

TOPIC WISE

UPSC MAINS SOLVED PYQs

FROM 2013 TO 2024

- UNDER UPSC WORD LIMIT
- HIGH QUALITY ANSWERS
- CRISP & VALUE ADDED
- BEST IN THE MARKET



UPSC PYQ INDEX

Updated Till 2024



Topic	Page No.
Indian Constitution	2
Separation of Power	26
Comparison of Constitutions	33
Parliament and State Legislatures	42
Executive and the Judiciary; Pressure Groups and Formal/Informal Associations	57
Representation of People's Act	76
Constitutional Posts, Statutory, Regulatory and Various Quasi-Judicial Bodies	84
Government Policies and Interventions	106
Development Processes and the Development Industry	126
Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the Population	140
Health, Education, Human Resources	152
Issues Relating to Poverty and Hunger	165
Governance, e-Governance	173
Role of Civil Services in a Democracy	186
India and its Neighbourhood-Relations	192
Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings; Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed Countries	201
Important International Institutions	226

GS-2 MAINS PYQS - (2013-2024)
TOPIC-1: Indian Constitution



PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**2013**

- Discuss Section 66A of IT Act, with reference to its alleged violation of Article 19 of the Constitution. (10 M)
- Recent directives from Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas are perceived by the 'Nagas' as a threat to override the exceptional status enjoyed by the State. Discuss in light of Article 371A of the Indian Constitution.

2014

- What do understand by the concept "freedom of speech and expression"? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss. (12.5 M)

Q1: Discuss Section 66A of IT Act, with reference to its alleged violation of Article 19 of the Constitution. (10 M)

What is being asked:

Examine Section 66A of the IT Act in the context of Article 19 violation.

How to approach:

Intro – Define 66A, highlight SC judgment.

Body – 6 polity dimensions: vague drafting, Article 19(2) conflict, misuse, judicial response, digital dissent, recent issues post-judgment.

Conclusion – Balanced digital rights and legal clarity.

Answer:

Introduction:

Section 66A of the IT Act penalised sending "offensive" messages online, but the Supreme Court in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)* struck it down for being **vague, arbitrary**, and violating **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution.

Body: IT Act dimensions in conflict, misuse with Article 19

1. Vague and Overbroad Language

- Terms like "grossly offensive" or "menacing" had no legal clarity.
- *Example:* Stand-up content by **Samay Raina (2024)** faced police complaints despite being parody — showing legacy of vague censorship culture.

2. Inconsistent with Article 19(2) Grounds

- Restrictions must align with public order, decency, etc.
- 66A failed to narrowly define what causes "public disorder."
- *Example:* SC in *Shreya Singhal* ruled annoyance ≠ legal ground for arrest.

3. Chilling Effect on Digital Expression

- Threatened artistic and journalistic freedom online.
- *Example:* Post **Ranveer Allahbadia's** controversial health claims in 2024, YouTubers feared uploading critical content.

4. Judicial Response and Constitutional Remedy

- Section 66A struck down as unconstitutional in 2015.
- **Doctrine of Vagueness** applied, reinforcing precision in criminal law.
- *Example:* 2023 PIL by PUCL showed misuse continued with 1000+ FIRs under the defunct law.

5. Conflict with Due Process and Natural Justice

- No procedural safeguards; arrests without warrant.
- Violated **Article 21** (procedure established by law).
- *Example:* Multiple 2024 digital creators sought anticipatory bail over minor content disputes.

6. Post-Judgment Non-Compliance and Governance Gap

- Despite SC directions, cases continued due to outdated police software.
- *Example: 2024 SC re-issued directives for state compliance in PUCL v. Union of India case.*

Relevant Recommendations :

- **Law Commission of India (2017):** Urged clearer definition of "hate speech" in digital spaces.
- **Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee (2018):** Recommended due process and safeguards in digital laws.
- **Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT (2021):** Flagged misuse of repealed Section 66A.
- **Supreme Court's Suo Moto (2022):** Issued notice to prevent continued misuse of Section 66A.
- **MeitY Draft Digital India Bill (2024):** Emphasises procedural safeguards and clear thresholds for prosecution.

Conclusion:

Repeal of 66A ensured digital speech protection. However, strict compliance, police training, and updated legal frameworks remain essential to uphold constitutional freedoms.

Q2: Recent directives from Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas are perceived by the 'Nagals' as a threat to override the exceptional status enjoyed by the State. Discuss in light of Article 371A of the Indian Constitution. (10 M)

What is being asked:

Discuss Nagaland's constitutional protection under Article 371A and whether Petroleum Ministry's directives infringe upon it.

How to approach:

Intro – Article 371A's origin and special protection.

Body – 6 polity-linked dimensions: constitutional basis, federalism, legislative power, Centre–State conflict, recent directives, resolution path.

Conclusion – Harmony through cooperative federalism.

Answer:

Introduction:

Article 371A of the Constitution provides Nagaland **special safeguards**, including over land, customs, and natural resources. These derive from the **1960 Naga Accord**, respecting tribal autonomy and customary laws.

Body: Centre–State conflict over resource control under Article 371A

1. Constitutional Provision under Article 371A

- Central laws related to land/resources apply only if **Nagaland Assembly approves**.
- Protects traditional ownership and decision-making.
- *Example: Nagaland exempted from Forest Rights Act and central land acquisition laws.*

2. Federal Structure and Asymmetrical Autonomy

- Reflects **asymmetrical federalism**, accommodating regional and tribal diversity.
- *Example: Article 371F for Sikkim and 371G for Mizoram similarly protect cultural autonomy.*

3. Centre–State Legislative Demarcation

- Petroleum falls under **Union List**, but land and usage fall under **State List + 371A exception**.
- *SC in State of Assam v. Union of India (2024)* affirmed dual ownership concerns in mineral rights.

4. Directive from Petroleum Ministry (2013)

- Issued oil exploration guidelines without Assembly approval.
- Seen as **bypassing constitutional autonomy** under Article 371A.
- *Example: NSCN(IM) and tribal bodies raised strong objections.*

5. Tension between National Interest and Tribal Rights

- Centre's energy needs vs tribal claims on land and livelihood.

- *Example:* Similar tensions in Arunachal Pradesh's hydropower projects (2023).

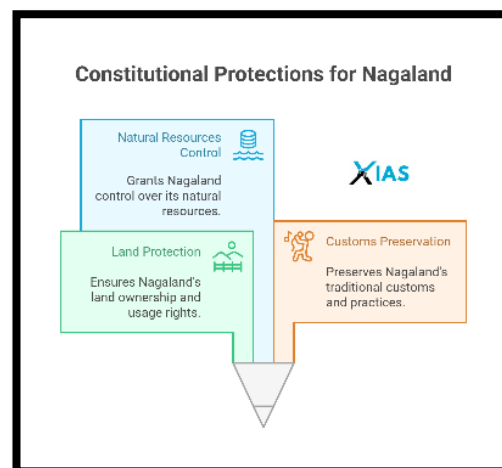
6. Judicial and Administrative Resolution Paths

- Consensus model through **state–centre agreements**.
- *Example:* SC in *SR Bommai (1994)* emphasized respect for state powers in federal structure.

Conclusion:

Autonomy under Article 371A must be protected while addressing national needs through dialogue, consent, and shared governance in a federal spirit.

Q3: What do understand by the concept “freedom of speech and expression”? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss. (12.5 M)



What is being asked:

Define *freedom of speech*, whether it includes *hate speech*, and explain why *films are treated differently*.

How to approach:

Intro – Define freedom under Article 19(1)(a) with legal updates.

Body – 6 polity dimensions: constitutional scope, hate speech exclusion, legal grounds (19(2)), penal law, judiciary role, and films' special status.

Conclusion – Balanced liberty with social order.

Answer:

Introduction:

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees the **freedom of speech and expression**, fundamental to democratic dialogue. In *Shreya Singhal (2015)* and *Kaushal Kishor (2023)*, the Supreme Court clarified that while dissent is protected, it is not absolute and is limited by Article 19(2).

Body: Dimensions of freedom of speech and expression

1. Constitutional Scope of Expression

- Includes spoken, written, artistic, symbolic, and digital forms.
- Covers satire, commentary, and dissent.
- *Example:* Stand-up comedian **KUNAL KAMRA'S** YouTube political roast drew both public support and FIRs, showing the complexity of offensive vs expressive content.

2. Hate Speech Is Excluded from Protection

- **Not protected** if it incites enmity or violence.
- SC in *Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan (2014)* and Law Commission Report (2017) sought stricter definition.
- *Example:* FIRs filed in 2024 against influencers for caste-based and communal slurs on social media platforms.

3. Article 19(2): Grounds for Restriction

- Reasonable restrictions include **public order, decency, morality, security of the State**.
- *Example:* **Ranveer Allahbadia's 2024 podcast on alternative medicine** faced takedown notices after accusations of misinformation and endangering public health.

4. Penal Provisions Against Hate/Offensive Speech

- IPC Sections **153A, 295A, 505**, IT Rules 2021, RPA Sections 123/8 regulate harmful speech.
- *Example:* YouTube had to pull episodes of political content post-2024 General Elections under IT guidelines.

5. Judicial Interpretation and Doctrines

- Courts apply "**proximity**", "**intent**", and "**clear and present danger**" tests.

- *Kaushal Kishor v. UP (2023)* clarified that individual ministers' speech not always attributable to the state.

6. Films Treated Differently – Legal and Regulatory Lens

- Due to **mass influence**, films face **pre-censorship under the Cinematograph Act, 1952**.
- *K.A. Abbas v. Union of India (1970)* upheld film restrictions for public morality.
- *Example: Film "Hamare Baarah" (2024)* was withheld by CBFC for content allegedly inciting communal sentiments.

Conclusion:

Freedom of expression must be preserved with accountability. Preempting harm while protecting speech is key in managing democracy's most powerful right.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2015

- **Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizen a uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy. (12.5 M)**
- **Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulation on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of Indian Constitution and judgements of the apex in this regard. (12.5 M)**

• 2016

- **To what extent is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, bearing marginal note "temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir", temporary? Discuss the future prospects of this provision in the context of Indian polity. (12.5 M)**
- **Discuss each adjective attached to the word 'Republic' in the 'Preamble'. Are they defensible in the present circumstances? (12.5 M)**
- **What was held in the Coelho case? In this context, can you say that judicial review is of key importance amongst the basic features of the Constitution? (12.5 M)**
- **In the integrity index of Transparency International, India stands very low. Discuss briefly the legal, political, social and cultural factors that have caused the decline of public morality in India. (12.5 M)**

Q1: Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizen a uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy. (12.5 M)

What is being asked:

Identify and discuss the **factors inhibiting the implementation of Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** despite its mention in the **Directive Principles**.

How to approach:

Intro – Contextualise UCC as per Article 44 and legal/judicial backing.

Body – 6 polity-linked factors: legal pluralism, minority apprehensions, political consensus, federal tensions, SC judgments, recent debates.

Conclusion – Balanced way forward through inclusive codification.

Answer:

Introduction:

Article 44 of the Constitution envisions a **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** for all citizens to ensure equality in personal laws. The Supreme Court in *Shah Bano (1985)* and *Jose Paulo Coutinho (2019)* highlighted UCC as an instrument for **national integration and gender justice**.

Body: Factors preventing UCC

1. Legal Pluralism and Constitutional Protection

- Article 25 ensures **freedom of religion**, complicating uniformity.
- India follows **co-existence model** of religious and secular laws.
- *Example:* Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 still governs Muslim family law.

2. Minority Apprehensions and Identity Concerns

- Fears of **majoritarian override** over minority customs.
- Perceived as dilution of **cultural autonomy**.
- *Example:* AIMPLB's opposition to UCC after 2023 Law Commission consultation citing religious autonomy.

3. Lack of Political Consensus

- Deep ideological divide on UCC's intent and scope.
- *Example:* 22nd Law Commission (2023) report invited wide-ranging public input, yet political will remains split across party lines.

4. Federal Structure and State Jurisdiction

- Personal laws fall under **Concurrent List**, creating Centre–State frictions.
- *Example:* Goa follows a UCC model under Portuguese Civil Code, but other states resist central drafting.

5. Judicial Advocacy and Constitutional Morality

- SC in *Shayara Bano (2017)* pushed for UCC to protect gender rights.
- But also cautioned against **judicial overreach**.
- *Example:* *Sarla Mudgal (1995)* stressed that religion cannot justify inequality under personal laws.

6. Socio-cultural Diversity and Practical Challenges

- India's customs vary across regions, tribes, and communities.
- UCC seen as top-down imposition.
- *Example:* Northeast states expressed concerns over tribal customs being undermined by UCC proposals in 2024.

Relevant Recommendations :

- **22nd Law Commission (2023):** Initiated fresh consultation on UCC feasibility.
- **Sarkaria Commission (1988):** Cautioned against central override in sensitive domains.
- **Justice Malimath Committee (2003):** Favoured common civil law for efficiency and justice.
- **Ministry of Law and Justice White Paper (2024):** Emphasised phased codification and stakeholder dialogue.

Conclusion:

UCC must be introduced gradually through democratic consensus, respecting diversity while ensuring constitutional equality and gender justice for all citizens.

Q2: Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulation on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of Indian Constitution and judgements of the apex in this regard. (12.5 M)

What is being asked:

Does **burning crackers** during Diwali violate **right to clean environment** under **Article 21**? Examine with judicial references.

How to approach:

Intro – Link Article 21 to environmental rights via SC interpretation.

Body – 6 dimensions: Article 21, SC judgments, regulatory actions, religious freedom conflict, enforcement issues, recent data/examples.

Conclusion – Balanced rights with sustainable celebration.

Answer:

Introduction:

The Supreme Court has interpreted **Article 21** to include the **right to clean and healthy environment**. In *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar (1991)* and *MC Mehta v. Union of India (1987-ongoing)*, the Court upheld environmental protection as intrinsic to life and dignity.

Body: Dimensions of right to clean environment**1. Right to Clean Environment under Article 21**

- Article 21 includes **pollution-free air, water, and life with dignity**.
- *Example: SC's Vellore Citizens Forum (1996)* introduced the **precautionary principle** in environmental governance.

2. Judicial Regulation on Firecrackers

- SC in *Arjun Gopal v. Union of India (2017-2023)* imposed limits on **barium-based crackers** and promoted **green crackers**.
- Complete bans in Delhi-NCR and sensitive zones.
- *Example: SC upheld Delhi's blanket ban on crackers in Oct 2023* citing AQI emergency.

3. Balancing Religious Freedom and Public Health

- Article 25 subject to **public order, morality, and health**.
- Religious celebrations not above right to life.
- *Example: SC in Noise Pollution case (2005)* drew limits on religion-based noise/fire practices.

4. Role of Statutory and Executive Bodies

- **CPCB, NGT, and state pollution boards** regulate seasonal pollution.
- *Example: NGT order in Nov 2023* banned sale of non-certified crackers across 8 states during Diwali.

5. Enforcement Challenges and Loopholes

- Weak local enforcement, black market sales continue.
- *Example: In 2024, 6,000 kg of banned crackers seized in Gujarat* despite green norms.

6. Public Awareness and Sustainable Alternatives

- Courts have encouraged **community fireworks zones and green celebrations**.
- *Example: Bengaluru schools ran eco-Diwali campaigns in 2024* to reduce cracker demand.

Conclusion:

Right to celebrate cannot override right to breathe. Judicial and public efforts must align to ensure health-centric, environmentally safe festive practices.

Q3: To what extent is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, bearing marginal note "temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir", temporary? Discuss the future prospects of this provision in the context of Indian polity. (12.5 M)

What is being asked:

Examine **how temporary** Article 370 was in reality, and **future implications** in Indian polity.

How to approach:

Intro - Explain Article 370's context with its marginal note.

Body - 6 polity dimensions: historical origin, temporary vs permanent debate, Presidential Order 2019, federal implications, SC judgment 2023, future prospects.

Conclusion - Balanced view on integration with respect for constitutional values.

Answer:**Introduction:**

Article 370, inserted in 1949, conferred **special status to Jammu & Kashmir**, with a marginal note calling it a **"temporary provision."** The **Presidential Orders of August 2019** nullified its operative part. The Supreme Court upheld this move in *In Re Article 370 (2023)*, giving it constitutional finality.

Body: Evaluation of special provisions to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370

1. Historical and Legal Origin

- Linked to **Instrument of Accession (1947)** and **Article 370** enabling temporary arrangements.
- Gave J&K its own Constitution and restricted Union jurisdiction.
- *Example:* Central laws needed state concurrence till 2019.

2. Was It Truly Temporary?

- No sunset clause; remained in force for 70 years.
- Clause (3) allowed abrogation by **President + State Constituent Assembly** (ceased to exist in 1957).
- *SC in Sampat Prakash (1969)* called it continuing, not transitional.

3. Abrogation via Presidential Order 2019

- Article 367 reinterpreted to allow Union to act on behalf of dissolved state.
- J&K Reorganisation Act bifurcated state into UTs.
- *Example:* 106 Central laws applied post-2019, including RTE and CAA.

4. Federal and Democratic Concerns

- Critics argued **quasi-federalism** was violated.
- Parliament acted without elected state legislature.
- *Example:* Opposition walkout during 2019 debate in Rajya Sabha.

5. Supreme Court Verdict (2023)

- Held abrogation **valid and legal**; Union has overriding power.
- Recognised J&K's integration as complete.
- Directed Assembly elections by Sep 2024 for democratic restoration.

6. Future Prospects and Political Stability

- Delimitation done, Panchayat polls held in 2023.
- Assembly polls and full statehood promised.
- *Example:* PMO's 2024 statement confirmed roadmap for statehood after elections.

Conclusion:

Though termed "temporary," Article 370 shaped India's federal journey. Its repeal must now be followed by democratic restoration and reconciliation in the region.

Q4: Discuss each adjective attached to the word 'Republic' in the 'Preamble'. Are they defensible in the present circumstances? (12.5 M)

What is being asked:

Explain the **adjectives related to 'Republic' in the Preamble** and whether they are defensible today.

How to approach:

Intro – Define 'Republic' with its Preamble adjectives.

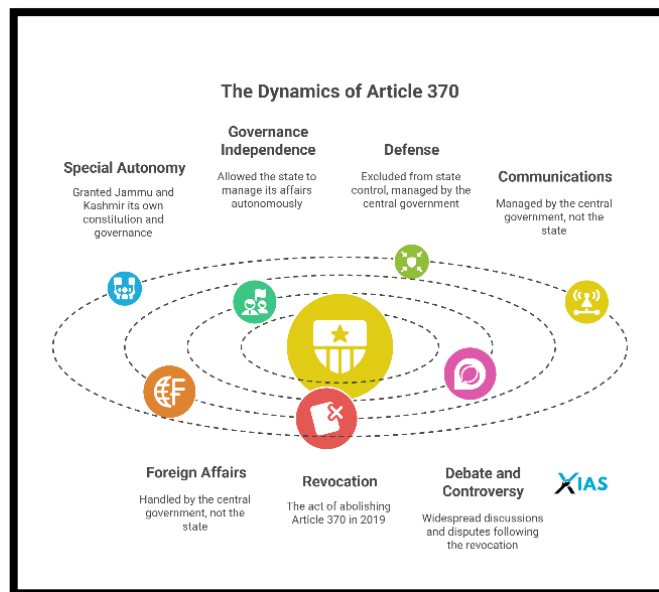
Body – 6 adjectives/dimensions: sovereign, secular, socialist, democratic, republic, justice – tested with current relevance.

Conclusion – Values are relevant but need robust defence in evolving polity.

Answer:

Introduction:

The Preamble describes India as a **Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic**, reflecting its



foundational values. While inserted or reaffirmed through the **42nd Amendment (1976)**, their application remains contested in contemporary politics and governance.

Body: Contemporary relevance of key terms in preamble

1. Sovereign

- India's **external and internal sovereignty** remains intact.
- *Example:* Independent foreign policy seen in India's neutral stance during the Israel–Gaza conflict (2023–24).

2. Socialist

- Implies **economic justice** and state-led welfare.
- Criticised today for market-led inequality.
- *Example:* PM-KISAN and NREGS continue as socialist redistributive tools.

3. Secular

- Equal treatment of all religions by the State.
- Rising communal rhetoric challenges this.
- *Example:* SC in *Farzana Parveen v. UP (2024)* reaffirmed protection of interfaith marriage under secular principles.

4. Democratic

- Free elections, civil liberties, decentralised governance.
- Concerns about ECI neutrality and media freedom.
- *Example:* 2024 Lok Sabha polls conducted with high turnout but marred by hate speech and misinformation.

5. Republic

- Head of State elected, not hereditary.
- Strong checks through Parliament, Judiciary.
- *Example:* Presidential elections (2022) showcased peaceful democratic transition.

6. Justice – Social, Economic, Political

- Still elusive in many parts.
- *Example:* Caste census demand (2023) driven by need for data-driven social justice policies.

Conclusion:

India's republican ideals remain relevant but need stronger institutional safeguards and citizen vigilance to withstand current social and political distortions.

Q5: What was held in the Coelho case? In this context, can you say that judicial review is of key importance amongst the basic features of the Constitution? (12.5 M)

What is being asked:

Explain **what the Coelho case held**, and whether **judicial review** is a **basic feature** of the Constitution.

How to approach:

Intro – Define judicial review + Coelho case.

Body – 6 polity-linked dimensions: origin of judicial review, Kesavananda link, Ninth Schedule misuse, Coelho ruling, Article 32/226, current judicial examples.

Conclusion – Judiciary is a guardian of constitutional morality.

Answer:

Introduction:

In *I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007)*, a 9-judge Bench held that laws inserted into the **Ninth Schedule after 1973** are open to **judicial review** if they violate **basic structure**, reaffirming judicial supremacy.

Body: Dimensions of judicial review as a basic feature

1. Origin and Meaning of Judicial Review

- Courts examine constitutionality of laws.
- Drawn from **Article 13, 32, 226**.
- *Example:* SC invalidated farm laws' suspension in 2023 on procedural grounds.

2. Kesavananda Bharati and Basic Structure (1973)

- First to limit Parliament's power to amend Constitution.
- *Example:* Parliament can amend, not destroy basic features like secularism, federalism, etc.

3. Ninth Schedule and Immunity Misuse

- Used to **shield land and reservation laws** from scrutiny.
- SC in Coelho held that post-1973 entries into Ninth Schedule must comply with basic structure.

4. Coelho Case – Core Holding

- Reaffirmed **judicial review as part of basic structure**.
- Parliament cannot override it through Schedule insertion.
- *Example:* SC struck down parts of Tamil Nadu law on 69% reservation in Coelho.

5. Tools of Judicial Review – Article 32 & 226

- Fundamental rights enforcement by SC and HCs.
- *Example:* SC used Article 32 in *Sabarimala Review (2023)* to protect dignity and equality.

6. Contemporary Relevance of Judicial Review

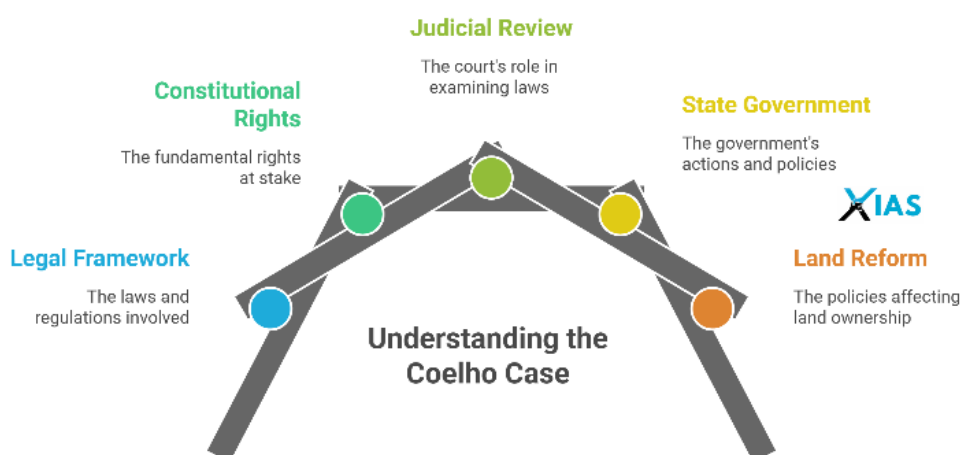
- Resists majoritarian excesses and unlawful executive acts.
- *Example:* SC scrutiny on CAA, electoral bonds, and GNCTD Amendment Act (2023) are current applications.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Constitution Review Commission (2002):** Reaffirmed judicial review as essential to rule of law.
- **ARC II (2007) Report on Ethics in Governance:** Upheld review as necessary to curb legislative overreach.
- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC, 2002):** Advocated protection of judicial independence.
- **Ministry of Law & Justice 2023 White Paper:** Defended SC's role in safeguarding civil liberties via review.

Conclusion:

Coelho reaffirmed judicial review as a guardian of the Constitution. Its role is vital in safeguarding liberties from arbitrary legislative or executive power.



Q6: In the integrity index of Transparency International, India stands very low. Discuss briefly the legal, political, social and cultural factors that have caused the decline of public morality in India. (12.5 M)

What is being asked:

Discuss the legal, political, social, and cultural causes of declining public morality.

How to approach:

Intro – India’s low rank + define public morality.

Body – 6 dimensions: legal loopholes, political patronage, social tolerance, media failure, institutional weaknesses, cultural normalisation.

Conclusion – Need a multi-pronged ethical, institutional, and civic renewal.

Answer:

Introduction:

In the 2024 **Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index**, India ranked **93rd**, highlighting a **widening gap between law and ethics**. Public morality, rooted in constitutional values, is undermined by institutional and societal failures.

Body: Evaluation of public morality in India

1. Legal Framework Gaps

- **Prevention of Corruption Act (1988)** weakened after 2018 amendments.
- Delays in trials, weak Whistleblower Act enforcement.
- *Example:* No Lokpal appointments since 2023 despite SC direction.

2. Political Patronage and Criminalisation

- 43% MPs with pending cases (ADR 2024).
- Cronyism, opaque electoral funding.
- *Example:* SC struck down Electoral Bonds in 2024 due to lack of transparency.

3. Social Acceptance of Corruption

- Normalisation in daily life – bribes, quota misuse.
- Weak civic resistance to unethical behaviour.
- *Example:* Scam in Ayushman Bharat beneficiary database exposed in Bihar (2023).

4. Media and Moral Erosion

- Paid news, trial by media, TRP manipulation.
- *Example:* News channels fined in 2024 by NBDA for false reporting on CAA protests.

5. Institutional Weaknesses

- CBI, ED, often accused of political misuse.
- Lack of independence affects credibility.
- *Example:* CBI Director appointment delayed for over six months in 2023.

6. Cultural and Educational Deficits

- Ethical education missing in schools.
- Public figures rarely held accountable.
- *Example:* 2024 UGC push for ethics curriculum in higher education yet to be implemented widely.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Second ARC (2007) Report on Ethics in Governance:** Called for independent anti-corruption bodies and speedy trials.
- **NITI Aayog Action Plan (2020–25):** Emphasised transparency, digital monitoring, and citizen charters.
- **Law Commission (166th Report):** Advocated reforms in election funding and candidate disclosures.
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Recommended separation of prosecution and investigation wings.
- **Central Vigilance Commission (2022 Annual Report):** Cited need for capacity building in vigilance systems.

Conclusion:

Restoring public morality requires institutional reform, political accountability, civic education, and ethical leadership across sector

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2017

- Explain the salient features of the constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough 'to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services'? (15 M)
- Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy. (15 M)

- 2018

- Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? (15 M)

Q1: Explain the salient features of the constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough 'to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services'? (2017, 15M)

What is being asked:

Explain the key features of the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, and assess whether it has eliminated tax cascading and enabled a common national market.

How to approach:

Intro – Define 101st Amendment and purpose.

Body – 6 polity-linked features and an analysis of efficacy.

Conclusion – GST is a progressive reform, but needs refinement in federal coordination and compliance.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016**, enabled the rollout of **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** from **1st July 2017**, subsuming indirect taxes to create a **unified tax regime**. It aimed to **eliminate cascading taxes** and promote a **common national market** for goods and services.

Body: GST and its impact on policy of tax system

1. Constitutional Architecture of GST

- Inserted **Article 246A** for concurrent power to tax goods/services.
- Created **Article 279A** to constitute the **GST Council**.
- *Example:* GST Council has met over 50 times to decide rates and policies.

2. Elimination of Cascading Effect

- Input Tax Credit (ITC) across goods and services reduced **tax-on-tax**.
- *Example:* Earlier VAT + Service Tax + Excise led to 25–30% cumulative tax; now reduced to ~18% on many goods.

3. Uniform Tax Structure Across India

- GST subsumed 17 taxes and 13 cesses into 5 rate slabs.
- *Example:* FMCG sector saw logistics and compliance cost reduction due to **pan-India uniformity**.

4. Cooperative Federalism via GST Council

- Centre and states make joint decisions.
- *Example:* Dispute over compensation cess during COVID resolved through Council negotiation.

5. Digital Compliance and Transparency

- Use of **GSTN, e-invoicing, and E-Way Bills** modernised tax administration.
- *Example:* Over 1 crore GSTINs registered as of 2024, improving tax base.

6. Structural Challenges and Delays

- Complexity in slabs, delayed refunds, and compliance burden on MSMEs.
- *Example:* Recommendations in **15th Finance Commission Report** and **Parliamentary Standing Committee (2022)** stressed rationalising slabs.

Relevant Recommendations :

- **Kelkar Task Force on Indirect Taxes (2003):** Proposed a unified GST with ITC mechanism.
- **Thirteenth Finance Commission (2009):** Emphasised revenue-neutral GST.
- **15th Finance Commission (2020):** Urged strengthening of GST Council and simplification.
- **CAG Report (2021):** Flagged compensation delays and input credit backlog.
- **NITI Aayog (2023):** Recommended lower slabs and unified compliance interface.

Conclusion:

GST has moved India closer to a **common market**, reducing tax distortion. Strengthening **Council consensus**, simplifying rates, and timely refunds are key to its full potential.

Q2: Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy (2017, 15M)

What is being asked:

Discuss how the **Right to Privacy judgment** has redefined the **scope of Fundamental Rights**.

How to approach:

Intro – Mention *Puttaswamy (2017)* verdict and Article 21.

Body – 6 dimensions of impact on rights, laws, and digital governance.

Conclusion – Privacy is now a moral and legal shield in the digital age.

Answer:

Introduction:

In *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)*, a **9-judge Constitution Bench** unanimously held that the **Right to Privacy** is a **fundamental right under Article 21**, expanding the scope of liberty, autonomy, and dignity in the Indian constitutional framework.

Body: Impact of Right to privacy on other Fundamental rights

1. Reinforcement of Article 21

- Privacy is intrinsic to **right to life and personal liberty**.
- *Example:* Aadhaar data collection subjected to proportionality test in *Puttaswamy II (2018)*.

2. Privacy as a Facet of Multiple Rights

- Linked with **Articles 14 (equality), 19 (freedom), 25 (religion)**.
- *Example:* SC in *Navtej Johar (2018)* used privacy to decriminalise Section 377.

3. Horizontal Application Against Private Actors

- Recognises state's duty to regulate data use by private firms.
- *Example:* Supreme Court asked Meta and WhatsApp to clarify privacy compliance in 2024.

4. Strengthening of Data Protection Regime

- Mandated Parliament to pass a robust **Data Protection Law**.
- *Example:* **Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023)** passed as a direct consequence.

5. Limitations and Proportionality Doctrine

- Privacy not absolute; restrictions must be lawful, necessary, proportionate.
- *Example:* SC upheld contact tracing in pandemics only with consent and minimal intrusion.

6. Impact on Surveillance and Digital Governance

- Called for judicial oversight on surveillance laws.

- *Example:* SC in Pegasus Case (2022) appointed a committee to probe illegal surveillance.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee (2018):** Drafted India's first data protection framework.
- **ARC II Report on Right to Information (2006):** Highlighted privacy as a limitation to transparency.
- **Law Commission (205th Report):** Called for harmonising privacy with state interest.
- **Parliamentary Committee on IT (2021):** Emphasised protecting privacy from corporate surveillance.

Conclusion:

The *Puttaswamy* ruling transformed privacy into a **constitutional guardrail**, enhancing the democratic architecture of India's rights-based governance.

Q3: Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? (2018, 15M)

What is being asked:

Explain the **conditions for proclaiming Financial Emergency**, and its **constitutional consequences**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define Article 360 and its rationale.

Body – 6 polity-specific points: conditions, parliamentary approval, implications on executive/legislature, impact on federalism.

Conclusion – Though never invoked, legal clarity and fiscal discipline are crucial.

Answer:

Introduction:

Article 360 empowers the President to proclaim a **Financial Emergency** if the **financial stability or credit of India or any part thereof is threatened**. Though never invoked, it remains a powerful tool in the emergency framework.

Body: Conditions and effects of Financial Emergency

1. Grounds for Proclamation

- Triggered by **severe fiscal breakdown** or external credit crisis.
- *Example:* 1991 Balance of Payments crisis came close, but handled through IMF aid and reforms.

2. Procedure and Duration

- Must be approved by both Houses within **2 months**.
- Once passed, continues indefinitely until revoked.

3. Centralisation of Financial Control

- Centre can issue directives to states to observe **financial propriety**.
- *Example:* Hypothetically, during COVID economic shock, Centre could have invoked it but used GST compensation route instead.

4. Reduction of Salaries and Allowances

- Centre can reduce salaries of judges, civil servants.
- *Example:* In 2020, several states voluntarily cut MLA and employee pay due to revenue loss.

5. Impact on Federalism and State Autonomy

- Centre can **override state financial discretion**.
- Seen as intrusive; unlike fiscal federalism under Finance Commission.

6. Legal and Administrative Safeguards

- No judicial review explicitly provided in Article 360.
- Yet subject to **basic structure and constitutional morality**, as per SC in *Bommai (1994)*.

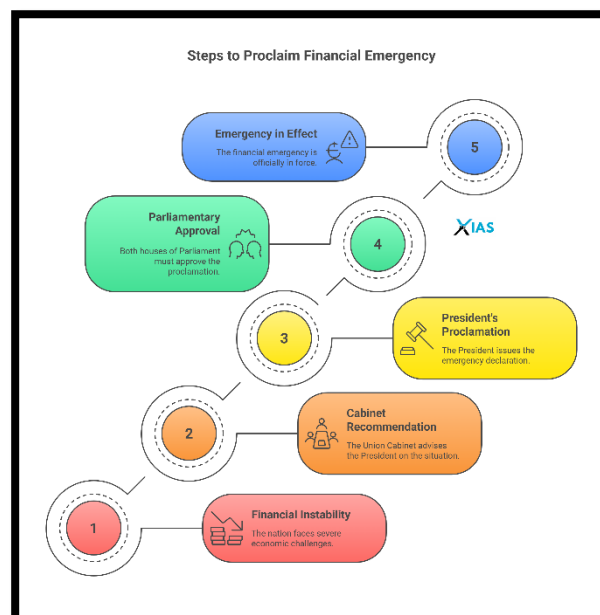
Relevant Recommendations:

- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Advised strict safeguards before declaring Financial Emergency.
- **14th Finance Commission (2015):** Highlighted cooperative fiscal discipline, not coercive tools.

- **RBI Reports (2020–23):** Emphasised need for fiscal responsibility instead of constitutional emergency.
- **ARC I (1967):** Warned against potential misuse of Article 360 provisions.
- **NITI Aayog (2023):** Advocated early warning indicators for fiscal stress rather than emergency declarations.

Conclusion:

Though Article 360 has never been invoked, its potential impact on **federal balance and constitutional rights** necessitates its cautious and transparent use.



• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2019

- “Parliament’s power to amend the Constitution is a limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power.” In the light of this statement explain whether Parliament under Article 368 of the Constitution can destroy the Basic Structure of the Constitution by expanding its amending power? (15 M)

• 2020

- Indian Constitution exhibits centralising tendencies to maintain unity and integrity of the nation. Elucidate in the perspective of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; The Disaster Management Act, 2005 and recently passed Farm Acts. (15 M)

• 2021

- ‘Constitutional Morality’ is rooted in the constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of Constitutional Morality’ with the help of relevant judicial decisions. (10 M)

Q1. “Parliament’s power to amend the Constitution is a limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power.” In the light of this statement explain whether Parliament under Article 368 of the Constitution can destroy the Basic Structure of the Constitution by expanding its amending power. (2019, 15M)

What is being asked:

Examine whether **Parliament’s amending power under Article 368 is limited by the Basic Structure Doctrine** or if it can be expanded into an **unlimited power**.

How to approach:

Intro – Trace origin of amending power and Basic Structure.

Body – 6 polity dimensions: Article 368 scope, Kesavananda verdict, judicial safeguards, Parliament’s limits, abuse potential, recent examples.

Conclusion – Amending power is essential but subordinate to the Constitution’s core.

Answer:

Introduction:

Article 368 grants Parliament the power to **amend the Constitution**, but the **Supreme Court in Kesavananda**

Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) held that such power **does not extend to altering the Basic Structure**, thereby placing **implicit limits** on the amending authority.

Body: Evolution of Parliament's amending power

1. Scope of Article 368

- Allows constitutional amendments by **special majority**.
- However, no provision in Article 368 explicitly allows destruction of the Constitution's identity.

2. Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973)

- Held that **Parliament can amend any part**, but **not destroy the Basic Structure**.
- *Example: Supremacy of Constitution, judicial review, secularism, and federalism are inviolable.*

3. Judicial Review as Limitation

- Courts act as **guardians against constitutional subversion**.
- *Example: I.R. Coelho (2007)* applied Basic Structure test to laws inserted into Ninth Schedule.

4. Attempts to Override Limitations

- 42nd Amendment (1976) sought to curb judicial review.
- Partially struck down in *Minerva Mills (1980)* for violating balance between legislature and judiciary.

5. Parliament's Accountability to the Constitution

- Parliament is **not sovereign**; the **Constitution is supreme**.
- *Example: 99th Amendment for NJAC struck down in 2015 for violating judicial independence.*

6. Contemporary Relevance

- Ongoing debates on **One Nation One Election, UCC, and Simultaneous Polls** test the boundaries of amending power.
- Any move diluting federalism or electoral integrity could face judicial scrutiny.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **NCRWC Report (2002)**: Reiterated that Basic Structure acts as a constitutional firewall.
- **ARC II Report on Ethics in Governance (2007)**: Warned against centralised constitutional overreach.
- **Constitution Review Commission (2000)**: Suggested clearer scope of amending powers.
- **Law Commission (2020)**: Called for codification of Basic Structure elements.

Conclusion:

Parliament's amending power is broad, but **subordinate to the Basic Structure**, which ensures continuity, identity, and constitutional stability in India's democratic framework.

Q2. Indian Constitution exhibits centralising tendencies to maintain unity and integrity of the nation. Elucidate in the perspective of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; The Disaster Management Act, 2005 and recently passed Farm Acts. (2020, 15M)

What is being asked:

Discuss how the Constitution leans towards **centralisation**, especially during crises, using **three legislative examples**.

How to approach:

Intro - Define quasi-federalism and constitutional design.

Body - 6 dimensions: federal design, concurrent subjects, Centre's override power, examples from three Acts, cooperative vs coercive federalism.

Conclusion - Need for federal trust in extraordinary centralisation.

Answer:

Introduction:

Though India is a **federal polity**, its Constitution is designed to be **quasi-federal with centralising features** to protect **unity and integrity**, especially in emergencies. This has been evident in Centre-led responses under the **Epidemic Act (1897), DMA 2005, and Farm Acts (2020)**.

Body: Dimensions showing unitary features of the Constitution and Legislation

1. Quasi-Federal Structure with Unitary Bias

- **Article 1 and Article 248–253** give overriding legislative powers to the Centre.
- *Example:* Centre can legislate on state matters during national interest under Article 249.

2. Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

- Colonial-era law used by Centre during COVID-19 without state consultation.
- Lacked federal oversight; imposed uniform restrictions.
- *Example:* Lockdown orders in 2020 issued through central guidelines.

3. Disaster Management Act, 2005

- Empowers **National Executive Committee** under MHA.
- *Example:* Migrant worker decisions during COVID bypassed state-specific inputs.

4. The Farm Acts, 2020

- Though agriculture is a **State subject**, Centre enacted laws citing **trade and commerce (Entry 33, Concurrent List)**.
- *Example:* Sparked federal backlash – Punjab and Chhattisgarh refused implementation.

5. Fiscal Centralisation Post-GST

- GST regime enhanced Centre's role in indirect taxation.
- *Example:* Compensation cess delays during 2020–21 led to Centre–State trust deficit.

6. Cooperative vs Coercive Federalism Debate

- Emergency centralisation must be **time-bound, consultative**.
- *Example:* SC in *State of Rajasthan v. Union of India (1977)* upheld emergency powers but cautioned against arbitrary imposition.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Sarkaria Commission (1988):** Warned against Centre's legislative overreach on state subjects.
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Urged clear crisis protocols and federal coordination.
- **NITI Aayog (2019):** Promoted cooperative federalism in crisis response.
- **14th Finance Commission:** Enhanced state share to balance central bias.
- **Rajamannar Committee (1971):** Called for constitutional protection of state autonomy.

Conclusion:

While **centralisation is sometimes necessary**, sustainable governance in India requires **trust-based federalism** that respects constitutional roles during both normalcy and crises.

Q3. 'Constitutional Morality' is rooted in the constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of 'Constitutional Morality' with the help of relevant judicial decisions. (2021, 10M)

What is being asked:

Define the **doctrine of constitutional morality** and explain its **judicial evolution and application**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define concept, origin, and purpose.

Body – 5–6 headings: source, judicial evolution, social justice, limits of popular morality, current usage.

Conclusion – Constitutional morality upholds justice beyond mere legality.

Answer:

Introduction:

Constitutional morality implies adherence to the **core values of the Constitution**—justice, liberty, equality, and dignity—beyond procedural compliance. The phrase was revived by the Supreme Court in *Naz Foundation (2009)* and elevated in *Navtej Johar (2018)* to counter **majoritarian morality**.

Body: Constitutional morality established through judiciary

1. Origin and Theoretical Foundation

- Borrowed from **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, who called it “the cement of constitutional structure.”
- Upholds the **spirit** of the Constitution beyond its text.

2. Constitutional Morality vs Social Morality

- When societal norms clash with rights, constitutional morality must prevail.
- Example: Navtej Singh Johar (2018)* decriminalised homosexuality despite social taboos.

3. Instrument of Transformative Justice

- Empowers judiciary to bridge the gap between law and justice.
- Example: Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala (2018)* allowed women into Sabarimala temple.

4. Application to Executive and Legislative Conduct

- Requires all organs to act within **ethical constitutionalism**.
- Example: Manoj Narula v. Union of India (2014)* urged PMs to avoid appointing charge-sheeted ministers.

5. Foundation for Equality and Dignity

- Basis for **Article 21 expansions**.
- Example: Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)* upheld passive euthanasia based on dignity.

6. Limits and Cautions

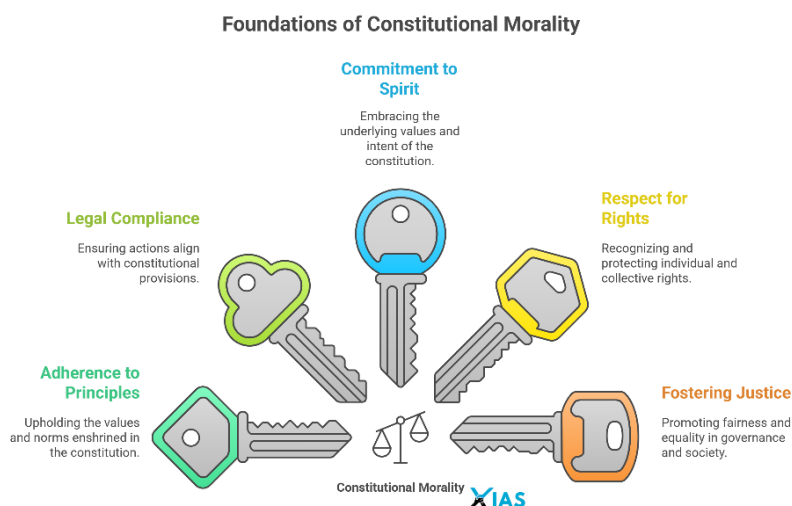
- Courts warned not to use it to impose **judicial overreach**.
- Example: Kalpana Mehta v. Union of India (2018)* advised restraint while applying morality to policy domains.

Relevant Recommendations:

- Justice Verma Committee (2013):** Called for constitutional morality in gender-sensitive governance.
- ARC II Report on Ethics in Governance (2007):** Framed morality as key to public service values.
- NCRWC (2002):** Emphasised need to uphold values even if socially unpopular.
- Law Commission (244th Report):** Defined role of courts in enforcing constitutional morality.
- Parliamentary Ethics Committee Reports:** Urged MPs to act within moral limits of constitutional office.

Conclusion:

Constitutional morality enables governance that is **inclusive, just, and ethical**, helping constitutional values triumph over majoritarian or populist pressures.



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2022**

- To what extent, in your opinion, has the decentralization of power in India changed the governance landscape at the grassroots? (10 M)
- While the national political parties in India favour centralisation, the regional parties are in favour of State autonomy." Comment. (15 M)

- **2023**

- "The states in India seem reluctant to empower urban local bodies both functionally as well as financially." (10 M)

- **2024**

- Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at the local level and bring out the pros and cons of merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies. (10 M)
- What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism. (15 M)

Q1. To what extent, in your opinion, has the decentralization of power in India changed the governance landscape at the grassroots? (2022, 10M)

What is being asked:

Evaluate how **decentralisation (73rd & 74th Amendments)** has transformed **local governance**.

How to approach:

Intro - Define constitutional decentralisation.

Body - 5-6 dimensions: functional autonomy, democratic deepening, local delivery, capacity gaps, state reluctance, digital innovations.

Conclusion - Deepening devolution is key to transformative governance.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** (1992) institutionalised **Panchayati Raj and Urban Local Bodies** as the third tier of governance. Over three decades later, decentralisation has enabled **participatory development**, though challenges in autonomy and implementation persist.

Body: Effects of democratic decentralisation

1. Empowerment of Local Governance Institutions

- Elected bodies now operate in all states.
- *Example:* 2.5 lakh Panchayats and 4,000+ ULBs functioning as per State Acts.

2. Social Inclusion and Grassroots Democracy

- **Reservation for SC/ST/Women** deepened representation.
- *Example:* 2024 Rajasthan PRIs: over 50% women-led panchayats.

3. Improved Service Delivery and Local Planning

- Focus on **water, sanitation, health, housing** at local levels.
- *Example:* Jal Jeevan Mission relies heavily on Gram Panchayats for implementation.

4. Financial and Functional Constraints

- Less than 10% PRIs have access to **untied funds**.
- *Example:* CAG report (2023) flagged unutilised grants in Bihar and UP PRIs.

5. Capacity and Administrative Gaps

- Shortage of trained staff and digital literacy.
- *Example:* 2023 MoPR report noted only 30% PRIs have trained data entry operators.

6. Digital and Mission-Driven Innovations

- E-Gram Swaraj, Swamitva, and MyGov platforms improving transparency.
- *Example:* Over 1.8 lakh panchayats onboarded to e-Gram portal as of 2024.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Second ARC (2007):** Urged full devolution of 3Fs – Funds, Functions, Functionaries.
- **13th and 15th Finance Commissions:** Enhanced grants for local bodies tied to performance.
- **MoPR (2023):** Stressed PRIs' role in climate resilience and disaster response.

Conclusion:

Decentralisation has democratised governance, but **de facto autonomy, fiscal devolution, and functional clarity** are critical to realise its full potential.

Q2. "While the national political parties in India favour centralisation, the regional parties are in favour of State autonomy." Comment. (2022, 15M)

What is being asked:

Comment on the **tension between centralising trends of national parties and autonomy-seeking role of regional parties.**

How to approach:

Intro – Frame federalism vs centralisation trend.

Body – 6 dimensions: constitutional design, electoral politics, national vs regional interest, GST/fiscal issues, coalition era, recent events.

Conclusion – Harmonising interests requires cooperative federalism.

Answer:

Introduction:

India's **quasi-federal Constitution** balances national unity with state autonomy. However, **national parties often pursue centralised control**, while **regional parties advocate for state-specific concerns**, creating **federal tension**, especially visible post-2014 with political centralisation.

Body: Dimensions of national and state parties on federalism

1. Constitutional Design with Central Bias

- Articles 248–253, All-India Services, and Emergency Powers empower Centre.
- Regional parties resist erosion of state authority.

2. National Parties Promote Uniformity

- Push for **One Nation-One Ration, UCC, CAA**, often seen as centralising.
- *Example:* Opposition by regional parties to NEP 2020 citing linguistic imposition.

3. Regional Parties and Cultural Assertion

- Demand greater fiscal, administrative autonomy.
- *Example:* DMK's resistance to Hindi imposition; TMC's stand on CAA rules in Bengal (2024).

4. Fiscal Federalism and Resource Centralisation

- GST compensation delays, cesses bypassing divisible pool.
- *Example:* Kerala and Punjab raised concerns over decreasing state share post-15th FC.

5. Coalition vs Majority Governments

- Coalition era (1996–2014) empowered regional voices.
- Majoritarian regime post-2014 revived centralising administrative culture.

6. Legislative and Institutional Bypasses

- Use of Ordinances, Governors, Central agencies viewed as weakening state power.
- *Example:* Allegations of ED misuse by several regional governments in 2023–24.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Sarkaria Commission (1988):** Recommended cooperative federalism and respect for state sphere.

- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Urged greater state consultation in national lawmaking.
- **NITI Aayog (2018):** Promoted Team India approach but states seek real inclusion.
- **14th FC:** Raised state share from 32% to 42%, but central cesses undercut it.

Conclusion:

A **mature federation must allow regional diversity** within national integrity. Dialogue, respect, and institutional balance are key to harmonious federal functioning.

Q3. "The states in India seem reluctant to empower urban local bodies both functionally as well as financially." (2023, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain why **states hesitate to devolve real power to urban local bodies** and what this means for urban governance.

How to approach:

Intro – Define 74th Amendment intent.

Body – 5–6 polity dimensions: **functional overlap, fiscal dependence, bureaucracy dominance, electoral control, capacity gaps, recent examples.**

Conclusion – **Strengthening ULBs is essential for urban India's future.**

Answer:

Introduction:

The **74th Constitutional Amendment (1992)** sought to empower Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as self-governing institutions, yet many states **retain control over finances, staff, and functions**, weakening true decentralisation in India's cities.

Body: States reluctance in strengthening urban local governance

1. Incomplete Functional Devolution

- 18 subjects listed in Twelfth Schedule not fully devolved.
- *Example:* Town planning and water supply still handled by parastatals in most states.

2. Financial Dependence on States

- ULBs lack own tax base, depend on state grants.
- *Example:* CAG (2023) flagged delay in release of FC grants to Maharashtra and MP ULBs.

3. Parallel Administrative Structures

- Development authorities, Smart City SPVs bypass elected bodies.
- *Example:* Bengaluru's BBMP sidelined by BDA and Smart City Ltd in key decisions.

4. Political Interference and Delayed Elections

- ULB polls often delayed; limited mayoral powers.
- *Example:* Chandigarh and Delhi see mayors with no budgetary or planning control.

5. Capacity Deficit in ULBs

- Lack of trained staff, digital infra, financial autonomy.
- *Example:* Only 40% ULBs have property tax automation (MoHUA 2024).

6. Urban Challenges Demand Localised Response

- Climate, mobility, housing need bottom-up planning.
- *Example:* Mohalla Sabhas in Delhi improved responsiveness to sanitation and health.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Second ARC (2007):** Urged fiscal empowerment and direct mayoral elections.
- **15th FC Report (2021):** Tied ULB grants to audited accounts, performance.
- **MoHUA Advisory (2022):** Promoted municipal bonds and own-source revenue reforms.

Conclusion:

ULBs must be empowered **not just in law but in practice**, with **funds, functions, and functionaries** to address India's urban transition effectively.

Q4. Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at the local level and bring out the pros and cons of merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies. (2024, 10M)

What is being asked:

Discuss the **role of local bodies in governance**, and provide a **balanced list of 5 pros and 5 cons** of merging rural and urban local bodies.

How to approach:

Intro – Define PRIs/ULBs and their role in governance.

Body – **First part: their governance functions; second part: pros and cons with 2024–25 examples.**

Conclusion – Integration must respect rural identity while promoting effective governance.

Answer:**Introduction:**

India's **local self-government system**, institutionalised by the **73rd and 74th Amendments**, empowers PRIs and ULBs to ensure **decentralised, participatory governance**.

I. Role of Local Bodies in Good Governance

- **Decentralised Service Delivery:** Health, sanitation, water, welfare schemes.
Example: PRIs executed Swachh Bharat and Jal Jeevan Mission across villages in 2024.
- **Citizen Participation:** Regular Gram Sabhas, Ward Committees.
Example: Odisha's Gram Sabha model for climate planning appreciated by MoPR in Jan 2025.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** RTI, social audits, e-governance platforms.
Example: 90,000+ Panchayats used e-Gram Swaraj in 2024.
- **Tailored Policy Execution:** Local needs drive implementation.
Example: Urban heat action plans led by ULBs in Ahmedabad and Chennai (Summer 2024).
- **Disaster Resilience and Inclusion:** First responders in emergencies.
Example: Kerala PRIs led flood evacuation and shelter management in August 2024.

II. Pros and Cons of Merging Rural and Urban Local Bodies**Pros:**

1. **Integrated Planning and Infrastructure**
 - Prevents duplication across urban peripheries.
Example: Navi Mumbai's inclusion of revenue villages under unified plan (2024).
2. **Better Fiscal Pooling and Resource Sharing**
 - Merged bodies can utilise larger, combined budgets.
Example: Kerala's hybrid waste management model launched in Jan 2025.
3. **Efficiency in Service Delivery**
 - Single body for drainage, waste, mobility improves responsiveness.
Example: Greater Chennai streamlined transport planning post zone unification (2024).
4. **Eases Transition for Peri-Urban Areas**
 - Many areas evolve from rural to urban quickly.
Example: Varanasi merged adjoining panchayats to streamline Smart City execution (2025).
5. **Professionalisation and Digital Governance**
 - Urban-style governance benefits rural areas.
Example: Himachal Pradesh piloting joint rural-urban e-services platform (April 2025).

Cons:

1. **Erosion of Rural Identity and Representation**

- Villages may lose voice in broader urban-centric agenda.
Example: Opposition to Bengaluru peri-urban merger raised in Karnataka Assembly (2024).
- 2. **Administrative Complexity and Jurisdictional Conflicts**
 - Conflicting legal frameworks cause governance confusion.
Example: GHMC still struggles with overlapping mandals and wards (2025).
- 3. **Dilution of Gram Sabha Empowerment**
 - Gram Sabhas risk being sidelined by urban council structures.
Example: Decline in Gram Sabha meetings post merger in Nagpur periphery zones (2024).
- 4. **Financial Disparity and Prioritisation Bias**
 - Urban zones may get more resources than rural ones.
Example: Jaipur merged zones saw 80% budget allocated to inner city in 2024 audit.
- 5. **Resistance from Elected Representatives and Citizens**
 - Seen as centralising move by rural stakeholders.
Example: PRIs in Haryana opposed urban integration in panchayat sammelan (Feb 2025).

Conclusion:

Merging local bodies may offer **efficiency and coherence**, but must preserve **democratic depth, rural voice, and constitutional spirit of decentralisation**. Reform must be **gradual, consultative, and context-sensitive**.

Q5. What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism. (2024, 15M)

What is being asked:

Discuss recent changes in Centre-State dynamics and suggest measures to **strengthen cooperative federalism**.

How to approach:

Intro – Federalism framework + recent tensions.

Body – 6 dimensions: fiscal, legislative, administrative, political, institutional changes + suggestions.

Conclusion – Federalism needs trust, not control.

Answer:**Introduction:**

India's **federal structure**, while **Constitutionally balanced**, has witnessed **centralising trends** in recent years. From **GST governance** to new laws on policing, education, and agriculture, Centre-State relations are being redefined, demanding renewed consensus and trust.

Body: Dimensions of centre-state relations**1. Fiscal Recentralisation**

- GST cesses, reduced devolution, delayed compensation.
- *Example: States' share in central tax reduced effectively from 42% to ~29% (15th FC + cesses).*

2. Legislative and Regulatory Overreach

- Centre enacting laws on **agriculture, education, services**, often seen as infringing state domain.
- *Example: NMC Act, NEP 2020, Farm Acts triggered backlash.*

3. Rise of Central Institutions in State Sectors

- Central schemes bypass state structures.
- *Example: PM SHRI schools launched in 2023 under Centre's direct control.*

4. Political Polarisation and Partisan Federalism

- Centre-State disputes intensified in opposition-ruled states.
- *Example: Use of ED/CBI during elections raised concerns over coercive federalism.*

5. Institutional Imbalances

- NITI Aayog, Inter-State Council not regularly used for federal consultations.
- *Example:* ISC has not met since 2017.

6. Measures to Build Trust

- Activate ISC, strengthen GST Council dispute resolution, reform Finance Commission role, share scheme design.
- Encourage fiscal federalism and political non-interference.

Relevant Recommendations:

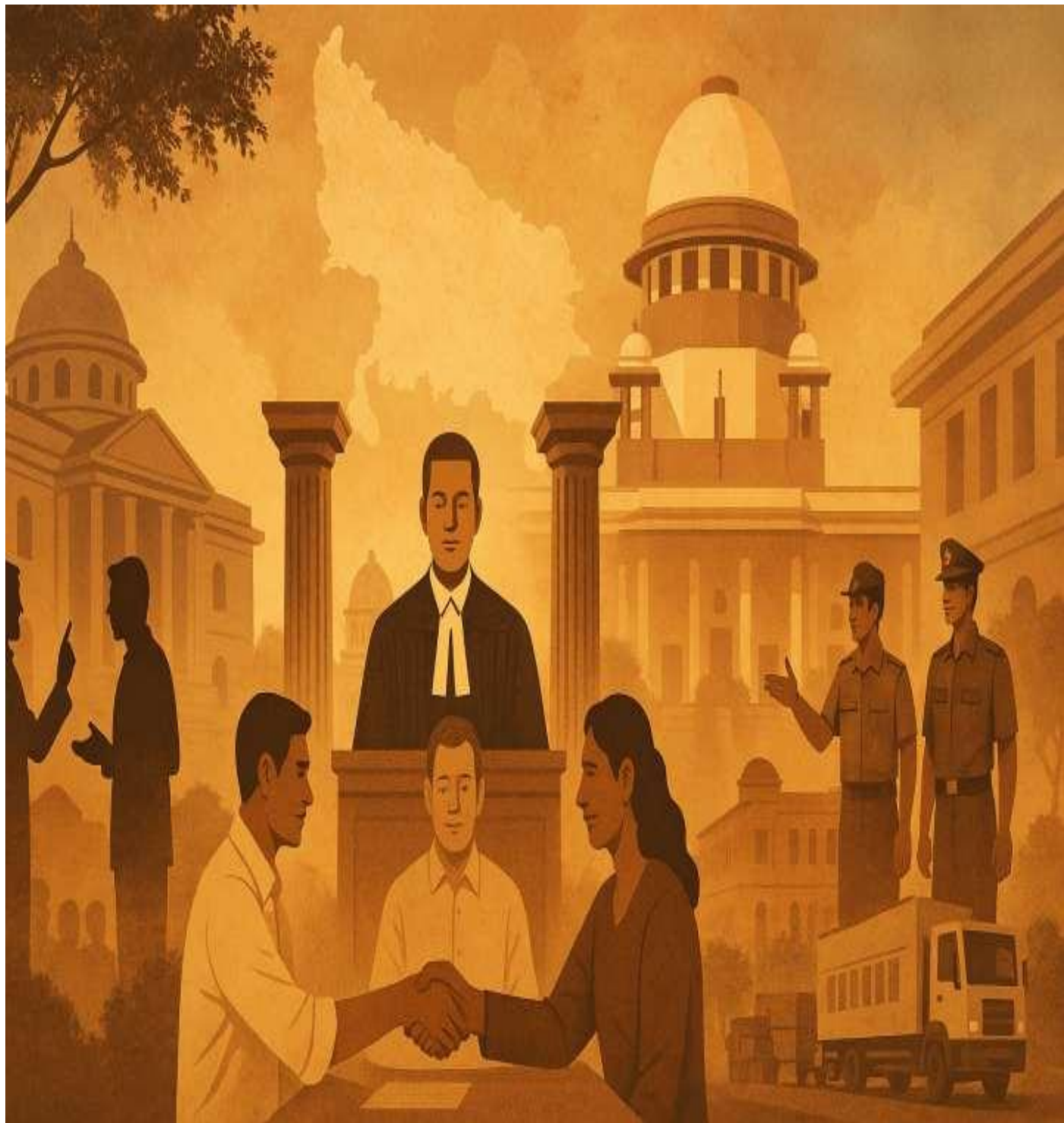
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Proposed stronger ISC and checks on Article 356 misuse.
- **NITI Aayog (2021):** Recommended co-designing Centrally Sponsored Schemes with states.
- **14th & 15th FCs:** Highlighted equitable devolution as bedrock of fiscal trust.
- **Rajamannar Committee (1971):** Called for curbing central legislative encroachment.

Conclusion:

Centre–State relations must evolve through **dialogue, respect, and institutional cooperation**, ensuring India’s federalism stays both strong and flexible.



TOPIC-2 Separation of Power



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013
- 'The Supreme Court of India keeps a check on the arbitrary power of the Parliament in amending the Constitution.' Discuss critically. (10 M)
- 2015
- Resorting to ordinances has always raised concern on violation of the spirit of the doctrine of separation of powers. While noting the rationales justifying the power to promulgate ordinances, analyze whether the decisions of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate ordinances be repealed? (12.5 M)
- 2019
- Do you think that the Constitution of India does not accept the principle of strict separation of powers; rather, it is based on the principle of 'checks and balances'? Explain. (10 M)
- 2020
- Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. (15 M)
- 2023
- "Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is a prerequisite of democracy". Comment. (10 M)

Q1. 'The Supreme Court of India keeps a check on the arbitrary power of the Parliament in amending the Constitution.' Discuss critically. (2013, 10M)

What is being asked:

Discuss how the **Supreme Court checks parliamentary power under Article 368**, and evaluate whether this has led to judicial overreach or necessary balance.

How to approach:

Intro - Define Article 368 + Basic Structure doctrine.

Body - Judicial checks, key verdicts, balance of powers, criticism, contemporary relevance.

Conclusion - Review power sustains constitutional supremacy, but must not replace Parliament.

Answer:

Introduction:

While **Article 368** empowers Parliament to amend the Constitution, the **Supreme Court in Kesavananda Bharati (1973)** ruled that no amendment can destroy the **Basic Structure**, placing **substantive limits** on this power and ensuring constitutional supremacy.

Body: Role of Supreme court in article 368

1. Kesavananda Bharati (1973) - Judicial Safeguard Introduced

- SC held that Parliament's power is wide but not unlimited.
- *Basic structure* includes secularism, judicial review, federalism, etc.

2. Minerva Mills (1980) - Reinforcing Limits

- Struck down clauses from 42nd Amendment for violating balance of fundamental rights and DPSPs.

3. Judicial Review as a Core Principle

- *I.R. Coelho (2007)*: Laws in Ninth Schedule post-1973 also open to review.
- *Example*: 2024 PIL filed challenging proposed Uniform Civil Code on federalism grounds invokes Coelho principles.

4. Checks and Balances in Action

- Parliament can amend the Constitution, but SC ensures **spirit is preserved**.
- *Example:* 99th Amendment (NJAC) struck down in 2015 for violating judicial independence.

5. Criticism – Judicial Overreach?

- Some argue SC became **final lawmaker**, weakening democratic will.
- *Example:* Debates on court's role in electoral disqualification, bail policy (2024).

6. Contemporary Role and Relevance

- With majoritarian governments, **judicial review** acts as democratic safeguard.
- *Example:* SC's 2024 ruling against Electoral Bonds as anti-transparency.

Relevant Recommendations:

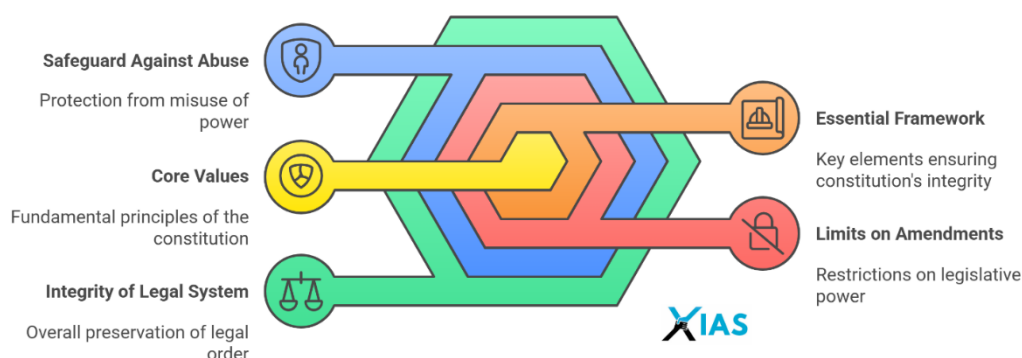
- **Constitution Review Commission (2002):** Supported Basic Structure doctrine as democratic shield.
- **Law Commission (2015):** Defended SC's power to review amendments.
- **NCRWC:** Suggested codifying constitutional principles judicially evolved.

Conclusion:

The SC's limitation of Article 368 via Basic Structure is vital to uphold **constitutional morality**, though it must exercise this power with **judicial restraint** to preserve institutional balance.

Q2.

Basic Structure Doctrine



Resorting to ordinances has always raised concern on violation of the spirit of the doctrine of separation of powers. While noting the rationales justifying the power to promulgate ordinances, analyze whether the decisions of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate ordinances be repealed? (2015, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Explain the **justification and abuse** of ordinance power, assess **SC verdicts** on this, and debate **whether it should be repealed**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define Article 123, historical context.

Body – Justifications, misuse, judicial verdicts, impact, repeal debate.

Conclusion – Power needed but must be strictly regulated.

Answer:

Introduction:

Article 123 empowers the President (and Article 213, the Governor) to promulgate **ordinances** during legislative recess. While intended for **urgency**, frequent misuse has undermined the **doctrine of separation of powers** and raised democratic concerns.

Body: Judicial stance on ordinance power and its impact on separation of powers

1. Rationale Behind Ordinance Power

- Allows executive to act swiftly in **extraordinary situations**.
- *Example:* Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance issued in 2020 during COVID-19 emergency.

2. Pattern of Misuse

- Often bypasses legislative debate.
- *Example:* Three Farm Laws (2020) introduced via ordinances without prior state consultation.

3. Supreme Court Verdicts

- *D.C. Wadhwa (1987):* Struck down **re-promulgation** as unconstitutional.
- *Krishna Kumar Singh v. State of Bihar (2017):* SC held ordinance must be **laid before legislature** and cannot create permanent effects if disapproved.

4. Facilitation or Check?

- SC tried to restrict misuse but stopped short of banning political overuse.
- *Example:* 2024 PIL in Bombay HC challenged repeated extension of e-commerce rules via ordinances.

5. Should Ordinance Power Be Repealed?

No: Needed for **national security, disasters, economic shocks**.

Yes: Must be curbed through strict time-bound scrutiny and judicial oversight.

6. Reforming the Ordinance System

- Introduce **mandatory tabling**, sunset clauses, judicial pre-clearance in some cases.
- *Example:* Law Commission (2024) working paper proposed limiting ordinance re-issuance to one term only.

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Sarkaria Commission (1988):** Warned against overuse; suggested clear definition of urgency.
- **Law Commission (100th Report):** Re-promulgation violates constitutional spirit.
- **Krishna Kumar Singh Case Guidelines (2017):** Established ordinance as temporary, reviewable tool.

Conclusion:

Ordinance-making must remain an **emergency tool**, not a **habitual legislative shortcut**. SC has drawn limits, but a clear legislative reform is required to uphold constitutional balance.

Q3. Do you think that the Constitution of India does not accept the principle of strict separation of powers; rather, it is based on the principle of 'checks and balances'? Explain. (2019, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain why **India doesn't follow strict separation**, and instead uses **checks and balances** among executive, legislature, judiciary.

How to approach:

Intro – Define doctrine as per Montesquieu and Indian adaptation.

Body – 6 headings with examples from each branch.

Conclusion – Balance is key to flexibility and accountability.

Answer:

Introduction:

Unlike the U.S. model of **strict separation of powers**, the Indian Constitution follows a **system of checks and balances**, wherein powers are **functionally divided** but institutions **interact and restrain** one another to uphold constitutional harmony.

Body: Fluidity between separation of powers and checks and balances

1. Executive–Legislature Overlap

- Ministers are part of the legislature (Article 75).

- *Example:* Prime Minister's accountability through Question Hour, Vote of Confidence.

2. Judiciary as Constitutional Guardian

- Reviews legislative and executive actions under **Articles 32 and 226**.
- *Example:* SC quashed Electoral Bonds (2024) for violating electoral transparency.

3. Legislature's Oversight on Executive

- Through **PAC, CAG reports, motions**.
- *Example:* 2024 JPC demanded on Agri subsidy diversion case.

4. Executive's Role in Judicial Appointments

- Though NJAC was struck down, executive still involved via MoP.
- *Example:* Centre delayed appointments to SC Collegium recommendations in 2024.

5. Judiciary Self-regulated but Checked

- Impeachment (Article 124), budgetary dependence on the executive.
- *Example:* MoLJ's 2024 request for judicial accountability framework.

6. Federal Balance Through Institutions

- Inter-State Council, NITI Aayog foster Centre-State cooperation.
- *Example:* Recent NITI-Governor roundtables on cooperative federalism.

Conclusion:

India's **checks-and-balances system** ensures flexibility and democratic resilience, even as overlapping functions require transparency, restraint, and mutual respect among organs.

Q4. Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. (2020, 15M)

What is being asked:

Analyse whether **judicial activism** (via PILs) violates **separation of powers**, and whether PILs are justified.

How to approach:

Intro – Define judicial legislation and separation of powers.

Body – Judicial activism, PILs, guidelines issued, their impact, scope, checks.

Conclusion – PILs must balance rights protection with institutional roles.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **doctrine of separation of powers** implies distinct roles for the legislature, executive, and judiciary. However, **judicial legislation**—where courts frame policy-like guidelines—has become common, especially through **Public Interest Litigations (PILs)** since the 1980s.

Body: Evaluation of PILs

1. Origin and Growth of PILs

- Intended to protect **marginalised groups** and environmental/public health issues.
- *Example:* MC Mehta series on pollution control, Vishaka guidelines for workplace harassment.

2. Judicial Guidelines Filling Legislative Gaps

- Courts step in when **executive inaction or legislative vacuum** exists.
- *Example:* SC issued bail reform guidelines in Jan 2024 amid rising undertrial deaths.

3. Risk of Judicial Overreach or Legislation

- Courts often accused of entering policy domain.
- *Example:* SC's ban on firecrackers without legislative backing triggered state pushback (2024).

4. PILs Reflect Public Frustration with Governance

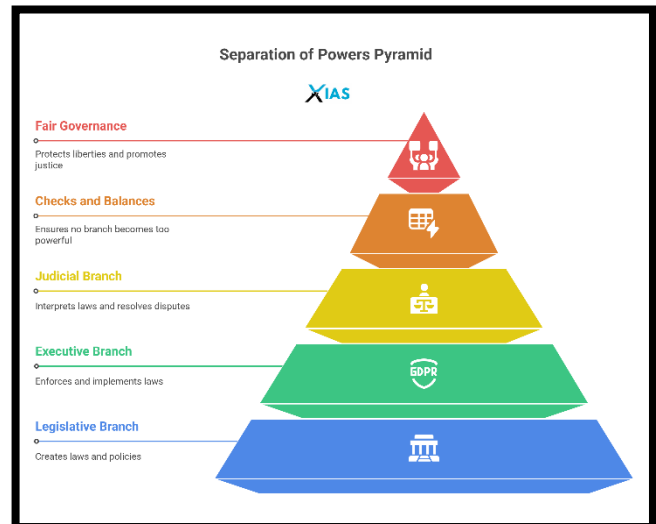
- Citizens seek directions where authorities fail.
- *Example: 2024 PILs filed on AI content regulation, pending legislative response.*

5. Impact on Accountability and Rights Protection

- Forces government action, keeps issues in public attention.
- *Example: SC's 2024 directive to ensure migrant workers' biometric access to ration system.*

6. Need for Judicial Restraint and Clarity

- Courts have warned against treating PILs as substitute for policy.
- *Example: Common Cause v. UoI (2023) upheld executive primacy in euthanasia regulations post-guideline phase.*



Relevant Recommendations:

- **Law Commission (277th Report):** Called for PIL guidelines to prevent misuse.
- **Justice J.S. Verma (Vishaka Case):** Framed PIL-based rules as temporary until law enacted.
- **Second ARC (2007):** Cautioned against over-legislative judiciary.
- **SC PIL Guidelines (2023):** Prioritise actionable relief, discourage political PILs.

Conclusion:

PILs are essential for **rights enforcement and governance accountability**, but courts must **limit themselves to interpretation**, not creation, of policy in a constitutional democracy.

Q5. "Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is a prerequisite of democracy". Comment. (2023, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain why **judicial independence** is essential to democracy and how it is constitutionally protected.

How to approach:

Intro – Define concept and its purpose.

Body – Constitutional provisions, case law, institutional guarantees, threats, recent developments.

Conclusion – Independent judiciary safeguards democracy and must be protected.

Answer:

Introduction:

Judicial independence ensures **fair and unbiased adjudication**, which is vital for the rule of law in a democracy. The Constitution provides multiple safeguards under **Articles 50, 124, 121, 211**, and the **Basic Structure Doctrine**.

Body: Reasons why Judicial independence is essential for democracy

1. Structural Safeguards in the Constitution

- Security of tenure, fixed salaries, independent removal process.
- *Example: SC judges appointed till 65, cannot be removed except by impeachment.*

2. Judicial Review and Accountability

- Power to strike down unconstitutional laws (Article 13).
- *Example: 2024 Electoral Bonds struck down despite political sensitivity.*

3. Independence from Executive and Legislature

- *NJAC struck down (2015) to protect Collegium system.*
- *Example: In 2024, SC objected to executive delays in Collegium appointments.*

4. Role in Protecting Fundamental Rights

- PILs, habeas corpus, environmental and privacy rights.
- *Example:* SC's biometric access order for ration ensured Article 21 protection (2024).

5. Threats to Judicial Independence

- Budgetary dependence, transfer of judges, political commentary.
- *Example:* 2023–24 friction over judicial transfers in Madras and Bombay HCs.

6. Public Trust and Institutional Integrity

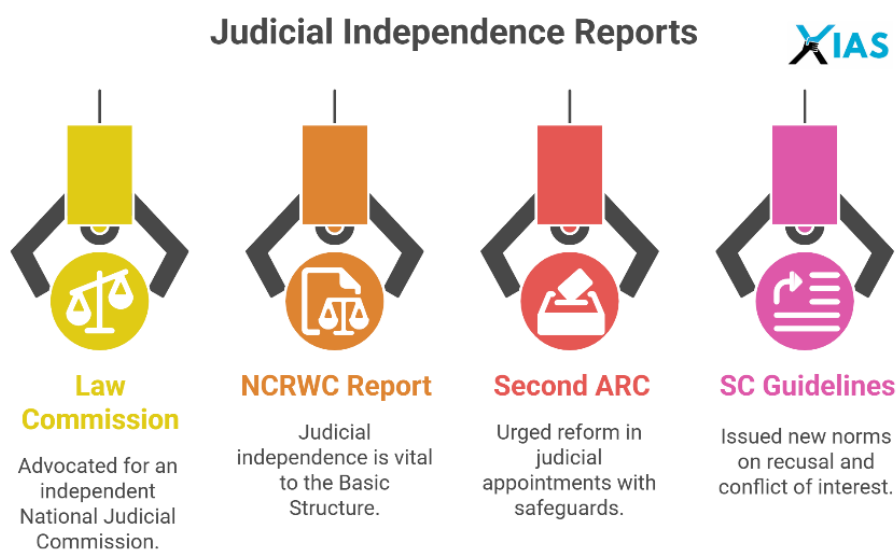
- Judges must avoid conflicts of interest and uphold impartiality.
- *Example:* SC's internal ethics panel met twice in 2024 over judicial conduct cases.

Relevant Recommendations Box:

- **Law Commission (121st Report):** Advocated independent National Judicial Commission.
- **NCRWC Report (2002):** Judicial independence vital to Basic Structure.
- **Second ARC (2007):** Urged reform in judicial appointments with safeguards.
- **SC Guidelines (2023):** Issued new norms on recusal and conflict of interest.

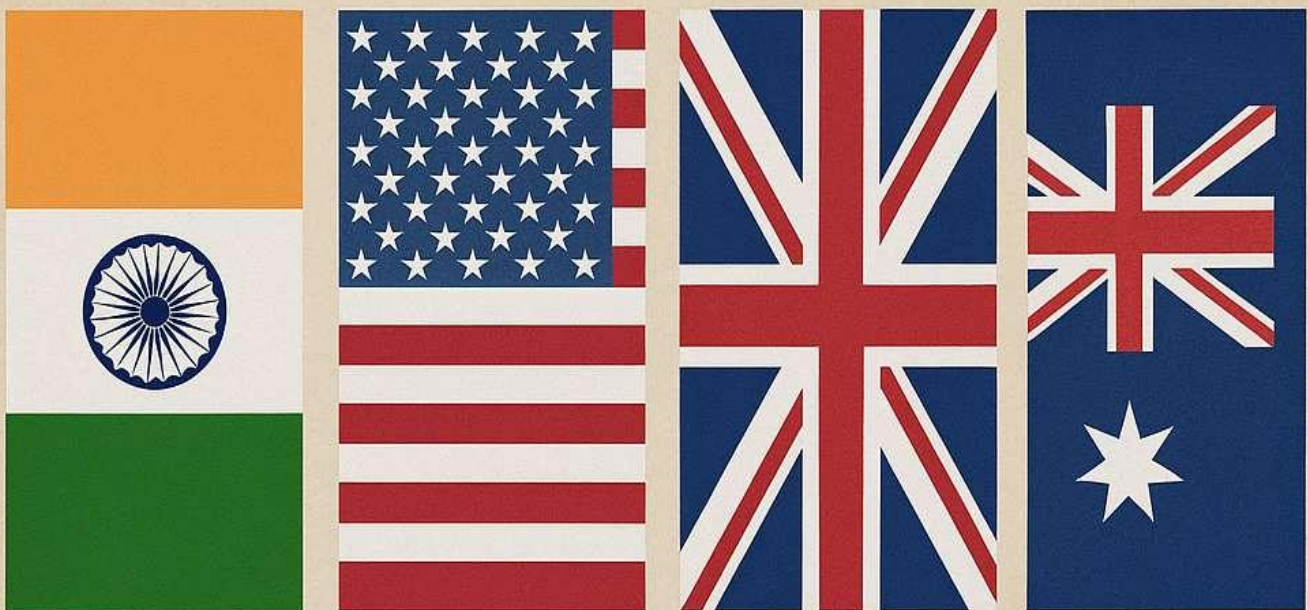
Conclusion:

Judicial independence is the **cornerstone of constitutional democracy**. It must be **institutionally preserved** to ensure justice is not only done but seen to be done.



TOPIC-3:Comparison of Constitution

Comparison of the Indian Constitutional Scheme with that of other major democratic countries



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2018
 - India and the USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based. (15 M)
- 2019
 - What can France learn from the Indian Constitution's approach to secularism? (10 M)
- 2020
 - The judicial systems in India and UK seem to be converging as well as diverging in recent times. Highlight the key points of convergence and divergence between the two nations in terms of their judicial practices. (10 M)
- 2021
 - Analyze the distinguishing features of the notion of Right to Equality in the Constitutions of the USA and India. (15 M)
- 2022
 - Critically examine the procedures through which the Presidents of India and France are elected. (15 M)

Q1. India and the USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based. (2018, 15M)

What is being asked:

Compare the **fundamental constitutional-political frameworks** of India and the USA across institutional, structural, and rights-based principles.

How to approach:

Intro – Set up oldest vs largest democracies.

Body – Thematic comparative table (6 principles), with 2024–25 examples.

Conclusion – Both diverse democracies tailored to local contexts.

Answer:

Introduction:

India and the USA represent **two of the world's most influential democracies** — India being the largest (1950) and the USA the oldest (1789). Both uphold **liberty, constitutionalism, and popular sovereignty**, but differ fundamentally in the **design of their political systems**, shaped by divergent historical needs and colonial legacies.

Body: Thematic Comparison of Political Tenets

<u>Feature</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>USA</u>
<u>Form of Government</u>	Parliamentary democracy under Article 74; PM is head of govt, President is nominal.	Presidential system with clear separation; President is both Head of State & Govt.
<u>Federal Structure</u>	Quasi-federal with unitary tilt (Articles 1, 248, 356).	True federalism ; states have sovereign constitutional status.
<u>Separation of Powers</u>	Overlap – Executive drawn from Legislature.	Strict separation – No member of one organ can function in another.

<u>Feature</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>USA</u>
<u>Judicial Review</u>	Constitutionally guaranteed (Articles 13, 32, 226).	Originated in Marbury v. Madison (1803) ; part of constitutional tradition.
<u>Rights Regime</u>	Part III Fundamental Rights with reasonable restrictions (e.g. Art. 19(2)).	Bill of Rights is absolute; e.g., 1st Amendment bars even symbolic state-religion ties.
<u>Amendment Process</u>	Flexible under Article 368 – simple & special majority.	Rigid – 2/3rd Congress + 3/4th states.

Examples:

- *USA*: Controversy over Trump's immunity ruling (2024) raised questions of separation of powers.
- *India*: Electoral Bonds verdict (Feb 2024) affirmed judicial review and transparency under Art. 19(1)(a).
- *Both*: Participated in 2024 Democracy Summit reaffirming constitutional democracy against rising authoritarianism.

Relevant Committees / Reports:

- **NCRWC Report (2002)**: India's cooperative federalism compared to U.S. federal rigidity.
- **ARC II Report (2007)**: Separation of powers in India is functional, not structural.
- **Sarkaria Commission (1988)**: Indian model is "federal in form, unitary in spirit".

Conclusion:

While India and the USA share democratic ideals, their **institutional structures diverge** sharply. India's model ensures **flexibility and responsiveness**, while the USA prioritises **institutional autonomy and checks** — both rooted in respective socio-political histories.

Q2. What can France learn from the Indian Constitution's approach to secularism? (2019, 10M)**What is being asked:**

Highlight the **contrast** between French Laïcité and Indian secularism, and analyse **how India's inclusive model offers lessons** for diverse democracies like France.

How to approach:

Intro – Define both secularisms.

Body – Contrast key principles and give 5 lessons France could learn.

Conclusion – Indian secularism allows pluralism in democracy.

Answer:**Introduction:**

France follows Laïcité — a strict separation of religion and state, while India practices principled equidistance, allowing freedom of religion under **Articles 25–28**, and treating all faiths with equal respect without state-sponsored atheism.

Body: What Can France Learn from India's Model?

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Indian Secularism</u>	<u>Lesson for France</u>
<u>State-Religion Interface</u>	State can engage with religion for social reform (e.g., abolition of untouchability).	France may adopt contextual engagement to integrate minorities.

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Indian Secularism</u>	<u>Lesson for France</u>
<u>Cultural Pluralism</u>	Celebrates religious diversity in public life.	Promote inter-faith visibility rather than ban symbols (e.g., hijab bans in schools).
<u>Reasonable Restrictions</u>	Art. 25(1) allows restrictions in public order, health.	Can balance freedom with civic order instead of blanket bans.
<u>Reform Within Religions</u>	SC intervenes for equality (e.g., Sabarimala, Triple Talaq).	French judiciary may take a rights-centric reform approach .
<u>Accommodation Model</u>	Multiple personal laws coexist within constitutional bounds.	France may consider contextual diversity in legal systems (e.g., family law flexibility).

Examples:

- *India:* Delhi govt (2025) continued funding religious pilgrimages for all communities.
- *France:* 2024 national debate reignited over wearing abayas in public schools; Indian model was cited in academic forums.

Relevant Reports/Committees:

- **Justice Ranganath Misra Commission (2007):** Affirmative action for religious minorities.
- **NCRWC (2002):** Pluralistic secularism essential in India.
- **SC in S.R. Bommai (1994):** Defined secularism as part of Basic Structure.

Conclusion:

India's **inclusive, reformative and pluralistic secularism** provides a **dynamic model** for countries like France struggling with rigid Laïcité in a multicultural society. Democracy must integrate diversity, not erase it.

Q3. The judicial systems in India and UK seem to be converging as well as diverging in recent times. Highlight the key points of convergence and divergence between the two nations in terms of their judicial practices. (2020, 10M)

What is being asked:

Identify and explain **similarities and differences** between Indian and UK judicial practices in structure, judicial review, independence, etc.

How to approach:

Intro – Shared common law heritage.

Body – Convergence vs Divergence structure with examples.

Conclusion – Judicial innovation within constitutional limits defines modern democracy.

Answer:**Introduction:**

Both India and the UK derive their **legal foundations from British common law**, but have evolved **unique judicial frameworks** — India through a **written Constitution with judicial review**, and the UK through **parliamentary sovereignty and conventions**.

Body: Convergence and Divergence in Judicial Systems**Points of Convergence****1. Common Law Traditions**

- Judicial precedent as a source of law.
- *Example:* Indian SC cited UK precedent in 2024 crypto regulation ruling.

2. Increasing Judicial Activism

- UK SC in *Miller case (2019)* intervened in prorogation; India in *Election Commission case (2023)* appointed EC through Collegium.

3. Public Interest Litigation Culture

- Both courts entertain rights-based petitions.
- *Example: 2024 PIL in India on facial recognition; similar UK petitions on data privacy.*

4. Modernisation and Tech Use

- E-courts, AI case management pilots.
- *Example: SC of India launched virtual benches for remote districts (2025); UK using AI in sentencing analysis.*

Points of Divergence

1. Judicial Review Powers

- India: Extensive, including constitutional invalidation.
- UK: Parliament is sovereign; courts cannot strike laws.

2. Written vs Unwritten Constitution

- India: Clear constitutional limits.
- UK: Based on conventions, statutes, judicial interpretation.

3. Appointment System

- India: Collegium (post-NJAC verdict).
- UK: Independent Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC).

4. Role in Governance

- India: SC has wide say in executive matters (e.g. pollution, governance guidelines).
- UK: Courts more restrained; defer to Parliament.

Examples:

- *India: SC verdict striking down electoral bonds (2024) shows proactive judicial review.*
- *UK: SC's limited role in Rwanda asylum treaty ruling (2024) cited in EU migration debate.*

Relevant Reports/Doctrines:

- **NCRWC (2002):** Favoured accountable judiciary with independent appointments.
- **Justice Lokur Panel (2024):** Suggested hybrid JAC inspired by UK model.
- **Second ARC (2007):** Advocated strengthening judicial standards without overreach.

Conclusion:

While both nations' courts are **evolving as guardians of rights**, India's judiciary holds a **constitutionally expansive mandate**, whereas the UK's judiciary remains **subservient to Parliament** — reflecting their different democratic lineages.

Q4. Analyze the distinguishing features of the notion of 'Right to Equality' in the Constitutions of the USA and India. (2021, 15M)

What is being asked:

Critically compare the **scope and features** of the Right to Equality in India and the USA, with focus on structure, interpretation, and implementation.

How to approach:

Intro – Mention constitutional location of equality in both.

Body – Use **thematic comparative structure** (definition, scope, restrictions, jurisprudence).

Conclusion – Both promote equality, but Indian model is more qualified and state-reliant.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **Right to Equality** is a foundational democratic guarantee. In India, it is enshrined under **Articles 14 to 18**,

while in the USA, it is rooted primarily in the **14th Amendment** (Equal Protection Clause). Both share liberal-democratic goals but vary in legal architecture and philosophical framing.

Body: Thematic Comparison of Right to Equality

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>USA</u>
<u>Constitutional Location</u>	Part III – Articles 14–18 (Fundamental Rights).	14th Amendment (Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses).
<u>Nature of Equality</u>	Substantive and affirmative – allows for reasonable classification (Art. 14).	Formal equality – insists on equal treatment without distinctions.
<u>Permissible Restrictions</u>	Allows positive discrimination (e.g., reservations under Art. 15(4), 16(4)).	Restrictions mostly judicially evolved; affirmative action debated (e.g., race-conscious policies).
<u>Jurisprudential Development</u>	Expanded via Kesavananda Bharati (1973), Indra Sawhney (1992), Navtej Johar (2018).	Evolved through Brown v. Board (1954), Grutter v. Bollinger (2003), Students for Fair Admissions (2023).
<u>Group-Based Protection</u>	Protects caste, gender, class, disability , etc.	Focus on race, sex, religion, alienage under strict scrutiny doctrine.
<u>Current Policy Debate (2024–25)</u>	SC's 2023 verdict upholding 10% EWS reservation. Debate continues over caste census (2024).	SC's 2023 judgment ended race-based admissions; major rollback of affirmative action in universities.

Relevant Committees / Cases / Reports:

- **Indra Sawhney Case (1992)** – Defined backwardness and creamy layer.
- **Rohini Commission (2024)** – Recommended sub-categorisation within OBCs.
- **ARC II (2007)** – Called for equality of outcomes in governance.
- **Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023)** – US SC ended race-conscious admissions.

Conclusion:

Both India and the USA **pursue equality** through constitutional means, but while the USA focuses on **individual-centric formal equality**, India uses **group-sensitive, substantive equality** to address historical injustice through state action.

Q5. Critically examine the procedures through which the Presidents of India and France are elected. (2022, 15M)

What is being asked:

Compare the **Presidential election procedures** in India and France and critically evaluate their democratic and institutional implications.

How to approach:

Intro – Presidential role in both systems.

Body – Use thematic comparative table (electoral method, tenure, powers, checks).

Conclusion – Reflect on implications for democratic legitimacy and federalism.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **President of India**, a constitutional head in a parliamentary system, is elected **indirectly** to reflect

federalism and consensus. In contrast, the **President of France** is the **directly elected executive head** of a semi-presidential system, blending popular legitimacy with shared executive powers.

Body: Comparative Analysis of Presidential Election Procedures

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>France</u>
<u>System Type</u>	Parliamentary – President is nominal head.	Semi-presidential – President shares executive power with PM.
<u>Mode of Election</u>	Indirect via Electoral College – MPs + MLAs, weighted votes.	Direct – Two-round universal adult franchise system.
<u>Tenure and Re-election</u>	5 years, eligible for re-election any number of times.	5 years, maximum of two consecutive terms.
<u>Reflects Federalism?</u>	Yes – vote weightage ensures state participation.	No – centralised system, no separate representation for regions in vote value.
<u>Legitimacy and Mandate</u>	Derived from legislature; seen as above party politics.	Direct people’s mandate; can result in political activism.
<u>Recent Trends (2022-25)</u>	2022: Droupadi Murmu elected as first tribal woman President. 2024: debate over electoral reforms.	Macron re-elected in 2022; pension protests (2023–24) highlighted strong presidential activism.

Relevant Reports / Provisions / Examples:

- **Art. 54–58:** Indian constitutional provisions.
- **ECI Handbook (2022):** Election process reforms under consideration.
- **NCRWC (2002):** Upheld indirect election as essential to federal structure.
- **French Constitution (1958, amended):** Direct elections introduced under de Gaulle.

Conclusion:

India’s **indirect model preserves neutrality and federal balance**, while France’s **direct system ensures strong popular legitimacy**. Both systems must ensure that institutional **checks and accountability** outweigh populist tendencies

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- **2023**
- **Compare and contrast the British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary sovereignty. (10 M)**
- **2024**
- **Discuss India as a secular state and compare it with the secular principles of the US Constitution. (15 M)**

Q1. Compare and contrast the British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary sovereignty. (2023, 10M)

What is being asked:

Examine the concept of **Parliamentary Sovereignty** in the UK and India, highlighting both **convergence and divergence**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define Parliamentary Sovereignty.

Body – Compare UK and Indian models on 5–6 dimensions.

Conclusion – Indian model balances **Parliamentary power with constitutional supremacy**.

Answer:

Introduction:

The doctrine of **Parliamentary Sovereignty** — famously articulated by A.V. Dicey — holds sway in the UK's unwritten Constitution, where Parliament is supreme. In contrast, the Indian Constitution adopts a **limited sovereignty** under the **Basic Structure doctrine**, enforced by the judiciary.

Body: UK vs India on Parliamentary Sovereignty

Dimension	United Kingdom	India
Constitutional Setup	Unwritten Constitution , based on conventions and statutes.	Written Constitution (1950), supreme law of the land.
Scope of Parliamentary Power	Parliament can make or unmake any law ; no law is unconstitutional.	Parliament cannot violate Basic Structure (Kesavananda Bharati, 1973).
Judicial Review	UK courts cannot strike down Parliamentary Acts.	Indian judiciary has strong power of judicial review under Articles 13, 32, 226.
Amendment Procedure	Simple legislative process; no special procedure .	Article 368 provides special process , differentiates simple and entrenched amendments.
Recent Developments (2024–25)	2024: UK Parliament's AI Regulation Act passed with no court challenge.	2024: SC of India struck down part of Finance Act violating judicial independence.
Limits to Parliament	Only political checks , not legal limits.	Bound by constitutional checks and judicial oversight.

Relevant Committees / Judgments / Reports:

- **Kesavananda Bharati (1973)**: Limited amending power in India.
- **Maneka Gandhi (1978)**: Expanded due process under Art. 21.
- **NCRWC Report (2002)**: Reaffirmed constitutional supremacy.
- **UK's Miller Cases (2017, 2019)**: Asserted parliamentary process but not full legal sovereignty

Conclusion:

While **British Parliament is legally omnipotent**, India's Parliament is a **creature of the Constitution**. This ensures a balance between **democracy and constitutionalism**, especially in pluralistic societies like India.

Q2. Discuss India as a secular state and compare it with the secular principles of the US Constitution. (2024, 15M)

What is being asked:

Explain **India's model of secularism**, compare it with **US secularism**, and highlight key distinctions with recent examples.

How to approach:

Intro – Define secularism in both constitutions.

Body – Compare across 6 key dimensions.

Conclusion – India's **positive secularism** contrasts with US **strict separation**.

Answer:

Introduction:

India adopts **principled equidistance** under Articles 25–28, ensuring **freedom of religion** and equal treatment. The US, via the **First Amendment**, follows a stricter **Wall of Separation** doctrine, prohibiting establishment of religion and safeguarding free exercise.

Body: India–US Secularism Compared Thematically

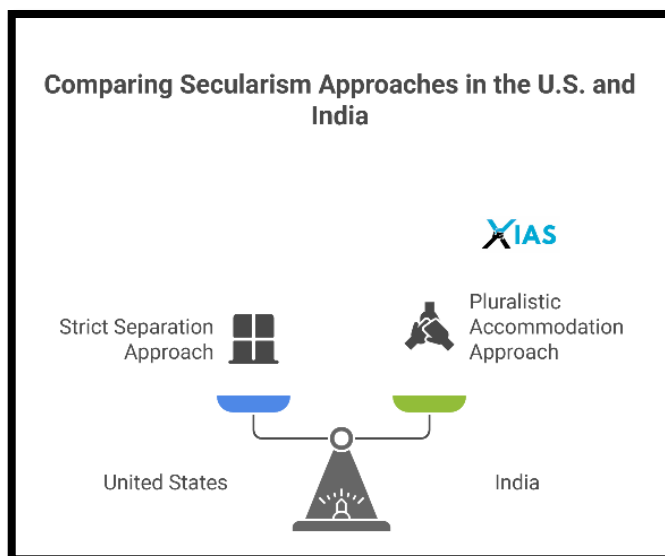
<u>Dimension</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>USA</u>
<u>Constitutional Reference</u>	Articles 25–28, Preamble (Secular since 42nd Amendment).	First Amendment – “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment...”
<u>State–Religion Interaction</u>	State can regulate religion for social reform (e.g., abolition of untouchability, temple entry).	State is barred from engaging or promoting any religion.
<u>Personal Laws</u>	Multiple personal laws based on religion (e.g., Hindu, Muslim, Christian).	Uniform civil laws; no religious-based family laws.
<u>Symbolic Tolerance</u>	Religious holidays, symbols allowed in public offices.	Strictly barred – e.g., no prayers in public schools.
<u>Judicial Interpretation</u>	Evolved through S.R. Bommai (1994), Aruna Roy (2002), Shayara Bano (2017).	Evolved via cases like Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971), Kennedy v. Bremerton (2022).
<u>2024–25 Developments</u>	Supreme Court allowed Dalit Christians to file for equal benefits (2024).	US courts upheld religious freedom in AI data access disputes (2024).

Relevant Committees / Cases / Reports:

- **S.R. Bommai (1994):** Secularism is part of Basic Structure.
- **Justice Ranganath Misra Commission (2007):** Safeguards for religious minorities.
- **NCRWC (2002):** Defined Indian secularism as reformist and inclusive.
- **US Case: Kennedy v. Bremerton (2022):** Relaxed separation doctrine for religious expression.

Conclusion:

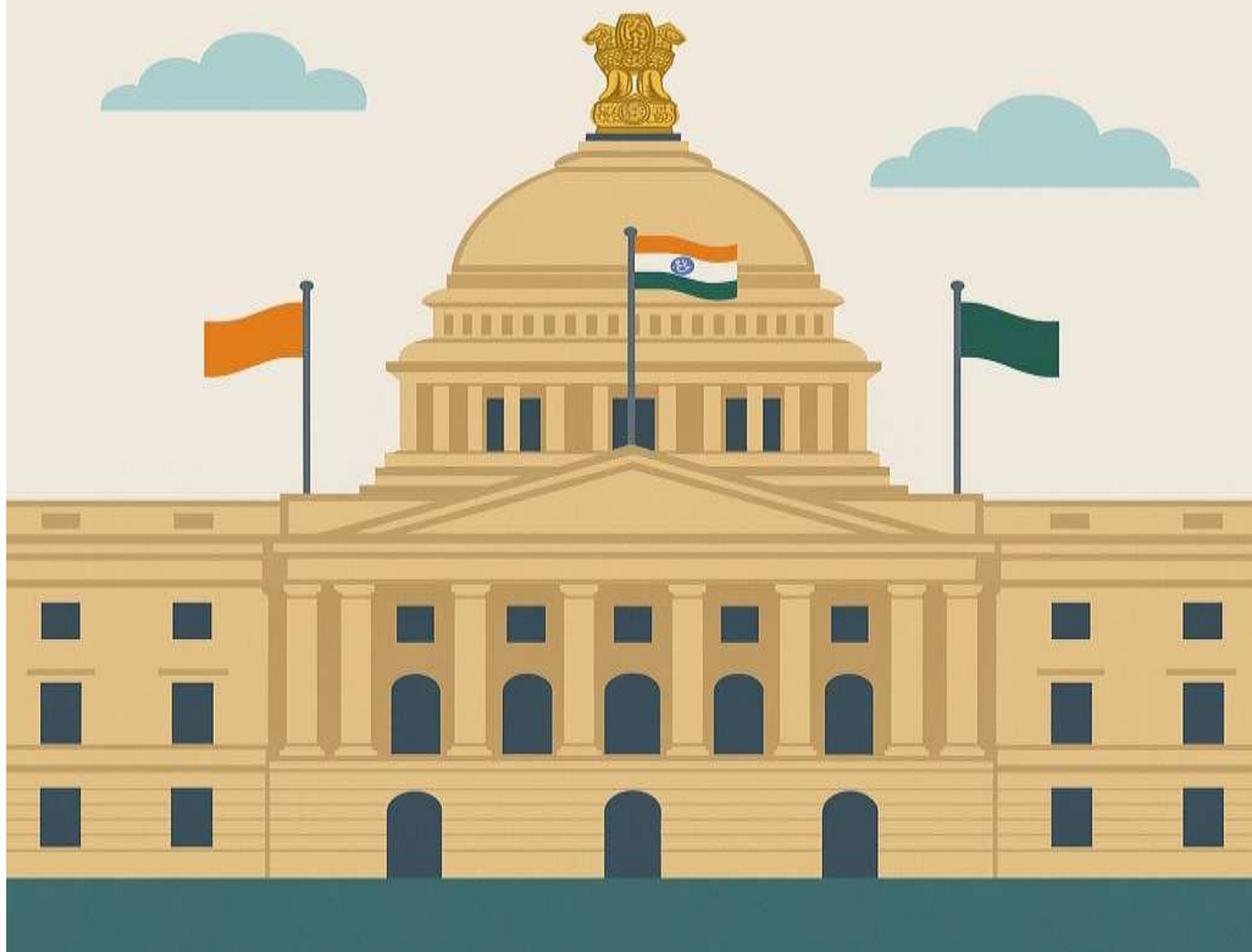
India’s secularism is **contextual and reformative**, allowing state-religion interaction to uphold equality. In contrast, the US follows a **rigid separation model**, prioritising non-interference — both suited to their unique societal structures.



TOPIC-4:Parliament and State legislatures

PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURES

STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONING, CONDUCT OF BUSINESS, POWERS AND PRIVILEGES AND CONCERNED ISSUES



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013

- The role of individual MPs (Members of Parliament) has diminished over the years and as a result, healthy constructive debates on policy issues are not usually witnessed. How far can this be attributed to the anti-defection law, which was legislated with a different intention? (10 M)

- 2014

- The 'Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and its Members' as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of un-codified and un-enumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of 'parliamentary privileges'. How can this problem be addressed? (12.5 M)

- 2015

- If the amendment bill to the Whistle-blowers Protection Act, 2011, tabled in Parliament is passed, there may be no one left to protect. Critically evaluate. (12.5 M)

Q1. The role of individual MPs (Members of Parliament) has diminished over the years and as a result, healthy constructive debates on policy issues are not usually witnessed. How far can this be attributed to the anti-defection law, which was legislated with a different intention? (2013, 10M)

What is being asked:

Assess the **decline of individual MPs' autonomy** and link it to the **anti-defection law**, including other contributing factors.

How to approach:

Intro – Purpose of the law vs outcome.

Body – Evaluate 5–6 dimensions (law's impact, party control, whip culture, reforms).

Conclusion – Strengthen deliberative space while preserving party coherence.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **Tenth Schedule**, inserted by the **52nd Amendment (1985)**, aimed to curb political defections and ensure stability. However, over time, it has contributed to the **marginalisation of individual MPs** by enforcing party discipline at the cost of legislative debate and dissent.

Body: How Anti-Defection Law Reduced Role of MPs

1. **Strict Party Whip Culture**

- MPs fear disqualification under Paragraph 2(1)(b), even for minor dissent.
- *Example:* In 2024, MPs in a private member bill discussion abstained fearing whip retaliation.

2. **Undermining of Deliberative Functions**

- Floor debates have become ritualistic; real deliberation occurs in party offices.
- *PRS Report 2024:* Only 12% of Bills referred to committees in Budget Session.

3. **No Distinction Between Ordinary and Confidence Votes**

- Law does not differentiate critical votes from routine business.
- *Sorabjee Committee Recommendation:* Whip should apply only to money/confidence motions.

4. **Reduced Legislative Innovation**

- Few Private Member Bills or policy innovations by individual MPs.
- *Example:* 2025: Only 2 Private Bills taken up, both withdrawn under party pressure.

5. **Executive Dominance Over Legislature**

- Council of Ministers influences debate, curtailing MP autonomy.
- *Example:* National Research Foundation Bill 2024 passed without serious deliberation.

Relevant Committees / Reports / Cases:

- **Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990):** Anti-defection reforms.
- **Law Commission (170th Report):** Need to distinguish disqualification grounds.
- **Kihoto Hollohan Case (1992):** Upheld law but recognised Speaker's bias risk.
- **NCRWC (2002):** Reform whip usage to protect dissent.

Conclusion:

While the anti-defection law ensures **political stability**, it has constrained MPs' legislative agency. Reforms must ensure that **stability does not override deliberative democracy**.

Q2. The 'Powers, Privileges, and Immunities of Parliament and its Members' as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of un-codified and un-enumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of 'parliamentary privileges'. How can this problem be addressed? (2014, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Examine **why parliamentary privileges remain uncoded**, and suggest ways to resolve this lack of clarity.

How to approach:

Intro – Define Article 105 privileges.

Body – Reasons for non-codification + consequences + solutions.

Conclusion – Codification must balance privilege with accountability.

Answer:**Introduction:**

Article 105 provides **freedom of speech in Parliament** and other privileges as defined by law or **as existed in British Parliament**. Despite Supreme Court urging clarity, **these privileges remain uncoded**, creating legal ambiguity and space for misuse.

Body: Why Parliamentary Privileges Remain Uncoded

1. **Constitutional Ambiguity**
 - Article 105(3) defers codification to Parliament, which has avoided it.
 - *Example:* No legislation has defined privileges even 75 years after independence.
2. **Fear of Judicial Encroachment**
 - Codification might expose MPs to litigation.
 - *Example:* 2023: SC observed need to balance privilege with RTI access on MPs' declarations.
3. **Political Consensus Lacking**
 - MPs across parties benefit from discretionary immunity.
 - *Lok Sabha Ethics Committee 2025* again deferred the discussion on codifying privileges.
4. **Complexity of Scope**
 - Privileges range from speech to arrest immunity to obstruction of House functioning.
 - Different interpretations lead to status quo.
5. **Precedent of Judicial Caution**
 - Courts like in *Raja Ram Pal Case (2007)* upheld expulsion but refrained from codification mandate.

How Can the Issue Be Addressed

- **Codification of Core Privileges Only** – Speech, arrest immunity, non-liability for voting.
- **Independent Privileges Committee** – Like UK's Standards Committee.
- **Judicial Review Mechanism** – SC oversight in extreme misuse (e.g. bribery cases).
- **Public Disclosure Norms** – Ethics guidelines codified like RTI/Code of Conduct.

Relevant Cases / Committees:

- **Raja Ram Pal (2007):** Privileges not above judicial review.

- **Tej Kiran Jain Case (1970):** Full immunity for speech inside House.
- **NCRWC (2002):** Recommended codification.
- **UK's House of Commons Standards Committee** as a model.

Conclusion:

Codification of parliamentary privileges must uphold **legislative independence** while preventing **arbitrariness and shielding from accountability**, in line with **constitutional morality and judicial oversight**.

Q3. If the amendment bill to the Whistle-blowers Protection Act, 2011, tabled in Parliament is passed, there may be no one left to protect. Critically evaluate. (2015, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Critically examine whether the proposed amendments to the Act **weaken protections** for whistle-blowers and threaten accountability.

How to approach:

Intro – State original intent of the 2011 Act.

Body – Analyse amendment features and impact across 5–6 dimensions.

Conclusion – Balance between security and transparency is key.

Answer:**Introduction:**

The **Whistle-blowers Protection Act (2011)** aimed to shield individuals exposing corruption in public offices. However, the **2015 Amendment Bill** (still pending) proposes restrictions that could **render the Act ineffective**, thereby defeating its purpose.

Body: Critical Evaluation of the Amendments**1. Bar on Disclosure of Classified Documents**

- Amendment prohibits disclosures under Official Secrets Act, even if exposing corruption.
- *Example: 2024:* RTI activist in Assam denied protection for exposing PDS scam involving classified contracts.

2. Need to Prove Public Interest

- Whistle-blowers must justify intent before disclosure.
- *Risks:* Discourages spontaneous reporting and increases legal vulnerability.

3. Omission of Anonymous Complaints

- Disallows anonymous tips, even when corruption is proven.
- *Example: 2025:* CAG flagged misuse of funds based on anonymous letter, later found valid.

4. No Protection from Victimization

- Amendment weakens safeguards from harassment or transfer.
- 2024: PSU employee suspended for leaking toxic waste info; no protection available.

5. Absence of Independent Oversight Authority

- Unlike Lokpal Act, no dedicated body to shield whistle-blowers.
- *UN Convention Against Corruption* mandates state protection mechanisms.

Relevant Committees / Bodies:

- **Second ARC (4th Report):** Whistle-blower protection is integral to governance reform.
- **Law Commission (179th Report):** Recommended comprehensive safeguards.
- **UN Convention Against Corruption:** India is a signatory.
- **SC in Vineet Narain Case (1997):** Emphasised institutional autonomy for anti-corruption.

Conclusion:

The Amendment Bill undermines the **spirit of transparency** and could **deter potential whistle-blowers**.

Legal reforms must ensure **confidentiality, protection, and institutional backing** to uphold ethical governance.

• **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

• 2017

- **Discuss the role of the Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people. (10 M)**
- **The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint sessions of the two houses of Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof. (15 M)**

• 2018

- **Why do you think committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee. (10 M)**

• 2019

- **Individual Parliamentarian's role as the national lawmaker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss. (15 M)**

Q1. Discuss the role of the Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people. (2017, 10M)

What is being asked:

Discuss how the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** enforces **fiscal and executive accountability** of the government.

How to approach:

Intro – Establish PAC's constitutional and ethical importance.

Body – 5-6 functions with recent examples.

Conclusion – PAC is a non-partisan fiscal watchdog.

Answer:

Introduction:

The **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**, established under Rule 308 of Lok Sabha Rules and guided by **Article 151**, scrutinises the **CAG reports** and ensures that public expenditure conforms to parliamentary approval, thus acting as a key **instrument of legislative accountability**.

Body: Role of PAC in Government Accountability

1. Post-audit Scrutiny

- Examines **CAG reports** to verify public fund utilisation.
- *Example:* PAC (2024) sought explanation from DoT on under-reported telecom revenue findings in CAG audit.

2. Non-Partisan Oversight

- Headed by opposition MP, ensures neutrality.
- *Example:* 2025: Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury-led PAC questioned spending under the Aspirational Blocks Programme.

3. Detection of Irregularities

- Highlights leakage, misappropriation, non-compliance.
- *Example:* PAC report (2024) flagged delay in Smart Cities Mission implementation in 14 states.

4. Policy Feedback to Parliament

- Recommends systemic reforms and administrative fixes.
- *PAC Reports on Food Subsidy (2023-24)* led to reforms in FCI procurement norms.

5. Departmental Accountability

- Calls ministries and departments for oral evidence.

- *Example:* PAC summoned Ministry of Health on Ayushman Bharat performance gaps (2025).

6. Transparency in Governance

- PAC reports are tabled in Parliament, made public.
- *Enhances citizen confidence in audit-backed governance.*

Relevant Committees / Provisions:

- **Article 151:** CAG reports submitted to PAC
- **CAG Act, 1971:** Empowers post-audit examination
- **ARC II (14th Report):** Strengthen PAC's technical capacity
- **Estimates & Public Undertakings Committees** – PAC is most impactful in expenditure monitoring

Conclusion:

The PAC functions as a **non-partisan fiscal sentinel** ensuring transparency and efficiency in public expenditure. Its effectiveness reflects the **maturity of parliamentary democracy**.

Q2. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint sessions of the two houses of Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof. (2017, 15M)

What is being asked:

Enumerate when **joint sittings** are allowed under **Article 108**, and explain **when and why they are not applicable**, with reasons.

How to approach:

Intro: Article 108 context and rationale.

Body: Split into two clear parts — when joint sessions occur and when they are not permitted, with constitutional reasoning and examples.

Conclusion: Balanced comment on its utility in a bicameral federal democracy.

Answer:

Introduction:

The provision for **joint sittings** under **Article 108** of the Indian Constitution offers a mechanism to resolve **deadlocks in bicameral legislation**. It reflects a balance between **Lok Sabha's democratic majority** and **Rajya Sabha's federal character**, ensuring legislative functionality in a parliamentary system.

Body: Occasions permitting and restricting joint sittings of Parliament

I. Constitutionally Permitted Occasions for Joint Sitting (Article 108)

- 1. Rejection of Bill by Rajya Sabha**
 - When a Bill passed by the Lok Sabha is rejected by Rajya Sabha.
 - *Example:* Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1961 – first bill passed via joint sitting.
- 2. No Action by Rajya Sabha for Six Months**
 - If Rajya Sabha doesn't act within six months of Lok Sabha's passage.
 - *Example:* Prevention of Terrorism Bill (2002) – rejected by RS, passed in joint sitting.
- 3. Disagreement on Amendments**
 - If both Houses disagree on amendments.
 - *Example:* Banking Services Commission Repeal Bill (1978) triggered a joint sitting.
- 4. Convened by the President**
 - On advice of the Council of Ministers, when any of the above three conditions are met.
 - Speaker presides; RS Chairperson doesn't have a role.

II. Cases Where Joint Sitting Cannot Be Held

- 1. Money Bills (Article 110)**
 - Only Lok Sabha has authority; Rajya Sabha can only recommend.
 - *Example:* Finance Bill 2024 passed despite RS suggestions on capital market taxation.

2. Constitutional Amendment Bills (Article 368)

- Must be passed separately by both Houses with special majority.
- *Example:* 128th Constitutional Amendment (Women's Reservation Bill, 2023) was passed by both Houses separately.

3. Withdrawal or Lapse of Bill

- If the bill is withdrawn or Lok Sabha is dissolved before passage.
- *Example:* The Farm Laws (2020) were withdrawn in 2021, making joint sitting unnecessary.

4. Bills Pending in RS After LS Dissolution

- Bills introduced in Lok Sabha lapse after dissolution, barring certain exceptions.
- *2024:* Data Protection Bill lapsed and had to be reintroduced in new LS.

Conclusion:

Joint sittings serve as an **exceptional reconciliatory tool** to maintain **legislative efficiency** while respecting federalism. Its restricted use reflects India's careful balance between **popular representation and regional interests**.

Q3. Why do you think committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee. (2018, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain **why Parliamentary Committees are essential** for legislative functioning, and elaborate specifically on the **Estimates Committee's role**.

How to approach:

Intro: Define committees and their systemic role.

Body: First explain the general utility of committees, then deep-dive into the Estimates Committee.

Conclusion: Committees are democratic assets, not procedural formalities.

Answer:

Introduction:

Parliamentary Committees, described by M.N. Kaul as the "**miniature Parliament**," function as **deliberative extensions** of the legislature. They enable **detailed, bipartisan, and non-disruptive scrutiny**, which is otherwise constrained by time, party politics, and media optics in the main House.

Body: Usefulness of parliamentary committees and role of Estimates Committee

I. Why Committees are Essential for Parliamentary Work

1. Detailed Legislative Examination

- Enable clause-wise, in-depth evaluation of Bills.
- *Example:* The 2024 Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill was scrutinised by the Home Affairs Standing Committee for 2 months.

2. Fiscal Accountability

- Examine expenditures, budget demands, performance of ministries.
- *2025:* Defence Committee flagged underutilisation in BRO's capital works budget.

3. Policy Evaluation and Oversight

- Track implementation and recommend course correction.
- *2024:* Standing Committee on Health reported on gaps in PM-ABHIM implementation.

4. Consensus Building Across Parties

- Less polarised, more cooperative discussion environment.
- Enhances quality of legislative recommendations.

5. Continuity of Governance Review

- Committees function even when Parliament is not in session.

II. Role of the Estimates Committee

- **Constitution:** Formed in 1950; presently has **30 members from Lok Sabha only**.
- **Purpose:** Examines **budget estimates**, suggests **economies in expenditure**, and evaluates the **efficiency of government schemes**.

Key Functions:

1. **Reviews Spending Trends**
 - Assesses whether funds are being used for approved purposes.
 - *2024 Example:* Reviewed expenditure patterns under Jal Jeevan Mission and recommended course correction.
2. **Suggests Organizational Reforms**
 - Proposes improvements in functioning of ministries/departments.
 - *2023:* Pushed for single-window delivery systems in agriculture credit schemes.
3. **Performance Audit Overlaps**
 - Complements CAG audit by addressing systemic gaps in budget design.
 - *2025:* Called for alignment between Union Budget and SDG tracking.
4. **Sets Agenda for Financial Reforms**
 - Often prompts new thinking in budgeting.
 - *Example:* Past chairperson Murli Manohar Joshi's report on NPAs led to banking reforms push.

Relevant Enrichments:

- **Rules 308–310 of Lok Sabha** – Define Estimates Committee
- **2nd ARC (14th Report)** – Called for rationalising multiple centrally sponsored schemes based on Estimates Committee findings
- **Public Accounts & Estimates Committee Reports (2023–24)** – Flagged cost-overruns in BharatNet
- **NITI Aayog Inputs (2024)** – Used by Estimates Committee to monitor outcome budgets

Conclusion:

Parliamentary Committees, especially the **Estimates Committee**, form the **institutional spine of legislative oversight**. Strengthening them ensures not only **efficient resource allocation**, but also **evidence-based, bipartisan governance**.

Q4. Individual Parliamentarian's role as the national lawmaker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss. (2019, 15M)

What is being asked:

Assess the **decline in MPs' lawmaking roles** and how it affects the **quality of debate and policy outcomes**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define the expected role of MPs.

Body – 5–6 factors showing decline + consequences + examples.

Conclusion – Empower MPs via reforms.

Answer:

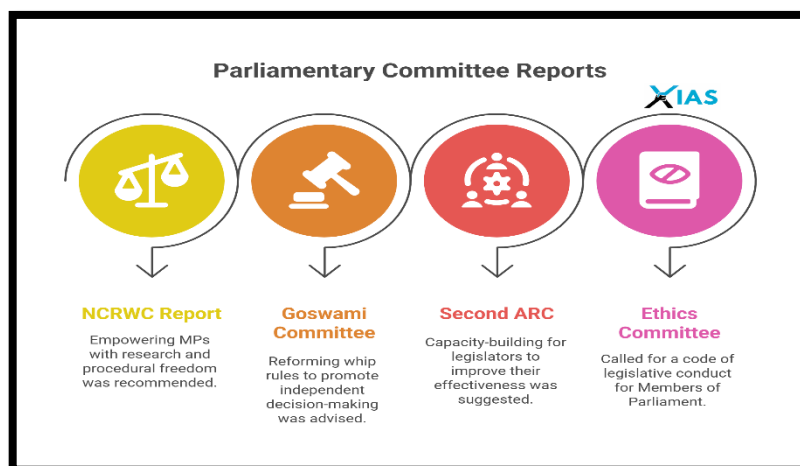
Introduction:

Members of Parliament are meant to **represent, legislate, and scrutinise**, yet their effective lawmaking role is increasingly limited. The rise of **party centralisation, executive dominance, and procedural bypasses** has diluted their independent voice in shaping national policy.

Body: Decline in Parliamentarians' Role –

1. **Whip-bound Voting Reduces Autonomy**
 - MPs must follow party line even on non-confidence motions.
 - *Example:* 2024: Private Member Bill on menstrual leave withdrawn after party whip threat.
2. **Decline in Private Member Bills**
 - Few are introduced, even fewer debated.

- *PRS Data 2024*: Only 7 Private Bills introduced; none passed.
3. **Ordinance and Money Bill Route**
 - Executive bypasses regular debate.
 - *Example*: Jammu & Kashmir Reservation Ordinance (2024) bypassed full parliamentary discussion.
 4. **Low Attendance and Poor Research Support**
 - MPs lack research staff and prep time.
 - *2025*: Only 54% avg MP attendance during post-budget debates.
 5. **Reduced Time for Legislative Business**
 - Majority of time spent on non-legislative issues.
 - *Example*: Winter Session 2024: Only 25% of planned bills tabled.
 6. **Rise of Executive-led Lawmaking**
 - Ministers pilot most legislation; MPs rarely initiate reform.
 - *Example*: Telecom Bill 2024 entirely drafted by DoT.



Relevant Reports / Committees:

- **NCRWC (2002)**: Empower MPs with research and procedural freedom.
- **Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990)**: Reform whip rules.
- **Second ARC (2007)**: Capacity-building for legislators.
- **Ethics Committee (2024)**: Called for MP code of legislative conduct.

Conclusion:

Strengthening the **institutional capacity and freedom** of individual parliamentarians is essential to restore **meaningful deliberation and democratic lawmaking** in Parliament.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2020

- **'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker'!** Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India? (10 M)
- **Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a 'useless stepney tyre' to a 'supporting organ' in the past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas where this transformation is visible.** (15 M)

• 2021

- **Do Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administrations on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples.** (15 M)
- **Explain the constitutional provisions under which the Legislative Councils are established. Review the working and current status of Legislative Councils with suitable illustrations.** (15 M)
- **To what extent, in your view, is the Parliament able to ensure accountability of the executive in India?** (10 M)

Q1. 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker'! Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India? (2020, 10M)

What is being asked:

Whether India should adopt a **UK-style convention** of permanently depoliticising the Speaker after election, and how this would affect **objectivity and parliamentary functioning**.

How to approach:

Intro – Role and trust deficit in Speaker's office.

Body – 5–6 dimensions: challenges to neutrality, UK model, pros-cons of reform, recent examples.

Conclusion – Institutional reform and codification as the balanced way forward.

Introduction:

The Speaker of Lok Sabha, empowered by **Articles 93–96**, is envisioned as an **impartial guardian of parliamentary democracy**. Yet in recent years, controversies surrounding decisions on **anti-defection (10th Schedule)** and **Money Bill certification (Art. 110)** have raised concerns about the Speaker's perceived partisanship, prompting calls to consider the **UK convention of political neutrality post-election**.

Body: Evaluating the Practice and Its Implications

1. Constitutional and Moral Authority of the Speaker

- Expected to act above party lines once elected.
- Holds key powers: anti-defection rulings, conduct of House, certification of Money Bills.
- *Recent Concern*: In the 2023 Maharashtra case, SC criticised delay by the Speaker in deciding disqualification pleas.

2. UK Practice: 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker'

- Speaker resigns from their political party upon election and runs as **independent** in future polls.
- Ensures sustained non-partisanship and garners **all-party respect**.
- *Example*: Sir Lindsay Hoyle (current Speaker) was re-elected unopposed as independent.

3. India's Divergence from Neutral Norms

- Speaker continues as a party member; ruling party influence often alleged.
- *Examples*:
 - Certification of Finance Bill as Money Bill (2017) questioned.
 - Disqualification rulings under Tenth Schedule delayed or inconsistent (Goa, Manipur, Maharashtra 2023–24).

4. Implications of Adopting the Practice in India

- **Positive Outcomes**:
 - Enhances Speaker's **credibility and impartiality**.
 - Strengthens House procedures, especially in tight majorities or coalition governments.
 - Improves public trust in Parliamentary rulings.
- **Challenges in Implementation**:
 - Electoral system not conducive for independents.
 - Lack of political consensus; risks post-retirement marginalisation.
 - In India's **multi-party, coalition-prone system**, maintaining neutrality is structurally harder.

5. Alternative Reforms and Solutions

- **Codification** of Speaker's neutrality obligations in the Rules of Procedure.
- Mandate **time-bound disqualification decisions** (as SC recommended in *Keisham Meghachandra case*, 2020).
- Establish **independent authority** for deciding on Money Bill certification.

- *2025 Proposal*: Ethics Committee of Lok Sabha recommended public rationale for Speaker's controversial decisions.

Relevant Committees / Provisions / Judgments:

- **Articles 93–96** – Speaker's role
- **10th Schedule** – Anti-defection decisions
- **Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu (1992)** – Speaker's decision subject to judicial review
- **NCRWC (2002)** – Urged institutional neutrality of Speaker
- **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance)** – Recommended reforms for impartiality
- **Keisham Meghachandra v. Speaker (2020)** – Time-limit for disqualification rulings

Conclusion:

Instead of transplanting the **UK model outright**, India should pursue **targeted institutional reforms** — including codification, judicial oversight, and internal checks — to ensure that the **Speaker's office regains its constitutional sanctity** as a neutral pillar of parliamentary democracy.

Q2. Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a 'useless stepney tyre' to a 'supporting organ' in the past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas where this transformation is visible. (2020, 15M)

What is being asked:

Critically assess how **Rajya Sabha's functional importance** has grown — with examples of areas where it acts as a **deliberative and federal institution**.

How to approach:

Intro – Constitutional role vs perception.

Body – Trace evolution with 5–6 functions and examples.

Conclusion – Strengthening cooperative federalism via an empowered Rajya Sabha.

Answer:

Introduction:

Though initially dismissed as a “**secondary chamber**”, the **Rajya Sabha** (Art. 80–89) has emerged as a **federal bulwark and deliberative forum**, especially in times of political dominance by one party in Lok Sabha.

Body: Dimensions of Rajya Sabha's Evolved Role

1. **Deliberative Function and Quality Debates**
 - RS often hosts better-quality, less partisan discussions.
 - *2024*: RS debate on Digital Personal Data Protection Bill was more nuanced than LS.
2. **Review of Legislative Overreach**
 - Slows or revises hasty legislations from LS.
 - *Example*: Citizenship Amendment Bill saw intense RS scrutiny in 2019–20.
3. **Federal Representation**
 - Voices of **smaller states** are amplified.
 - *Example*: North-Eastern MPs in RS led 2025 debate on MSPs for hill crops.
4. **No Confidence Shield**
 - RS cannot dissolve the government but acts as an oversight forum.
 - Maintains continuity during political flux.
5. **Empowerment via All-India Services and Concurrent Subjects (Art. 312)**
 - RS can authorise Parliament to legislate on State List.
 - *2023*: RS approved creation of an All-India Judicial Service framework.
6. **Checks on Money Bill Misuse**
 - Though limited, RS opposition in 2024 prompted government to reconsider Finance Bill classification norms.

Relevant Enrichments:

- **Article 80–89** – RS composition and powers
- **Rajya Sabha at 250 Report (2019)** – Emphasised cooperative federalism
- **NCRWC (2002)** – Called RS the ‘Council of States’ in spirit
- **2nd ARC** – Strengthen its oversight role on federal laws
- **PRS Data 2024** – RS sat for more hours per bill than LS in Budget Session

Conclusion:

Rajya Sabha’s transition from a “**stepney tyre**” to a **stabiliser** reaffirms its relevance in India’s **quasi-federal structure**. Reforms must enhance its **legislative and federal oversight** further.

Q3. Do Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administrations on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples. (2021, 15M)

What is being asked:

Evaluate how well **DRSCs function as accountability tools**, citing their **impact on executive conduct and policy improvement**.

How to approach:

Intro – DRSCs as key oversight arms.

Body – 5–6 dimensions showing function, output, limitations.

Conclusion – Institutional investment can improve their impact.

Answer:

Introduction:

Introduced in **1993**, **Department-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)** are critical instruments for **detailed scrutiny of ministries**, enhancing **executive accountability, budget analysis, and citizen-centric policy-making** in a parliamentary democracy.

Body: Effectiveness of standing committees in ensuring executive accountability

1. **Pre-Legislative Scrutiny**
 - Bills referred to DRSCs often emerge better.
 - **2024:** Parliamentary Committee on Communications improved Digital India Bill’s grievance redressal framework.
2. **Expenditure Oversight**
 - Examine Demands for Grants and budget utilisation.
 - **2025:** DRSC on Education criticised unspent funds in PM SHRI school scheme.
3. **Annual Reports and Performance Audits**
 - Help track schemes’ execution and red flags.
 - **2024:** Committee on Health flagged DBT delays in Ayushman Bharat payouts.
4. **Policy Recommendations and Reforms**
 - Push changes beyond budget and Bills.
 - **2023:** DRSC on Labour pushed for better social security architecture for gig workers.
5. **Bipartisan and Confidential Forum**
 - Encourages honest administrative replies.
 - Officials feel compelled to prepare thoroughly, knowing questions may arise.
6. **Challenges and Gaps**
 - Low attendance, limited expert assistance, only ~25% bills sent to committees.
 - **PRS Data (2024):** Only 11 of 44 bills referred to DRSCs.

Relevant Enrichments:

- **2nd ARC Report (Vol 1)** – Empower DRSCs with research staff
- **NCRWC (2002)** – Suggested public hearings and expert engagement

- **Standing Committee on Science (2025)** – Called for national AI ethics policy

Conclusion:

DRSCs remain **indispensable tools of legislative oversight**, but to make them truly effective, India must invest in their **capacity, transparency, and research independence**.

• **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

• **2022**

- **Discuss the role of the Vice-President of India as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. (10 M)**
- **Discuss the essential conditions for exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature. (15 M)**

• **2023**

- **Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices. (10 M)**

• **2024**

- **The growth of the cabinet system has practically resulted in the marginalisation of parliamentary supremacy.” Elucidate. (10 M)**

Q1. Discuss the role of the Vice-President of India as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. (2022, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain the **constitutional role**, functions, and challenges of the **Vice President as Rajya Sabha Chairman**.

How to approach:

Intro – Constitutional post and dual responsibility.

Body – 5–6 roles with examples and recent functioning.

Conclusion – VP is a federal stabiliser; needs institutional strengthening.

Introduction:

As per **Article 64**, the **Vice-President of India** is the **ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha**, a role that requires neutrality, procedural expertise, and dignified conduct. He ensures the **smooth functioning of the Upper House** and represents the constitutional idea of **federal balance**.

Body: Key Roles of the Vice President as RS Chairman

1. Presiding Over Sessions

- Regulates proceedings, ensures decorum.
- *Example:* Jagdeep Dhankhar (VP since 2022) invoked Rule 267 multiple times in 2023–24 to structure Opposition debates.

2. Maintaining Parliamentary Discipline

- Can suspend disruptive members (Rule 255).
- *Example:* Several MPs suspended in Winter 2023 for violating House decorum.

3. Interpreting and Enforcing Rules of Procedure

- Decisions on procedural motions, short duration discussions.
- Recently invoked to allow Short Duration Debate on Electoral Bonds (2024).

4. Referral of Bills to Committees

- Discretion to refer legislative proposals to DRSCs.
- *Criticism:* 2023 Bills (Digital India, Broadcasting) bypassed committees.

5. Tiebreaker in Voting

- In case of deadlock, casts deciding vote (rare).
- *Precedent:* G.S. Pathak cast vote in Companies Bill, 1965.

6. Custodian of Federal Discourse

- Balances Union and State narratives; ensures regional voices are heard.

- *Dhankhar 2024*: Promoted regional languages in Rajya Sabha debates.

Relevant Enrichments:

- **Articles 63–64, 89** – VP as Rajya Sabha Chair
- **Rules of Procedure of RS** – Rule 267, 255, 184
- **NCRWC (2002)** – Sought codification of Vice President's discretionary role
- **2nd ARC** – Recommended impartiality of Presiding Officers
- **2024**: RS session productivity: 92% vs 56% in LS (PRS)

Conclusion:

The Vice-President, as RS Chairman, embodies the **constitutional balance between Centre and States**. His non-partisan conduct is vital to **preserving the dignity and purpose** of India's Upper House.

Q2. Discuss the essential conditions for exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature. (2022, 15M)

What is being asked:

Two-part question: (1) When can Governors issue ordinances? (2) Is **re-promulgation** of ordinances without legislative approval constitutionally valid?

How to approach:

Intro – Governor's legislative role under Constitution.

Body – (I) Conditions for ordinance power (II) Legality of re-promulgation (III) Judicial position (IV) Examples.

Conclusion – Calls for codification and accountability.

Introduction:

Under **Article 213**, the Governor may promulgate ordinances when the **State Legislature is not in session**, subject to judicial and constitutional limits. However, the practice of **re-promulgation without tabling before the legislature** undermines legislative supremacy and has drawn repeated censure from the **Supreme Court**.

Body: Governor's legislative powers in ordinances

I. Conditions for Ordinance by Governor

1. Legislature Not in Session

- Only when both Houses (or unicameral house) are not in session.

2. Immediate Need for Action

- Must be urgent and necessary.
- *Example*: Kerala Governor (2024) passed ordinance on university VC appointments during assembly recess.

3. Aid and Advice of Council of Ministers

- Governor acts only on Cabinet advice, per Article 163.
- *Exception*: In case of constitutional breakdown or President's Rule.

4. Tabling Before Legislature

- Ordinance must be laid before House within 6 weeks of reassembly.

II. Illegality of Re-promulgation

1. Violation of Legislative Supremacy

- Re-promulgating without legislative scrutiny bypasses democracy.

2. Judicial View: D.C. Wadhwa Case (1987)

- SC held repeated re-promulgation as unconstitutional subversion of legislative function.

3. Krishna Kumar Singh v. State of Bihar (2017)

- Ordinance has no automatic legislative backing; must be laid and discussed.

4. Recent Case: Punjab (2023)

- Governor refused assent to multiple re-promulgated ordinances; SC questioned constitutional breach.

Relevant Provisions / Reports:

- **Article 213** – Governor's ordinance power
- **D.C. Wadhwa v. State of Bihar (1987)**
- **Krishna Kumar Singh (2017)** – Landmark on re-promulgation
- **Sarkaria Commission** – Urged restricting ordinance route
- **2024:** 3 re-promulgated ordinances challenged in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha

Conclusion:

Ordinances must remain an **exception, not a parallel legislative route**. Codifying norms for urgency and tabling can protect the **spirit of constitutional governance and legislative oversight**.

Q3. Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices. (2023, 10M)

What is being asked:

Assess how **Speakers of State Assemblies** ensure procedural order, neutrality, and democratic conduct.

How to approach:

Intro – Define role of Presiding Officers (Articles 178–187).

Body – 5–6 responsibilities with examples, challenges, and judicial views.

Conclusion – Neutrality must be ensured through institutional reform.

Introduction:

Presiding Officers of State Assemblies, primarily the **Speaker (Art. 178)**, are expected to function as **neutral custodians of the House**. Their ability to enforce order and fairness directly impacts the **quality of debate and legislative output in state politics**.

Body: Role and Responsibilities

- Maintaining Order and Decorum**
 - Can suspend members under rules (often misused).
 - *Example:* Tamil Nadu Speaker suspended 78 AIADMK MLAs during Budget Session 2024.
- Deciding on Disqualification Petitions**
 - Under 10th Schedule, Speaker decides defections.
 - *Concern:* SC (2023) warned Karnataka Speaker over delay in acting on MLA disqualifications.
- Certifying Bills and Procedures**
 - Speaker's certificate on Money Bills is final; has implications for state finance.
- Referral to Committees**
 - Can send contentious Bills to DRSCs or Select Committees.
 - *Example:* Kerala Speaker referred police reforms Bill (2023) to Select Committee.
- Promotion of Democratic Ethics**
 - Encourages public engagement, transparent discussions.
 - *2024:* Maharashtra Assembly launched 'Know Your MLA' initiative under Speaker's direction.
- Challenge of Political Pressures**
 - Speakers often face bias allegations due to party allegiance.
 - *SC View (2021):* Advocated independent tribunal for disqualification.

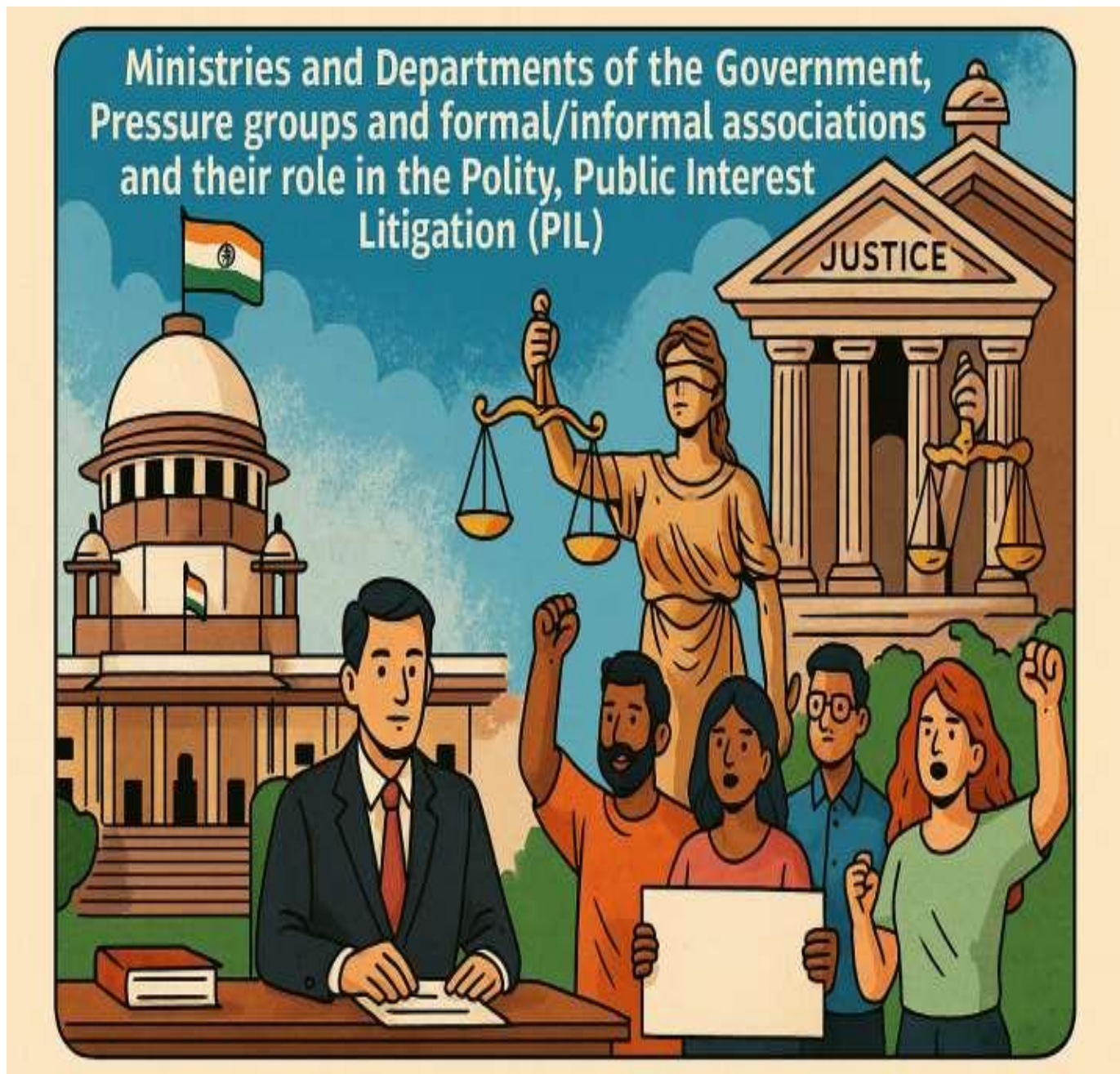
Relevant Provisions & Reports

- **Kihoto Hollohan (1992)** – Judicial review allowed
- **2nd ARC & NCRWC** – Recommended Speaker neutrality safeguards

Conclusion:

Presiding Officers must function with **constitutional sanctity**, rising above partisanship to ensure **procedural integrity, fair debate, and a culture of reasoned lawmaking** in State Assemblies.

TOPIC-5:Executive and the Judiciary; pressure groups and formal/informal associations



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013

- Pressure group politics is sometimes seen as the informal face of politics. With regards to the above, assess the structure and functioning of pressure groups in India. (10 M)

- 2014

- Instances of the President's delay in commuting death sentences have come under public debate as a denial of justice. Should there be a time specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyze. (12.5 M)
- The size of the cabinet should be as big as governmental work justifies and as big as the Prime Minister can manage as a team. How far is the efficacy of a government then inversely related to the size of the cabinet? Discuss. (12.5 M)

Q1. Pressure group politics is sometimes seen as the informal face of politics. With regards to the above, assess the structure and functioning of pressure groups in India. (2013, 10M)

What is being asked:

Assess how **pressure groups operate** in Indian democracy — their **types, influence, methods, and structural issues**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define pressure groups and their informal political nature.

Body – Types, operations, influence, successes, weaknesses, 2024–25 examples.

Conclusion – Pressure groups are vital if transparent and participatory.

Introduction:

Pressure groups represent **organised interests** that seek to **influence public policy** without contesting elections. In India's parliamentary democracy, they form the **informal but persistent interface** between civil society, economy, and the political class often impacting laws and budgets from outside Parliament.

Body: Role and functioning of pressure groups

1. Typology of Pressure Groups in India

- **Business:** FICCI, CII
- **Agrarian:** BKU, SKM
- **Caste-based:** Jat Mahasabha
- **Professional:** IMA, Bar Council
- **Tech & Startups (New, 2024):** IndiaAI Council lobbying against generative AI regulation

2. Methods of Influence

- **Lobbying, petitions, PILs, protests, media campaigns**
- *Example:* In 2024, **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad** successfully lobbied against CUET exam pattern change.

3. Functioning: Unstructured but Persistent

- Most groups lack internal democracy or transparency.
- Operate through elite linkages, media narratives, and bureaucratic liaisons.

4. Successes in Shaping Policy

- *2024:* Farmers' unions shaped state-level MSP legislation in Himachal and Odisha.
- *2025:* Gig Workers' unions forced ESIC to include platform workers in Bengaluru pilot scheme.

5. Risks of Elite Capture and Lack of Regulation

- Can subvert democratic process via closed-door influence.
- *Example:* 2023 probe into NGO lobbying in environmental clearance cases.

6. Need for Formal Lobby Regulation

- *2nd ARC (2007):* Urged transparent lobbying framework.

- India lacks a Lobbyist Registration Act like US/Canada.

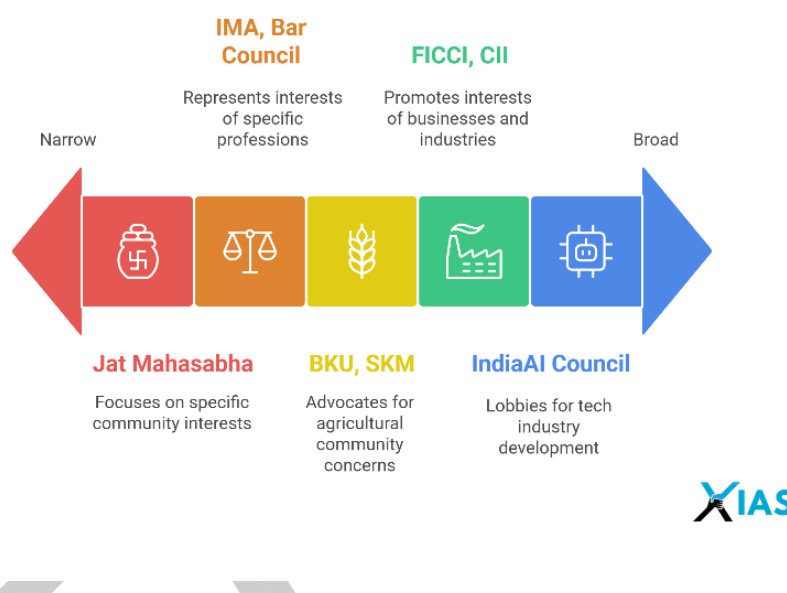
REFERENCE POINTERS:

- **Article 19(1)(c)** – Right to form associations
- **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance)** – Formal lobbying oversight needed
- **PRS 2025 Study** – Pressure group influence on budget allocations
- **SC (2023)** – Observed foreign influence in unregulated NGO lobbying
- **IndiaAI Council (2024)** – Emerging tech policy influencer

Conclusion:

When transparent and accountable, pressure groups enrich **policy pluralism**. But without regulation, they risk becoming **opaque interest brokers**, undermining democratic legitimacy.

Pressure groups vary from narrow to broad focus.



Q2. Instances of the President's delay in commuting death sentences have come under public debate as a denial of justice. Should there be a time specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyze. (2014, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Evaluate whether **delays in mercy petitions** by the President (Art. 72) amount to **denial of justice**, and whether a **time limit** should be set.

How to approach:

Intro – Role under Article 72, recent debates.

Body – Nature of power, legal implications of delay, 2024–25 cases, reforms.

Conclusion – Institutionalise mercy powers with clear timelines.

Introduction:

Article 72 of the Constitution empowers the President to grant pardon or commute death sentences. However, **long delays in such mercy decisions**, as seen in recent high-profile cases like the **2024 Pune gangrape mercy plea**, have raised questions about whether such delay constitutes '**cruel and inhuman treatment**' under **Article 21**.

Body: Evaluation of mercy petitions by President

1. Nature and Purpose of Clemency Power (Article 72)

- Meant as a **constitutional safeguard** against miscarriage of justice.

- President acts on **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** (Art. 74).
- Intended for rare, exceptional humanitarian relief — not as a second judicial appeal.

2. Implication of Delays on Right to Life and Dignity (Art. 21)

- Prolonged mental agony of death row inmates = **'psychological torture'**.
- *Example*: SC stayed execution of Amar Dhasmana (Uttarakhand, 2024) after President's 2.7-year delay.

3. Judicial View on Mercy Petition Delays

- *Shatrughan Chauhan v. UoI (2014)*: Delay can **justify commutation** to life.
- *Krishna Kumar Singh (2017)*: Re-promulgation of ordinances without legislature is unconstitutional — applied analogy to repeated delay without action.

4. Need for Time-bound Disposal: Administrative & Legal Gaps

- *2024 PIL*: Filed in SC seeking 3-month time cap on all mercy petitions.
- No statutory time frame = **executive inaction**.
- Delays often due to inter-ministerial routing (MHA to President Secretariat).

5. Recommendations for Reform

- **2nd ARC (2007)**: Urged fixed time limit for disposal of mercy petitions.
- **Law Commission (262nd Report)**: Proposed abolition of death penalty except for terrorism; if retained, mercy petitions must be decided **within 3 months**.
- **MHA Circular (2025)**: Now requires mandatory quarterly tracking of pending mercy petitions.

REFERENCE POINTERS

- **Article 72** – President's clemency power
- **Shatrughan Chauhan v. UoI (2014)** – Delay = ground for commutation
- **Law Commission 262nd Report** – Advocated time-bound disposal
- **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance)** – Fixed timelines for presidential decisions
- **MHA Mercy Petition Tracker 2025** – Introduced in April to speed up process

Conclusion:

To uphold the **constitutional values of justice, dignity, and due process**, the clemency process must be **time-bound, transparent, and humanely administered** — not left to executive delay or ambiguity.

Q3. The size of the cabinet should be as big as governmental work justifies and as big as the Prime Minister can manage as a team. How far is the efficacy of a government then inversely related to the size of the cabinet? Discuss. (2014, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Examine whether a **larger cabinet size** reduces government effectiveness, and what should guide **optimal cabinet formation**.

How to approach:

Intro – Cabinet size limitation under 91st Amendment.

Body – 5–6 governance-related angles, positives/negatives, 2024–25 examples.

Conclusion – Balance political needs with functional governance logic.

Introduction:

The **91st Constitutional Amendment (2003)** restricts cabinet size to **15% of the legislature**, promoting efficient governance. Yet, as seen in recent cabinets like **Rajasthan (2023)** or **Bihar (2024)**, political expediency often dictates appointments, potentially compromising **collective responsibility and administrative coherence**.

Body: Relationship between cabinet size and government efficiency

1. Smaller Cabinets Enhance Decision-Making Efficiency

- Fewer ministers = quicker, coherent decisions.

- *Example:* Sikkim's 2024 12-member cabinet showed fastest approval-to-implementation ratio in tourism and healthcare sectors.

2. Larger Cabinets Can Weaken Coordination

- Multiple overlapping portfolios → confusion, bureaucratic delays.
- *Example:* Bihar's 2024 cabinet saw **8 ministers without clear portfolios** for 3 months, hampering rural development fund release.

3. Political and Coalition Pressures for Expansion

- Cabinets often expanded to satisfy allies or caste groups.
- *Example:* Karnataka (2023) added 13 ministers due to caste-community appeasement pressure.

4. Administrative Argument for Functional Division

- More ministries can specialise in targeted domains.
- *Example:* Union Government created Ministry for **Co-operatives (2021)** and **Skill Development** to streamline schemes.

5. Erosion of Collective Responsibility in Jumbo Cabinets

- Individual accountability diluted; PM's authority weakened.
- 2025 PRS study: Attendance and decision participation lowest in ministries added in 2023 reshuffle.

6. Guidelines for Optimal Size: Performance over Patronage

- Use **Cabinet Performance Dashboards** (2025 pilot in Gujarat) to guide appointments.
- Evaluate ministries based on output indicators, not quota politics.

REFERENCE POINTERS:

- **91st Amendment (2003)** – Cabinet size capped at 15%
- **Sarkaria Commission** – Warned against symbolic ministries
- **2nd ARC (Vol. 10)** – Called for functional rationalisation of ministries
- **NITI Aayog Governance Index (2025)** – Tracks ministry-level output
- **PRS 2025 Report** – Cabinet efficiency in small vs large states

Conclusion:

Governance is best served by a **lean, cohesive cabinet** guided by function, not faction. Effective government must optimise size to maximise **coordination, efficiency, and accountability**.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2015

- **Khap panchayats have been in the news for functioning as extra-constitutional authorities, often delivering pronouncements amounting to human rights violations. Discuss critically the actions taken by the legislative, executive, and judiciary to set things right in this regard. (12.5 M)**
- **What are the major changes brought in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1966, through the recent ordinance promulgated by the President? How far will it improve India's dispute resolution mechanism? Discuss. (12.5 M)**

• 2016

- **"The Indian party system is passing through a phase of transition which looks to be full of contradictions and paradoxes." Discuss. (12.5 M)**

Q1. Khap panchayats have been in the news for functioning as extra-constitutional authorities, often delivering pronouncements amounting to human rights violations. Discuss critically the actions taken by the legislative, executive, and judiciary to set things right in this regard. (2015, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Critically analyse how **all three organs** of the state have responded to **extra-constitutional actions by Khap panchayats**, especially regarding **human rights and constitutional legality**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define Khap panchayats, link with Art. 21, 14, recent concerns.

Body – Judiciary, Executive, Legislature response (multi-dimensional).

Conclusion – Need for statutory and community-based solutions.

Introduction:

Khap panchayats, dominant in northern Indian states like Haryana and western UP, function as **informal caste-based councils**. While originally social dispute resolution forums, they often indulge in **coercive rulings** violating **Article 21 (Right to Life and Dignity)** and **Article 14 (Equality before Law)** — especially in cases of **inter-caste/inter-gotra marriages**.

Body: Judiciary, executive, legislature responses on extra-constitutional actions**1. Judicial Measures**

- *Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018)*: SC directed states to curb honour killings and declared any Khap interference in adult marriages as **illegal and unconstitutional**.
- *2024*: Delhi HC upheld police action in curbing Khap threat in Najafgarh interfaith marriage case.

2. Legislative Gaps and Proposals

- No specific central legislation against Khap rulings or honour crimes.
- **Prohibition of Unlawful Assembly Bill (Private Member's, 2022)** was introduced but lapsed.
- Law Commission 242nd Report (2012) proposed a **standalone law** to penalise honour-based violence — yet to be implemented.

3. Executive Response and State-Level Initiatives

- Haryana's **Special Cells in Police (2024)** to protect couples facing Khap threats.
- *Example*: Rajasthan launched "**Safe Marriage Helpline**" (2023) to shield inter-caste couples.

4. Role of NHRC and Women's Commissions

- NHRC has issued advisories since 2020 and took suo moto cognisance in 2024 Tamil Nadu Khap-style lynching of Dalit groom.
- NCW (2025) recommended integrating local police with family court counselling in such cases.

5. Civil Society and Social Reform Approach

- NGOs like **Love Commandos** and **Dhanak of Humanity** working with judiciary and police to secure young couples.
- *Example*: 2024: Maharashtra civil society-led legal literacy drive in Marathwada reduced Khap threats by 35% (Govt Data).

6. Need for Codified Accountability

- While SC guidelines exist, **Khap panchayats remain unregulated entities** — often protected by political and community support.

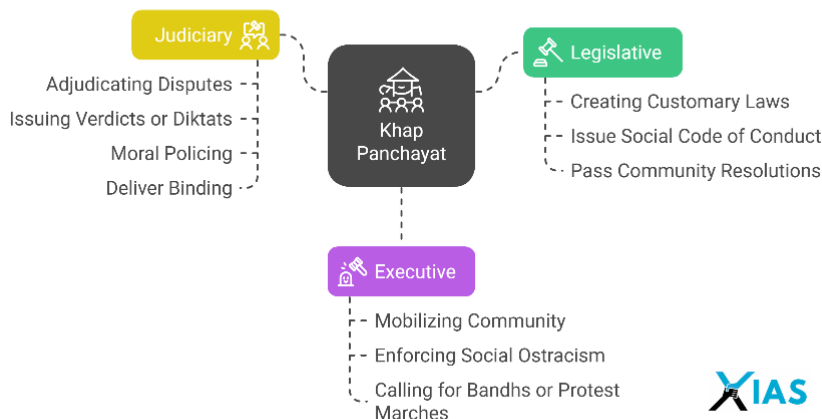
COMMITTEE / JUDGMENT POINTERS:

- *Shakti Vahini v. UoI (2018)* – Landmark SC ruling against Khaps
- *Arumugam Servai Case (2011)* – SC termed Khap actions as "kangaroo courts"
- **Law Commission 242nd Report (2012)** – Proposed law on honour crimes
- **NHRC Advisory (2024)** – Called Khap diktats "mob governance"
- **NCW Policy Paper (2025)** – Recommended pre-emptive community policing

Conclusion:

To uphold constitutional values, India must enact a **clear legal framework** against extra-constitutional authorities like Khaps while promoting **grassroots legal awareness and community dialogue**.

Functions of Khap Panchayat



Q2. What are the major changes brought in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, through the recent ordinance promulgated by the President? How far will it improve India's dispute resolution mechanism? Discuss. (2015, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

List the **changes made through the ordinance**, and evaluate their impact on **India's arbitration ecosystem**.

How to approach:

Intro – India's arbitration regime context, global ranking.

Body – Ordinance provisions + benefits/challenges + 2024 status.

Conclusion – India moving toward global arbitration hub, but reform must continue.

Introduction:

India's dispute resolution framework has long been marred by **judicial delays and high pendency**. To align with global norms, the **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2015** introduced sweeping reforms to **speed up, professionalise, and de-legalise** arbitration, reinforcing India's image as an arbitration-friendly jurisdiction.

Body: Ordinance led reform in arbitration and their impact

1. Major Changes Introduced via the 2015 Ordinance

- **Time-bound Arbitration:** Mandated completion within **12 months**, extendable by 6 months with consent.
- **Fee Regulation:** Model fee structure introduced.
- **Fast-track Procedure:** Allowed single arbitrator and document-based resolution.
- **Interim Measures:** Section 9 amended to allow interim reliefs post-arbitration tribunal formation.
- **Reduction in Judicial Intervention:** SC/HC to appoint arbitrators only when necessary.

2. Improving Ease of Doing Business

- India jumped 31 places in **Enforcing Contracts** (World Bank 2020).
- **2024:** India hosted **South Asia Arbitration Forum**, pushing for regional centre in Mumbai.

3. Enhancing Institutional Arbitration

- Promoted institutions over ad hoc processes.
- *Example:* **India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC)** operationalised in 2024 with 76 cases registered.

4. Challenges Persist

- Lack of trained arbitrators, conflicting HC rulings.
- Poor capacity in lower courts to handle interim relief appeals.

5. Subsequent Reforms Post-Ordinance

- 2019 Amendment: Introduced Arbitration Council of India (ACI).
- 2021 Ordinance: Removed automatic stay on awards.
- 2024: NITI Aayog working on **Model State Arbitration Rules**.

REFORM ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Arbitration Ordinance 2015** – Key procedural reforms
- **Arbitration Council of India (2019)** – Quality grading of institutions
- **India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC, 2024)** – Institutionalised hearings
- **NITI Aayog 2024 White Paper** – Recommended Tier-2 city arbitration hubs
- **UNCITRAL Model Law Compliance** – India aligned post 2019

Conclusion:

India's arbitration regime has undergone **substantive procedural modernisation**, but further improvement in **training, digital infrastructure, and institutional support** is needed to fully realise its **commercial dispute resolution potential**.

Q3. "The Indian party system is passing through a phase of transition which looks to be full of contradictions and paradoxes." Discuss. (2016, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Critically analyse the **changing nature of India's party system** — recent transitions and underlying contradictions.

How to approach:

Intro – Evolution of party system in India.

Body – 5–6 paradoxes with 2024 examples.

Conclusion – Indian party system is evolving, not deteriorating.

Introduction:

From **Congress dominance (1952–67)** to the era of **coalition politics (1989–2014)**, India's party system has continually transformed. Since 2014, the return of **single-party dominance at Centre**, amid **regional assertion and issue-based alignments**, reflects a **complex political paradox** rather than a settled model.

Body: Paradoxes and Contradictions in India's Party System

1. Central Dominance vs Regional Assertion

- BJP's dominance at Centre contrasts with strong regional parties in states.
- *2024 Lok Sabha Results*: BJP won 290 seats nationally, but faced defeat in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab.

2. Ideological Homogenisation vs Identity-Based Politics

- Rise of nationalist rhetoric vs persistence of caste and religious mobilisations.
- *Example*: Bihar's 2024 elections saw BJP push for "development + Hindu unity," while RJD retained OBC-Muslim base.

3. Nationalisation of Politics vs Federal Friction

- Parties focus on national messaging (e.g., One Nation One Election), yet federal trust deficit growing.
- *2024*: Telangana and West Bengal opposed Central bills on forest and digital health ID rollout.

4. Electoral Reforms vs Electoral Populism

- Simultaneous talk of clean politics alongside rising freebies and caste-based sops.
- *Example*: Madhya Pradesh's 2024 poll announcement included caste census + free LPG + cash transfer.

5. Weak Internal Democracy in Strong Electoral Machines

- Most parties lack inner-party democracy, including dominant national parties.
- *Example*: Congress leadership chosen via resolution, not election; BJP reshuffle done top-down.

6. Emergence of Issue-Based Alliances, Not Ideological Blocs

- 2024: INDIA bloc included Congress, Left, DMK, AAP — ideologically divergent, but united on electoral reform and federalism.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Election Commission 2024 report** – Flags poor inner-party democracy
- **SYC Report (2024)** – Highlights rise of political dynasties in 15 states
- **Dinesh Goswami Committee** – Called for internal democracy in parties
- **NCRWC (2002)** – Urged party system reform for stability
- **Law Commission (255th Report)** – Advocated regulation of party finances

Conclusion:

India's party system reflects **fluidity, diversity, and contradiction**, but these traits are inherent to a **pluralist democracy**. Future reforms must encourage **transparency, ideological clarity, and coalition accountability**.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2017

- **Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on the 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to the appointment of judges of the higher judiciary in India. (10 M)**
- **How do pressure groups influence the Indian political process? Do you agree with the view that informal pressure groups have emerged as more powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years? (10 M)**
- **'Simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering, but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people.' Discuss. (10 M)**

• 2018

- **Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and the elected government of Delhi? Examine. (15 M)**
- **How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India. (15 M)**

Q1. Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on the 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to the appointment of judges of the higher judiciary in India. (2017, 10M)

What is being asked:

Evaluate the **SC's reasoning in striking down NJAC** and how it affects the **judicial appointments process**.

How to approach:

Intro – NJAC background, why enacted.

Body – Judgment rationale, critiques, implications, 2024–25 updates.

Conclusion – Balance independence and accountability in judicial appointments.

Introduction:

The **99th Constitutional Amendment** and **NJAC Act, 2014** were passed to replace the opaque collegium system with a more broad-based process. However, in *Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record v. Union of India (2015)*, the SC struck it down, holding it **violated the basic structure**, especially **judicial independence under Article 50**.

Body: Judicial primacy, separation of powers, and appointment process debate

1. Basis of the Judgment – Basic Structure Doctrine

- SC held judicial primacy is essential to preserve independence of judiciary.
- Inclusion of Law Minister and eminent persons gave potential for **executive interference**.

2. Criticism of the Judgment

- Seen as **judicial overreach** and **status quoist**.
- Many argued NJAC would have ensured **transparency, diversity, and checks**.

3. Collegium System's Continued Weaknesses

- Still faces charges of **opaqueness, nepotism, lack of representation**.
- *Example: 2024, SC Collegium rejected two HC recommendations without reason, drawing criticism from bar councils.*

4. Lack of Parliamentary Override

- Parliament has not passed a revised NJAC Bill.
- Law Commission and 2nd ARC recommended a balanced model, but political consensus lacking.

5. Recent Developments (2024–25)

- *2024: SC issued suo motu directions to Centre for clearing 55 Collegium recommendations pending for over 6 months.*
- *Attorney General 2025 remark: "There is need for judicial-executive consultative panel", hinting at future reforms.*

6. Debate: Judicial Independence vs Democratic Accountability

- Should judges be the sole selectors of judges?
- India lacks a **Judicial Appointments Commission** as in the UK or **Senate hearings** like the US.

COMMITTEE / JUDGMENT:

- *SC AoR Association v. Union of India (2015)* – NJAC struck down
- **Articles 124, 217, 50** – Appointment & independence
- **Law Commission 214th Report, 2nd ARC** – Advocated transparent system
- **Justice Lokur (2024)** – Advocated inclusion of Bar Council in appointments
- **Attorney General (2025)** – Called for structured consultative body

Conclusion:

The rejection of NJAC preserved **judicial independence**, but reform is needed to ensure **transparency, accountability, and inclusivity** in appointments without compromising autonomy.

Q2. How do pressure groups influence the Indian political process? Do you agree with the view that informal pressure groups have emerged as more powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years? (2017, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain the role of **pressure groups** and critically evaluate the **rise of informal groups over formal ones** in Indian politics.

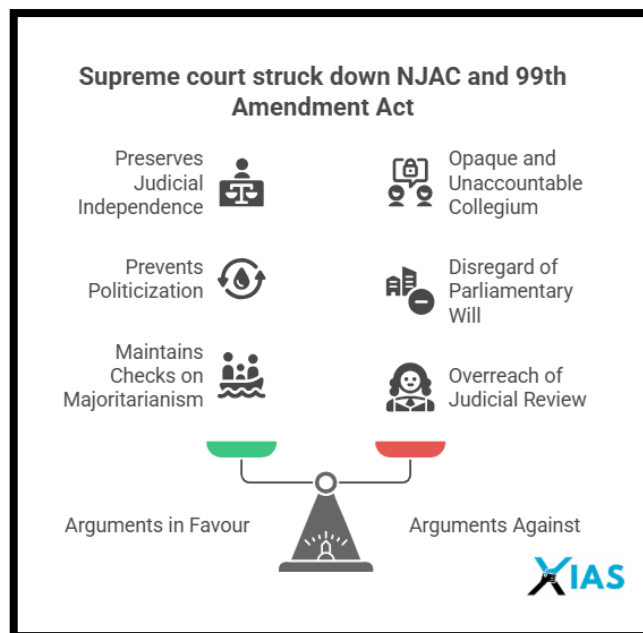
How to approach:

Intro – Define pressure groups, their democratic role.

Body – Formal vs informal, modes of influence, examples from 2024–25.

Conclusion – Balance of influence needed for democratic legitimacy.

Introduction:



Pressure groups are non-elected bodies that influence public policy through lobbying, public mobilisation, or legal interventions. While **formal groups** (e.g. FICCI, CII) are institutionally recognised, **informal groups** (e.g. farmer unions, religious/caste groups, social media collectives) have **gained disproportionate influence** in recent years.

Body: Influence of pressure groups and rise of informal networks

1. Formal Pressure Groups: Institutional Channels

- Registered bodies like **FICCI, NASSCOM, Bar Councils** use lobbying and consultations.
- Example:* In 2024, ASSOCHAM influenced DPIIT on semiconductor subsidy policies.

2. Informal Pressure Groups: Street and Social Mobilisation

- Caste-based, community, youth-led groups act beyond formal channels.
- Example:* **Maratha Kranti Morcha (2024)** led to Maharashtra revisiting quota policy.

3. Role of Social Media and Digital Influencers

- Online collectives now shape narratives and pressure governments.
- Example:* #SaveCUET campaign on X (2025) led to policy reversal in UGC exam structure.

4. Effectiveness in Policy Impact

- Informal groups often trigger **faster, emotionally charged responses**.
- Formal groups focus on **technical expertise and long-term planning**.

5. Concerns with Informal Groups

- Lack of regulation, accountability.
- Can resort to **coercion, misinformation, or majoritarian tactics**.
- Example:* 2023 Haryana school syllabus withdrawal under religious group pressure.

6. Need for Regulation and Interface Mechanisms

- India lacks **Lobbying Regulation Act** (unlike US).
- 2nd ARC recommended disclosures and parliamentary committees for pressure group engagement.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- Article 19(1)(c)** – Right to association
- 2nd ARC (2007)** – Suggested legal recognition of lobbying
- Law Commission (2024)* – Proposed mandatory registration of interest groups
- FICCI-PRS Dialogue (2025)* – Called for structured civil society consultation
- #SaveCUET 2025 campaign* – Informal influence over exam policy

Conclusion:

While **informal groups now wield stronger emotional leverage**, both formal and informal pressures must be **institutionally channelled** for responsible and democratic policy formulation.

Q3. 'Simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering, but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people.'

Discuss. (2017, 10M)

What is being asked:

Critically weigh **benefits vs concerns** of simultaneous elections in the context of **accountability and cost**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define simultaneous elections, constitutional background.

Body – Pros and cons, legal concerns, current status (2024–25).

Conclusion – Recommend phased, cautious transition.

Introduction:

The idea of **One Nation, One Election** proposes simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, as practiced until 1967. Though it promises **efficiency and cost savings**, critics argue it may **reduce political accountability** and harm **India's federal character**.

Body: Simultaneous elections pros and cons**1. Advantages of Simultaneous Elections**

- Reduces frequency of MCC, ensures uninterrupted governance.
- *Example: 2024 EC data showed ₹11,000 crore saved if 9 state polls had been synchronised.*
- Boosts voter turnout via single-cycle mobilisation.

2. Concerns over Accountability

- Breaks link between state-specific performance and elections.
- Encourages **nationalisation of issues** in local polls.

3. Federalism and Regional Autonomy at Risk

- States may lose **distinct electoral voice**.
- *Example: Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and West Bengal opposed 2024 proposal citing “erasure of regional discourse”.*

4. Legal and Constitutional Challenges

- Requires amendment of **Articles 83, 172, 356**, etc.
- President's power to dissolve Assemblies could be politically misused to synchronise cycles.

5. Feasibility: Administrative and Logistical

- Need massive polling infrastructure, security personnel, and updated electoral rolls.
- *EC 2024: 30 lakh EVMs needed if implemented in 2029.*

6. Recent Developments

- **High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections (2023)** under Ram Nath Kovind submitted report in 2024 recommending **phased roll-out** starting 2029.
- Opposition rejected, citing "**de-democratisation of dissent.**"

REFERENCE:

- **Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, 356** – Tenure and dissolution
- **Law Commission (170th Report)** – Supported simultaneous polls
- **High-Level Committee Report (2024)** – Phased model, presidential ratification
- **ECI Submission (2024)** – Logistical readiness analysis
- *State CM Roundtable (2024)* – 7 CMs opposed idea; 5 supported

Conclusion:

Simultaneous elections offer **administrative value**, but may compromise **accountability, federalism, and political diversity**. A **calibrated, consensus-based phase-in** is the prudent path forward.

{ADOPTION OF ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION WILL ALIGN WITH THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CONSTITUTIONALISM. }

Q4. Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and the elected government of Delhi? Examine. (2018, 15M)



What is being asked:

Examine whether the **2018 SC verdict on Delhi governance** has resolved the conflict between the **Lieutenant Governor and Delhi government**, or if friction still persists.

How to approach:

Intro – Context of the SC judgment and constitutional backdrop.

Body – Key observations, implementation challenges, recent 2024–25 status.

Conclusion – Balance between democratic accountability and administrative control needed.

Introduction:

The Supreme Court's **Constitution Bench judgment in *GNCTD v. Union of India (2018)*** clarified the powers of Delhi's elected government vis-à-vis the Lieutenant Governor, under **Article 239AA**. While it upheld the **primacy of elected representatives**, the court stopped short of granting Delhi full statehood, leaving space for ongoing conflicts.

Body: Ambiguities and tensions in Delhi's administrative federalism**1. Key Observations of the 2018 SC Verdict**

- Delhi's Council of Ministers has **executive powers** over all subjects except **public order, police, and land**.
- LG must act on the **aid and advice** of the Council in other matters.
- Rejected LG's "concurrence" as necessary for decisions.

2. Democratic Accountability Emphasised

- SC: "The LG is not the Governor; he is bound by the aid and advice of elected government."
- *2024 example*: Delhi's Health Ministry challenged MHA's decision to overrule its urban health centre scheme — relying on SC precedent.

3. Post-Judgment Complications & Ordinance Route

- Despite ruling, **Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021** reasserted LG's supremacy.
- *Example: 2023 Ordinance* created a **National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA)** giving LG final authority over transfers.

4. Split Verdict in 2023 and Continued Legal Ambiguity

- In 2023, SC referred some matters to a **larger bench** on control over administrative services.
- *2024 Update*: SC ruled that Delhi government must have "limited but real control" over services, prompting fresh litigation.

5. Federal Implications & Democratic Concerns

- Undermines cooperative federalism.
- Reduces **accountability of the elected executive**, affects governance delivery.

6. Need for Political & Constitutional Resolution

- Options: Special status law, SC-monitored guidelines, or full statehood (recommended by **Balakrishnan Committee, 2002** but politically stalled).

JUDGMENT / COMMITTEE:

- *GNCTD v. UoI (2018)* – Aid and advice doctrine upheld
- **Article 239AA** – Special provisions for Delhi
- **2021 Amendment Act** – Reasserted LG primacy
- **2024 SC Order** – Reiterated limited control of Delhi over services
- **Balakrishnan Committee (2002)** – Recommended full statehood to Delhi

Conclusion:

The 2018 judgment set important constitutional benchmarks, but **piecemeal legislation and executive assertion** have kept the power tussle alive. A **clear constitutional demarcation or political consensus** is essential to resolve this governance anomaly.

Q5. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India. (2018, 15M)

What is being asked:

Discuss if **tribunals limit access to regular courts**, and evaluate their **constitutional status and functioning**.

How to approach:

Intro – Tribunalisation in India and Article 323A/323B.

Body – Role, judicial scrutiny, issues, reforms, 2024–25 developments.

Conclusion – Tribunals must supplement, not supplant, judiciary.

Introduction:

Tribunals were introduced in India to offer **speedy, expert adjudication**, especially in administrative and tax matters. Articles **323A and 323B** provide for their establishment. However, excessive **tribunalisation and ousting of High Court jurisdiction** has drawn criticism and frequent **Supreme Court scrutiny**, especially in light of **judicial independence (Art. 50)**.

Body: Jurisdictional conflicts and constitutional position of tribunals

1. Tribunals and Judicial Bypass

- Several laws bar civil courts from hearing matters (e.g., NCLT, APTEL, DRT).
- Critics argue this denies access to **wider writ jurisdiction of HCs (Art. 226)**.

2. Judicial Interventions & Safeguards

- *L. Chandra Kumar v. UoI (1997)*: Tribunal orders are subject to HC/Supreme Court judicial review.
- *Madras Bar Association cases (2020–2021)*: Struck down provisions on tenure and appointment in Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021.

3. Constitutional Competency and Structure Issues

- Many tribunals under executive control – violates **separation of powers**.
- *Example: 2024 SC struck down Tribunal Members' selection rules in Armed Forces Tribunal as violating independence norms.*

4. Poor Performance and Pendency

- *NITI Aayog's 2025 report*: Many tribunals have higher pendency than regular courts (e.g., Income Tax Appellate Tribunal backlog increased by 17%).
- Vacancies and funding constraints affect functionality.

5. Lack of Uniform Procedure

- No common appellate structure or recruitment norms.
- Parties face confusion on jurisdiction, procedural delays.

6. Reform Proposals and Way Forward

- *Law Commission 272nd Report (2017)*: Unified tribunal service, fixed tenures, and HC judges as heads.
- *2024 Budget*: Proposed merger of 7 tribunals into existing judicial bodies.

COMMITTEE / CASE LAW:

- *L. Chandra Kumar v. UoI (1997)* – Tribunal orders subject to HC review
- *Madras Bar Association (2021)* – Struck down executive-heavy provisions
- **Article 323A / 323B** – Tribunal creation
- **Law Commission 272nd Report** – Tribunal reform
- **NITI Aayog Tribunal Audit (2025)** – Critique on pendency and vacancies

Conclusion:

Tribunals were meant to **lighten judicial burden**, but in their current form they often suffer from **executive dominance and inefficiency**. Reforms must ensure **constitutional independence, uniformity, and access to justice**.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2019**

- What are the methods used by the Farmers' organizations to influence policymakers in India, and how effective are these methods? (10 M)
- "The Attorney-General is the chief legal adviser and lawyer of the Government of India." Discuss. (15 M)

- **2021**

- "Pressure Groups play a vital role in influencing public policy making in India." Explain how business associations contribute to public policies. (10 M)
- Discuss the desirability of greater representation of women in the higher judiciary to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusiveness. (10 M)

- **2022**

- "The most significant achievement of modern law in India is the constitutionalization of environmental problems by the Supreme Court." Discuss this statement with the help of relevant case laws. (10 M)

- **2024**

- Explain the reasons for the growth of public interest litigation in India. As a result of it, has the Indian Supreme Court emerged as the world's most powerful judiciary? (15 M)

Q1. What are the methods used by the Farmers' organizations to influence policymakers in India, and how effective are these methods? (2019, 10M)

What is being asked:

Identify and assess the **methods used by farmers' groups** to influence policy, and evaluate their **effectiveness**.

How to approach:

Intro – Rise of farmers' mobilization, significance post-1990s.

Body – Methods (6 types), effectiveness with 2024–25 examples.

Conclusion – Farmers remain key actors, but effectiveness hinges on unity and policy responsiveness.

Introduction:

India has over **140 million cultivators**, making farmer mobilizations a potent force in shaping agrarian policy. From the **Bharat Bandh (1980s)** to the **Farm Laws Protest (2020–21)**, farmers have evolved diverse methods to influence government decisions, with varying success and legitimacy.

Body: Strategies and impact of farmers' pressure politics in India

1. Mass Mobilization & Protest Movements

- Protests remain central: e.g., **Samyukt Kisan Morcha-led protest (2020–21)**.
- **2024: SKM-2 revived protests in Punjab** demanding MSP law and input subsidies.

2. Negotiations & Memoranda

- Delegations meet ministers, submit detailed charters.
- *Example:* **Shetkari Sanghatana** submitted price assurance policy to NITI Aayog in Feb 2024.

3. Judicial Petitions and PILs

- Legal channels used to challenge policies (e.g., land acquisition).
- **2023:** Tamil Nadu farmers challenged dam water diversion via PIL in Madras HC.

4. Use of Social Media and Digital Campaigns

- Mobilisation through WhatsApp, X, and YouTube channels.
- **2025:** #MSPForAll trended with 2.1 million posts influencing Parliament debates.

5. Political Entry and Electoral Influence

- Support or oppose parties; in some cases, contest elections.

- *2024 Lok Sabha:* Rakesh Tikait floated a farmers' platform in UP and Haryana.

6. Alliances with Civil Society & Pressure Groups

- Collaborate with environmentalists, students, labour unions.
- *Example:* Joint protests on crop insurance delay in Odisha (2025) led to state government reversal.

Effectiveness – Mixed Outcomes:

- High success in **stopping reforms (2020 farm laws repeal)**.
- Limited gains in institutional reforms like **MSP legalisation or insurance redesign**.
- Fragmentation and politicisation often reduce credibility.

Conclusion:

Farmer organisations have emerged as **strong, issue-based pressure groups**, but their **effectiveness now depends on unity, informed advocacy, and institutional engagement** beyond street protests.



Q2. "The Attorney-General is the chief legal adviser and lawyer of the Government of India." Discuss. (2019, 15M)

What is being asked:

Describe the **constitutional role, powers, limitations** and evolving position of the **Attorney General (AG)** in India.

How to approach:

Intro – Constitutional basis and significance of the AG.

Body – Roles, powers, limitations, comparisons, reforms, 2024 examples.

Conclusion – Need to balance neutrality with executive loyalty.

Introduction:

Under **Article 76**, the Attorney-General of India is the **chief legal adviser to the Government of India** and its primary advocate before the **Supreme Court**. While the office carries great constitutional responsibility, it is often caught between **professional objectivity and political loyalty**.

Body: Role, powers, and limitations of the Attorney-General of India

1. Core Functions

- Advises Union on legal matters.
- Represents government in **SC and high-profile cases**.
- *2024:* AG represented Centre in SC challenge to Forest (Amendment) Act, 2023.

2. Constitutional Provisions & Rights

- Right of audience in all Indian courts.

- Entitled to participate (not vote) in Parliament (Article 88).

3. Lack of Fixed Tenure and Executive Dependence

- Serves at the pleasure of the President; raises questions of **impartiality**.
- No bar on private practice (unlike judges).
- *Example:* AG R. Venkataramani faced criticism (2024) for defending delay in Collegium appointment cases.

4. Comparison with Other Countries

- Unlike US AG (cabinet-level post), India's AG is **not autonomous or elected**.
- UK model offers better safeguards for impartial legal advice.

5. Challenges in Upholding Neutrality

- Seen as defending controversial executive actions (e.g., electoral bonds, demonetisation).
- Critics demand AG act as **"defender of Constitution", not just government agent**.

6. Reform Suggestions

- 2nd ARC: Clear guidelines, fixed tenure, bar on private practice.
- Law Commission 195th Report: Professional code and accountability framework.
- *2025 NITI Aayog internal note:* Called for separation between AG's litigation and advisory roles.

Conclusion:

The Attorney-General's role is vital for constitutional governance. Ensuring **objectivity, transparency, and ethical clarity** can strengthen the position as both a **legal guardian and executive counsel**.

Q3. "Pressure Groups play a vital role in influencing public policy making in India." Explain how business associations contribute to public policies. (2021, 10M)

What is being asked:

Discuss how **business pressure groups** shape Indian public policy and assess their **influence and methods**.

How to approach:

Intro – Role of pressure groups in a democracy; focus on business groups.

Body – Modes of influence, institutional reach, 2024–25 examples.

Conclusion – Responsible lobbying enhances governance.

Introduction:

Pressure groups, as **non-governmental actors**, influence public policy through advocacy and lobbying. Business associations such as **FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM, NASSCOM** use expert input, industry consensus, and strategic engagement to **steer economic, tax, and regulatory policy**.

Body: Role of business associations in shaping public policy

1. Policy Advocacy through Consultative Mechanisms

- Frequent engagement with **DPIIT, NITI Aayog, and Finance Ministry**.
- *Example:* FICCI's 2025 pre-budget recommendations shaped MSME tax reliefs.

2. Expert Research and Policy Papers

- Submit white papers on regulation, taxation, ESG, etc.
- *Example:* NASSCOM's 2024 study on AI governance influenced Digital India Bill draft.

3. Parliamentary Committee Consultations

- Invited as stakeholders to standing committee hearings.
- *2024:* ASSOCHAM appeared before Commerce Standing Committee on India-UK FTA.

4. Public-Private Partnerships and Pilots

- Influence sectoral schemes and pilot implementations.
- *Example:* CII co-implemented AgriTech pilot in Gujarat (2025) under public subsidy.

5. International Business Diplomacy

- Help shape India's negotiating stance in trade deals (e.g., CEPA, FTA).

- 2024: Indian pharma industry used FICCI to lobby against IPR clauses in Indo-EU FTA.

6. Limitations and Ethical Concerns

- Influence often limited to elite firms; lack of lobbying regulation risks opacity.
- *Law Commission and 2nd ARC* recommend institutional transparency mechanisms.

Conclusion:

Business associations significantly shape India's **economic and regulatory policies**. Regulating lobbying and **broadening stakeholder diversity** can improve both **legitimacy and effectiveness**.

Q6. Explain the reasons for the growth of public interest litigation in India. As a result of it, has the Indian Supreme Court emerged as the world's most powerful judiciary? (2024, 15M)

What is being asked:

Explain the **factors behind the rise of PILs** and assess whether it has made the **Indian Supreme Court the most powerful judiciary** globally.

How to approach:

Intro – Origin and constitutional basis of PIL

Body – Causes of growth, key features, global comparison, SC's powers

Conclusion – Balanced take on power vs accountability

Introduction:

Public Interest Litigation (PIL), first championed by **Justice P.N. Bhagwati in the 1980s**, allowed access to justice for the voiceless through liberalised locus standi. Rooted in **Article 32 and Article 226**, PIL has evolved into a transformative tool, making the Indian **Supreme Court a globally unique constitutional court** in terms of activism, scope, and societal impact.

Body: Rise of PILs and judicial activism in India

1. Liberalisation of Locus Standi

- The Court allowed **third-party actors** to file petitions on behalf of the marginalised.
- *Example: Sheela Barse case (1983)* – journalist filed for custodial rights of women.
- In 2024, a student group filed PIL on electoral data transparency before the Lok Sabha polls.

2. Judicial Innovation and Socio-Economic Rights Expansion

- Courts interpreted **Article 21** to include health, shelter, education, clean air, privacy, etc.
- *Example: 2025 PIL* led to SC ordering nationwide menstrual hygiene product access in government schools.

3. Institutional Gaps and Executive Inaction

- PILs rose due to **governance vacuum**, especially in environmental and social justice matters.
- *Example: 2024 PIL* led SC to issue directions on heatwave-related worker protections after multiple deaths in Rajasthan and Odisha.

4. Judicial Activism and Epistolary Jurisdiction

- SC began accepting letters and media reports as writs.
- Gave rise to **suo motu cognisance**, e.g., COVID migrant crisis (2020), and again during **2023 Manipur internet shutdown** case.

5. Media, Civil Society, and Legal Awareness

- Increased civic engagement with courts via NGOs, legal clinics, legal tech tools.
- 2024: Vidhi Centre's litigation support led to PIL on regulating facial recognition tech in public spaces.

Has SC Become the World's Most Powerful Judiciary?

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>India's Supreme Court</u>	<u>Other Countries</u>
<u>Scope of Powers</u>	Enforces FRs, socio-economic rights, PILs, suo motu powers	US SC limited to strict interpretation; no suo motu
<u>Access & Standing</u>	Open PIL system; liberal access	UK/US require aggrieved party; narrow access
<u>Policy Role</u>	Directives on education, environment, governance	Most courts avoid entering policy sphere
<u>Enforcement</u>	Orders enforced via Art. 141 + constitutional supremacy	Many courts depend on legislature compliance

- *Example:* In 2024, SC directed mandatory climate curriculum in all schools—a policy-level intervention unique globally.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Articles 32, 226** – Writ jurisdiction enabling PILs
- *SP Gupta v. UoI (1981)* – Expanded locus standi
- *Sheela Barse (1983), M.C. Mehta cases* – PIL benchmarks
- **2024–25 PILs** – Menstrual hygiene access, heatwave response, facial recognition regulation
- *US v. Windsor (2013)* – US SC's limited role compared to Indian SC

Conclusion:

The Indian Supreme Court, through **PIL jurisprudence and constitutional creativity**, has become one of the most **socially responsive and powerful courts globally**. Yet, to retain legitimacy, it must **balance activism with restraint** and ensure that it complements—rather than replaces—legislative and executive functions.

TOPIC-6: Representation of People's Act

Salient features of the Representation of People's Act



**Appointment to various
Constitutional posts, Powers,
functions and their responsibilities**



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2017**

- **To enhance the quality of democracy in India, the Election Commission of India proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms, and how significant are they in making democracy successful? (15 M)**

- **2018**

- **In light of the recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? (10 M)**

- **2019**

- **On what grounds can a people's representative be disqualified under the Representation of the People Act, 1951? Also, mention the remedies available to such a person against their disqualification. (15 M)**

Q1. To enhance the quality of democracy in India, the Election Commission of India proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms, and how significant are they in making democracy successful? (2017, 15M)

What is being asked:

List and evaluate the **electoral reforms proposed by ECI in 2016**, and assess their role in improving **democratic quality** in India.

How to approach:

Intro – Contextualise reforms in backdrop of ECI autonomy, political transparency.

Body – 5–6 key reforms and their democratic significance; current status.

Conclusion – Reforms vital for electoral credibility and fair governance.

Introduction:

In its **2016 recommendations to the Law Ministry**, the Election Commission of India suggested comprehensive reforms to strengthen **electoral transparency, curbing criminalisation, and regulating funding**. With electoral democracy facing threats of opacity and muscle-money power, these proposals remain pivotal to **deepening India's democratic ethos**.

Body: Electoral reforms for strengthening democratic integrity and transparency

1. Decriminalisation of Politics

- ECI proposed amending RPA to bar candidates with serious charges (offence punishable ≥ 5 years) after framing of charges.
- *2023: SC reiterated urgency of this in *ADR v. Union of India*, directing Parliament to consider reform.*

2. Political Funding Transparency

- Proposed abolition of anonymous donations above ₹2,000 and creating a National Electoral Fund.
- *Example: After 2024 SC struck down electoral bonds, ECI reiterated its 2016 fund transparency model.*

3. Inner-Party Democracy & Candidate Selection

- Advocated for transparency in **candidate selection process** and internal party elections.
- *2024 ADR report: 89% candidates selected lacked publicly declared selection criteria.*

4. Paid News and Media Regulation

- Proposed making **paid news an electoral offence** under RPA.
- *Example: ECI flagged over 3,200 paid news cases during 2024 Lok Sabha elections, many unresolved.*

5. ECI's Independent Powers for Disqualification

- Sought power to **de-register parties violating MCC or funding rules**, currently not vested.
- *Law Commission 255th Report supported giving ECI legal backing.*

6. Tax Benefits and Political Funding Scrutiny

- Suggested stricter IT scrutiny for donations, especially for dormant political parties.
- *2025 Budget*: Proposed PAN-based donation cap—echoes ECI's 2016 recommendations.

Conclusion:

The ECI's 2016 reforms offer a **holistic roadmap for electoral cleansing**, but need **legislative will** and institutional synergy to ensure democracy remains **free, fair, and inclusive** in spirit and structure.

Q2. In light of the recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? (2018, 10M)

What is being asked:

Discuss the **challenges ECI faces** in maintaining public trust in elections amidst the EVM controversies.

How to approach:

Intro – Context of recurring EVM controversies despite technical reliability.

Body – Challenges faced by ECI and efforts taken to address them.

Conclusion – Way forward for restoring electoral faith.

Introduction:

Despite being considered **tamper-proof and auditable**, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in India have drawn **political criticism and voter suspicion**. The ECI, while upholding their integrity, faces growing challenges in an era of **disinformation, distrust, and partisanship**, especially post the **2024 general elections**.

Body: Challenges before ECI to ensure electoral credibility

1. Perception vs Technology Gap

- Though secure, the **lack of transparency** in design and access creates distrust.
- *2024*: Allegations of malfunction in 78 booths in Bengal reignited trust issues.

2. VVPAT Verification Limitations

- Only 5 randomly selected booths per constituency are verified.
- *SC in N Chandrababu Naidu v. ECI (2023)* suggested increasing verification scope.
- *2025*: PIL seeks minimum 30% VVPAT tallying.

3. Non-Disclosure of Source Code & Machine Audit

- ECI does not permit open audit of firmware/software.
- Raises concern of **black-box voting**.

4. Political Polarisation and Loss of Trust

- Parties alleging bias when losing, praising EVMs when winning.
- *Example*: In 2024, several opposition parties petitioned ECI for full paper-ballot return.

5. Cybersecurity and Handling Protocols

- Questions raised about storage, transportation, strong-room security.
- ECI has issued SOPs but enforcement varies.

6. Communication Deficit and Lack of Public Audit

- Public not fully aware of how EVMs and VVPATs work.
- *Suggestion*: Annual public demo + academic peer review panel.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 324** – ECI autonomy
- **VVPAT Supreme Court Case (2019 & 2023)** – Verification limits



- *ECI Status Paper (2024)* – Defended machine integrity
- *ADR PIL (2025)* – Demand for higher VVPAT count

Conclusion:

EVMs can retain public trust only through **greater transparency, accountability, and institutional communication**. The ECI must combine **technical robustness with participatory openness** to sustain electoral legitimacy.

Q3. On what grounds can a people's representative be disqualified under the Representation of the People Act, 1951? Also, mention the remedies available to such a person against their disqualification. (2019, 15M)

What is being asked:

List the grounds for disqualification under **RPA, 1951**, and explain the **remedial options** available to the disqualified person.

How to approach:

Intro – Legal framework of RPA, importance for democratic integrity.

Body – Grounds under RPA Sections 8–10; SC rulings; appeal mechanisms.

Conclusion – Need to expedite disqualification and strengthen deterrence.

Introduction:

The **Representation of the People Act, 1951** lays down qualifications and disqualifications for MPs and MLAs to preserve the **purity of electoral politics**. However, delays in enforcement and political misuse of provisions raise concerns about the **efficacy of this legal shield**.

Body: Disqualification criteria and legal recourse for representatives

1. Criminal Conviction – Section 8

- Conviction for offences punishable ≥ 2 years \rightarrow disqualification for 6 years.
- *Example:* Rahul Gandhi's 2023 conviction under defamation led to automatic disqualification (later stayed).

2. Corrupt Practices or Electoral Offences – Section 8A

- Includes bribery, undue influence, booth capturing.
- Disqualification based on **ECI's recommendation to President/Governor**.

3. Failure to Lodge Election Expense Accounts – Section 10A

- 2024: 11 candidates in Telangana barred for not submitting expense reports on time.

4. Office of Profit – Article 102(1)(a)

- Holding positions under government \rightarrow disqualification.
- *Example:* 2023: Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren faced office-of-profit inquiry (case ongoing).

5. Insolvency, Unsound Mind, or Citizenship Loss – Article 102/191

- If declared by court or losing Indian citizenship.

6. Remedies Available

- **Judicial Review under Article 226/136** – HC or SC
- *Example:* Rahul Gandhi approached SC, which stayed conviction citing free speech.
- **Presidential reference under Article 103/192** for non-conviction-based cases.

Conclusion:

A robust disqualification regime is essential for **clean and credible politics**. Timely adjudication, judicial oversight, and ECI empowerment are necessary to uphold **constitutional morality and voter trust**.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2020

- “There is a need for simplification of procedure for disqualification of persons found guilty of corrupt practices under the Representation of Peoples Act.” Comment. (10 M)

- 2022

- Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? What remedy is available to the aggrieved party against the decision? Refer to case laws. (15 M)

- 2024

- Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees, with particular reference to the “one nation – one election” principle. (10 M)

Q1. “There is a need for simplification of procedure for disqualification of persons found guilty of corrupt practices under the Representation of Peoples Act.” Comment. (2020, 10M)

What is being asked:

Evaluate the **procedural complexity** of disqualification under RPA for corrupt practices and argue why it needs simplification.

How to approach:

Intro – Constitutional and legal background

Body – Current process, 4–5 key challenges, committee suggestions

Conclusion – Empower ECI and streamline procedure

Introduction:

Under **Section 8A of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951**, candidates found guilty of corrupt practices face disqualification. However, the multi-step process involving the **President/Governor and Election Commission** has created delays and inconsistencies. Several reform bodies, including the **Law Commission (255th Report)** and **2nd ARC**, have advocated procedural simplification to uphold electoral integrity.

Body: Streamlining disqualification process for corrupt electoral practices

Current Process

- After a court finds a candidate guilty of corrupt practices (Section 123, RPA), the President (for MPs) or Governor (for MLAs) disqualifies them **based on ECI’s opinion** (Section 8A).
- No statutory **timeframe or direct ECI authority** for implementation.

Key Challenges in the Current Procedure:

1. Executive Delay and Political Influence

- No timeline binding the President/Governor’s action.
- *Example:* In 2024, disqualification of a Bihar MLA was delayed for 10 months despite a conviction for bribery.

2. ECI Lacks Independent Disqualification Powers

- Depends on court ruling and then advises executive; cannot act directly.
- This affects **timeliness and deterrence**.

3. High Threshold of Evidence for Corrupt Practices

- Burden of proof is steep; conviction requires evidence of intention, benefit, and material impact.
- Leads to lengthy trials and low conviction rate.

4. No Uniform Interpretation of ‘Corrupt Practice’

- Includes vague terms like “undue influence”, “appeals to religion”, etc.
- *Example:* 2023 Karnataka HC gave differing interpretations in communal speech cases.

5. Disparity in Implementation and Legal Loopholes

- Different states report different action timelines; limited data transparency.
- *ADR Report 2025*: 46% of EC recommendations on disqualification still pending.

Recommendations for Simplification

- **Empower ECI** with direct disqualification authority post-conviction.
- **Set a statutory 3-month timeframe** for President/Governor decision.
- **Broaden the scope** of Section 8A with clearer definitions.
- Suggested by:
 - **Law Commission (255th Report, 2015)**
 - **2nd ARC, Ethics in Governance**
 - **NCRWC, 2001**

Conclusion:

For faster and fair electoral accountability, the disqualification process under RPA must be **simplified, time-bound, and independent of executive delay**. Empowering ECI and codifying clear procedures would uphold **constitutional morality and public trust**.

Q2. Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? What remedy is available to the aggrieved party against the decision? Refer to case laws. (2022, 15M)

What is being asked:

Explain the **procedure for election disputes, grounds for declaring elections void, and remedies available**, along with case law.

How to approach:

Intro – RPA provisions and democratic context

Body – Process → Grounds → Remedies → Challenges

Conclusion – Electoral dispute system must be fair and time-bound

Introduction:

Under **Part VI (Sections 80–122) of the RPA, 1951**, disputes related to elections of MPs and MLAs are adjudicated by **High Courts** through election petitions. Despite this legal clarity, the mechanism suffers from **delays, high litigation costs**, and inconsistent remedies—undermining the very spirit of **free and fair elections** guaranteed under Article 324.

Body: Election disputes: procedure, grounds for voiding, and legal remedies

Procedure to Decide Election Disputes

- **Section 81**: Any elector/candidate can file a petition in the High Court within **45 days** of result.
- **Section 86**: HC decides and can declare the election void or valid.
- **Section 100**: Outlines grounds for declaring an election void.
- *Example*: In 2023, Tamil Nadu HC annulled a bypoll result for misuse of religion during campaigning.

Grounds for Declaring an Election Void (Section 100)

1. **Corrupt Practices (Section 123)** – Bribery, undue influence, communal appeal, booth capturing.
2. **Improper Acceptance of Nomination**
3. **Non-Compliance with Constitution or RPA Provisions**
4. **False Declaration or Excessive Expenditure**

Remedies Available to Aggrieved Party

- **Section 116A**: Appeal to Supreme Court within 30 days.
- **Interim Stay** may be granted to prevent byelections pending final verdict.
- *Example*: *Mohd. Salim v. Sanjay Singh (2023)* – SC stayed HC ruling and ordered early disposal.

Challenges in Adjudication Process:

1. Delay in Judgments

- No legal deadline; cases often take 5+ years.
- *ADR 2025*: 111 pending election petitions from 2019 remain undecided.

2. High Litigation Costs and Limited Access

- Voters rarely use this provision due to lawyer fees and technical complexity.

3. No Special Tribunals

- Burdened High Courts handle all petitions; Law Commission (255th) suggested exclusive benches.

4. Inconsistent Precedents and Interpretations

- HC rulings vary, especially on communal appeals and fake affidavits.

5. Limited EC Legal Role Post Election

- ECI lacks power to initiate post-poll litigation unless petition is filed.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **RPA Sections:** 80–86, 100, 116A
- **Articles 329(b), 324** – Electoral dispute resolution
- **Case Laws:**
 - *Rajendra Singh v. Usha Rani (1984)* – False affidavit
 - *Mohd. Salim v. Sanjay Singh (2023)* – Delay concern
- **Law Commission (255th Report)** – Electoral tribunals
- **2nd ARC** – Fast-track election justice

Conclusion:

To ensure electoral justice is **accessible, fair, and timely**, India must establish **dedicated election benches or tribunals**, define timelines, and simplify procedures under RPA—thereby upholding the **integrity of democratic representation**.

Q3. Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees, with particular reference to the “one nation – one election” principle. (2024, 10M)

What is being asked:

Discuss the **broader need for electoral reforms**, focusing especially on **simultaneous elections (ONOE)** and committee recommendations.

How to approach:

Intro – Rising demand for electoral reforms due to cost/policy paralysis

Body – Need → ONOE concept → Committees → Pros & Challenges

Conclusion – Gradual consensus-building is the way forward

Introduction:

India’s democracy has matured, yet its electoral processes suffer from **frequent elections, high costs, and prolonged campaign mode**. The push for **“One Nation, One Election” (ONOE)**, revived by the **2024 Kovind Committee**, represents a major electoral reform aimed at governance continuity, resource saving, and national stability.

Body: Simultaneous elections as part of comprehensive electoral reform

Why Electoral Reform is Urgently Needed

- MCC halts policy decisions frequently.
- Election expenses cross ₹55,000 crore in 2024.
- Growing criminalisation and money power (*ADR 2025*).
- Frequent elections distract from governance.

ONOE Proposal: Core Idea

- Synchronising **Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections** once in five years.

- Requires amendments to **Articles 83, 172, 356**, and possibly new federal conventions.

Committee Recommendations

1. **Law Commission (2018)** – Suggested phased synchronisation.
2. **NITI Aayog (2017)** – Cost efficiency and reduced disruption.
3. **Kovind Committee (2024)** – Legal roadmap, public consultations.
4. **Parliamentary Standing Committee (79th Report, 2015)** – Pilot model for phased elections.

Pros of ONOE

- Saves time and resources.
- Boosts governance focus.
- Reduces communal/identity mobilisation.
- Improves administrative efficiency.

Key Challenges:

1. **Need for Multiple Constitutional Amendments**
 - Changes in tenure, dissolution, and emergency provisions.
2. **Federal Opposition and Political Consensus**
 - States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu opposed ONOE in 2025 citing erosion of regional autonomy.
3. **Premature Dissolution Dilemma**
 - Collapse of one assembly disrupts entire calendar.
4. **Logistical and Legal Readiness**
 - Requires massive deployment of forces and infrastructure.
5. **Voter Fatigue vs Engagement**
 - Risk of clubbing local and national issues in one vote.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Articles 83, 172, 356** – Constitutional hurdles
- **Law Commission (2018), NITI Aayog (2017), Kovind Committee (2024)**
- **ECI Estimate (2024)** – ₹55,000 crore could be saved
- **Opposition Memorandum (2025)** – Concerns over federalism

Conclusion:

ONOE, while administratively efficient, must be implemented via **consensual constitutional reform**, respecting **federal plurality and electoral integrity**. Electoral reform must balance **efficiency with democratic diversity**.

TOPIC-7:Constitutional posts, Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Statutory, Regulatory and Quasi-Judicial Bodies

including NITI Aayog, their features and functioning



**STATUTORY
BODY**

Established
by a statute
or act



**REGULATORY
BODY**

Supervises
and regulates
a sector



**NITI
AAYOG**

Policy
think tank

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2014**

- **The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority to regulate fares will subject the cash-strapped Indian Railways to demand subsidies for the obligation to operate non-profitable routes and services. Taking into account the experience in the power sector, discuss if the proposed reform is expected to benefit the consumers, the Indian Railways, or the private container operators. (12.5 M)**
- **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India can be most effective when its tasks are adequately supported by other mechanisms that ensure the accountability of a government. In light of the above observation, assess the role of NHRC as an effective complement to the judiciary and other institutions in promoting and protecting human rights standards. (12.5 M)**

- **2015**

- **For achieving the desired objectives, it is necessary to ensure that regulatory institutions remain independent and autonomous. Discuss in the light of experiences in recent past. (12.5 M)**

Q1. The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority to regulate fares will subject the cash-strapped Indian Railways to demand subsidies for the obligation to operate non-profitable routes and services. Taking into account the experience in the power sector, discuss if the proposed reform is expected to benefit the consumers, the Indian Railways, or the private container operators. (2014, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Assess the impact of a **Rail Tariff Authority (RTA)** on three stakeholders: **consumers, Indian Railways, and private operators**, drawing a parallel with the **power sector** experience.

How to approach:

Intro – Context of tariff reforms in Railways and RTA proposal

Body – Impacts on each stakeholder, draw power sector parallels, include 4–5 challenges

Conclusion – Balanced outlook with caution on autonomy and subsidy design

Introduction:

The proposal to establish a **Rail Tariff Authority (RTA)** follows India's larger shift towards **independent regulatory pricing**, seen earlier in power and telecom. The Rakesh Mohan Committee and NITI Aayog (2020–22) have advocated for **transparent, depoliticised fare setting** in Railways to reduce cross-subsidisation, attract private investment, and improve consumer fairness.

Body: Subsidy, service, and competition in rail tariff reform debate

Benefit to Consumers

- Transparent fare structure may prevent arbitrary hikes.
- Rationalisation of freight vs passenger tariffs could **improve service quality**.
- *Example:* In 2024, Mumbai suburban services saw a public backlash after steep fare hike; RTA could have moderated the shock.

Benefit to Indian Railways

- Depoliticisation of fare decisions improves financial planning.
- RTA can recommend **cost-reflective pricing**, reducing chronic under-recovery.
- But subsidy obligations for socially necessary routes (e.g., Northeast) will need **explicit fiscal provisioning**.

Benefit to Private Container Operators

- Predictability in freight charges and haulage tariffs makes the sector **more investable**.
- *Example:* Adani Logistics and DP World showed renewed interest in 2025 in expanding container terminals, citing stable pricing regime.

Parallels with Power Sector Experience

- State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) led to better tariff rationalisation but suffered from **political interference and delayed cost pass-throughs**.
- In power, separation of **subsidy determination from tariff setting** improved financial health of DISCOMs.

Key Challenges in RTA Implementation:

1. **Lack of Statutory Backing**
 - Unlike SERCs (under Electricity Act, 2003), RTA lacks legal independence.
2. **Political Resistance to Fare Hikes**
 - Railway fare hikes often face populist pushback.
3. **No Clear Subsidy Mechanism for Loss-Making Routes**
 - Cross-subsidisation still remains unless central subsidies are codified.
4. **Potential Marginalisation of Non-Metro Consumers**
 - Private players may focus on profitable routes, neglecting Tier-2/3 cities.
5. **Bureaucratic Delay and Overlap with Ministry**
 - Risk of RTA becoming another layer without decision-making teeth.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Rakesh Mohan Committee (2001)** – Fare rationalisation
- **NITI Aayog Rail Logistics Report (2022)** – Private freight, container policy
- **Electricity Act (2003)** – Lessons from tariff setting
- **Example (2025): Adani, DP World investment revival**
- **Mumbai fare protest (2024)** – Tariff transparency needed

Conclusion:

If made **statutorily autonomous**, the RTA can balance the interests of consumers, operators, and Indian Railways—provided subsidy design is **transparent and non-political**, learning from **power sector reforms**.

Q2. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India can be most effective when its tasks are adequately supported by other mechanisms that ensure the accountability of a government. In light of the above observation, assess the role of NHRC as an effective complement to the judiciary and other institutions in promoting and protecting human rights standards. (2014, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Assess NHRC's role in promoting rights, and how **synergy with other accountability institutions** (judiciary, police, executive) makes it more effective.

How to approach:

Intro – Mandate and status of NHRC

Body – Complementary role, achievements, 4–5 limitations, 2024–25 examples

Conclusion – Institutional synergy and reform needed

Introduction:

Established under the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**, the NHRC is an independent watchdog mandated to protect civil, political, and socio-economic rights. As a **non-judicial institution**, it complements the judiciary by using **fact-finding, recommendations, and moral authority**, but its effectiveness depends on **state cooperation and institutional support**.

Body: Role of NHRC within a multilayered rights protection system

Complementary Role with Judiciary

- Acts in **preventive and promotional** domain, unlike judiciary's reactive model.
- *Example:* In the 2023 Manipur violence case, NHRC submitted an independent report even as the SC handled suo motu PILs.

With Police and Investigative Agencies

- NHRC guidelines on **custodial deaths, encounter protocols, and prison conditions** shape administrative reforms.
- *2024:* NHRC flagged custodial torture cases in Uttar Pradesh, prompting a state-level police manual revision.

With Parliament and Executive

- Annual reports submitted to Parliament (often delayed).
- Recommends compensation, interim relief, and legal reform.
- *Example:* In 2025, NHRC recommended migrant worker tracking protocols post-heatwave deaths in Delhi and Gujarat.

Challenges Facing NHRC:

1. **Lack of Binding Power**
 - Recommendations are **non-enforceable**. 2025 data shows only 32% full compliance.
2. **Delayed Appointment and Understaffing**
 - Chairperson post remained vacant in early 2024 for 6 months.
3. **Limited Jurisdiction over Armed Forces**
 - Section 19 limits NHRC inquiry powers in AFSPA regions.
4. **Poor Follow-Up by State Human Rights Commissions**
 - State bodies often lack funds or trained personnel.
5. **Over-Reliance on Government Agencies**
 - Investigations often use **state police**, creating conflict of interest.

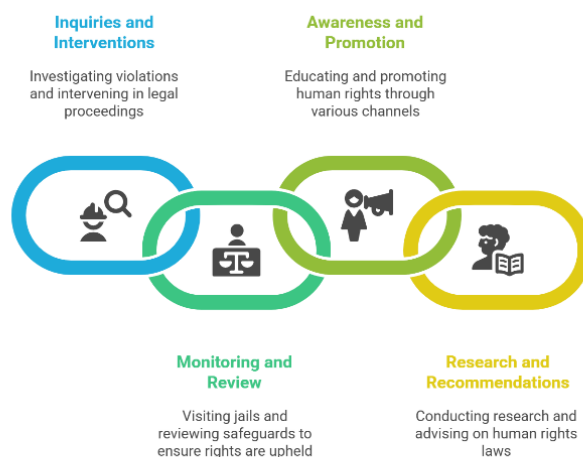
ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**
- **Justice J.S. Verma Committee (1999)** – Strengthen NHRC autonomy
- **Paris Principles (UN)** – Guide for national HRIs
- **NHRC 2024-25 Cases:** Custodial deaths, heatwave, prison overcrowding
- **SC-NHRC Complementarity** – Manipur, Lakhimpur Kheri examples

Conclusion:

NHRC's effectiveness lies in **cooperation with judiciary, police, and Parliament**, backed by **autonomy, resources, and legal reform**. Strengthening State Commissions and giving binding power would ensure it protects rights proactively.

Core Functions of the NHRC



Q3. For achieving the desired objectives, it is necessary to ensure that regulatory institutions remain independent and autonomous. Discuss in the light of experiences in recent past. (2015, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Discuss why **autonomy of regulatory bodies** is essential, and assess recent events where their independence has been compromised or strengthened.

How to approach:

Intro – Role of regulators in liberal economy

Body – Why autonomy matters, recent concerns across sectors, 4–5 challenges

Conclusion – Strong legal backing and insulation from political interference needed

Introduction:

India's regulatory ecosystem—from SEBI to TRAI and IRDAI—ensures **fair competition, consumer protection, and policy stability**. However, concerns about **government overreach, appointment opacity, and interference** have raised alarms. The **2nd ARC** and **NITI Aayog (2018)** recommended structural reforms to safeguard regulator independence.

Body: Balancing autonomy and oversight in regulatory institutions

Why Regulator Autonomy Matters

- Ensures **policy continuity and investor confidence**
- Reduces political influence in tariff, licensing, or enforcement
- Maintains a **rules-based governance** in liberal economy

Recent Experiences Indicating Autonomy Erosion

1. **SEBI and Adani-Hindenburg Case (2023)**
 - Allegations of delayed response by SEBI drew criticism over independence.
2. **TRAI on OTT and Spectrum Pricing**
 - Government has overruled TRAI's pricing recommendations in 2024, citing national priorities.
3. **CERC and Power Sector Reforms**
 - Regulatory capture suspected in renewable power auctions.
4. **RBI-Centre Differences (2020–24)**
 - Erosion of monetary policy autonomy debated during fiscal-deficit episodes.
5. **Competition Commission of India (CCI) Appointments**
 - 2025 PIL filed challenging political nominees with no competition law background.

Key Challenges in Regulator Independence:

- **Political Appointments without Transparency**
- **Lack of Statutory Security of Tenure**
- **Interference through Policy Directives**
- **Budgetary Dependence on Line Ministries**
- **Absence of Parliamentary Oversight or Review**

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **2nd ARC – Ethics in Governance**
- **NITI Aayog Strategy Paper (2018) – Independent regulators**
- **Adani-SEBI Controversy (2023)**
- **CCI PIL (2025) – Regulatory credibility issue**
- **Paris Principles for Independent Institutions**

Conclusion:

India's regulatory institutions must be empowered through **transparent appointments, security of tenure, and independent budgets**. Only then can they fulfil their mandate as **neutral arbiters of public interest and market stability**.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2016

- Exercise of CAG's powers in relation to the accounts of the Union and the States is derived from Article 149 of the Indian Constitution. Discuss whether the audit of the Government's policy implementation could amount to overstepping its own (CAG) jurisdiction. (12.5 M)
- What is a quasi-judicial body? Explain with the help of concrete examples. (12.5 M)

- 2017

- Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face in both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. (15 M)

Q1. Exercise of CAG's powers in relation to the accounts of the Union and the States is derived from Article 149 of the Indian Constitution. Discuss whether the audit of the Government's policy implementation could amount to overstepping its own (CAG) jurisdiction. (2016, 12.5M)

What is being asked:

Whether CAG auditing policy implementation infringes its constitutional limits under Article 149.

How to approach:

Intro – Define CAG's role constitutionally

Body – Legal mandate vs criticism of overreach; 5 dimensions; recent cases

Conclusion – Accountability without policy interference is the key

Introduction:

The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** derives its authority from **Article 149**, empowered to audit receipts and expenditures of Union and States. The expansion into **performance and policy audits** highlighted by landmark reports like the **2G (2011)** and **Coal Scam (2012)** has triggered debates over whether CAG is encroaching into executive discretion.

Body: Limits of CAG's mandate in auditing policy outcomes

1. Scope Under Article 149 and CAG's DPC Act, 1971

- CAG audits **compliance, financial, and performance aspects**.
- Performance audits review **efficiency of implementation**, not policy decision itself.

2. Landmark Cases Supporting CAG's Expanded Role

- *2G Spectrum Case (2012)* – CAG flagged revenue loss, SC ordered cancellation.
- *CAG v. NHAI (2023)* – Delhi HC upheld CAG's authority to audit implementation delays in highway PPPs.

3. Criticism of Overstepping

- Government in *Coal Block Allocation (2012)* claimed CAG cannot second-guess policy decisions.
- However, **audit is retrospective** and targets **execution**, not policymaking.

4. Policy vs Implementation Audit Distinction

- *Example:* CAG's 2024 report on Jal Jeevan Mission focused on **utilisation patterns**, not the mission design.
- The key lies in not questioning the intent but evaluating outcomes.

5. CAG's Role in Ensuring Fiscal Prudence

- Audits flag inefficiencies that improve governance.
- *2025 CAG Report* revealed ₹3,000 crore of unspent urban infra grants in 7 Smart Cities.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 149** – Powers and duties
- **CAG's DPC Act, 1971** – Audit mandates
- **Delhi HC 2023 ruling** – Upheld audit of NHAI delays
- **PAC 2022 Report** – Emphasised constructive performance audits

Conclusion:

CAG must avoid policy commentary but is well within its mandate to audit execution and delivery. Strengthening institutional dialogue between CAG and executive ensures **accountability without overreach**.

Q2. What is a quasi-judicial body? Explain with the help of concrete examples. (2016, 12.5M)**What is being asked:**

Define quasi-judicial bodies and illustrate with **contemporary Indian examples**.

How to approach:

Intro – Definition and origin

Body – Features, constitutional basis, examples across sectors

Conclusion – Their growing relevance in administrative justice

Introduction:

A **quasi-judicial body** is an authority vested with powers resembling those of a court of law but not part of the regular judiciary. Rooted in **administrative law**, such bodies are created to **resolve disputes, adjudicate claims**, or enforce rights within a defined scope—e.g., the **National Green Tribunal** under the NGT Act, 2010.

Body: Role, structure and significance of Quasi-judicial bodies**Key Features of Quasi-Judicial Bodies**

- They perform **adjudicatory functions**
- Must follow **principles of natural justice**
- Their decisions are **binding**, but appealable in courts

Examples Across Sectors:

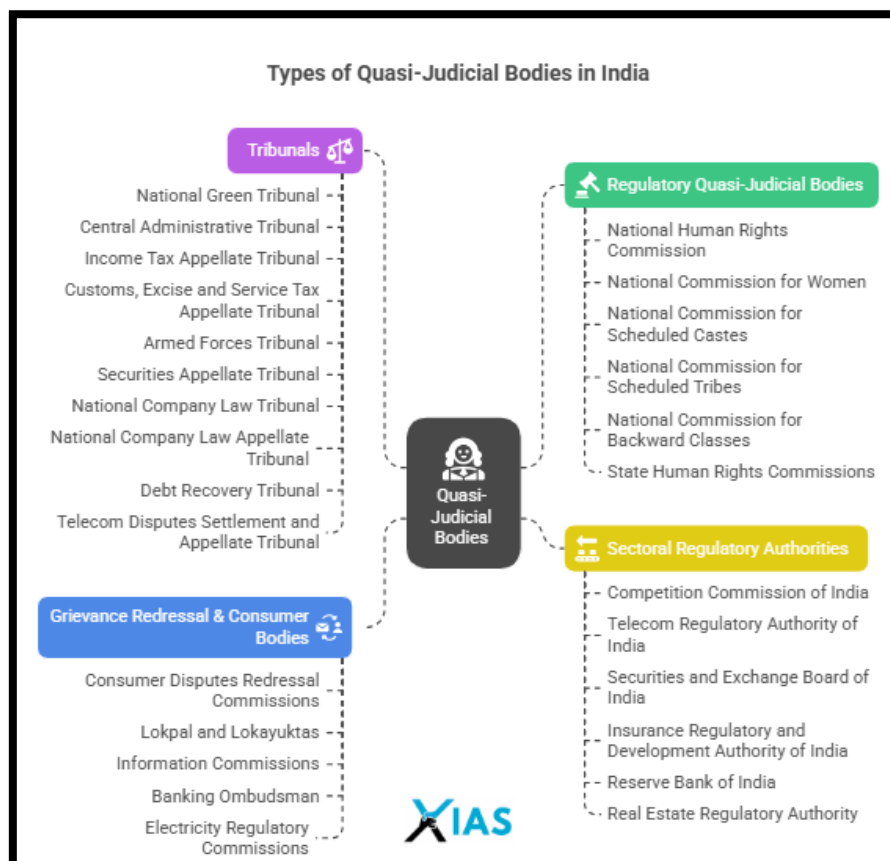
1. **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**
 - Adjudicates on environment-related violations
 - *2025*: Ordered closure of illegal sand mining in Chambal River Basin, Madhya Pradesh.
2. **Central Information Commission (CIC)**
 - Decides RTI disputes under RTI Act, 2005
 - Recently (2024) fined a ministry for delay in disclosing PM-CARES fund usage.
3. **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)**
 - Hears high-value consumer cases
 - *2023*: Penalised a leading e-commerce platform for fraudulent sale of fake electronics.
4. **Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)**
 - Adjudicates appeals under Income Tax law
 - Major 2025 ruling on crypto-taxation interpretation under new Digital Asset Regime.
5. **Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)**
 - Protects consumer rights in real estate sector
 - *2024*: Penalised a Mumbai developer for 18-month delay in handover.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Not part of Judiciary** but perform judicial functions
- **Quasi-judicial = adjudication without full judicial procedure**
- **Established under specific laws** (e.g., NGT Act, RTI Act, RERA Act)
- **Recent Examples (2024–25)**: NGT, CIC, RERA rulings

Conclusion:

Quasi-judicial bodies bridge the gap between executive and judiciary by ensuring **sector-specific, accessible justice**. Their role is expanding in a **complex regulatory state**, demanding capacity-building and digital reform.



Q3. Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face in both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. (2017, 15M)

What is being asked:

Assess **NCW's effectiveness** in addressing women's challenges in both public and domestic/private spheres.

How to approach:

Intro – Legal status and mandate of NCW

Body – Role, achievements, 5 challenges, recent examples

Conclusion – Reform and decentralisation needed

Introduction:

The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** was established under the **NCW Act, 1990** to review legal safeguards, address grievances, and advise on policy reforms for women's empowerment. With rising cases of **gender-based violence, workplace harassment, and cybercrimes**, its strategic role has become more urgent than ever. The **National Policy for Women (2022 draft)** reiterates NCW's centrality.

Body: Role of NCW in gender justice and institutional limitations

1. Strengths in Tackling Public Sphere Issues

- Helpline (181), legal aid and inquiry committees
- **2024:** NCW assisted in fast-tracking justice for Hathras 2.0 case involving police inaction
- Conducts workplace audits under **PoSH Act** compliance

2. Efforts in Addressing Private Sphere Problems

- Domestic violence, dowry, marital rape awareness
- NCW 2025 Report: 64% of complaints still relate to **domestic abuse**
- Launch of **Sakhi Suraksha App (2024)** for emergency support in private spaces

3. Key Challenges Faced by NCW:

1. Non-binding Nature of Recommendations

- Ministries/states not compelled to act on its advisories
- 2. **Limited Investigation Powers**
 - Cannot prosecute or arrest; relies on state police
- 3. **Urban-Centric Approach**
 - Low outreach in rural and tribal belts; only one NCW office in Northeast
- 4. **Inadequate Budget and Manpower**
 - 2025 budget < ₹40 crore; lacks regional resource centers
- 5. **Underutilisation of Digital Grievance Redressal Tools**
 - Only 23% of complaints handled through portal in 2024 (NCW Dashboard)

Conclusion:

While NCW has taken bold steps, it remains limited by **statutory and structural constraints**. To truly strategize and impact both private and public spheres, it needs **decentralisation, legal teeth, and stronger inter-agency coordination**.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2018**

- **“The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play.” Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. (10 M)**
- **Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in religious minority institutions? Examine. (10 M)**
- **How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss. (15 M)**

- **2019**

- **“The Central Administrative Tribunal, which was established for redressal of grievances and complaints by or against central government employees, nowadays is exercising its powers as an independent judicial authority.” Explain. (10 M)**

Q1. “The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play.” Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. (2018, 10M)

What is being asked:

Explain how CAG’s **constitutional importance** is reflected in his **appointment process and wide powers**.

How to approach:

Intro – Importance of CAG

Body – 5 dimensions: appointment, tenure, powers, autonomy, accountability

Conclusion – Institutional relevance must be preserved

Introduction :

CAG, empowered by **Article 148–151**, ensures fiscal accountability of the executive. Its independent constitutional status and wide powers underscore its vital role in India’s parliamentary democracy and public finance.

Body: Ensuring neutrality through CAG’s tenure, powers, and functions**1. Constitutional Appointment (Art. 148)**

- Appointed by the President of India; enjoys **status equal to a SC judge**
- No consultation process required, raising recent reform suggestions (e.g., **NCRWC, 2nd ARC**)

2. Security of Tenure

- Fixed **6-year term or until age 65**
- Can only be removed like a SC judge (via impeachment on proved misbehavior)

3. Wide Scope of Powers

- Audits Union/State finances, public authorities, PSUs
- *Example: 2024 audit of Smart Cities Mission revealed ₹2,800 crore unused in 9 cities*

4. Performance and Efficiency Audits

- Goes beyond book-keeping to assess **implementation outcomes**
- *Example: CAG's 2025 report on Digital India initiatives flagged major underutilisation in Tier-II towns*

5. Reports to Legislature, Not Executive

- Reports submitted to **President/Governor**, laid before Parliament/State Legislature
- Examined by **Public Accounts Committees (PAC)**

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Articles 148–151, CAG DPC Act, 1971**
- **2nd ARC:** called for more transparent selection
- **PAC Report 2025:** praised CAG's performance audits
- **CAG 2024 Reports:** Smart Cities, Digital India flagged delays and fund misuse

Conclusion:

To retain CAG's democratic role as a **fiscal watchdog**, reforms in appointment process and support to performance audits are essential for deeper institutional trust and transparency.

Q2. Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in religious minority institutions? Examine. (2018, 10M)

What is being asked:

Can NCSC ensure **SC reservation implementation in religious minority institutions?**

How to approach:

Intro – Role and Article of NCSC

Body – Legal limitations, case laws, Article 30, recommendations

Conclusion – Requires legislative clarity and judicial review

Introduction :

The **NCSC under Article 338** monitors safeguards for Scheduled Castes. Its role in minority institutions, protected under **Article 30**, raises a complex constitutional conflict between social justice and minority autonomy.

Body: Limits of NCSC's powers in minority-run institutions

1. Role of NCSC (Art. 338)

- Investigates complaints, monitors constitutional safeguards, reports to President
- Recommends action but **has no enforcement power**

2. Minority Institutions and Art. 30(1)

- Article 30 guarantees **administrative autonomy** to religious minorities in educational institutions
- Thus, SC reservations cannot be enforced without statutory amendment

3. Legal Clarity – TMA Pai & P.A. Inamdar Cases

- SC held minority unaided institutions are **exempt from quotas**
- *TMA Pai (2002)*: autonomy must be preserved
- *St. Stephen's (1992)*: some autonomy in aided institutions allowed

4. Current status

- 2024: NCSC issued notice to a Christian medical college for non-reservation in SC quota – institution cited **minority protection under Article 30**

5. Suggested Legislative Solutions

- *Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission (2007)*: recommended SC status for Dalits of all religions
- Yet to be implemented due to political and legal resistance

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Art. 338 (NCSC), Art. 30 (Minority Rights)**
- *TMA Pai (2002), P.A. Inamdar (2005)*
- **Ranganath Mishra Commission**
- **NCSC 2024 notice** to minority colleges (Christian/Islamic) for ignoring SC quotas

Conclusion:

While NCSC can recommend safeguards, **constitutional protection under Article 30** limits its enforcement in minority institutions. A clear legislative direction and judicial review are needed to reconcile both rights.

Q3. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss. (2018, 15M)

What is being asked:

Explain FC's **constitutional setup**, and the **terms of reference (ToR)** of the **15th Finance Commission**.

How to approach:

Intro – Art. 280 mandate

Body – Composition, powers, ToR, criticisms, current relevance

Conclusion – Towards cooperative fiscal federalism

Introduction :

The Finance Commission, constituted under **Article 280**, recommends devolution of taxes between Centre and States. The 15th Commission's altered Terms of Reference sparked debate on vertical and horizontal equity.

Body: Formation and evolving role of the Finance Commission

1. Constitutional Composition and Mandate

- Appointed every **5 years** by President
- Consists of **Chairperson and 4 members**
- Recommends:
 - a) Tax devolution
 - b) Grants-in-aid
 - c) Debt management support

2. Terms of Reference of 15th FC

- Unique directives:
 - a) Consider **2011 census** instead of 1971
 - b) Evaluate **defence and internal security funding**
 - c) Incentivise reforms in **power, sanitation, DBT**

3. Criticism by States

- Southern states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu opposed 2011 census use
- Argued it penalises **population control efforts**

4. Recommendations Accepted (2020–26)

- **41% tax devolution** to states
- Performance-based grants on SDGs, judiciary, and PMGSY
- *Example: ₹70,000 crore grant for rural health infra (2021–24)*

5. Role in Fiscal Federalism Today

- 2024: States demanded **greater autonomy** in spending tied grants
- 16th FC (to be notified in 2025) expected to revisit Centre-state equity under post-COVID strain

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 280, 15th FC headed by N.K. Singh**
- States' memorandum: 2011 census penalises developed states
- **Finance Commission Reports 2020–25: ₹10.3 lakh crore devolved**
- **NITI Aayog inputs** on conditional grants alignment with SDG goals

Conclusion:

Finance Commissions are pillars of India's **fiscal federal structure**. Balanced ToRs, wider consultations, and dynamic formulae are essential to uphold equity and cooperative federalism.

Q4. "The Central Administrative Tribunal, which was established for redressal of grievances and complaints by or against central government employees, nowadays is exercising its powers as an independent judicial authority." Explain. (2019, 10M)

What is the question asking:

It is asking how and to what extent the **CAT functions independently** like a judicial body — though it is technically a tribunal and not a constitutional court.

How to approach:

Intro – Constitutional basis and purpose of CAT

Body – 6–7 dimensions showing CAT's evolution into a quasi-judicial authority

Conclusion – Balanced view on its judicial strength and pending reforms

Introduction :

The **Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)** was established under **Article 323A** via the **Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985** to ensure speedy justice to public servants. It now functions with near-judicial authority.

Body: Judicial independence and functioning of CAT

1. Independent Establishment & Statutory Mandate

- Constituted under Article 323A
- Operates independent of government control in adjudication of service matters of **civil servants, All India Services, PSUs**
- 19 Benches + 21 Circuit Benches across India

2. Powers of a Civil Court

- Under Sec 17 of the Act, CAT has powers of a civil court: summoning witnesses, taking evidence, enforcing attendance
- *2024 example*: CAT Bengaluru directed reinstatement of a terminated EPFO officer with damages

3. Binding Nature of Judgments

- CAT orders are binding like civil court decrees
- Appeals lie directly to **High Courts (post-L. Chandra Kumar case)**, reinforcing its judicial stature

4. No Requirement of Administrative Exhaustion

- Employees can approach CAT **without exhausting departmental remedies**, unlike civil litigation
- This elevates its position as a first-level independent adjudicator

5. Presence of Judicial and Administrative Members

- Every bench includes a **judicial member (often retired HC judge)** and an **administrative member (senior civil servant)**
- Ensures neutrality and technical competence

6. SC Recognition of Judicial Character

- *L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India (1997)*: SC called CAT a **supplementary judicial mechanism**, subject to HC review, but integral to justice system
- CAT decisions influence civil service jurisprudence

7. Expansion of Subject Matter and Influence

- CAT now handles matters of **appointment, promotion, transfer, pension**, and even sensitive disciplinary actions
- *2025 case example*: CAT stayed appointment in UPSC citing procedural violation under DoPT rules

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Art. 323A, Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985**
- **L. Chandra Kumar (1997)** – Restored HC review over CAT
- **CAT 2024–25 Judgments**: Reinstatement in CBDT, UPSC postings
- **Law Commission 272nd Report** – Called for better infrastructure and separation from executive influence
- **SC (2024)**: Declared tribunals like CAT integral to India's justice delivery structure

Conclusion

CAT's evolution into an independent judicial body ensures justice for public servants. Ensuring autonomy in appointments and infrastructure will strengthen its constitutional relevance further.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2021**

- **How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the States to improve their fiscal position? (10 M)**
- **Though the Human Rights Commissions have contributed immensely to the protection of human rights in India, yet they have failed to assert themselves against the mighty and powerful. Analyzing their structural and practical limitations, suggest remedial measures. (10 M)**

- **2020**

- **Which steps are required for the constitutionalization of a Commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give reasons. (15 M)**
- **"Recent amendments to the Right to Information Act will have a profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission." Discuss. (10 M)**

Q1. How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the States to improve their fiscal position? (2021, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Assess how 14th FC **strengthened states' fiscal capacity** and reduced Centre-state dependency.

How to approach:

Intro – FC's constitutional role and 14th FC's key shift

Body – 5–6 enabling measures with examples

Conclusion – Cooperative fiscal federalism enabled, but new challenges emerged post-GST

Introduction:

The **14th Finance Commission (2015–20)**, under Article 280, significantly enhanced fiscal devolution to states, aiming to promote greater fiscal autonomy and cooperative federalism in post-Planning Commission India.

Body: Fiscal empowerment of States through 14th FC recommendations**1. Raised States' Share in Central Taxes**

- Increased vertical devolution from **32% to 42%**
- Enabled states to fund schemes independently
- *Example*: Chhattisgarh scaled up its "Sanchar Kranti Yojana" using untied devolution

2. Reduction of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)

- 8 core schemes retained; others made discretionary
- States received flexibility to innovate in health, agriculture, education
- *2024 example:* Tamil Nadu's nutrition programme upgraded independently using devolution grants

3. Performance-based Grants

- Grants for **municipal sanitation, disaster response**, forest cover
- Incentivised fiscal discipline and reform
- *Example:* Kerala received higher urban sanitation grants for 2020–21

4. Fiscal Discipline and Debt Management

- Recommended debt-to-GSDP targets and revenue deficit control
- Helped improve creditworthiness of states like Odisha and Gujarat

5. Empowered Local Bodies

- ₹2.87 lakh crore devolved to local bodies (2015–20)
- *2025 update:* Panchayats in Maharashtra reported increased sanitation fund utilisation due to prior 14th FC training

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 280, 14th FC headed by Y.V. Reddy**
- **NITI Aayog's 2024 review:** States better utilised untied funds than CSS-linked grants
- **CAG audits 2022–24:** Noted improved fiscal outcomes in states with robust FRBM adherence

Conclusion:

The 14th FC improved states' fiscal space and autonomy. However, new fiscal challenges like post-GST compensation loss call for evolving intergovernmental finance frameworks.

Q2. Though the Human Rights Commissions have contributed immensely to the protection of human rights in India, yet they have failed to assert themselves against the mighty and powerful. Analyzing their structural and practical limitations, suggest remedial measures. (2021, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Evaluate NHRC's contributions, identify its structural and operational weaknesses, and offer reforms.

How to approach:

Intro – Mandate of NHRC

Body – Contributions + 5–6 challenges + reforms

Conclusion – Make NHRC future-ready with robust powers

Introduction:

The **National Human Rights Commission**, a statutory body under the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**, plays a vital role in monitoring rights violations, yet struggles to act against powerful actors.

Body: Limits of NHRC/SHRC in confronting state power

1. Key Contributions

- Probed custodial deaths, prison conditions, bonded labour
- *Example:* 2024–25: NHRC intervened in Rajasthan police abuse case; sought video-based FIR recording

2. Structural Limitations

- Chairperson must be retired CJI – narrows pool
- Appointments remain executive-dominated
- Vacancies often delay case disposal
- *As of 2025*, 3 of 7 NHRC posts vacant

3. Lack of Enforcement Powers

- NHRC can only recommend – no binding power
- *Example:* 2023 Bihar custodial death report was ignored by state police without consequence

4. Jurisdictional Restrictions

- Cannot investigate matters older than **1 year**
- Cannot probe **armed forces violations** directly
- *2024 Kashmir encounter cases* excluded from NHRC remit

5. Funding and Staffing Constraints

- Budget allocation fell short by 18% in 2023–24
- Lacks dedicated investigation wing or tech support

6. Reforms Suggested

- *Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)* recommends autonomy in appointments, more diversity
- *2nd ARC & Verma Committee* called for binding powers and federal coordination
- **National Human Rights Commission**, a statutory body under the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**, plays a vital role in monitoring rights violations, yet struggles to act against powerful actors.



ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**
- *Justice Verma Committee (1999)*
- *2nd ARC on Rights & Ethics*
- **2024 NHRC intervention:** Gujarat inter-caste violence, Delhi prison torture report

Conclusion:

Without structural empowerment, NHRC risks becoming toothless. Legal amendments, budgetary support, and greater federal coordination are essential to safeguard rights against systemic abuse.

Q3. Which steps are required for the constitutionalization of a Commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give reasons. (2020, 15M)

What is the question asking:

Steps for **making a statutory body constitutional**, and whether **NCW should be made constitutional** for deeper gender justice.

How to approach:

Intro – NCW's current role

Body – Steps + rationale for constitutionalisation + limitations + examples

Conclusion – Balanced reform outlook

Introduction:

The **National Commission for Women (NCW)**, created under the 1990 Act, protects women's rights. Making it a constitutional body could enhance its autonomy, authority, and enforcement capacity.

Body: Steps for constitutionalising commissions and relevance for NCW

1. Steps for Constitutionalisation

- Requires **constitutional amendment** via Article 368

- New Article (e.g. 338C) to define mandate, powers, tenure
- Parliament approval + ratification by 50% states (if affecting states)

2. Why NCW Needs Constitutional Status

- Current status = recommendatory only
- Can't enforce compliance or summon suo motu
- 2024: NCW's direction to social media platforms on online abuse went unheeded

3. Enhanced Enforcement and Autonomy

- Constitutional status ensures protection from executive interference
- Better staffing, budget, and jurisdiction
- *Example:* NCSC and NCST have clearer enforcement scope and SC backing

4. Rising Gender Rights Challenges

- Rise in **AI-based abuse, cyberstalking**, political underrepresentation
- 2025: NCW flagged 20% increase in deepfake-based harassment, no central grievance redressal mechanism

5. Existing Limitations

- No direct powers to summon police or penalise state actors
- *Example:* In 2023, NCW couldn't compel Haryana police to act on forced marriage case

6. Precedents & Suggestions

- *Justice Verma Committee (2013):* recommended stronger NCW with legal powers
- *Parliamentary Standing Committee 2021:* suggested constitutional upgrade for NCW and NCPCR

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- NCW Act, 1990
- *Justice Verma Committee (2013)*
- *PSC Report on Women & Law 2021*
- *NCW 2024 report:* Online violence + political intimidation
- Proposed **Article 338C** for Women's Commission

Conclusion:

Empowering NCW constitutionally will bolster gender justice. But structural reforms, decentralised units, and coordination with judiciary and police are equally essential for tangible impact.

Q4. "Recent amendments to the Right to Information Act will have a profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission." Discuss. (2020, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Do 2019 amendments to RTI Act **weaken Information Commissions' independence?**

How to approach:

Intro – RTI's institutional setup

Body – Amendments + 5–6 autonomy threats + outcomes

Conclusion – RTI's spirit must be protected

Introduction:

The **RTI Act, 2005**, empowered citizens and ensured transparency through the **Central and State Information Commissions**. The 2019 amendments raise concerns over diluted independence and executive dominance.

Body: Impact of RTI amendments on institutional independence

1. Key Amendments in 2019

- Removed fixed 5-year tenure for CIC/SIC
- Centre empowered to decide **tenure, salaries, and service conditions**

2. Threat to Institutional Autonomy

- Central control over service terms weakens independence
- *2024 example*: 2 SICs in Maharashtra remained vacant for months after Centre delayed clearance

3. Impact on Federal Structure

- State Commissions now indirectly under Union influence
- Undermines cooperative transparency architecture

4. Lowering Constitutional Equivalence

- Earlier, CIC equated to CEC; now removed
- Symbolic downgrade discourages whistleblowers and complainants

5. Weakening Public Trust in RTI

- More than **2.2 lakh pending cases (as of March 2025)**
- Activists cite increased case pendency due to lack of proactiveness

6. Judicial Response

- *Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India (2021)*: SC upheld amendment but urged transparency in appointments
- *CIC orders on electoral bonds (2019–20)* weakened after new tenure rules

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **RTI Act, 2005**, RTI Amendment Act 2019
- *ADR v. UOI (2021)*
- **CIC 2024 report**: Backlog, delays rising post-amendment
- **2nd ARC on RTI**: Independence is backbone of information regime

Conclusion:

To preserve transparency, Information Commissions must function autonomously. Amending service conditions without public consultation undermines trust, and reforms must restore statutory independence.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2022

- **Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. (15 M)**
- **Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body. (10 M)**

• 2023

- **Discuss the role of the Competition Commission of India in containing the abuse of dominant position by Multi-National Corporations in India. Refer to recent decisions. (10 M)**

• 2024

- **Explain and distinguish between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals. Whether they entertain civil as well as criminal cases? (10 M)**
- **The duty of the Comptroller and Auditor General is not merely to ensure the legality of expenditure but also its propriety." Comment. (10 M)**

Q1. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. (2022, 15M)

What is the question asking:

Evaluate how the **ECI uses the MCC** to regulate free and fair elections, and how its role has evolved alongside the MCC.

How to approach:

Intro – Origin of MCC and ECI's mandate

Body – 6–7 dimensions: evolution, powers, limitations, judicial backing, implementation examples

Conclusion – Reform suggestions to empower ECI

Introduction:

The **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)**, a voluntary code issued by the **Election Commission under Article 324**, has evolved into a crucial tool to uphold electoral integrity and ethical campaigning.

Body: ECI's role in enforcing Model Code of Conduct over time**1. Historical Evolution of MCC**

- First used in 1960 Kerala elections; formally adopted by ECI in 1979
- Now applied from date of election announcement
- *2024 Lok Sabha Elections*: MCC enforced across 543 constituencies from March 2024

2. Legal vs Moral Code

- MCC isn't a law, but **violation invites action under IPC, RP Act, etc.**
- Its moral pressure often leads to **self-censorship by candidates**

3. Key Provisions of MCC

- No misuse of official machinery
- No hate speech or communal appeals
- Ban on announcing new schemes
- *Example*: ECI stayed ₹4,000 crore highway project launch in April 2024

4. ECI's Role in Enforcement

- Can **issue notices, censure candidates**, file FIRs
- *Example*: ECI banned a top minister in May 2024 from campaigning for 48 hours due to communal statements

5. Judicial Support and Autonomy

- *S. Subramaniam Balaji (2013)*: SC urged statutory backing for MCC
- SC upheld ECI's disqualification of candidates for paid news (2020)

6. Challenges Faced by ECI

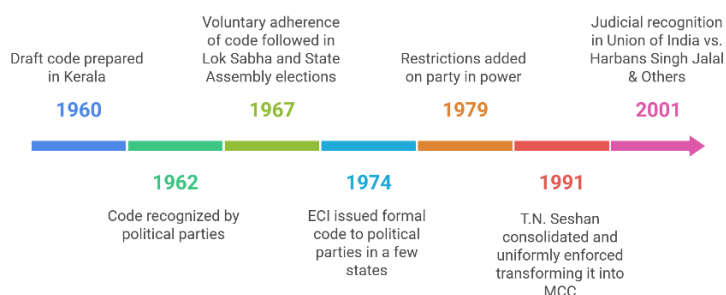
- **No legal status**, delays in action
- Selective enforcement accusations
- Pressure from ruling governments
- *ADR 2024 report*: 47% of MCC complaints lacked action within 3 days

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 324, RP Act 1951, IPC**
- *S. Subramaniam Balaji v. State of Tamil Nadu (2013)*
- **ADR Report 2024**: Enforcement delays, EC autonomy questioned
- *ECI April 2024 Handbook* update on MCC digital enforcement

Conclusion:

Strengthening ECI with statutory backing for MCC, timely action protocols, and insulation from political pressure is key to sustaining electoral neutrality in a vibrant democracy.

Evolution of the Model Code of Conduct in India

Q2. Discuss the role of the National Commission for Backward Classes in the wake of its transformation from a statutory body to a constitutional body. (2022, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Explain how the **role and powers of NCBC** have changed after it became a **constitutional body under Article 338B**.

How to approach:

Intro – Timeline of evolution

Body – Earlier limitations, post-constitutional status powers, examples from 2024–25

Conclusion – Need for further reforms

Introduction:

The **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018** transformed the **National Commission for Backward Classes** into a **constitutional body under Article 338B**, strengthening its mandate in safeguarding social justice for OBCs.

Body: Enhanced role of NCBC after gaining constitutional status

1. Earlier as a Statutory Body

- Functioned under NCBC Act, 1993
- Only advisory role on inclusion/exclusion
- No power to hear grievances

2. Now a Constitutional Authority

- Has **powers of a civil court** under Clause 5
- Can **summon officials, investigate complaints**
- Jurisdiction over **service matters, educational rights, and welfare schemes**

3. Increased Visibility & Advocacy Role

- Played key role in **EWS-OBC seat allocation** in NEET (2022)
- **2024:** NCBC flagged poor OBC representation in J&K public sector hiring

4. Better Coordination with Centre and States

- Periodic review of OBC welfare schemes
- **2025:** Bihar and UP asked to amend state OBC scholarship disbursement norms after NCBC report

5. Still Lacks Enforcement Powers

- No binding authority like SC/ST Commission
- Recommendations often ignored
- **2024:** NCBC's report on private sector reservation implementation still pending response

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 338B**, NCBC Act, 1993
- **123rd Amendment Act (2018)**
- *SC in Indra Sawhney case (1992)*
- *NCBC Report 2024:* Underrepresentation in Central Universities

Conclusion:

While constitutional status enhances NCBC's authority, giving it **binding powers** and expanding scope to private sector reservations will make it a more effective instrument of social justice.

Q3. Discuss the role of the Competition Commission of India in containing the abuse of dominant position by Multi-National Corporations in India. Refer to recent decisions. (2023, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Explain how **CCI tackles monopolistic abuse** by MNCs through investigations, penalties, and regulation — with recent decisions.

How to approach:

Intro – CCI's mandate

Body – 5–6 dimensions: legal basis, types of abuse, recent MNC cases, challenges

Conclusion – CCI's strengthening in digital age

Introduction:

The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**, established under the **Competition Act, 2002**, plays a pivotal role in curbing monopolistic and anti-competitive practices, especially by dominant multinational corporations operating in Indian markets.

Body: CCI safeguards Indian markets from unfair practices by powerful corporations**1. Legal Basis & Powers**

- Investigates abuse of dominant position under **Section 4**
- Can levy fines, issue cease and desist orders
- Supported by **DG Investigation** wing

2. Price Fixing and Market Access

- **2024:** CCI fined **Amazon India ₹750 crore** for influencing seller algorithms and controlling marketplace pricing unfairly

3. Abuse of Platform Dominance

- **2022:** Google fined ₹936 crore for **unfair Play Store billing practices**
- **2025 update:** CCI reviewing complaint against **Apple Pay** for restricting third-party apps

4. Predatory Pricing and Bundling

- **2023:** Zomato and Swiggy warned for imposing listing restrictions on restaurants
- Uber under scrutiny for unfair discounts in Bengaluru

5. Deterrence through Penalties and Guidelines

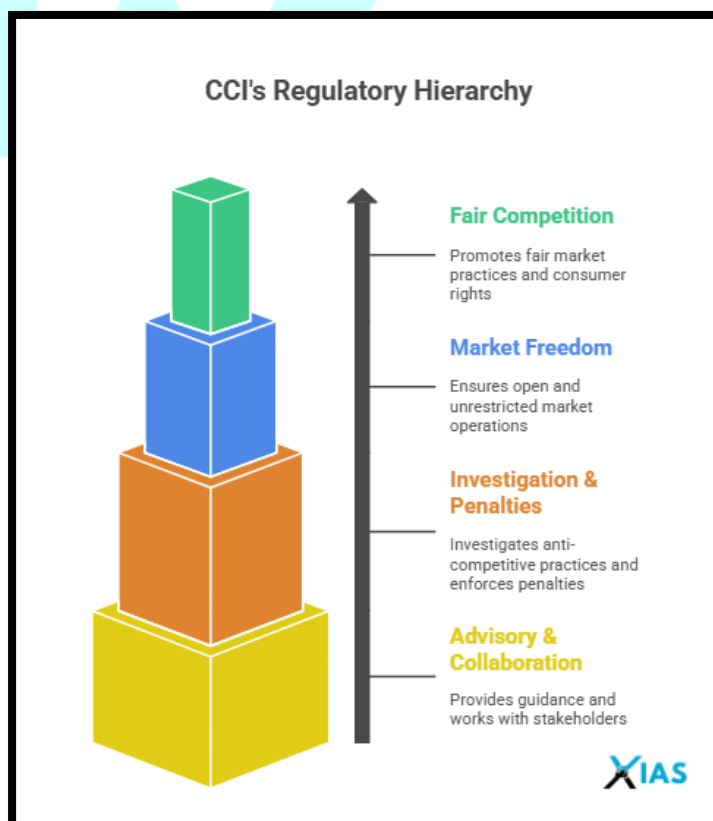
- CCI issued **2024 Competition Guidelines for E-commerce**, emphasising transparency and non-discrimination

6. Challenges in Enforcement

- Digital platforms operate globally; jurisdictional overlaps
- Delay in finalising **Digital Competition Law**, as per 2024 Parliamentary Committee

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Competition Act, 2002** – Sec 3 & 4
- CCI decisions: Google (2022), Amazon (2024), Zomato (2023)
- **Parliamentary Committee Report 2024:** Need for digital antitrust law
- New **Digital Markets Bill (draft 2025)** under review

Conclusion:

CCI remains pivotal in checking MNC abuse, but needs **stronger digital-era tools, quicker resolution capacity**, and global cooperation to protect Indian consumers and market competition.

Q4. Explain and distinguish between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals. Whether they entertain civil as well as criminal cases? (2024, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Differentiate between **Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals** in terms of constitution, procedure, jurisdiction, and legal validity. Also clarify their scope in civil/criminal matters.

How to approach:

Intro – Origin and legal basis of both

Body – Comparative table or structured distinction + jurisdiction examples

Conclusion – Ensure access to justice through reforms in both

Introduction:

While **Lok Adalats** under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** aim at informal settlement of disputes, **Arbitration Tribunals** are private dispute resolution mechanisms governed by the **Arbitration Act, 1996**.

Body: Thematic comparison between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Lok Adalat</u>	<u>Arbitration Tribunal</u>
<u>Legal Basis</u>	Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987	Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996
<u>Nature</u>	Statutory, quasi-judicial	Contractual, private
<u>Jurisdiction</u>	Civil, compoundable criminal cases	Only civil, commercial disputes
<u>Composition</u>	Retired judges, social workers, advocates	Arbitrators chosen by parties (technical/legal experts)
<u>Award Status</u>	Deemed as decree of civil court, binding	Binding like civil court decree but subject to challenge under Section 34
<u>Cost</u>	Free, no court fees	Costly, governed by party agreement
<u>Appeal Provision</u>	No appeal (consensual)	Appeal lies under limited grounds

Key Scope Clarification:

- **Lok Adalat** can take up **compoundable criminal offences**, e.g., Section 138 of NI Act, traffic challans
- **Arbitration Tribunal** cannot handle criminal matters
- *Example 2024:* Lok Adalat in Telangana settled ₹23 crore in traffic fine cases in a single day (February 2024)

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **SC in Afcons Infra v. Cherian Varkey (2010):** Encouraged ADR, including Lok Adalat
- **Arbitration Amendment Act 2021** – made awards subject to unconditional stay in case of fraud
- **NITI Aayog 2024 Report:** Recommended “Online Arbitration Grid” and “AI Lok Adalat” pilots

Conclusion:

Both mechanisms enhance speedy justice. But stronger institutionalisation, digital integration, and jurisdictional clarity can optimise their effectiveness for India's vast backlog of disputes.

Q5. "The duty of the Comptroller and Auditor General is not merely to ensure the legality of expenditure but also its propriety." Comment. (2024, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Explain how **CAG's role** extends beyond just checking legality to also evaluating **propriety** — i.e., the wisdom, fairness, and public interest behind expenditures.

How to approach:

Intro – CAG's constitutional basis

Body – Legal audit vs propriety audit; examples; challenges; limitations

Conclusion – Reform suggestions to enhance propriety audits

Introduction:

The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)**, under **Article 149**, ensures accountability in public expenditure by auditing both the **legality and appropriateness (propriety)** of how public funds are used.

Body: Role of CAG in audits

1. Legal vs Propriety Audit

- **Legal Audit:** Is spending within budget head and authority?
- **Propriety Audit:** Was the spending prudent, ethical, and necessary in public interest?
- *Example:* Spending on luxury cars for village heads in Odisha flagged by CAG in 2023 as "avoidable expenditure"

2. Key Instruments for Propriety Audit

- Audit reports on **performance, compliance, and economy**
- Highlights "avoidable expenditure," "idle assets," "wasteful duplication"
- *2024:* CAG flagged ₹1,200 crore underspent Smart City funds in 5 states despite fund releases

3. Role in Democratic Oversight

- Reports tabled in Parliament; examined by **PAC**
- Builds public pressure on ministries
- *Example:* 2023 audit on BharatNet Phase-II prompted DoT to release pending vendor payments

4. Not Just Past Spending – Forward-Looking Insight

- CAG offers **recommendations for reform** in governance practices
- *2025:* CAG proposed new procurement practices for AI software in state e-governance schemes

5. Challenges in Propriety Audit

- Not legally binding
- Executive often contests interpretation of "propriety"
- Resource constraints for large-scale performance audits

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 149, DPC Act, 1971**
- *2nd ARC Report on Financial Management*
- **CAG's 2024 Audit Reports:** Highlighted wasteful LPG subsidy duplication in northeastern states
- **PAC 2023:** Endorsed CAG propriety objections on Rural Road Phase-III spending

Conclusion:

CAG's propriety audit is central to ensuring ethical and efficient governance. Strengthening PAC follow-up and public accountability mechanisms can amplify its impact on executive behaviour.

TOPIC-8: Government policies and interventions

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design, implementation and Information Communication Technology (ICT)



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013

- The concept of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is almost a century old in India with early beginnings in Madras Presidency in pre-independent India. The scheme has again been given impetus in most states in the last two decades. Critically examine its twin objectives, latest mandates, and success. (10 M)
- The Central Government frequently complains about the poor performance of the State Governments in eradicating the suffering of vulnerable sections of society. Restructuring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes across the sectors for ameliorating the cause of vulnerable sections of the population aims at providing flexibility to the States in better implementation. Critically evaluate. (10 M)
- Electronic cash transfer system for welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage, and facilitate reforms. Comment. (10 M)
- The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment. (10 M)

Q1. The concept of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is almost a century old in India with early beginnings in Madras Presidency in pre-independent India. The scheme has again been given impetus in most states in the last two decades. Critically examine its twin objectives, latest mandates, and success. (2013, 10M)

What is the question asking:

It seeks a critical assessment of the **objectives, recent reforms, and performance** of the Mid-Day Meal scheme.

How to approach:

Intro – Constitutionally rooted background

Body – Objectives (2), 5 positives, 5 challenges, each with 2024–25 examples

Conclusion – Strengthening future delivery

Introduction:

The **Mid-Day Meal Scheme**, launched nationwide in 1995 and restructured as **PM POSHAN in 2021**, addresses **Article 21A (Right to Education)** and **Article 47 (nutrition)** for vulnerable children.

Body: Improving nutrition and education through targeted school meals.

Twin Objectives of the Scheme:

- **Nutritional Security:** Ensure minimum caloric and protein intake for growing children.
- **Educational Incentive:** Improve enrolment, attendance, and reduce dropout among socio-economically deprived students.

5 Successes of MDM / PM POSHAN (2024–25 examples):

1. Improved School Retention:

- *MoE Annual Report 2024:* Enrolment increased by 7.8% in backward districts of Bihar due to fortified mid-day meals.

2. Reduction in Malnutrition:

- *POSHAN Abhiyan 2.0 (2024):* Found 14% decline in anaemia among girls aged 6–14 in Chhattisgarh schools with egg-based MDM.

3. Local Economic Support:

- 2025 pilot in Karnataka: 400+ Self-Help Groups linked to MDM supply chains, boosting rural livelihoods.

4. Introduction of Millets & Local Crops:

- *Smart Food India 2024*: Millet integration in PM POSHAN meals across 9 states – aiding climate resilience and nutrition.

5. Real-Time Monitoring:

- 2025 rollout of **PM-POSHAN Dashboard 2.0** with geo-tagged kitchens and grievance redressal in states like Telangana and Maharashtra.

5 Key Challenges (2024–25 examples):

1. Caste and Social Discrimination:

- *February 2024 (Rajasthan)*: Dalit children denied food by cook in a public school, triggering NHRC notice.

2. Corruption and Leakages:

- *CAG Audit 2024*: Flagged ₹68 crore misappropriation in midday meal funds in Uttar Pradesh across 3 districts.

3. Poor Infrastructure and Food Quality:

- *Jharkhand 2025*: 20% schools lack hygienic kitchens; cases of food poisoning reported due to improper storage.

4. Delayed Fund Transfers:

- *Assam and Odisha 2024*: 3-month delay in fund release led to suspension of meals in over 2,000 schools.

5. Monitoring Gaps and Data Manipulation:

- *NITI Aayog Digital Governance Brief 2025*: States like MP showed inflated attendance for funding benefits under PM POSHAN.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 21A**: Right to Education
- **PM POSHAN 2021**, Budget: ₹11,600 crore (2024–25)
- *SC in PUCL v. Union of India (2001)*: Made MDM a legal entitlement
- **NITI Aayog 2024 Evaluation Report**
- *MoE Mid-Day Meal Dashboard 2025*

Conclusion:

Ensuring transparency, kitchen hygiene, timely funds, and stronger social inclusion through community monitoring will make PM POSHAN a cornerstone for child welfare and education equity.

Where Nutrition Meets Education for Child Development



Q2. The Central Government frequently complains about the poor performance of the State Governments in eradicating the suffering of vulnerable sections of society. Restructuring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes across the sectors for ameliorating the cause of vulnerable sections of the population aims at providing flexibility to the States in better implementation. Critically evaluate. (2013, 10M)

What is the question asking:

It seeks a **critical assessment** of the restructuring of **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)** in terms of **flexibility, efficiency, and outcomes** for vulnerable sections.

How to approach:

Intro – Historical evolution and constitutional link

Body – 5 positives of restructuring, 5 challenges; current scheme examples

Conclusion – Way forward for centre–state cooperative implementation

Introduction:

Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), restructured post-2013 and rationalised to 130 in 2022–23, aim to enhance **state flexibility and ownership** in delivering welfare for vulnerable communities under **Article 38 and 46**.

Body: Strengthening delivery to vulnerable through flexible CSS models.

5 Positives of Restructured CSS (2024–25 examples):

1. **Greater State Autonomy:**
 - States like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh adapted **Ayushman Bharat** to cover additional diseases under state funding in 2024.
2. **Outcome-Based Planning:**
 - *Mission Vatsalya 2024* adopted State Action Plans for child welfare, ensuring targeted fund utilisation based on needs.
3. **Reduced Overlap and Duplication:**
 - Merger of **PMAGY, SCA to SCSP, and Umbrella SC scheme** led to simplified fund flows in tribal-dominated Jharkhand districts.
4. **Flexi-Fund Provision:**
 - Under **PM-KSHAY 2.0 (2024)**, 10% flexi-fund allowed states to build region-specific waste treatment units.
5. **Digital Dashboards for Monitoring:**
 - *NITI Aayog's CSS Analytics Portal 2025* provides live data on scheme progress in nutrition, rural housing, and skilling.

5 Challenges in CSS Implementation (with 2024–25 examples):

1. **Delayed Fund Transfers:**
 - *March 2024:* Tamil Nadu flagged delay of ₹1,200 crore under Jal Jeevan Mission, halting pipeline projects in 8 districts.
2. **Fragmented Administrative Capacity:**
 - States with poor bureaucratic capacity (e.g. Bihar, Nagaland) struggle with implementation despite funds, per *MHA CSS Review 2024*.
3. **Mismatch in Priorities:**
 - Uttar Pradesh 2024: High fund allocation under Smart Cities, but poor usage under SC Welfare schemes.
4. **Conditionalities Affect Local Design:**
 - *PM Garib Kalyan Yojana:* States found rigid spending categories limited adaptation for nomadic groups in Rajasthan (2024 report).

5. Low Outcome Accountability:

- *CAG Report 2025*: Identified lack of clear performance indicators in **Poshan 2.0** in 7 states.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- 2nd ARC: “Localised innovation needs flexible fiscal space”
- **Article 38, 46** – Directive Principles for vulnerable sections
- **CSS Restructuring Committee, 2016** recommendations
- NITI Aayog’s 2024 “One Nation–One Scheme Platform”
- MoF Expenditure Review 2025: Flagged CSS leakages in sanitation and rural housing

Conclusion:

To improve welfare outcomes, restructuring must be coupled with decentralised planning, timely fund flows, and digital accountability tools co-developed by states and the centre in cooperative spirit.

Q3. Electronic cash transfer system for welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage, and facilitate reforms. Comment. (2013, 10M)

What is the question asking:

This asks for an evaluation of **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** and related cash transfer systems in reducing **corruption and inefficiency** in welfare schemes.

How to approach:

Intro – DBT as a digital welfare tool

Body – 5 benefits with 2024–25 data + 5 challenges

Conclusion – Suggest reforms for inclusion and impact

Introduction:

The **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** mechanism, launched in 2013 and digitally expanded through **DBT 2.0 (2024)**, aims to enhance transparency, eliminate leakages, and ensure direct delivery of welfare entitlements.

Body: Dimensions of Direct Benefit Transfer through digital ways

5 Benefits of Electronic Cash Transfers (2024–25 examples):

- 1. Elimination of Middlemen and Ghost Beneficiaries:**
 - *Aadhaar–SEED integration* in PDS 2024 removed 2.1 crore ghost ration cards across 6 states.
- 2. Improved Financial Inclusion:**
 - 95.6% rural women now have Jan Dhan accounts as per *MoF DBT Tracker 2024*; direct LPG subsidy credited under **PAHAL**.
- 3. Time-bound Transfers:**
 - *PM-KISAN 2025* released ₹2,000 tranches within 24 hours of announcement due to automated digital push.
- 4. Cost-Efficient Delivery:**
 - *MoRD Data 2024*: Reduced MNREGS transaction cost from ₹5.1 to ₹1.8 per payment via Aadhaar-based DBT.
- 5. Promotion of Digital Literacy & Governance:**
 - *DBT Saarthi Yojana 2025* launched in tribal Gujarat to assist elders with biometric authentication and grievance redressal.

5 Key Challenges (2024–25 examples):

- 1. Exclusion Errors:**
 - *Jharkhand 2024*: Over 1 lakh elderly denied pensions due to Aadhaar mismatch; NHRC issued notice.
- 2. Inadequate Digital Infrastructure:**
 - Mizoram and Nagaland DBT transfer failures reported due to poor server connectivity (*MeitY Review, March 2024*).
- 3. Delay in Last-Mile Transfers:**

- *Chhattisgarh 2025*: PM Ujjwala beneficiaries got LPG subsidy 45 days late due to bank-server sync issues.

4. **Biometric Authentication Failures:**

- Rajasthan tribal belts: 18% biometric mismatch in DBT pensions; *UIDAI 2024 Report* flagged need for alternative verification.

5. **Digital Illiteracy among Beneficiaries:**

- Women in rural Assam (2025) still rely on middlemen for DBT information, defeating the transparency intent.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **DBT Mission under Cabinet Secretariat**
- **Jam Trinity**: Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile
- *Justice Sinha Committee on Welfare Leakages*
- **DBT 2.0 Dashboard 2024–25**
- *UIDAI Circular 2025*: Pushed OTP-based fallback for failed biometric authentications

Conclusion:

Digital transfers have revolutionised welfare delivery but must be accompanied by grievance redressal, financial literacy, and multi-mode verification to ensure no beneficiary is left behind.

Q4. The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment. (2013, 10M)

What is the question asking:

It asks for a **commentary on the foundational concept of PURA**, i.e. establishing **physical, electronic, and knowledge connectivity** to deliver urban-like amenities in rural areas.

How to approach:

Intro – Background and Gandhian roots

Body – 5 key connectivity pillars of PURA with 2024–25 examples

Conclusion – PURA's relevance in current digital rural governance

Introduction:

The PURA scheme, conceptualised by **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** and piloted by the **MoRD**, aimed to ensure **urban-level quality of life in rural India** by enhancing integrated connectivity.

Body: Connectivity as a catalyst for rural prosperity in PURA vision.

5 Pillars of PURA Connectivity :

1. **Physical Connectivity (Roads, Transport):**

- Under **PMGSY 3.0 (2024)**, rural hinterlands in Jharkhand and Odisha connected with all-weather roads, boosting local market access and medical emergency reach.

2. **Electronic Connectivity (Digital Infrastructure):**

- *BharatNet Phase II (2024)* completed 93% of village panchayat optical fibre rollout; enabled CSC e-services in tribal Maharashtra.

3. **Knowledge Connectivity (Education & Skill Training):**

- *Skill India Rural Grid 2025*: Remote Andhra Pradesh villages now digitally linked with ITIs and e-learning content through DIKSHA-PURA interface.

4. **Economic Connectivity (Livelihood Access):**

- *PM Vishwakarma Yojana 2025*: Merged with PURA-linked rural hubs to provide MSME toolkits, artisan markets, and solar grids.

5. **Social Connectivity (Health, Governance, Welfare):**

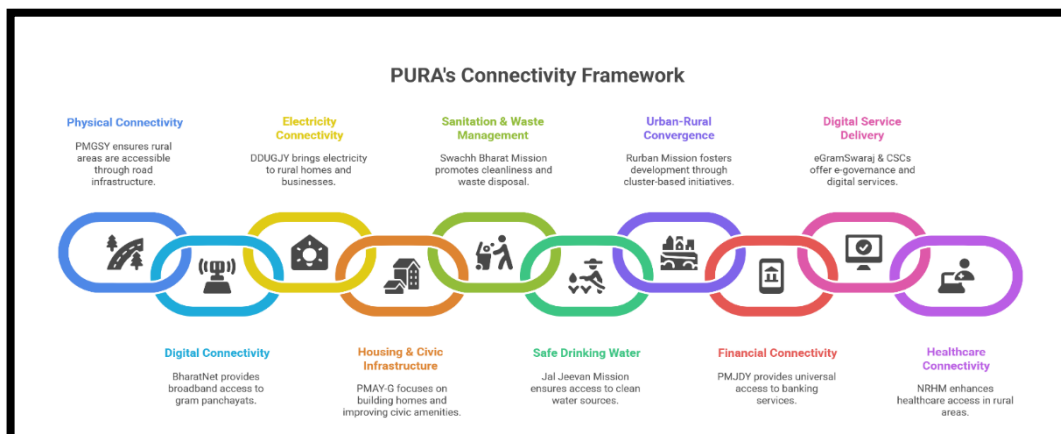
- e-Sanjeevani telemedicine 2025 linked 12,000 Gram Panchayats via PURA telehealth kiosks, ensuring remote diagnostics for maternal health.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- Concept by **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**
- **PURA 2.0 proposal by NITI Aayog (2024)**
- **Digital India + BharatNet synergy**
- 2nd ARC on Rural–Urban Connectivity (2007)
- **SAMPANN (2025)** – Unified pension portal under PURA e-governance model

Conclusion:

PURA remains a visionary model for bridging India's rural–urban divide. Scaling up integrated connectivity will transform village clusters into self-sustaining engines of inclusive development.



• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2014

- **Though 100 percent FDI is already allowed in non-news media like a trade publication and general entertainment channel, the government is mulling over the proposal for increased FDI in news media for quite some time. What difference would an increase in FDI make? Critically evaluate the pros and cons. (12.5 M)**
- **Two parallel-run schemes of the Government, viz. the Aadhar card and NPM, one voluntary and the other compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need to run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve development benefits and equitable growth. (12.5 M)**
- **An athlete participates in the Olympics for personal triumph and the nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies on their return. Discuss the merit of state-sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement. (12.5 M)**

Q1. Though 100 percent FDI is already allowed in non-news media like a trade publication and general entertainment channel, the government is mulling over the proposal for increased FDI in news media for quite some time. What difference would an increase in FDI make? Critically evaluate the pros and cons. (2014, 12.5M)

What is the question asking:

It seeks a critical evaluation of the **impact of increasing FDI in the news media sector**, including pros and cons.

How to approach:

Intro – Article 19(1)(a), FDI policy context

Body – 5 pros and 5 cons with 2024–25 examples

Conclusion – Balanced way forward

Introduction:

While **100% FDI** is permitted in non-news media, FDI in print news (26%) and digital news (26%) remains capped due to **Article 19(1)(a)** concerns over foreign influence in journalism.

Body: Impacts of FDI in news media**5 Merits of Increasing FDI in News Media (2024–25):**

1. **Capital Infusion & Tech Upgrade:**
 - *2025 Budget Forum Report:* Indian digital news outlets could access global AI tools and data journalism platforms with foreign funding.
2. **Professionalisation of Journalism:**
 - Entry of ethical global players like **Thomson Reuters** and **BBC Digital** can elevate standards of reporting in investigative journalism.
3. **Boost to Startups and Digital Expansion:**
 - *Startup India Media Pitch 2024:* Over 200 vernacular portals in Tier-II cities seek FDI backing for multilingual expansion.
4. **Greater Competition & Content Diversity:**
 - Entry of foreign-funded ventures would reduce monopoly of a few media conglomerates (e.g. Adani–NDTV).
5. **Employment Generation & Skill Transfer:**
 - Tie-ups with institutions like **Columbia Journalism School India Hub (2025)** for capacity building in new media ethics and fact-checking.

5 Concerns with Higher FDI in News Media:

1. **Threat to Editorial Independence:**
 - *Parliamentary Standing Committee 2024* warned that foreign investors may influence national political narratives in conflict zones.
2. **National Security Concerns:**
 - Risk of **data surveillance and information warfare** from entities with links to adversarial nations (e.g. Chinese apps banned in 2024).
3. **Digital Disinformation Risk:**
 - SC-monitored panel (2025) raised concern over foreign-funded news portals spreading misinformation on electoral bonds.
4. **Erosion of Indigenous Voices:**
 - Smaller regional and community media may be crowded out by foreign-funded English-language platforms.
5. **Conflict with Sovereignty and Policy Autonomy:**
 - Retaining control over narratives on social policies, Kashmir, and minority rights may be compromised.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Article 19(1)(a)** – Freedom of speech
- *Press Council of India Reports (2024)*
- **FDI Policy 2024 Update** – 26% in news media (with prior approval)
- **Parliamentary Committee on IT (2024–25)**
- *UNESCO Media Viability Index: India ranked 143/180 in press freedom*

Conclusion:

Balanced liberalisation with **ownership checks, data localisation, and editorial safeguards** is key to unlocking FDI benefits while protecting national information sovereignty and public trust.

Q2. Two parallel-run schemes of the Government, viz. the Aadhaar card and NPM, one voluntary and the other compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need to run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve development benefits and equitable growth. (2014, 12.5M)

What is the question asking:

It asks for a **merit-based analysis** of Aadhaar and National Population Register (NPR), and whether both should co-exist or not.

Introduction:

Aadhaar, under UIDAI, is a biometric-based voluntary digital identity tool, while **NPR**, linked to the **Citizenship Act**, is a demographic database with mandatory linkage, sparking federal and privacy debates.

Body: Navigating Aadhaar and NPM concurrence on governance

Why Running Aadhaar & NPR Concurrently Makes Sense (2024–25):

1. Complementary Objectives:

- Aadhaar serves welfare targeting, while NPR is designed for citizenship enumeration under the **2024 Population Update Project**.

2. Legal Framework & Coverage Gaps:

- *UIDAI Report 2025*: 2.7 crore people (migrants, tribals) without Aadhaar but covered in NPR update in NE states.

3. Administrative Efficiency:

- Integrating datasets helped clean voter rolls in 3 states in 2024 under **Election Commission's SEED-Voter Sync**.

4. National Security Imperative:

- NPR aids in flagging illegal immigrants, esp. in Assam and West Bengal border zones (per MHA 2025).

5. Equitable Welfare Delivery:

- *Chhattisgarh 2024*: Social audit found Aadhaar-seeded DBT excluded some PVTGs, whereas NPR records helped re-include them.

Challenges of Dual Identity Systems:

1. Duplication and Confusion:

- *NITI Aayog Advisory (2025)* flagged redundant biometric processes burdening poor citizens.

2. Federal Resistance:

- Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal refused to cooperate with NPR citing privacy and exclusion fears.

3. Risk of Profiling and Surveillance:

- Supreme Court has mandated data protection laws before NPR rollout due to *Justice Srikrishna Committee* recommendations.

4. Lack of Legal Clarity:

- *UIDAI Act (2024 Amendment)* still does not clearly define relationship between NPR and Aadhaar.

5. Trust Deficit among Minorities:

- Social backlash in 2024–25 in parts of UP and Assam over perceived NRC–NPR linkage.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Aadhaar Act, 2016** (Amended in 2019, 2024)
- **Citizenship Rules, 2003** for NPR
- *Puttaswamy Judgment (2017)* on privacy
- *UIDAI vs. NPR Debate – MoHUA Note (2025)*

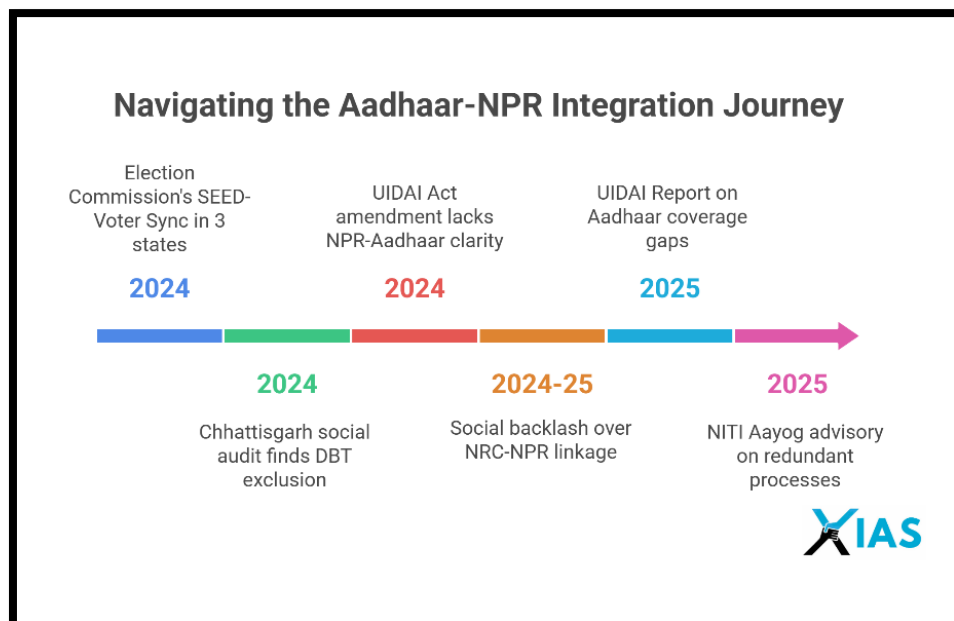
- Justice B.N. Srikrishna
Committee on Data
Protection

Conclusion:

Both Aadhaar and NPR serve distinct goals, but their concurrent use must be synchronised under strong **privacy safeguards and federal consultation** to prevent duplication and distrust.

Q3. An athlete participates in the Olympics for personal triumph and the nation's glory; victors are showered

with cash incentives by various agencies on their return. Discuss the merit of state-sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement. (2014, 12.5M)



What is the question asking:

It seeks a comparison between **pre-event support (talent nurturing)** and **post-event incentives (reward culture)** in Indian sports governance.

Introduction:

The contrasting focus on **state-sponsored grassroots talent identification** versus **post-performance monetary rewards** reflects India's ongoing struggle to institutionalise sporting excellence beyond episodic achievements like Olympic victories.

Body: Evaluation of talent nurturing and reward mechanism

5 Merits of Talent Identification and Cultivation:

- Long-Term Investment:**
 - Khelo India Talent Scouting Mission 2025* identified 3,700 athletes from rural and tribal belts for sustained Olympic prep.
- Holistic Athlete Development:**
 - SAI-IIS Bengaluru Residential Program:* Offers schooling, diet, training, and mental health support from early age.
- Regional Inclusion:**
 - Mission Utkarsh 2024* scouted talent from 112 Aspirational Districts with 50% women participation.
- Global Exposure and Consistency:**
 - Pre-Olympic exposure tours for shooters and wrestlers helped bag 5 Paris 2024 medals.
- Gender and Caste Equity:**
 - Women in Sports Scheme 2025* enabled Dalit and Adivasi girls from MP and Odisha to train in professional circuits.

5 Issues with Over-Reliance on Reward-Based Model:

- Neglect of Grassroots Systems:**
 - 2024: Only 1.2% of Union Sports Budget used for district-level infrastructure.
- Motivation Becomes Transactional:**

- Athletes may chase rewards, neglecting sportsmanship or longevity, as seen in boxing doping controversy (2025).
- 3. **Post-Achievement Abandonment:**
 - Several Tokyo 2020 medalists raised funds for surgery/training after initial fanfare faded.
- 4. **Political Interference in Rewards:**
 - Multiple states announced different cash prizes for Paris 2024 bronze winner, politicising success.
- 5. **Lack of Ecosystem for Sustained Excellence:**
 - India's rank fell in **Youth Olympics 2024**, showing cracks in pipeline despite earlier rewards.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **National Sports Policy 2025 (draft):** Emphasises long-term athlete ecosystem
- *Khelo India, TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme)*
- *SAI-IIS Partnerships, 2024–25*
- *World Bank "Sports for Development" Index – India Rank 94/180*
- *Paris Olympics 2024 medal analysis*

Conclusion:

India must shift from reward-centric recognition to institutionalised **talent pipelines**, training infrastructure, and community-based scouting to foster sustained global sporting excellence.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2016

- **Has the Indian governmental system responded adequately to the demands of Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization started in 1991? What can the government do to be responsive to this important change? (12.5 M)**

- 2017

- **To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation, and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes. Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme. (10 M)**

- 2018

- **Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation to the environment.' Comment with relevant illustrations. (10 M)**

Q1. Has the Indian governmental system responded adequately to the demands of Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization started in 1991? What can the government do to be responsive to this important change? (2016, 12.5M)

What is the question asking:

Evaluates how India's government has responded to **LPG reforms**, and seeks **suggestions for strengthening responsiveness** in today's context.

How to approach:

Intro – Contextualize 1991 reforms

Body – 5 responses + 5 reforms needed (2024–25 examples)

Conclusion – Balanced institutional way forward

Introduction:

The 1991 LPG reforms reshaped India's economy and governance, but the state's responsiveness has been uneven. Post-pandemic global realignments now demand **second-generation structural reforms and agile policymaking**.

Body: Contemporary relevance of LPG reforms, 1991

Has the system responded adequately? – 5 Key Trends

1. Policy Shifts & Economic Liberalisation:

- Production Linked Incentive (PLI 2.0, 2024) for electronics and semiconductors attracted over ₹47,000 crore in FDI.

2. Privatisation Drive:

- National Monetisation Pipeline (2021–25): Partial privatisation of railway stations, airports; but slow asset recycling (only 48% achieved till 2024).

3. Ease of Doing Business:

- Decriminalisation of 42 minor corporate offences (2024) under Companies Act improved investor confidence.

4. Global Integration & FTAs:

- India–EU FTA resumed (2025), India joined IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework) for trade-tech diplomacy.

5. Digital Governance:

- ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce, 2025) revolutionised MSME e-commerce access; India Stack exported to Mauritius and Kenya.

What More Needs to Be Done? – 5 Recommendations

1. Labour Market Reform Acceleration:

- Labour Codes still unevenly implemented; 2024 gig-worker unrest in Delhi shows lack of social security net.

2. Privatisation Transparency:

- Need for an independent disinvestment regulator after BPCL sale stalled over valuation concerns (2024).

3. State-Level Liberalisation:

- Asymmetric GST compliance and land reforms delay regional investment inflows (esp. Bihar, West Bengal).

4. Green Growth Integration:

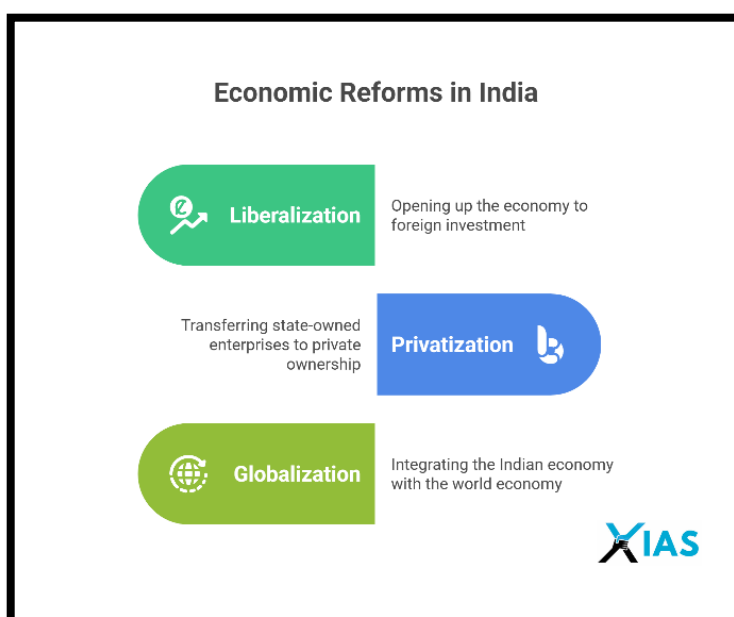
- SEZs need carbon-neutral incentives; PM-PRANAM 2024 underutilised in fertilizer-heavy states.

5. Regulatory Autonomy:

- Excessive control over SEBI, CCI flagged in NITI Aayog's 2025 report on "Reforming Regulatory Capture".

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **LPG reforms – 1991** under Narasimha Rao–Manmohan Singh
- **NMP, PLI, ONDC, PM-Gati Shakti (2024–25)**
- NITI Aayog 2025 report: "Navigating Next-Gen Liberalisation"



- **ARC II** – Reforms in Civil Services and Regulatory Institutions
- **Ease of Doing Business Ranking: India not ranked after 2021**

Conclusion:

India must institutionalise liberalisation gains by empowering regulators, strengthening federal investment governance, and balancing economic ambition with social equity in a post-globalisation landscape.

Q2. To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation, and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes. Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme. (2017, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Asks how effective WASH policy implementation depends on **accurate beneficiary targeting and outcome-linked planning**.

How to approach:

Intro – Define WASH and its evolution

Body – 5 points on importance of synchronisation with examples

Conclusion – Suggest better design-delivery mechanisms

Introduction:

The **WASH framework**, guided by **Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission**, addresses rural health, dignity, and environment. Beneficiary targeting and outcome alignment remain central to efficient delivery and impact.

Body: Role of accurate targeting in ensuring impactful WASH delivery

5 Dimensions Where Synchronisation is Critical (2024–25):

- 1. Behavioural Segmentation for Sanitation:**
 - *Swachh Survekshan 2024:* Found open defecation hotspots in tribal belts despite 100% toilet coverage due to cultural norms.
- 2. Gender-Sensitive WASH Design:**
 - *Jal Jeevan Mission 2024:* Women-led Village Water Committees ensured tap water to 77% of homes in Rajasthan, up from 45% in 2021.
- 3. Real-Time MIS and Geotagging:**
 - Integrated WASH Dashboard (2025) helped Jharkhand target 13,000 schools lacking menstrual hygiene facilities.
- 4. Health-WASH Integration:**
 - Tamil Nadu linked WASH with Health and Wellness Centres; reduced UTI and anemia cases by 12% (NHA 2024 data).
- 5. Urban–Rural Coordination:**
 - *AMRUT 2.0–SBM-U 2024* convergence prevented duplicate spending and streamlined drainage work in Tier-II cities.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **WASH – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene**
- **Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, Jal Jeevan Mission**
- *UNICEF–MoHFW 2024 Toolkit on Gender and WASH*
- *Swachh Survekshan 2024 Findings*
- 15th Finance Commission – Grants for rural sanitation and drinking water

Conclusion:

WASH outcomes require **hyperlocal targeting**, gender-responsive planning, and tech-driven monitoring to ensure dignity, health, and inclusion across India's most vulnerable regions.

Q3. Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation to the environment.' Comment with relevant illustrations. (2018, 10M)

What is the question asking:

Comments on **conflict between development policies and environmental protection**, with need for harmonised policy design.

How to approach:

Intro – Mention policy vs ecological dilemma

Body – 5 sectoral contradictions + examples

Conclusion – Need for green federalism and EIAs

Introduction:

Despite constitutional and legal safeguards, environmental governance in India is often compromised by **development–ecology contradictions**, especially in infrastructure, energy, and mining sectors, as evident in recent policy and project clashes.

Body: Impact of policy clashes on environmental sustainability and governance.

5 Key Policy Contradictions (2024–25):

1. Mining vs Tribal Rights:

- *2025 Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act* diluted tribal consent, sparking Adivasi protests in Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo Arand coal zone.

2. Hydro Projects vs Fragile Ecology:

- Teesta Phase-IV (Sikkim) fast-tracked in 2024, ignoring CWC biodiversity warnings; landslides increased 3x in project zone.

3. Green Energy vs Grassland Biodiversity:

- Gujarat's Banni grassland lost 800+ ha to solar parks (2024), displacing Maldhari communities and endangering Indian wolves.

4. EIA Dilutions vs Coastal Livelihoods:

- New CRZ norms (2024) exempted minor ports from EIA, threatening fisher settlements in Odisha and Tamil Nadu.

5. Urbanisation vs Water Table:

- PM Gati Shakti-led expressway projects diverted 12 wetlands in 2024–25, impacting local aquifers in Haryana and Rajasthan.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **Art. 48A, 51A(g)** – Environmental Duties
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006**
- **Environment Protection Act, 1986**
- NGT Rulings (Teesta, Banni Solar 2025)
- IPCC–India Working Paper (2024): "Sectoral Policy Misalignment"

Conclusion:

Harmonising environmental and sectoral policies through **participatory green governance**, impact assessments, and inter-ministerial coordination is critical to ensure sustainable development.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2019

- In the context of the neo-liberal paradigm of development planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost-effective and remove many implementation blockages. Discuss. (15 M)
- The need for cooperation among various service sectors has been an inherent component of development discourse. Partnership bridges bring the gap among the sectors. It also sets in motion a culture of 'Collaboration' and 'team spirit'. In the light of statements above, examine India's development process. (15 M)

- 2021

- 'Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment. (10 M)

- 2022

- The Gati-Shakti Yojana needs meticulous coordination between the government and the private sector to achieve the goal of connectivity. Discuss. (10 M)

- 2024

- What are the aims and objectives of the recently passed and enforced Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024? Whether University/State Education Board examinations are covered under the Act? (15 M)

Q1. In the context of the neo-liberal paradigm of development planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost-effective and remove many implementation blockages. Discuss. (2019, 15M)

What is the question asking:

Examine how **multi-level planning** under a **liberalised development paradigm** helps improve delivery, reduce costs, and resolve bottlenecks.

How to approach:

Intro – Define neo-liberalism and multi-level planning

Body – 5–6 dimensions with 2024–25 examples

Conclusion – Strengthening convergence and localisation

Introduction:

Under India's liberalised model post-1991, **multi-level planning** enables decentralised governance by involving Union, states, districts, and panchayats in **cost-efficient**, locally adapted planning frameworks, aligned with market-led growth.

Body:

Benefits of Multi-Level Planning in Neo-Liberal Context

1. Bottom-Up Policy Customisation:

- District-level SDG localisation in Kerala (2024) aligns local plans with national Viksit Bharat targets.

2. Cost-Efficiency and Resource Allocation:

- Gati Shakti State Portals (2025) enabled inter-departmental synchronisation of logistics investments across Assam and Gujarat, cutting duplication costs.

3. Data-Driven Governance:

- NITI Aayog's 2025 "Data as Development" Index allowed real-time monitoring of Aspirational Districts' health and education metrics.

4. Improved Federal Cooperation:

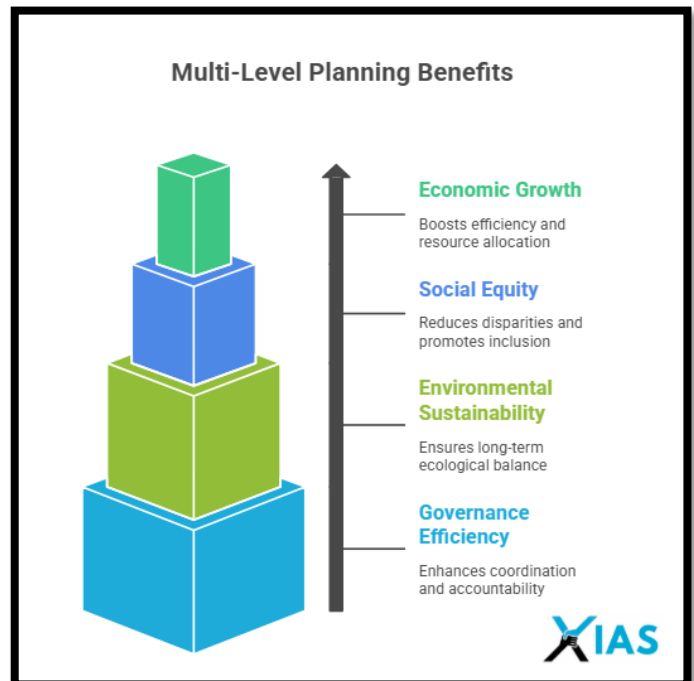
- State-Centre dialogues under PM Gati Shakti platform helped resolve land acquisition conflicts for industrial corridors in 6 states (2024).

5. Enhanced Urban-Rural Linkages:

- PURA 2.0 proposals integrate rural hubs with AMRUT urban plans for seamless water and transport service delivery.

6. Integration of Schemes:

- Odisha integrated Jal Jeevan Mission with MNREGA for cost-effective piped water delivery to tribal hamlets (2024 pilot).



ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **73rd & 74th Amendments** – Localised planning
- **NITI Aayog's SDG Localisation Framework (2024)**
- ARC II – "Local Governance"
- Gati Shakti State Master Plans – 2025 updates
- PURA 2.0 pilot concept notes (MoRD-NITI 2025)

Conclusion:

Institutionalising multi-level planning with data convergence, local autonomy, and inter-tier coordination is vital to delivering cost-effective outcomes in a market-driven development regime.

Q2. The need for cooperation among various service sectors has been an inherent component of development discourse. Partnership bridges bring the gap among the sectors. It also sets in motion a culture of 'Collaboration' and 'team spirit'. In the light of statements above, examine India's development process. (2019, 15M)

What is the question asking:

Examine how **inter-sectoral cooperation** and **partnership models** contribute to India's inclusive development process.

How to approach:

Intro – Define inter-sectoral partnerships

Body – 5 dimensions of collaboration with examples

Conclusion – Institutionalising convergence and synergy

Introduction:

India's development landscape increasingly relies on **inter-sectoral partnerships** between public, private, and civil society actors, which improve service delivery, fill capacity gaps, and embed **collaborative governance** into the policy ecosystem.

Body:

Key Dimensions of Inter-Sectoral Collaboration in India

1. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):

- *PM Gati Shakti* involved 47 private logistics operators in multi-modal transport integration (2025 status update).

2. Centre-State-Local Convergence:

- *Swachh Bharat Mission-U 2.0* (2024) linked state sanitation boards, ULBs, and private waste recyclers in Gujarat's plastic neutrality initiative.

3. Tech-Policy Interfaces:

- *Digital India stack* expanded to rural health via eSanjeevani and ABHA platform (2025 rollout in 11 new states).

4. CSR-Development Partnerships:

- *Aspirational Blocks Programme (2024)* leveraged CSR from Infosys Foundation for school digitisation in tribal Andhra Pradesh.

5. Cross-sectoral Mission Mode Projects:

- *National Education Policy* syncs Ministry of Education, Skill, Women & Child Development to deliver NEP-PMKVY convergence under Samagra Shiksha 2.0.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- NITI Aayog on "Development Partnerships" (2024)
- SDG 17 – Partnership for Goals
- PM Gati Shakti, SBM 2.0, ABP (2024–25)
- ARC II – Public-Private Collaboration Framework
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) growth 2024

Conclusion:

India's development model must institutionalise sectoral partnerships through shared accountability, tech platforms, and governance innovation to enhance outcomes in an increasingly integrated policy environment.

Q3. 'Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment. (2021, 10M)**What is the question asking:**

Evaluate the present status of **vocational + income-linked training models**, and suggest ways to make them impactful.

How to approach:

Intro – Define the scheme philosophy

Body – 5 challenges + 5 reforms with 2024–25 examples

Conclusion – Link with Atmanirbhar Bharat and employability

Introduction:

The "Earn while you learn" approach promotes **skill development with livelihood assurance**, yet needs revamp in structure, industry integration, and state ownership to achieve its true socio-economic potential.

Body:**Challenges in Implementation****1. Limited Industry Linkages:**

- Only 32% of PMKVY 4.0 trainees were absorbed in wage employment (MoSDE 2024 data).

2. State-Level Disparities:

- Bihar and Rajasthan lagged in apprenticeship targets; 2025 audit flagged utilisation below 40%.

3. Gender & Social Exclusion:

- Less than 22% female participation in industrial apprenticeships, especially in STEM trades (2024, NSDC).

4. Low Certification Recognition:

- Skills acquired through informal routes still not mapped under NSQF in Tier-3 towns.

5. **Fragmented Schemes:**

- Overlap of state schemes like Mukhyamantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana with national programs led to confusion in MP and UP.

Strengthening Measures

1. **Mandatory Apprenticeship Linkage in Higher Ed:**

- UGC 2024 draft mandates 6-month paid apprenticeship in all UG professional courses.

2. **Skill University Models:**

- Delhi's DSPU signed MoUs with 24 firms in 2025 to ensure stipend-based dual training.

3. **Digital Credentials & Mapping:**

- DigiLocker 2024 integrated with Skill India portal for real-time certification validation.

4. **Livelihood-Education Convergence:**

- SHG-led tailoring units in Odisha under NRLM were linked to textile skilling modules in 2025 pilot.

5. **Private Sector Co-financing:**

- TCS and L&T Foundation launched "Skill Bridge 2025" for backward districts with 60% wage guarantee.

ENRICHMENT POINTERS:

- **NSQF, PMKVY 4.0, DSPU (2025)**
- **UGC Draft on Vocational Degree Apprenticeships (2024)**
- ARC II on HRD – Vocational and Livelihood Convergence
- MoSDE Annual Report 2024–25
- SDG 4.3, 8.6 – Skills and Youth Employment

Conclusion:

Aligning vocational training with employment guarantees, digital skilling ecosystems, and industry-driven modules can transform "earn while you learn" into a mainstream path for youth inclusion.

Q1. The Gati-Shakti Yojana needs meticulous coordination between the government and the private sector to achieve the goal of connectivity. Discuss. (2022, 10M)

What is the question asking:

It asks for an evaluation of how **PM Gati Shakti** requires coordination between government and private players to achieve **multi-modal connectivity and infrastructure goals**.

How to approach:

Intro – What is Gati Shakti and its objective.

Body – 5 benefits of private-government coordination and 5 coordination challenges with 2024–25 examples.

Conclusion – Way forward with institutional synergy.

Introduction:

Launched in 2021, the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (NMP)** is a ₹111-lakh crore initiative aimed at integrated infrastructure development across sectors, requiring seamless coordination between government and private stakeholders.

Body:

Benefits of Government-Private Sector Coordination

1. **Accelerated Infrastructure Creation:**

- The **Haryana Integrated Logistics Hub (2024)**, developed with DP World, fast-tracked cargo connectivity.

2. **Technology and Efficiency Gains:**

- Private GIS and AI firms like **MapMyIndia** onboarded in 2025 for real-time corridor planning.
- 3. **Investment Multiplication:**
 - Gujarat's industrial parks under **DMIC (2024)** saw 2.8x return due to hybrid PPP models.
- 4. **Supply Chain Resilience:**
 - **Eastern Freight Corridor**, co-planned with JICA and private freight operators, improved last-mile delivery.
- 5. **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB):**
 - **Tamil Nadu's Gati Portal (2025)** reduced average infra project clearance time by 30%.

Challenges in Implementation Coordination

1. **Fragmented Data Sharing:**
 - Ministries and private firms lack seamless access to **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)** data.
2. **Land Acquisition Delays:**
 - In the **UP Defence Corridor**, delays due to overlapping state-centre priorities affected private participation.
3. **Weak State Capacities:**
 - Only 12 states fully integrated state-level GIS portals with NMP as of March 2025 (DPIIT data).
4. **Uneven Risk Distribution:**
 - Private players flagged high upfront risks without guaranteed returns in the **Gati Shakti Industrial Corridors**.
5. **Environmental and Clearance Delays:**
 - Conflicts between MoEF and developers over **connectivity projects in NE India (2024)** delayed implementation.

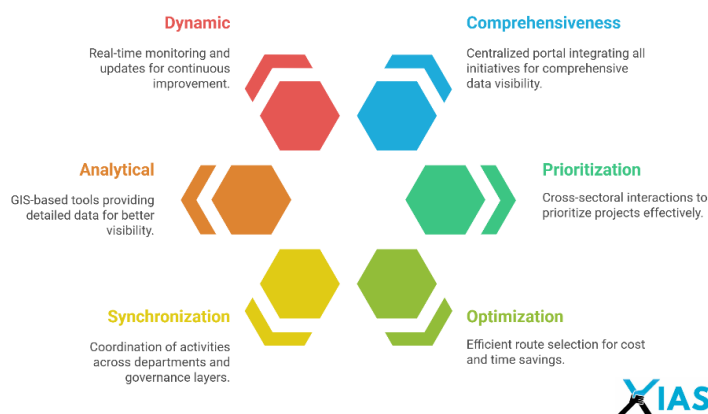
Committees/Recommendations:

- **Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) Report 2024 – DPIIT**
- **Standing Committee on Commerce (2024):** Urged tighter Centre–State–Private convergence
- **PM Gati Shakti Digital Platform Guidelines – 2025**
- **Public–Private Infra Partnership Policy Draft – NITI Aayog 2025**
- **ULIP integration mandated by MoCA (2025)**

Conclusion:

For Gati Shakti's success, robust PPP models, institutional synergy, and capacity-building of states must align with digital and spatial planning innovations across sectors.

6 Pillars of PM Gati Shakti



Q2. What are the aims and objectives of the recently passed and enforced Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024? Whether University/State Education Board examinations are covered under the Act? (2024, 15M)

What is the question asking:

Explain the **objectives** and **scope** of the 2024 Act, and analyse whether **university or state education board exams** fall under its ambit.

How to approach:

Intro – Why the Act was passed

Body – Objectives + Features + What is covered/not + Implications

Conclusion – Balanced suggestion for coverage expansion with safeguards

Introduction:

The **Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024** was enacted to curb systemic exam malpractices after recurring paper leaks in central recruitment exams like BPSC, UP-TET, and RRB.

Body:

Aims and Objectives of the Act

1. **Criminalisation of Organised Cheating Networks:**
 - Targets impersonation, question paper leaks, collusion, and use of unfair means at scale.
2. **Safeguard Public Recruitment Integrity:**
 - Applies to exams conducted by **UPSC, SSC, RRB, NTA, etc.** ensuring public trust in state hiring.
3. **Deterrent Legal Penalties:**
 - Jail up to 10 years and fines up to ₹1 crore for individuals and institutions involved.
4. **Vendor Accountability:**
 - Institutes/contractors responsible for breaches are punishable under IPC/CrPC and contract law.
5. **Prevent Disruption of Aspirants' Future:**
 - Seeks to ensure exam sanctity for over 2 crore annual test takers across India.

Coverage: Are State/University Exams Included?

1. **Central Exams Covered:**
 - All exams by central agencies are included (e.g. JEE, NEET, CUET, UPSC).
2. **University Exams Not Included (Yet):**
 - **UGC NET is covered**, but state board/university exams are **not under direct ambit**.
3. **State Adoption via Article 252 Possible:**
 - **Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar (2025)** expressed willingness to adopt the Act for state exams.
4. **Legal Ambiguity Persists:**
 - A **2025 PIL in Delhi HC** seeks extension to include CBSE and State Board Class 12 exams.
5. **Draft UGC and AICTE Guidelines Pending:**
 - UGC in 2025 began framing rules for universities to adopt equivalent anti-cheating frameworks.

Committees/Recommendations :

- **Standing Committee on Education (2023)** – Recommended urgent central legislation
- **Justice K.R. Radhakrishnan Committee (2024)** – Proposed tech-driven safeguards for public exams
- **NEP 2020 Implementation Report (2024)** – Emphasised integrity in assessment reforms
- **UGC Anti-Cheat Advisory (2025 Draft)**
- **MoE-DoPT Coordination Guidelines (2025)** for exam security protocols

Conclusion (25 words):

The Act is a critical step in exam reform, but must expand to include state/university exams while balancing punitive measures with systemic safeguards and accountability.

TOPIC-9:Development processes and the development Industry



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2013**

- **The legitimacy and accountability of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their patrons, the micro-finance outfits, need systematic assessment and scrutiny for the sustained success of the concept. Discuss. (10 M)**

- **2014**

- **The penetration of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas in promoting participation in development programmes is facing socio-cultural hurdles. Examine. (12.5 M)**

- **2015**

- **Examine critically the recent changes in the rule governing foreign funding of NGOs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976. (12.5 M)**
- **The Self-Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program (SBLP), which is India's own innovation, has proved to be one of the most effective poverty alleviation and women empowerment programmes. Elucidate. (12.5 M)**
- **How can the role of NGOs be strengthened in India for development works relating to the protection of the environment? Discuss, throwing light on the major constraints. (12.5 M)**

Q. The legitimacy and accountability of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their patrons, the micro-finance outfits, need systematic assessment and scrutiny for the sustained success of the concept. Discuss. (10 M)

What is the question asking:

The question asks for a critical discussion on the **need for assessing legitimacy and accountability** of SHGs and microfinance institutions (MFIs), focusing on their role in sustaining inclusive development.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define SHGs and MFIs with a reference to accountability in development.

Body: 5–6 polity-linked dimensions evaluating issues of legitimacy and accountability, with examples.

Conclusion: Constitutional/ethical way forward for participatory and transparent community development.

Introduction:

In the light of **Article 38 of the Constitution**, which mandates promoting welfare through institutions, **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** and **microfinance institutions (MFIs)** have emerged as grassroots tools of financial inclusion.

Body: Dimensions of Legitimacy and Accountability in SHGs and MFIs

1. Legal Ambiguity and Lack of Regulation

Most SHGs are informal entities with no uniform registration or oversight, while many MFIs operate in grey regulatory zones.

Example: The 2023 RBI discussion paper flagged the need for a legal framework for digital microfinance lending.

2. Financial Mismanagement and Debt Cycles

Several MFIs charge high interest rates, pushing vulnerable borrowers into cycles of debt. SHGs often lack trained book-keepers.

Example: Andhra Pradesh 2010 microfinance crisis led to borrower suicides and prompted the Malegam Committee's recommendations.

3. Patronage and Political Capture

Local elites sometimes capture SHGs to divert benefits or push political interests, undermining trust and fairness.

Example: 2022 NABARD report noted such risks in SHG federations in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

4. Lack of Grievance Redress and Oversight

No structured grievance redressal mechanism exists for SHG members; MFIs rarely face real-time public scrutiny.

Example: The 2023 RBI Integrated Ombudsman does not yet extend to informal SHG–bank linkages.

5. Exclusion of Marginalised Sections

Caste, gender, or regional barriers often hinder true inclusivity in SHG operations, despite their goals.

Example: Ministry of Rural Development (2024) highlighted under-representation of SC/ST women in some NRLM-linked SHGs.

6. Institutional Fragmentation and Coordination Issues

Multiple agencies (banks, NGOs, line departments) create overlapping responsibilities, weakening accountability loops.

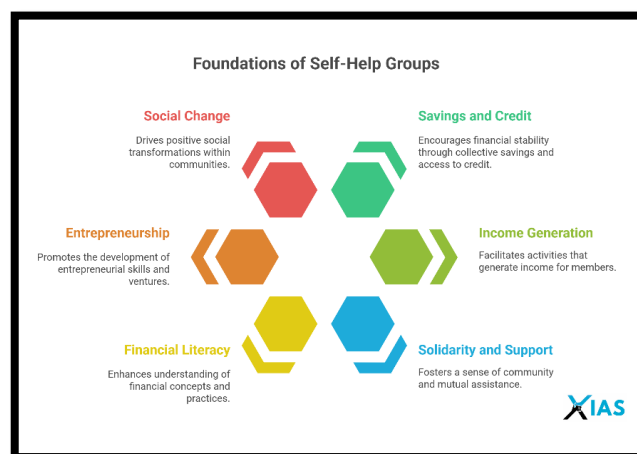
Example: Standing Committee (2023) recommended a single-window digital dashboard for SHG oversight under DAY-NRLM.

Enrichment:

- **Malegam Committee (2011):** Recommended interest rate caps and better borrower protection for MFIs.
- **RBI Microfinance Framework (2022):** Shifted to a uniform regulatory regime for MFIs.
- **Ministry of Rural Development (2024):** Pushed for SHG audits and geo-tagging for transparency.
- **Constitutional Link:** Article 38 – Social justice through institutional reform; Article 43 – Promotion of cooperative societies.

Conclusion:

Systemic audit, legal reform, and democratic oversight of SHGs and MFIs are essential to uphold accountability and ensure they serve as true engines of inclusive empowerment.



Q. The penetration of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas in promoting participation in development programmes is facing socio-cultural hurdles. Examine. (12.5 M)

What is the question asking:

The question asks for an examination of the **social and cultural challenges** limiting SHG participation in development programs, especially in rural India.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define SHGs in terms of participatory development; link to constitutional aims.

Body: Split into **Social Hurdles** and **Cultural Hurdles**, with 3 polity-linked points each.

Conclusion: Suggest inclusive, institution-backed way forward.

Introduction:

Self-Help Groups (SHGs), promoted under **DAY-NRLM** and rooted in the principle of **participatory governance**, enable grassroots development. As per **Article 38**, their impact is hindered by persistent **social and cultural barriers** in India's rural social structure.

Body: Socio-Cultural Hurdles to SHG Participation

I. Social Hurdles

1. Gender Hierarchy and Patriarchy

Most SHG members are women, but patriarchal norms restrict decision-making and mobility.

Example: NFHS-5 (2021–22) shows only 42% of rural women have autonomy in financial matters.

2. Caste-Based Exclusion

Dalit and tribal women often face subtle exclusion from SHG meetings or leadership roles.

Example: 2024 NITI Aayog monitoring flagged underrepresentation of SC/ST women in Bihar and Jharkhand SHGs.

3. Low Literacy and Awareness

Social barriers like illiteracy and digital illiteracy reduce confidence and effective SHG participation.

Example: In 2023, MoRD found only 37% of SHG women in Aspirational Districts could independently operate bank accounts.

II. Cultural Hurdles

4. Religious Conservatism and Mobility Restrictions

Traditional norms restrict women from participating in public gatherings or financial institutions.

Example: Rajasthan SHG study (2023) showed 27% of women cite religious restrictions as key barriers.

5. Fear of Honour-Based Sanctions

In conservative rural communities, SHG participation may be seen as dishonourable or rebellious.

Example: In 2024, reported cases in UP and MP showed backlash against women assuming SHG leadership roles.

6. Language and Communication Gaps

Cultural disconnect between SHG members and officials due to unfamiliar banking, bureaucratic, or digital language.

Example: 2024 Standing Committee on Rural Development advocated local-language SHG training manuals and multilingual digital interfaces.

Conclusion:

SHG reforms must move beyond economics to address rural social realities through inclusive training, legal safeguards, and culturally rooted empowerment frameworks at the grassroots level.

Q. The Self-Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program (SBLP), which is India's own innovation, has proved to be one of the most effective poverty alleviation and women empowerment programmes. Elucidate. (12.5 M)

What is the question asking:

The question requires an **elucidation (detailed explanation)** of how the **SHG–Bank Linkage Programme** has emerged as an effective tool for **poverty alleviation and women's empowerment**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define SBLP with constitutional or policy linkage and scale of impact.

Body: Explain its success across **5 dimensions** — economic, social, financial, political, and institutional.

Conclusion: Balanced, forward-looking closure with governance and equity principles.

Introduction:

Launched in 1992 by **NABARD**, the **SHG–Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP)** operationalises **Article 43** (promotion of cooperative economic participation) by integrating informal women's collectives with formal credit systems. It has since evolved into a cornerstone of India's inclusive development model.

Body: Success Dimensions of SHG–Bank Linkage Programme

1. Economic Upliftment through Micro-Credit Access

By enabling collateral-free loans, SBLP directly tackles rural indebtedness and livelihood insecurity.

Example: As of March 2024, over ₹1.85 lakh crore in cumulative bank credit has been disbursed to SHGs under NRLM.

2. Social Empowerment and Collective Assertion

Participation in SHGs builds confidence, breaks isolation, and promotes social mobility among rural women.

Example: SHGs in Tamil Nadu and Odisha now run village-level dispute resolution forums under MoRD pilot (2024).

3. Financial Inclusion and Banking Access

SBLP brings rural women into the formal banking net, supporting DBT and financial literacy.

Example: Over 82% of SHG members have Aadhaar-seeded Jan Dhan accounts (MoRD 2024).

4. Political and Civic Participation

Women active in SHGs often take leadership in Panchayats or Gram Sabhas, enhancing governance accountability.

Example: Bihar's JEEViKA SHG programme (2023–24) saw over 12,000 SHG leaders contesting Panchayat elections.

5. Institutional Strengthening and Credit Discipline

The program fosters credit discipline, enhances bank outreach, and improves NPAs in priority sector lending.

Example: NABARD data (2023) shows SHG-linked NPAs at 3.2%, significantly below MSME sector NPAs (~9%).

Conclusion:

The SHG–Bank Linkage model has institutionalised inclusive credit and women's agency, and its expansion into new sectors strengthens India's path toward grassroots equity and development.

Q. How can the role of NGOs be strengthened in India for development works relating to the protection of the environment? Discuss, throwing light on the major constraints. (12.5 M)

What is the question asking:

The question demands an analysis of how **NGOs' role in environmental protection** can be strengthened, along with a discussion on the **key constraints** they face.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define the role of NGOs in environmental governance with constitutional or legal linkage.

Body: First give **5 major constraints**, then **5 governance strategies** to strengthen NGOs' role.

Conclusion: Balanced constitutional outlook with governance reform logic.

Introduction:

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as per the vision of **Article 48A** and the **National Environment Policy (2006)**, act as civic intermediaries in environmental governance. Their ability to influence conservation, awareness, and policy innovation is often undermined by institutional and legal constraints.

Body: Constraints and Strengthening Measures for Environmental NGOs

I. Major Constraints Faced by NGOs

1. Stringent Regulatory Environment (FCRA, CSR Rules)

Frequent changes in FCRA and CSR compliance restrict funding flows to environment-linked NGOs.

Example: Over 1,500 environmental NGOs lost FCRA licences between 2020–2024 (MHA data).

2. Ambiguity in Legal Status and Recognition

Many NGOs operate under diverse statutes (Societies Act, Trusts Act), leading to unclear mandates and oversight.

Example: 2024 NITI Aayog report called for uniform registration and monitoring framework.

3. Institutional Resistance from Bureaucracy

NGO involvement is sometimes seen as adversarial or redundant by state agencies.

Example: Delays in forest rights implementation in Odisha due to poor NGO–departmental coordination.

4. Capacity Gaps and Lack of Scientific Expertise

Many grassroots NGOs lack technical skills or data infrastructure for environmental advocacy.

Example: Only 12% of green NGOs working in climate sectors have GIS or forecasting capability (MoEFCC 2023).

5. Politicisation and Trust Deficit

NGOs working on mining, forest, or land issues often face accusations of foreign influence or activism.

Example: Parliamentary Standing Committee (2023) noted misuse of FCRA norms to silence critical NGOs.

II. Ways to Strengthen NGOs' Role in Environmental Protection

1. Streamlining the Regulatory Environment

Simplified FCRA and CSR compliance norms for credible environmental NGOs with verified track record.

Example: Law Commission Report 281 (2024) recommended graded FCRA scrutiny for environmental NGOs.

2. Institutionalising NGO Participation in Policy

Mandating NGO roles in State Pollution Control Boards and District Environment Committees.

Example: Maharashtra Environment Plan (2023) includes two civil society seats in regional committees.

3. Public-NGO Data Sharing Mechanisms

Creating joint data platforms for pollution, afforestation, and climate impact monitoring.

Example: 2024 MoEFCC-NGO green data portal pilot launched in Assam and Kerala.

4. Capacity Building and Skill Partnerships

Government-accredited training and fellowship schemes to enhance NGO expertise.

Example: Green Skilling Initiative (2024) launched by MoEFCC in collaboration with TERI and local NGOs.

5. Performance-Based Recognition and Funding

Linking funding with outcomes (tree survival, water recharge, etc.) via competitive grants.

Example: CAMPA-linked NGO evaluation framework rolled out in 5 states in 2023.

Conclusion:

Empowering environmental NGOs through enabling laws, data access, and institutional partnerships can realise the constitutional mandate of sustainable development and participatory environmental governance.



• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2017

- ‘The emergence of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in contemporary times points to the slow but steady withdrawal of the state from developmental activities.’ Examine the role of the SHGs in developmental activities and the measures taken by the Government of India to promote the SHGs. (15 M)

• 2020

- “Micro-Finance as an anti-poverty vaccine, is aimed at asset creation and income security of the rural poor in India.” Evaluate the role of the Self-Help Groups in achieving the twin objectives along with empowering women in rural India. (15 M)

• 2021

- Can Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative model. (15 M)
- Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition be broken through microfinancing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (15 M)

Q1. 'The emergence of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in contemporary times points to the slow but steady withdrawal of the state from developmental activities.' Examine the role of the SHGs in developmental activities and the measures taken by the Government of India to promote the SHGs. (2017)

What is the question asking:

The question explores whether the rise of SHGs reflects a **retreat of the state** from welfare functions and asks to assess both **SHGs' role in development** and **government support mechanisms**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define SHGs as a complementary model, not a substitute, within India's development governance.

Body: (1) Role of SHGs in developmental activities across 4–5 dimensions, (2) Government promotion measures.

Conclusion: Balanced view on SHG–state synergy in participatory development.

Introduction:

The emergence of **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** reflects a shift towards **participatory development**, not a retreat of the state. As envisioned under **Article 43**, SHGs function as grassroots partners in delivering services aligned with constitutional goals of inclusive and decentralized development.

Body:

I. Role of SHGs in Developmental Activities

1. Livelihood Generation and Financial Inclusion

SHGs provide micro-credit and income diversification for poor households.

Example: SHGs under DAY-NRLM engaged in goat rearing, handicrafts, and food processing in tribal Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

2. Women's Empowerment and Social Capital

They foster leadership, reduce dependency, and improve decision-making agency.

Example: JEEViKA SHGs in Bihar have recorded significant increases in women's literacy and civic participation.

3. Public Service Delivery Support

SHGs assist in disbursing pensions, managing anganwadis, and delivering PDS rations.

Example: Kudumbashree in Kerala runs over 1,000 micro-enterprises in service sectors like health and sanitation.

4. Behaviour Change and Community Mobilisation

They promote awareness around nutrition, sanitation, and maternal health.

Example: UNDP–MoRD collaboration (2023) helped SHGs lead community campaigns in Aspirational Districts.

5. Conflict Resolution and Local Governance

SHG federations act as informal mediation forums in panchayats.

Example: Madhya Pradesh's SHGs under Tejaswini project facilitate dispute resolution in rural land issues.

II. Government Measures to Promote SHGs

- **DAY-NRLM:** Over 10 crore women mobilised; ₹1.85 lakh crore in cumulative credit as of 2024.
- **Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS):** Offers loans at 7%, reduced to 4% for prompt repayment.
- **SHG–Bank Linkage:** Supported via NABARD and SBI-led FINSAG digital dashboard (2023).
- **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Program (SVEP):** Promotes micro-enterprises from SHG pool.
- **National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP):** World Bank-backed project to upscale SHG-based businesses with tech and skilling support.

Conclusion:

SHGs reflect not the withdrawal but the **reorientation of the state** from provider to enabler. Strengthening their synergy with institutions ensures participatory, accountable and demand-driven rural development.

Q2. “Micro-Finance as an anti-poverty vaccine, is aimed at asset creation and income security of the rural poor in India.” Evaluate the role of the Self-Help Groups in achieving the twin objectives along with empowering women in rural India. (2020)

What is the question asking:

The question evaluates how SHGs, as micro-finance instruments, help in **asset creation, income security, and women’s empowerment** in rural India.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define micro-finance as a development strategy within SHGs.

Body: Assess the SHG role across asset creation, income security, and women’s empowerment with examples.

Conclusion: Analytical conclusion linking institutional finance with grassroots gender transformation.

Introduction:

Rooted in India’s micro-finance evolution, the **SHG–Bank Linkage Programme** operationalises access to institutional credit under **priority sector norms**, thereby supporting **asset building, livelihood diversification**, and the empowerment of rural women through collective finance.

Body: Role of SHGs in various areas

I. Asset Creation

1. Productive Asset Investment

SHG loans support purchase of livestock, sewing machines, agricultural tools.

Example: SHGs in Andhra Pradesh’s SERP used revolving funds to create goat-rearing clusters and chillers for dairy.

2. Housing and Basic Amenities

Micro-loans support home repairs, toilets, solar panels.

Example: PM Awas Yojana convergence with SHGs for housing loans under NRLM in 2024.

II. Income Security

3. Diversified Micro-enterprises

Loans support tailoring, food processing, and handicrafts to reduce seasonal distress.

Example: Odisha’s Mission Shakti SHGs created 80,000+ small enterprises during COVID recovery.

4. Consumption Smoothing and Insurance

SHGs enable savings and access to social security schemes.

Example: Convergence with PM Jeevan Jyoti and Atal Pension Yojana has risen by 25% since 2022 in SHG-linked clusters.

III. Women’s Empowerment

5. Leadership and Financial Literacy

SHGs train women in bank operations, budget planning, and cooperative functioning.

Example: Over 50% of Panchayat-level Mahila Resource Centres are SHG-led in UP and Chhattisgarh (2024).

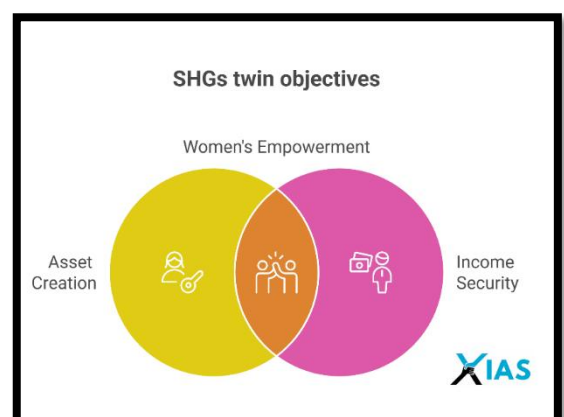
6. Gender Equity in Households

Increased income and voice in financial decisions lead to better gender outcomes.

Example: A 2023 UNDP study in Bundelkhand shows 34% drop in domestic violence in SHG-intensive areas.

Conclusion:

SHGs act as instruments of **structural poverty reduction**, enabling rural women to transition from vulnerability to agency through integrated access to finance, enterprise, and empowerment.



Q3. Can Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative model. (2021)

What is the question asking:

The question asks if **civil society and NGOs** can offer a **credible alternative to state-led service delivery**, and what **challenges** they face in doing so.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define NGO–civil society role as complementary in public service frameworks.

Body: (1) How they function as alternative service providers, (2) Challenges in scaling and sustaining the model.

Conclusion: Balanced future of co-governance.

Introduction:

Civil society and NGOs function as **non-state service actors** under the framework of **Article 38** and **Article 51A(g)**, aiming to realise distributive justice and participatory development through direct engagement with marginalised communities.

Body: Role and feasibility of NGOs in public service delivery

I. How NGOs Offer Alternative Models of Service Delivery

1. Last-Mile Reach in Remote Areas

They operate in tribal and conflict zones where state presence is limited.

Example: PRADAN's role in livelihood promotion in Chhattisgarh's LWE districts.

2. Innovation and Flexibility

NGOs often pioneer innovative models in health, education, and sanitation.

Example: Arghyam's decentralised water systems in Karnataka inspired Jal Jeevan Yojana models.

3. Cost-Effective and Community-Led Delivery

Lower admin costs and local participation improve efficacy.

Example: SEWA's primary healthcare delivery model in Gujarat uses local health workers.

4. Rights-Based Mobilisation

NGOs empower citizens to demand entitlements under MGNREGA, PDS, etc.

Example: MKSS's social audit model institutionalised in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.

5. Data-Driven Policy Feedback

NGOs provide granular data and impact evaluation.

Example: Accountability Initiative's learning assessment data influenced mid-day meal reform.

II. Challenges of This Model

1. Funding Uncertainty and FCRA Constraints

Lack of stable funds hampers long-term planning.

Example: Over 6,000 NGOs lost FCRA status between 2020–24.

2. Institutional Distrust from State Agencies

NGOs often seen as adversarial, reducing cooperation.

Example: Reduced access for NGOs in forest rights implementation in Odisha (2023).

3. Capacity and Professionalism Deficits

Small NGOs often lack skilled staff or tech systems.

Example: Only 18% of rural NGOs used digital MIS systems in MoSPI's 2023 NGO survey.

4. Politicisation and Identity Targeting

NGOs working on rights-based or minority issues face regulatory scrutiny.

Example: 2021–24 saw frequent regulatory action on advocacy NGOs.

5. Fragmentation and Duplication of Efforts

Lack of coordination leads to overlapping work and inefficient resource use.

Example: 2023 NITI Aayog paper called for a national NGO coordination grid.

Conclusion:

NGOs can co-create a **hybrid public service model** if empowered with legitimacy, stable finance, and coordination with state institutions under principles of transparency and democratic accountability.

Q4. Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition be broken through microfinancing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (2021)**What is the question asking:**

The question examines whether **microfinance via women SHGs** can address the interlinked issues of **gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link SHG microfinance with structural poverty-gender-health nexus.

Body: One section for each — gender, poverty, malnutrition — with SHG microfinance role and example.

Conclusion: Constitutional and rights-based conclusion.

Introduction:

The SHG–microfinance model addresses the **triple burden** of gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition through economic agency. Aligned with **SDG 1, 2, and 5**, it leverages collective finance to dismantle intergenerational deprivations in rural India.

Body: Role, impact, and limitations of women SHG microfinance**1. Addressing Gender Inequality**

Access to finance enhances agency, mobility, and decision-making.

Example: Tamil Nadu’s Mahalir Thittam SHGs improved women’s participation in Gram Sabhas and school committees.

2. Breaking the Poverty Trap

Asset creation and income security prevent distress migration and dependence.

Example: Rajasthan SHG dairy collectives enabled 2 lakh women to reach economic self-sufficiency by 2023.

3. Tackling Malnutrition and Food Security

SHG earnings are invested in nutrition, kitchen gardens, and health access.

Example: POSHAN Abhiyaan–SHG convergence led to 14% increase in child nutrition indicators in MP (2022–23).

4. Social Behaviour Change

Peer influence in SHGs promotes nutrition, health, sanitation awareness.

Example: UP NRLM SHGs launched “Swasthya Sakhi” campaigns in 25 districts (2024).

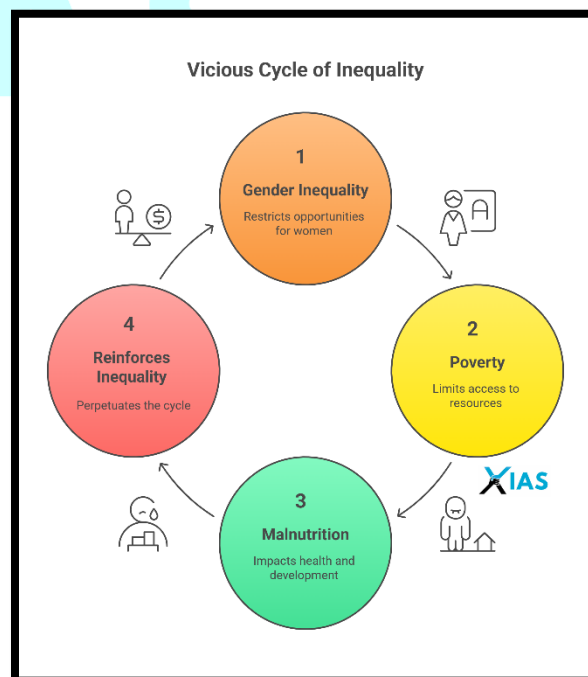
5. Intergenerational Impact

Children of SHG members show better school attendance and health indicators.

Example: 2023 MoRD survey found 18% higher vaccination rates in SHG households.

Conclusion:

SHG microfinance not only empowers rural women economically but transforms family well-being, dismantling the gender–poverty–nutrition trap through a rights-based, community-led pathway.



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2022**

- Do you agree with the view that increasing dependence on donor agencies for development reduces the importance of community participation in the development process? Justify your answer. (15 M)

- **2023**

- The crucial aspect of the development process has been the inadequate attention paid to Human Resource Development in India. Suggest measures that can address this inadequacy. (10 M)
- E-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features? (10 M)

- **2024**

- Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India's development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment. (10 M)

Q1. Do you agree with the view that increasing dependence on donor agencies for development reduces the importance of community participation in the development process? Justify your answer. (2022)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether rising dependence on **donor-driven development** weakens **community ownership and participation**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define donor-led vs community-led development.

Body: Give 5 pros and 5 cons of donor dependence vis-à-vis community participation.

Conclusion: Balanced constitutional and participatory way forward.

Introduction:

Development policy increasingly involves global and national donor agencies that fund large-scale interventions. Yet, as per **Article 243G**, the essence of participatory development lies in local community involvement, which may get diluted in donor-driven models.

Body: Evaluating Donor Dependence vs Community Participation

I. Where Donor-Led Development Undermines Community Participation

1. Top-Down Project Design

Interventions often ignore local needs and cultural contexts.

Example: World Bank-funded dam projects in North-East faced local resistance over land and identity issues.

2. Displacement of Local Knowledge

Donor frameworks may marginalise traditional ecological or social wisdom.

Example: International sanitation projects replaced existing rural composting practices without adaptation.

3. Accountability Skewed Toward Donors

Priority is often donor reporting, not public feedback.

Example: CAG report (2023) flagged lack of social audit in externally funded WASH projects.

4. Disempowerment of Local Institutions

Panchayats and SHGs are sidelined in favour of professionalised agencies.

Example: CSR-NGO partnerships in tribal belts bypassed Gram Sabha roles.

5. Perceived Foreign Influence and Resistance

Donor funding may be viewed as external imposition, reducing community ownership.

Example: FCRA restrictions intensified post-2020 due to perceived foreign agenda in development discourse.

II. Where Donor-Driven Models Strengthen Participation

1. Financial Support for Capacity Building

Donors help scale local NGOs and SHGs through training and tools.

Example: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's support to Bihar SHGs in health and nutrition.

2. Innovation and Pilots

Donor funding enables risk-taking in untested models later scaled up by government.

Example: UNICEF-backed community nutrition gardens later adopted under Poshan 2.0.

3. Bridging Public Funding Gaps

Large-scale interventions become possible in underfunded sectors.

Example: GAVI's support to India's immunisation expansion post-COVID.

4. Evidence-Driven Programming

Rigorous M&E ensures outcome-based community programs.

Example: USAID's sanitation impact dashboards enabled course correction in 2023 Swachh Bharat pilots.

5. Knowledge Transfer and Best Practices

Global experience enhances local institutional planning.

Example: Urban participatory budgeting pilots in Pune were donor-initiated and later institutionalised.

Conclusion:

Donor agency support must be guided by **local institutional ownership**, **Gram Sabha consent**, and **transparent partnership models**, preserving India's constitutional commitment to participatory development.

Q2. The crucial aspect of the development process has been the inadequate attention paid to Human Resource Development in India. Suggest measures that can address this inadequacy. (2023)

What is the question asking:

It asks for **measures to improve human resource development (HRD)**, given the systemic neglect in policy focus.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define HRD and link with constitutional/socioeconomic relevance.

Body: Give 5 thematic measures — education, skilling, health, migration, institutions.

Conclusion: HRD as foundation for long-term inclusive development.

Introduction:

Human Resource Development (HRD) involves expanding people's capabilities through education, health, and skills. **Article 41** and **SDGs 3, 4, 8** place HRD at the core of equitable growth, yet policy implementation remains fragmented and underfunded.

Body: Measures to Strengthen HRD in India

1. Revamp School Education Quality

Focus on foundational literacy via digital tools and multilingual pedagogy.

Example: NIPUN Bharat 2.0 launched in 2024 to strengthen learning outcomes in Class 1–3.

2. Skill–Industry Alignment and Lifelong Learning

Strengthen National Credit Framework and vertical skilling ladders.

Example: 2024 Budget introduced Skill India Digital platform with multilingual, modular skilling.

3. Strengthen Public Health Capacity

Prioritise preventive, primary, and digital health infrastructure.

Example: Ayushman Arogya Mandirs expanded to 1.5 lakh centres by March 2025.

4. Labour and Migration Portability

Ensure social protection for seasonal/interstate migrant workers.

Example: e-SHRAM portal integrated with State databases under MoLE in 2024.

5. Institutional Governance of HRD

Create convergence mechanisms across education, health, skilling ministries.

Example: National Human Development Authority proposed in ARC-like committee (2023).

Conclusion:

India's demographic advantage must be matched by systemic HRD investments that prioritise **quality, access, and institutional coordination**, ensuring sustainable and inclusive development outcomes.

Q3. E-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features? (2023)

What is the question asking:

It asks what **inadequacies** prevent **e-governance** from fully realising its transformative governance potential.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define e-governance and its link to transparency-accountability.

Body: List 5 inadequacies across infrastructure, design, inclusion, and institutional gaps.

Conclusion: Way forward with digital constitutionalism.

Introduction:

E-governance uses ICT to promote citizen-centric governance, aligned with **Right to Information, Digital India, and Article 21A**. While transformative in design, implementation challenges have slowed its full impact.

Body: Inadequacies in E-Governance Realisation

1. Digital Divide and Connectivity Gaps

Lack of internet in rural/tribal belts limits access to digital public services.

Example: BharatNet Phase II lagged behind targets in 8 EAG states (CAG 2023).

2. Low Digital Literacy and Trust Deficit

Poor awareness of services or fear of data misuse reduces uptake.

Example: 2024 ASCI report noted high dropout rates in DigiLocker and UMANG use among rural users.

3. Interoperability Failures and Fragmented Platforms

Citizen data scattered across ministries; no unified ID integration.

Example: PM Gati Shakti portal yet to be linked with UWIN (unorganised worker database).

4. Exclusion from Aadhaar-Based Services

Linkage issues or biometric mismatch deny entitlements.

Example: Delhi High Court (2023) ruled Aadhaar mismatch cannot block welfare delivery.

5. Weak Cybersecurity and Data Governance

Frequent breaches erode public trust in digital systems.

Example: 2024 NPCI server breach exposed 7 crore mobile-linked bank credentials.

Conclusion:

E-governance must evolve into a **rights-based, secure, and inclusive digital architecture**, with last-mile infrastructure and citizen-centric design at its core.



Q4. Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India's development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment. (2024)

What is the question asking:

It asks how **public charitable trusts** contribute to **inclusive development**, particularly in critical sectors.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define public charitable trusts and link with inclusivity and Article 38.

Body: List 5 contributions to vital public issues with enriched examples.

Conclusion: Constitutional role of philanthropy in deepening inclusion.

Introduction:

Public charitable trusts, regulated under **Indian Trusts Act** and supported by **CSR frameworks**, play a vital role in addressing public issues. They embody the **constitutional vision of Article 38** — promoting social justice and equitable access to opportunities.

Body: Contributions of Public Charitable Trusts to Inclusive Development

1. Health Access and Infrastructure

Set up hospitals, diagnostic centres, and preventive health camps.

Example: Tata Trusts operate over 100 rural cancer care centres across India.

2. Inclusive Education and Skilling

Provide scholarships, digital classrooms, and vocational training.

Example: Azim Premji Foundation supports schools in 5 aspirational districts with inclusive pedagogy models.

3. Urban Poor and Homeless Support

Run night shelters, food kitchens, and legal aid.

Example: Delhi Urban Shelter Board–Trust collaboration (2023) for modular shelter pods.

4. Environmental and Climate Action

Support afforestation, water harvesting, and waste management.

Example: Sir Ratan Tata Trust partners with Gram Panchayats for watershed development in Vidarbha.

5. Disability and Marginalised Inclusion

Run rehab centres and employment-linked interventions.

Example: Samarathanam Trust trains visually impaired youth in tech and BPO skills (2024 data).

Conclusion:

Public charitable trusts fill institutional voids in India's development journey and, when transparently governed, can scale **inclusive, need-sensitive solutions** aligned with public welfare priorities.

TOPIC-10: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the Population

WELFARE SCHEMES FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS BY CENTRE AND STATES

AND PERFORMANCE OF THESE SCHEMES; LAWS,
INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES CONSTITUTED FOR
THEIR PROTECTION AND BETTERMENT



- 2014
- Do government schemes for uplifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies? (12.5 M)
- 2016
- Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation. (12.5 M)
- 2017
- Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure an effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in society? Discuss. (10 M)
- 2018
- Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case. (15 M)

Q1. Do government schemes for uplifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies? (2014)

What is the question asking:

It examines whether **protective policies for vulnerable communities** create **structural exclusion** from urban entrepreneurial ecosystems.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define protective entitlements and economic mainstreaming of vulnerable sections.

Body: 5 arguments showing how policies can unintentionally exclude, and 5 counterpoints or policy corrections.

Conclusion: Balanced solution through equity-based urban inclusion.

Introduction:

Government schemes for SCs, STs, OBCs, and minorities aim to ensure **social justice** and access to resources, as mandated under **Articles 15(4)** and **46**. Yet, in urban economic settings, such entitlements may unintentionally restrict mobility and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Body: Impact of welfare-focused resource protection on urban entrepreneurial inclusion

I. How Social Resource Protection May Lead to Urban Exclusion

1. Rural/Location-Tied Entitlements

Schemes often require domicile or rural residence, discouraging migration.

Example: Land for STs under FRA or state allotments can't be monetised in urban ventures.

2. Skills and Ecosystem Mismatch

Schemes focus on rural skillsets with little exposure to urban entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Example: Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federations (TRIFED) lack urban incubation linkages.

3. Credit and Collateral Constraints

Beneficiaries lack urban assets or banking history to qualify for business loans.

Example: MUDRA loans have 3x higher rejection rates for first-generation urban SC/ST applicants (2024 SIDBI report).

4. Reservation-Centric Dependency Culture

Some argue welfare may disincentivize risk-taking or private entrepreneurship.

Example: Concerns raised in 2023 Lok Sabha debate on urban youth entrepreneurship under Ambedkar SC Hub.

5. Caste-Based Social Capital Deficit

Urban startup ecosystems rely on informal networks, which Dalit and tribal entrepreneurs lack.

Example: Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI) flagged barriers in angel investor access.

II. Counterpoints and Policy Evolutions

1. Urban Entrepreneurship Schemes Targeting Marginalised

Government is promoting caste-based enterprise clusters.

Example: SC/ST Entrepreneurs Forum and Stand-Up India reforms (2024) expanded urban access points.

2. Start-Up Inclusion Incentives

Urban incubators are mandated to reserve slots for marginalised founders.

Example: Atal Innovation Mission 2023 guidelines include SC/ST-specific mentorship.

3. Skill + Credit Convergence Models

Urban skilling now integrated with Udyam registration, linking MSME support.

Example: PM Vishwakarma Scheme (2024) supports ST/SC artisans in metro zones.

4. NEP 2020-Based Higher Ed Inclusion

Increased enrolment in urban institutions builds technical capacity.

Example: IITs launched reserved entrepreneur fellowships in 2023 for Dalit youth.

5. Livelihood–Migration Portability

e-SHRAM data used to connect migrants with urban job and training schemes.

Example: Delhi, Hyderabad running targeted migrant entrepreneurship pilots.

Conclusion:

Affirmative policies must evolve from static protection to **urban-capable economic mobility**, ensuring equity in entrepreneurship through skilling, finance, and institutional handholding.

Q2. Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks for a review of **National Policy for Children (2013)** and the status of its implementation.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link policy with constitutional and rights-based mandates.

Body: 5 key provisions + 5 gaps in implementation with examples.

Conclusion: Rights-based, accountable governance framework needed.

Introduction:

India's **National Policy for Children (2013)** recognises every child as a rights-holder, grounded in **Article 39(e)(f)** and the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. It outlines comprehensive development goals across survival, protection, participation, and education.

Body: Provisions and implementation challenges of the National Child Policy.

I. Key Provisions of the Policy

1. Holistic Development of Children

Addresses health, nutrition, education, protection, and participation.

Example: Links with ICDS, RTE, and child protection services.

2. Special Focus on Marginalised Children

Targets SC/ST, disabled, street and conflict-affected children.

Example: Juvenile Justice Act 2015 aligned with policy vision.

3. Child Participation in Decision-Making

Encourages space for expression in school and community platforms.

Example: Bal Panchayats in parts of Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

4. Convergence and Coordination Mechanism

Calls for integrated action across ministries and schemes.

Example: District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) created for this purpose.

5. Data, Monitoring, and Budgeting

Calls for child budgeting, impact analysis, and gender disaggregation.

Example: NCPCR dashboard pilot for child protection cases (2024).

II. Implementation Gaps

1. No Legal Backing or Dedicated Act

The policy lacks statutory status, limiting enforceability.

Example: Unlike RTE or MGNREGA, it's not justiciable.

2. Poor Budgetary Allocation and Prioritisation

Child budgeting remains ad hoc and fragmented.

Example: Share of children in Union Budget declined from 4.5% (2016) to 3.8% (2024).

3. Weak Monitoring at Local Level

Village Child Protection Committees largely inactive.

Example: CAG flagged non-functional DCPUs in 9 states (2023).

4. Lack of Awareness Among Duty-Bearers

Teachers, ASHAs, and Anganwadi workers not trained in policy framework.

Example: NCERT training module rollout incomplete even by 2024.

5. Poor Data Systems

No unified child database or real-time tracking.

Example: Mismatch in NCRB and NCPCR data on child abuse cases.

Conclusion:

The policy requires **statutory anchoring, budgeted convergence, and community-level enforcement** to transform intent into measurable child development outcomes.

Q3. Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure an effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in society? Discuss. (2017)

What is the question asking:

It assesses whether the **2016 RPwD Act** delivers effective inclusion and empowerment for persons with disabilities.

How to approach:

Introduction: State purpose and legal grounding of the Act.

Body: 5 enabling features + 5 gaps or challenges.

Conclusion: Rights-realisation through enforcement and inclusion.

Introduction:

The **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016**, aligns Indian law with the **UNCRPD**, expanding the definition of disability and institutionalising equality, accessibility, and non-discrimination under **Article 41** and **Article 15**.

Body: Evaluation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

I. Empowerment and Inclusion Provisions

1. Expanded Disability Categories

Increases list from 7 to 21 disabilities, including mental illness and blood disorders.

Example: Epilepsy, Parkinson's now included, increasing legal protection.

2. 4% Reservation in Public Employment

Improves access to government jobs and career stability.

Example: UPSC provided scribe and extra time to PwD candidates in 2024.

3. Inclusive Education Mandate

All educational institutions must adopt inclusive pedagogy.

Example: NEP 2020 integrates disabled students via UDL (Universal Design for Learning).

4. Accessibility in Infrastructure and ICT

Access audit and guidelines for public buildings and digital platforms.

Example: Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan created accessibility index for central buildings.

5. Penalty for Discrimination and Non-Compliance

Legal remedies for denial of rights or institutional negligence.

Example: Delhi High Court fined a coaching centre for denying admission to a visually impaired aspirant (2023).

II. Implementation Challenges

1. Low Awareness and Social Stigma

Discrimination persists in schools, families, and workplaces.

Example: Only 1 in 4 disabled persons access schooling (NSO 2023).

2. Inadequate Infrastructure Compliance

Access audits not implemented in many states.

Example: CAG (2023) reported <20% of public buildings in compliance.

3. Poor Grievance Redressal

State commissioners lack visibility or enforcement powers.

Example: Only 14 states had full-time disability commissioners by 2024.

4. Low Private Sector Participation

No mandated hiring quotas or tax incentives.

Example: Less than 1% PwD representation in private sector jobs (Labour Bureau 2023).

5. Weak Monitoring and Data Systems

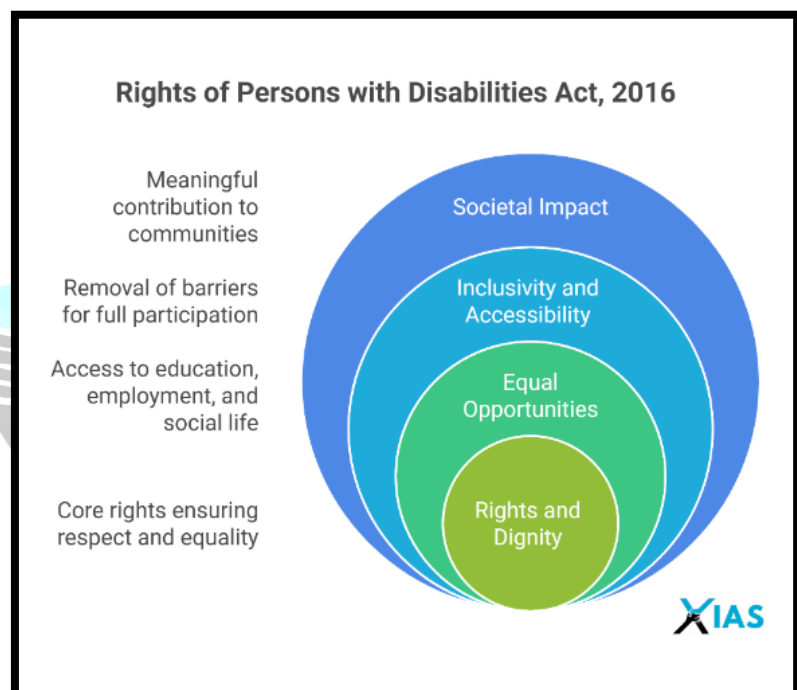
No real-time disability census or tracking.

Example: SECC 2011 data still used for policy planning.

Conclusion:

The RPwD Act creates a robust rights framework, but real empowerment

requires **social awareness, institutional capacity, and technology-enabled enforcement** at scale.



Q4. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case. (2018)

What is the question asking:

It seeks your position on whether **merging multiple identity-based commissions** into a single **Human Rights Commission** would be effective.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define role of statutory commissions in Indian polity.

Body: Give arguments for and against merging commissions.

Conclusion: Balanced governance-oriented suggestion.

Introduction:

Statutory commissions like **NCBC, NCW, NCPCR, NCM** function as institutional safeguards for vulnerable groups under **Articles 338 to 338B**. They embody constitutional morality, but operational overlaps raise questions on reform and consolidation.

Body: Overlap and feasibility of merging identity-based commissions into a unified human rights body.

I. Arguments in Favour of Merging**1. Reduces Jurisdictional Conflicts**

One central authority avoids turf wars.

Example: NCM–NCBC clashes over minority Dalit benefits (2022) delayed scholarship rollout.

2. Economies of Scale and Resource Pooling

Common infrastructure and staff reduce redundancy.

Example: ₹400 crore saved annually by unified administration (NITI Aayog projection, 2024).

3. Integrated Rights-Based Approach

Intersectional issues handled more holistically.

Example: Disabled tribal women's cases often fall through cracks in current silos.

4. Improved Monitoring and Impact Evaluation

Unified dashboards and grievance redressal systems.

Example: NHRC's e-HRC portal could be extended to all verticals.

5. Global Best Practices

Many countries have national equality commissions.

Example: South Africa's Human Rights Commission includes all vulnerable categories.

II. Arguments Against Merging**1. Loss of Focus on Identity-Specific Issues**

Caste, gender, minority concerns risk dilution.

Example: NCW's focus on dowry violence differs from NCM's religious discrimination remit.

2. Reduced Political and Social Visibility

Smaller groups lose access to constitutional voice.

Example: ST women's trafficking cases often ignored unless NCST intervenes directly.

3. Federal Concerns and State Autonomy

States may resist a centralised rights body.

Example: NE states objected to merger of tribal welfare cells in 2022.

4. Capacity Overload and Delays

One umbrella body risks becoming bureaucratically slow.

Example: NHRC already faces pendency of 30,000+ complaints (2023 data).

5. Constitutional and Legal Hurdles

Each commission has distinct legislative origin; merger requires complex amendments.

Example: Article 338B protects NCBC as a constitutional body.

Conclusion:

A **hybrid model** with identity-based verticals under an empowered rights architecture can offer both **focus and synergy**, preserving India's commitment to **inclusive constitutionalism**.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2019**

- “The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self-government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process.” Comment. (15 M)

- **2021**

- “Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and the feminist movement has been patriarchal.” Apart from women’s education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu? (15 M)
- Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to the absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of the policy process. Discuss. (15 M)

- **2022**

- Reforming the government delivery system through the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme is a progressive step, but it has its limitations too. Comment. (10 M)
- Besides the welfare schemes, India needs deft management of inflation and unemployment to serve the poor and the underprivileged sections of society. Discuss. (15 M)

Q1. “The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self-government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process.” Comment. (2019)

What is the question asking:

It asks for a critical comment on how far **women's political reservation at grassroots level** has altered India's **deep-rooted patriarchy in politics**.

How to approach:

Introduction: State the constitutional and legislative foundation of women’s reservation.

Body: 5 limitations + 5 positive transformations in patriarchal structure due to local body reservations.

Conclusion: Balanced assessment of impact and the path forward.

Introduction:

The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** mandate one-third reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), promoting **grassroots democratic inclusion**. Yet, patriarchal norms still constrain autonomy, representation, and real political power.

Body: Role, impact, and limitations of women’s reservation

I. Limitations in Challenging Patriarchy

1. Proxy Representation by Male Relatives

Women often function under control of husbands or family.

Example: “Sarpanch Pati” syndrome documented across MP, Bihar, Rajasthan (2024 NIRDPR survey).

2. Tokenism without Leadership Development

Many elected women are marginalised in actual governance decisions.

Example: Only 8% of women panchayat heads report decision-making control (MoPR 2023).

3. Social Backlash and Gender Violence

Politically active women face intimidation, trolling, and physical threats.

Example: NCRB (2024) reports 18% rise in political violence against women local representatives.

4. Skewed Focus on Soft Portfolios

Even within PRIs, women are often given “less important” domains like sanitation.

Example: In Karnataka PRIs, 70% women heads assigned to social sector, not revenue or roads.

5. Low Transition to Higher Political Levels

Reservation hasn't translated into stronger state/national political pipelines.

Example: Only 15% of Lok Sabha and 11% of Assemblies are women (2024 data).

II. Transformative Impacts Achieved

1. Increased Female Political Visibility

Millions of women now occupy formal roles in governance.

Example: Over 14 lakh elected women in PRIs across India as of 2023.

2. Focus on Gender-Centric Issues

Greater attention to water, health, schools, and nutrition.

Example: Women-led panchayats in Odisha improved immunisation coverage by 22% (UNDP 2023).

3. Role-Modelling and Leadership Pipelines

Creates pathways for local women into block, district, and state politics.

Example: Jharkhand's SHG leaders contested Zila Parishad polls successfully in 2024.

4. Disruption of Caste-Patriarchy Equations

Intersectional women leaders assert against dual marginalisation.

Example: Dalit woman sarpanch in Maharashtra initiated land redistribution under FRA in 2023.

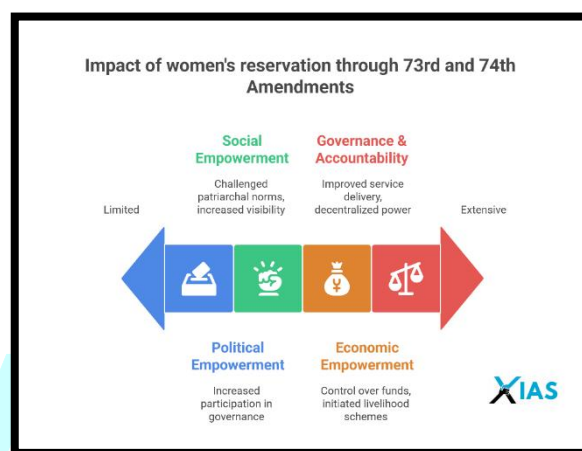
5. Capacity Building and Digital Tools

E-governance tools enhance women's participation.

Example: E-Gram Swaraj app saw 48% log-ins from women representatives in 2024.

Conclusion:

While local body reservations have expanded women's access, **patriarchy in political culture and party systems** must be tackled through legal, social, and institutional reform to enable real gender empowerment.



Q2. "Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and the feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women's education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu? (2021)

What is the question asking:

It asks for **non-schematic, societal interventions** needed to challenge India's **patriarchal attitudes** toward women and feminism.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define the persistence of patriarchy despite formal progress.

Body: 5 key interventions beyond schemes and education.

Conclusion: Multi-actor social transformation.

Introduction:

Despite legal equality and programmatic inclusion, **patriarchal mindsets** continue to frame women's roles in post-Independence India. As per **Article 15(1) and 51A(e)**, transformation requires deeper behavioural and institutional shifts beyond formal empowerment.

Body: Non-Schematic Interventions Needed

1. Gender-Sensitive Media and Popular Culture

Reframing narratives around masculinity, labour, and female leadership.

Example: NCERT-CBFC joint campaign launched in 2024 to assess gender bias in school media content.

2. Role of Men and Boys in Gender Advocacy

Masculinity-focused sensitisation in schools, police, and workplaces.

Example: MenEngage Alliance pilot in Delhi schools shows reduced sexist attitudes among male adolescents.

3. Reform in Religious and Customary Practices

Involve community leaders in reinterpreting gender-just norms.

Example: Bohra women-led campaigns against FGM supported by legal advocacy since 2023.

4. Labour and Care Work Recognition

Valuing unpaid domestic work via time-use surveys and local indexation.

Example: MoSPI 2024 survey shows 6.5 hours/day spent by women in unpaid care, unaccounted in GDP.

5. Social Audit of Patriarchal Institutions

Audit practices in police stations, panchayats, and judicial procedures for gender bias.

Example: 2023 Justice Verma Follow-up Forum recommended institutional behavioural audits.

Conclusion:

Challenging patriarchal attitudes demands **multi-sectoral change — in homes, institutions, and culture —** beyond schemes, to establish a rights-based and egalitarian gender order.

Q3. Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to the absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of the policy process. Discuss. (2021)

What is the question asking:

It explores why **welfare schemes underperform** due to **lack of beneficiary awareness and participation**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link welfare success with participatory governance.

Body: 5 limitations due to lack of awareness/involvement + 5 suggested improvements with examples.

Conclusion: Rights-based inclusion and citizen ownership.

Introduction:

The effectiveness of welfare schemes rests on **active citizen participation**, as envisioned under **Article 38 and 243G**. Top-down implementation often fails when beneficiaries are unaware or excluded from the policy cycle.

Body:

I. Challenges from Lack of Awareness/Involvement

1. Poor Targeting and Coverage Gaps

Eligible citizens remain excluded from benefits.

Example: NSAP beneficiaries in tribal areas missed out due to outdated SECC data.

2. Misinformation or Fear of Bureaucracy

People avoid schemes due to perceived complexity.

Example: Low uptake of PM-JAY in NE states due to fear of hospitals charging extra.

3. Ineffective Grievance Redressal

Beneficiaries can't flag issues or demand accountability.

Example: Social audits not implemented in 63% of MGNREGA districts (MoRD 2023).

4. Implementation Skewed by Intermediaries

Middlemen distort priorities for local or political gains.

Example: PDS leakage remains 28% in rural Bihar despite digital ration cards.

5. Lack of Feedback Loops

No mechanism to adapt schemes to changing needs.

Example: Tribal forest dwellers excluded from housing eligibility due to rigid criteria under PMAY-G.

II. Interventions for Inclusive Delivery

1. Jan Sookhna Portals and Right to Information

Digitised, multilingual info access on entitlements.

Example: Rajasthan's Jan Sookhna Portal expanded to 55 schemes by 2024.

2. Gram Sabha-Based Participatory Planning

Local communities decide and monitor schemes.

Example: Kerala Kudumbashree federations lead nutrition and water audits.

3. Targeted IEC Campaigns in Local Dialects

Community radio, wall art, and folk theatre for outreach.

Example: PM Poshan awareness via mobile vans in tribal Odisha (2023–24).

4. Digital Inclusion and Assisted Access

Common Service Centres offer assisted applications in remote belts.

Example: CSCs helped Aadhaar seeding for 7.2 crore PM-Kisan families (2024).

5. Community-Based Monitoring and Social Audits

Third-party audits and peer feedback.

Example: UNDP-supported Gram Sabha Social Audit Toolkit launched in 2024 in 5 states.

Conclusion:

Active involvement of beneficiaries ensures **accountability, efficiency, and dignity** in welfare schemes, turning top-down delivery into **citizen-led governance**.

Q4. Reforming the government delivery system through the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme is a progressive step, but it has its limitations too. Comment. (2022)

What is the question asking:

It seeks an evaluation of **DBT's benefits and its operational limitations**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link DBT to governance and rights-based delivery.

Body: 5 strengths + 5 limitations with current examples.

Conclusion: Reforms needed to ensure universal, inclusive DBT access.

Introduction:

The **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** platform, launched in 2013 and now integrated with **JAM trinity**, has redefined service delivery by promoting efficiency, transparency, and leakage reduction under the broader vision of **minimum government, maximum governance**.

Body: Role, impact, and limitations of Direct Benefit Transfer in reforming welfare delivery.

I. Achievements of DBT

1. Eliminated Leakages in Subsidies

Funds go directly to verified beneficiaries.

Example: ₹2.75 lakh crore transferred in 2023–24 across 315 schemes.

2. Financial Inclusion and Digital Identity

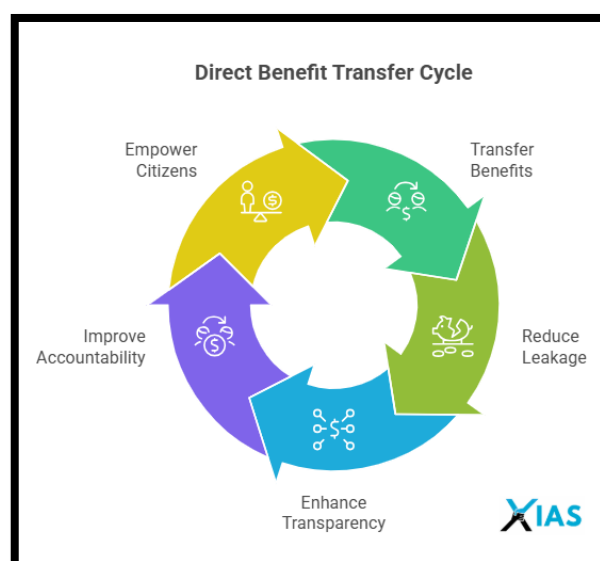
Aadhaar-linked bank accounts expanded access.

Example: 98% Jan Dhan accounts now Aadhaar-seeded (MoF 2024).

3. Speed and Efficiency

Real-time credit during crises.

Example: DBT ensured PM-KISAN and PM-GKY payments during COVID.



4. Cost Savings for Government

Reduced ghost beneficiaries.

Example: ₹1.8 lakh crore saved cumulatively (DBT Mission 2023).

5. Empowered Last-Mile Beneficiaries

Especially women and elderly in rural areas.

Example: 62% of PM Ujjwala 2.0 beneficiaries were women.

II. Limitations in DBT Implementation

1. Exclusion Errors Due to Digitisation

Aadhaar or account mismatches cause denial.

Example: Jharkhand starvation deaths linked to Aadhaar delinking (2022 inquiry).

2. Digital Illiteracy and Rural Connectivity Gaps

Beneficiaries struggle to access or verify transfers.

Example: MoRD 2023 noted poor DBT penetration in LWE districts.

3. Inadequate Grievance Redress

Citizens lack recourse when transfers fail.

Example: RBI Ombudsman doesn't cover DBT-specific issues yet.

4. Limited Flexibility in Use of Funds

Direct cash doesn't solve service delivery failures.

Example: LPG subsidy fails where cylinders remain unaffordable.

5. Gendered and Caste-Based Banking Access

Women or Dalits denied agency in account operation.

Example: 2023 SEWA study found 34% of rural women depend on men to withdraw DBT funds.

Conclusion:

DBT has institutionalised **transparent delivery**, but reforms in **last-mile access, grievance systems, and human interface** are key to realise its full social inclusion potential.

Q5. Besides the welfare schemes, India needs deft management of inflation and unemployment to serve the poor and the underprivileged sections of society. Discuss. (2022)

What is the question asking:

It asks for the role of **macro-economic management (inflation and jobs)** in supporting **poor and vulnerable populations**, beyond just welfare.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link welfare and macro-economic stability.

Body: 3 impacts of inflation + 3 impacts of unemployment + 4 policy solutions.

Conclusion: Inclusive growth via coordinated fiscal–monetary response.

Introduction:

While welfare schemes offer **cushions, price stability and employment** remain central to socio-economic rights under **Article 21 and Directive Principles**. The poor bear disproportionate brunt of inflation and joblessness, demanding systemic response.

Body: Welfare schemes in macro-economic management

I. Impact of Inflation on the Poor

1. Erosion of Real Incomes

Food, fuel, and health costs impact daily subsistence.

Example: Rural CPI inflation exceeded 6% in 2024 due to food spikes.

2. Reduction in Nutritional Security

High food prices distort household consumption.

Example: Drop in pulses and milk intake in NSS (2024) among bottom two quintiles.

3. Pressure on Informal Borrowing

Pushes poor into high-interest credit cycles.

Example: Informal borrowing rose 12% in LWE zones (RBI 2023).

II. Impact of Unemployment

4. Youth Frustration and Idle Labour

Especially acute in rural and urban poor segments.

Example: PLFS (2023–24) shows 17% unemployment for youth aged 15–29.

5. Reduced Consumption and Multiplier Effects

Low purchasing power reduces overall demand.

Example: CMIE data shows 18 million fewer salaried jobs since 2020.

6. Outmigration and Urban Stress

Seasonal and forced migration strains urban infrastructure.

Example: e-SHRAM portal registered 30 crore informal workers by 2024.

III. Policy Interventions Needed

7. Urban Employment Guarantee

Replication of MGNREGA in urban poor pockets.

Example: Telangana's "Nirman" and Rajasthan's "Indira Rasoi Rozgar" schemes.

8. MSME Credit and Demand Support

Ensure capital + demand to sustain jobs.

Example: ₹1.5 lakh crore ECLGS for MSMEs extended in Budget 2024.

9. Food Price Stabilisation Measures

Buffer stock use, smart procurement, targeted PDS expansion.

Example: Tomato-on-Wheels mobile sale under MoCA (2024) in metro slums.

10. Labour-Skilling Convergence

Skilling programs linked with hiring incentives.

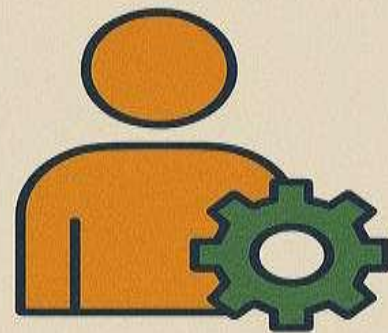
Example: PM Vishwakarma integrated with GST-linked micro-employer incentives.

Conclusion:

Welfare cannot substitute for stable **inflation control and employment generation**. A combined approach of **macro-management and grassroots participation** ensures dignity and equity for India's vulnerable.

TOPIC-11: Health, Education, Human Resources

Issues Relating To DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL SECTOR/SERVICES RELATING TO HEALTH, EDUCATION, HUMAN RESOURCES



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013

- Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same. (10 M)

- 2014

- Should the premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses, and also decide mode/criteria of selection of students? Discuss in light of the growing challenges. (12.5 M)

- 2015

- The quality of higher education in India requires major improvement to make it internationally competitive. Do you think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of technical and higher education in the country? Discuss. (12.5 M)

- 2016

- Professor Amartya Sen has advocated important reforms in the realms of primary education and primary health care. What are your suggestions to improve their status and performance? (12.5 M)
- “Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled, and creative.” What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable? (12.5)

Q1. Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same. (2013)

What is the question asking:

It asks to list the **health-related MDGs** and assess India's **governmental efforts and outcomes** in achieving them.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define MDGs and India's policy linkage.

Body: List health-related MDGs + discuss India's performance and actions.

Conclusion: Balanced view on achievements and transition to SDGs.

Introduction:

The **Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015)** guided global development, with India aligning national policies accordingly. Under **MDGs 4, 5, and 6**, India committed to reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

Body: Dimensions MDGs in health

I. Health-Related MDGs

1. **MDG 4:** Reduce under-five child mortality by two-thirds.
2. **MDG 5:** Reduce maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters; ensure universal access to reproductive health.
3. **MDG 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases.

II. Government Actions and Outcomes

1. Child Mortality (MDG 4)

IMR declined from 66 (2000) to 38 (2015), aided by immunisation and nutrition schemes.

Example: Mission Indradhanush (2014) and Janani Suraksha Yojana expanded reach of vaccines and neonatal care.

2. Maternal Mortality (MDG 5)

MMR dropped from 374 (2000) to 174 (2015) through institutional births and safe delivery.

Example: JSY and Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram enabled free childbirth in public facilities.

3. HIV/AIDS (MDG 6)

Prevalence among adults declined to 0.26% by 2015.

Example: NACO implemented targeted IEC and ART programs with community support.

4. Malaria and TB Control (MDG 6)

Malaria deaths dropped by over 50%, TB detection rose.

Example: Revised National TB Control Program improved DOTS coverage and diagnosis.

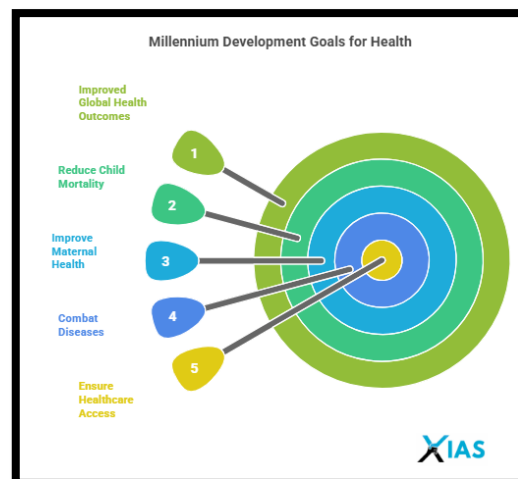
5. Cross-Cutting Measures

NRHM (2005) provided integrated rural health delivery, ASHAs, and mobile clinics.

Example: By 2015, over 9 lakh ASHAs supported village-level interventions.

Conclusion:

India made significant progress on MDG health goals through targeted schemes and mission-mode programs. The shift to **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** now demands **systemic quality, equity, and coverage improvements**.



Q2. Should the premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses, and also decide mode/criteria of selection of students? Discuss in light of the growing challenges. (2014)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether **autonomy for IITs/IIMs** in curriculum and admissions is justified amid new higher education challenges.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define institutional autonomy and constitutional vision for excellence.

Body: 5 arguments in favour of autonomy + 5 concerns/challenges.

Conclusion: Balanced framework for regulated autonomy.

Introduction:

Autonomy for premier institutions like **IITs and IIMs** aligns with the goal of **excellence in higher education** under **Article 41 and 45**. Academic freedom enhances innovation, global competitiveness, and leadership in knowledge production.

Body: Premier status for institutes demands flexibility with responsibility.

I. Arguments Supporting Autonomy

1. Curriculum Innovation and Industry Alignment

Flexible course design suits evolving market needs.

Example: IIT Madras introduced online BSc in Data Science with modular exits.

2. Competitive Admissions Based on Aptitude

Alternative selection models can diversify talent pools.

Example: IIM Ahmedabad uses multiple parameters, not just CAT scores, for admission.

3. Global Collaboration and Ranking

Autonomous status boosts international partnerships and reputation.

Example: IIT Bombay ranked in QS Global Top 150 (2024) due to collaborative labs.

4. Faculty and Research Freedom

Decentralised hiring promotes cross-disciplinary excellence.

Example: IISc allows domain-agnostic PhD intake based on research proposal quality.

5. Reduced Political/Bureaucratic Interference

Governing councils manage without day-to-day ministry control.

Example: IIM Act 2017 grants functional independence to Boards.

II. Challenges and Concerns

1. Unequal Access and Urban Bias

Non-standard admission modes may favour elite students.

Example: Regional diversity in IIMs declined post change in weightages.

2. Marketisation of Education

Risk of fee hikes and reduced inclusivity.

Example: IIT tuition fees increased threefold since 2012, burdening students from EWS backgrounds.

3. Research-Teaching Imbalance

Focus on rankings may sideline pedagogy.

Example: 2023 CAG audit flagged low teaching load in top-tier tech institutions.

4. Accountability Gaps

Too much freedom without oversight can dilute public responsibility.

Example: Reports of admission irregularities in autonomous business schools in 2023.

5. Lack of National Coordination

Excess autonomy may fragment national higher education vision.

Example: UGC's attempts to integrate CUET met with resistance from IITs.

Conclusion:

India's premier institutions require **academic and operational freedom**, but must be governed by a framework ensuring **equity, quality, and accountability** to preserve both **autonomy and public interest**.

Q3. The quality of higher education in India requires major improvement to make it internationally competitive. Do you think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of technical and higher education in the country? Discuss. (2015)

What is the question asking:

It examines whether **foreign universities in India** can help raise **technical and higher education standards**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link higher education competitiveness with institutional reform.

Body: 5 positives of foreign entry + 5 concerns or limitations.

Conclusion: Regulated globalisation with academic safeguards.

Introduction:

The **New Education Policy 2020** advocates internationalisation of Indian higher education to boost **global competitiveness**, research, and diversity. The **University Grants Commission (Foreign Institutions) Rules 2023** marks a structural shift toward regulated entry.

Body: Global academic exposure vs. domestic capacity building.

I. Potential Benefits of Foreign Universities

1. Global Quality Benchmarking

Brings in global academic standards and pedagogy.

Example: MIT, Stanford-India collaborations piloted under GIFT City regulations.

2. Faculty and Curriculum Excellence

Exposure to global faculty and interdisciplinary content.

Example: UGC guidelines permit joint degrees with top 500 QS-ranked institutions.

3. International Research Networks

Enhances Indian R&D through joint labs and funding.

Example: TUM India centre at IIT Delhi initiated Indo-German AI labs.

4. Reduction in Brain Drain

High-quality foreign education available domestically.

Example: Over ₹4 lakh crore spent by Indians abroad for education annually (MEA 2023).

5. Competition-Induced Reforms in Indian HEIs

Promotes internal reform and innovation among local institutes.

Example: Ashoka, Krea, and IIIT-H have adopted global liberal arts models.

II. Concerns and Challenges

1. Equity and Access Gaps

Fee structures may favour elite, urban students.

Example: Proposed Yale–India undergraduate program projected ₹25 lakh annual fees.

2. Regulatory and Jurisdictional Ambiguities

Challenges in aligning with Indian legal and academic frameworks.

Example: Disputes over IP rights and UGC compliance in past tie-ups.

3. Faculty Drain from Indian HEIs

Star professors may migrate to better-funded foreign institutes.

Example: IISc expressed concerns over loss of top AI faculty to global campuses.

4. Cultural Disconnect and Curriculum Irrelevance

Imported models may not suit Indian socio-economic context.

Example: Social science courses lack regional content, reducing local relevance.

5. Risk of Commercialisation

Profit motive may dilute academic purpose.

Example: For-profit private players partnering with low-tier global universities in SE Asia.

Conclusion:

While foreign institutions offer **diversity and competition**, their entry must be shaped by **inclusivity, regulation, and academic parity**, ensuring global access without diluting India's higher education mission.

Q4. Professor Amartya Sen has advocated important reforms in the realms of primary education and primary health care. What are your suggestions to improve their status and performance? (2016)

What is the question asking:

It seeks concrete **suggestions to improve primary education and health**, aligned with Amartya Sen's human development approach.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link Sen's focus on basic capability expansion.

Body: 3 suggestions each for primary education and primary health, with examples.

Conclusion: Constitutional commitment to welfare and human capital.

Introduction:

Amartya Sen's capability approach emphasises **basic education and health** as fundamental to freedom and growth. India's constitutional framework under **Articles 21A and 47** makes these a cornerstone of human development policy.

Body: Reforms needed in primary education and primary health

I. Primary Education Reforms

1. Early Childhood Learning Focus

Strengthen pre-primary through ICDS–school convergence.

Example: Balvatika program under NEP 2020 scaled to 7,500 schools (2024).

2. Teacher Training and Accountability

Regular assessments and incentives.

Example: NISHTHA digital training rolled out for 22 lakh teachers.

3. Localised Curriculum and Multilingual Delivery

Mother tongue-based learning till Class 3.

Example: NCERT books translated into 21 languages by 2024.

II. Primary Health Care Reforms

4. Strengthen Sub-Centres and Wellness Clinics

Focus on preventive care and NCD management.

Example: Ayushman Arogya Mandirs functional in over 1.2 lakh locations.

5. Community Health Workers and Digital Tools

Expand ASHA scope with tech kits.

Example: ASHA-Poshan app piloted in Aspirational Districts for maternal tracking.

6. Health Financing and Insurance Linkages

Link health with direct benefit transfers.

Example: PM-JAY expanded to include diagnostics and OPD coverage (Budget 2024).

Conclusion:

Investments in **foundational literacy and preventive health** must be decentralised, community-driven, and data-linked to ensure universal human capability and development.

Q5. “Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled, and creative.” What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable? (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks for specific **government measures to realise demographic dividend** through education, skills, and awareness.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define demographic dividend and its potential.

Body: 5 government initiatives across education, skilling, innovation, and productivity.

Conclusion: Human capital as key to sustained growth.

Introduction:

India’s demographic dividend over **62% population in working age** offers a unique growth opportunity.

Under **SDG 4 and Article 41**, the state has launched integrated measures to boost education, skilling, and economic creativity.

Body: Understanding the Demographic Dividend and Its Potential

1. National Education Policy 2020

Flexibility, multilingualism, and skill integration from school to higher education.

Example: Credit-based modular learning piloted in 12 states (2024).

2. Skill India Mission and PMKVY 4.0

Industry-aligned, demand-based skilling.

Example: ₹8,000 crore allocated in Budget 2024 with focus on green and digital jobs.



3. National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

Industry exposure during learning phase.

Example: Over 14 lakh apprentices engaged in 2023–24.

4. Digital India & DEEP (Digital Education Empowerment Platform)

Bridges digital divide for remote learners.

Example: DEEP content delivered in 11 languages with AI-based assessments.

5. Start-Up India & Atal Innovation Mission

Fostering youth-led innovation and enterprise.

Example: 8,500 school tinkering labs active under AIM (2024 data).

Conclusion:

India's demographic dividend can convert into **economic strength only through holistic investments** in skilling, innovation, and educational access that match evolving labour markets.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2018

- **Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieving 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (10 M)**

• 2019

- **Despite consistent experience of high growth, India still goes with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive. (10 M)**
- **2020**
- **National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient the education system in India. Critically examine the statement. (15 M)**

• 2021

- **"Besides being a moral imperative of a Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development." Analyze. (10 M)**

Q1. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieving 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (2018)

What is the question asking:

It seeks to explain why **community-based healthcare** is essential for achieving **universal and inclusive health coverage** in India.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link "Health for All" to constitutional and SDG frameworks.

Body: Give 5 key reasons why community-level intervention is necessary, with examples.

Conclusion: Institutionalise local health systems for sustainability.

Introduction:

The vision of '**Health for All**', enshrined under **Article 47** and **SDG-3**, requires not just hospital-based services but strong **community-level healthcare**, especially for rural and marginalised populations.

Body: Role of community in health sector

1. First Contact and Early Detection

Local health workers enable timely intervention and cost-effective treatment.

Example: ASHA workers track high-risk pregnancies and immunisation schedules in villages.

2. Cultural and Linguistic Accessibility

Local workers bridge gaps in awareness and trust.

Example: Tribal-dialect IEC campaigns improved vaccine acceptance in Jharkhand (2024 UNICEF data).

3. Preventive and Behavioural Health

Community interventions influence hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention.

Example: Poshan Maah campaigns led by SHG women in UP saw anaemia awareness rise by 26%.

4. Emergency Response and Referral Support

Local workers provide stabilisation and connect patients to PHCs.

Example: Telemedicine booths in Aspirational Districts operate via local volunteers (MoHFW 2023).

5. Health Equity and Gender Sensitivity

Women-led local health groups increase access for vulnerable groups.

Example: ASHA–Midwife linkages reduce maternal deaths in LWE districts.

Conclusion:

Community-rooted health systems **decentralise care, build trust, and empower preventive health**, making them indispensable to India's goal of universal health coverage.

Q2. Despite consistent experience of high growth, India still goes with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive. (2019)

What is the question asking:

It asks why **India's high GDP growth** has not translated into **inclusive human development outcomes**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Contrast economic growth with HDI trends.

Body: List 5 structural issues behind lack of inclusive development.

Conclusion: Growth must be equity-oriented and people-centric.

Introduction:

India's GDP growth averaged 6–8% over two decades, yet it ranks **132 in UNDP's Human Development Index (2024)**. This disconnect reveals deep **structural gaps in health, education, income, and social equity**.

Body: Evaluation of human development in India

1. Regional and Rural–Urban Imbalances

Wealth creation is concentrated in select urban zones.

Example: 70% of FDI inflows are cornered by 5 metro states (DPIIT 2024).

2. Skewed Public Spending

Low investment in social sectors like health and education.

Example: Public health expenditure still below 2.5% of GDP despite National Health Policy targets.

3. Gender and Caste-Based Exclusion

Deep inequality in labour force participation and access to services.

Example: Female LFPR at 27% (PLFS 2023); SC/ST students face higher dropout rates.

4. Informalisation and Jobless Growth

Majority of employment is precarious, underpaid, and unprotected.

Example: Over 90% of India's workforce remains in informal jobs (MoLE 2024).

5. Poor Quality of Governance and Delivery

Leakages and inefficiencies in last-mile service provision.

Example: PM Poshan audit (2023) flagged irregularity in supply chains in 12 states.

Conclusion:

Inclusive development requires **redistribution of public investment, regional equity, and empowered delivery systems**, making growth meaningful for every section of society.

Q3. National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient the education system in India. Critically examine the statement. (2020)

What is the question asking:

It asks for a critical examination of **NEP 2020** in light of **SDG-4**, which ensures inclusive and quality education.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link NEP 2020 to SDG-4 vision.

Body: 5 areas of alignment + 5 limitations/gaps.

Conclusion: Directionally aligned but needs strong implementation

Introduction:

National Education Policy 2020 aligns with **SDG-4**, aiming for **inclusive, equitable, and quality education** by 2030. It proposes a learner-centric, multilingual, and competency-based framework suited for India's socio-demographic diversity.

Body: Overview of NEP 2020 and SDG-4 Goals

I. Areas of Alignment with SDG-4

1. Universal Access and ECCE Integration

Brings 3–6-year-olds under formal education.

Example: Balvatika rollout in 7,500 schools by 2024.

2. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

Mission NIPUN targets Class 3 literacy by 2026–27.

Example: 1.8 crore children enrolled in NIPUN learning modules.

3. Curriculum Reform and Critical Thinking

Reduced rote learning, focus on creativity.

Example: New textbooks to reflect experiential learning (NCERT 2024).

4. Multilingual and Inclusive Pedagogy

Mother tongue use till Class 5; sign language standardisation.

Example: Digital Dictionary in 22 Indian languages launched for school use.

5. Technology and Vocational Education

Increased integration of coding, AI, and skilling.

Example: PM eVidya and SWAYAM 2.0 offer modular online content.

II. Critical Concerns and Limitations

1. Digital Divide and Access Gaps

Technology-based reforms may exclude rural students.

Example: ASER 2023 showed only 34% rural students had device access.

2. Teacher Training and Capacity Gaps

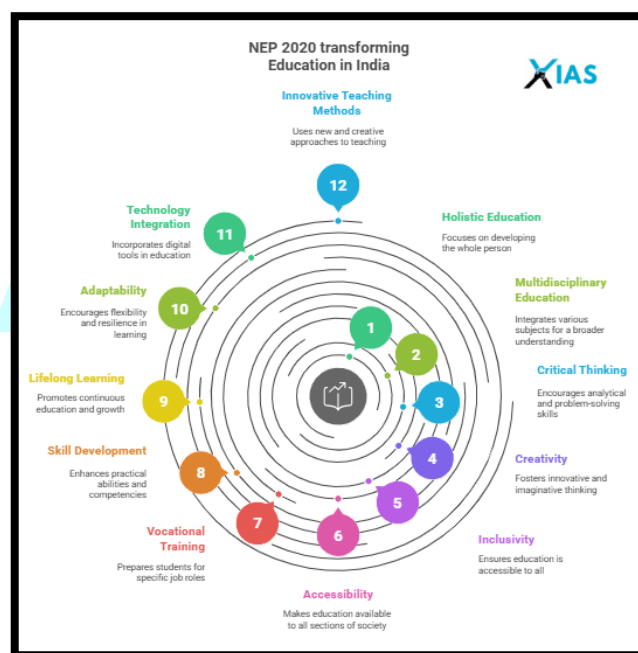
Quality of instruction hasn't matched new pedagogy.

Example: Less than 60% of school teachers trained in new content.

3. Over-centralisation and Lack of State Readiness

NEP rollout not uniform across states.

Example: Tamil Nadu and West Bengal continue with older curriculum models.



4. Financing Constraints

No significant budgetary jump to support reforms.

Example: Education spending at 2.9% of GDP (2024–25), below 6% NEP target.

5. Ambiguity in Higher Education Governance

Autonomy may lead to marketisation without equity safeguards.

Example: CUET access issues for tribal and remote-area students.

Conclusion:

NEP 2020 sets the right vision for **inclusive education**, but must address **infrastructure, training, digital equity, and federal coordination** to truly deliver on SDG-4 by 2030.

Q4. “Besides being a moral imperative of a Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development.” Analyze. (2021)

What is the question asking:

It seeks an analysis of how **primary health infrastructure** is both an ethical responsibility and an economic necessity.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link primary healthcare to Article 47 and SDG-3.

Body: 5 arguments showing its centrality to sustainable development.

Conclusion: Institutional strengthening of primary care.

Introduction:

Under **Article 47**, the State has a constitutional duty to improve public health. A robust **primary healthcare system** ensures preventive, promotive, and accessible care, making it essential to the sustainability of development efforts under **SDG-3**.

Body: Role of primary healthcare, its impact on equity and sustainability

1. Preventive Healthcare Reduces Systemic Burden

Strong PHC reduces tertiary hospital overload and costs.

Example: Ayushman Arogya Mandirs handle >60% of maternal visits in 2024.

2. Improves Productivity and Workforce Readiness

Healthy populations contribute to economic activity.

Example: Anaemia Mukt Bharat increased Hb levels in adolescent girls by 2023.

3. Financial Protection and Poverty Prevention

Primary care averts catastrophic health spending.

Example: National Health Accounts (2023) show OOP health expenses dropped in states with strong PHC.

4. Pandemic and Emergency Resilience

Local health infrastructure is frontline in crises.

Example: PHCs managed vaccine cold chains and early COVID detection.

5. Equitable Access in Rural and Marginalised Areas

Ensures inclusion and social justice.

Example: Tribal PHC strengthening under SATH-E program reached 150 districts by 2024.

Conclusion:

Sustainable development demands **resilient, inclusive primary healthcare** that reduces inequity, improves economic outcomes, and fulfils the foundational promise of the Indian welfare state

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2022

- **The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 remains inadequate in promoting an incentive-based system for children's education without generating awareness about the importance of schooling. Analyse. (15 M)**

- 2023

- **Skill development programmes have succeeded in increasing human resources supply to various sectors. In the context of the statement, analyze the linkages between education, skill, and employment. (15 M)**

- 2024

- **In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system, the Indian State should play a vital role in containing the adverse impact of marketization of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level. (15 M)**

Q1. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 remains inadequate in promoting an incentive-based system for children's education without generating awareness about the importance of schooling. Analyse. (2022)

What is the question asking:

It asks for an analysis of the **limitations of RTE Act, 2009** in creating an **incentivised and awareness-driven schooling culture**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link RTE with constitutional obligation and human development.

Body: 5 inadequacies of the Act in terms of incentive structures and awareness gaps.

Conclusion: RTE needs integration with behavioural, social, and economic enablers.

Introduction: Overview of the RTE Act, 2009

The **Right to Education Act, 2009**, operationalising **Article 21A**, guarantees free and compulsory education to all children aged 6–14. While it expanded access, it has struggled to build an **incentive-based and community-driven schooling ecosystem**.

Body:

1. Absence of Behavioural Incentives for Parents

The Act mandates schooling but lacks behavioural nudges to change parental attitudes.

Example: ASER 2023 shows 19% parents in rural areas see little value in secondary education for girls.

2. Weak Integration with Livelihood Realities

For poor families, opportunity cost of schooling remains high.

Example: Seasonal dropouts persist in tribal regions due to agricultural work.

3. Over-reliance on Supply-Side Push

Focus is on infrastructure, not demand creation.

Example: PM SHRI schools upgraded, but dropout continues in Classes 6–8 in 64 districts (MHRD 2024).

4. Poor IEC and Community Engagement Mechanisms

Village Education Committees remain passive and underutilised.

Example: 2023 CAG report showed only 38% of VECs held monthly meetings.

5. Incentives Not Aligned with Retention and Quality

Schemes like MDM and DBT often disconnected from learning outcomes.

Example: MoE report (2024) notes minimal impact of MDM on attendance beyond primary level.

Conclusion:

The RTE framework needs **incentives linked with learning, targeted behavioural campaigns, and community partnerships** to move from mere enrolment to genuine educational inclusion.

Q2. Skill development programmes have succeeded in increasing human resources supply to various sectors. In the context of the statement, analyze the linkages between education, skill, and employment. (2023)

What is the question asking:

It asks to **analyse the interplay** between **formal education, skilling programs, and employment outcomes** in India.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link education–skill–employment continuum with demographic dividend.

Body: 5 key linkages, supported with examples from policies and labour trends.

Conclusion: Holistic workforce strategy is needed to close the gaps.

Introduction:

India's demographic dividend depends on synchronising **education, skill development, and employability**. National efforts like **PMKVY, Skill India, and NEP 2020** aim to bridge these gaps, but integration remains uneven across sectors and states.

Body: Linkages Between Education, Skills, and Employability

1. Curriculum–Industry Disconnect in Education

Formal education lacks employability-oriented skills.

Example: 48% graduates deemed unemployable in BFSI and IT sectors (India Skills Report 2024).

2. Skilling as a Bridge between Education and Employment

Short-term certifications improve domain readiness.

Example: PMKVY 4.0 trained 6.2 lakh youth in green and digital skills in FY 2024.

3. Vocationalisation of Schooling (NEP 2020)

Integration of skilling from Class 6 onwards.

Example: Pilot schools in Rajasthan introduced coding and drone tech in upper primary.

4. Apprenticeship and Dual Pathway Models

Work-linked learning enhances job-readiness.

Example: NAPS scheme enabled 14 lakh apprenticeships in 2023–24.

5. Regional and Sectoral Skill Mapping

Alignment of local education with district-level economic trends.

Example: Skill India Digital platform geo-tags demand clusters and offers multilingual content.

Conclusion:

India's youth potential can be realised only when **education is competency-based, skilling is continuous, and employment pathways are localised and adaptive.**

Recommendation: Strengthening Education–Skill–Employment Linkage

- **National Credit Framework (NCrF):** Seamless mobility between formal and skill-based streams
- **District Skill Committees:** Local industry–ITI–school convergence
- **AI-Powered Labour Market Information System (2024):** Job forecasting tools
- **Mandatory Apprenticeship in Final Year UG/Polytechnic**
- **Expanded Udyam-Mitra Portal:** MSME–trainee linkage using skilling database

Enhancing Employability in India



Unskilled Youth
Lacking industry-relevant skills



National Skill Mission
Creating skill development ecosystem



Skill India Initiative
Training millions in diverse trades



PMKVY
Providing financial support, training



Sector-Specific Training
Meeting demands of job market



Skilled Workforce
Enhanced employability, economic growth

XIAS

Q3. In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system, the Indian State should play a vital role in containing the adverse impact of marketization of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level. (2024)

What is the question asking:

It asks for **State-led measures** to expand **grassroots public health access**, especially in light of increasing **marketisation and private dominance**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link public health to constitutional and developmental imperatives.

Body: Suggest 5 concrete, polity-rooted measures with examples.

Conclusion: State must restore public health as a universal right.

Introduction:

Under **Article 47**, the Indian State bears the duty of ensuring public health. In the face of increasing **private-sector dominance**, it must act as a **provider, regulator, and capacity-builder** to make healthcare accessible to all, especially the poor.

Body: Role of the State in Strengthening Healthcare Access

1. Scale-up Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Health and Wellness Centres)

Transform sub-centres into comprehensive care units.

Example: 1.5 lakh AAMs by March 2025 now offer OPD, diagnostics, and teleconsultation.

2. Public Health Workforce Expansion

Recruit and train ASHAs, ANMs, and midwives with better incentives.

Example: ASHA cadre regularised in Himachal Pradesh with career mobility (2024).

3. Digital PHC and Telemedicine Infrastructure

Bridge rural–urban health divide via technology.

Example: eSanjeevani used by 12 crore citizens for teleconsultation (MoHFW 2024).

4. Price Regulation and Essential Medicine Access

Curb out-of-pocket expenditure through price caps and Jan Aushadhi outlets.

Example: NPPA added 40 new drugs under price control in 2024; 10,000+ Janaushadhi Kendras functional.

5. Community Participation in Health Governance

Strengthen Rogi Kalyan Samitis, VHNSCs for transparency.

Example: Kerala's People's Plan Campaign includes community-led PHC audits.

Conclusion:

Public health must be secured as a **citizen entitlement**, not a private commodity. The State must ensure **universal access, affordability, and institutional accountability** at the grassroot

TOPIC-12: Issues relating to Poverty and Hunger

Issues Relating To Poverty And Hunger, Their Implication On Body Politic



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2015**

- **Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators. (12.5 M)**

- **2017**

- **'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will.' Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. (15 M)**

- **2018**

- **How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? (15 M)**

Q1. Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators. (2015)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether poverty has reduced consistently across time, and to **critically examine rural-urban poverty indicators** that support or challenge this claim.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define poverty trends using national data sources.

Body: 3 evidences supporting decline + 3 counterpoints showing challenges in rural and urban poverty.

Conclusion: Multidimensional poverty lens is key to meaningful reduction.

Introduction:

Poverty measurement in India has evolved from the **Tendulkar and Rangarajan Committees** to **NITI Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**. While all estimates indicate a **decline in headcount poverty**, rural-urban disparities and structural exclusions persist.

Body: Trends in Poverty Reduction

I. Evidence Supporting Poverty Reduction

1. Decline in Official Poverty Ratios

Tendulkar Committee: 37.2% (2004-05) → 21.9% (2011-12).

Example: MPI 2024 estimates multidimensional poverty fell from 29% (2015-16) to 11.3% (2019-21).

2. Increased Rural Consumption and Assets

Rise in rural asset ownership, electrification, and sanitation access.

Example: 93% rural households now have electricity (NSS 2023), up from 56% in 2011.

3. Expansion of Social Protection

Schemes like PMAY-G, PM-KISAN, MGNREGA improved rural livelihoods.

Example: ₹1.12 lakh crore disbursed under MGNREGA in FY 2023-24.

II. Persistent Challenges in Rural and Urban Poverty

4. Seasonal and Hidden Poverty in Rural India

Agrarian distress and underemployment continue.

Example: PLFS 2024 shows >50% of rural workers in self-employed agriculture earn below poverty line.

5. Urban Informality and Migrant Exclusion

Slum dwellers, gig workers excluded from schemes.

Example: 2023-24 e-SHRAM data shows 60% of informal urban workers lack social security coverage.

6. Inequality and Relative Poverty

Wealth gaps within urban areas have widened.

Example: Top 10% hold 77% of urban wealth (Oxfam India Report 2023).

Conclusion:

While absolute poverty has declined, **urban precarity, rural underemployment, and invisible deprivations** demand a multidimensional, regionally sensitive poverty alleviation strategy rooted in rights and redistribution.

Q2. 'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will.' Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. (2017)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether **political will is the decisive factor** in the **effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define political will in context of welfare execution.

Body: 3 positive cases of impact where political will was strong + 3 failures where political will was weak or misdirected.

Conclusion: Political intent must be backed by institutional integrity.

Introduction:

Poverty alleviation in India has been guided by **Directive Principles (Article 39 & 41)**. While the country has launched ambitious schemes over decades, their performance often hinges not on design alone, but on **political commitment to implementation**.

Body: Overview of Major Poverty Alleviation Programmes

I. Cases Where Political Will Ensured Success

1. MGNREGA – Legal Entitlement with Budget Backing

Despite criticism, the Act persisted due to grassroots demand and parliamentary support.

Example: ₹1.1 lakh crore allocation in 2024–25; over 5 crore active workers.

2. JAM Trinity and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)

Political will to curb leakages transformed welfare delivery.

Example: DBT saved ₹2.7 lakh crore since inception; LPG subsidy better targeted post PAHAL.

3. PMAY-G – Housing as Political Capital

Housing schemes succeeded where states prioritised execution.

Example: Odisha and Chhattisgarh led in quality housing due to strong CM-level monitoring.

II. Cases Where Lack of Will or Misalignment Affected Impact

4. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

Remains underfunded and fragmented despite targeting destitute.

Example: Pension amount unchanged at ₹200–₹500/month for over a decade.

5. Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana (NRLM)

Potential not fully realised due to inter-departmental silos.

Example: SHG-bank linkage still faces bottlenecks in tribal and EAG states.

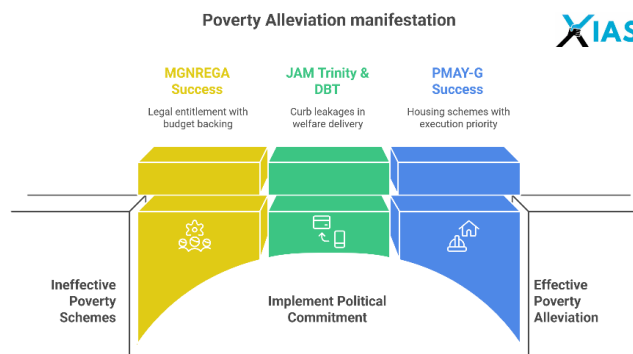
6. Skill Development Programmes

Fragmented across ministries; low placement rates.

Example: Only 18% of PMKVY certified trainees got wage employment in 2023–24.

Conclusion:

Poverty schemes succeed when they are **politically prioritised, institutionally coordinated, and socially monitored** — transforming welfare from symbolic to structural change.



Q3. How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? (2018)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether hunger is misdiagnosed as merely a **food supply issue**, ignoring **broader human development failures**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Link hunger to multidimensional causes.

Body: 3 limitations of food-centric approach + 3 broader human development gaps contributing to hunger.

Conclusion: Food availability is necessary but not sufficient to address hunger.

Introduction:

While India is a **net food surplus nation**, it ranks 111/125 on the **Global Hunger Index (2023)**. This reflects how **hunger is rooted in structural failures of health, education, sanitation**, and not merely in food supply.

Body: Role of Human Development Policies in Hunger Reduction

I. Limitations of Food-Centric Hunger Approach

1. Public Distribution System (PDS) Gaps

Leakages, exclusion errors, and low dietary diversity.

Example: CAG 2023 audit shows 14% ration card exclusion in urban areas.

2. Focus on Calorie Quantity, Not Nutrition

Staple-heavy diets ignore protein and micronutrients.

Example: National Nutrition Survey (2023) shows 34% of children underweight despite cereal sufficiency.

3. Ignoring Social Determinants of Hunger

Caste, gender, and region impact access despite availability.

Example: Muslim and Dalit children have higher stunting rates in urban slums (NFHS-5 disaggregated).

II. Broader Human Development Failures

4. Maternal Health and Antenatal Care Gaps

Malnourished mothers give birth to undernourished children.

Example: Anaemia prevalence among pregnant women at 52% (NFHS-5).

5. WASH and Sanitation Deficits

Poor sanitation affects nutrient absorption.

Example: Studies link open defecation to environmental enteropathy and chronic malnutrition.

6. Nutrition Literacy and Gendered Food Access

Intra-household inequality leads to maternal and child deprivation.

Example: 2024 UNDP data shows girls in low-income homes receive fewer calories than boys.

Conclusion:

Solving hunger demands a **human development-first lens**, integrating nutrition with **public health, sanitation, education**, and gender-sensitive policies beyond food provisioning alone.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2019

- There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items, squeezing their food budget. Elucidate. (10 M)

- 2020

- “The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone.” In this context, analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report. (15 M)

- 2021

- Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty and malnutrition be broken through micro financing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (10 M)

- 2024

- Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle? (10 M)

Q1. There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items, squeezing their food budget. Elucidate. (2019)

What is the question asking:

It asks to explain how **poverty and hunger have diverged**, particularly due to **reduced social spending** and the **rising burden of essential non-food expenses**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define poverty–hunger divergence with reference to economic behaviour.

Body: 5 dimensions showing how rising non-food costs reduce food intake despite income parity.

Conclusion: Expand social spending to stabilise the poor’s consumption basket.

Introduction:

Though India's poverty rates have declined, the **Global Hunger Index (2023)** places India at **111/125**, reflecting a growing **decoupling of income poverty and nutritional outcomes**. Rising health, education, and housing costs force poor households to reallocate food expenditure.

Body: Divergence Between Poverty Reduction and Hunger

1. Health Expenditure Crowding Out Food

Out-of-pocket medical expenses drain household budgets.

Example: NSSO (2023) shows 7% of rural households fall below poverty line due to health shocks.

2. Rising Education Costs

Private tuition and digital learning tools absorb a rising share of family income.

Example: 2024 ASER survey shows average rural education spending has doubled since 2018.

3. Fuel, Rent, and Transport Price Rise

Urban poor divert spending to housing and fuel.

Example: Monthly LPG refill costs rose by 12% (MoPNG 2024), affecting urban slum families.

4. Inadequate Nutrition Support Schemes for Migrants

Portable entitlements under PDS still underused.

Example: Only 36% of interstate migrants used One Nation One Ration Card in FY 2023–24.

5. Informality and Wage Insecurity

Irregular income leads to food consumption volatility.

Example: PLFS 2024 reports 82% of rural labourers work without contracts or social insurance.

Conclusion:

Addressing hunger requires **holistic protection from essential expenditure shocks** — through **universal social security**, food diversity schemes, and **public health–education strengthening**.

Q2. “The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important than determining poverty based on income alone.” In this context, analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report. (2020)

What is the question asking:

It asks to explain the **advantages of multidimensional poverty assessment** and critically examine the **latest UN MPI report in the Indian context**.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define MPI and its relevance over income-based measures.

Body: 3 reasons MPI is more insightful + 3 findings from the latest report.

Conclusion: India must align anti-poverty efforts with MPI dimensions.

Introduction:

The **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**, developed by UNDP and OPHI, measures **simultaneous deprivations in health, education, and living standards**, offering a **more nuanced poverty profile** than income metrics alone.

Body: Role, implications, and insights from UN-MPI**I. REASONS - MPI is a Better Poverty Measure****1. Captures Non-Monetary Deprivations**

Education, nutrition, sanitation deficits captured comprehensively.

Example: A household may earn above ₹1,200/day but still lack toilets, clean fuel, or schooling.

2. Reveals Intra-household and Regional Disparities

Identifies poverty in specific blocks or vulnerable groups.

Example: Aspirational Districts show higher MPI values despite state-level prosperity.

3. Enables Targeted Policy Design

Helps prioritise schemes where gaps are multidimensional.

Example: NITI's MPI helps align Jal Jeevan Mission and SBM in high-deprivation clusters.

II. Key Findings: UN MPI India Report (2023)**4. 24.8 Crore Indians Lifted Out of Poverty (2015–21)**

Sharpest decline in MPI in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh.

Example: UP halved its multidimensional poverty from 38% to 19.2%.

5. Nutrition and Sanitation Still Lag

Despite improvements, 44% of MPI-poor face undernutrition.

Example: NFHS-5 shows 35.5% stunting in rural children.

6. Urban–Rural and SC/ST Disparities Persist

Rural MPI at 19.3% vs. Urban at 5.4%; ST communities face highest overlap.

Example: 2023 MPI data: 45.5% of tribal households still MPI-poor.

Conclusion:

India's anti-poverty policy must shift from **income targeting** to **multi-sector deprivation mapping**, ensuring **convergence of nutrition, housing, education, and sanitation schemes**.

Q3. Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty and malnutrition be broken through micro financing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (2021)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether **microfinancing women SHGs** can disrupt the **gender-poverty-malnutrition cycle**, and requires examples to substantiate.

How to approach:

Introduction: Define the cycle and how SHG microfinance aims to disrupt it.

Body: 5 interlinked ways SHG microfinance breaks the cycle, with recent examples.

Conclusion: SHGs are key to structural transformation if backed by capacity building.

Introduction:

The intersection of **gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition** traps women in intergenerational disadvantage. **Microfinancing via women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** can empower them economically and socially, creating **positive spillovers** across this cycle.

Body: Role of microfinancing of women SHGs in various elements**1. Income Access Leads to Food Security**

Loan-linked activities improve food quantity and diversity.

Example: In Odisha's Mission Shakti, SHG members invested in kitchen gardens and nutrition kits (2023-24).

2. Women's Control Over Resources Reduces Gender Bias

Microfinance improves women's say in household spending.

Example: NRLM survey (2024) shows 68% of SHG women make food decisions, vs. 23% non-members.

3. Group Nutrition Awareness and Collective Action

SHGs anchor village-level Poshan campaigns.

Example: Maharashtra SHG federations monitor ICDS centres for child feeding quality.

4. Access to Sanitation and Clean Fuel

SHG loans used for latrines and LPG stoves improve health outcomes.

Example: Bihar's Jeevika SHGs partnered with SBM for toilet construction in 19 districts.

5. Multiplier Effect on Adolescent Girls and Mothers

Improved maternal health feeds into better child nutrition and schooling.

Example: UNICEF-NRLM 2023 pilot reduced adolescent anaemia by 12% in Bundelkhand.

Conclusion:

Microfinancing SHGs can **disrupt gendered poverty cycles** if paired with **health, nutrition, and governance convergence**, creating long-term impact on human development.

Q4. Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle? (2024)

What is the question asking:

It seeks a policy-rooted answer on **measures to break the poverty-malnutrition-low human capital cycle**.

How to approach:

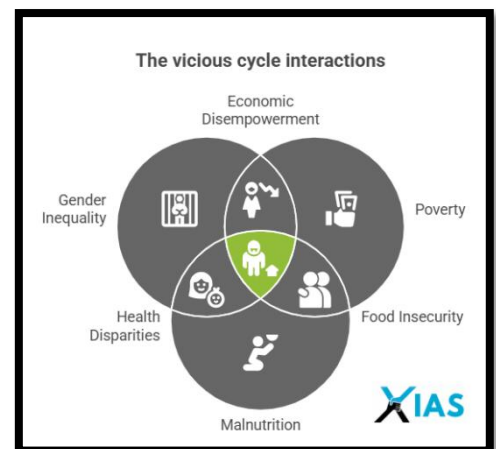
Introduction: Define the cycle and its impact on long-term development.

Body: 5 specific multi-sectoral policy steps with examples.

Conclusion: A convergence-based rights framework is essential.

Introduction:

Poverty reduces access to food and health, while malnutrition reduces learning and productivity, perpetuating poverty. This **vicious cycle undermines human capital formation**, weakening India's demographic dividend and long-term growth.

Body: Measures to break poverty and malnutrition cycle

1. Nutrition-Centric Social Protection

Expand and diversify nutrition in MDM, ICDS, and PM Poshan.

Example: Tamil Nadu's millet-based school meals scaled nationally in 2024.

2. Maternal Health and WASH Integration

Address maternal undernutrition and sanitation simultaneously.

Example: Poshan 2.0 now mandates joint convergence plans with Jal Jeevan Mission.

3. Early Childhood Education and Day-Care

Support cognitive growth during critical years.

Example: 2024 NEP pilot in 7 states launched integrated Anganwadi–Balvatika models.

4. Rural Livelihoods for Dietary Access

Expand employment and food security linkages.

Example: MGNREGA nutrition-top-up in Chhattisgarh: additional grains for active workers.

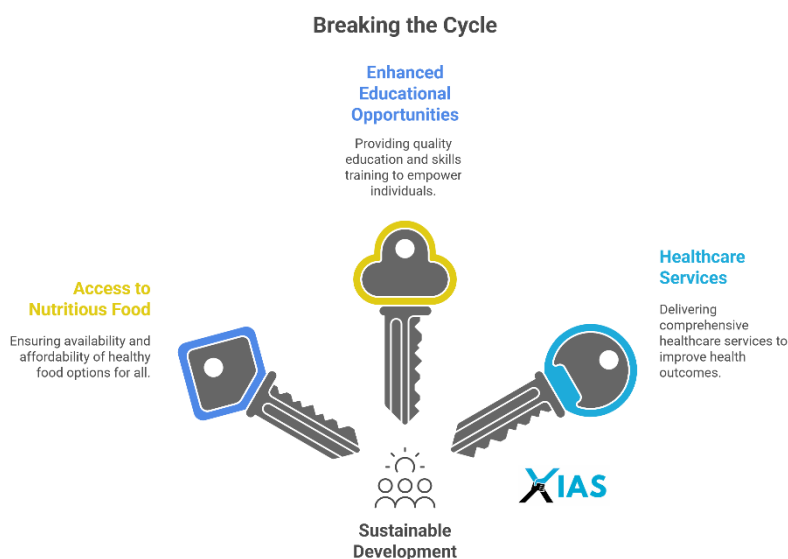
5. Local Governance and SHG Mobilisation

Empower PRI and SHG institutions to monitor growth tracking.

Example: 2023 Andhra Pradesh model tracks child BMI via SHG clusters.

Conclusion:

Breaking this cycle requires **rights-based, decentralised public delivery** backed by **education, nutrition, and gender empowerment** converging around the poorest households.



TOPIC-13: Governance, e-Governance

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF GOVERNANCE



TRANSPARENCY



E-GOVERNANCE



CITIZENS



INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013

- **Though Citizens' Charters have been formulated by many public service delivery organizations, there is no corresponding improvement in the level of citizens' satisfaction and quality of services being provided. Analyse. (10 M)**

- 2015

- **In the light of the Satyam Scandal (2009), discuss the changes brought in corporate governance to ensure transparency and accountability. (12.5 M)**

- 2016

- **"In the Indian governance system, the role of non-state actors has been only marginal." Critically examine this statement. (12.5 M)**
- **"Effectiveness of the government system at various levels and people's participation in the governance system are inter-dependent." Discuss their relationship in the context of India. (12.5 M)**

- 2017

- **Hunger and poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement. (10 M)**

Q1. Though Citizens' Charters have been formulated by many public service delivery organizations, there is no corresponding improvement in the level of citizens' satisfaction and quality of services being provided. Analyse. (2013)

What is the question asking:

It asks to analyse why Citizens' Charters have failed to improve service delivery and satisfaction.

How to approach:

Intro: Define Charters and their governance purpose.

Body: 5 reasons for implementation failure.

Conclusion: Need for legal and institutional strengthening.

Introduction:

The Citizens' Charter initiative, introduced as part of administrative reforms post-1997, sought to improve **accountability, transparency, and service quality**. However, the lack of **statutory backing, awareness, and enforcement** has limited their on-ground effectiveness.

Body:

1. Absence of Statutory Status

Most Charters lack legal enforceability, unlike state-level public services Acts.

Example: Central Ministries don't operate under a legal obligation like the Madhya Pradesh Lok Sewa Guarantee Act.

2. Inadequate Citizen Awareness

Low literacy and dissemination hinder citizens from using Charters effectively.

Example: DARPG (2023) found only 29% public awareness of Charter entitlements in surveyed districts.

3. No Accountability Mechanism

Officials are rarely penalised for non-compliance.

Example: Delhi's implementation showed wide mismatch between service promises and delivery timelines.

4. Generic and Poorly Drafted Content

Charters often list vague goals and unrealistic timelines.

Example: Many Charters list "improve efficiency" without defining measurable service metrics.

5. Weak Grievance Redressal Integration

Charters operate separately from CPGRAMS and other grievance systems.

Example: CPGRAMS complaints rose 27% in 2024 due to lack of local service-level accountability.

Recommendation: Charter Reform Based on Governance Reports

- **2nd ARC (2009):** Recommended legal backing for Citizens' Charters and linkage with grievance mechanisms.
- **DARPG (2016):** Urged periodic review and third-party audit of Charters.
- **NITI Aayog (2020):** Called for real-time service dashboards and citizen feedback tools.
- **Standing Committee on Personnel (2023):** Advocated linking SPARROW (officer appraisal) to Charter compliance rates.

Recommendation pointers:

- **2nd ARC (2009):** Recommended legal backing for Citizens' Charters and linkage with grievance mechanisms.
- **DARPG (2016):** Urged periodic review and third-party audit of Charters.
- **NITI Aayog (2020):** Called for real-time service dashboards and citizen feedback tools.
- **Standing Committee on Personnel (2023):** Advocated linking SPARROW (officer appraisal) to Charter compliance rates.

Conclusion:

Citizens' Charters will remain ineffective unless integrated into **rights-based, legally accountable frameworks** with citizen participation, grievance tracking, and timely redressal.

Q2. In the light of the Satyam Scandal (2009), discuss the changes brought in corporate governance to ensure transparency and accountability. (2015)

What is the question asking:

It seeks analysis of post-Satyam reforms in corporate governance to ensure transparency and accountability.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention Satyam scandal as watershed in corporate governance.

Body: 5 major institutional and legal changes post-2009.

Conclusion: Stronger enforcement remains the key.

Introduction:

The **Satyam corporate fraud (2009)** revealed deep weaknesses in board oversight, audit practices, and investor protection. In response, India overhauled its corporate governance regime through legislative, regulatory, and institutional reforms.

Body:

1. Companies Act, 2013

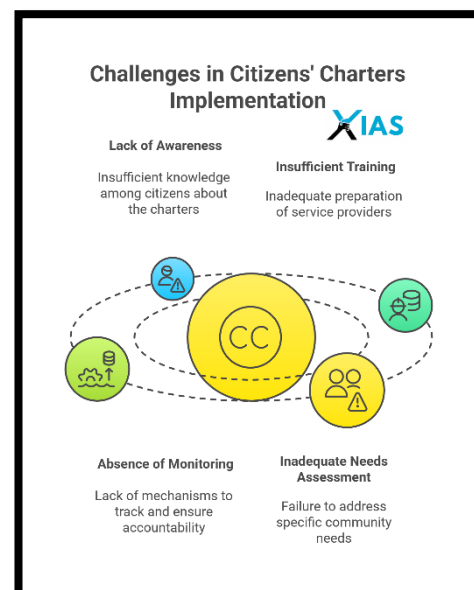
Replaced 1956 Act with clear provisions on board roles, CSR, and compliance.

Example: CSR made mandatory for companies crossing profit thresholds.

2. Auditor Accountability and Rotation

Mandatory auditor rotation and audit committees for large firms.

Example: Auditors now face fines and debarment by **NFRA**.



3. Role of Independent Directors Enhanced

One-third independent directors mandated for listed companies.

Example: SEBI (2023) requires them to undergo proficiency certification.

4. SEBI's Corporate Governance Norms (2020–24)

Stricter disclosure norms, ESG mandates, and whistleblower protection.

Example: Top 1,000 companies must file BRSR (Business Responsibility reports).

5. Establishment of NFRA (2018)

A statutory watchdog for accounting and audit quality.

Example: NFRA fined audit firms ₹1–2 crore for lapses in NBFC audits (2023–24).

Recommendation pointers:

- **Corporate Governance Reform Sources**
- **Naresh Chandra Committee (2002):** Advocated auditor independence and penalties.
- **Narasimham II Report (1998):** Stressed disclosure and financial transparency.
- **SEBI Committee on Corporate Governance (Kumar Mangalam Birla):** Laid foundation for Clause 49 norms.
- **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (2023):** Recommended AI-based audit analytics and ESG governance benchmarking.

Conclusion:

India's corporate governance has strengthened structurally post-Satyam, but must now focus on **real-time compliance, board ethics, and regulatory coordination.**

Q3. "In the Indian governance system, the role of non-state actors has been only marginal." Critically examine this statement. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks to assess whether non-state actors have played a marginal or substantive role in governance.

How to approach:

Intro: Define non-state actors and their roles.

Body: 3 substantial roles + 3 systemic limitations.

Conclusion: Institutional integration is needed for scaling impact.

Introduction:

Non-state actors — including **NGOs, think tanks, private entities, media, and CSOs** — play vital roles in **policy advocacy, welfare delivery, and accountability.** Their marginality lies not in capability, but in **limited institutional convergence with the state.**

Body:

1. Policy Advocacy and Rights Mobilisation

Civil society catalysed key legislations like RTI and MGNREGA.

Example: MKSS mobilised national consensus for Right to Information Act.

2. Public Service Delivery in Health and Education

Non-state actors operate schools, PHCs, and nutrition centres in PPPs.

Example: Karuna Trust–State health partnerships in Karnataka.

3. Crisis Management and Community Relief

NGOs lead disaster relief and migrant support.

Example: During Cyclone Michaung (2023), NGOs served over 2 lakh meals in Tamil Nadu.

4. FCRA Restrictions Limit Scope

Funding and compliance burdens hamper outreach.

Example: 6,000 NGOs lost licenses (2020–24) due to regulatory tightening.

5. Lack of Role Clarity in Schemes

Overlap with PRIs and line departments causes duplication.

Example: SHG–NGO functions clash under DAY-NRLM in some districts.

6. Urban–Rural Asymmetry

NGO activity is skewed towards metros and donor-funded areas.

Example: Ministry data (2023) shows 70% of NGO presence in just 6 states.

Recommendation pointers:

- **2nd ARC Report on Social Capital (2008):** Called for formal partnerships with NGOs in policy design.
- **NITI Aayog (2020):** Advocated co-creation of development goals with CSOs.
- **FCRA Review Committee (2021):** Recommended graded compliance and digital approval for transparency.
- **MoSPI & MoRD Joint Note (2023):** Proposed SHG–NGO convergence models in Aspirational Districts.

Conclusion:

Non-state actors have demonstrated **impact, not marginality**, but require **clear roles, legal enabling frameworks, and state–civil convergence** to scale their contribution.

Q4. “Effectiveness of the government system at various levels and people’s participation in the governance system are inter-dependent.” Discuss their relationship in the context of India. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks to explain the **mutual dependence between state effectiveness and citizen participation**.

How to approach:

Intro: Link democratic decentralisation with participatory governance.

Body: 5 governance levels where this synergy is evident.

Conclusion: Responsive governance needs empowered participation.

Introduction:

As per the **73rd and 74th Amendments**, governance in India is designed to be **bottom-up**, where people’s participation ensures **accountability, legitimacy, and service efficiency**, and effective systems enable such participation.

Body:

1. Gram Sabhas as Accountability Forums

Active sabhas improve implementation of rural schemes.

Example: Kerala’s ward sabhas review budgets and beneficiary lists annually.

2. Participatory Budgeting in Urban Governance

Citizen planning improves fund allocation.

Example: Pune’s 2023 initiative allocated ₹25 crore based on ward-level inputs.

3. Social Audits and Civic Monitoring

Community audits enhance state responsiveness.

Example: Andhra Pradesh institutionalised MGNREGA audits with SHG members.

4. SHGs and Federated Community Governance

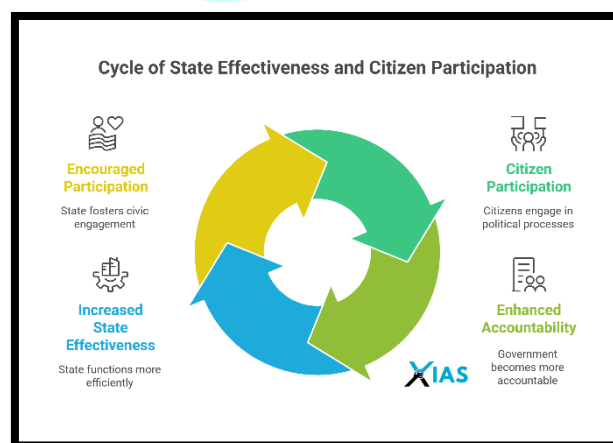
SHG collectives engage in health, sanitation, and PDS monitoring.

Example: Odisha’s Mission Shakti SHGs partner in school mid-day meal supervision.

5. Digital Platforms for Participation

MyGov, Janmanch, and CM grievance portals enable real-time participation.

Example: Janmanch Haryana resolved 1.4 lakh citizen queries in 2023.



Recommendation pointers:

- **Enhancing Participatory Governance**
- **2nd ARC on Citizen-Centric Administration:** Urged legal mandate for Gram Sabha consultations in planning.
- **MoPR Guidelines (2022):** Mandated people's plan campaign across all rural panchayats.
- **NITI Aayog (2019):** Called for participatory audits in urban governance.
- **MoHUA Advisory (2023):** Recommended ULB-level participatory budgeting forums.

Conclusion:

For governance to be truly effective in India, **citizens must not only receive services but co-own processes** through **institutionalised, empowered participation mechanisms**.

Q5. Hunger and poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement. (2017)

What is the question asking:

It seeks evaluation of India's efforts in tackling hunger and poverty and demands constructive governance-based suggestions.

How to approach:

Intro: Link poverty/hunger to governance indicators.

Body: 3 areas of progress + 3 persistent governance gaps.

Conclusion: Delivery must shift from programmatic to systemic.

Introduction:

Good governance ensures **equitable access, effective service delivery, and inclusion of the poor**. While India has launched wide-ranging food and anti-poverty schemes, governance gaps continue to limit long-term impact.

Body:**I. Progress Made****1. Legal Entitlements under NFSA (2013)**

Ensured food security for 80 crore+ citizens.

Example: Free foodgrain under PMGKAY extended till Dec 2024.

2. MGNREGA and Wage-based Social Security

Acts as safety net during rural distress.

Example: 5.2 crore households availed jobs in FY 2023–24.

3. Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and JAM

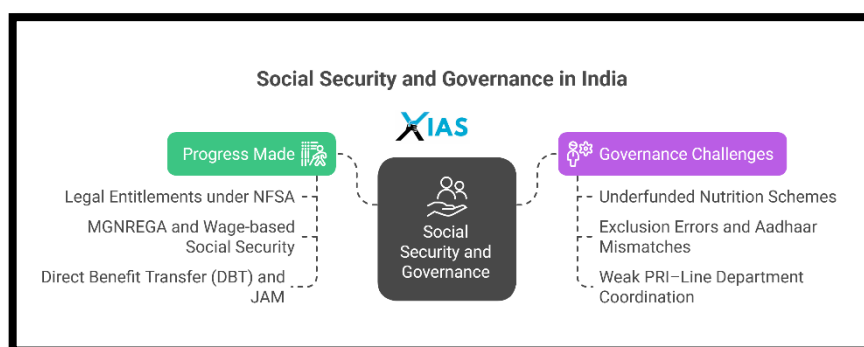
Reduced leakages and improved efficiency.

Example: ₹2.8 lakh crore transferred via DBT in FY 2024.

II. Governance Challenges**4. Underfunded Nutrition Schemes**

ICDS and Poshan 2.0 face stagnant budgets.

Example: 2023–24 allocation increased by just 3.4%.



5. Exclusion Errors and Aadhaar Mismatches

PDS beneficiaries often excluded.

Example: 2.1 crore exclusions flagged by CAG (2024).

6. Weak PRI-Line Department Coordination

Fragmented delivery affects outcomes.

Example: Many gram panchayats lack data on malnourished children.

Recommendation pointers:

- **Governance for Hunger and Poverty**
- **National Nutrition Strategy (NITI, 2017):** Called for lifecycle-based convergence in food–health–sanitation.
- **Standing Committee on Food (2023):** Recommended revamping TPDS with nutrition-sensitive baskets.
- **2nd ARC:** Advocated integrating poverty schemes under Panchayat-level Unified Service Windows.
- **Ministry of Rural Development (2024):** Proposed SHG-led identification of left-out families.

Conclusion:

To address poverty and hunger as governance failures, India must adopt **citizen-led, data-driven, decentralised frameworks** for inclusive development.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2019

- **Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based projects/programmes usually suffers in terms of certain vital factors. Identify these factors, and suggest measures for their effective implementation. (10 M)**

• 2020

- **“The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government.” Discuss. (10 M)**

• 2021

- **Has digital literacy, particularly in rural areas, coupled with lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification. (15 M)**

Q1. Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based projects/programmes usually suffers in terms of certain vital factors. Identify these factors, and suggest measures for their effective implementation. (2019)

What is the question asking:

It asks to identify **barriers in ICT project implementation** and suggest systemic **reforms for effectiveness**.

How to approach:

Intro: Define ICT in governance context.

Body: 5 barriers + 5 specific reforms.

Conclusion: Need long-term planning, capacity, and inter-ministerial convergence.

Introduction:

ICT projects under **Digital India, e-Kranti, and NeGP** aim to enhance governance delivery. Yet, infrastructural, human, and institutional gaps undermine their implementation and scalability in many parts of India.

Body:

I. Barriers in ICT Implementation

1. Digital Infrastructure Gaps

Limited broadband and server capacity in rural areas.

Example: Only 40% of Gram Panchayats connected under BharatNet Phase-II (MeitY 2024).

2. Lack of Digital Literacy and User Training

Inhibits adoption among frontline workers and citizens.

Example: PMGDISHA reached only 54% of its 2023–24 rural targets.

3. Fragmentation of Platforms and Databases

Lack of integration across ministries.

Example: Land records, bank databases, and welfare portals often operate in silos.

4. Vendor Lock-ins and Procurement Delays

Outdated hardware and bureaucratic procurement norms.

Example: CAG flagged hardware delays in CSC 2.0 rollout (2023).

5. Data Security and Privacy Concerns

Weak compliance with cyber laws and data protocols.

Example: CERT-IN reported over 1.4 million cybersecurity incidents in 2024 alone.

II. Measures for Effective Implementation

1. Last-Mile Connectivity via 5G + BharatNet Synergy

Focus on Aspirational and Left-Wing Extremism Districts.

2. Interoperability Frameworks under India Stack

APIs for cross-ministerial integration.

3. Outcome-Based Procurement and Audit Mechanisms

Shift from input-based to milestone-linked vendor payments.

4. Digital Literacy for Governance Workforce

Department-specific e-modules under iGOT Karmayogi.

5. Citizen Grievance Analytics and Feedback Dashboards

Real-time feedback integration across e-seva platforms.

Recommendation pointers:

- **ICT Governance Reform Sources**
- **MeitY Guidelines (2023):** Advocated open APIs, cloud migration, and standardised architecture.
- **NITI Aayog (2022):** Recommended BharatNet saturation and multilingual e-service interfaces.
- **Public Digital Infrastructure Report (2024):** Called for digital public goods built on India Stack.
- **2nd ARC (e-Governance Report):** Emphasised decentralised implementation, local customisation, and user feedback loops.

Conclusion:

To harness ICT's full governance potential, India must shift from **fragmented project-based approaches to integrated, scalable, and citizen-centric digital ecosystems.**

Q3. "The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government." Discuss. (2020)

What is the question asking:

It seeks to examine how **4IR technologies** have catalysed the evolution of **e-Governance in India.**

How to approach:

Intro: Define 4IR and link to e-Governance shift.

Body: 5 dimensions where 4IR tech has transformed governance.

Conclusion: Future of governance lies in secure, inclusive, tech-enabled systems.

Introduction:

The **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)** — driven by AI, IoT, blockchain, and big data — has redefined governance by embedding **efficiency, personalisation, and real-time decision-making** into public administration systems across India.

Body:

1. AI-Driven Policy and Targeting

Data analytics enable smart allocation and welfare targeting.

Example: Aadhaar–eShram–NREGA integration used AI to pre-select COVID relief beneficiaries in 2023.

2. IoT and GIS in Infrastructure Governance

Asset monitoring and environmental governance.

Example: Jal Jeevan Mission uses GIS to track tap water installations.

3. Blockchain in Land and Document Integrity

Immutable records for property and education credentials.

Example: Maharashtra and Telangana piloted blockchain-based land record projects.

4. Chatbots and Automated Grievance Redressal

Enables scale and 24x7 public service.

Example: MyGov Helpdesk on WhatsApp handles over 1 million queries monthly (MeitY 2024).

5. Predictive Analytics in Health and Disaster Management

Supports preemptive governance.

Example: CoWIN dashboard used AI forecasting to manage vaccine inventories.

Recommendation pointers:

- **4IR & e-Governance Integration**
- **NITI Aayog Strategy for New India @75:** Advocated blockchain, AI, and cloud for governance scalability.
- **MeitY Draft Digital India Bill (2024):** Proposes accountability standards for AI and big data use in governance.
- **Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee (2018):** Urged data privacy and consent-based digital governance.
- **Standing Committee on IT (2021):** Recommended AI/ML integration in digital grievance and audit systems.

Conclusion:

e-Governance in the age of 4IR demands **inclusive infrastructure, ethical data use, and digital literacy** to truly democratise governance for all citizens.

Q4. Has digital literacy, particularly in rural areas, coupled with lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification. (2021)

What is the question asking:

It asks to **evaluate how digital illiteracy and ICT access gaps** are hindering rural socio-economic development.

How to approach:

Intro: Define digital literacy and its developmental role.

Body: 5 sectoral impacts due to access gaps.

Conclusion: Digital equity is essential for balanced development.

Introduction:

Digital literacy — the ability to access, evaluate, and use digital technologies — is now a foundational skill. In rural India, limited ICT access and low digital fluency have created **developmental asymmetries** in health, education, livelihoods, and governance.

Body:

1. Welfare Exclusion due to Digital Gaps

Inability to access DBT or ration entitlements.

Example: 2024 PDS leakages in Chhattisgarh linked to Aadhaar-seeding errors and lack of kiosk access.

2. Education Disruption during Pandemic

Digital divide affected continuity of learning.

Example: Only 28% of rural students accessed online classes in 2021 (ASER Report).

3. Employment Access via Skilling Portals

Low access to digital skilling and gig platforms.

Example: Less than 25% rural youth onboarded on e-Skill India or NCS (MoLE 2023).

4. Health and Telemedicine Access

eSanjeevani not fully utilised in digitally poor districts.

Example: Bihar and Jharkhand showed lowest teleconsultation uptake in 2023.

5. Agricultural Extension and Market Linkages

Limited access to mandi rates, crop advisories.

Example: Kisan e-mitra usage in tribal MP remains below 20% due to smartphone access barriers.

Recommendation pointers: Bridging the Digital Divide

- **PMGDISHA (2021-24):** Rural digital literacy for 6 crore citizens.
- **NITI Aayog Digital Inclusion Framework (2022):** Called for vernacular digital content and offline-enabled apps.
- **Ministry of Rural Development (2024):** Proposed ICT co-operatives and SHG-led digital training centres.
- **Standing Committee on IT (2023):** Urged digital inclusion index at state and district levels.

Conclusion:

Digital literacy and ICT accessibility are no longer optional but **critical enablers of rural economic mobility, welfare inclusion, and participatory governance.**

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2023

- **Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India. (15 M)**

• 2024

- **The Citizens' Charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them. (15 M)**
- **E-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in the service delivery process. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context, evaluate the role of the 'Interactive Service Model' of e-governance. (15 M)**

Q1. Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India. (2023)

What is the question asking:

It asks to evaluate the role of civil society in enhancing women's representation and participation in state-level legislatures.

How to approach:

Intro: Link civil society to democratic deepening and gender parity.

Body: 5 ways in which CSOs have enabled women's political empowerment.

Conclusion: Civil society must complement institutional reform for sustainable representation.

Introduction:

Civil society organisations, as per **Article 19(1)(c)** and recognised in several Law Commission reports, have long acted as catalysts for **gender equity, political inclusion, and rights-based advocacy**. Their interventions have helped transform women's participation from symbolic presence to meaningful legislative agency.

Body:

1. Capacity Building for Grassroots Entry

CSOs train women at PRI levels for electoral contests.

Example: PRIA and ANANDI supported 50,000+ women in contesting local elections across Rajasthan and Gujarat (2023 data).

2. Election Support and Voter Mobilisation

Run awareness campaigns to increase women's candidatures and turnout.

Example: ADR campaigns in Karnataka (2023) increased turnout of women in backward districts by 12%.

3. Legal Advocacy and Campaigning for Quotas

Supported push for Women's Reservation Bill and state-specific quotas.

Example: NAWO and Centre for Social Research contributed inputs to the Women's Reservation Act, 2023.

4. Creating Pressure Groups and Networks

Coalitions amplify women MLAs' voices in legislatures.

Example: Shakti Vahini facilitated networking among women MLAs in Odisha for common agendas.

5. Tracking and Publicising Women Legislators' Performance

CSOs use scorecards to track and compare legislators.

Example: Score India's 2024 Legislative Tracker reports that women MLAs with NGO-backed support raised 3x more constituency questions.

Recommendation: Civil Society & Women's Political Representation

- **National Policy for Women (2016):** Called for strengthening women's political training and leadership capacity via CSOs.
- **2nd ARC (Report 9):** Urged partnership between state and civil society for inclusive representation.
- **NITI Aayog (2020):** Proposed state-level Women's Political Development Cells in collaboration with NGOs.
- **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women (2023):** Recommended tracking the political career trajectory of women from panchayats to legislatures.

Conclusion:

Civil society has acted as an **institutional equaliser** in India's gendered political space, but must now partner more deeply with state and party systems to **institutionalise women's legislative leadership**.

Q2. The Citizens' Charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them. (2024)

What is the question asking:

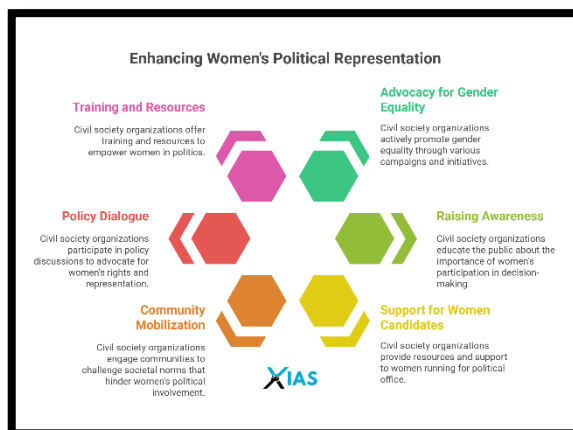
It seeks to identify implementation-level challenges in Citizen's Charters and suggest concrete improvements.

How to approach:

Intro: Place Charters in constitutional and administrative reform context.

Body: 5 challenges + 5 targeted reforms.

Conclusion: Shift from symbolic to enforceable citizen contract.



Introduction:

Citizen's Charters, inspired by the UK model and introduced post-1997 under administrative reforms, aim to uphold "seva bhaav" (service orientation) and constitutional values of **transparency and accountability**. However, fragmented adoption and weak enforcement hinder their systemic potential.

Body:**I. Factors Hindering Effectiveness****1. Absence of Legal Mandate**

No binding commitment to timelines or penalties.

Example: Only a few states like MP and Karnataka have Services Guarantee Acts; most central ministries lack enforceability.

2. Minimal Citizen Engagement in Design

Charters are top-down and not co-created.

Example: Only 17% of Charters on DARPG portal show consultation with end-users.

3. Weak Integration with Grievance Redress**Redress**

No auto-triggering of grievance when services fail.

Example: CPGRAMS and Charters function in isolation in many departments.

4. Poor Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms

Lack of audit, third-party evaluation, or citizen scoring.

Example: CAG (2023) flagged outdated Charters in MoRD and MoHFW.

5. Tokenism and Generalised Language

Use of aspirational, vague promises with no metrics.

Example: "Serve with empathy" is common but lacks measurable benchmarks.

II. Suggested Measures**1. Pass a Central Services Delivery Act**

Make Charters legally binding across all ministries.

2. Mandate Citizen Co-creation Workshops

Use SHGs, RWAs, and CSOs to co-design measurable service parameters.

3. Link with CPGRAMS and Performance Appraisals

Non-compliance affects SPARROW scores of officers.

4. Real-Time Dashboards and SMS Alerts

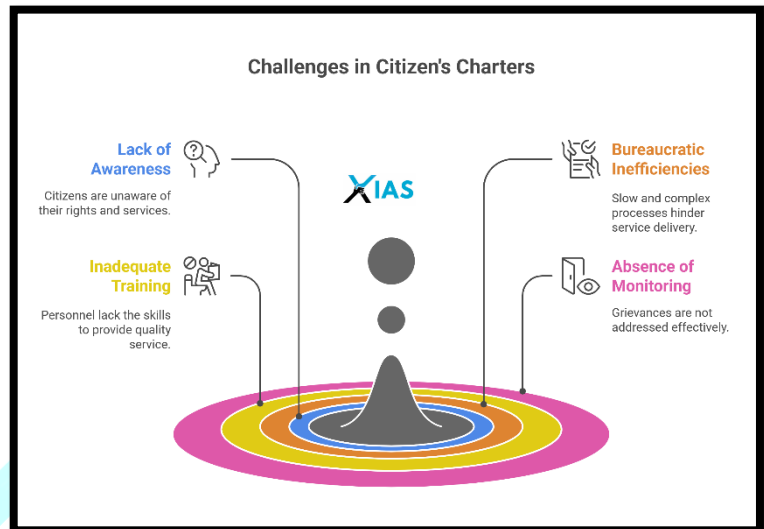
Auto-updates on service delivery timelines and delays.

5. Department-level Charter Audit Cells

Annual review and rating by independent agencies.

Recommendation: Revitalising Citizen's Charters

- **2nd ARC (2008):** Recommended Charter legislation with penalty mechanisms and periodic third-party audits.
- **DARPG (2023):** Called for making Charters SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Responsive, Transparent).
- **NITI Aayog (2021):** Proposed integration with CPGRAMS and performance-linked incentives.
- **Standing Committee on Personnel (2022):** Urged Charter enforcement through annual officer appraisal reviews.



Conclusion: Charters can transform governance only if treated as **enforceable service contracts**, driven by **citizen ownership, digital feedback loops, and cross-agency accountability**.

Q3. E-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in the service delivery process. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context, evaluate the role of the 'Interactive Service Model' of e-governance. (2024)

What is the question asking:

It asks to evaluate the **role of interactive e-governance models** (beyond one-way digital tools) in enhancing governance outcomes.

How to approach:

Intro: Define e-governance and shift toward interaction-based models.

Body: 5 dimensions where interactive governance enhances transparency/accountability.

Conclusion: Digital governance must embed citizen-state co-creation as a norm.

Introduction:

E-governance has evolved from simple digitisation to **interactive service models** — characterised by two-way communication, grievance loops, participatory platforms, and co-production of services. These models fulfil the **constitutional vision of participatory, transparent, and responsive administration**.

Body:

1. Citizen–Government Dialogue via Digital Platforms

MyGov, Janmanch, and CM grievance apps enable feedback-driven decisions.

Example: Janmanch Haryana closed 1.4 lakh grievances in FY24 with 72% satisfaction.

2. Interactive Grievance Portals with Auto-Escalation

CPGRAMS 7.0 allows status tracking, escalation, and citizen comments.

Example: MoFPI grievance resolution time reduced by 40% post automation.

3. Real-Time Participatory Budgeting and Polls

ULBs using apps for participatory planning.

Example: Pune Smart City app collects citizen inputs for road, light, and water projects.

4. Interactive Chatbots and Helpdesks

Enables 24x7 access with multilingual support.

Example: MyGov WhatsApp chatbot handled 15 lakh COVID queries and now supports PM-KISAN.

5. Dynamic Dashboard Disclosure

E-platforms display real-time service KPIs, creating public pressure.

Example: Jal Jeevan Dashboard displays live tap connections by state.

Recommendation pointers: Interactive Governance and Transparency

- **NITI Aayog (2022):** Advocated citizen feedback APIs in all welfare portals.
- **MeitY Digital India Report (2023):** Emphasised interoperable, multilingual, feedback-enabled governance apps.
- **2nd ARC Report on e-Governance:** Urged shift from information dissemination to co-creation platforms.
- **Standing Committee on IT (2024):** Recommended real-time grievance transparency via chatbots and whatsapp services

Conclusion:

Interactive service models reframe governance from a **provider–recipient hierarchy to a citizen–state partnership**, unlocking scalable pathways for transparency, co-ownership, and trust-building.

TOPIC-14: Role of Civil Services in a Democracy

Role Of Civil Services In A Democracy In The Context Of Emerging Trends



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2014

- **Has the Cadre-based Civil Services Organization been the cause of slow change in India? Critically examine(12.5M)**

- 2016

- **“Traditional bureaucratic structure and culture have hampered the process of socio-economic development in India.” Comment. (12.5 M)**

- 2017

- **Initially, Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services? Comment. (15 M)**

- 2020

- **“Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance.” In this context, suggest reforms in Civil Service for strengthening democracy. (10 M)**

- 2024

- **The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss. (10 M)**

Q1. Has the Cadre-based Civil Services Organization been the cause of slow change in India? Critically examine. (2014)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether India’s cadre-based civil services system has contributed to **slow or inefficient change**, and calls for a critical analysis.

How to approach:

Intro: Define cadre-based system and its rationale.

Body: 5 critiques of the system + 5 positives/defensive points.

Conclusion: Suggest need for balanced reforms, not removal.

Introduction:

India’s **cadre-based civil services system**, rooted in the All India Services Act, 1951, was designed to promote **continuity, neutrality, and decentralised administration**. However, it has increasingly been critiqued for hindering responsive and flexible governance.

Body:

I. Factors Leading to Slow Change

1. Fixed State Cadre Limits Exposure

Reduces cross-learning and pan-India policy vision.

Example: A 2023 DoPT report noted <10% inter-cadre deputation in 15 years.

2. Generalist over Specialist Orientation

Hampers effective delivery in technical sectors.

Example: Health secretaries with no medical background managing pandemic operations.

3. Seniority-Based Promotion over Merit

Demotivates performance innovation.

Example: ARC noted skewed performance-reward link in central cadres.

4. Resistance to Lateral Entry and Innovation

Fear of dilution of status and security.

Example: Pushback against NITI Aayog’s lateral entry proposals in 2021–22.

5. Weak Accountability to Outcome-Based Governance

Cadre loyalty sometimes outweighs citizen outcomes.

Example: Poor outcome tracking in centrally sponsored schemes due to cadre insulation.

II. Positive Aspects of Cadre System

1. State-Level Administrative Continuity

Familiarity with local issues improves policy stability.

2. Prevents Over-Politicisation of Bureaucracy

All India Services insulated from state pressures.

3. Builds Institutional Memory and State Capacity

Long-term retention helps maintain procedural continuity.

4. Equitable Representation of States

Cadre allocation ensures federal balance.

5. Strong Crisis Management Experience

Trained generalists often handle multi-sectoral emergencies effectively.

Recommendation pointers: Cadre Reform

- **2nd ARC (2008):** Suggested mid-career reviews and specialised career tracks.
- **Baswan Committee (2016):** Recommended revised cadre allocation and recruitment at sub-cadre levels.
- **NITI Aayog Strategy @75 (2020):** Advocated for domain-specific lateral entries and outcome-based appraisals

Conclusion: The cadre-based system requires **adaptive modernisation**, not replacement — focusing on **merit, mobility, and skill alignment** while retaining its federal strengths.

Q2. "Traditional bureaucratic structure and culture have hampered the process of socio-economic development in India." Comment. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks how India's **bureaucratic structure and culture** act as a constraint to **development outcomes**.

How to approach:

Intro: Describe traditional Weberian structure in Indian context.

Body: 5 ways bureaucracy hampers development outcomes.

Conclusion: Need structural and behavioural transformation.

Introduction:

India inherited a **Weberian bureaucratic system** marked by hierarchy, secrecy, and procedural rigidity. While it ensured continuity post-Independence, the same features now often obstruct **agility, innovation, and participatory development**.

Body:

1. Hierarchical Command Slows Decision-Making

Delays grassroots responsiveness.

Example: Time lag in disaster relief deployment due to administrative bottlenecks.

2. Red Tape and Proceduralism

Focus on input compliance, not output delivery.

Example: Slow fund utilisation under PMAY-G (2023) in Bihar and Odisha.

3. Poor Citizen Engagement and Field Sensitivity

Lack of empathy, especially in vulnerable areas.

Example: Resistance to tribal rights in FRA implementation by forest bureaucracy.

4. Centralised Planning Bias

Limited delegation to local institutions.

Example: District-level officers often await state approvals for local development needs.

5. Weak Accountability and Feedback Mechanisms

No reward for innovation or penalty for status quoism.

Example: Rural sanitation outcomes manipulated to meet targets under SBM-I.

Recommendation pointers: Bureaucratic Reform

- **2nd ARC (2009):** Called for mission-mode governance and decentralisation.
- **iGOT Karmayogi (2020):** Seeks behavioural reform and citizen-centric attitude training.
- **Economic Survey (2021-22):** Urged “learning-by-doing” governance and experimental federalism

Conclusion:

India must replace bureaucratic rigidity with **mission-oriented, feedback-driven, and field-sensitive administration** to meet its socio-economic aspirations.

Q3. Initially, Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services? Comment. (2017)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether the **foundational ideals of neutrality and effectiveness** in civil services are being eroded, and whether **drastic reforms** are justified.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention foundational goals + erosion trend.

Body: 5 signs of erosion + 5 suggested reforms.

Conclusion: Constructive reform, not rupture, is needed.

Introduction:

The Indian Civil Services, governed by **Article 312** and built on values of **neutrality, integrity, and efficiency**, are increasingly being questioned for declining autonomy and service outcomes, justifying urgent systemic reform.

Body:

I. Signs of Erosion

1. Politicisation of Postings and Transfers

Undermines functional autonomy.

Example: Frequent reshuffles of Chief Secretaries before elections.

2. Inadequate Sectoral Expertise

Leads to inefficiency in complex sectors.

Example: Generalists heading AI missions or public health departments.

3. Decline in Public Trust and Integrity Perception

Corruption and conflict of interest rise.

Example: Lokpal received 3,600 complaints in 2023; few convictions.



4. Lack of Innovation and Risk Appetite

No reward for out-of-box reforms.

Example: Few bureaucrats drive open data or citizen dashboards voluntarily.

5. Low Accountability for Outcomes

Process-driven over impact-oriented.

Example: Poor learning outcomes persist despite SSA budgets.

II. Drastic Reforms Needed

1. Introduction of Domain-Based Lateral Entry

Ensure expertise in specialised roles.

2. Independent Civil Services Board for Transfers

Reduce political interference.

3. Performance-Based Promotions and SPARROW Reform

Use citizen feedback and outcomes.

4. Mandatory Field Immersion and Local Governance Posting

Improve grassroots empathy.

5. Ethics and Digital Governance Training via Karmayogi

Behavioural and tech transformation.

Recommendation pointers: Transforming Civil Services

- **Hota Committee (2004):** Recommended fixed tenure, performance-based appraisals.
- **Baswan Committee (2016):** Proposed domain-specific career paths.
- **NITI Aayog (2023):** Advocated civil service-modernisation index for states.

Conclusion:

Drastic reforms must aim not to dismantle but to **revive the constitutional vision of a neutral, competent, and citizen-facing bureaucracy.**

Q4. "Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance." In this context, suggest reforms in Civil Service for strengthening democracy. (2020)

What is the question asking:

It seeks to link **civil services reform** to improved **institutional quality and democratic performance.**

How to approach:

Intro: Link institutional strength to democratic governance.

Body: 5 reforms in civil services to enhance democratic outcomes.

Conclusion: Good institutions empower both economy and democracy.

Introduction:

As per the **World Bank Governance Indicators**, quality of institutions — particularly **bureaucratic capability, responsiveness, and integrity** — has a strong correlation with inclusive economic growth and democratic resilience.

Body:

1. Civil Services Board Empowerment

Autonomy in transfers to reduce politicisation.

Example: Punjab, Odisha have begun limited board-based postings since 2022.

2. Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment

Greater tribal, gender, and regional representation.

Example: UPSC promoting regional language inclusion in CSE (2023).

3. Citizen Engagement and Transparency Norms

Mandate public hearings and grievance analytics.

Example: IAS officers now graded on public complaint resolution via SPARROW.

4. Outcome-Based Governance Metrics

Tie budget, scheme, and career to outcome, not input.

Example: Aspirational Districts use delta rankings for officer incentives.

5. Ethics Training and Political Neutrality Modules

Mandatory under Mission Karmayogi.

Example: Over 1.2 lakh officers trained under iGOT in 2023–24.

Recommendation pointers: Civil Services as Drivers of Democracy

- **2nd ARC (2007):** Called for proactive bureaucracy as agent of democratic transformation.
- **NITI Aayog (2020):** Recommended democratic accountability framework in officer evaluation.
- **DoPT (2023):** Updated SPARROW guidelines to include public-facing performance indicators.

Conclusion:

Institutionalised civil services reform, driven by **inclusion, autonomy, ethics, and impact measurement**, is essential for making Indian democracy both accountable and adaptive.

Q5. The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss. (2024)

What is the question asking:

It asks why public trust in the **ethics and integrity** of civil servants is essential to democratic governance.

How to approach:

Intro: Define democratic governance and the role of civil servants.

Body: 5 ways public perception impacts democracy.

Conclusion: Civil servants must embody integrity to anchor democratic legitimacy.

Introduction:

Democratic governance, as per the UNDP framework, rests on **transparency, participation, and integrity**. Civil servants, as the permanent executive, are critical to this trust chain — and their public perception shapes both democratic credibility and administrative legitimacy.

Body:

1. Perception of Integrity Builds Policy Acceptance

Trust enhances public compliance.

Example: High trust in IAS officers drove rapid vaccine uptake in rural Gujarat (2022).

2. Commitment Signals Rule of Law Enforcement

Weak perception leads to arbitrary governance.

Example: Survey (NCAER, 2023) found poor public trust in municipal cadre linked to corruption perception.

3. Media Narratives Influence Civil Service Morale

Low credibility demotivates ethical officers.

4. Ethical Gaps Reduce Public Participation

Citizens disengage when they perceive bias or apathy.

5. Global Indices Impact Investment and Democracy Scores

India's ranking in WGI (2023) dropped on "control of corruption" parameter.

Recommendation pointers: Improving Public Perception of Civil Servants

- **Mission Karmayogi (2020):** Introduced citizen-centric and ethical governance training.
- **2nd ARC (Ethics in Governance):** Urged asset disclosure, citizen scorecards, and transparent postings.
- **Lokpal Act (2013) and 2024 Amendments:** Strengthened complaint mechanism against public servants.

Conclusion:

For civil services to anchor democratic legitimacy, they must not only **be impartial and ethical — but also be seen as such by the public**.

TOPIC-15: India and its neighbourhood-relations

India And Its Relationship With Neighbouring Countries



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2013

- The protests in Shahbag Square in Dhaka, Bangladesh, reveal a fundamental split in society between the nationalists and Islamic forces. What is its significance for India? (10 M)

- 2014

- With respect to the South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (12.5 M)

- 2015

- Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of the Indian government to improve relationships with its neighbours. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss. (12.5 M)
- Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India–Pakistan relations. To what extent can the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange help generate goodwill between the two countries? Discuss with suitable examples. (12.5 M)

Q1. The protests in Shahbag Square in Dhaka, Bangladesh, reveal a fundamental split in society between the nationalists and Islamic forces. What is its significance for India? (2013)

What is the question asking:

It seeks an analysis of the **sociopolitical divide in Bangladesh** and how it affects **India's security and bilateral interests**.

How to approach:

Intro: Describe the Shahbagh movement and its ideological undercurrent.

Body: 5 dimensions of India's strategic interests impacted.

Conclusion: India must monitor domestic developments that influence bilateral ties and regional stability.

Introduction:

The 2013 **Shahbagh Square protests** in Dhaka arose over demands for capital punishment to 1971 war criminals and exposed the **fault line between secular nationalists and radical Islamist forces** in Bangladesh. This domestic polarity holds key implications for India's strategic and regional interests.

Body: Significance for India

1. Cross-Border Security and Counter-Terrorism

A weakened secular front may embolden extremist networks in bordering Indian states.

Example: JMB terror modules in West Bengal traced to Islamist networks in Bangladesh (2023 NIA report).

2. Bilateral Ties and Political Alignment

India–Bangladesh relations have strengthened under secular regimes like Awami League. Political instability may threaten this trajectory.

Example: Teesta negotiations stalled due to shifting political priorities in Dhaka.

3. Refugee and Migration Management

Sectarian tensions risk triggering refugee flows and strain India's border management.

Example: Influx during the 2016 Dhaka café attack aftermath raised Assam–Bengal security concerns.

4. Cultural and People-to-People Linkages

Rise of radical forces could erode civil society ties India has cultivated.

Example: Impact on Tagore festivals, joint theatre movements, and NGOs.

5. Regional Stability and Connectivity Projects

Polarised politics can delay or derail joint infrastructure plans like BBIN and BIMSTEC corridors.

Example: India–Bangladesh railway and waterway links impacted by domestic resistance.

Conclusion:

India must **closely engage with democratic forces** in Bangladesh while preparing for contingencies arising from internal instability, ensuring regional peace and cooperative neighbourhood diplomacy.

Q2. With respect to the South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (2014)

What is the question asking:

It seeks to explore **India–China bilateral issues** in light of **South China Sea (SCS) maritime tensions** and their implications for regional maritime security.

How to approach:

Intro: Link freedom of navigation with India's Indo-Pacific outlook.

Body: 5 specific issues between India and China connected to SCS tensions.

Conclusion: A mix of maritime assertion and diplomatic engagement is essential.

Introduction:

The **South China Sea** has become a critical theatre for **freedom of navigation, resource control, and regional dominance**, placing India's Act East policy in a delicate balance vis-à-vis China's growing maritime assertiveness.

Body: Bilateral Issues Between India and China

1. Energy Exploration Rights in Vietnamese EEZ

China opposes ONGC's exploration with Vietnam, claiming the region.

Example: India's stake in

Vietnamese Block 128 was objected to by Beijing in 2019 and again in 2023.

2. Divergent Maritime Doctrines

India supports UNCLOS-based freedom of navigation; China insists on 'historic rights'.

Example: India's joint naval exercises with ASEAN seen as "provocative" by China.

3. Strategic Infrastructure in IOR and SCS

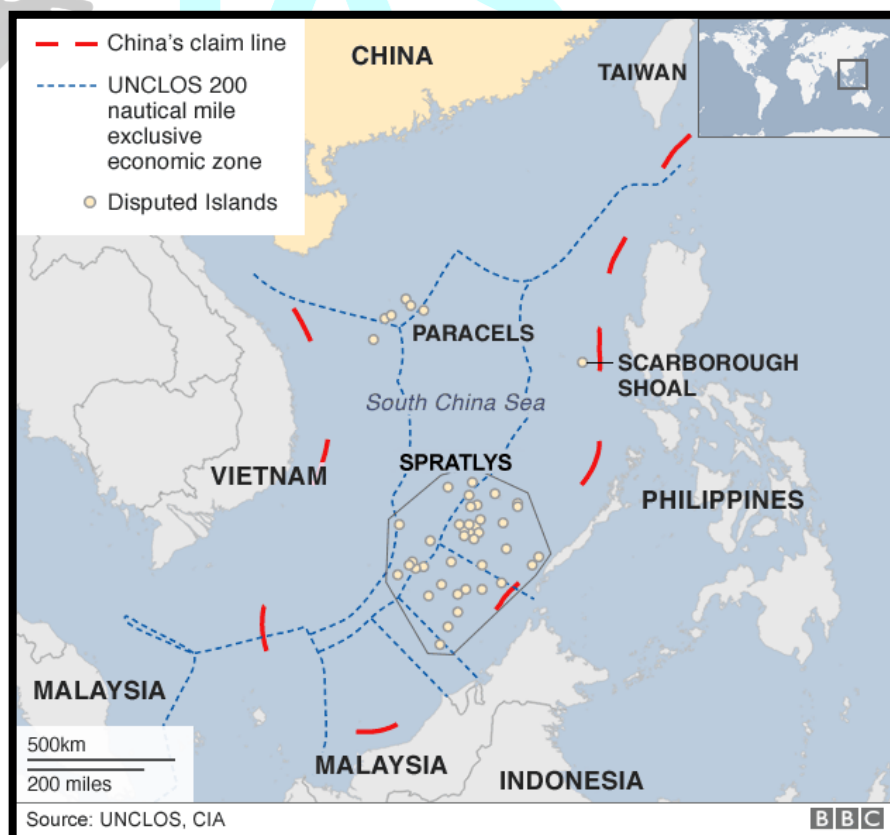
China's port-building (e.g., Djibouti, Hambantota) and India's SAGAR strategy clash.

Example: India's support to Philippines–Vietnam on SCS ruling irked Beijing in 2020.

4. Indo-Pacific vs Chinese

Worldview

India's support for Quad and IPEF



counters China's BRI-led approach.

Example: Chinese objections to India hosting Malabar exercises in Bay of Bengal.

5. Regional Connectivity Rivalry

SCS is vital for India's eastward connectivity plans via sea lanes.

Example: Delay in Chabahar–Vietnam cargo routes due to China's influence on ASEAN port partners.

Conclusion:

India must **balance assertive navigation diplomacy** with sustained dialogue with China, keeping its maritime stakes secure in the wider Indo-Pacific order.

Q3. Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of the Indian government to improve relationships with its neighbours. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss. (2015)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether Project Mausam has **strategic intent**, beyond cultural diplomacy, in India's regional foreign policy.

How to approach:

Intro: Define Project Mausam and its objectives.

Body: Cultural and strategic dimensions (5 points).

Conclusion: Combine heritage diplomacy with maritime strategy for long-term impact.

Introduction:

Launched in 2014 by India's Ministry of Culture and MEA, **Project Mausam** seeks to revive **maritime cultural linkages across the Indian Ocean**, reflecting India's intent to **project soft power and reclaim its historical maritime identity**.

Body: Strategic Dimensions of Project Mausam

1. Counter to China's Maritime Silk Route (MSR)

Presents India's civilisational alternative in IOR region.

Example: India highlighted ancient port linkages with East Africa and Southeast Asia in UNESCO forums.

2. Strengthening SAGAR Doctrine

Aligns with India's Security and Growth for All in the Region strategy.

Example: Collaboration with Sri Lanka and Maldives on maritime archaeology and coastal tourism.

3. Enhancing Soft Power Projection

Positions India as a benign civilisational force.

Example: Indian Ocean Conference dialogues reference Mausam's vision for maritime inclusiveness.

4. Building People-to-People and Academic Linkages

Connects universities, archaeologists, and communities across IOR.

Example: Joint research with Mauritius and Indonesia on temple–trade routes.

5. Influence in IORA and UNESCO

Gives India cultural leverage in multilateral maritime diplomacy.

Example: India's 2023 push for Mausam-backed heritage sites across 14 IORA nations.

Conclusion:

Project Mausam combines **civilisational connectivity with strategic positioning**, enabling India to shape a plural, secure, and culturally rooted Indian Ocean narrative.

Q4. Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India–Pakistan relations. To what extent can the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange help generate goodwill between the two countries? Discuss with suitable examples. (2015)

What is the question asking:

It asks for a **critical assessment of the role of soft power** — such as culture and sports — in improving relations between India and Pakistan despite the prevailing climate of mistrust and conflict.

How to approach:

Intro: Define soft power and its potential in conflict-laden bilateral relations.

Body: (1) Five soft power domains and their contribution, (2) Four key limitations to their effectiveness.

Conclusion: Soft power is essential but insufficient without structural trust-building.

Introduction:

In international relations, **soft power** — the ability to shape preferences through **culture, values, and people-to-people linkages** — plays a vital role in conflict de-escalation. In the Indo-Pak context, it offers symbolic and societal pathways for goodwill amidst deep-rooted diplomatic and security tensions.

Body

I. Role of Soft Power in Generating Goodwill

1. Cricket Diplomacy and Sports Connect

India–Pakistan cricket matches have historically served as informal diplomatic channels.

Example: 2024 T20 World Cup fixture was accompanied by backchannel Track-II diplomacy involving former diplomats and sports icons.

2. Film, Music, and OTT Platforms

Despite bans, Indian content remains widely consumed in Pakistan, reflecting strong cultural resonance.

Example: Indian web series and Bollywood films trend on Pakistani streaming platforms, while Pakistani dramas have Indian audiences via YouTube.

3. Religious and Heritage Linkages

Soft religious diplomacy, especially through pilgrimage corridors, sustains cultural goodwill.

Example: The **Kartarpur Sahib Corridor**, operational since 2019, facilitated over 200,000 pilgrimages by 2024, including amid heightened border tensions.

4. Academic, Literary, and Art Dialogues

Joint literature festivals and academic conferences foster intellectual engagement.

Example: *Jashn-e-Rekhta*, *Lahore Literary Festival* and webinars hosted by South Asian universities continue to invite cross-border scholars.

5. Civil Society, NGOs, and Peace Initiatives

Women-led peace movements and NGO collaborations focus on child welfare, climate issues, and education.

Example: 2023 South Asian Women’s Peace Forum included stakeholders from both countries working on sanitation and urban health.

II. Structural Limitations of Soft Power

1. Political Volatility Disrupts Continuity

Every major terror incident leads to suspension of cultural initiatives.

Example: 2016 Pathankot and 2019 Pulwama attacks halted sporting and cultural exchanges indefinitely.

2. Lack of State-Level Institutionalisation

Soft power initiatives are not institutionalised into formal bilateral frameworks, making them vulnerable to political shifts.

3. Media-Driven Polarisation

Sensationalist media narratives fuel mistrust, overshadowing cultural outreach.

Example: Social media backlash forced cancellations of cross-border film collaborations in 2022.

4. Hard Power Dominates the Strategic Narrative

Key disputes like Kashmir, terrorism, and border tensions remain unresolved, limiting soft power's impact.

Conclusion:

Soft power can **supplement formal diplomacy** by building societal bridges, but its efficacy requires parallel efforts in strategic dialogue, trust-building, and conflict resolution mechanisms

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2016

- "Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)." Explain with suitable examples. (12.5 M)

• 2017

- China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia. In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour. (10 M)

• 2022

- 'India is an age-old friend of Sri Lanka.' Discuss India's role in the recent crisis in Sri Lanka in the light of the preceding statement. (10 M)

• 2024

- Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Maldives for India, with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further, also discuss how this relationship affects India's maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition. (15 M)

Q1. "Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)." Explain with suitable examples. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks how **Pakistan's actions** — cross-border terrorism and interference — are affecting the **future and functioning of SAARC**.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention SAARC's foundational aim and its regional dysfunction.

Body: 5 ways Pakistan's conduct affects SAARC's viability.

Conclusion: SAARC's revival needs multilateral will and zero-tolerance for terror.

Introduction:

Established in 1985, **SAARC** aimed to promote **regional cooperation** in South Asia. However, recurring **cross-border terrorism** and **Pakistan's interference in member-state sovereignty** have rendered it largely inactive, stalling its regional development potential.

Body: Impediments to SAARC from Pakistan's Conduct

1. Disruption of Summits

India boycotted the 2016 Islamabad Summit after the Uri attack, with other nations following.

Example: Summit has not been held since 2014.

2. Bilateral Conflicts Affecting Multilateral Agenda

India-Pakistan tensions stall consensus-based decisions.

Example: SAARC satellite proposal rejected by Pakistan in 2016.

3. Support for Terror Networks

Pakistan-based groups like LeT, JeM operate across borders.

Example: Pulwama attack (2019) derailed any SAARC revival effort.

4. Interference in Internal Politics of Neighbours

Nepal and Bangladesh have alleged Pakistani interference in domestic Islamist or political movements.

Example: Bangladesh–Pakistan diplomatic rows over 1971 war crimes verdicts.

5. SAARC's Shift Toward Dormancy

India now prefers BIMSTEC and IORA where Pakistan is not a member.

Example: 2022 BIMSTEC summit gained momentum, while SAARC remains inactive.

Conclusion:

Unless **Pakistan abides by the SAARC Charter's principle of non-interference and renounces terrorism**, South Asia's regionalism will remain fractured and unrealised.

Q2. China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia. In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour. (2017)



What is the question asking:

It asks how **China's trade-led economic dominance is translating into military power**, and what implications this holds for **India's strategic position**.

How to approach:

Intro: Link China's economic rise with strategic ambitions.

Body: 5 key impacts on India.

Conclusion: India must calibrate engagement with strategic competition.

Introduction:

China's **economic surplus and trade dominance**, especially post-WTO entry, have been strategically converted into **defence modernisation, maritime expansion, and regional military projection**, significantly reshaping Asia's security landscape especially for neighbours like India.

Body: Impact on India

1. Strategic Encirclement via BRI and Ports

China's investment in Indian Ocean ports threatens India's maritime buffer.

Example: Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Gwadar (Pakistan), and Kyaukpyu (Myanmar).

2. Militarisation of Trade Routes

Chinese control over supply chains increases dual-use naval capacities.

Example: PLA Navy presence in IOR during anti-piracy operations, 2023.

3. Rising Trade Deficit Weakens Economic Leverage

India's ~\$85 billion trade deficit (2023) with China limits reciprocal pressure.



4. Border Infrastructure Backed by Surplus Funds

China's economic capacity fuels rapid border infrastructure growth.

Example: Bridge construction near Pangong Tso post-2020 standoff.

5. Arms Diplomacy with South Asian Neighbours

China sells weapons to Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan, shifting regional balance.

Example: 2022–23 JF-17 deliveries to Pakistan Air Force.

Conclusion:

India must adopt a **comprehensive balancing strategy** combining domestic resilience, regional alliances, and calibrated economic decoupling to manage China's multidimensional rise.

Q3. 'India is an age-old friend of Sri Lanka.' Discuss India's role in the recent crisis in Sri Lanka in the light of the preceding statement. (2022)

What is the question asking:

It asks how **India has responded to Sri Lanka's economic and political crisis**, reflecting its role as a longstanding partner.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention India–Sri Lanka's historic and cultural ties.

Body: 5 key forms of India's recent support.

Conclusion: India's neighbour-first policy must ensure Sri Lanka's stable recovery.

Introduction:

India and Sri Lanka share millennia-old **cultural, religious, and maritime bonds**. During Sri Lanka's 2022 economic collapse, India emerged as its **first and largest aid responder**, reaffirming its "Neighbourhood First" doctrine.

Body: India's Role in Sri Lanka's Crisis

1. Financial Assistance Package

India extended \$4.5 billion in lines of credit and forex swaps.

Example: \$1 billion credit line in March 2022 for essential imports.

2. Humanitarian Aid and Medicines

Sent essential food, medicines, and fuel through direct delivery.

Example: Over 25,000 tonnes of rice and critical medicines supplied.

3. Energy and Fuel Supplies

Helped keep public services running during blackout-prone months.

Example: IOC India supplied emergency fuel to power stations.

4. Support for IMF Bailout

India provided IMF-required financial assurances ahead of \$2.9 billion deal.

Example: India was first bilateral creditor to commit, influencing China and others.

5. Investment and Capacity Building

India offered long-term projects in digital infrastructure and port management.

Example: Trincomalee energy partnership and UPI–LANKA Pay collaboration (2023).

Conclusion:

India's **swift, multi-sectoral assistance** during Sri Lanka's crisis underlines its role as a **first responder, strategic partner, and stabiliser** in South Asia.

Q4. Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Maldives for India, with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further, also discuss how this relationship affects India's maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition. (2024)

What is the question asking:

It asks for an assessment of **Maldives' strategic importance** for India's trade, energy, and regional maritime security especially in the context of **rising international competition**.

How to approach:

Intro: Situate Maldives in Indian Ocean strategic architecture.

Body: 5 dimensions of strategic importance + 3 impacts on India's maritime security.

Conclusion: India must anchor Maldives in a cooperative Indo-Pacific framework.

Introduction:

Situated at the **crossroads of critical sea lanes of communication (SLOCs)**, the Maldives plays a pivotal role in ensuring **India's energy and trade security**, especially within the evolving **Indo-Pacific strategic theatre**.

Body: Geopolitical and Strategic Significance**I. Why Maldives Matters to India****1. Proximity to Indian Mainland**

Barely 700 km from Kerala — vital for India's southern defence buffer.

2. Overseeing Global Energy Routes

80% of India's oil and 40% of trade passes through nearby SLOCs.

3. Strategic Naval Positioning

Offers naval reach from West to East Indian Ocean.

Example: India's coastal radar and military facility in Addu Atoll.

4. Countering External Influence

China's BRI and funding of Male–Hulhumalé projects challenge India's leverage.

Example: Maldives signed BRI MoU in 2014; now realigning post-2023 elections.

5. Climate and Blue Economy Engagement

Shared interests in sustainable ocean governance.

Example: SAGAR-Maldives coastal protection projects launched in 2022.

II. Impact on India's Maritime Security**1. Counterterrorism and Coastal Vigilance**

India assists Maldives in marine police and surveillance training.

2. Anti-Piracy and HADR Missions

Helps maintain peace in IOR and respond to disasters.

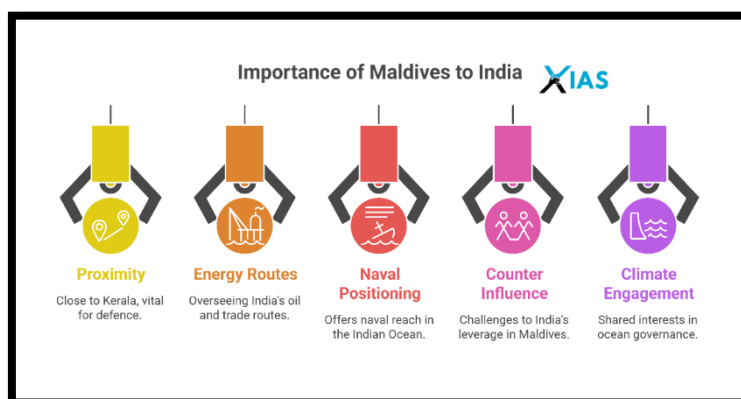
Example: India's quick HADR response post-2022 flooding in Addu.

3. Quad and SAGAR Diplomacy Linkages

Maldives' alignment crucial to IOR multilateral security order.

Conclusion:

Amidst intensifying great-power contestation, India must **nurture Maldives as a maritime partner**, aligning regional stability with its SAGAR and Indo-Pacific vision.



TOPIC-16 : Bilateral, regional and global groupings, Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries.

Bilateral, Regional And Global Groupings And Agreements Involving India And/Or Affecting India's Interest



- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- **2013**

- The proposed withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan in 2014 is fraught with major security implications for the countries of the region. Examine in light of the fact that India is faced with a plethora of challenges and needs to safeguard its own strategic interests. (10 M)
- What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this. (10 M)
- Economic ties between India and Japan, while growing in recent years, are still far below their potential. Elucidate the policy constraints that are inhibiting this growth. (10 M)
- What is meant by the Gujral Doctrine? Does it have any relevance today? Discuss. (10 M)

- **2014**

- Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pros and cons. Critically examine. (12.5 M)
- The aim of Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) is to lower all taxes and tariffs on Information Technology products by signatories to zero. What impact would such agreements have on India's interests? (12.5 M)
- Some international funding agencies have special terms for economic participation, stipulating a substantial component of the aid be used for sourcing equipment from leading countries. Discuss the merits of such terms and whether there exists a strong case not to accept such conditions in the Indian context. (12.5 M)
- India has recently signed to become a founding member of the New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two banks be different? Discuss the strategic significance of these two banks for India. (12.5 M)

Q1. The proposed withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan in 2014 is fraught with major security implications for the countries of the region. Examine in light of the fact that India is faced with a plethora of challenges and needs to safeguard its own strategic interests. (2013)

What is the question asking:

It asks how the **ISAF withdrawal** impacted regional security and India's efforts to **safeguard its strategic interests** post-2014.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention ISAF withdrawal and regional power vacuum.

Body: 5 implications for regional security and India's stakes + strategic responses.

Conclusion: India must pursue calibrated regional presence in sync with evolving threats.

Introduction:

The 2014 withdrawal of the **ISAF** from Afghanistan created a **strategic vacuum**, allowing the resurgence of the Taliban and a shift in the regional power balance. For India, this raised concerns over **terrorism, strategic isolation**, and **regional realignments** involving China and Pakistan.

Body: Implications for India's Strategic Interests

1. Rise of Taliban and Radical Networks

The return of Taliban rule (2021–present) emboldens cross-border terror threats.

Example: 2024 UN report flagged rising IS-KP recruitment targeting India-linked interests.

2. Pakistan's Strategic Depth Advantage

With Taliban alignment, Pakistan gains influence in Afghan affairs.

Example: Hafiz Saeed-linked networks reportedly active along the Afghan–Pak border (2024).

3. Strategic Marginalisation of Indian Investments

Indian developmental aid, totalling over \$3 billion, remains underutilised.

Example: India-built Salma Dam and Parliament Complex now face restricted Indian access.

4. Threats to Chabahar and INSTC Connectivity

Instability in Afghanistan hampers India's alternative route to Central Asia.

Example: 2023 Iranian proposal to link Chabahar with Afghanistan stalled over Taliban engagement.

5. Competition from China–Russia–Iran Axis

China's proactive role in mediating Taliban talks marginalises Indian influence.

Example: 2024 China–Afghanistan–Pakistan trilateral for trade and security excludes India.

Conclusion:

India must balance its **developmental engagement with strategic caution**, prioritise **counter-terrorism diplomacy**, and enhance cooperation with Iran and Central Asian republics to secure long-term regional interests.

Q2. What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps taken by India to counter this. (2013)

What is the question asking:

It seeks an explanation of the **String of Pearls** doctrine and its **geostrategic implications for India**, along with India's countermeasures.

How to approach:

Intro: Define the concept and its strategic context.

Body: 3 implications + 3 counterstrategies with recent examples.

Conclusion: India's Indo-Pacific strategy must stay proactive and coalition-driven.

Introduction:

The "**String of Pearls**" refers to China's network of commercial and military port facilities across the **Indian Ocean Region**, enabling it to project power and secure trade routes. This has raised concerns for India's **maritime sovereignty and security posture**.

Body

I. Impacts on India

1. Strategic Encirclement in the IOR

Ports in Gwadar, Hambantota, and Djibouti increase China's naval presence.

Example: In 2024, Chinese naval vessel Yuan Wang 5 again docked in Hambantota despite India's objections.

2. Undermining of India's Maritime Primacy

Increased PLA-N deployments diminish India's lead in IOR maritime diplomacy.

3. Surveillance and Intelligence Threats

China's presence in IOR raises cyber and satellite surveillance risks.

Example: Satellite tracking ship activities near Andaman waters (2023).

II. India's Strategic Responses

1. SAGAR Doctrine and SAGARMALA Infrastructure

India is strengthening island surveillance and commercial capacity.

Example: 2024 fast-tracking of Greater Nicobar port and drone-based maritime surveillance network.

2. Strategic Partnerships in Indo-Pacific

QUAD, France–India maritime drills, and IORA deepen defence diplomacy.

Example: 2025 Quad Naval Logistics Agreement signed for joint patrolling.

3. Chabahar, Duqm, and Coastal Radar Linkages

Indian investments in Duqm (Oman) and Chabahar offer alternative bases.

Example: 2024 Chabahar Port pact formalised under INSTC logistics.

Conclusion:

India must pursue a **multipronged Indo-Pacific maritime strategy**, combining **infrastructure, diplomacy, and coalition naval security** to counter encirclement and uphold regional sovereignty.



Q3. Economic ties between India and Japan, while growing in recent years, are still far below their potential. Elucidate the policy constraints that are inhibiting this growth. (2013)

What is the question asking:

It asks for the **policy-level reasons** behind the underperformance of **India–Japan economic ties** despite growing engagement.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention strong strategic partnership but low trade.

Body: 5 key policy constraints and examples.

Conclusion: Corrective steps for deeper economic synergy.

Introduction:

Despite their **Special Strategic and Global Partnership**, **India–Japan bilateral trade remains under \$25 billion (2024)**, reflecting structural underperformance due to **investment bottlenecks, procedural hurdles**, and divergent regulatory ecosystems.

Body: Key Policy Constraints

1. Regulatory and Tax Uncertainties

Delays in environmental and GST-related approvals affect industrial projects.

Example: Japan Industrial Townships in Rajasthan and Haryana saw delays due to forest clearance backlogs (2023).

2. Limited Use of CEPA

Japan–India CEPA (2011) underused due to NTBs and absence of tariff rationalisation.

Example: India's pharma exports face Japanese certification hurdles.

3. Labour and Skill Shortages

Indian labour lacks Japanese language and technical standards.

Example: Underutilisation of TITP (Technical Intern Training Program) even in 2024.

4. Infrastructure Bottlenecks

Projects like Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train face land acquisition and cost escalation.

Example: 2025 deadline postponed to 2028.

5. Low Participation in R&D and Innovation Ecosystem

Japan's startup engagement in India remains marginal despite digital synergy potential.

Conclusion:

Deepening India–Japan economic ties demands **supply chain resilience**, targeted FTA upgrades, and synergy in **technology, green infrastructure, and semiconductors**.

Q4. What is meant by the Gujral Doctrine? Does it have any relevance today? Discuss. (2013)**What is the question asking:**

To explain the **principles of the Gujral Doctrine** and assess their **relevance in contemporary foreign policy**.

How to approach:

Intro: Define doctrine and its context.

Body: 5 tenets + application in recent policy and challenges.

Conclusion: The doctrine's spirit remains essential in shaping regional trust.

Introduction:

The **Gujral Doctrine**, articulated in the 1990s, promoted a **non-reciprocal, neighbour-first foreign policy** toward India's smaller South Asian neighbours, emphasising **sovereignty, mutual respect, and regional trust-building**. It sought to stabilise South Asia through diplomatic generosity.

Body**I. Core Principles**

- Unilateral accommodation to smaller neighbours
- Non-interference in internal affairs
- Respect for sovereignty and peaceful coexistence
- Non-use of territory for anti-neighbour activities
- Regional cooperation through SAARC

II. Continued Relevance and Challenges**1. Neighbourhood First Policy Continuity**

India's 2022–25 aid to Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan upholds the non-reciprocal ethos.

2. SAARC Dormancy vs BIMSTEC Rise

SAARC weakened by Pakistan; BIMSTEC aligns better with doctrine's vision.

3. Infrastructure Diplomacy with Trust

Maitri Setu with Bangladesh and UPI–Lanka Pay show respectful cooperation.

4. Strategic Assertiveness with China and Pakistan

Limitations visible in zero-tolerance posture on sovereignty violations.

5. Subregional Engagement (BBIN, BIMSTEC)

India uses multilateral and bilateral channels to maintain goodwill.

Conclusion:

While evolving threats demand **strategic realism**, the Gujral Doctrine's core principles of **trust-building and regional generosity** remain pivotal to India's South Asia leadership.

Q1. Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pros and cons. Critically examine. (2014)**What is the question asking:**

To assess both **positive outcomes and concerns** arising from India's growing engagement with Africa.

How to approach:

Intro: Contextualise India–Africa resurgence

Body: 5 pros and 5 cons of deepening engagement

Conclusion: Suggest balanced, sustainable, and inclusive approach

Introduction:

India's engagement with Africa has deepened through platforms like the **India–Africa Forum Summit, Project Pan Africa e-network**, and **lines of credit exceeding \$12 billion**. This interest reflects India's vision of **South–South cooperation**, though strategic, economic, and ethical concerns persist.

Body**I. Pros of India–Africa Engagement**

1. South-South Developmental Model

India's emphasis on capacity building, digital health, and soft power resonates with African priorities.

Example: e-Vidya Bharati and e-Arogya Bharati tele-education and health projects in 22 African countries (2024).

2. Strategic Diversification

Engagement enhances India's access to energy, critical minerals, and trade corridors.

Example: 2024 MoU with DRC for lithium and cobalt exploration.

3. Counter to Chinese Hegemony

India offers an alternative to China's BRI via infrastructure and technology partnerships.

4. Diaspora Diplomacy and Cultural Bonds

Robust Indian diaspora in Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius fosters local goodwill.

5. Maritime and Defence Cooperation

Joint naval drills, IOR security partnerships, and SAGAR vision bolster shared security.

Example: 2025 India-Kenya IOR Maritime Patrol Mission initiated.

II. Cons and Emerging Challenges

1. Resource Extraction vs Value Addition

India risks replicating extractive economic models without fostering local industrialisation.

2. Limited Private Sector Penetration

Indian firms face logistical and financing hurdles compared to Chinese SOEs.

3. Underutilisation of Trade Agreements

Bilateral trade (~\$100 billion) remains below potential, constrained by tariff and logistics issues.

4. Political Instability and Coups

Frequent regime changes in Sahel, West Africa expose Indian investments to risk.

5. Rising Perception of Neocolonialism

Development-linked investments occasionally face public backlash and social tensions.

Conclusion:

India's engagement with Africa must evolve into a **partnership of mutual empowerment**, prioritising **inclusivity, local value creation, and long-term strategic trust**.

Q2. The aim of Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) is to lower all taxes and tariffs on Information Technology products by signatories to zero. What impact would such agreements have on India's interests? (2014)

What is the question asking:

To assess **how zero-tariff IT Agreements impact India's domestic IT manufacturing, innovation, and trade balance.**

How to approach:

Intro: Define ITA and its framework

Body: 3 advantages and 3 disadvantages for India

Conclusion: Suggest a calibrated approach in tech-trade diplomacy

Introduction:

The **WTO-led Information Technology Agreement (ITA)** aims to eliminate tariffs on IT products among member countries to boost **global supply chain integration**. India, a signatory to ITA-1, has been cautious about ITA-2 due to **domestic industry vulnerabilities**.

Body

I. Positive Impacts on India

1. Boost to Software-Hardware Integration

Cheaper imported inputs help India's software firms build integrated systems.

2. Expansion of IT Services Export Ecosystem

Access to global IT products enhances service delivery platforms.

3. Alignment with Digital India and 5G Rollout

Facilitates access to 5G routers, AI chipsets, and telecom equipment.

Example: 2024 5G-AI stack initiatives under Digital India leverage imported hardware.

II. Adverse Implications

1. Domestic Hardware Manufacturing Hit

Free imports undercut India's nascent electronics manufacturing base.

Example: MSMEs in LED assembly and mobile components face dumping threats.

2. Erosion of Customs Revenue

Zero tariffs on high-volume IT imports reduce fiscal space for digital infra investment.

3. Strategic Dependence on Foreign Tech

Undermines tech sovereignty goals of **PLI schemes** and **semiconductor mission**.

Conclusion:

India must ensure that **FTA commitments and tech liberalisation** are aligned with its **strategic goal of becoming a global electronics manufacturing hub**.

Q3. Some international funding agencies have special terms for economic participation, stipulating a substantial component of the aid be used for sourcing equipment from leading countries. Discuss the merits of such terms and whether there exists a strong case not to accept such conditions in the Indian context. (2014)

What is the question asking:

It asks to weigh the **benefits and drawbacks** of **tied aid conditions** and assess their acceptability in India's development context.

How to approach:

Intro: Define "tied aid" with example

Body: 3 merits + 3 limitations in Indian context

Conclusion: Aid conditionalities must balance transparency with sovereignty

Introduction:

Tied aid refers to concessional funding where recipient countries must **procure goods/services from the donor country**. Though common in World Bank, Japan, and OECD aid, this approach often reduces flexibility in **development planning**.

Body

I. Merits of Tied Aid

1. Access to Advanced Technology

Donor-linked procurement ensures high-quality infrastructure.

Example: Japan's tied aid for Bullet Train ensures Shinkansen quality tech.

2. Faster Project Implementation

Pre-identified vendors expedite rollout in energy and urban sectors.

3. Built-in Technical Support

Post-installation maintenance and training included.

Example: German tied aid for solar parks under GIZ includes 5-year O&M.

II. Concerns in Indian Context

1. Inflated Project Costs

Monopoly sourcing raises costs 15–20% over market benchmarks.

Example: Audit observations on tied aid power plants flagged cost inefficiencies (CAG 2023).

2. Limits Local Industry Participation

Violates Make in India vision to reach viksit bharat @47 and reduces domestic employment.

3. Strategic Dependency

Concentrated sourcing creates vulnerability in critical infra sectors, which in long term will prove to be critical.

Conclusion:

India must negotiate for “**value-neutral conditionalities**”, ensuring **technical access without undermining self-reliance and developmental autonomy**.

Q4. India has recently signed to become a founding member of the New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two banks be different? Discuss the strategic significance of these two banks for India. (2014)

What is the question asking:

To distinguish the **roles of NDB and AIIB** and explain their **strategic value for India**.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention post-Bretton Woods global shift

Body: Role comparison + India’s strategic advantages

Conclusion: India must shape reformist multilateralism through both platforms

Introduction:

The establishment of the **New Development Bank (NDB)** by BRICS and the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** signals a shift in **global financial architecture** towards **multipolar development financing**, offering India new channels for infrastructure and soft power projection.

Body

I. Functional Differences

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>NDB</u>	<u>AIIB</u>
<u>Membership</u>	BRICS + others	Asia-centric + global
<u>Voting Power</u>	Equal (India 20%)	Weighted (India ~8%)
<u>Focus</u>	Sustainable development, climate	Infrastructure, connectivity
<u>Headquarters</u>	Shanghai	Beijing
<u>Governance Style</u>	Consensus-driven	China-dominant board

II. Strategic Significance for India

1. Alternative to Bretton Woods Dominance

Enables India to shape a **non-Western financial narrative**.

2. Infrastructure Funding for National Missions

Both banks finance solar parks, metro rails, smart cities.

Example: 2024 AIIB loan for Vizag Metro (₹2,500 crore); NDB for solar grid in Rajasthan.

3. Platform for South-South Diplomacy

Enhances India’s standing among African, ASEAN, and Latin American nations.

4. Multilateral Leverage vis-à-vis China

India balances Chinese dominance via co-leadership and co-financing.

5. Financial Buffer in Post-COVID Recovery

Access to long-term infrastructure funding without IMF-type conditionalities.

Conclusion:

By leveraging NDB and AIIB, India can reinforce its vision of **inclusive, demand-driven, and sovereign-respecting development financing** for the Global South.

- **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

- 2016

- **The question of India's energy security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries. (12.5 M)**
- **Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post-Cold War international scenario. (12.5 M)**

- 2017

- **Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of the Indian Diaspora in South-East Asia in this context. (15 M)**

- 2018

- **"India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. (10 M)**
- **A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018. (10 M)**
- **In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? (15 M)**

Q1. The question of India's energy security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks how India is cooperating with West Asian countries to ensure **energy security**, and how this links with its broader economic strategy.

How to approach:

Intro: Define energy security and West Asia's significance

Body: 5 key dimensions of India-West Asia energy cooperation

Conclusion: Emphasise strategic diversification and resilience

Introduction:

India's energy security ensuring **affordable, reliable, and sustainable access** to energy — is intrinsically tied to **West Asia**, which supplies over **55% of India's crude oil imports**. The relationship has evolved from transactional trade to **strategic interdependence**.

Body: Dimensions of Energy Cooperation

1. Long-term Crude Supply Contracts

India maintains stable oil import deals with Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait.

Example: Iraq remained India's top oil supplier in 2024 despite global volatility.

2. Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) Collaboration

India stores oil in underground facilities; UAE's ADNOC has leased capacity in Mangaluru.

Example: India expanded SPR with 2.5 MMT in Chandikhol with UAE support (2025).

3. Upstream Investments and Joint Ventures

Indian PSUs like ONGC Videsh have stakes in oilfields across UAE, Qatar, and Iran.

Example: OVL continues upstream partnerships in Abu Dhabi despite regional shifts.

4. Green and Hydrogen Energy Transition

India is collaborating with Saudi Arabia and UAE on green hydrogen and solar energy.

Example: 2025 Indo-Saudi Green Hydrogen Taskforce launched for pilot exports to India.

5. Energy Diplomacy via I2U2 and IEF

Multilateral platforms like I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) are shaping clean tech, energy infrastructure, and innovation ecosystems.

Example: 2024 I2U2 renewable corridor proposal in Rajasthan-Gujarat.

Conclusion:

To secure future growth, India must balance **West Asian strategic dependence** with **clean energy diversification**, resilient supply chains, and multilateral energy diplomacy.

Q2. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post-Cold War international scenario. (2016)

What is the question asking:

It asks how India's **Look East Policy** (now Act East) evolved after the Cold War and the **economic and strategic dimensions** it encompasses.

How to approach:

Intro: Post-Cold War shift to Look East Policy

Body: 5 economic and 5 strategic dimensions

Conclusion: Emphasise need for deeper regional integration

Introduction:

India's **Look East Policy**, initiated in 1991, responded to post-Cold War realities by seeking **economic integration** and **strategic alignment** with Southeast and East Asia. It has since evolved into the more assertive **Act East Policy**, with geopolitical and trade imperatives.

Body

I. Economic Dimensions

1. Trade and Market Diversification

ASEAN accounts for ~11% of India's trade.

Example: India-ASEAN FTA (2009); new negotiations for services trade in 2025.

2. Infrastructure and Connectivity Projects

Initiatives like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Highway aim to link South Asia with SE Asia.

Example: Kaladan project saw fresh funding under Gati Shakti in 2024.

3. Investment and FDI Cooperation

India-Japan industrial townships and Vietnam's pharma sector are growing FDI destinations.

4. North-East Regional Development

LEP is a strategic tool for integrating India's North-East into regional economies.

Example: Trilateral Highway links Imphal to SE Asia via Myanmar.

5. Blue Economy Synergy

Maritime cooperation for fisheries, ports, and logistics is expanding with ASEAN.

II. Strategic Dimensions

1. Naval Diplomacy and IOR Security

Bilateral drills with Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia enhance maritime domain awareness.

Example: 2024 India-ASEAN Maritime Exercise focused on SLOC protection.

2. Counterbalance to China

Act East aligns with Quad, Indo-Pacific strategy to manage China's assertiveness.

3. Cultural and Diaspora Linkages

Buddhist heritage diplomacy and large Indian communities in Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand aid soft power.

4. Defence Equipment Sales

India exports military equipment to Vietnam and training aid to ASEAN countries.

5. Strategic Access to Indo-Pacific

Partnerships with Japan and Australia enhance India's Pacific presence.

Conclusion:

India's Act East Policy must mature into a **comprehensive regional integration framework**, balancing **economic ambition with strategic assertiveness** in a multipolar Asia.

Q3. Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of the Indian Diaspora in South-East Asia in this context. (2017)

What is the question asking:

To evaluate how the Indian diaspora contributes to **economic and social spheres** in Southeast Asia.

How to approach:

Intro: Historical context of Indian diaspora in SE Asia

Body: 5 economic + 5 social/political contributions

Conclusion: Diaspora is a diplomatic and development asset

Introduction:

The Indian diaspora in Southeast Asia, exceeding **7 million**, traces roots to **pre-colonial and colonial migrations**, and today serves as a **bridge of commerce, culture, and strategic influence** across ASEAN nations.

Body

I. Economic Contributions

1. Trade and Entrepreneurship

Indians dominate textile, retail, and financial services sectors in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

2. Remittance and Investment Flows

Diaspora-led SMEs and investments support bilateral economic ties.

Example: 2024 Tamil-origin investor groups launched smart city projects in Malaysia.

3. Skill Transfer and Employment

Indian professionals contribute in IT, healthcare, and academia.

4. Start-up and Tech Diplomacy

Bengaluru-based firms opened AI and fintech hubs in Jakarta and Manila in 2023–24.

5. Tourism and Aviation Linkages

Cultural tourism to Bodh Gaya and Kerala is supported via diaspora-run agencies.

II. Social and Political Roles

1. Cultural Preservation and Exchange

Indian cultural centres (ICC) in Kuala Lumpur, Yangon promote classical arts and festivals.

2. Political Participation and Representation

Ethnic Indians hold legislative and ministerial roles in Singapore and Malaysia.

3. Educational Bridges

MoUs between Indian and SE Asian universities are often diaspora-initiated.



4. Humanitarian Engagement

Indian diaspora organisations contributed to COVID-19 and flood relief efforts in ASEAN.

5. Strengthening Bilateral Trust

They enhance India's soft power and influence policy goodwill.

Example: Singapore's support for UPI acceptance stems partly from Indian business lobbies.

Conclusion:

India must deepen diaspora diplomacy in Southeast Asia to **nurture long-term economic and people-to-people partnerships**, reinforcing its Act East vision.

Q4. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. (2018)

What is the question asking:

To assess the **strategic evolution and consolidation** of India-Israel ties

How to approach:

Intro: Trace diplomatic evolution post-1992

Body: 5 dimensions showing depth and diversity

Conclusion: Relationship is structural, not transactional

Introduction:

Since the establishment of full diplomatic relations in **1992**, India-Israel ties have matured from discreet defence cooperation to a **multidimensional strategic partnership**, spanning security, agriculture, technology, and innovation. The **2024 DefenceTech Corridor MoU** reinforces this irreversible trajectory.

Body: Dimensions of Deepening India-Israel Ties

1. Defence and Strategic Cooperation

India is one of the largest buyers of Israeli defence tech (radars, UAVs, missiles).

Example: 2024 BrahMos upgrade collaboration with Israeli radar systems.

2. Agricultural and Water Innovation

Israel's drip irrigation and dryland farming have transformed Indian agri-belts.

Example: Over 30 Centres of Excellence under Indo-Israel Agricultural Project (IIAP).

3. Cybersecurity and Start-up Ecosystem

Both nations collaborate on cybersecurity and innovation under I4F (India-Israel Industrial R&D Fund).

4. Political Normalisation and High-Level Engagements

Visits by PM Modi (2017) and reciprocal visits reflect open political warmth.

Example: Israeli President's 2024 visit focused on clean-tech cooperation.

5. Geopolitical Alignment in West Asia

Both share converging views on counterterrorism and maritime security in the IOR.

Example: Triangular coordination with UAE under I2U2 framework.

Conclusion:

India-Israel relations reflect **converging interests across defence, technology, and agriculture**, evolving into a **resilient strategic partnership** that transcends transient political changes.

Q2. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018.

What is the question asking:

To discuss how **external power competition in Central Asia** affects India's interests

How to approach:

Intro: Explain Central Asia's strategic value + India's interest

Body: 5 implications of Ashgabat Agreement membership

Conclusion: Leverage Ashgabat for connectivity and strategic autonomy

Introduction:

Central Asia, rich in **energy and geostrategic position**, is increasingly dominated by China, Russia, and the US. India's entry into the **Ashgabat Agreement (2018)** — a transport and transit pact — offers a **Eurasian corridor** via Iran and Turkmenistan to counterbalance this external influence.

Body: Implications for India**1. Access to Eurasian Trade Corridors**

Links India to **Central Asia and Europe** through the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Example: 2024 pilot cargo from Mumbai to Kazakhstan via Chabahar–Ashgabat.

2. Strategic Autonomy in the Region

Reduces India's overdependence on Pakistan routes for Central Asia access.

3. Counter to BRI and Chinese Influence

Presents India as an alternate infrastructure and connectivity partner.

4. Synergy with Chabahar Port and INSTC

Ashgabat boosts viability of India's **Chabahar–Zahedan–Turkmenistan axis**.

5. Energy and Economic Engagement

Facilitates gas import linkages and trade with Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Example: Renewed talks in 2024 for TAPI pipeline revival post-Ashgabat corridor updates.

Conclusion:

India must leverage Ashgabat Agreement to gain **strategic depth in Eurasia**, build **connectivity alternatives**, and reinforce its long-term **energy and security footprint**.

Q3. In what ways would the ongoing US–Iran Nuclear Pact controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? (2018)**What is the question asking:**

It seeks an analysis of how **instability around the US–Iran nuclear deal** affects India's strategic, economic, and energy interests — and how India should respond.

How to approach:

Intro: Explain 2015 JCPOA and 2018 US withdrawal

Body: 5 national interest challenges + 5 suggested responses

Conclusion: India's strategic autonomy is key

Introduction:

The 2015 **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** offered Iran sanctions relief in return for nuclear curbs. The **US withdrawal (2018)** and subsequent tension — continuing under the Biden and post-2024 administrations — have disrupted regional stability, directly impacting **India's energy and connectivity calculus**.

Body**I. Impacts on India's National Interests****1. Energy Security Disruption**

Iran was a top oil supplier; US sanctions halted imports since 2019.

Example: India had to substitute Iranian crude with costlier Brent-linked sources.

2. Chabahar Port Development Delays

Sanctions risk deterring international funding and contractors.

3. INSTC and Central Asia Strategy Stalled

India's Eurasian connectivity depends on smooth access via Iran.

4. Regional Instability Spillover

West Asian volatility affects Indian diaspora safety and remittances (~\$90B/year).

5. Dilemma in Balancing US and Iran Ties

India faces pressure from both partners, risking strategic confusion.

II. India's Possible Responses

1. Strategic Balancing and Diplomacy

Maintain parallel engagement with Tehran and Washington.

2. Rupee-Rial or Alternate Currency Mechanisms

Use workaround for non-USD trade (e.g., rice, pharma exports).

3. Accelerate Chabahar via India-Iran Bilateral Channels

Keep project outside US sanctions scope using G2G agreements.

Example: 2024 Iran-India Chabahar Operationalization Pact signed amid JCPOA deadlock.

4. Diversify Oil Sources and Build SPRs

Strengthen tie-ups with Iraq, UAE, and increase SPR coverage.

5. Push for Multilateral Diplomacy

Support EU-mediated nuclear deal revival and strategic stability.

Conclusion:

India must pursue **strategic autonomy and issue-based alignment**, ensuring its **energy, diaspora, and connectivity interests** are protected regardless of external disruptions.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2019

- 'The time has come for India and Japan to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving a global and strategic partnership that will have great significance for Asia and the world as a whole.' Comment. (10 M)
- "The long-sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalised nations has disappeared on account of its newfound role in the emerging global order." Elaborate. (15 M)
- "What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India's national self-esteem and ambitions." Explain with suitable examples. (15 M)

• 2020

- 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)' is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance in present times - Discuss. (15 M)
- What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (15 M)

Q1. 'The time has come for India and Japan to build a strong contemporary relationship, one involving a global and strategic partnership that will have great significance for Asia and the world as a whole.' Comment. (2019)

What is the question asking:

It calls for an assessment of the **strategic importance and potential** of a robust India-Japan partnership at both regional and global levels.

How to approach:

Intro: Historical base + recent transformation

Body: 5 strategic areas + how it contributes globally

Conclusion: Way forward for institutional synergy

Introduction:

India and Japan, as **Asian democracies with shared civilisational values**, have elevated their ties to a **Special Strategic and Global Partnership**. Their convergence on Indo-Pacific, infrastructure, and multilateralism has become increasingly central to regional stability.

Body: Dimensions of Strategic Partnership

1. Indo-Pacific Convergence

Both nations support a **Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)** architecture.

Example: 2024 Trilateral Dialogue (India–Japan–France) focused on Indo-Pacific naval synergy.

2. Defence and Security Cooperation

Regular joint military exercises like **Dharma Guardian**, **JIMEX**, and **Malabar** reflect rising interoperability.

3. Infrastructure and Investment

Japan funds mega projects like **Mumbai–Ahmedabad Bullet Train**, **DMIC**, and smart cities.

Example: ₹12,000 crore Japanese investment in green hydrogen industrial parks (2025).

4. Tech and Innovation Diplomacy

MoUs on AI, semiconductor design, and digital public infrastructure were signed under the 2024 Indo-Japan Tech Alliance.

5. Global Governance and Multilateralism

India and Japan support UN reforms, G4 grouping, and WTO multilateralism.

Conclusion:

A strong India–Japan axis is not just bilateral; it's **pivotal for shaping a multipolar, rules-based Asian order**, built on **mutual trust and shared leadership**.

Q2. “The long-sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalised nations has disappeared on account of its newfound role in the emerging global order.” Elaborate. (2019)

What is the question asking:

It asks whether India's shift from **moral leadership of the Global South** to **realist power diplomacy** has diluted its image — and to explore this change.

How to approach:

Intro: Past positioning vs current role

Body: 5 points showing image shift + 5 showing continuity/potential

Conclusion: Balance between values and pragmatism

Introduction:

India once stood as the **voice of the decolonised and marginalised**, leading NAM and South–South solidarity. Today, its pursuit of **strategic autonomy, trade, and security partnerships** reflects its emerging great power aspirations.

Body

I. Shifts Undermining the Old Image

1. Prioritising Strategic Ties with West

Deepening Quad, I2U2, Indo–US and Indo–France defence deals have replaced NAM activism.

2. Silence on Global South Issues

Perceived detachment from Palestine, Myanmar Rohingyas, and Africa's debt challenges.

Example: India abstained on 2023 UNGA Gaza resolutions.

3. Export Bans and Vaccine Diplomacy Disruptions

India's 2021 vaccine export halt created disillusionment in Africa and Latin America.

4. Reluctance on Refugee and Climate Justice

India hasn't signed the UN Refugee Convention or taken assertive climate justice positions.

5. Border-Focused Security Over Global Advocacy

Shift to national interest-led diplomacy over values-based leadership.

II. Continuities and Positive Transformation

1. Leadership in Global South Voice Platforms

2023 **Global South Summit** hosted by India revived its normative leadership.

Example: “Global South Growth Fund” launched at G20 Presidency.

2. Multilateral Development Diplomacy

India supports SDG-aligned capacity-building across Asia and Africa (ITEC, Solar Alliance).

3. Vaccine Maitri and Tech Sharing

India’s open-source platforms like CoWIN have benefited over 20 developing nations.

4. Inclusive Digital Development

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) partnership launched with African Union in 2024.

5. Reframing Itself as ‘Vishwa Mitra’ (Global Friend)

India now balances self-interest with global responsibilities — not withdrawal, but recalibration.

Conclusion:

India’s image has evolved — from a **moral voice to a pragmatic leader**. The challenge lies in harmonising **strategic ambitions with inclusive multilateral advocacy**.



Q3. “What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India’s national self-esteem and ambitions.” Explain with suitable examples. (2019)

What is the question asking:

To explore why **India-US ties**, though deepening, experience friction due to strategic asymmetry and mutual expectations.

How to approach:

Intro: Acknowledge convergence with structural differences

Body: 5 friction points + 5 areas of convergence/stabilisation

Conclusion: Mature ties need mutual recognition of limits and autonomy

Introduction:

India-US ties have transitioned into a **Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership**, but gaps remain due to **India’s insistence on strategic autonomy** and **US’s global alliance-centric outlook**.

Body

I. Friction Points

1. CAATSA Sanctions Threat over Russian Arms

Despite strong ties, India’s S-400 deal triggered CAATSA waiver debate.

Example: 2023 waiver renewal highlighted US discomfort with India-Russia defence link.

2. Divergence on Iran and West Asia

US pressure on India to cut Iranian oil imports disrupted energy strategy.

3. WTO and Trade Disputes

US opposition to India’s MSP support and e-commerce data norms remains unresolved.

4. Digital Taxation and Tech Regulation

India’s 2024 Digital Tax Bill drew criticism from US tech majors and USTR.

5. Delay in Formal Alliance Recognition

India resists becoming a formal ally; US hasn’t offered full NATO-equivalent status.

II. Areas of Strategic Convergence

1. Indo-Pacific Security Cooperation

Quad, Malabar exercises, and logistics pacts signal growing trust.

2. Defence Trade and Interoperability

India-US signed **Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)** in 2023.

3. Counterterrorism and Intelligence Sharing

Joint Working Groups and FATF lobbying show mutual alignment.

4. Climate Finance and Green Hydrogen

India-US Climate Partnership and Just Energy Transition initiatives launched in 2024.

5. Indian Diaspora and People-to-People Ties

Over 5 million strong diaspora strengthens bilateral cultural and political bonds.

Conclusion:

India-US ties must evolve **beyond alliance templates**, rooted in mutual respect for **sovereignty, development trajectories, and shared global responsibilities**.

Q4. 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)' is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance in present times - Discuss. (2020)

What is the question asking:

To evaluate the **transformation of the Quad** — from a strategic/military grouping into a **broader geo-economic, trade-oriented platform**.

How to approach:

Intro: Trace Quad evolution

Body: 5 trade/economic initiatives + 5 limitations to this transformation

Conclusion: Quad is evolving, but not yet a full-fledged trade bloc

Introduction:

Initially formed in 2007 and revived in 2017, the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** — comprising India, US, Japan, and Australia — has diversified into **digital economy, vaccine diplomacy, critical tech**, and trade resilience, reflecting its shift beyond maritime security.

Body

I. Dimensions of Quad's Trade Bloc Evolution

1. Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)

Launched in 2021, now formalised in 2024 with focus on electronics, pharma, rare earths.

2. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Collaboration

Joint working group (2024) promotes IndiaStack adoption across Indo-Pacific nations.

3. Semiconductor and Tech Cooperation

US-India-Japan-Australia have launched Quad Chip Resilience Pact (2025) to secure supply chains.

4. Climate Financing and Clean Energy Transition

Quad Green Corridors Initiative funds clean hydrogen and solar manufacturing.

Example: \$3B pledged in 2024 for South Asian clean tech.

5. Infrastructure Funding via Blue Dot Network

Certification mechanism for infrastructure standards, gaining traction in ASEAN and Pacific Islands.

II. Limitations to Becoming a True Trade Bloc

1. Absence of Formal FTA or Common Market

Unlike EU or RCEP, Quad lacks binding trade frameworks.

2. Varied Economic Priorities

India's hesitation on digital trade norms vs US-Japan liberal approach.

3. Internal Frictions on IP, Data Sovereignty

India-US divergence on AI ethics and cross-border data flows.

4. No Unified Tariff Policy or Investment Platform

Most initiatives are voluntary and project-based.

5. Perception as Anti-China Bloc Hurts Broader Economic Integration

Many ASEAN members resist Quad-centric economic realignments.

Conclusion:

The Quad's evolution into a **geo-economic coalition** is undeniable, but it remains a **flexible, issue-based strategic partnership**, not yet a formal trade bloc.

Q5. What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (2020)

What is the question asking:

To compare the **strategic impact of Indo-US vs Indo-Russia defence ties**, especially in terms of **Indo-Pacific security and regional balance**.

How to approach:

Intro: Acknowledge historic Russia ties and emerging US role

Body: 5 strategic benefits of Indo-US defence + 5 limitations/comparison with Russia

Conclusion: India must balance both to sustain regional leverage

Introduction:

While Russia remains India's **traditional defence partner**, the last decade has seen Indo-US defence ties gaining strategic weight through **foundational pacts, joint exercises, and technology transfers**, especially in the Indo-Pacific context.

Body

I. Strategic Significance of Indo-US Defence Deals

1. Operational Interoperability in Indo-Pacific

Example: MALABAR 2024 and joint naval patrols in Western Pacific signal maritime collaboration.

2. Foundational Defence Agreements

India has signed all major pacts — COMCASA, BECA, LEMOA — enabling real-time intel and logistics.

3. Transfer of Critical Technology

Under iCET (2023), India is co-developing AI-enabled ISR systems and unmanned platforms.

4. Counterbalancing Chinese Assertiveness

Indo-US naval posture complements FOIP (Free & Open Indo-Pacific) agenda.

5. Strategic Dialogue and Defence Procurement

Predator drones, MH-60R helicopters and GE jet engine manufacturing approved in 2024.



II. Indo-Russia Defence Engagement: Continuing Relevance

1. Legacy Systems and Maintenance Dependency

70% of Indian platforms still Russian-origin (e.g., Su-30MKI, T-90 tanks).

2. Strategic Autonomy via Diversification

Russia supports India's non-aligned defence posture without conditions.

3. Hypersonics and Nuclear Submarine Collaboration

Joint BrahMos-II and leasing of Akula-class subs remain critical.

4. Non-Interference in Indo-Pacific Realignments

Russia supports India's regional ambitions without pressure.

5. Limits of US Ties: CAATSA, Technology Caps

Indo-US trust-building is ongoing; Russia remains risk-insulated.

Conclusion:

For Indo-Pacific stability, India must **leverage US tech-maritime depth** while **retaining Russia's strategic legacy** — a calibrated two-front partnership model.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2021

- "If the last few decades were of Asia's growth story, the next few are expected to be Africa's." In the light of this statement, examine India's influence in Africa in recent years. (10 M)
- The newly tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario. (15 M)
- "The USA is facing an existential threat in the form of a China that is much more challenging than the erstwhile Soviet Union." Explain. (10 M)

• 2022

- How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE, and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (15 M)
- 'Clean energy is the order of the day.' Describe briefly India's changing policy towards climate change in various international forums in the context of geopolitics. (15 M)

• 2024

- 'The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China's political and economic dominance.' Explain this statement with examples. (10 M)
- Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic, and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs), highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics. (10 M)
- 'Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security.' Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level. (15 M)

Q1. "If the last few decades were of Asia's growth story, the next few are expected to be Africa's." In the light of this statement, examine India's influence in Africa in recent years. (2021)

What is the question asking:

To assess how India has leveraged its **economic, diplomatic, and strategic presence in Africa** in the context of Africa's emerging global significance.

How to approach:

Intro: Link Africa's emerging growth role with India's re-engagement

Body: 5 dimensions of India-Africa engagement

Conclusion: India's future presence depends on strategic and inclusive partnerships

Introduction:

Africa is emerging as the **next frontier of global economic growth**, with the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** and a demographic dividend in motion. India, as Africa's third-largest trading partner, is expanding its influence through **developmental, strategic, and diaspora-centric diplomacy**.

Body: India's Growing Influence in Africa

1. Economic and Trade Engagement

Bilateral trade reached **\$100+ billion in 2024**, with major investments in telecom, fintech, and pharmaceuticals.

Example: Bharti Airtel and Serum Institute's vaccine manufacturing units in Kenya.

2. Development and Capacity Building

India has extended **\$12.6 billion in concessional loans**, set up 150+ e-Vidya Bhavans, and launched the **e-AarogyaBhavan telemedicine platform** (2025).

3. Defence and Security Cooperation

India has signed defence MoUs with 11 African countries.

Example: 2024 Africa-India Defence Ministers Conclave focused on maritime security.

4. Digital and Infrastructure Diplomacy

The **Pan Africa e-Network Project** and Digital Public Infrastructure exports (IndiaStack) are expanding access to education and governance.

5. Multilateral and South-South Solidarity

India-Africa Forums (IAFS), vaccine diplomacy, and support in WTO/UN reform forums project India as Africa's trusted partner.

Conclusion:

India's Africa policy must blend **commerce, capacity, and civilisational diplomacy**, strengthening mutual growth within a rules-based global order.

Q2. The newly tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario. (2021)

What is the question asking:

To analyse the **impact of AUKUS** on Indo-Pacific security and whether it could marginalise other regional partnerships like Quad, ASEAN, or IORA.

How to approach:

Intro: Introduce AUKUS and its strategic intent

Body: 5 strengths/advantages of AUKUS + 5 counterpoints on why it won't supersede other forums

Conclusion: AUKUS complements but does not replace the multipolar security matrix

Introduction:

Formed in 2021, **AUKUS (Australia-UK-US)** represents a security partnership aimed at **technology sharing, undersea warfare**, and deterring China in the Indo-Pacific. Its emergence reflects a **tightening of unilateral defence alignments**.

Body

Strengths and Strategic Impact of AUKUS

1. Nuclear Submarine Technology Transfer

Australia to receive SSNs by 2030, shifting regional deterrence dynamics.

2. Advanced Tech Sharing

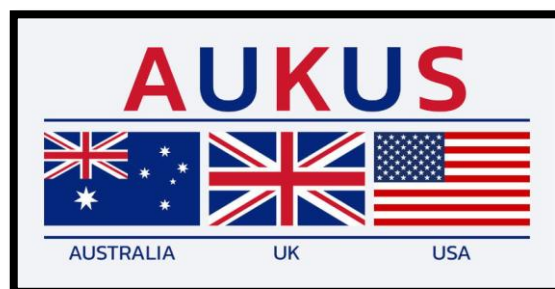
Cooperation in cyber, AI, quantum tech, and undersea capabilities.

3. Clear Military Focus

Compared to Quad's broad agenda, AUKUS has sharper defence orientation.

4. UK's Re-entry into Indo-Pacific

Signals NATO interest in Indo-Pacific; reinforces trans-Atlantic presence.



5. Signal to China on Hard Deterrence

Direct response to China's naval expansion in South China Sea and Solomon Islands.

Why AUKUS Won't Supersede Other Groupings

1. Limited Membership and Narrow Focus

AUKUS is not an economic or diplomatic platform like Quad or ASEAN.

2. ASEAN Centrality Maintained

India and Japan stress ASEAN's role for regional order and inclusivity.

3. Quad's Broader Agenda

Quad focuses on vaccines, infrastructure, and climate tech — complementary to AUKUS.

4. Risk of Strategic Polarisation

AUKUS may harden blocs; India prefers multipolar cooperation.

5. India's Non-Aligned Strategic Autonomy

India avoids military alliances; AUKUS thus doesn't include or affect Indian strategy directly.

Conclusion:

AUKUS enhances deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, but **existing partnerships like Quad and ASEAN remain central** to the region's **inclusive and multi-layered security architecture**.

Q3. "The USA is facing an existential threat in the form of a China that is much more challenging than the erstwhile Soviet Union." Explain. (2021)

What is the question asking:

To compare the **strategic threat posed by China today** to that posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, especially in terms of scale and nature.

How to approach:

Intro: Describe global shift in power balance

Body: 5 comparisons showing China as a deeper challenge than USSR

Conclusion: Need for nuanced containment without ideological rigidity

Introduction:

Unlike the USSR, whose ideological and military challenge was rigid and state-controlled, **China's hybrid model of authoritarian capitalism**, tech dominance, and military expansion poses a **multi-dimensional challenge** to US supremacy.

Body: How China is a Greater Threat than USSR

1. Economic Interdependence with US

China is **embedded in global supply chains**, unlike the isolated Soviet economy.

Example: \$690 billion US–China bilateral trade (2024).

2. Techno-Strategic Superiority

Dominance in AI, 5G, rare earths, and dual-use tech make China a peer competitor.

3. Expansive Global Ambitions

Through the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** and **Digital Silk Road**, China penetrates Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

4. Military Modernisation and Grey Zone Warfare

PLA's navy is the world's largest; use of salami slicing and cyberwarfare has no Soviet precedent.

5. Undermining Democratic Institutions Globally

China's influence campaigns, surveillance exports, and UN voting patterns challenge the liberal order.

Conclusion:

China's challenge lies in its **embedded power**, not ideological opposition — making it a **strategic, economic, and normative competitor**, far beyond the Cold War model.

Q4. How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE, and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (2022)

What is the question asking:

To analyse the geopolitical and economic implications of India's participation in the I2U2 grouping on its global strategic standing.

How to approach:

Intro: Introduce I2U2 and its new age strategic collaboration

Body: 5 ways I2U2 transforms India's global role

Conclusion: I2U2 elevates India's multidimensional diplomacy

Introduction:

Launched in 2022, **I2U2 is a plurilateral initiative** focusing on **food security, energy, innovation, and infrastructure**. It marks India's strategic entry into a West Asian Indo-Pacific corridor that bridges diplomacy, trade, and technology across regions.

Body: Impact of I2U2 on India's Global Standing

1. Repositioning in West Asia and Abraham Accords Sphere

Strengthens India's strategic presence alongside US–Israel–UAE trilateral.

Example: Food Corridor and Smart Agro Parks in Gujarat backed by UAE.

2. Gateway to Tech Diplomacy

Joint solar, green hydrogen, and fintech collaborations project India as a **green innovation hub**.

3. Alternative Global South Coalition

I2U2 complements India's G20 presidency vision of "**One Earth, One Family**", offering South–South cooperation avenues.

4. Economic Integration and Logistics Access

UAE's logistics base and Israel's agritech create a new trade loop connecting Asia–Europe via India.

5. Strategic Hedge Against China-Led Platforms

Counterbalances BRI and RCEP by offering **transparent, rules-based development partnerships**.

Conclusion:

I2U2 signifies India's growing **multi-alignment diplomacy** — where **tech, trade, and trust converge** to boost India's global power projection beyond traditional alliances.

Q5. 'Clean energy is the order of the day.' Describe briefly India's changing policy towards climate change in various international forums in the context of geopolitics. (2022)

What is the question asking:

To explain India's evolving clean energy and climate diplomacy in major global platforms and its geopolitical implications.

How to approach:

Intro: Frame India's shift in climate diplomacy

Body: 5 major shifts in global climate engagement

Conclusion: India is reshaping its identity as a climate leader

Introduction:

India has shifted from climate responsibility resistance to proactive **climate leadership**, visible in forums like **COP summits, G20, ISA, and GCF**, aligning domestic energy transition with global climate justice narratives.

Body: Changing Features of India's Global Climate Policy

1. From Burden Sharing to Leadership Role

India now commits to **Net Zero by 2070** and leads **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** with 110+ countries.

2. Launch of Global Biofuel Alliance (2023)

Co-launched with Brazil and US, India is mainstreaming clean bioenergy across the Global South.

3. LiFE Mission and Climate Ethics Diplomacy

The LiFE campaign (2022) promotes sustainable lifestyles as a **soft power climate export**.

4. G20 Presidency and Green Development Pact (2023)

India led global agreement on green finance, battery recycling, and cross-border clean energy trade.

5. Strategic Solar & Hydrogen Partnerships

India-EU Hydrogen Council, India-Japan Solar Parks, and Quad's green corridors boost climate-linked geopolitics.

Conclusion:

India's evolving climate policy reflects a blend of **ecological responsibility and strategic opportunity**, positioning it as a **Global South climate champion**.

Q6. 'The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China's political and economic dominance.' Explain this statement with examples. (2024)

What is the question asking:

To explain how and why Western nations are cultivating India as a counterweight to China, especially in trade and geopolitics.

How to approach:

Intro: Global supply chain reset and India's emergence

Body: 5 key Western strategies aiding India's rise

Conclusion: India's rise must balance opportunity with autonomy

Introduction:

In the wake of pandemic disruptions, **China-US decoupling**, and supply chain insecurity, the West is increasingly positioning India as a **trusted, democratic, and economically scalable** alternative to counter China's influence in Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Body: How the West is Backing India's Rise

1. Trade Realignment and Nearshoring

EU-India FTA negotiations accelerated; Apple, Boeing, and Tesla shifting manufacturing to India.

2. Semiconductor and Tech Cooperation

US-India iCET and Japan-India Foundry Corridor signed in 2024 to build fab units in Gujarat and Odisha.

3. Critical Minerals & Rare Earth Security Partnership

India-Australia-US Quad Mineral Pact ensures supply chain resilience in clean energy transition.

4. Defence and Maritime Collaborations

India signed tech-transfer agreement for GE F414 engines with US (2024), strengthening Indo-Pacific interoperability.

5. Strategic Narratives at Multilateral Forums

G7+ invites to India, inclusion in PGII (Build Back Better World), and space/AI norms coalition reflect soft elevation.

Conclusion:

India is being fostered as a **strategic and economic pivot**, but its **independent diplomacy and multilateral balance** will define its true global position.

Q4. Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic, and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs), highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics. (2024)

What is the question asking:

To analyse the status and significance of India's relations with CARs across multiple domains and their broader strategic relevance.

How to approach:

Intro: Contextualise CARs' geopolitical location

Body: 5 dimensions of India-CARs engagement

Conclusion: India needs long-term access and presence in Eurasia

Introduction:

The **Central Asian Republics (CARs)** rich in energy, minerals, and located at the crossroads of Eurasia — are pivotal for India's extended neighbourhood policy, especially amid China's BRI expansion and Taliban-affected Afghanistan.

Body: India-CARs Relations

1. Energy and Connectivity Diplomacy

TAPI gas pipeline revival talks, and Chabahar-INSTC corridor as gateway to Central Asia.

Example: 2024 MoU with Iran and Kazakhstan on logistics hub.

2. Strategic Counterbalance to China

India participates in SCO, CICA summits to push multi-vector diplomacy.

3. Cultural and Educational Outreach

ICCR scholarships, Buddhist heritage diplomacy, and Hindi language chairs in Almaty and Tashkent.

4. Trade and Investment Cooperation

Pharma, textiles, and IT sectors tapped through India-CAR Virtual Business Platform (launched 2023).

5. Security and Terrorism Dialogue

Joint working groups on radicalisation, narco-terrorism and intelligence sharing enhanced in 2024 post-Afghan spillover threats.

Conclusion:

India's CAR policy must integrate **infrastructure, intelligence, and influence**, anchoring its Eurasian vision with **long-term strategic autonomy**.



Q5. 'Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security.' Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level. (2024)

What is the question asking:

To evaluate the **impact and challenges** of the UNSC-CTC and related institutions in the global fight against terrorism.

How to approach:

Intro: CTC's creation post-9/11 and its global mandate

Body: 5 achievements + 5 limitations of CTC

Conclusion: Global cooperation needs reform and equity

Introduction:

Formed after **UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001)**, the **Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** monitors global counter-terror norms, financing frameworks, and national legislations, aiming to **unify responses against transnational terrorism**.

Body

Achievements of CTC

1. Global Norm Setting and Resolutions

Led key UNSC resolutions (e.g., 2178 on FTFs, 2396 on border control tech).

2. Financial Sanctions and Listings

Supports FATF, 1267 Sanctions Committee; India lobbied successfully for JeM and LeT listings.

3. Capacity Building and State Reporting

Helps nations draft CT laws, strengthen prosecution and intelligence.

4. Tech and Cyber-terrorism Guidelines

CTED 2023 report set benchmarks on social media misuse and online extremism.

5. Advocacy for Human Rights Compliance

Focuses on proportionality and due process in anti-terror operations.

Limitations

1. Politicisation of Designation Process

China's repeated veto on listing of Masood Azhar reflects double standards.

2. Implementation Gaps

Many member-states lack resources to enforce CTC mandates effectively.

3. No Clear Definition of Terrorism

Global consensus remains elusive; leads to selective outrage.

4. Lack of Enforcement Power

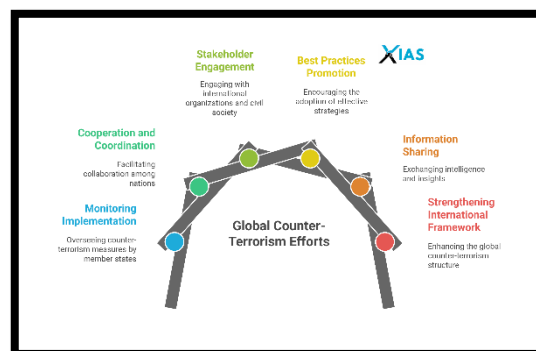
CTC recommendations are non-binding; limited deterrent impact.

5. Tech Adaptation Lag

Slow to counter AI-driven deepfake propaganda and darknet terrorism funding.

Conclusion:

CTC has laid important groundwork, but a **reformed, depoliticised, and tech-savvy UN counter-terror framework** is needed to uphold global peace credibly.



TOPIC-17: Important International institutions

IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES

THEIR STRUCTURE, MANDATE AND FUNCTIONING



- 2013

- The World Bank and the IMF, collectively known as the Bretton Woods Institutions, are the two inter-governmental pillars supporting the structure of the world's economic and financial order. Superficially, the World Bank and the IMF exhibit many common characteristics, yet their role, functions, and mandate are distinctly different. Elucidate. (10 M)

- 2015

- Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UNSC. (12.5 M)

- 2016

- "The broader aims and objectives of WTO are to manage and promote international trade in the era of globalization. But the Doha round of negotiations seems doomed due to differences between the developed and the developing countries." Discuss in the Indian perspective. (12.5 M)
- What are the aims and objectives of the McBride Commission of UNESCO? What is India's position on these? (12.5 M)

Q1. The World Bank and the IMF, collectively known as the Bretton Woods Institutions, are the two inter-governmental pillars supporting the structure of the world's economic and financial order. Superficially, the World Bank and the IMF exhibit many common characteristics, yet their role, functions, and mandate are distinctly different. Elucidate. (2013)

What is the question asking:

To bring out the **differences between the IMF and World Bank** despite their shared origin and structure.

How to approach:

Intro: Origin and shared nature of Bretton Woods Institutions

Body: Comparison of mandate, functions, membership, lending, and conditionalities

Conclusion: Both serve complementary yet distinct roles in global financial governance

Introduction:

Established at the **Bretton Woods Conference (1944)**, the **IMF and World Bank** are global financial institutions aimed at ensuring macroeconomic stability and development financing. While structurally similar, their **core objectives and instruments differ fundamentally**.

Body: Key Differences Between IMF and World Bank

1. Core Mandate

- **IMF:** Ensures global monetary stability and provides short-term balance-of-payment support.
- **World Bank:** Focuses on long-term development and poverty reduction through infrastructure and social financing.

2. Lending Purpose and Tenure

- **IMF:** Offers short- to medium-term financial assistance during crises.
- **World Bank:** Grants and long-term loans for sectors like education, health, infrastructure.

3. Conditionalities

- **IMF:** Structural reforms like fiscal tightening, deregulation (e.g., 1991 India crisis).
- **World Bank:** Project-specific governance or environmental standards.

4. Membership Voting Structure

- **IMF:** Quota-based with heavier Western influence.
- **World Bank:** Also quota-based, but more concessional lending arms (IDA) for poorer nations.

5. Functional Focus

- **IMF:** Macroeconomic surveillance, currency stabilisation.
- **World Bank:** Knowledge services, technical assistance, post-conflict reconstruction.

Conclusion:

Together, the IMF and World Bank reflect a **division of responsibility** in stabilising and developing the global economic order, especially in today's post-pandemic and climate-sensitive world economy.

Q2. Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UNSC. (2015)

What is the question asking:

To critically analyse the **barriers India faces in gaining permanent membership** in the UN Security Council.

How to approach:

Intro: India's growing global stature vs. outdated UNSC structure

Body: 5 major obstacles to India's inclusion

Conclusion: Reform needs diplomatic consensus and multilateral political will

Introduction:

Despite being a **founding member of the UN, nuclear power, and G20 leader**, India continues to be denied a permanent seat in the UNSC. This reflects the **disconnect between post-WWII power equations and 21st-century geopolitical realities**.

Body: Impediments to India's UNSC Bid

1. Lack of Consensus Among P5

China's repeated opposition to India's inclusion undermines reform talks.

Example: China's soft veto to India's entry in G4-backed proposals.

2. Resistance from Regional Rivals

Pakistan opposes India, and countries like Argentina, Italy challenge regional representation formulas (Uniting for Consensus).

3. No Agreed Criteria for Expansion

Divergent views on veto rights, regional balance, and G4 composition stall reform.

4. Inertia in UN Charter Amendment Process

Charter reform needs support from 2/3 of General Assembly and all P5 — a near-political deadlock.

5. Geopolitical Volatility and Power Imbalance

Emerging blocs (e.g., BRICS, I2U2) challenge UN legitimacy, but fail to translate into reform mechanisms.

Conclusion:

India's pursuit of UNSC reform must continue through **coalition diplomacy, normative leadership, and multilateral pressure**, keeping in mind the **principles of democratic global governance**.

Q3. "The broader aims and objectives of WTO are to manage and promote international trade in the era of globalization. But the Doha round of negotiations seems doomed due to differences between the developed and the developing countries." Discuss in the Indian perspective. (2016)

What is the question asking:

To evaluate WTO's mandate and India's position amidst the **Doha Round's failure** due to North-South conflicts.

How to approach:

Intro: WTO's role in trade governance and Doha's ambition

Body: 5 core issues from Indian viewpoint

Conclusion: WTO needs balanced reforms to regain trust of developing nations

Introduction:

The **WTO's Doha Development Round (2001)** aimed to create a fairer global trade regime, but has stagnated due to conflicts over **agricultural subsidies, market access, and intellectual property**. India has consistently argued for a **development-first approach**.

Body: Indian Perspective on Doha Round Deadlock

1. Agricultural Subsidy and Food Security Dispute

Developed countries resisted India's public stockholding for food security.

Example: India led G-33 in demanding a permanent solution at WTO Bali & Nairobi.

2. Resistance to Special and Differential Treatment (SDT)

India supports SDT to protect infant industries; US and EU seek uniform tariff commitments.

3. Non-Tariff Barriers and TRIPS+ Clauses

Proposals for higher IPR protections threaten India's pharma exports.

4. E-Commerce and Digital Trade Asymmetries

India resists premature rules without addressing data localisation and MSME access.

5. Absence of Dispute Settlement Reform

WTO's Appellate Body remains paralysed due to US veto, undermining India's grievance redressal mechanisms.

Conclusion:

WTO must reconcile **equity with efficiency**, ensuring **inclusive multilateralism** that safeguards the **developmental space of countries like India**.

Q4. What are the aims and objectives of the McBride Commission of UNESCO? What is India's position on these? (2016)

What is the question asking:

To outline the **mandate of the McBride Commission** on information and communication, and assess India's stance.

How to approach:

Intro: Context of the McBride Commission (1980) under UNESCO

Body: 5 aims + India's support and policy alignment

Conclusion: Balanced need for media equity and digital openness

Introduction:

The **McBride Commission (1980)**, also known as the **International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems**, was set up by UNESCO to address the **imbalances in global information flow** and promote a more **equitable communication order**.

Body: Aims and India's Position

1. Promote Free and Balanced Information Flow

Avoid dominance of Western media narratives and ensure representation of Global South voices.

2. Cultural Sovereignty and Media Pluralism

Advocated respect for indigenous narratives and linguistic diversity in global media.

3. Democratise Communication Technologies

Equal access to communication tools, including radio, print, and digital infrastructure.

4. Ethical Journalism and Responsible Media

Urged codes of conduct and accountability in media systems globally.

The McBride Commission Report (1985)



- international character of the media, their structures, world-views and markets
- One way flow of media
- Globalization: concentration of media ownership, monopolization of markets, and a decline in diversity
- Emergence of the information society
- Self-reliance and cultural identity

5. Equitable Use of Airwaves and Satellites

Criticised monopolisation of geostationary orbits and bandwidth by developed countries.

India's Position

India supported the **New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)** envisioned by the Commission, advocating for **communication equity** and cultural rights in global forums.

Example: India's Prasar Bharati Act, local language news initiatives, and resistance to foreign content dominance reflect this legacy.

Conclusion:

India continues to uphold the **McBride ideals** through its **media pluralism, cultural autonomy, and South-South media cooperation** in the age of digital geopolitics.

• PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

• 2017

- What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it. (10 M)

• 2018

- What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India? (15 M)

• 2019

- 'Too little cash, too much politics, leaves UNESCO fighting for life.' Discuss the statement in the light of the US withdrawal and its accusation of the cultural body as having an 'anti-Israel bias'. (10 M)

• 2020

- Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. (10 M)

• 2021

- Critically examine the aims and objectives of SCO. What importance does it hold for India? (15 M)

• 2022

- Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organization like SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organization? (10 M)

Q1. What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it. (2017)

What is the question asking:

To outline the **core roles of ECOSOC** and list its **key functional commissions** involved in global socio-economic governance.

How to approach:

Intro: Introduce ECOSOC as a key UN organ under Article 62

Body: 5 core functions + 5 functional commissions

Conclusion: ECOSOC's reform is crucial for inclusive global governance

Introduction:

The **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, established under **Chapter X (Articles 61–72) of the UN Charter**, is the principal UN body for promoting **economic, social, and environmental cooperation**. It plays a critical role in realising the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

Body**Main Functions of ECOSOC****1. Coordination of UN Agencies**

Aligns work of specialised agencies like WHO, UNESCO, ILO to avoid overlaps.

2. Global Policy Dialogue and Recommendations

Convenes High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) for SDG review and policy harmonisation.

3. Promotes Development Cooperation

Supports financing and capacity-building for global South-South and triangular cooperation.

4. Platform for Civil Society Engagement

Over 5,000 NGOs consult ECOSOC for participatory development discussions.

5. Norm-Setting and Monitoring

Sets normative frameworks on gender, poverty, environment, health and education.

Key Functional Commissions Under ECOSOC

1. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – Advocates global gender policy

2. Commission on Population and Development (CPD) – Works on demographic trends

3. Statistical Commission – Guides global data and indicators framework (e.g., SDGs)

4. Commission for Social Development (CSocD) – Focuses on vulnerable groups and inclusive policies

5. Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) – Shapes international drug control policies

Conclusion:

ECOSOC must be reformed to improve its **coherence, authority, and responsiveness**, ensuring it remains central to multilateralism in a complex global development architecture.

Q2. What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India? (2018)**What is the question asking:**

To identify **WTO reform priorities** amid rising protectionism and trade conflicts, especially relevant for India's developmental interests.

How to approach:

Intro: WTO under stress due to trade wars and dispute paralysis

Body: 5 key reforms needed + Indian perspective

Conclusion: Need for inclusive and equitable WTO renewal

Introduction:

The **WTO's multilateral order**, built on rules-based trade, faces existential threats from the rise of **bilateralism, subsidy wars, and unilateral sanctions**. For India, WTO reform must ensure **developmental space, agricultural protection, and digital sovereignty**.

Body: Key Areas of WTO Reform from India's Perspective**1. Revive Dispute Settlement Mechanism**

The **Appellate Body** has been non-functional since 2020; India has faced unresolved disputes in steel and solar cases.

2. Permanent Solution on Public Stockholding

India demands food security exemptions under the **Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)**.

Example: India's rice procurement programmes have faced scrutiny.

3. Regulation of E-Commerce and Digital Trade

India calls for a **moratorium on e-commerce duties** to be lifted and for **data localisation safeguards**.

4. Transparency in Developed Countries' Subsidies

Massive green and farm subsidies (e.g., under EU Green Deal, US IRA Act) distort global trade.

5. Recognition of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT)

India champions SDT for developing nations in fisheries, environment, and IPR regimes.

Conclusion:

WTO must evolve as an **inclusive and development-centric multilateral forum**, restoring trust among Global South nations like India while regulating emerging trade frontiers.



Q3. 'Too little cash, too much politics, leaves UNESCO fighting for life.' Discuss the statement in the light of the US withdrawal and its accusation of the cultural body as having an 'anti-Israel bias'. (2019)

What is the question asking:

To examine the **financial and political crisis at UNESCO**, especially after the US pullout in 2017.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention US withdrawal and its stated reasons

Body: 5 challenges facing UNESCO + India's balanced role

Conclusion: UNESCO must regain neutrality and funding credibility

Introduction:

UNESCO, the **UN's cultural and educational agency**, has faced financial instability and political controversy since **the US and Israel withdrew in 2017**, citing its alleged "anti-Israel bias" and inefficiency.

Body

1. Funding Crisis

US and Israel contributed 22% of UNESCO's budget; their exit reduced resources for heritage, education, and science programmes.

2. Political Tensions Over Cultural Resolutions

Resolutions criticising Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and Hebron drew backlash.

3. Charges of Bureaucratic Inefficiency

UNESCO was accused of politicisation, slow response, and redundant programmes.

4. Impact on Global Heritage Conservation

Important missions (like in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan) were delayed due to lack of funds and staff.

5. India's Constructive Role

India continues supporting UNESCO's educational equity and heritage conservation agenda.

Example: 2024 – Hoysala temples and Varanasi nominated under India-UNESCO collaboration.

Conclusion:

UNESCO must balance **cultural diplomacy with neutrality**, rebuilding trust and funding to remain central to global human development goals.

Q4. Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. (2020)

What is the question asking:

To analyse both **strengths and limitations of WHO** in global pandemic response.

How to approach:

Intro: WHO's mandate and role during Covid-19

Body: 5 strengths and 5 criticisms

Conclusion: WHO needs reform without undermining its centrality

Introduction:

The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, under **Article 1 of its Constitution**, is the UN's specialised agency for global health governance. Its response to Covid-19, particularly during the early outbreak, drew mixed global reactions.

Body**Positive Role Played by WHO****1. Global Coordination and Alerts**

Issued early alerts and declared Covid-19 a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** in January 2020.

2. Technical Guidelines and Protocols

Advised governments on testing, lockdowns, treatment protocols.

3. COVAX Facility and Vaccine Equity

Partnered with GAVI and CEPI to distribute vaccines to LMICs.

4. Fact-Based Communication Campaigns

Launched the '**Infodemic Management**' campaign to combat misinformation.

5. India-Specific Collaboration

Supported India's Ayushman Bharat–Digital Health Mission and pandemic capacity-building.

Criticism and Limitations**1. Delayed Declaration of Emergency**

Alleged delay in recognising Covid-19's global threat.

2. Overdependence on Member-State Data

Failed to verify initial outbreak data from China independently.

3. Weak Enforcement Powers

Could not compel compliance with International Health Regulations (IHR).

4. Politicisation of Investigations

Accused of bias in Wuhan origin investigation.

5. Lack of Funding and Autonomy

80% of budget is donor-driven, limiting its independence.

Conclusion:

The WHO remains **irreplaceable in global health governance**, but requires **greater funding, independence, and legal mandate** to effectively handle future health emergencies.

Q5. Critically examine the aims and objectives of the SCO. What importance does it hold for India? (2021)



What is the question asking:

To evaluate the **core aims of SCO** and analyse **India's strategic, economic, and security interests** in engaging with it.

How to approach:

Intro: Mention SCO's origin and its Eurasian vision

Body: 5 aims + 5 India-linked benefits/challenges

Conclusion: India must balance strategic autonomy with regional alignment

Introduction:

Formed in 2001, the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** aims to promote **regional security, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange** in Eurasia. With eight full members including India, China, Russia, and Central Asian nations, it is **Asia's largest regional organisation by geography and population**.

Body**Aims and Objectives of SCO****1. Regional Counter-Terrorism and Extremism**

Via RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure), it seeks to counter terrorism, separatism, and extremism.

2. Promoting Multilateralism and Sovereignty

Encourages non-interventionist regional security architecture.

3. Economic and Energy Cooperation

Seeks to enhance trade, transport corridors, and energy grids.

4. Cultural and Civilisational Exchange

Promotes people-to-people and educational partnerships among Eurasian nations.

5. Eurasian Connectivity and Stability

Provides a platform for balancing US/NATO influence in the region.

Significance for India**1. Counterbalancing China's Dominance**

Membership gives India a **voice in a China-led regional body**, offering strategic space.

2. Access to Central Asian Energy

Helps diversify India's energy basket via Iran-Central Asia connectivity.

Example: INSTC and Chabahar links are synchronised with SCO transport plans.

3. Tackling Terrorism from Af-Pak Region

India uses RATS to address regional terror threats, especially post-Taliban 2.0.

4. Avoiding Regional Isolation

SCO allows India to engage Russia and Central Asia amidst China-Pakistan proximity.

5. Navigating China-Pakistan Axis

India balances its presence despite hurdles like CPEC and Belt and Road endorsement by SCO.

Conclusion:

SCO presents a **strategic conundrum and opportunity** for India one that must be tactfully used to protect sovereignty while deepening regional stakes in Eurasia.

Q6. Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organization like SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organization? (2022)



What is the question asking:

To compare BIMSTEC and SAARC and explain how BIMSTEC aligns with **India's Act East and Neighbourhood First** policies.

How to approach:

Intro: Set up context of SAARC's stagnation vs BIMSTEC's rise

Body: 5 similarities, 5 dissimilarities (short, focused, with examples), and 3–4 convergence points with India's policy goals

Conclusion: Balanced evaluation of BIMSTEC as a functional complement—not just a replacement—of SAARC

Introduction:

In response to the **functional deadlock of SAARC**, BIMSTEC has gained prominence as a **Bay of Bengal-centric regional grouping** connecting South and Southeast Asia. Though sharing foundational goals with SAARC, it differs sharply in orientation, enabling India to recalibrate its regional and Indo-Pacific outreach.

Body**I. Similarities between BIMSTEC and SAARC****1. Regional Cooperation Mandate**

Both aim to promote **economic development, poverty reduction, and connectivity** among member nations.

2. Common Membership Base

India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are members of both, reflecting overlapping **regional priorities**.

3. Institutional Structure

Both have **permanent secretariats** (SAARC in Kathmandu, BIMSTEC in Dhaka) and work through **summits and sectoral meetings**.

4. Soft Law Framework

Neither grouping has binding enforcement mechanisms — relying on **voluntary cooperation**.

5. Sectoral Collaboration Focus

Both promote work in areas like **trade, energy, transport, and people-to-people exchange**, though BIMSTEC has expanded newer themes like the **blue economy**.

II. Dissimilarities between BIMSTEC and SAARC**1. Geopolitical Scope**

SAARC is confined to **South Asia**; BIMSTEC spans **South and Southeast Asia**, adding Thailand and Myanmar.
→ *This expands India's Act East footprint.*

2. Pakistan's Presence

SAARC includes **Pakistan**, causing diplomatic gridlocks; BIMSTEC **excludes Pakistan**, ensuring smoother functioning.

→ *No BIMSTEC summit has stalled due to bilateral issues.*

3. Thematic Breadth

BIMSTEC has 14 detailed sectors (e.g., counterterrorism, coastal security), while SAARC remains broad but less operationally deep.

4. Activity and Frequency

SAARC has not met at summit level since 2014; BIMSTEC held **its 5th Summit in 2022**, and hosts regular ministerials.

5. Regional Strategic Alignment

SAARC is more SA-centric, whereas BIMSTEC aligns with **Indo-Pacific geopolitics**, naval diplomacy, and **Quad interests**.

III. How BIMSTEC Advances India's Foreign Policy Objectives

1. Supports Act East and Indo-Pacific Strategy

BIMSTEC connects India's northeast to ASEAN via **Myanmar–Thailand land and maritime routes**.

→ *Example:* **India–Myanmar–Thailand Highway Project**, Kaladan MMT.

2. Bypasses SAARC Stalemate

It allows regional cooperation **without Pakistan's obstruction**, consistent with India's **Neighbourhood First**.

3. Maritime Security and SAGAR Vision

Facilitates **coastal security cooperation** in the Bay of Bengal.

→ *Example:* India-led **BIMSTEC Coastal Security Exercises 2024**.

4. Sectoral Leadership and Agenda-setting

India leads **five out of 14 BIMSTEC sectors**, reinforcing diplomatic leadership.

→ *Examples:* Security, Counterterrorism, and Disaster Management sectors.

5. Trade and Energy Diplomacy

BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Plan and FTA in progress support India's **energy diplomacy and trade diversification**.

Conclusion:

BIMSTEC is not a mere replacement for SAARC but a **strategically evolved platform** that better serves India's regional and Indo-Pacific vision. By combining economic, maritime, and subregional priorities, it enables India to lead through **functional multilateralism** in a complex neighbourhood.



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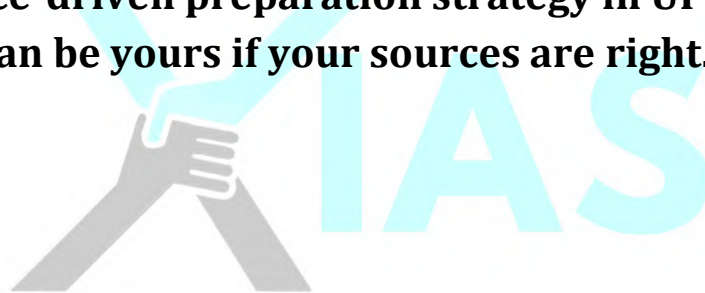
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14. Who among the following rulers in ancient India had assumed the titles 'Mattavilasa', 'Vichitrachitta' and 'Dunabhara'?

(a) Mahendravarmam I
(b) Simhavishnu
(c) Narasimhavarmam I
(d) Simhavarmam

Mahendravarmam I was a follower of Jainism in the early part of his career. He was converted to Saivism by the influence of the Saiva saint, Thirunavukkarasar alias Appar. He built a Siva temple at Tiruvadi. He assumed a number of titles like Gunabhara, Sivayasantha, Chettakan (builder of temples) Chitrakarapuli, Vichitrachitta and Mattavilasa.

filed from Tamralipti (port@BoBengal) and Amaravati to Burma, and Indonesia. The ports of south India sent ships to Tenasserim, Trang, the Malacca, and Java.

ancient capital of Thailand was named after Ayodhya performed various Vedic sacrifices, including the *ashvamedha*.

later group of Pallava rulers, Mahendra-varman I (600-630) was. He was a contemporary of Thanesar and curiously enough was also a dramatist and poet of some being the author of a play *Mattavilasa-prahasana* (The Delight of the ...). It was during his reign that some of the finest rock-cut Pallava temples, including the famous temples at Mahabalipuram. Mahendra-varman began Jainism but was converted to Shaivism by the saint Appar. Mahendra-varman's wife was Pulakeshin II.

varman swept right into the capital of Badami and his occupation of the city claim to the title of *Vatapikonda*, 'the Conqueror of Vatapi'. Mahendravarmam's play *Mattavilasa* was well-known and frequently performed by the actors of

Handwritten notes: XIAS LEVEL-1 BTS Class Notes X lecture


Handwritten note: BTS LEVEL-2

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13. The irrigation device called 'Araghatta' was

(a) a water bag made of leather pulled over a pulley
(b) a large wheel with earthen pots tied to the outer ends of its spokes
(c) a larger earthen pot driven by bullocks
(d) a large water bucket pulled up by rope directly by hand

Whether the Persian wheel was in use in early medieval Rajasthan is debated, and hinges on the interpretation of the term *araghatta*. The key issue is whether the reference is to the Persian wheel or to the *noria*. The *noria* is a wheel which has pots or buckets attached to its rim without a chain for carrying the pots, or a gear mechanism to ensure continuous flow of water. It could only be used to draw water from close to the surface or from a river.



Handwritten note: Explained in details in BTS class (LEVEL-2)

The Persian wheel, on the other hand, had gears and a chain to carry the pots and was associated with a well. *araghatta* seems to have been different from an ordinary well (*dhimada*) or a step well (*vapi*). UPSC PYQ.

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6. Consider the following statements :

I. India has joined the Minerals Security Partnership as a member.
II. India is a resource-rich country in all the 30 critical minerals that it has identified.
III. The Parliament in 2024 has amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowering the Central Government to exclusively auction mining lease and composite license for certain critical minerals.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) I and II only (b) II and III only
(c) I and III only (d) I, II and III

MINERALS SECURITY PARTNERSHIP FINANCE NETWORK

Recent Update: India joined the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) Finance Network to ensure sustainable critical mineral supply chains.

About:

- Global Collaboration: Joint financing body for critical mineral projects worldwide.
- Objectives: Strengthen Indo-Pacific and European cooperation for sustainable supply chains.
- Critical Minerals: Includes lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth elements crucial for modern technologies.

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9. Consider the following statements :

Statement I : Circular economy reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases.
Statement II : Circular economy reduces the use of raw materials as inputs.
Statement III : Circular economy reduces wastage in the production process.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
(a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I
(b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one of them explains Statement I
(c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
(d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

VOLUNTARY VEHICLE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

Recent Update: Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways launched the Vehicle Scrapping Policy to promote a circular economy in the automotive sector.

About:

- Circular Economy: Aims to reduce raw material consumption and encourage recycling.
- Scrappage Certificate: Provided to owners of unfit vehicles to avail discounts on new purchases.
- Incentives: Discounts of up to 3% for commercial vehicles and 1.5% for passenger vehicles on ex-showroom prices.

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83. Consider the following space missions :

I. Axiom-4
II. SpaDEX
III. Gaganyaan

How many of the space missions given above encourage and support micro-gravity research?
(a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) All the three (d) None

SPADEx MISSION

Recent Update: India's SpaDEX mission will demonstrate spacecraft docking technology using PSLV-C59 on December 30.

About SpaDEX Mission:

- What it is: A technology demonstrator for spacecraft docking developed by ISRO.
- Objectives:
 - Primary: Demonstrate rendezvous, docking, and undocking.
 - Secondary: Power transfer between docked spacecraft.
- Technologies:
 - Docking system: Low-impact androgynous.

GAGANYAM MISSION

Recent Update: ISRO has selected Gaganyaan astronauts for training for the International Space Station (ISS) on the Axiom-4 mission, scheduled for October 2024. The mission will be a collaboration with NASA and Axiom Space, utilizing SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft.

About:

- Mission Details: The astronauts will undergo training in the US before the mission.
- Collaboration: India's space program cooperates with NASA and Axiom Space.
- Gaganyaan: India's first human space mission is expected post-2025, after successful unmanned missions.

AXIOM MISSION 4 (AX-4)

Recent Update: Shubhanshu Shukla and Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair Selected for Axiom-4 mission.

About:

- AX-4: Fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- Duration: 14 days.
- Launch Provider: SpaceX.

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48. With reference to **monoclonal antibodies**, often mentioned in news, consider the following statements :

- I. They are man-made proteins.
- II. They stimulate immunological function due to their ability to bind to specific antigens.
- III. They are used in treating viral infections like that of Nipah virus.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) I and II only
(b) II and III only
(c) I and III only
(d) I, II and III

MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES

Recent Update: Monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) continue to be widely used in diagnostics, treatments, and cell analysis, offering targeted therapies for diseases like cancer and autoimmune disorders.

About:

- Monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) are lab-made proteins designed to mimic natural antibodies.
- Antibodies are part of the immune system, targeting and destroying foreign materials (antigens).
- Key applications include:
 1. Diagnostics (e.g., ELISA),
 2. Treating diseases such as cancer, infections, and autoimmune disorders,
 3. Cell analysis in blood/tissue using fluorescent tags.

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24. Consider the following statements about **turmeric during the year 2022-23** :

- I. India is the largest producer and exporter of turmeric in the world.
- II. More than 30 varieties of turmeric are grown in India.
- III. Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are major turmeric producing States in India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) I and II only
(b) II and III only
(c) I and III only
(d) I, II and III

NATIONAL TURMERIC BOARD ESTABLISHED

Recent Update: The National Turmeric Board has been launched to support turmeric production and export.

About:

- Objectives: Farmer welfare, R&D, export promotion, quality control.
- India's Dominance: Produces 70% of the world's turmeric.
- Key Regions: Maharashtra, Telangana, Meghalaya.

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90. Which organization has enacted the **Nature Restoration Law (NRL)** to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss?

(a) The European Union
(b) The World Bank
(c) The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
(d) The Food and Agriculture Organization

EU NATURE RESTORATION LAW

Recent Update: The EU Nature Restoration Law has come into force.

About:

- First continent-wide legislation for nature restoration.
- Targets to restore 20% of degraded ecosystems by 2030, and 100% by 2050.
- Member States must prepare National Restoration Plans by 1st September 2026.
- Legally binding targets:
 - 30% of terrestrial, coastal, freshwater, and marine ecosystems to be restored by 2030.
 - 25,000 km of rivers to be restored to free-flowing status by 2030.
 - Plant three billion trees by 2030.

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30. Consider the following statements about the **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** :

- I. It is important for the upliftment of rural poor as majority of low producing indigenous animals are with small and marginal farmers and landless labourers.
- II. It was initiated to promote indigenous cattle and buffalo rearing and conservation in a scientific and holistic manner.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) I only
(b) II only
(c) Both I and II
(d) Neither I nor II

RASHTRIYA GOKUL MISSION

Recent Update: The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying highlighted the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) for indigenous bovine conservation and milk production.

About:

- RGM was launched in 2014 as part of the Rashtriya Pashudhan Vikas Yojna with a budget of ₹. 1400 crore (2021-2026).
- Aims to conserve indigenous bovine breeds like Punganur for climate resilience and high-quality milk production.
- Focuses on increasing genetic diversity, supporting Artificial Insemination (AI), and conservation efforts.
- Introduces National Digital Livestock Mission to enhance data management and services.

88. Consider the following statements :

- I. If any question arises as to whether a Member of the House of the People has become subject to disqualification under the 10th Schedule, the President's decision in accordance with the opinion of the Council of Union Ministers shall be final.
- II. There is no mention of the word 'political party' in the Constitution of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) I only
(b) II only
(c) Both I and II
(d) Neither I nor II

POWERS OF SPEAKER

- The Speaker, elected by a simple majority, has a key constitutional role, including overseeing the House, casting votes, and dealing with member disqualification.
- The Speaker has vast powers in conducting the House, deciding on questions, expunging remarks, and ensuring impartiality in procedures.
- The Speaker's casting vote resolves tie votes, typically favoring the government.

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BTS GEOGRAPHY

29. Consider the following statements :

- I. Without the atmosphere, temperature would be well below freezing point everywhere on the Earth's surface.
- II. Heat absorbed and trapped by the atmosphere maintains our planet's average temperature.
- III. Atmosphere's gases, like carbon dioxide, are particularly good at absorbing and trapping radiation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) I and III only
(b) I and II only
(c) I, II and III
(d) II and III only

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84. With reference to India's defence, consider the following pairs :

Aircraft type	Description
I. Dornier-228	: Maritime patrol aircraft
II. IL-76	: Supersonic combat aircraft
III. C-17 Globemaster III	: Military transport aircraft

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All the three
(d) None

ZORAWAR LIGHT TANK

Recent Update: The DRDO successfully completed the first phase of developmental field trials for the **Zorawar Light Tank**, designed for high-altitude deployment, especially in Ladakh.

About:

- Tested in desert terrain, met all performance goals.
- Developed by CVRDE and L&T.
- Weights 25 tonnes, highly mobile and versatile.
- Can be transported by C-17 aircraft.
- Integrates technologies like unmanned systems and loitering munition.

AS

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27. Consider the following statements :

Statement I : In January, in the Northern Hemisphere, the isotherms bend equatorward while crossing the landmasses, and poleward while crossing the oceans.

Statement II : In January, the air over the oceans is warmer than that over the landmasses in the Northern Hemisphere.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I
(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I
(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct
(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

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20. Consider the following statements in respect of the Non-Cooperation Movement :

- The Congress declared the attainment of 'Swaraj' by all legitimate and peaceful means to be its objective.
- It was to be implemented in stages with civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes for the next stage only if 'Swaraj' did not come within a year and the Government resorted to repression.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- I only
- II only
- Both I and II
- Neither I nor II

September 1920 At a special session in Calcutta the Congress approved a non-cooperation programme till the Punjab and Khilafat issues were removed and swraj was established. The programme was to include—

- boycott of government schools and colleges;
- boycott of law courts and dispensation of justice through panchayats instead;
- boycott of legislative councils (there were some differences over this as some leaders like C.R. Das were not willing to include a boycott of councils, but bowed to Congress discipline; these leaders boycotted elections held in November 1920 and the majority of the voters too stayed away);
- boycott of foreign cloth and use of khadi instead; also practice of hand-spinning to be done;
- renunciation of government honours and titles; and
- boycott of foreign goods.

Participants were urged to work for Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability, all the time remaining non-violent.

December 1920 At the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress—

- The programme of non-cooperation was endorsed.
- An important change was made in that Congress created new committees for the attainment of self-government.

As a constitutional means to its goal, the Congress decided to have the attainment of swraj through peaceful and legitimate means, thus committing itself to a non-violent mass struggle.

Local level implementation changes were made: a Congress working committee (CWC) of 15 members was set up to lead the Congress from now onwards; provincial congress committees on legislative, local, revenue, education

Explained in XIAS BTS Modern History classes.

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- boycott of law courts and dispensation of justice through panchayats instead;
- boycott of legislative councils (there were some differences over this as some leaders like C.R. Das were not willing to include a boycott of councils, but bowed to Congress discipline; these leaders boycotted elections held in November 1920 and the majority of the voters too stayed away);
- boycott of foreign cloth and use of khadi instead; also practice of hand-spinning to be done;
- renunciation of government honours and titles; and
- boycott of foreign goods.

Participants were urged to work for Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability, all the time remaining non-violent.

December 1920 At the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress—

- The programme of non-cooperation was endorsed.
- An important change was made in that Congress created new committees for the attainment of self-government.

As a constitutional means to its goal, the Congress decided to have the attainment of swraj through peaceful and legitimate means, thus committing itself to a non-violent mass struggle.

Local level implementation changes were made: a Congress working committee (CWC) of 15 members was set up to lead the Congress from now onwards; provincial congress committees on legislative, local, revenue, education

Explained in XIAS BTS Modern History classes.

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56. Consider the following statements :
With reference to the Constitution of India, if an area in a State is declared as Scheduled Area under the Fifth Schedule

- The State Government loses its executive power in such area and a local body assumes total administration.
- The Union Government can take over the total administration of such area under certain circumstances on the recommendations of the Governor.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- I only
- II only
- Both I and II
- Neither I nor II

PEA ACT
Recent Update: A recent study has found that providing political representation and decision-making power to tribal populations through acts like PESA has supported forest conservation in India's Scheduled Areas.

About:
The PESA Act, enacted on 24th December 1996, aims to ensure self-governance for people in tribal areas (Scheduled Areas) through traditional village assemblies, or Gram Sabhas. It extends Panchayat provisions to tribal areas in Fifth Schedule states.

Legislation:
• The Act defines Scheduled Areas as those under Article 244(1), which includes to areas and tribes in states other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
• Scheduled Areas are those notified by the President as per community list.

10 states have notified Fifth Schedule areas, covering districts in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana.

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55. Which one of the following launched the Nature Solutions Finance Hub for Asia and the Pacific?

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- The New Development Bank (NDB)
- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

ASIA-PACIFIC CLIMATE REPORT 2024
Recent Update: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) highlighted alarming economic impacts of climate change on the Asia-Pacific region in the 2024 report.

About:

- Economic Impact:** APAC could face a 17% GDP reduction by 2070 under high emissions scenarios.
- Country-specific Risks:**
 - India: 24.7% GDP decline by 2070.
 - Bangladesh: 30.5% GDP loss.
 - Vietnam: 30.2% reduction.
 - Indonesia: 26.8% decline.
- Long-term Projections:** Potential 41% GDP loss by 2100.

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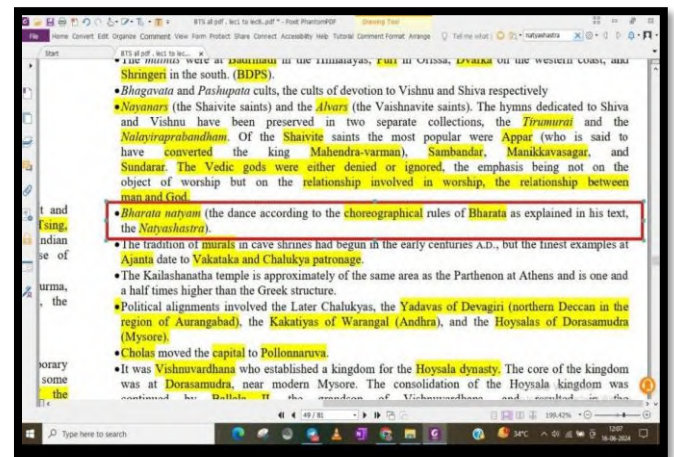
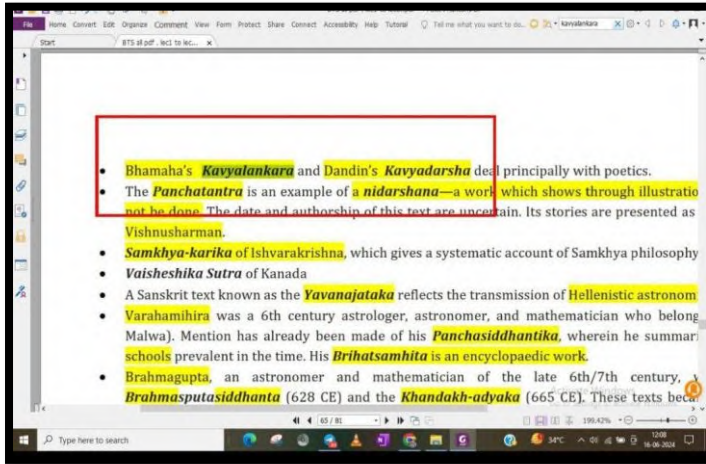
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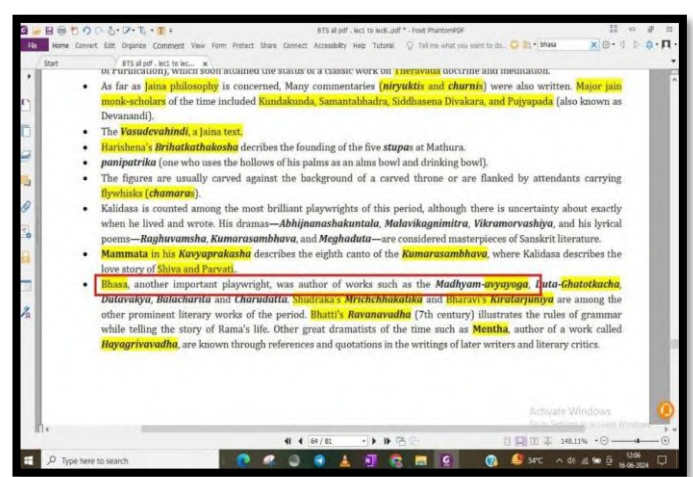
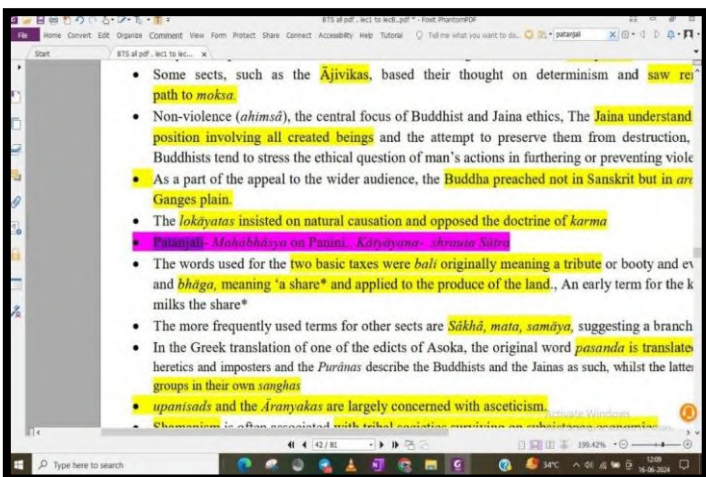
33 Which one of the following is a work attributed to playwright Bhasa?

(a) ~~Kavyalankara~~ Swapaamsha

(b) ~~Natyashastra~~ Playwright

(c) ~~Madhyama-vyayoga~~ Buddhist Tone

(d) ~~Mahabhashya~~ Ratanjali

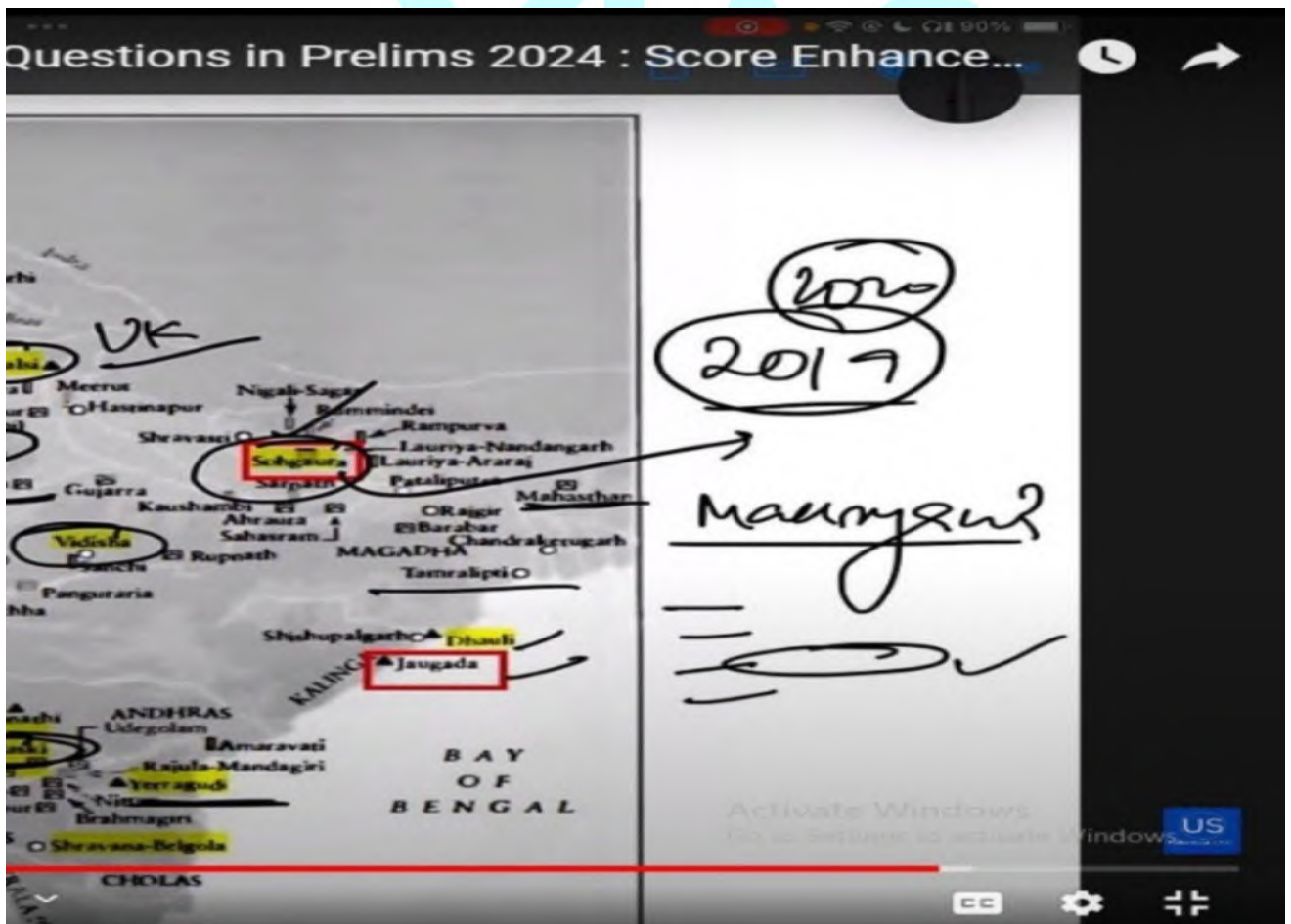
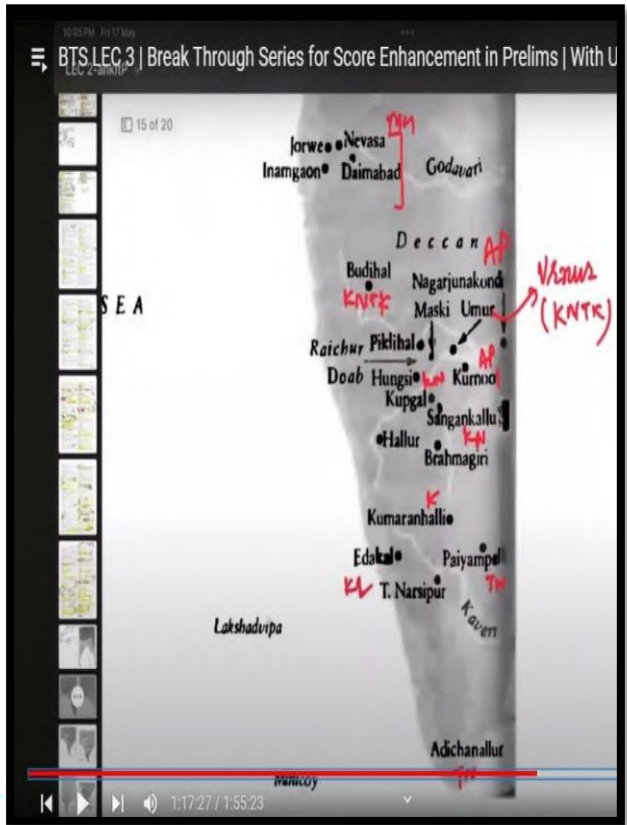


55. Consider the following information :

Archaeological Site	State	Description
1. Chandraketugarh	Odisha	Trading Port town
2. Inamgaon	Maharashtra	Chalcolithic site
3. Mangadu	Kerala	Megalithic site
4. Salihundam	Andhra Pradesh	Rock-cut cave shrines

In which of the above rows is the given information correctly matched ?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 1 and 4

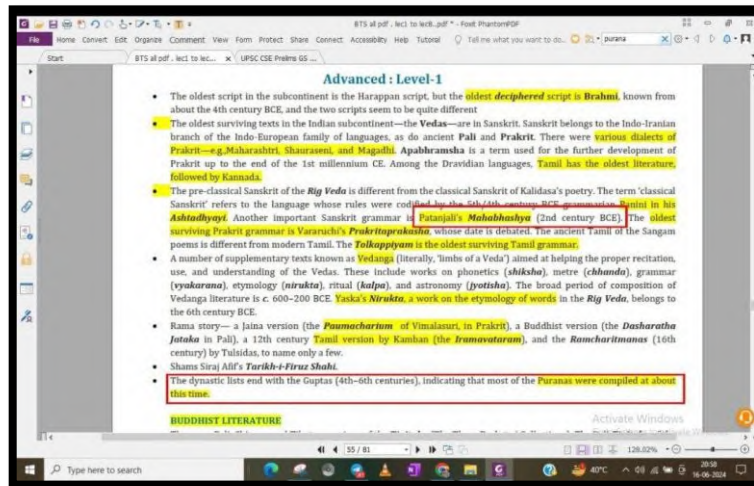


58. Consider the following statements :

1. There are no parables in Upanishads.
2. Upanishads were composed earlier than the Puranas.

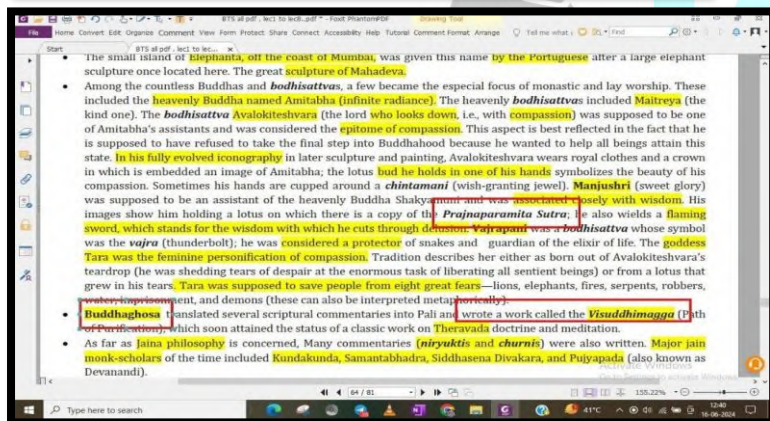
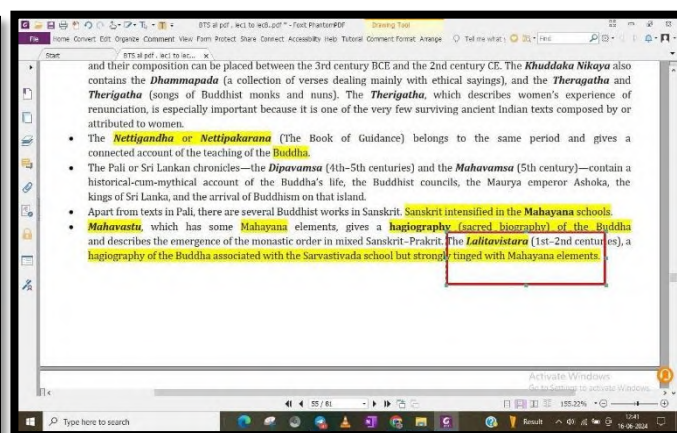
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2



Sanghabhuti, an Indian Buddhist monk, who travelled to China at the end of the fourth century AD, was the author of a commentary on :

- (a) Prajnaparamita Sutra
- (b) Visuddhimagga
- (c) Sarvastivada Vinaya
- (d) Lalitavistara



With reference to ancient India, Gautama Buddha was generally known by which of the following epithets?

1. Nayaputta
2. Shakyamuni
3. Tathagata

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None of the above are epithets of Gautama Buddha

37

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सस्ती चीज़ का मतलब घटिया नहीं होता, कीमत नहीं, गुणवत्ता पहचानो, हर सस्ता विकल्प गलत नहीं होता, सही चुनाव ज़रूरी होता है। बजट में भी बेहतरीन मिल सकता है!"

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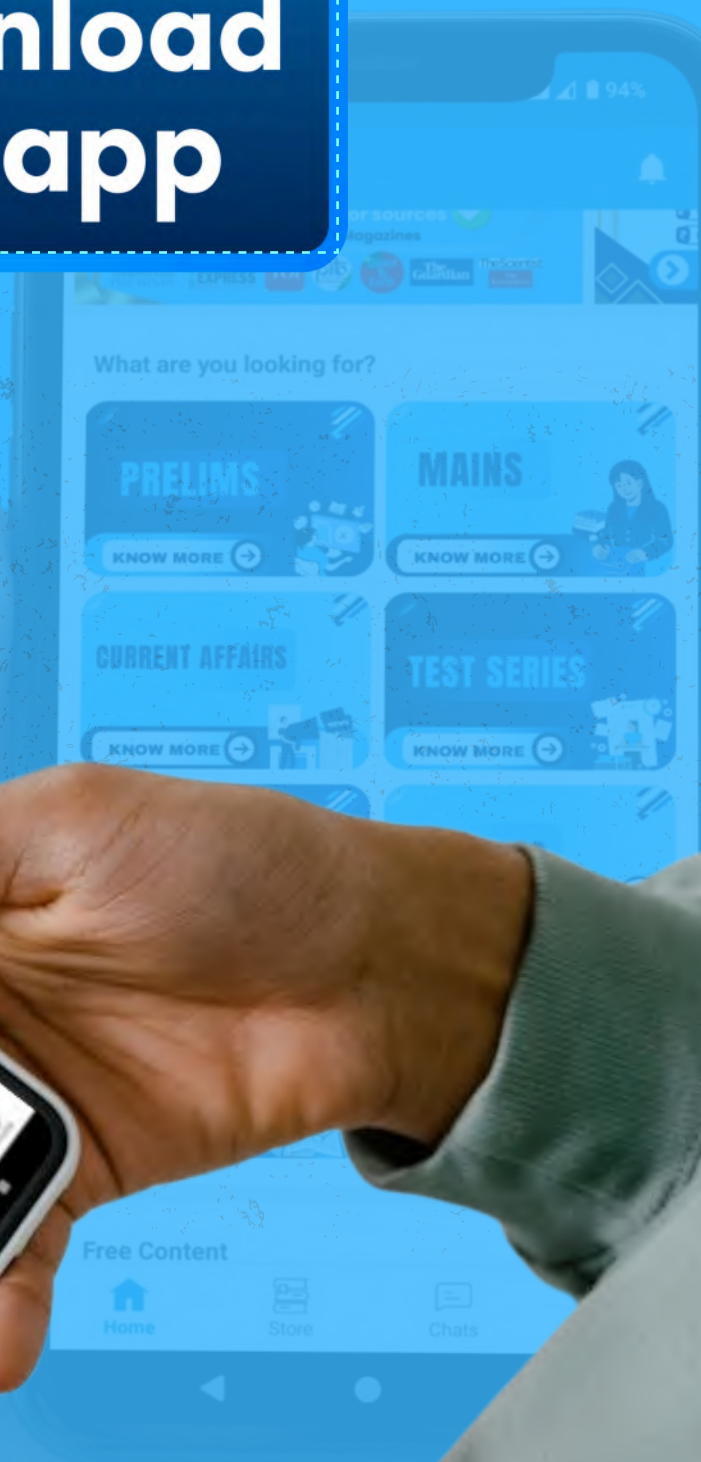


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