



First E-collectorate in Bihar

For Mains: Red Tape and its consequences

Why in News?

Saharsa became the first district in Bihar to be declared paperless (e-office) with an aim to end the Great Indian Red Tape.

What is an e-Office Initiative?

- E-Office is a Mission-Mode project as part of e-Governance Initiatives.
- The **e-office initiative goes back to 2009**, but the towering piles of paperwork were—and still are—a hurdle too high to cross.
 - Idukki in Kerala became paperless in 2012 and Hyderabad in 2016.
- It aims to significantly improve the operational efficiency of **Government Ministries and Departments** through improvement in the workflow mechanism and office procedure manuals.

What is Red Tape?

- It is a **derisive term for excessive regulation or rigid conformity** to formal rules that is considered redundant or bureaucratic and hinders or prevents action or decision-making.
- It is **usually applied to the government** but can also be applied to other organisations like corporations.
- It **generally includes the filling out of seemingly unnecessary paperwork**, obtaining of unnecessary licenses, having multiple people or committees approve a decision and various low-level rules that make conducting one's affairs slower and/or more difficult.

What are the Consequences of Red Tapism?

- **Increased Cost of Doing Business:**
 - In addition to time and money spent filling out forms, **red tape reduces productivity and innovation in businesses.**
 - Small businesses are particularly burdened by this and may discourage people from starting up a new business.
- **Poor Governance:**
 - Because of red tape, **contracts are not enforced consistently, and administration is delayed**, resulting in delayed justice, especially for the poor. The burden of red tape requirements prevents many to enjoy their rights due to delayed governance and delayed distribution of welfare measures.
- **Citizen Dissatisfaction:**
 - The **delays caused by government processing and the costs associated with them**

remain a source of dissatisfaction among citizens. **Red Tapism leads to a sense of loss of trust in the government's process** most of the time, leaving citizens with unresolved problems.

▪ **Delay in Scheme Implementation:**

- Each new government scheme is met with red tape that eventually kills the larger objective for which it was launched.
- Lack of proper monitoring, delayed release of funds, etc., are common associated issues connected to Red Tapism.

▪ **Corruption:**

- According to a World Bank study, **corruption increases with increasing red tape.**
- By complicating the normal flow of businesses, bureaucracy breeds corruption and lowers growth.

What is the Need to End Red Tape?

▪ **Bring Efficiency:**

- Digitisation can help in bringing efficiency, transparency and accountability.

▪ **Increased Employee Productivity:**

- It has **increased employee productivity** and reduced the number of workers required to process one file since files are processed within a day.
- In the government system, it is said that the faster a file moves, the faster a policy will be implemented.

▪ **Bring Accountability:**

- The online system has also brought in more accountability and staff members cannot sit on files for days on end.

▪ **A Step towards Good Governance:**

- Technology is the first step towards good governance and a corruption-free system.
- The more technology we implement, the easier our service delivery will be to the public.

Way Forward

- With a bottom-up approach of planning through separate urban-rural level socio-economic databases, **there is a need for a holistic and Integrated approach from government ministries** that includes identifying, evaluating, formulating, implementing and redressing data driven policies to meet the needs of the population at the earliest.
- E-Governance needs to transform all levels of Government, but the **focus should be on local governments since local governments are the closest to citizens**, and constitute for many, the main interface with government.
- **Special attention should be given to [improve digital infrastructure](#)** especially in rural areas along with better internet connectivity.
 - E-Governance through regional languages is appreciable for nations like India where people from several linguistic backgrounds are the participants.

[Source: IE](#)