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Q8

E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · GS II · 10 marks · Transparency and e-Governance

Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance - applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency and accountability and institutional and other measures.

Core demand of the question

- E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain
- Contrast portals and bandwidth with information a citizen can actually act on; use RTI, NeGP/Digital India and the Second ARC

Revision summary

Technology is the pipe; use value is information a citizen can act on.

NeGP, Digital India and CSCs are infrastructure; RTI Section 4 and live, local records are the content test.

Land, DBT, passports and GST show the gap between a working transaction and a dead PDF.

Privacy after Puttaswamy is part of use value, not an opposite of e-governance.

Measure success by time, visits and appeals, not by the count of apps.

Flow diagram

Digital India technology -> Information

Information -> Use value timely accurate local

Use value timely accurate local -> Citizen can apply track appeal

RTI s.4 and Puttaswamy s.4 and Puttaswamy -> Use value timely accurate local

Citizen can apply track appeal -> Real e-governance

Conclusion

- Design every portal against a citizen task (apply, track, appeal), with local language and assisted Common Service Centres for those who are not digitally fluent.
- Measure e-governance by reduction in visits, time and bribes, and by Section 4 disclosure quality, not by the number of apps launched.
- Keep a human first-appeal path beside the app, so technology does not become a new wall around the same old file.

E-governance succeeds when information has use value - when a person can act on it to get a service or enforce a right. **Digital India** supplies the power of technology; RTI, local language, accurate live records and a working grievance path supply that value. Without them, new technology is only a more expensive way to hide the file.

Facts & figures

National e-Governance Plan (2006)

Mission Mode Projects and CSC architecture that **Digital India** later expanded.

Right to Information Act, 2005, Section 4

Duty of proactive disclosure; the statutory core of information's public use value.

Second ARC on e-governance

Treated ICT as a tool for transparent, simplified service delivery and citizen-centric administration.

Puttaswamy (2017)

Supreme Court held privacy to be a fundamental right, setting a limit on how e-governance may process personal data.

Common Service Centres

Assisted access points so that use value is not restricted to smartphone-literate users.

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