Government to Citizens):** Enhances public service delivery and fosters transparency, accessibility, and accountability in governance.
    - ✓ **SVAMITVA:** Uses drones to map rural residential lands, enabling villagers to get property cards and access bank credit.
    - ✓ **Shram Suvidha Portal:** A unified platform for labor law compliance and registration, improving ease for workers and employers.
    - ✓ **Jan Soochna Portal (Rajasthan):** Proactively discloses government scheme data to the public, promoting transparency at the grassroots.
    - ✓ **CPGRAMS:** 24×7 online platform for lodging public grievances.
    - ✓ **Aarogya Setu:** COVID-19 contact tracing and health status monitoring.
    - ✓ **DigiLocker:** Secure cloud storage for official documents like Aadhaar, PAN & academic certificates.
  3. **G2B (Government to Business):** Streamlines business-government interactions by simplifying licensing, taxation, procurement, and compliance.
    - ✓ **SPICe+:** A single-window integrated form for company incorporation, PAN, TAN, GSTIN, and EPFO registration.
    - ✓ **MCA21:** An e-Governance initiative of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for online filing of company-related documents and returns.
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- ✓ **GeM (Government e-Marketplace):** Online procurement portal for government tenders & goods transparently.
  - ✓ **ICEGATE:** Online customs clearance platform facilitating e-filing, duty payments, and logistics tracking for import-export businesses.
4. **G2E (Government to Employees):** Supports internal administrative processes and enhances service conditions, training, and engagement for government employees.
- ✓ **iGOT Karmayogi:** An e-learning platform under Mission Karmayogi for continuous skill-building of civil servants across domains.
  - ✓ **e-Postal Ballot:** Enables government employees on election duty or posted remotely (like in paramilitary forces) to vote electronically.
  - ✓ **e-HRMS:** A comprehensive human resource management system that manages employee records, promotions, leave, and service history for central government employees.

### **Status of E-Governance in India**

- **Expanding reach:** Over 4.5 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) have been established in rural areas.
- **Improved service delivery:** Use of the Aadhaar trinity has streamlined services; DigiLocker has issued 190 crore digital documents, reducing bureaucratic burden.
- **Greater transparency and efficiency:** Initiatives like Karnataka's Bhoomi project have digitised land records.
- **Reduced time and cost:** 77% of users reported faster service delivery (Digital India Report, 2023).
- **Enhanced inclusion:** Over 400 schemes are implemented through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

### **Benefits of e-Governance:**

- **Transparency:** e-Governance reduces the opacity in administrative functioning by making data and processes openly accessible to citizens. Ex: Jan Soochna Portal of Rajasthan.
- **Efficiency:** Digital platforms eliminate redundant paperwork, reduce delays, and automate workflows. Ex: GSTN Portal reducing compliance time.
- **Economic Growth:** e-Governance minimizes transaction costs and encourages business growth by simplifying regulatory processes. Ex: MCA21 portal- aims at improving India's ease of doing business.
- **Social Inclusion:** Involves marginalized groups in digital governance. Ex: PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan), trained 6+ crore rural citizens in basic digital skills.
- **Better Service delivery:** Digital platforms improve the quality, speed, and accountability of service delivery. Ex: UMANG App integrates 1400+ services like EPFO, Passport etc.
- **24x7 Accessibility:** Enables anytime, anywhere availability of government services. Ex: Passport seva portal- 24x7 access to passport-related services.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Enables data-driven governance and real-time monitoring. Ex: PRAGATI Platform allowing PMO to monitor projects and address delays.
- **Uniform Service Standards:** Standardization of digital processes ensures consistency in service delivery across all regions. Ex: Bhoomi portal bringing uniformity in property data.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Reduces paper usage, eco-friendly governance. Ex: e-Courts digitize case files, reducing physical storage and paper usage.

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- **Enhanced Participation:** Encourages citizen involvement through portals. Ex: MYGOV Portal enhancing regular citizen participation in the governance framework.
  - **Interdepartmental Coordination:** Promotes seamless communication between departments and ministries. Ex: e-Samiksha platform allows Cabinet Secretariat to track inter-ministerial issues.
  - **Judicial Efficiency:** Digitization helps reduce case backlogs and ensures faster case tracking. Ex: National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) enables real-time tracking of case pendency.

### **Challenges in e-Governance:**

Despite the rapid adoption of digital platforms in governance, India faces several structural, infrastructural, and societal challenges that hinder the full realization of e-Governance's potential. These issues range from technological gaps to human resistance, posing significant hurdles in ensuring equitable, secure, and efficient digital governance. Some prominent challenges include:

- **Digital Divide:** Significant urban-rural gap in internet access – 66% penetration in urban areas vs. 25–42% in rural India, limiting inclusivity.
- **Cybersecurity Risks:** With 1.39 million cyber incidents reported by CERT-In (2022), digital services remain vulnerable to attacks and data breaches.
- **Resistance to Change:** With 1.39 million cyber incidents reported by CERT-In (2022), digital services remain vulnerable to attacks and data breaches.
- **Frequent power cuts:** Frequent power cuts in remote/rural areas interrupt access to e-governance services and infrastructure functionality.
- **Legacy systems:** Many government platforms run on obsolete software/hardware that are difficult to upgrade or integrate with newer technologies.
- **Untrained personnel:** Many government employees lack adequate digital skills, leading to poor implementation and service delivery.
- **High initial costs:** The cost of building digital infrastructure, training staff, and maintaining platforms is often a deterrent for expansion.
- **Platform Overload & Fragmentation:** Multiple service portals (e.g., DigiLocker, UMANG, MyGov) lead to user confusion and reduced accessibility due to lack of integration.
- **Language barriers:** With over 200 languages spoken, limited multilingual support on platforms hinders access for non-Hindi/English speakers.
- **Lack of data protection laws:** Incidents like the 2018 Aadhaar data breach (1.1 billion records) highlight weak safeguards for citizens' personal data.

### **Recent e-governance developments in India:**

- **E-Passports** → launched with embedded biometric chips for secure travel.
- **Digital Fare Payment** → Contactless fare collection via UPI/debit/ cards in buses.
- **Delhi Metro Tickets** → booked through Uber app via ONDC integration.
- **e-Panchanama in Maharashtra** → Use of GPS and digital documentation for crop damage assessments.
- **Virtual Labs in Delhi schools** → Introduction of interactive science experiments through digital labs in schools.
- **Digital Audio Guides** → QR-code-based audio guides in Indian museums for visitors (Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum, Pune).
- **Bihar Helpline** → A helpline-based interface to access land records and revenue services digitally.

- **Digi Yatra** → Use of Facial Recognition Technology for seamless airport check-ins.
- **Digital Rupee** → upgraded with offline payment & UPI interoperability features.
- **Bhuvan Platform** → By ISRO, GIS-based platform for geospatial planning, disaster monitoring, and infrastructure development.
- **Smart City Command and Control Centers** → Real-time urban management centers using AI, CCTV, IoT, and big data.
- **India Stack** → A set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that allows governments, businesses, startups and developers to utilize India's digital infrastructure to deliver services.
- **BHIM** → Revolutionized digital payments in India, making transactions quick, easy and secure, leading to a shift towards a cashless economy.

### **E-Governance is “more than Use of Technology” in governance**

Achieving meaningful e-governance goes beyond the mere adoption of digital tools. It demands both technological progress and a transformation in how administrative systems function.

- **Information as a Strategic Asset:** Power of information lies in its ability to empower citizens, enhance government transparency, and reinforce accountability. Simply putting services online is not enough; the data provided must be accurate, timely, and easy to access.
- **Diverse and Inclusive Engagement:** For e-governance to be effective, it must support a wide range of interactions, not just between the state and its citizens, but also involving private enterprises, community groups, and civil society organizations.
- **Reforming Institutions, Not Just Digitizing Them:** Placing people at the center of governance is essential. Technological tools are ineffective when paired with outdated administrative procedures or rigid hierarchies.
- **Simplifying Governance for All:** E-governance should aim to make governance easier, not more complex. Streamlined and user-friendly procedures empower citizens to interact confidently with digital platforms.

### **2nd ARC recommendations on e-Governance:**

- **Build the Enabling Environment:** Create a supportive ecosystem through political commitment, public awareness, and institutional incentives.
- **Process Re-engineering:** Redesign existing administrative processes before automating them.
- **Enterprise Architecture:** Develop a National Enterprise Architecture to guide technology standardization
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Implement continuous, real-time monitoring of projects by executing agencies.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage transparent, accountable PPPs in implementation of ICT projects.
- **Cybersecurity Strategy:** Formulate a comprehensive plan for securing critical information infrastructure.
- **Common Infrastructure:** Promote use of shared digital infrastructure like State Data Centres (SDCs), SWANs, and Cloud services.
- **Legal Framework:** Formulate legal roadmap for e-Governance implementation.
- **Knowledge Management:** Institutionalize mechanisms to capture, store, and reuse organizational knowledge.

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- **Capacity Building:** Train officials, stakeholders, and institutions to adapt to e-Governance tools and processes.
  - **Multi-Channel Access:** Provide services not only online but also through CSCs, mobiles, call centres etc. to bridge the digital divide.
  - **Integration of Services:** Integration & convergence of govt services to remove duplication and improve ease of access.
  - **Financial Sustainability:** Long term financial planning recommended to sustain and scale e-governance initiatives.
  - **Disaster Resilience:** Incorporate disaster preparedness and resilience in e-Governance infra to ensure continuity of service during crises.
  - **Performance measurement:** Set clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and benchmarks for e-Governance projects to evaluate outcomes effectively.

### **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**

It refers to the essential digital platforms and systems that enable the efficient delivery of public services and support digital governance. These foundational tools are built to improve accessibility, streamline operations, and promote transparency within government functions.

#### **Role of DPI in Enhancing E-Governance:**

- **Foundational Digital Tools:** Key systems such as digital identity platforms (like Aadhaar), real-time payment solutions (like UPI), and secure digital document storage (such as DigiLocker) form the core of e-governance, ensuring smooth and integrated service delivery.
- **Interoperability Standards:** Frameworks and protocols are established to allow different governmental digital systems to communicate effectively. This reduces duplication, improves coordination & enhances data sharing across departments.
- **Open Data Platforms:** Government-backed initiatives that provide public access to non-sensitive data promote transparency, support innovation, and empower citizens and organizations to make data-driven decisions.
- **Citizen-Focused Digital Services:** User-friendly platforms allow people to easily access and use government services online, thereby improving engagement, satisfaction, and the overall user experience.

## **Fourth Industrial Revolution and e-Governance**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) refers to the fusion of technologies blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Coined by Klaus Schwab, it includes technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, Big Data, Cloud Computing, Robotics, and 5G.

### **Key Features of the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

- **Hyperconnectivity:** Seamless communication between devices, systems, and people. Enables smart cities, real-time governance, and integrated service delivery platforms.
- **Automation and AI:** Intelligent systems that learn and make decisions. Examples: AI in traffic management, predictive policing, and chatbot-based grievance redressal.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Real-time data analytics guiding policy. Tools like MIS dashboards in Aspirational Districts Programme illustrate this feature.

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- **Decentralization via Blockchain:** Transparent and tamper-proof records. Use cases: land record management (Telangana), logistics tracking, e-voting pilots.
  - **Digital Integration:** Unified platforms for services, governance, and innovation. Reduces redundancy, increases efficiency, and improves citizen experience.

## **Impact of 4IR on e-Governance in India**

### **1. Improved Service Delivery**

- ✓ AI-driven chatbots for public grievance redressal (e.g., MyGov Helpdesk on WhatsApp).
- ✓ Facial recognition and biometrics for welfare schemes (e.g. PM Jan Dhan Yojana linked to Aadhaar and DBT).

### **2. Efficient Administration**

- ✓ Blockchain in land records (e.g., Maharashtra, Telangana pilots) ensures tamper-proof property records.
- ✓ Cloud-based governance platforms (e.g., DigiLocker, e-Office) reduce paperwork and enhance access.

### **3. Real-time Monitoring**

- ✓ Use of Big Data in Aspirational Districts Programme for tracking performance metrics related to health, education and infra outcomes.
- ✓ GIS and drone mapping in Smart Cities and rural development for precision and rural asset mapping.

### **4. Predictive Governance**

- ✓ AI tools for crime pattern analysis and predictive policing (e.g., Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System - CCTNS).
- ✓ Early warning systems using IoT in disaster management (e.g., FLOWS by NDMA).

### **5. Financial Inclusion**

- ✓ UPI and JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) have enabled inclusive digital financial governance.

### **6. Citizen-Centric Platforms**

- ✓ Digital portals like UMANG, BharatMaps, Bhuvan, CoWIN showcase scalable, citizen-first e-governance models.

## **Challenges**

- **Digital Divide:** Rural-urban gap in digital literacy and access. Example: Only 37% rural households had internet access (NSSO data); limited access hinders inclusion in schemes like digital health or online education.
- **Cybersecurity Risks:** Data breaches and privacy concerns. Example: Repeated reports of Aadhaar data leaks raise serious privacy and national security concerns.
- **Regulatory Gaps:** Absence of comprehensive data protection law. Example: Delayed passage of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, despite increasing digitization of governance.
- **Resistance to Change:** Bureaucratic inertia and lack of capacity in lower administrative tiers. Many officials still rely on manual processes due to lack of digital skills or fear of accountability.
- **Ethical Dilemmas:** AI bias, algorithmic accountability, and surveillance concerns. Example: Use of facial recognition systems by law enforcement without adequate oversight.

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## **Way Forward for an effective e-governance:**

- **Digital Literacy Campaigns:** Prioritize last-mile inclusion by expanding initiatives like PMGDISHA to empower citizens with digital skills, especially in rural and underserved regions.
- **Robust Data Protection Regime:** Operationalize the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 effectively with independent oversight, ensuring privacy, consent-based data usage, and grievance redressal.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage ethical collaboration with the private sector to leverage cutting-edge tech (e.g., AI, cloud computing) while maintaining transparency, cybersecurity, and accountability.
- **Inclusive Design:** Ensure digital platforms are multilingual, gender-sensitive, and accessible for persons with disabilities and marginalized communities to promote equity in service delivery.
- **Political will:** Required to build a supportive ecosystem. Implementation of mission mode projects in all states. Ex: Land records computerisation.
- **Capacity Building:** Upskill government officials through platforms like iGOT Karmayogi to build institutional readiness for integrating 4IR technologies into policymaking and implementation.
- **Process Reengineering:** The administrative procedures must be redesigned and simplified to leverage technology effectively.

## **Global Governance**

Global governance refers to the system of rules, institutions, and practices that aim to manage global affairs in the absence of a world government. It involves cooperation among international organizations, nation-states, civil society, and the private sector to address issues that transcend borders - such as poverty, inequality, health, climate change, and human rights.

### **Key Areas of Global Governance in Social Justice**

#### **1. Poverty & Development**

- ✓ Role of World Bank, UNDP, IMF in funding development projects and poverty alleviation.
- ✓ Global initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### **2. Health Governance**

- ✓ WHO's role during pandemics (e.g., COVID-19), global vaccine equity (COVAX).
- ✓ Global Health Security Agenda and International Health Regulations (IHR).

#### **3. Gender Justice**

- ✓ UN Women, CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).
- ✓ Global campaigns: HeForShe, Generation Equality, etc.

#### **4. Climate and Environmental Justice**

- ✓ UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, IPCC reports.
- ✓ Emphasis on climate finance, technology transfer, and climate justice for vulnerable nations.

#### **5. Human Rights & Migration**

- ✓ UNHRC, UNHCR, IOM – protecting refugee rights and stateless persons.
- ✓ Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees.

#### **6. Digital and Data Governance**

- ✓ Debates around data privacy, surveillance, cybersecurity, and digital divide.
  - ✓ Role of ITU, UNESCO, and multi-stakeholder platforms like Internet Governance Forum (IGF).
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## Key Global Governance Institutions

Institution	Mandate	Relevance
United Nations (UN)	Peace, security, development, human rights	Upholds international norms and human dignity
World Bank	Poverty reduction via financial and technical support	Supports health, education, livelihood projects
IMF	Monetary cooperation and financial stability	Supports debt-laden nations but often criticized for austerity-led inequality
World Health Organization (WHO)	Global health coordination	Addresses disease outbreaks, promotes universal health
UNESCO	Education, science, culture	Promotes inclusive and equitable education
ILO	Labor rights and decent work	Protects informal workers, promotes gender parity in work
UNHCR	Refugee protection	Works for the rights of forcibly displaced persons
UN Women	Gender equality	Advocates for women's rights in global decision-making

## Challenges in Global Governance

- **Inequality in Representation:** Global South underrepresented in decision-making bodies (e.g., UN Security Council, IMF quotas).
- **Western-Centric Norms:** Global institutions often reflect Western economic or cultural models.
- **Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms:** Global agreements (e.g., climate, human rights) lack binding enforcement.
- **Sovereignty vs Global Norms:** Nation-states often reject external interference in domestic matters (e.g., human rights violations).
- **Digital Divide and Technology Gap:** Inequitable access to digital tools and knowledge platforms widens global inequality.
- **Geopolitical Tensions:** US-China rivalry, Russia-West conflict hamper multilateral cooperation.

## Recent Trends & Innovations

- **SDG 2030 Agenda:** A global blueprint for social justice, sustainability, and inclusion.
- **COVAX initiative:** Vaccine equity in the Global South.
- **Global Minimum Tax:** Proposed to reduce corporate tax avoidance.
- **Debt Relief Initiatives** by G20 and IMF post-COVID.
- **The Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** movement led by India is gaining traction in the Global South.
- Emphasis on South-South cooperation, BRICS+, G77, and Global South solidarity.

## India's Role in Global Social Justice Governance

- Champion of climate justice, digital equity, and inclusive multilateralism.
- India's G20 Presidency (2023) emphasized "One Earth, One Family, One Future" - focusing on women-led development, Digital Public Infrastructure, and Global South cooperation.
- Strong presence in peacekeeping operations, SDG advocacy, and WHO reforms.
- Hosting and promoting initiatives like International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

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## Way Forward

- **Democratize Global Institutions:** Reform the UN, IMF, World Bank to reflect 21st-century realities and Global South interests.
- **Strengthen Multilateralism:** Move away from unilateral actions toward consensus-based, rule-based order.
- **Inclusive Digital Governance:** Promote digital sovereignty, data equity, and access to global digital infrastructure.
- **Global Human Rights Charter 2.0:** Updated frameworks to cover climate refugees, digital rights, AI ethics, etc.
- **Finance for Justice:** Increase climate financing, education and health funding, and basic income guarantees for global poor.

Global governance must move beyond mere institutional cooperation to inclusive, equitable, and people-centered action. In an increasingly interconnected world, addressing global social justice challenges, from pandemics to poverty, and from climate change to digital rights, requires not just reforming systems but reimagining them. India, with its democratic values and developmental experience, can play a catalytic role in shaping a more just, multipolar, and inclusive global order.

Globalization without global governance is chaos." – Joseph Stiglitz



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