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## **Good Governance and the Indian Constitution: Reassessing Accountability of the Bureaucracy**

Author  
Srishti Malhotra



# Good Governance and the Indian Constitution: Reassessing Accountability of the Bureaucracy

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## Abstract

Good governance has emerged as a foundational principle underlying the Indian constitutional framework, closely linked to the ideals of accountability, transparency, and the rule of law. Although not explicitly codified as a fundamental right, the concept of good governance has been judicially recognized as an integral component of constitutional morality and effective administration. This research paper critically examines the extent to which the Indian Constitution ensures bureaucratic accountability and evaluates whether existing legal mechanisms are sufficient to uphold the standards of good governance.

The study adopts a doctrinal methodology, analysing constitutional provisions such as Articles 14, 19, and 21, along with statutory frameworks including the Right to Information Act, 2005, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and service conduct rules governing public officials. It further explores key judicial pronouncements that have expanded the scope of accountability and reinforced transparency in governance. The role of institutions such as the Central Vigilance Commission, Lokpal, and judiciary is also assessed in ensuring checks on bureaucratic discretion.

The paper identifies persistent challenges, including administrative opacity, delays in decision-making, corruption, and limited enforcement of accountability mechanisms. It argues that while legal and institutional frameworks exist, their implementation remains inconsistent, thereby undermining the realization of good governance. The research also highlights the evolving role of digital governance and citizen participation as emerging tools for strengthening accountability.

The paper concludes that a rethinking of bureaucratic accountability is essential to align governance practices with constitutional values. It advocates for stronger institutional reforms, enhanced transparency measures, and a more proactive judicial approach to ensure that good governance evolves from a guiding principle into a realizable constitutional guarantee in India.

**Keywords:** Good Governance, Bureaucratic Accountability, Indian Constitution, Rule of Law, Transparency, Judicial Review, Administrative Law, India.

## **Introduction**

Fair rule matters deeply inside every functioning democracy. Because power must serve everyone, decisions need clarity, answerability, inclusion, fairness, responsiveness. This isn't merely about efficient management - constitutional duty shapes it too, guiding how fully promises to people are kept. When citizens allow authority to act, trust holds only when conduct stays transparent, balanced, answerable. A well-run system puts democratic ideals into action, shaping how constitutional guarantees show up in everyday experience. When institutions operate clearly and consistently, outcomes tend to reflect equity more than chance. Rules matter most when they prioritize shared benefit over personal gain. Fairness takes root where decisions are open, predictable, not hidden behind closed doors.

Despite its broad reach, the concept of good governance has shifted legal frameworks across nations in uneven yet noticeable ways. Global actors - such as the World Bank, UNDP, and OECD - have played central roles shaping expectations far beyond their headquarters. Rather than working in isolation, these institutions promote openness, fairness, responsibility, performance, along with adherence to laws. Power, when managed properly, should safeguard freedoms while enabling progress; this forms the core of UNDP's view on governance. How authority operates matters: the World Bank ties sound practices to cleaner public administration, anti-corruption efforts, plus reforms aimed at lifting economies and easing deprivation. Ahead of many discussions, the OECD points to fair regulations, truthful management in public offices, and transparency as key features of today's governments. Because of these international standards, it now seems obvious: holding authority involves more than control - it includes duty and care for citizens.

The shape of India's constitutional thought ties closely to visions of effective rule. Not merely a set of laws, the Indian Constitution acts as a blueprint aimed at reshaping society toward fairness, balance, and dignity. Stated upfront, its guiding aims include justice across social, economic, and political realms, along with liberty, equity, and unity. Such values form the ethical backbone behind how authority functions there. Within Part III, basic rights shield individuals from unchecked power, ensuring institutions stay bound by principle and consistency. Aimed at fairness, Part IV's Directive Principles require the state to advance public well-being while shrinking disparities across society. Taken alongside one another, these clauses form a structure reflecting what effective governance means - though the word never appears in the constitutional text.

Courts helped shape how governments should operate by giving wide meanings to parts of the Constitution. Because judges took active roles, certain goals meant to guide policy slowly became enforceable promises - linked through their connection to life and freedom under Article 21. What once seemed separate - rights on one side, government actions on another - now often overlap, since poor administration can weaken basic freedoms. Over time, courts included things like clean air, fair legal access, and balanced decision-making within protected rights, showing that running a state cannot escape constitutional review. Seen this way, treating good governance as something guaranteed isn't sudden invention - it grows naturally from long-standing legal ideas.

## **Defining “Good Governance”**

Good governance isn't fixed in law, yet it shapes expectations about leadership. Though not a rulebook, it offers a lens to judge how governments operate. Global organizations have helped define it, bringing structure to an otherwise fluid idea. Its meaning grows clearer through practice, especially where democracy and progress intersect. What counts as effective rule often reflects these shared benchmarks.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, *Governance and Development* (World Bank, Washington D.C., 1992) 1.

## **Good Governance as Moral and Constitutional Ideal**

Rooted in ethics more than structure, sound governance draws legitimacy from enduring ideals, not just rules or results. From Rome's concept of shared resources springs an idea revived today: authority rests with the people, entrusted cautiously to leaders. Those who govern act less as owners and more as stewards, answerable through duty, care, and fairness. Power exercised wrongly - when self-serving or biased - breaks faith, not merely protocol. What matters is purpose; decisions must favor collective welfare, never narrow gain. Trust collapses when service shifts toward favoritism, revealing failure beyond poor outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

## **Good Governance and Bureaucracy Under the constitution of India**

Preamble acts as a moral compass for the Constitution. It states that India is a "Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic," aiming to deliver justice - social, economic, and political - not merely through words but principles shaping law and policy. Thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship must remain free; such liberties are not optional extras but core expectations. Instead of treating people uniformly regardless of context, equality involves fair access and standing for everyone.<sup>3</sup> Because cohesion matters, fraternity strengthens bonds across differences, helping hold society together. Far beyond symbolic value, these ideals shape how courts and officials interpret duties. While delivering resources justly, government actions must reflect fairness in practice, not only design. Since institutions ought to respond to citizens' rights, liberty lives through mechanisms that protect choice and voice. Equal treatment means avoiding bias in public decisions, especially where marginalisation persists. As dignity appears directly named, it signals more than respect - it points to concrete safeguards against humiliation or neglect by authorities. When procedures ignore human worth, they fail even if technically correct. So governance gains depth when rooted in the recognition of each person's inherent value.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning with fairness, Part III's Fundamental Rights form the binding heart of the Constitution - setting clear legal boundaries for government actions while defining baseline standards for rule. Not limited to obvious bias, equality under Article 14 extends to blocking erratic or illogical conduct by authorities, because unpredictability undermines trust. Such interpretation shifts neutrality into an active standard: officials must justify choices through consistent, understandable reasoning rather than whims. Instead of mere permission, liberty under Article 19 covers key civic activities - expression, gathering, forming groups, travel, settling, work - with room for regulation if justified socially. Because silence hinders scrutiny, courts link free speech to transparency, treating knowledge access as essential for debate. Likewise, joining forces freely becomes a tool for holding power accountable when citizens organize beyond official channels. Life under Article 21 now means more than survival - it includes a standard of dignity, shaped by court rulings that link it to essentials like clean air, work, medical care, learning, housing, and timely legal processes. Fairness in governance emerges through the combined force of Articles 14, 19, and 21, which together oppose erratic or unjust state conduct. When public authorities fall short in upholding these expectations, courts may step in to enforce accountability. Such constitutional safeguards respond directly to breakdowns in administration affecting basic freedoms.<sup>5</sup>

Part of the constitution's fourth section lays out goals for government action that cannot be enforced in court yet still shape policy aims centered on well-being. Instead of legal penalties,

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<sup>2</sup> F.W. Maitland, *Public Rights and Duties* (Sweet & Maxwell, London, 1890) 45-50.

<sup>3</sup> The Constitution of India, Preamble.

<sup>4</sup> Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999) 50-55.

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution of India, art. 21; Seervai, *Constitutional Law of India* (Universal Law Publishing, Delhi, 4th edn., 2002) vol.2, 1245-1350.

these guidelines push leaders to build fairness through reduced gaps in earnings, rank, access, and chances. One clause requires authorities to create societal structures where resources spread more evenly, money does not pile up in few hands, fair compensation follows effort regardless of identity. Another provision ensures support during hardship - joblessness, aging, illness, physical limits - as well as learning opportunities and employment pathways. Conditions at workplaces matter too: pay must sustain life, environments stay humane, employees gain voice in operational choices. Health advancement, better food intake, uplifted daily existence become official tasks under separate clauses guiding administrative conduct away from narrow privilege protection. Even if not directly enforceable, DPSPs become effective through inventive court interpretations - linking them to Fundamental Rights - to turn broad goals into binding standards. Take environmental care: it now ties back to Article 21, shaped by the directive in Article 48A. Similarly, the right to education under Article 21A finds roots in the earlier call of Article 45. Through such reasoning, ideals shift toward obligation.<sup>6</sup> With its framework in place, the Constitution strengthens key textual foundations. Though rooted in *Kesavananda Bharati*,<sup>7</sup> the basic structure idea protects core features - rule of law, judicial oversight, balance among levels of government - from being altered. One branch handles legislation, another carries out decisions, a third examines legality; each watches the others. Because power is shared across national and regional authorities, collaboration becomes necessary, allowing policy to reflect diverse conditions on the ground. Alongside rights, duties listed in Article 51A call citizens to active involvement, shaping how people engage with governance. Only through such balance does authority remain grounded.

A constitution's core character shapes how well it governs. Normative aims emerge from the Preamble, while Fundamental Rights offer concrete protection. Direction unfolds via DPSPs, whereas institutions supply practical scaffolding. Implementation relies heavily on state conduct, especially administrative execution across this layered structure. Failure within such a system may undermine constitutional legitimacy. Interpretation shifts over time, allowing fixed wording to generate evolving benchmarks - judicial reasoning drives that change, setting up what follows.

### **Judicial Shifts in How Courts Think About Governance**

One quiet shift in Indian jurisprudence began not with loud reform but through gradual reinterpretation. From the pivotal ruling in *Maneka Gandhi's* case onward,<sup>8</sup> judges slowly wove core governance norms into key constitutional provisions. Fairness crept into Article 21, shaped by rulings that demanded reasonableness in state action. Over years, arbitrariness was challenged less as procedural error and more as systemic failure. Courts treated gaps in administration not merely as policy flaws, yet as breaches of constitutional duty. Principles like accountability emerged quietly, embedded in decisions focused on life and liberty. Though never labeled a distinct right, good governance took form indirectly across judgments. Each verdict added texture to how power must be exercised under law. The logic of responsible rule became part of judicial vocabulary without needing new amendments. Later analysis will trace these ideas through laws and institutions built upon such groundwork. What arose was not a sudden doctrine, just persistent insistence on ethical conduct in governance.

Not until *Maneka Gandhi* faced off against the Union of India in 1978 did judicial thinking on personal liberty begin to shift. That ruling, delivered by a bench of seven judges, stretched what Article 21 could shield. Before then, *A.K. Gopalan's* 1950 decision had held firm - procedure

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<sup>6</sup> Upendra Baxi, "The Promise of the Indian Constitution" (2008) 4 *Indian Journal of Constitutional Law* 4 at 12-15.

<sup>7</sup> *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, AIR 1973 SC 1461.

<sup>8</sup> *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, AIR 1978 SC 597.

meant only laws passed by legislature, nothing more. Yet here, the court refused such a tight reading. Instead of accepting formality as enough, it demanded fairness woven into process. At the core stood Justice P.N.'s reasoning: rights cannot hang on technicalities alone. What stood out in Bhagwati's key insight was how cutting off life or liberty needed a method that stayed reasonable - fair instead of erratic - no matter if laws or officials set the rules. At its core, the judgment linked rights from Articles 14 and 19 directly into Article 21, forming what became known as the balanced trio: fairness blocks capriciousness, free expression hinges on proper steps, existence itself calls for meaningful safeguards. Following Maneka, legal thinking shifted - state choices, even bureaucratic ones, now had to reflect baseline logic, clear justification, attention to those impacted.

A shift in legal thinking opened up new meanings within Article 21, stretching it into areas tied to public welfare. Not long after, environmental protections took shape under this broader view. One turning point came when the court in *Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P.* (1985)<sup>9</sup> linked a healthy environment directly to the right to life. Later, in *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar* (1991),<sup>10</sup> judges affirmed that access to unpolluted air and water belongs to every citizen. Responsibility fell on authorities to act - Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian made clear that proper oversight must guard against harm to nature. *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India* (1996)<sup>11</sup> set a precedent by embedding sustainable development into Article 21. From that point on, the courts treated environmental care as integral to life rights. Notably, the ruling made the precautionary principle part of legal duty. Where risks appear, delay in regulation is no longer acceptable. Instead, officials must act before harm becomes evident. The polluter-pays doctrine gained equal weight at that time. Responsibility shifts to those causing damage, financially and operationally. Since then, agencies cannot ignore ecological costs during decision-making. This judgment reshaped how public administration handles environment-related choices.

### **Constitutional Morality Rule of Law Good Governance**

Good governance takes shape when two key ideas hold up the system: how well laws are followed, and whether those in charge act by deeper ethical rules meant to protect fairness. These are not just old theories found in books - they show up plainly in court rulings and written parts of the constitution discussed earlier. What matters is that people running things must stick to core constitutional ideals each time they make choices. At the same time, decisions need clear legal backing, avoid randomness, and come with explanations as basic requirements. When both forces work at once, something new appears - like an implied right to fair administration - especially visible when government actions affect personal freedoms directly. Still, some remain unsure if calling it part of Article 21 adds strength or if leaving it broader works better.

From Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's words during the Constituent Assembly debates<sup>12</sup> emerged a quiet but firm idea - constitutional morality, framed as a demand for self-restraint among those holding power, urging them away from partisan pulls toward deeper democratic principles. Though long dormant, it reappeared years later through Justice K. Ramaswamy's reasoning in *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994), where loyalty to constitutional spirit was set above popular sentiment, especially when state and central powers clashed. Beginning with a vision of fairness, the Supreme Court clarified its stance in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018). Notably, Chief Justice Dipak Misra described it as rule-based governance that honors each person's value. Such an approach values equality along with individual freedom. Dignity

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<sup>9</sup> *Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P.*, AIR 1985 SC 652.

<sup>10</sup> *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar*, AIR 1991 SC 420.

<sup>11</sup> *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India*, (1996)5 SCC 647.

<sup>12</sup> Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII (25 November 1948)953.

matters just as much as solidarity among people. These elements form essential foundations for any functioning system.

Rule of law rests on three core expectations when governing: actions must fit within established laws, choices should link clearly to valid goals, while reasoning behind them stays open to examination. When officials impact individual rights, their conduct needs alignment with these principles - powers limited by written rules, outcomes that withstand constitutional fairness checks, explanations clear enough for courts to assess. In *A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India* (1970), the judiciary emphasized fair process in administration; Justice H.R. Khanna stated even executive bodies cannot bypass equitable standards under rule of law.<sup>13</sup>

One way to see it: a "right to good governance" takes shape when constitutional morality meets the rule of law inside everyday administration, especially where officials affect basic rights. Values like dignity, fairness, together with shared respect - these steer how authorities should act, drawn from constitutional morality. Meanwhile, structure comes from legal clarity, logical reasoning, oversight mechanisms; all rooted in rule-of-law principles shaping execution. Delays that block fair trial access breach Article 21's promise. Hidden processes weaken equal information rights under Article 19. Unpredictable job relocations threatening jobs also strike at life and livelihood, again falling under Article 21. Each case turns poor governance into a constitutional wrong, claimable through remedies in Articles 32 or 226.<sup>14</sup>

This idea of rights fits together logically. When it comes to good governance, each part lines up clearly: transparency supports the need for reasons in legal decisions while also honoring personal dignity and self-rule. Because laws should apply equally, accountability shows fairness in practice and strengthens people's confidence in institutions. Inclusive choices bring about a sense of shared belonging, which is what participation truly enables. Justice that arrives on time becomes real when officials act promptly - this links directly to protections guaranteed under Article 21. Fairness grows when differences are acknowledged, advancing the deeper form of equality required by Article 14. Since civil servants carry out constitutional duties, their role matters even more whenever they make judgment calls. Where power meets individual rights, those serving under Article 309 must follow moral principles rooted in the Constitution - not shift with changing political interests.<sup>15</sup>

### **Bureaucratic Accountability to Political Leaders and Lawmakers**

India's civil service structure follows a traditional setup where officials operate without public visibility, guided by principles inherited from Britain's Northcote-Trevelyan reforms. Though unseen, these administrators carry out policies while offering specialized guidance to elected leaders. Responsibility flows upward - officials answer to ministers, who in turn must justify actions before legislatures at national or state levels. Because of this arrangement, politicians act as intermediaries linking long-term administrative functions with people's mandate. When things go wrong in governance, it is the minister who takes blame or steps down, even if errors originate among staff. Constitutional clauses such as 74-75 and 163-164 back this practice, making ministerial oversight a structural feature rather than mere custom. Oversight mechanisms within legislative bodies - including inquiries, debates, and votes expressing disapproval - keep executives answerable; consequences then filter into bureaucratic ranks via reviews, reassignments, or penalties.<sup>16</sup>

A framework of upward responsibility takes shape legally through civil service regulations. Oversight of IAS and IPS appointments at the central level rests with the Department of Personnel & Training. At the state tier, distribution among eligible posts falls under the

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<sup>13</sup> *A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India*, AIR 1970 SC 150.

<sup>14</sup> M.P. Jain, *Indian Constitutional Law* (LexisNexis, Gurugram, 8th edn., 2018) 1456-1520.

<sup>15</sup> Stuart Woolman, *Constitutional Law of South Africa* (Juta, Cape Town, 2nd edn., 2013) Ch. 56.

<sup>16</sup> *L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India*, AIR 1997 SC 1125.

authority of Chief Secretaries. Evaluations tied to administrative outcomes appear in annual reviews, shaping decisions on advancement where inputs from elected officials matter. Disciplinary actions under Article 311 may begin via vigilance channels influenced by ministers, while guidance comes from UPSC and rulings emerge from judicial panels. Funds move under watchful eyes, as lawmakers examine spending using audit reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General. Oversight comes mainly through bodies like the Public Accounts Committee alongside review by the Estimates panel. Officials must explain decisions when called, while civil servants appear to provide details. Responsibility rests with ministers, though evidence is often supplied by administrative staff.<sup>17</sup>

### **Landmark Judgments Articulating Governance Standards**

In *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms* (2002), a pivotal moment unfolded when courts required candidates to reveal their criminal records, financial status, debts, and education level - so voters could make thoughtful choices. Because information shapes decisions, the ruling saw openness as essential, not optional. Although election oversight had long existed, Chief Justice M. Bhandari gave it sharper purpose by connecting clean processes to effective rule.<sup>18</sup> While some viewed disclosures as bureaucratic, the bench treated them as tools for integrity. From this point on, access to candidate data was seen less as administrative detail and more as democratic necessity. Since citizens rely on facts before voting, silence around wealth or charges became unacceptable. As part of broader rights under Article 19(1)(a), knowledge gained legal weight - not just expression but awareness mattered. Even so, resistance lingered in parts of governance unused to scrutiny. Yet the verdict pushed the Election Commission to act, using sworn statements to gather what once went unrecorded. Over time, such clarity began shaping expectations far beyond ballots - into how offices are held, and trust maintained. Once limited to polling moments, transparency now stretched into ongoing conduct. With each affidavit filed, accountability found new ground.<sup>19</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Looking closely at India's constitutional setup reveals how deeply good governance sits within its legal foundations - even without appearing outright as a fundamental right. Built into the structure are values shaping how power should function: fairly, openly, answerably. Starting from the top, the Preamble does more than introduce - it steers interpretation, pointing toward broader aims like freedom, fairness, human worth. Justice - social, economic, political - threads through institutions, nudging them beyond mere procedure. Instead of staying theoretical, these ideals push systems to respond meaningfully, include widely, balance unevenness. How laws take shape rests on this undercurrent: one where openness meets duty, equity guides choices. From time to time, core principles gain real-world weight once tied to constitutional promises - especially those found in Articles 14, 19, and 21. Because of judicial interpretation, Article 14 now stands against capriciousness in governance, demanding fairness, logic, and absence of bias in every state decision. Notably, courts insist that equal treatment isn't merely symbolic - it shapes how power gets used. While less directly stated, Article 19 pulls the State toward creating conditions where freedoms aren't hollow but livable. Often overlooked at first glance, it quietly insists on space for expression, movement, choice. But one provision reshapes public administration more than others: Article 21. Far beyond its original scope, life and personal liberty have come to include dignity, clean air, timely decisions. Through steady rulings, this clause keeps stretching executive responsibility. Its reach grows - not by amendment, but by

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<sup>17</sup> Northcote-Trevelyan Report (1854); Article 74, Constitution of India.

<sup>18</sup> *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms*, (2002) 5 SCC 294 at para 47.

<sup>19</sup> *Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India*, (2014) 3 SCC 161.

insistence on decency in governance. A shift unfolded when courts began reading the right to life more deeply than just survival. Instead of limiting it to bodily safety, judges linked it to many rights - both what they include and how they work. This turn gained strength through Maneka Gandhi's landmark encounter with state power. Meaning expanded where once it had been narrow. The interpretation now reached further, altering how freedom was seen.

Now Article 21 covers new entitlements - such as living in a pollution-free setting, earning a lawful income, accessing learning opportunities, maintaining well-being, preserving human worth, and receiving swift legal remedies - due to evolving court rulings. Since each of these claims relies on how public agencies operate, their fairness, performance, and responsibility matter greatly. Take environmental safety: it demands strong oversight mechanisms run by state bodies; conversely, making a decent living hinges on open and balanced financial decision-making. Thus, whether people actually experience constitutional guarantees often rests upon how skillfully officials carry out duties. When courts defend core rights, they often stress fair process, logical decisions, and consistency - features tied closely to how constitutions operate. Because these traits appear again in rulings, acting without bias or procedure falls outside what the law accepts. So governance shaped by such standards turns into a duty, not merely a goal. This expectation follows the State everywhere it acts. What seems like mere policy at first reveals deeper roots in constitutional demands.

Even so, progress toward effective governance relies just as much on how institutions function and how civil servants act as on written laws and court rulings. Though India has solid constitutional and legal foundations, real-world implementation frequently falls short due to deep-rooted institutional flaws. Persistent challenges - such as bribery, weak management, missing openness, and heavy-handed political influence - weaken state performance. These gaps create a growing distance between what the constitution promises and how rules are enforced daily. Nowhere is this split clearer than in delivering public services, where slow processes, unpredictable decisions, and absent responsibility spark frustration and erode trust in official systems.

## **Suggestion**

### **Creating a Complete Set of Rules for Government Actions**

Change must come to India's administration through full procedural laws. Though Articles 14 and 21 uphold reason, equity, and restraint, courts still shape these ideas - laws do not. Without statutes guiding practice, outcomes diverge across agencies. Different officers treat like cases unlike. Discretion grows unchecked when rules stay unwritten. Although such authorities help adapt rules to shifting needs, misuse risks like bias or capricious choices remain high. A single national law on how agencies operate could bring order instead - clear steps, uniform outcomes, fewer surprises across regions.

### **Strengthening Anti-Corruption Organisations**

A key step toward stronger administrative oversight in India involves reshaping institutions such as the Central Vigilance Commission, Lokpal, and Lokayuktas. Though established under law to curb misconduct and uphold ethical governance, they frequently deliver less than promised. Hindered by interference from ruling powers, weak autonomy, budget shortages, and conflicting jurisdictions, their impact diminishes significantly. As a result, instead of driving real change, they risk becoming ceremonial bodies - unable to confront graft effectively while weakening trust in checks meant to hold power accountable.

### **Changes to Civil Service and Autonomy of Officials**

Public administration cannot work well without quick reforms that strengthen how independent and answerable officials are. What happens now - constant shifting of staff, no secure positions, too much political influence - puts pressure on service quality and trust. Moving civil servants around too often creates uncertainty, breaks continuity in projects, leaves strategies unfinished. When appointments or promotions depend more on loyalty than skill, neutrality suffers, experience gets lost. Decisions shaped by power interests instead of facts open space for poor outcomes, sometimes misuse of duty.

### **Right to Information Put Into Practice**

A key tool meant to promote transparency in governance is the Right to Information system, yet real-world hurdles limit how well it works. Though people can now request data and demand answers from authorities, problems remain that weaken outcomes. Delays in releasing information are common, sometimes stretching response times far beyond legal limits. Exemption rules exist for valid reasons - yet they occasionally serve as excuses to avoid sharing facts. Many citizens simply do not know what access they're legally entitled to. When officers fail to respond on schedule - or supply misleading snippets instead of full records - the purpose behind the law starts to unravel.

### **Promoting E Governance and Digital Accountability**

One way to strengthen how governments answer to people, work efficiently, and stay open is through tech tools built into daily operations. Where digital services reach citizens fast, where complaints get handled online, and money moves straight to those entitled - these steps already reduce favoritism, cut down dishonest practices, yet outcomes differ widely. Uneven internet strength, spotty device ownership, gaps in skills - especially outside cities or among poorer groups - weaken results. When parts of the population fall behind in going digital, government systems powered by data cannot perform as intended.

### **Supporting Fair Practices and Honest Governance**

Behind steady governance sits character, not blueprints. Systems function better when workers care about right conduct. Rules alone fail if those applying them lack moral grounding. Though procedures get revised often, trust requires inner consistency. Breakdowns occur where truthfulness fades, regardless of policy detail. Real progress links closely to daily choices made quietly. What matters most emerges slowly - through habits shaped over time.

### **Ways People Can Get Involved**

Public involvement sits at the heart of how democracies function, shaping bureaucracies that listen and answer to citizens. Yet across India, authority tends to flow one way - officials decide while voices from communities stay unheard. When those affected by rules have little say, outcomes miss their mark more often than not. Because of this distance, programs may run into resistance, waste resources, or simply fail where trust is low.

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