Mains PYQs - GS-II (2026) (Q. 16 - 18)

16. "Transparency and accountability in governance are not about controlling corruption but about creating the trust of stakeholders in the policy process by following the Rule of Law and Participatory Governance." Comment. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro----- Transparency and accountability beyond corruption + Challenges----- Conclusion.

Introduction:

Briefly discuss the rule of law and participatory governance.

Main Body

Transparency and accountability: Beyond corruption control

- Building trust among stakeholders – Disclosure of policies, budgets and decisions reduces information asymmetry between the government and citizens.
- Strengthening the Rule of Law – Transparency and accountability make officials answerable to citizens for their actions.
- Promoting participatory governance – Through public consultations, social audits and citizen feedback to influence policy formulation and implementation.
- Improving policy effectiveness – Via public scrutiny, feedback, evidence-based measures, etc.
- Ensuring institutional accountability – Parliamentary committees, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), vigilance institutions and grievance-redressal mechanisms.

Challenges

- Excessive secrecy and bureaucratic resistance.
- Tokenistic public consultations that do not influence decisions.
- Delays in grievance redressal and weak enforcement mechanisms.
- Limited awareness and unequal access to information among vulnerable groups.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

17. Can the constitutional mandate of rights-based welfare be effectively realised in

the context of non-integrated governance and minimal public investment? Examine. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro----- non-integrated governance and minimal public investment------- Conclusion.

Introduction:

Start with the constitutional mandate of rights-based welfare.

Main Body

Impact of non-integrated governance on welfare

- Fragmented implementation
- Accountability deficits
- Centre-state coordination gaps
- High corruption
- Inefficient resource utilisation.

Impact of minimal public investment

- Poor quality of service
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Lack of capacity building
- Unequal access.

Measures for realisation of rights

- Strengthen fiscal federalism
- Empower local institutions
- Improve accountability
- Ensure inclusive digital governance
- Adopt whole-of-government governance

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

18. Should education be treated primarily as a welfare obligation of the state or as a strategic investment for building a globally competitive, knowledge-driven nation? Critically evaluate. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro----- Education - welfare obligation + strategic investment + Critical evaluation-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Start with the status of education in India and give some data.

Main Body

Education as a welfare obligation of the state

- Constitutional commitment – Article 21A and the Right to Education Act, 2009.
- Equality of opportunity in public education to bridge inequalities from caste, gender, disability, etc.
- Access to quality education enables disadvantaged groups to improve their economic and social position.
- Universal access to education can break the cycle of poverty and deprivation.

Education as a strategic investment

- Human capital formation - skilled workforce
- Global competitiveness – Enables India to compete in information technology, advanced manufacturing, AI, etc.
- Strengthen innovation and research by investing in higher education.
- Demographic dividend – Equips India's young population with employable skills and entrepreneurial capabilities. NEP 2020.
- Vocational education and industry-linked training help address skill gaps.

Critical evaluation

- Treating education as a welfare obligation or a strategic investment both have their own limitations.
- Thus, treating education merely as welfare risks neglecting quality and productivity, while treating it solely as an economic investment risks undermining equity, dignity and the broader purposes of education.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

Education is simultaneously a social right, a public good and a productive investment.

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering