

- E.g., Quality Council of India study of highway development sector highlighted that the L1 method fails to consider quality and performance.

In this context, **PPPM needs to be improved through the following measures:**

- **Legislative backing to the General Financial Rules:** To ensure a transparent, accountable, and competitive procurement regime, there is needed legal backing to the general financial rules.
- **Enhancing transparency & accountability:** Introduction of a Debriefing Procedure to let unsuccessful bidders know why they were not successful as part of '**Right to Know**'.
- **Simplify existing procedures:** To provide flexibility on use of discretion, ensure close coordination between CCI and Governments/ Departments/ PSUs to detect and deter unfair practices. Revamp and strictly enforce blacklisting rules for corrupt firms.
- **Alternative procurement mechanisms** can be promoted. For e.g., Promotion of E-procurement methods such as the Central Public Procurement Portal and the Government e-Marketing (GeM) portal.
- **Periodic awareness and training of procurement officials** in all aspects of public procurement for capacity building at various governance levels.

Improving the PPPM Framework will go a long way in promoting faster, efficient and transparent execution of government projects, which will inter alia improve the whole governance process.

5. ***Adequate measures are required to overcome the challenges and vulnerabilities associated with undertaking social accountability initiatives and institutionalising them. Elaborate.***
(150 words) 10

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction about social accountability.
- List the challenges and vulnerabilities associated with social accountability initiatives.
- Discuss measures required to institutionalize these initiatives.
- Give a brief conclusion.

Answer:

Social accountability has been defined as an approach in which ordinary citizens and citizen groups participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. In a public sector context, social accountability refers to a wide range of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, independent media and civil society organizations can use to hold public officials accountable.

Challenges and vulnerabilities associated with social accountability initiatives

- **Resistance to reform:** Since Social Accountability initiatives upset the vested interests who have an incentive to maintain the status quo, there is much resistance to reform.
- **Risk of collusion:** There is always a risk of collusion between various actors in the form of false claims regarding conducting such initiatives, data manipulation, deliberate dereliction of duties etc.
- **Co-option:** Often times citizens, especially powerful members of the community, are themselves co-opted by those from whom accountability is demanded, resulting in citizens not speaking up against corruption, and refusing to co-operate in Social Accountability efforts.
- **Disruption by powerful vested interests:** Citizens engaged in Social Accountability initiatives risk being threatened by those who have benefitted from the lack of accountability. Thereby, making them hesitant in participating and speaking up.
- **Lack of support from government agencies:** Citizens are expected to challenge entrenched power dynamics and take risk but support from the government in case of any collective action is abysmal.
- **Lack of effective grievance redressal:** Timely, strict and unfailing follow-up action on Social Accountability findings through effective grievance redressal mechanisms is not done.