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## Mains Practice Questions

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**Q.** Social audits help in bridging the gap between policy objectives and outcomes. Discuss. (250 words)

30 May, 2019 GS Paper 2 Polity & Governance

### **Approach**

- Describe Social audit as introduction.
- Highlight role of Social Audit in bridging gap between objectives stated in policy and desired outcomes.
- Give conclusion.

### **Introductio**

- A social audit is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting and ultimately improving an organization's social and ethical performance. A social audit helps to narrow gaps between vision/goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness.
- It is a technique to understand, measure, verify, report on and to improve the social performance of the organization.

### **Body**

Role of Social audit in bridging gaps between policy objectives and outcomes

- **Accountability:** Social audit fixes accountability of public servants, increases efficacy and effectiveness of local development programmes.
- **Transparency:** Social audit measures enhance transparency by enforcing the right to information in the planning and implementation of local development activities. Transparency in public schemes reduces corruption and increases outcomes.
- **Encourages community participation:** Social audit creates awareness among beneficiaries and providers of local social and productive services. Local community becomes important stakeholder in success of public welfare schemes thus improving outcomes through periodic evaluation of outcomes of policies. For example, in MGNREGS Social Audits led to entries in job cards, increased knowledge about the wage payment slips and visible improvements were noticed in worksite facilities.
- **Empowering marginalized:** It is important that marginalized social groups, which are normally excluded, have a say on local development issues and activities and have their views on the actual performance of local elected bodies. Through social audits these groups can have impact on policies implementation and thus increasing outcomes.
- **Policy evaluation:** Social audit play important role not in policy implementation but also policy evaluation. Thus social audit also assess the physical and financial gaps between needs and resources available for local development thus improving policies and outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The Social Audit process is intended as a means for social engagement, transparency and communication of information, leading to greater accountability of decision-makers, representatives, managers and officials. Thus application of Social Audit holds tremendous potential in bridging gaps between policy objectives and outcomes.