



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

- IAS SELF STUDY GUIDE -

SECURE SYNOPSIS

MAINS 2019

GS-II

MARCH 2019



NOTE: Please remember that following '*answers*' are *NOT* '*model answers*'. They are NOT synopsis too if we go by definition of the term. What we are providing is content that both meets demand of the question and at the same time gives you extra points in the form of background information.

INSIGHTS IAS



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General Studies Paper - II

TOPIC: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure ;

Q) Discuss the constitutional procedure involved in selecting a successor in case of death of a sitting chief minister. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](#)

[Reference](#)

Why this question:

The question is in the backdrop of new chief minister Pramod Sawant facing a floor test in the legislative assembly of Goa necessitated by the death of sitting chief minister Manohar Parrikar.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must explain the procedure involved in electing the chief minister in case of death of the sitting chief minister in office.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with importance of chief minister of a state in the polity of any state machinery in a line or two.

Body:

Discuss that In India, a chief minister is the elected head of government. According to the Constitution of India, the Governor is a state's de jure head, but de facto executive authority rests with the chief minister. Following elections to the state legislative assembly in a state, the state's governor usually invites the party (or coalition) with a majority of seats to form the government. The governor appoints and swears in the chief minister.

The governor may exercise situational discretion if no party has clear majority. He may ask a leader to become chief minister and then prove his majority on floor of the house.

In case the chief minister dies and no successor is present then the governor may appoint one at his discretion but if the ruling party has a nominee then the governor has no choice but to appoint that person.

Conclusion:

Conclude with importance of constitution and appreciate its foresightedness in situations of inevitability.

Introduction:

- Chief Minister's position in state is analogous to the prime ministers position at the centre. The governor appoints **the leader of the largest party of the house** or **leader chosen by the largest coalition** to become the chief minister. The **governor may exercise situational discretion** if no party has clear majority. He may ask a leader to become chief minister and then prove his majority on floor of the house.

Body:

- In the Republic of India, a chief minister is the elected head of government of each of Twenty nine states and two among the seven union territories (Delhi and Puduchery). According to the Constitution of India, the **Governor is a state's de jure head**, but **de facto executive authority rests with the chief minister**. Since his council of ministers are appointed in accordance with his advice, on his resigning or death causes the collapse of entire council of ministers.



- **Article 164 of the Constitution** lays down the provisions on the appointment of the CM and council of ministers as well as their salaries.

The process of electing a fresh CM in the event of death of an individual in office is similar to the one through which a new government is elected after assembly elections.

- **If ruling party or coalition has majority:**
 - The death of a sitting CM will have no impact on a government **if the party in power has a clear majority either on its own or through coalition.**
 - The government in power will only have to present a face for the CM's post to continue provided the coalition partners agree to go the distance.
 - The ruling party can **pick anyone** to become the CM of the state. That person **need not necessarily be a sitting legislator**, but in that case the selected person will have to **contest elections to the legislative assembly within 6 months from the date of him taking oath of office.**
- **If ruling party or coalition has lost the majority:**
 - In case the chief minister dies and no successor is present then the governor may appoint one at his discretion.

Conclusion:

The constitution of India has provided the necessary steps of action in cases of eventualities. In case of discrepancies, The Supreme Court of India remains the final interpreter of the Constitution of India.

Q) With increasing young leaders taking centre stage in the electoral discourse, Do you think the time has come to revisit the minimum age for contesting Lok Sabha elections ? Provide your opinion and examine the pros and cons associated. (250 words)

Indian Polity by Lakshmikanth, D D Basu

Why this question:

Under Article 84(b) and article 173(b) no one below 25 years of age can become candidates eligible for Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections. However, with youngsters like Hardik Patel, Kanhaiya Kumar and Shehila Rashid etc. gaining the limelight in recent past much before their attainment of the requisite age for election as MP/MLA, the issue has come to the forefront.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the constitutional provisions associated with Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections, the facts associated with minimum age provision, explain the interlinkages with rising trends of increased youth participation.

Directive word:

Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Introduce by highlighting the known provisions of constitution in this context.

Body:

Answers must discuss the following aspects :

High spot the increased participation of youth these days in politics.

Discuss the pros and cons associated.

Explain India is a young country with average age of 27 years while currently that of Parliament members is 63, thus explain how reduction of age will help in plugging the generation gap and to be in sync with the present generation and addressing their issues.



Measure the associated issues that can accompany the change in minimum age revision to a lower age.

Conclusion –

Emphasize the importance and suggest a way forward.

Introduction:

- In the Indian Constitution, **Article 84 (b)** provides that **minimum age criteria for becoming a candidate for the Lok Sabha is 25 years**. For a candidate to the **Legislative Assembly, Article 173 (b)** prescribes a similar age limit of 25 years. As per recent census figures, more than half our population is under the age of 25.

Body:

- In January 2010, the Supreme Court was confronted with a **public interest litigation**, which sought to reduce the age limit for contesting Lok Sabha and legislative assembly elections from 25 years to 21.
- Three decades ago Parliament passed a constitutional amendment bringing down the age for voting from 21 to 18.

Pros of reducing the minimum age criteria:

- The very concept of establishing a specific minimum age for voting or contesting elections is arbitrary, considering that people mature at different times in their lives.
- Ideally, an election should determine which candidate presents the best or most convincing idea, the age is immaterial.
- The average age of MPs in India is 56 years where as 50% of the population is below 25 years of age. Reducing the age would close the generation gap to an extent.
- 50% of the population is below the age of 25. Reducing the minimum age will widen the pool for the electors.
- Many developed countries with democracies have a younger age limit for the contesters like Germany (18), UK (18), Israel(21) etc.
- Young people can understand the problems more effectively of masses of young India and greater representation of youth issues at the policy making level.
- It will encourage Politics as a career among the youth.
- Young politicians are more energetic, enthusiastic and passionate which puts them in better position to dedicate themselves for the nation.
- They possess the capacity of resilience and so they govern their constituency in a systematic way.
- The Gen Next is much well connected in terms of technology and hence can have better access to the people.

Cons of reducing the minimum age criteria:

- The main argument supporting the status quo has been that most voters under 18 and candidates under 21 would not be sufficiently mature to use those rights properly, because they would—have insufficient understanding of the issues, be more likely to act irresponsibly, and be more easily influenced by others.
- In the medical community, the growing consensus is that the brain is not fully finished developing until about age 25. The prefrontal cortex or the part of the brain that deals with controlling impulses and imparting organised behaviour isn't fully developed.
- Young people tend to be easily swayed Because of their lack of experience they are likely to be manipulated by others.
- Youngsters having radical ideologies could create law and order issues harming the peace in the society
- It might wean away the mind of the youth from their academic goals which would be a loss.
- The issue of political funding might be a problem for these candidates.
- Possibilities of conflicts may arise between the old and young politicians.
- Also, the youth may be too naïve to deal with the older bureaucracy. This would lead to inefficiency in administration.

Other challenges facing Indian politics which might hinder reducing the age limit are **intraparty democracy, anti-defection provisions, money power, anonymous corporate funding, and dynasty politics, among others**

Way forward:

- As a society, the whole process of fixing the age limit must depend on the age demographics.
- The Parliament must sit down and amend the current rules, and come to an agreement which will allow candidates from the age demographic with the highest numbers in this country to find some degree of representation in our temples of democracy.



- Developing the younger generation by making them participate in events like **National Young Leaders Programme, Neighbourhood Youth Parliament** can give them a learning of true happenings.
- Lowering the minimum age to 22 makes more sense atleast in regional elections to encourage better democracy.
- Innovative solution could be reserving some seats for the people of age lower than 25 and having the rest of the seats for candidates above age of 25.

Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Q) Do you think India will soon have to deal with the issue of delimitation of constituencies and increase the number of Member of Parliament seats to retain the representativeness of parliament essential to democracy ? Discuss. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The article is in the background of upcoming Lok Sabha elections, it provides for a detailed analysis of the need for the delimitation in Indian Parliamentary system to ensure true democracy.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the significance of Delimitation, its purpose, why was it paused, what is the current position, should India opt for another delimitation? Way forward.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with what do you understand by Delimitation and its purpose .

Body:

What is delimitation of constituency?

Importance of Richer regions contributing to the well-being of poorer regions, and the concept of redistribution modern democracies.

Indian scenario – what is the issue with delimitation? Population conflict.

What needs to be done?

Conclusion:

Conclude with the importance of the use of Delimitation in a democracy.

Introduction:

- **Delimitation** literally means the act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province having a legislative body. Under **Article 82 of the Constitution**, the Parliament by law enacts a **Delimitation Act after every census**.
- After coming into force commencement of the Act, the Central Government constitutes a Delimitation Commission. This **Delimitation Commission** demarcates the boundaries of the Parliamentary Constituencies as per provisions of the Delimitation Act.

Body:

Current Scenario:

- The present delimitation of constituencies has been done on the basis of 2001 census figures under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2002.
- Notwithstanding the above, the **Constitution of India was specifically amended in 2002** not to have delimitation of constituencies **till the first census after 2026**.



- Thus, the present Constituencies carved out on the basis of **2001 census** shall continue to be in operation till the first census after 2026.
- Population is the basis of allocation of seats of the Lok Sabha. As far as possible, every State gets representation in the Lok Sabha in proportion to its population as per census figures.

India will soon have to deal with the issue of delimitation of constituencies:

- ❖ Until the early 1970s, it was the general practice to redraw constituencies based on the most recent population available, but the **total number of members was constant**.
- ❖ The idea of redrawing was to have each member of Parliament (MP) represent **roughly an equal number of voters**, hence the redrawing of constituencies.
- ❖ We may desire “equality” of constituencies, but economic development and demographic patterns do not develop uniformly across the country. Some states have achieved zero population growth while others still have very high fertility rates.
- **Increase in Population:**
 - In 1971, India’s population was 548 million, and by 2031, the first census after 2026, it may well be close to 1.4 billion. The great apprehension is that redrawing boundaries and distributing the existing 550 MPs might mean that the south will lose a lot of seats to the north.
 - Even if more members are added to the Lok Sabha, that incremental gain will mostly go to the northern states.
- **Anomaly in Size of constituency:**
 - One of the distortions and anomalies created by the 1971 freeze, which applies to national elections, is that we have constituencies as small as 50,000 and as large as three million residents.
 - Thus, there is a skew in the number of voters each MP represents in Parliament.
- **Age of the representatives:**
 - The average age of the 13th Lok Sabha was 55.5 years, which went down to 52.7 in the 14th, but then went up again to 53 in the 15th, and 56 in the outgoing one.
 - It was only 46.5 years in 1952. India’s median age, however, is just 26. Two-thirds of the population is below 35.
 - Yet our MPs are getting older. In contrast, the so-called ageing countries like the UK, Italy, France and Canada are electing much younger leaders.
- **Non-Inclusive:**
 - Women account for only 12% of the Lok Sabha. At least three states have zero female MPs. Less than 10% of candidates are women.
 - The Women’s Reservation Bill, meanwhile, has been pending in Parliament for over four decades.
- **Wealth:**
 - 82% of all Lok Sabha members have declared wealth of more than ₹1 crore.
 - Their numbers have gone up from 156 to 315 to 449 in the last three Lok Sabhas.
 - Their average wealth (declared via self-sworn affidavits) is around ₹14 crore. (In the Rajya Sabha, the average is ₹55 crore).
 - The average income is around ₹31 lakh, which is 20 times India’s present per capita income.
- **Criminality:**
 - The proportion of MPs with criminal cases has been going up steadily, from 12% to 15% to 21%, since 2004.
 - These are cases for which if they were convicted, they would not have been allowed to contest.
 - Many cases are for heinous crimes like rape, murder, kidnapping and extortion. But the law does not bar them from contesting elections, even from prison.
- **Dynasty politics:**
 - It is well known (and documented by Patrick French) that an increasing number of elected representatives have a close relative (parent, spouse, sibling or cousin) who was an incumbent or a senior politician.

Conclusion:

- ✓ While 2026 is still a few years away, if we do not start a debate now on how to deal with the problems that are likely to arise, we will be forced to postpone the lifting of the freeze to a future date as was done in 2001. This will only postpone the problem for which we must find a solution sooner or later.



- ✓ Even the various proposals for electoral reforms which have been recommended by various Commissions over the past decade do not address these issues. These are challenges which our political leaders have to address in the immediate future.

Topic – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Q) Is the Right of Press to provide the information or opinion encroaching upon the privacy of an individual ? Should it not be restricted only to foster public interest and not to infringe upon privacy of individual. Discuss. (250 words)

Don't cross 'Line of control', High Court cautions media 15-03-2019, Bengaluru edition page 02

[Indianexpress](#)

Why this question:

The question is in the context of tension between the freedom of expression and the right to privacy as examined with particular attention to media in India. Freedom of Press is integral part of the freedom of expression. Infant print media has grown up as a youth with tremendous dimensions viz, electronic media.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must crucially highlight that freedom of speech and expression assured to media has to be exercised subject to the degree to which private information is exposed and therefore it depends on how the public will receive this information, which differs between places and over time.

Directive word

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Briefly bring out the role of Media/Press and its significance.

Body:

The purpose of the answer must be to understand whether media is functioning within its arena of Constitution; freedom of speech and expression properly, examine whether the internal norms to regulate media are virtually followed, should there be outer checks on media freedom or it is against the democratic principle of freedom of speech and expression. Further, analyze the limitation on people's right to know and how far appropriate.

In the environment of scattered statutory provisions for privacy protection, limitations of law declared by the judiciary on privacy and the modern days threat to privacy, one must highlight the need for comprehensive and effective law for the protection of privacy in India.

Conclusion –

Conclude with what needs to be done, how can a balance be struck between the two.

Introduction:

- The Supreme Court of India (SCI) in **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India** is a resounding victory for privacy. The judgment's ringing endorsement of the **right to privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21** marks a watershed moment in the constitutional history of India.
- Freedom of speech and expression is one of the important pillars of democracy. Free expression is indispensable to the unadulterated exchange of thoughts and ideas needed to regulate the democratic machinery in India. Freedom of press can be said to be a subset of freedom of speech and expression under **Article 19 (1) (a)**.



Body:

Right of press is encroaching the privacy of individuals:

- In the case of **Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras**, it was observed that, “freedom of speech and the press lay at the foundation of all democratic organizations, for, without free political discussion no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the processes of the popular government is possible.”
- It is the only kind of freedom, which makes it possible for the people to formulate their own opinion on a proper basis in order to exercise their social, economic and political rights in their free society in an informed manner. Democracy cannot prosper unless people go out and express their views.
- Freedom of speech and expression also means freedom to propagate ideas by way of circulation of press. Liberty of circulation is as important as publication by the print media or press. Without circulation, the publication would be worthless.
- Today, it is being witnessed that the **over-inquisitive media, which is a product of over-commercialization**, is severely encroaching the individual’s “Right to Privacy” by crossing the boundaries of its freedom.
- Yet another observation of the court which touched this aspect of violation of right to privacy of the individuals is found in the judgment of the **Andhra Pradesh High Court in Labour Liberation Front v. State of Andhra Pradesh**. The Court observed: “Once an incident involving a prominent person or institution takes place, the media is swinging into action virtually leaving very little for the prosecution or the Courts to examine in the matter.
- Recently, it has assumed dangerous proportions to the extent of entering into the very privacy of individuals. Gross misuse of technological advancements and unhealthy competition in the field of journalism resulted in obliteration of norms or commitments to the noble profession. The freedom of speech and expression which is the bedrock of journalism is subjected to gross misuse.
- The SC in **Rajgopal v. State of TamilNadu** observed that Citizen has the right to safeguard the privacy of his own, his family, marriage, procreation, motherhood, childbearing and education among others. No one can publish anything concerning the above matters without his consent – whether truthful or otherwise and whether laudatory or critical. If he does so he would be violating the right of privacy of the person concerned and would be liable to action of damages.

Way forward:

- There is a need to **maintain balance between the freedom of speech and expression of Press and right to privacy of the individuals**. It is necessary to **keep a check on the extent of its role and when it starts to forget the thin line between public and private interest**.
- Since balancing of the right to privacy against freedom of press is a complex process and **demands sensitivity to both interests**, it requires a clear precision.
- If citizens and organizations are left absolutely free and unchecked, it will lead to conflict of rights and ultimately end in disorder and anarchy. Therefore, while exercising such rights of speech and expression, one should keep in mind the fundamental right to dignity and privacy of the individual concerned as guaranteed under Article 21 of the constitution.
- In recent times there have been spates of incidence which required the courts to step in and restrain newspapers and other media from entering into individual privacy. Whenever, such matters of invasion of privacy reach the court, journalists put forward common defence that the disclosure was privileged because it was **news-worthy** and try to cover it with **public interest blanket of defence**. There is no doubt that newspapers do a commendable job in bringing certain long buried issues to the forefront.
- However it needs to be realised that even while reporting those news, some amount of restraint must be exercised.
- Like every other right, these two rights also have restrictions. The situation needs to be balanced in these kinds of cases.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The government should come out with specific law, clearly laying down the guidelines for press while dealing with such threshold issues as soon as possible. All this mandates for a specific law on privacy, but still this law is nowhere near to reality.



Q) Critically examine the issues involved in the functioning of Lokpal. Does it dispute with the mandate of elected representatives ? Suggest methods to make Lokpal effective with least interference in the government affairs. (250 words)

Hindistantimes

Why this question:

Retired Supreme Court judge Pinaki Chandra Ghose is likely to be appointed the country's first Lokpal, the anti-corruption ombudsman, after a Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led selection committee decided on his name. Thus the question becomes important from the perspective of GS II paper.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must trace the issues involved in the functioning of Lokpal. Bring out in what way it disputes the functioning of the mandate of elected representatives. You must also suggest solutions to overcome such an issue pertaining to functioning of Lokpal.

Directive word:

Critically examine – When asked to critically examine, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Introduce with importance of Lokpal in the Indian political system.

Body:

Importance of The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.

What are the issues associated – parallel system; It can dismiss serving all India civil servants, a power only president has. It has authority over CBI officers on deputation. With no additional resources, the power to dismiss a case as frivolous or false and fine the complainant. The lokpal bill attempts to alter the balance between three branches of government attained through years. Any alteration of it could lead to accumulation of power either with one of these or with lokpal itself. The threat is further increased by the lack of accountability in presence of sweeping powers.

Provide for a comparison with other countries.

Now suggest what can be done to overcome the above stated challenges.

Conclusion:

Conclude with the significance, end with optimism that though it has its own associated issues, but the merits outweigh it all.

Introduction:

- The need for a governing body which can halt the ever-increasing corruption in our nation has become the need of the hour for a developing country like ours. An anti-corruption committee has the potential to take our nation's governance to a new level.
- Retired Supreme Court judge Pinaki Chandra Ghose is the country's first Lokpal, or the anti-corruption ombudsman. His **appointment has been cleared by President of India**. Justice Ghose's name was finalised and **recommended by the Selection Committee led by Prime Minister**. The selection was made weeks after the February-end deadline set by the Supreme Court.



Body:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>A long-drawn debate</p> <p>A short history of the Lokpal Bill from the 1960s to the present</p> |  | <p>2005: The second ARC recommended that a Lokpal be established without delay</p> <p>2013: Lokpal Act, 2013, passed in Parliament</p> <p>2016: Lok Sabha agreed to amend the 2013 Act</p> |
| <p>1963: The idea of an Ombudsman first came up in Parliament during a discussion on budget allocation for the Law Ministry</p> | <p>State level – to probe complaints against public functionaries, including MPs</p> | <p>2017: The SC on April 27 clarified that the Lokpal appointment process need not be stalled merely due to the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, who is a member of the Lokpal selection committee as per the 2013 Act</p> |
| <p>1966: The First Administrative Reforms Commission recommended two independent authorities – one at the Centre and one at the</p> | <p>1968: Lokpal Bill introduced in Parliament, but was not passed. Eight attempts were made till 2011 to pass the Bill, but all in vain</p> <p>2002: The Constitution review commission headed by M.N. Venkatachaliah recommended appointment of the Lokpal and the Lokayuktas. It also recommended that the Prime Minister be kept out of the Lokpal's ambit</p> | |

Importance of The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013:

- The Act consists of setting up a **team called Lokpal**, headed by a **chairperson and consisting of eight people**
- This committee will have the power to investigate people who might be acquiring money through corrupt means
- All categories of public servants will be covered under Lokpal, **including the Prime Minister, while the armed forces will be exempted.**
- The body will also have the power of confiscating property or assets acquired by corrupt means
- One of the main powers of the Lokpal is that they can **protect all the public servants who act as whistle-blowers**
- They also have a **special Whistle Blowers Protection Act** established for the same reason
- Lokpal will also be given the **power to conduct trials in a special court** if they feel that the trial is of extreme importance
- They can also fine people for false or inaccurate complaints
- The fines can amount up to Rs 2 lakh
- The Act also incorporates provisions for attachment and confiscation of property acquired by corrupt means, even while the prosecution is pending.
- The **States** will have to institute **Lokayukta** within one year of the commencement of the Act.

The issues associated:

- The Act does not allow a Lokpal inquiry if the allegation against the **PM relates to international relations, external and internal security, public order, atomic energy and space.**
- Also, complaints against the PM are not to be probed unless the full Lokpal bench considers the initiation of an inquiry and at least two-thirds of the members approve it.
- Such an inquiry against the Prime Minister (if conducted) is to be held in camera and if the Lokpal comes to the conclusion that the complaint deserves to be dismissed, the records of the inquiry are not to be published or made available to anyone.
- The Selection committee and the issue of Leader of Opposition is still lingering and the recent selection of Lokpal didn't have the views of the opposition party, which is against democratic principles.
- It can dismiss serving all India civil servants, a power only president has. It has authority over CBI officers on deputation.
- With no additional resources, the power to dismiss a case as frivolous or false and fine the complainant.
- Any alteration of it could lead to accumulation of power either with one of these or with lokpal itself.
- The threat is further increased by the lack of accountability in presence of sweeping powers.
- The lokpal bill attempts to alter the balance between three branches of government attained through years.



- The establishment of Lokayukta and any appointment falls within the domain of the States.

Way forward:

- The **Official Secrets Act** might come in between the way of delivering justice, this must be repealed as suggested by 2nd
- There is a need for a mechanism that provides for **simple, independent, speedy means of delivering justice by redressing the grievances of the people** without succumbing to the clutches of the executive.
- The issue of Leader of Opposition in the Selection committee must be resolved by amending the act.
- The jurisdictions must be clear so that there is no overlap in the powers.
- Any new piece of legislation even when implemented becomes lengthy and time consuming and stretched over years.
- The **Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** recommended the enacting of the Office of a Lokpal, convinced that such an institution was justified, not only for removing the sense of injustice from the minds of citizens, but also to **instil public confidence in the efficiency of the administrative machinery**.
- It is rightly said by **Publius Cornelius Tecitus** that “**the more corrupt the state, the more laws**”.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Looking at the low ranking of India in Corruption on global level, there is a need to check the corruption by strong institutions.
- ❖ Creation of the institution of Lokpal and Lokayuktas by forming its members to function has come up as a welcome step. But it shall **function independently of any political influence so that a proper system of checks-and -balance is maintained in the federal and democratic system of India.**

Topic – Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Q) “Cooperative federalism is being replaced with coercive federalism”. Elucidate. Also discuss the importance of fundamental renegotiation of powers between Union and states in favor of political democracy in this context. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article talks about how cooperative federalism with social equity as its primary objective is transforming the Indian society, but when the conditions underlying cooperation are changing, the pressure to expand national power inherent in cooperative federalism is giving rise to coercive federalism.

Key demand of the question:

The question is in the backdrop of the Cooperative federalism increasingly being replaced with coercive federalism, one must explain such statements with recent examples and then move on to explain what need to be done to overcome it.

Directive word:

Elucidate – means to explain and clarify the topic, make it clear with examples.

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with the importance of the cooperative federalism in Indian context.

Body:

the challenges, issues and concerns associated with Cooperative federalism in India – quote examples from agricultural reforms and NAM, Niti Ayog etc.

What needs to be done In light of contemporary conditions? – a new consensus may have to be forged from elements of cooperative equity, competitive efficiency, and dual accountability etc.



Conclusion:

Conclude with renegotiation of powers between Union and states; necessity of cooperative federalism for the development of political democracy in the right direction.

Introduction:

- **Cooperative federalism** is the concept which reflects the relationship between centre and state where they both come together and resolve the common problems with each other's cooperation.
- With the collaborative efforts and cooperation, different level of governments in an amicable manner, contributes towards the growth of the country.

Body:

- It shows the **horizontal relationship** between union and states and shows neither is above the other. To ensure this relationship between centre and state, Indian constitution has incorporated certain instruments like inter-state council, Zonal council, 7th schedule etc.

Various instances have shown that the cooperative federalism is being replaced by **coercive federalism**:

- **Taxation:**
 - Taxation powers are contentious issue and the Central government has won most of the disputes purely due to express provisions in the Constitution.
 - In the Goods and Services Tax (GST) scenario, States have foregone some taxation powers (octroi, entry tax, luxury and entertainment taxes, etc.) but have powers to levy taxes through panchayats and municipalities
- **Finance Commission report:**
 - Recommendations of the Finance Commission are placed before Parliament and States have no role in the debate.
 - There is also no provision for an aggrieved State to challenge the report of Finance Commission on certain grounds or seek mandatory enforcement of its recommendations.
- **Niti Aayog:**
 - Niti Aayog was envisaged as a think tank which replaced the Planning Commission.
 - Senior members of the NITI Aayog descended upon Kolkata to impress upon the West Bengal government the need for agricultural reforms in the state.
 - The discussion centered on the Union government's policy directives regarding land lease laws as well as agricultural reform, a term by which the Union government means the revision of state Agricultural Produce Market Committee laws as per its vision.
- **Office of Governor:**
 - Governor's office is being used to the whims and fancies of the union government.
 - This is despite Supreme Court's ruling in SR Bommai Case.
 - Instances of Goa, Karnataka post elections show how Governor's office was misused.
 - States having no say in appointment and transfers of Governor.
- **Centrally Sponsored Schemes:**
 - Ministries are directly dealing with Centrally Sponsored Schemes. So, the spirit of discussion and dialogue is being replaced by diktats by various Ministries.
 - Some say that there is no dialogue, which is untypical of cooperative federalism.
- **Other issues:**
 - Deployment of paramilitary forces in states without their consent.
 - Enquiries against chief ministers to settle personal equations.

Way forward:

- Greater devolution of power to states. Ideally union should have only those powers which state can't handle and requires national unity like in the form of matters like defence, communication, foreign policy etc. This has been iterated by **Sarkaria as well as Punchi commissions**
- Union government consulting states before legislating over the matters of state list.
- Improved and efficient use of **inter-state and zonal councils**. It should inquire and advise on disputes, discuss subjects common to all states and make recommendations for better policy coordination.
- Increased fund devolution to states by the centre by taking in concerns of states wrt to the Terms of Reference of 15th Finance Commission.
- Using NITI Aayog efficiently with increased participation of states and making it functioning more democratic. Mistakes of its predecessor should not be repeated.



- Legislations related to contentious issues like land, labour and natural resources should be left to the states, as the state will promote best practices. This will also enable greater investment and economic activity in states with a favourable regulatory framework.
- States having a say in appointment and removal of governor.
- Healthy competition between the states should be encouraged.
- To deal with issues related to international treaties, WTO obligations, or the environment, an institutional mechanism must be evolved where important decisions are appropriately discussed with states.

Conclusion:

- ❖ To bring competition, the centre should cooperate with the states by providing necessary autonomy in their policy making and allocating them the required funds to spend based on their own priorities.

Q) The recent National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam has excluded 40 lakh people from its final draft list, has it failed to resolve the illegal immigration debate in Assam ? What are the Socio-Economic and Political Consequence of such Illegal Migration ? Critically analyse. (250 words)

Centre, Assam lax on illegal migration: SC-[The hindu](#)
Reference

Why this question:

The recent National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise and the proposed decision to deport all immigrants have been at the core of the controversy along with the discussion to scrap Article 35. But the issue of deportation of all immigrants is hasn't worked out successfully as a solution. The apex court in this context has slammed at the Assam government for failing to address the issue of illegal immigrants.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects us to express our understanding as to whether exclusion of all illegal immigrants from the NCR is working out to be a feasible solution or not. One has to form an opinion based on valid facts and arguments with examples to justify.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Introduce with a few lines on the illegal immigrants issue in India and more so specifically in Assam.

Body:

why deporting all immigrants from India is not a feasible and recommended solution?

Narrate upon the associated problems with the exercise to demarcate legal and illegal immigrants-like the problems of exclusion as seen in the Assam NRC exercise; some illegal immigrants would be difficult if not impossible to deport- Gorkhas and Lepchas from Nepal; India has no agreement with nearby governments for large-scale deportation etc.

Discuss the Socio-Economic and Political Consequence of such Illegal Migration.

What can be done? – suggest policy changes required in this direction.

Conclusion:

Conclude as – It is high time that India takes stringent measures against the illegal migrants who have become a real threat to the security of the country.



Introduction:

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise is among the most ambitious experiments the Indian state has undertaken. The NRC is the list of Indian citizens and was **prepared in 1951**, following the census of 1951. The process of **NRC update** was taken up in **Assam** as per a **Supreme Court order in 2013**. In order to **wean out cases of illegal migration from Bangladesh and other adjoining areas**, NRC updation was carried out under **The Citizenship Act, 1955**, and according to **rules framed in the Assam Accord**.
- The Assam government released the final draft of NRC on July 30, 2018. The list incorporates names of 2.89 crore people out of 3.29 crore applicants. The names of 40.07 lakh people have been left out.

Body:

Deporting all immigrants from India is not a feasible and recommended solution:

- The official presumption that people residing in Assam areas are foreigners has reduced several million of these **highly impoverished, mostly rural, powerless and poorly lettered residents** to a situation of helplessness and extreme poverty, destitution, hardship.
- It has also caused them abiding anxiety and uncertainty about their futures. They are required to convince a variety of usually hostile officials that they are citizens, based on vintage documents which even urban, educated, middle-class citizens would find hard to muster.
- **Women** are especially in **danger of exclusion** from the citizenship register. Typically, they have **no birth certificates, are not sent to school, and are married before they become adults**.
- They are told that they have no documents to prove that they are indeed the children of the people they claim are their parents. There were cases of being excluded from citizenship on this ground alone.
- **Impoverished migrant workers** often travel to other districts of Assam in search of work, as construction workers, road-builders and coal-miners.
- Another process began in the mid-1990s when the then Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan, as a one-time measure, directed officials to **identify “doubtful voters” by marking a “D” against their names on the voters’ list**. This would temporarily bar them from voting or standing for elections, until an inquiry was completed.
- But this temporary measure became permanent. The power was vested permanently with junior officials who could doubt the citizenship of any person at any time without assigning any reason.
- There was some disquiet in Bangladesh when the Indian Army Chief, General Bipin Rawat, lent support to the NRC drive, claiming that those settled in Indian territory without legal jurisdiction posed a threat to national security.
- Some illegal immigrants would be difficult if not impossible to deport- Gorkhas and Lepchas from Nepal.
- India has no agreement with nearby governments for large-scale deportation

This exercise of compiling the NRC in the first place has sparked a debate around its **social, political and economic consequences**.

Social consequences of illegal migration

- **Crisis of identity:** The influx of immigrants created a crisis of identity among the indigenous. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened and their employment opportunities will be undermined by such illegal migration. The recent Bodo-Muslim violence in the BTAD has its root on the issue of illegal migration.
- **Environmental degradation:** Large areas of forest land were encroached upon by the immigrants for settlement and cultivation. The state experienced declining percent of land area under forest from 39% in 1951-52 to about 30% now.
- **Difficult to identify the illegal migrants:** Due to the similar language spoken by illegal migrants from Bangladesh and the indigenous Bengali speaking Muslim of Assam, it becomes difficult to identify and deport the illegal migration from Assam soil.
- **Community tension:** The commission on integration and Cohesion found that tension usually exist with the presence of high levels of migration combine with other forms of social exclusion like poverty, poor housing etc.



Economic consequences

- **Increase financial burden:** Immigration has increased pressure on the part of state government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities to the immigrants.
- **Displacing native workers:** There is a fear particularly during a recession that immigrants take jobs which would otherwise be taken by local people; in particular place and circumstances there can be competition and conflict.
- **Decreases wage level with the increase of population:** Illegal immigrants in every year have been adding a good number of people in Assam. It is one of the main reasons of population explosion. Due to this there is a possibility of decreasing wage level.

Political consequences

- **Assam agitation:** The failure of government to respond the issue of illegal migration led to the agitation by the Assamese under the leadership of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and All Assam Student's Union (AASU). Assam witnessed governmental instability, sustained civil disobedience campaigns and worst cases of ethnic violence. Assam accord was the result of this agitation.
- **Illegal voters:** Most of the Bangladeshi immigrants have got their names enlisted in the voting list illegally, thereby claiming themselves as citizens of the state. The immigrant's population act as a vote bank for the political parties in Assam.
- **Issue of terrorism:** Pakistan's ISI has been active in Bangladesh supporting militant movements in Assam (Lt Gen S K Sinha, 1998). It is alleged that among the illegal migrants there are also militants, who enter into Assam to carry out the terrorist activities.

Way forward:

- The Central Government should appoint a National Immigration Commission to frame a National Migration Policy and a National Refugee Policy. The Commission should examine ways of strengthening the **Foreigners Act 1946**, as well as feasibility of Identity Cards for both citizens and non-citizens and Work Permits for migrants.
- **Border fencing in Assam** must be completed forthwith on a war footing. The **existing Border Security Force posts and the BSF water wing** should be strengthened.
- **Our nationals** in the border districts and for that matter in the whole State should be provided **multipurpose photo identity card**.
- The **ongoing NRC updating should be completed without delay** and proper arrangement for the deportation of illegal migrants should be done.
- The **Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) Act of 1983** should be repealed.

Q) Fiscal federalism is the economic counterpart to political federalism. Discuss with suitable examples. (250 words)

[The hindu](#)

Why this question:

The article discusses in detail how Fiscal federalism is the economic counterpart to political federalism. It provides for a detailed assessment of Fiscal federalism in India, its link with political federalism and the challenges being faced by it in India.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must explain in detail what is fiscal federalism, explain how it is counterpart to political federalism, how are the two different? One is expected to explain with recent examples along with features of constitution that requires highlighting.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with what you understand by Fiscal federalism.

**Body:**

What is fiscal federalism in India? context.

Present status

Link between Fiscal federalism and political federalism – the constitutional angle.

What are the associated concerns and challenges

Way forward.

Conclusion:

Conclude with importance of federalism and its role in Indian set up, take cues from the article.

Introduction:

- Fiscal federalism is **the financial relations between units of governments in a federal government system**. It is part of broader public finance discipline. The term was introduced by the German-born American economist **Richard Musgrave** in 1959.
- Fiscal federalism deals with the division of governmental functions and financial relations among levels of government.

Body:

- India has a federal form of government, and hence a federal fiscal system. For successful operation of federal form of government, **financial independence and adequacy** forms the backbone.
- The Economic Survey 2017-18 highlighted the need for fiscal federalism.

Link between Fiscal federalism and political federalism:

- Fiscal federalism is concerned with the assignment on the one hand of functions to different levels of government, and with appropriate fiscal instruments for carrying out these functions on the other.
- It is generally believed that the Central government must provide national public goods that render services to the entire population. A typical example cited is defence.
- Sub-national governments are expected to provide goods and services whose consumption is limited to their own jurisdictions.
- An equally important question in fiscal federalism is the determination of the specific fiscal instruments that would enable the different levels of government to carry out their functions. This is the 'tax-assignment problem'.
- It is generally argued that the de-centralised levels of government should avoid non-benefit taxes and taxes on mobile units.
- In India, income tax is levied only by the Central government though shared with the States. Recognising the possibility of imbalance between resources and responsibilities, many countries have a system of inter-governmental transfers.
- The **Indian Constitution** lays down the functions as well as taxing powers of the Centre and States.
- It is against this background that the issues relating to the correction of vertical and horizontal imbalances have been addressed by every Finance Commission, taking into account the prevailing set of circumstances.
- However, Central transfers to States are not confined to the recommendations of the Finance Commissions. There are other channels such as those through the Planning Commission until recently as well the discretionary grants of the Central government.

Associated concerns and challenges:

- **Trends in Tax Revenue:**
 - A look at the composition of central and states' own taxes and expenditure reveal that the share of the own tax revenue and expenditure of the states is 38% and 58% respectively.
 - This reflects the more than proportionate expenditure obligations of the states and also the lesser revenue raising powers vis-à-vis the centre.
- **Trends in Tax Devolution:**
 - Under Article 270 of the Constitution, the net proceeds of all taxes levied by the union, except surcharges and cesses are shareable with the states after the 80th Constitutional Amendment.
 - **Net proceeds** are defined in Article 279 of the Constitution as gross tax revenue of the centre less surcharges and cesses, and cost of collection. However, the amount of net proceeds is not published in the budget documents of the union.



- But, the **proportion of surcharges and cesses to gross tax revenue of the centre is rising**, and this is **neutralising the higher shares recommended** by the successive finance commissions.
- **FRBM Acts and Asymmetric Impacts:**
 - The FRBM acts were passed at the level of the centre and the states in the beginning of the 2000s.
 - It laid emphasis only on achieving targets. In the bargain, if revenues could not be raised, expenditure (even essential) would be cut.
 - the states have been forced to limit their deficits due to sanctions by the finance commissions, whereas the centre is not bound by any such conditionalities.
- **Inefficient Cash Management by States:**
 - The states do not spend essentially due to the fear of the consequences of non-adherence to deficit targets, which are not only a legislative constraint but also a conditionality imposed by the finance commissions.

Way forward:

- Perhaps the time has come for the Constitution to be amended and the proportion of shareable taxes that should go to the States fixed at the desired level.
- The shareable tax pool must also include cesses and surcharges as these have sharply increased in recent years. Fixing the ratio at 42% of shareable taxes, including cesses and surcharges, seems appropriate.
- Another possible route is to follow the practice in the U.S. and Canada: of allowing the States to levy tax on personal income, with some limitations.
- The freedom given to the States must be limited. It is important to note that the levy by the Centre and States together should be reasonable. Also once this power is given to the States, the transfers from the Centre need adjustment.
- **Horizontal Distribution:** The ability of bringing about equalisation across States in India has limitations. Even the relatively richer States have their own problems and they feel 'cheated' because of the overuse of the equity criterion. An appropriate balancing of criteria is needed particularly in the context of the rise in unconditional transfers.

Topic: Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

Q) The recent Supreme Court judgements have rendered fruitless the chance to restraint an increasingly powerful Central executive. Critically analyze. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article highlights the Supreme Court's landmark judgements that have concentrated greater power in the hands of the executive leading to powerful Central executive. Thus it becomes important from the point of view of GS paper II.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects you to critically analyze the current scenario of the overpowering Centre amidst greater support being provided to it by the Judiciary through landmark judgements that are making the Centre imperial. The answer must address and justify by elucidation of recent judgements and their impact.

Directive word

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with highlighting the importance of separation of power, how each wing should control and bind the other by suggesting corrective actions rather than fueling the thirst of autonomy.

**Body:**

Recent landmark judgements that highlight the rising support of the apex court to the Centre's actions – the four landmark judgments on fundamental rights: decriminalizing same-sex relations and adultery, opening up Sabarimala to women of all ages, and (partially) upholding Aadhaar, court's findings on the legal status of "money bills", dispute between the central government (acting through the Lt Governor) and the government of Delhi etc.

Explain the trending drift towards the increased powers of the political executive, across liberal democracies.

Way forward

Conclusion:

Conclude with how judicial facilitation of an imperial executive is against the basic tenets of the very constitution ; doctrine separation of powers.

Introduction:

- The **Constitution of India** embraces the idea of separation of powers in an implied manner. Despite there being no express provision recognizing the doctrine of separation of powers in its absolute form, the Constitution does make the provisions for a reasonable separation of functions and powers between the three organs of Government.
- As per **Article 50**, State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive. This is for the purpose of ensuring the independence of judiciary.

Body:

In the last six months, the Supreme Court has frequently found itself in the headlines. It handed down many landmark judgments on fundamental rights:

- ✚ Decriminalising same-sex relations and adultery
- ✚ Opening up Sabarimala to women of all ages, and
- ✚ Upheld Aadhar act (partially)

- However, some of its judgments related to Rafale and Central Bureau of Investigation were subjected to intense scrutiny, and continue to be debated.
- Constitution guarantees freedom by dividing and distributing political power between state organs in order to **avoid concentration of authority**, and to **ensure that these different organs act as checks and balances upon each other**. The surest dam **against totalitarianism** is to guarantee that no **one stream of authority becomes powerful** enough to sweep away everything else in the time of a flood.

The trending drift towards the increased powers of the political executive:

Courts often exercise significant influence upon the future direction of the Republic in cases involving constitutional structure.

Money Bills:

- Despite strong protests, the Aadhar Act was passed as a money bill. This affected a crucial element of our constitutional structure: **bicameralism**.
- Bicameralism, in our parliamentary democracy, requires that a bill must be scrutinised and passed by both Houses of Parliament before it becomes law.
- While the Lok Sabha represents the voice of the democratic majority, the Rajya Sabha represents the interests of the States, as well as perspectives free of immediate, electoral interests.
- The crucial purpose of the Rajya Sabha is to act as a **check and a balance** upon the Lok Sabha, by scrutinising bills in a more deliberative and reflective manner, and raising concerns that may have been glossed over or evaded in the Lower House.
- Its role becomes even more important when we consider a unique Indian innovation: **anti-defection**, which effectively undermines the intra-party democracy as individual MPs could no longer vote according to their conscience, and had to follow the diktats of the cabinet.
- With the Lower House no longer able to check the government, the only remaining legislative forum that can then do so is the Rajya Sabha.



- Aadhar act is passed as a money bill and money bill takes the Rajya Sabha out of the equation, it only needs Lok Sabha approval.
- And in combination with the anti-defection law, this places absolute power in the hands of the executive, and skews the democratic process.
- Hence, its use must be restricted to the most limited of circumstances as enshrined in Constitution (Article 110) mandated that money bills be narrowly limited to those that fell exclusively within the categories set out in Article 110.
- The Aadhaar Act, which established a biometric database and set up an authority (the UIDAI) to administer it, raises question mark to passing it as a “money bill” simply because the funds for the Authority came from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- The verdict on Aadhar case, may motivate the governments, which does not enjoy majority in the upper house to bypass Rajya Sabha scrutiny on a range of important issues by simply inserting a provision specifying that money for a project is to come from the Consolidated Fund.

Federalism:

- The court was also considering another issue of democratic structure: **the dispute between the central government (acting through the Lt Governor) and the government of Delhi.**
- This dispute effectively turned upon the text of Article 239AA of the Constitution, a somewhat ambiguously drafted provision establishing **Delhi as a hybrid federal entity** — somewhere between a State and a Union Territory.
- In July 2018, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court made it clear that the court would favour a reading that **increased democratic accountability**, that is, in case of doubt, power would lie with the government that had been directly elected by the people (in this case, the Delhi government).
- When it came to applying this principle to the specific disputes between the two entities, however, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court seemed to resile from this fundamental democratic principle.
- The February 2019 judgment bears very little evidence of democratic concerns: the heart of the dispute was about control over the civil services, which directly impacted day-to-day governance.
- While the constitutional provisions themselves were ambiguous, one judge held that the Delhi government had no control over civil servants above a certain rank, while another judge held that the Delhi government had no control over civil servants at all.

In 1973, the American historian Arthur M. Schlesinger coined the term “**Imperial Presidency**”, to characterise the increasing concentration of power in the office of the President, at the cost of other democratic institutions (such as the U.S. Congress and the Senate). The Supreme Court’s decisions on Articles 110 (money bills) and 239AA (status of the federal unit of Delhi) have concentrated greater power in the hands of the executive. By expanding the scope of what counts as money bills, the court has set the cabinet down the road of transforming itself into a Roman-style imperator.

Conclusion:

- ❖ By privileging the centralising tendencies of the Constitution over its federalising ones, the court has squandered the chance to develop a strong jurisprudence on the federal structure, that could have been of use in future disputes between the Central government and various federal units.
- ❖ The impact of these decisions will not be felt immediately, but in the long run, unless set right, one enduring legacy of the recent court might be **the judicial facilitation of an imperial executive.**

Topic: Elections; Salient features of the Representation of People's Act.

Q) Should India opt for ‘One Nation, One Election’ ? Analyze the feasibility of simultaneous elections in India while assessing the pros and cons. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

[Economictimes](https://economictimes.com)

Why this question:

The article is in the backdrop of the demand by the political parties for Simultaneous elections in Kashmir the valley.



Key demand of the question:

The answer should discuss and reveal the need for simultaneous elections in India and the fact that the Election Commission of India (EC) has always favored simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, But considering the situations in the country there is an array of argument as to whether elections are to be conducted simultaneously or not.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Discuss the context of one nation, one election briefly.

Body:

Discuss – why is the need, what are the advantages of implementing simultaneous elections in terms of massive expenditure, diversion of security and civil staff from primary duties, impact on governance due to the model code of conduct, and disruption to normal public life etc.

Then bring out the challenges in implementing it along with some demerits of it.

Conclusion –

Conclude with its feasibility as to whether India is ready to embrace such changes.

Introduction:

- Simultaneous elections refer to holding elections to Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Panchayats and Urban local bodies simultaneously, once in five year. The idea of holding elections simultaneously is in news after it got a push from Prime Minister and ex-President of India. However, political parties are divided on the issue of holding simultaneous elections
- The political parties of Kashmir recently impressed upon the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to hold the assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir simultaneously with the upcoming Lok Sabha elections

Body:

- The Law Commission of India has also proposed holding simultaneous state and general elections and has sought public opinion on its recommendations regarding the same. Simultaneous elections were held in India during the first two decades of independence.

Merits of Simultaneous elections:

- **Governance and consistency:**
 - The ruling parties will be able to focus on legislation and governance rather than having to be in campaign mode forever.
 - Parties and workers spending too much time and money in electioneering, can make use of the time for social work and to take people-oriented programmes to the grassroots.
 - To overcome the “**policy paralysis and governance deficit**” associated with imposition of the Model Code of Conduct at election time which leads to putting on hold all developmental activities on that area and also affects the bureaucracy’s functioning.
- **Reduced Expenditure of Money and Administration:**
 - The entire State and District level administrative and security machinery will be busy with the conduct of elections twice in a period of five years as per the current practice.
 - Expenditure can be reduced by conducting simultaneous elections.
 - It is felt that crucial manpower is often deployed on election duties for a prolonged period of time. If simultaneous elections are held, then this manpower would be made available for other important tasks.
 - For instance for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, which was held along with 4 state assemblies saw the deployment of **1077 in situ companies and 1349 mobile companies of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF)**.
- **Continuity in policies and programmes:**
 - Will limit the disruption to normal public life associated with elections, such as increased traffic and noise pollution.
 - Large numbers of teachers are involved in the electoral process which causes maximum harm to the education sector.



- **Efficiency of Governance:**
 - Simultaneous elections can bring the **much-needed operational efficiency** in this exercise.
 - Populist measures by governments will reduce.
- **Curbs Vices:**
 - During frequent elections there is increase in “vices” such as communalism, casteism, corruption and crony capitalism.
 - Simultaneous elections can also be a means to **curb corruption** and build a more conducive socio-economic ecosystem.
 - The impact of black money on the voters will be reduced as all elections are held at a time.

Challenges to simultaneous elections:

- **Illiteracy:**
 - Not all voters are highly educated to know who to vote for. They may get confused and may not know whether they are voting for candidates contesting assembly or parliament elections.
 - **IDFC study** says that there is 77% chance that the Indian voter will vote for the same party for both the state and centre, when elections are held simultaneously.
 - Evidence from Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Germany, the US and Europe supports the idea that elections that are held simultaneously produce greater alignment between national and regional election outcomes.
- **Functional issues:**
 - Frequent elections bring the politicians back to the voters, create jobs and prevent the mixing of local and national issues in the minds of the voters.
 - There is a dearth of enough security and administrative officials to conduct simultaneous free and fair elections throughout the country in one go.
- **Changes in Constitution and Legislations:**
 - The following constitutional changes need to be made:-
 - Amendments needed in the following articles:-
 - Article 83 which deals with the duration of Houses of Parliament need an amendment
 - Article 85 (on dissolution of Lok Sabha by the president)
 - Article 172 (relating to the duration of state legislatures)
 - Article 174 (relating to dissolution of state assemblies)
 - Article 356 (on President's Rule).
 - The Representation of People Act, 1951 Act would have to be amended to build in provisions for stability of tenure for both parliament and assemblies. This should include the following crucial elements:
 - Restructuring the powers and functions of the ECI to facilitate procedures required for simultaneous elections
 - A definition of simultaneous election can be added to section 2 of the 1951 act
 - Articles 83 and 172 along with articles with articles 14 and 15 of the 1951 act be appropriately amended to incorporate the provision regarding remainder of the term i.e., post mid elections, the new loksabha/assembly so constituted shall be only for the remainder of the term of the previous loksabha or assembly and not for a fresh term of five years.
- **Constructive vote of no confidence:**
 - The 170th law commission report suggested a new rule i.e., rule 198-A has to be added to rules of procedure and conduct of business in Lok Sabha and similar amendment to such rules in the state legislatures.
 - The report suggested introduction of motion of no confidence in the incumbent government along with a motion of confidence in the alternative government.
 - To avoid premature dissolution of the house/state assembly in case of Hung parliament /assembly and to advance simultaneous elections the rigour of anti defection law laid under in tenth schedule be removed as an exception.
- Local and national issues will get mixed up distorting priorities.
- The terms of different state governments are ending on separate dates and years.
- **Spirit of Constitution:**
 - One nation, one election” would make sense if India were a unitary state. So “one nation, one election” is anti-democratic.



- Simultaneous elections threaten the federal character of our democracy.
- Frequent elections act as checks and balances on the functioning of elected representatives.

Way forward:

- Any changes must require **both a constitutional amendment and judicial approval** that they do not violate the “basic structure” of the Constitution.
- A **focused group of constitutional experts, think tanks, government officials and representatives of political parties** should be formed to work out appropriate implementation related details.
- Other alternatives should be explored to reduce election related expenses like
 - **State funding of elections**
 - **Decriminalisation of politics**
 - **Bringing in transparency in political funding**
 - Setting up **National Electoral Fund** to which all donors can contribute.
- **One year one election** as suggested by Election Commission can be executed by amending Section 15 of the RP Act 1951. If the six-month stipulation is extended to nine or 10 months, elections to all states, whose term is expiring in one year, can be held together.
- The **Law Commission of India** in its report of **1999** has dealt with the problem of premature and frequent elections. It had recommended an amendment of this rule on the lines of the German Constitution, which provides that the leader of the party who wants to replace the chancellor has to move the no-confidence motion along with the confidence motion. If the motions succeed, the president appoints him as the chancellor.
 - If such an amendment to Rule 198 is made, the Lok Sabha would avoid premature dissolution without diluting the cardinal principle of democracy that is a government with the consent of the peoples’ representatives with periodical elections.
 - It will also be consistent with the notion of collective responsibility of the government to the House as mentioned in Article 75 (3) of the Constitution.

Conclusion:

- ✓ **Election Commission’s** idea of “**one year one election**” will better suited as it will require fewer amendments to the constitution, it will respect the essence of the exercise of popular will, unlike **one nation one election** which **prioritizes economic costs of elections over the exercise itself**, it will avoid clubbing of national and state issues, it will not disturb federalism much, not much issues generated by emergencies like need to hold by-election etc will be addressed by this option.

Q) Election Commission of India has been known for its rich legacy of being independent and inclusive, however studies suggest that the electorate count has decreased over time in comparison with census count. Comment and also suggest what steps should be taken with respect to these missing voters from the electoral rolls of the world’s largest democracy. (250 words)

[Livemint](https://www.insightsias.com/livemint)

Why this question:

The article highlights studies suggesting More than 50 million voters—most of them young—missing from India’s electoral rolls, and provides for a detailed analysis of electoral and census data .

Key demand of the question:

The question expects you to provide for a detailed picture of the scenario, you must detail upon the inclusiveness of ECI, the provisions therefore for the marginalized and the ‘invisible’ sections of the society and the women in the society. you must discuss the problems associated and suggest what measures should be taken to make it more inclusive.

Directive word

Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.



Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with Importance of ECI ; inclusiveness as an essential component in the electoral process of the country.

Body:

Why inclusiveness is in question? What is the issue of missing records?

Issue of – greater scrutiny in the voter registration process and inadequate registration in the youngest age group.

What are the implications for the electoral process?

Way forward

Conclusion:

Conclude with how ECI has a rich legacy of being independent and inclusive. It must live up to that legacy and remove all doubts about missing voters from the electoral rolls of the world's largest democracy.

Introduction:

- Independent India's first electoral rolls were painstakingly prepared as India moved from limited franchise under the British Raj to universal franchise after Independence.
- However, **more than 50 million voters**—most of them young—**may be missing from India's electoral rolls for Elections 2019**, an analysis of electoral and census data suggests.

Body:

- The officials responsible for drafting the first electoral rolls of world's largest democracy took special care to ensure that the marginalized and the 'invisible' sections of the society, such as pavement dwellers and refugees without robust documentation, found a place in the electoral rolls.
- In the process, the making of the electoral rolls ended up influencing the framing of the Constitution itself leading to an independent election commission that is not subject to the whims and prejudices of local officials.

The **electorate count has decreased over time** in comparison with census count because:

- The inclusive legacy that India's election officials have for many years erred on the side of caution in removing names from the electoral register.
- The complaints throughout most of independent India's history have been of including duplicate names, and even names of dead persons.
- However, today the complaint is one of widespread omissions. **Example:** Millions of voters—by some estimates, nearly 2% of the eligible electorate—have been missing from Telangana's electoral rolls in the latest elections and the deletions have not followed due process, according to election officials.
- New migrants from other constituencies and non-deletion of those who have migrated out due to poor updation of electoral rolls.
- Data from the 2018 electoral rolls suggests that there could be 52 million missing voters on the electoral rolls.
- Calculations based on the 2011 census data combined with age-wise mortality rates to estimate the current voting-age population revealed that for 2018, there should be **931 million eligible voters** but there were **only 878 million names on electoral rolls, an under-count of 6%.**
- The missing names in the electoral register are **largely those of women.**
- The latest data from the 2019 electoral rolls reveals that the elector count according to the electoral roll falls short of the census estimates in 12 of the 14 states for which data is available.
- **Greater scrutiny in the voter registration process and inadequate registration in the youngest age group** have led to the decreased counts on the electoral rolls over the past two decades.
- The lower elector roll count could also be a result of **declining interest in voting among youth.**
- According to a **2017 study by the not-for-profit Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, Booth Level Officers** in major cities are **under-paid, ill-trained, and over-burdened.**
- Their lack of training can, therefore, be a serious hindrance to updation of electorate list.



- The government's **National Electoral Rolls Purification and Authentication Programme (NERPAP)**, which links electoral rolls to the Aadhaar database, has generated further controversy.
- Delhi-based Centre for Research and Debates in Development Policy argued that **Muslims tended to be under-represented more than others** in several states in the electoral rolls based on their analysis of disaggregated electoral data.

Measures taken:

- The **Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)** programme of Election Commission of India is a landmark programme to inform, educate, motivate and facilitate voters and in turn make Indian democracy more participative and meaningful.
- Awareness Creation- to encourage more young voters to take part in the electoral process. The Government of India has decided to celebrate January 25th of every year as '**National Voters Day**'. It started from January 25, 2011 to mark Commission's foundation day.
- The ECI collaborated with educational institutions, youth organizations such as NYKS, NSS, NCC etc. to tap new voters and promote greater awareness.
- ECI also collaborated with Government media, private media, Civil Society and credible NGOs for increasing people's awareness regarding electoral participation.
- Electoral literacy was made a major component of the Sakshar Bharat Programme of the Government of India.

Way forward:

- Creation of a fully computerized database of electors, comprehensive photo electoral roll; de-duplication technologies to eliminate bogus and duplicate entries.
- The Law Commission endorses the ECI's suggestions regarding the introduction of common electoral rolls for Assembly, Parliamentary, and local body elections. However, require an amendment in the State laws pertaining to the conduct of local body elections.
- Proper training, adequate payment and to lower the burden of the booth level officers.
- ECI is developing a full-fledged '**Strategic Framework on Accessible Elections**' going into the next Lok Sabha polls to make sure Elections are accessible to Divyang.
- ECI has tied up with **India Post** to send Form 6, which is the application for inclusion of names in electoral rolls to the registered address, are underway.
- Use of social media to educate, create awareness of voting among the new-generation voters.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Qualitatively and quantitatively, the voter's participation is bedrock for a participative democracy. Similarly, the voter registration and electorate education are central to the election management process.

Q) With India going to witness biggest election in world history with total electorate being more than the population of every continent, discuss the issues and challenges faced by Election commission in conducting elections of such magnitude with special emphasis on role of social media. (250 words)

[Livemint](https://www.insightsias.com/livemint)

Why this question:

The question is in the context of Elections as an essential democratic exercise; with India about to witness the world's largest elections, It is thus essential to know about the major issues surrounding such a large democratic exercise in the world.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must provide for a detailed analysis of the upcoming elections of 2019 in terms of the quantum, size, associated challenges that need to be addressed and a special focus needs to be made upon the social media and its role in elections.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.



Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Explain briefly the importance of elections in India, provide for specific facts indicating the magnitude of elections this time .

Body:

various issues plaguing the electoral process in India.

Role of election commission

Impact of social media – a medium for political campaign and also as a medium of voter's education; discuss the conundrum.

Reforms required.

Conclusion:

Conclude with importance of elections in Democracy, and emphasize specially on role of Election commission in conducting free and fair elections on such a scale.

Introduction:

- The 17th Lok Sabha elections of India would be the biggest election in world history, with over 900 million registered voters, out of which 15 million are aged 18-19. The total electorate is more than the population of every continent.

Body:

Magnitude of the elections:

- There will be nearly one million polling stations, up 10.1% from the 2014 elections; 2.33 million ballot units, 1.63 million control units and 1.74 million VVPATs (voter verifiable paper audit trails).
- Approximately 11 million polling staff (including security forces) will be randomized for neutrality.
- Over 120 trains with more than 3,000 coaches, and 200,000 buses and cars, besides a large variety of transport—from boats, elephants and camels to planes and helicopters—will transport the staff and materials with clockwork precision.
- Thousands of polling parties would walk 2-3 days to reach polling stations not otherwise accessible.

Various issues and challenges faced by Election commission in conducting elections of such magnitude:

- The school examinations make the month of March out of reckoning. Lakhs of schools and their teachers are involved in the polls.
- Weather conditions, agricultural cycle, festivals, (religious or social), law and order are also to be taken into consideration.
- Availability of paramilitary forces, demanded by every party, determines the number of phases since they have to be rotated because of limited numbers.
- The timing is extremely significant as the model code of conduct kicks in the moment the schedule is announced.
- The government is prohibited from announcing new schemes, new postings and transfers, and using government resources for campaigning.
- There has been ample speculation about election dates, with some even casting aspersions on the Election Commission of India's (EC's) neutrality in determining the dates.
- The issue of EVM hacking has led to credibility issues.

The digital challenge to ECI and conduction of elections:

- While social media has opened new doors for political parties to connect and converse with a new section of audience in the country, at the same time it has posed a new challenge for the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- Although the MCC has applied to internet platforms since 2013, no attempt has been made to enforce it thus far.
- As per **IAMAI's latest social media report** – political parties have earmarked around 2%-5% of their election budgets for social media.
- The role of social media in influencing the people's decision was seen in the Presidential elections of the USA in 2017.



- The anonymity, universality, opacity and ease of accessibility has made internet and social media a easy way to propagandize ideas, ideologies.
- Issues like appointment of dedicated grievance channel for expeditious action by the organizations, pre-certification and transparency in the expenditure of political advertisements still persist.
- The kind of monitoring tool will it be using to monitor activities on social media platforms is still a conundrum as it should not affect the right to privacy which is a fundamental right.

Way forward for challenges posed by social media:

- To curb abuse of social media platforms in the upcoming general election, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has asked them to frame a general code of ethics.
- The code would be similar to Model Code of Conduct laid down operational details by today evening, as per ECI statement.
- Social media firms and industry body IAMAI agreed to draft the code of ethics in the immediate context.
- Measures designed to increase transparency in campaigning, such as verification of the identities and locations of all political advertisers, and disclosure of candidates' social media accounts and expenditure.
- The norms aimed at **curbing misinformation and hate speech** by candidates: pre-certification of political ads by the ECI's **Media Certification and Monitoring Committee** and the creation of **dedicated grievance redressal channels** through which the ECI can flag and takedown problematic content quickly.
- The ECI has added social media experts to its district and state-level election Media Certification and Monitoring Committees and has launched an app called **cVigil** through which MCC violations, both online and offline, can be reported.
- A clear clause on users' voluntarily agreeing not to misuse social media platforms for election should be considered.
- The ECI should bring social media into the ambit of paid news by cracking the whip on paid content circulated on social networking sites apart from restraining paid news items in print and electronic media.
- Tracking the cash flow being invested on social media by political parties to keeping a check on proxy profiles the ECI should execute it all.
- ECI must keep a track of fake profiles, objectionable content and monitoring.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The ECI acknowledges social media as a big challenge and has started taking measures to ensure free and fair elections.
- ❖ A collaborative approach with all stakeholders will ensure that the social media challenge can be minimized.

Q) Examine the philosophy behind Model code of conduct in India. How has it evolved over the years ? Analyse. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Why this question:

The article is in the background of upcoming Lok Sabha elections, it provides for a detailed analysis of the importance of Model code conduct in India and it traces the evolution of MCC with time and changing dynamics of the Indian polity.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the significance of Model code of conduct in professing free and fair elections, emphasis upon the philosophy guiding it and trace its evolution over the period since its inception.

Directive word:

Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with a brief on Model code of conduct – what is it ? why is it essential.

**Body:**

What is Model code of conduct – underlying philosophy; consensus document, parties and candidates should show respect for their opponents, criticize their policies and programmes constructively, and not resort to mudslinging and personal attacks.

Importance of Model code of conduct.

Trace its evolution – Kerala being first state to adopt, revisions of MCC etc

What are the challenges faced by MCC and how to overcome them? – social media, corruption etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude with the importance of the use of Model code of conduct in conducting free and fair elections.

Introduction:

- Model code of conduct is the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections mainly with respect to speeches, polling day, polling booths, election manifestos, processions and general conduct. It aims to ensure free and fair elections.

Body:**The philosophy behind MCC in India:**

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a **consensus document**.
- In other words, **political parties have themselves agreed to keep their conduct during elections in check**, and to work within the Code.
- The philosophy behind the MCC is that **parties and candidates should show respect for their opponents, criticise their policies and programmes constructively, and not resort to mudslinging and personal attacks**.
- The MCC is intended to help the poll campaign **maintain high standards of public morality** and **provide a level playing field for all parties and candidates**.
- **Adherence to the Code** is most important for the government or party in power, because it is they who can skew the level playing field by taking decisions that can help them in the elections.
- At the time of the Lok Sabha elections, both the Union and state governments are covered under the MCC.

Evolution of the MCC:

- **Kerala** was the first state to adopt a code of conduct for elections. In **1960**, ahead of the Assembly elections, the state administration prepared a draft code that covered important aspects of electioneering such as processions, political rallies, and speeches.
- The experiment was successful, and the Election Commission decided to emulate Kerala's example and circulate the draft among all recognised parties and state governments for the Lok Sabha elections of 1962.
- In **1968**, ECI held meetings with political parties at State level and circulated the Code of Conduct to observe minimum standard of behavior to ensure free and fair elections.
- In 1971-72, during General Election to the House of the People/State Legislative Assemblies ECI circulated the Code again.
- At the time of general elections to some State Assemblies in **1974**, **ECI** issued the code of conduct to the political parties in those States.
- ECI also suggested constituting committees at district level headed by the District Collector and comprising representatives of political parties as members for considering cases of violation of the code and ensuring its compliance by all parties and candidates.
- For the 1977 Lok Sabha general election, the Code was again circulated to the political parties.
- In 1979, ECI in consultation with the political parties further amplified the code, adding a new Section placing restrictions on the "Party in power" so as to prevent cases of abuse of position of power to get undue advantage over other parties and candidates.
- In 1991, the code was consolidated and re-issued in its present form.
- The MCC has been revised on several occasions since then. The last time this happened was in 2014, when the Commission introduced Part VIII on manifestos, pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court.

Challenges faced by MCC:

- EC does not have a mechanism to monitor Social Media and coordinate with Internet companies to take down impermissible content.
- Expenditure on advertisement done on Social Media is not yet under ambit of MCC.
- The code does not have any specific statutory basis. It has only a persuasive effect.



- The complaint that the MCC is coming in the way of developmental activities leading to socio-economic injustice.

Way Forward:

- MCC should be provided with **statutory backing**. It should be made a part of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** to make the MCC more powerful.
- Establishment of **special fast track courts** to solve the MCC violation cases at a faster rate.
- The **law commission recommendations** should be implemented to save the unnecessary spending of public money during elections.
- **Public awareness** about MCC needs to be developed. The use of app like **cVIGIL** should be encouraged to reduce violations during polls.
- Stakeholders including Internet companies should come up with a **code for Social Media and Internet**.

Conclusion:

- ❖ MCC has an **indisputable legitimacy** and parties across the political spectrum have generally adhered to its letter and spirit.
- ❖ The **immaculate independence of the EC** and its **uncompromising attitude towards enforcing the code**, combined with the **perception among parties** that following the code far outweighs the costs accrued if violated by other parties, especially the ruling one, have led to the success of the MCC since its inception.

Q) Historically, startups, whether in business or in politics, have a very high mortality rate. In this context discuss the factors that make a political startup survive and thrive with suitable examples. (250 words)

[Hindustantimes](#)

Why this question:

The article discusses in detail the coming of new political startups; political parties and their survival.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must explain in detail the coming of any new political party, the process of genesis, and the chances of mortality of the same. The answer must critically analyse the challenges that are faced by the new political start ups.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with brief introductory lines on political start ups.

Body:

Discuss some facts associated that justify the quick genesis and quick mortality of the political parties.

There are more the 1800 political parties that registered with the Election Commission of India. However, the numbers belie the challenges involved in building and sustaining a party in the country.

Discuss what are the challenges – leading to early demise of the political parties.

Conclusion:

Conclude with importance of robust methods to channelize the starting of the parties.

Introduction:

- Political startups refer to the **new political parties floated by candidates due to break-up from the older party or based on new ideology at national or state level**.
- At last count, there were more the 1800 political parties registered with the Election Commission of India. However, the numbers belie the challenges involved in building and sustaining a party in the country.

**Body:**

The factors that make a political startup survive and thrive are:

- **Organized structure:** Just being helmed by a charismatic and popular figure does not guarantee the well being of a party. Acquiring electoral clout requires an organisational structure as well as a dedicated band of activists. E.g. the case of Makkal Needhi Maiyam (MNM), a party formed a year ago by the film star, Kamal Haasan, in Tamil Nadu.
- **Ground level booth management:** A key reason attributed to the remarkable performance of the BJP in 2014 was its ground level booth management and deployment of ideologically committed foot soldiers. AAP's success in Delhi Assembly elections in 2017 is also a good illustration. Grassroots support is crucial to political parties' ability to win elections and in countering the influence of money in politics.
- **Well-known candidates:** Parties devoid of a robust organisational structure and well known candidates, will be forced to fall back on one person's appeal and charisma. E.g. MNM.
- **Intra-party democracy:** The extent to which the party can survive is thus conditional on its success in making the representative regime not only operative but legitimate. Internal divisions over hot-button issues can be disastrous. E.g. AAP and Swaraj India. Political parties should make **gender equality a priority** and should address the corrupting influence of money in politics.
- **Diversity of issues:** Campaigning on a single issue — especially one rooted in demagoguery — can put you on the map. It can rarely help the party survive as it has a diversity of audience to cater to. **Parties' adaptability to new challenges and restrictions** is also imperative.
- **Fresh and Innovative solutions:** Citizens are engaging with governments in new ways, so traditional party systems may become relics of the past; The increase in radical parties on the left and right means it is important for those in the center to better clarify and articulate their positions;

Conclusion:

- ❖ Only a clear ideology, a committed cadre, and visionary leadership will allow a political party to thrive.

Q) The recent storm related to demand for more transparency by means of electoral bonds mechanisms holds widespread importance but it may also lead to overlap priorities comment ? Critically analyse. (250 words)

The hindu

why this question:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has recently told the Supreme Court that electoral bonds, contrary to government claims, wreck transparency in political funding. The question is thus to examine the significance and issues involved in this context.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the Electoral Bonds – Significance and Issues involved especially with respect to transparency in political funding.

Directive word:

Critically Analyse – When asked to 'analyse', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer**Introduction:**

write a few introductory lines about the Electoral Bond, their origin and utility.

Body:

Discuss the key features of the electoral bonds.

Pros and cons



How Electoral bond leads to corruption and hinders the capacity of the citizens to meaningfully participate in political and public life.

Take cues from article – discuss foreign funding and role of electoral bonds.

How the power of vote is diluted through opacity in political funding, and thus democracy as a whole loses its intrinsic value.

Conclusion –

Conclude by suggesting a way forward, how can the government overcome the challenges and focus on its priorities.

Introduction:

- Electoral bonds will allow donors to pay political parties using banks as an intermediary. Although called a bond, the banking instrument resembling promissory notes will not carry any interest.
- The electoral bond, which will be a bearer instrument, will not carry the name of the payee and can be bought for any value, in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh or Rs 1 crore.

Body:

Rationale behind the electoral bonds:

- Electoral bonds have been introduced to promote transparency in funding and donation received by political parties.
- The scheme envisages building a transparent system of acquiring bonds with validated KYC and an audit trail. A limited window and a very short maturity period would make misuse improbable.
- The electoral bonds will prompt donors to take the banking route to donate, with their identity captured by the issuing authority. This will ensure transparency and accountability and is a big step towards electoral reform.
- The previous system of cash donations from anonymous sources is wholly non-transparent. The donor, the donee, the quantum of donations and the nature of expenditure are all undisclosed.
- According to government the system of Bonds will encourage political donations of clean money from individuals, companies, HUF, religious groups, charities, etc.
- After purchasing the bonds, these entities can hand them to political parties of their choice, which must redeem them within the prescribed time.
- Some element of transparency would be introduced in as much as all donors declare in their accounts the amount of bonds that they have purchased and all parties declare the quantum of bonds that they have received.
- The electoral bonds are aimed at rooting out the current system of largely anonymous cash donations made to political parties which lead to the generation of black money in the economy.

Concerns expressed:

- ECI said that coupled with the removal of cap on foreign funding, they invite foreign corporate powers to impact Indian politics
- The move could be misused, given the lack of disclosure requirements for individuals purchasing electoral bonds.
- Electoral bonds make electoral funding even **more opaque**. It will bring more and more black money into the political system. electoral bonds would cause a “serious impact” on transparency in funding of political parties
- With electoral bonds there can be a legal channel for companies to **round-trip their tax haven cash** to a political party. If this could be arranged, then a businessman could lobby for a change in policy, and legally funnel a part of the profits accruing from this policy change to the politician or party that brought it about.
- The amendments would pump in black money for political funding through shell companies and allow “unchecked foreign funding of political parties in India which could lead to Indian politics being influenced by foreign companies
- Electoral bonds eliminate the 7.5% cap on company donations which means even loss-making companies can make unlimited donations.
- Companies no longer need to declare the names of the parties to which they have donated so shareholders won’t know where their money has gone.
- They have potential to load the dice heavily in favour of the ruling party as the donor bank and the receiver bank know the identity of the person. But both the banks report to the RBI which, in turn, is subject to the Central government’s will to know.



Alternative mechanisms for electoral funding:

- According to Former Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Quraishi, an alternative worth exploring is a **National Electoral Fund** to which all donors can contribute.
- The funds would be allocated to political parties in **proportion to the votes** they get. Not only would this protect the identity of donors, it would also weed out black money from political funding.
- The total cost of MPLADS funding for all MPs is nearly ₹4,000 crore every year, and scrapping the scheme even for one year in an MP's five-year term will be enough to bankroll state funding of Lok Sabha candidates. This is a legalized way of allowing MPs and MLAs to shower money on their constituencies at state expense.
- **Direct funding of candidates**, who will be reimbursed according to their final share of the votes cast.
- The best way to bring about such transparency in political funding is to put a complete ban on cash donations by individuals or companies to political parties.
- Making it **mandatory for all parties** to receive donations **only by cheque, or other modes of money transfer**.
- There should be **clear provisions for getting tax benefits** for all those making such donations.
- Make it mandatory for political parties **to submit details of all donations received** with the Election Commission and also with the income-tax department.
- State funding of political parties can be considered. The **Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections** had endorsed partial state funding of recognised political parties.
- The mechanics of this process need to be carefully worked out to establish the allocation of money to national parties, State parties and independent candidates, and to check candidate's own expenditure over and above that which is provided by the state.
- Voters have to be made aware through awareness campaigns about ill effects of money power during elections. Bringing political parties under the preview of RTI act.

Q) The MCC Is not legally binding and there is no great punishment or penalty for violating it. unless the violation can be prosecuted under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure At the least. In such a context how is the party in power expected to conduct itself when MCC is in operation ? Discuss. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Why this question:

On 27th March, India successfully tested A-SAT. This news was addressed by Prime Minister Narendra himself, the opposition is now accusing PM Modi of violating the model code of conduct. Under such circumstances the election commission had directed a committee to examine the matter. Thus it becomes necessary for us to evaluate the conduct of party in power when MCC is in action.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects us to discuss and analyse the role of party in power in the context of Model code of conduct in action, One has to evaluate what are the privileges and limitations that the party in power can exercise.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with brief introductory lines on importance of Model code of conduct in conducting free and fair elections in a Democracy.

Body:

Take cues from the article and quote the conclusion made by the committee appointed by the election commission of India.



Then move on to discuss what are the do's and don'ts prescribed by the MCC.

What should be the general conduct of parties and politicians during the period of MCC. – Limit criticism of political parties to their policies and programmes. They should not use caste and communal feelings to secure votes, Processions Organizers must coordinate with those of other candidates and parties to ensure there is no clash between them etc.

One can also choose to criticize that there was no grave national emergency involved, requiring the PM to urgently address the nation. The event was meant to claim an achievement to impress voters.

Conclusion:

Conclude with importance of MCC and how it should evolve better to ensure much fairer and free elections.

Introduction:

- Model code of conduct is the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections mainly with respect to speeches, polling day, polling booths, election manifestos, processions and general conduct. It aims to ensure free and fair elections.

Body:

- The Election Commission (EC) gave a clean chit to Prime Minister for his address to the nation announcing the success of 'Mission Shakti'. Stating that the Prime Minister's address has not violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), the poll watchdog said that public broadcasters — Doordarshan and All India Radio — were not used to air the speech. The Opposition claimed that the Prime Minister's address was a violation of the poll code and had complained to ECI.
- A committee of four officers was directed to examine the matter thoroughly in "light of the Model Code of Conduct" to ensure official machinery and the government office were not misused to the advantage of the ruling party.
- Former Chief Election Commissioner Dr SY Quraishi also criticised Prime Minister's speech on India's Anti Satellite Test capability (ASAT), saying it was **not in conformity with ethics and spirit of the model code of conduct for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections**. It is primarily aimed at giving a level playing field to all the contesting candidates.

Do's and Don'ts for the Government:

- The government cannot transfer bureaucrats and officials. Officials transferred in this period cannot take charge of their new position
- The government **cannot announce any new scheme that is to be available publicly**
- However, the government can continue the implementation of schemes that have been approved and whose disbursement has started before the election
- However, governments can use funds at will to announce schemes and relief measures in times of natural or man-made disasters.
- The government cannot hold auctions for licenses and issue tenders during the MCC

Do's and Don'ts for Ministers:

- The MCC makes certain provision to separate the governmental machinery that ministers use in their ministerial capacity, who will in all likelihood hit the campaign train for their political parties at the time of elections.
- Ministers cannot combine electioneering visits with their political visits. **The only exception to this rule is the Prime Minister.**
- Ministers cannot use official vehicles for political activity. It can only be used to commute to those venues that the minister is doing as a representative of the government. None of any ministers' cars can have sirens.
- Ministers cannot announce any sop or financial grants under discretionary funds when the MCC is in force.
- No fresh grants of fund to be made under the MP/MLA/MLC Local Area Fund.
- Ministers cannot authorize advertisements depicting the achievements of governments in papers or in electronic media at the expense of public funds. Such information must be at the expense of the minister or the party.
- Ministers cannot lay foundations, or make any ad-hoc appointments. Such undertakings need to be executed by civil servants if and when the need arises, without involving any political functionary.
- Ministers and political functionaries from outside a constituency who came in with the propose to campaign cannot stay there starting 48 hours ending with the hour of the conclusion of the polls.



Do's and Don'ts for political parties:

- Political parties need to inform the police of all campaign and propaganda it wishes to undertake to the local authorities/police
- Organizers of rallies cannot take action against miscreants inhibiting party rallies/campaigns/roadshows. Such actions is to be taken only by the police
- Parties cannot campaign in areas where other parties are organising political events
- No potential contestant can go to file his/her nomination with pomp/celebration
- Loudspeakers cannot be used between 10 PM to 6AM. Even outside this period, police permission is needed for the use of loudspeakers
- Political parties must cease all display of all election matter 48 hours ending with the hour of the conclusion of the polls

Conclusion:

- ❖ MCC has an **indisputable legitimacy** and parties across the political spectrum have generally adhered to its letter and spirit.
- ❖ The **immaculate independence of the EC** and its **uncompromising attitude towards enforcing the code**, combined with the **perception among parties** that following the code far outweighs the costs accrued if violated by other parties, especially the ruling one, have led to the success of the MCC since its inception.

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Q) Discuss the salient features of the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018. How far will it address the unfair trade practices ? Critically analyse. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Why this question:

The article brings out the merits of the recently introduced Consumer Protection Bill, 2018 in the parliament. It discusses in detail the provisions of the Bill.

Key demand of the question:

Provide the salient features of the bill, how is it different from its previous version; establishment of an executive agency — Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), other provisions of the Bill including mediation, misleading advertisements and inclusion of imported products etc.

Directive word

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start by bringing out the importance of consumer protection in the country.

Body:

Body should discuss the following broad aspects in detail –

Importance of the policy, key features, how is it different from the previous one, its link with the current changing trends of the market . various special features – establishment of Consumer Protection Councils at the district, state and national levels to render advice on consumer protection, — Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), other provisions of the Bill including mediation, misleading advertisements and inclusion of imported products etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude with how it is a better version of the previous one and thus should be brought into action as early as possible.

**Introduction:**

- There are a host of products and services in the market. Issues of **adulteration, false weights, monopoly, unfair trade practice** are very high and are to be addressed to protect the consumer against it.
- Consumers in any modern market economy often experience **information asymmetry** and a **significant imbalance of bargaining power** as compared to producers and sellers of products and services.

Body:

- Consumer markets for goods and services have undergone a drastic transformation since the enactment of **Consumer Protection Act, 1986**. **Consumer protection Bill 2018** seeks to replace the existing Act of 1986 to address emerging consumer vulnerabilities.

The salient features of the Consumer Protection Bill 2018 are:

- It defines the “**consumer**” as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration.
- The Bill covers transactions, **both online and offline**, and **includes tele-shopping and multi-level marketing**.
- Definition of “consumer rights” in the Bill exhaustively covers the **right to be protected against the marketing of goods, products or services that are hazardous to life and property**.
- It also focuses on the **right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods, products or services**, as the case may be, so as to protect a consumer against unfair trade practices.
- It also includes the **right to be assured, wherever possible, of access to a variety of goods, products or services at competitive prices**.
- It involves the **right to seek redress against unfair or restrictive trade practices, or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers**.

Comparison of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 with the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018

| Provision | 1986 Act | 2018 Bill |
|---|--|--|
| Ambit of law | All goods and services for consideration, while free and personal services are excluded | All goods and services, including telecom and housing construction, and all modes of transactions (online, teleshopping, etc.) for consideration. Free and personal services are excluded. |
| Product liability | No provision. | Claim for product liability can be made against manufacturer, service provider, and seller. Compensation can be obtained by proving one of the several specified conditions in the Bill. |
| Unfair trade practices | Includes six types of such practices, like false representation, misleading advertisements. | The new Bill adds three types of practices to the list, namely: (i) failure to issue a bill or receipt; (ii) refusal to accept a good returned within 30 days; and (iii) disclosure of personal information given in confidence, unless required by law or in public interest. |
| Unfair contracts | No provision. | Defined as contracts that cause significant change in consumer rights. Lists six contract terms which may be held as unfair. |
| Central Protection Councils (CPCs) | CPCs promote and protect the rights of consumers. They are established at the district, state, and national level. | The new Bill makes CPCs advisory bodies for promotion and protection of consumer rights. Establishes CPCs at the district, State and national level. |
| Regulator | No provision. | Establishes the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect, and enforce the rights of consumers as a class. CCPA may: (i) issue safety notices; (ii) pass orders to recall goods, prevent unfair practices, and reimburse purchase price paid; and (iii) impose penalties for false and misleading advertisements. |



| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Pecuniary jurisdiction of Commissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District: Up to Rs 20 lakh; State: Between Rs 20 lakh and up to Rs one crore; National: Above Rs one crore. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> District: Up to Rs one crore; State: Between Rs one crore and up to Rs 10 crore; National: above Rs 10 crore. |
| Composition of Commissions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> District: Headed by current or former District Judge and two members. State: Headed by a current or former High Court Judge and at least two members. National: Headed by a current or former Supreme Court Judge and at least four members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District: Headed by a president and at least two members. State: Headed by a president and at least four members. National: Headed by a president and at least four members. |
| Appointment | Selection Committee (comprising a judicial member and other officials) will recommend members on the Commissions. | No provision for Selection Committee. Central government will appoint through notification. |
| Alternate dispute redressal mechanism | No provision. | Mediation cells will be attached to the District, State, and National Commissions. |
| Penalties | If a person does not comply with orders of the Commissions, he may face imprisonment between one month and three years or fine between Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000, or both. | If a person does not comply with orders of the Commissions, he may face imprisonment up to three years, or a fine not less than Rs 25,000 extendable to Rs one lakh, or both. |
| E-commerce | No provision. | Defines direct selling, e-commerce and electronic service provider. The central government may prescribe rules for preventing unfair trade practices in e-commerce and direct selling. |

Merits:

- Provide time-bound redressal of their grievances.
- It will allow Central government to regulate e-commerce and direct selling among other important measures.
- It is a welcome step towards tackling misleading endorsements
- Provides for simplification of consumer disputes adjudication process for faster disposal of grievances through filing of complaints by a consumer from his place of residence, e-filing and video conferencing for hearing.
- The CCPA will act in a manner similar to enforcement agencies in other jurisdictions such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the US. This will be a landmark step in upgrading the implementation mechanism to global standards
- This is the first time that powers to take action for damage caused by a product have been introduced in a consumer protection framework.

**Demerits:**

- It has penalty provisions for the endorsers and on the other it is giving them a route to get away because the clause of due diligence will act in their defence
- It lags behind in tackling misleading advertisements endorsed by any celebrity
- This step will act as a deterrent for manufacturers since the liability quotient has increased

Way Forward:

- Several countries like Canada, Estonia have devised advertisement regulations for unhealthy foods targeted at children
- Countries such as the UK, Ireland and Belgium have specifically banned celebrity endorsement of unhealthy foods. The impact of such restrictions has been reported to be significant.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The emergence of global supply chain, rise in global trade and rapid development of e-commerce have led to a new delivery system for goods and services and also provided new options and opportunities for consumers.
- ❖ Misleading ads, tele-marketing, multi-level marketing, direct selling and e-commerce pose new challenges to consumer protection and will require appropriate and swift executive intervention to prevent consumer detriment.
- ❖ This bill is the step in the right direction in addressing these issues.

Q) Recently the Government of India introduced 10% quota for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) among General Category candidates in government jobs and educational institutions. Should economic-status based reservations be extended to the SC, ST and OBC's too to help correct the centuries-old wrongs on the lower castes ? (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Why this question:

The article provides for a close examination of the necessity of economic-status based reservations even for Dalits, as there are substantial inequalities even within Dalits. Thus In addition to the 15 per cent quota, the community should also have reservation based on socioeconomic criteria.

Key demand of the question:

One needs to address the needs of economic-status based reservations even amongst the vulnerable and backward sections of the society who are already being given caste based reservations as socioeconomic differentiation is as well pronounced in these communities.

Structure of the answer**Introduction:**

Discuss the significance of economic-status based reservations in India.

Body:

You must weigh the pros and cons of such a system of affirmative action, what needs to be done? What are the imperatives? To what extent can reservation – caste based and socio- economic address the problems of weaker and poorer sections of the society? Should reservation be the only solution to fix the problem.

Conclusion –

Conclude with how reservation is only part of a solution and not a permanent fix to the vulnerability of the socially and economically weaker section and thus we must look for alternatives and an integrated approach .

Introduction:

The President of India has given his assent to the bill providing **10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions to the economically weaker sections in the general category**. The legislation will be known as the **Constitution (103 Amendment) Act, 2019**.

**Body:**

The amendment has renewed the debate whether a similar criteria is needed among SC, ST and OBCs. The latter idea has been mulled since the time of framing constitution in India.

- While the constitution-framers did recognise **the group identity of a community** while creating reservations for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, they had a **significantly more ambivalent attitude towards the category of 'other backward classes' or OBCs**.
- In post-independence India, a significant section of the politically active population voiced concerns that **caste-based reservations would be divisive and compromise national unity**.
- Till as late as the 1980s, the dominant opinion in New Delhi – represented by successive central governments and national parties – **preferred income over caste as the determining factor for any proposed reservation scheme**.
- Numerous academics and lawyers insisted that since 'class' did not mean the same thing as 'caste', the 'other backward classes' must be identified on an economic or class basis.
- In **Balaji v. Mysore, 1962**, the Supreme Court noted that ultimately, **poverty, rather than community identity**, was the real marker of social and educational backwardness. While the **court did not categorically reject using caste identity** to determine the beneficiaries of quota or reservation schemes, the damage had been done.
- However, in the watershed **Indra Sawhney case**, the Supreme Court held that exclusively **"economic criteria" were unconstitutional since the category of "poor" did not reflect "social backwardness"**.

Positives of Economic-status based reservation for SC, ST and OBCs

- EWS reservations will allow 'excluded' sections in lower castes to "share the fruits of the policies of the government".
- To provide **equal opportunity as far as equity is concerned**, reservation policy should be associated with economic status and rich/poor classification.
- This will prevent the privileged classes in minority communities from unduly benefiting from caste based reservation, whether it is in government jobs or medical admissions.
- India still lives in her villages and instead of caste based reservation, income based reservation will be more beneficial because people from rural areas and low income groups will benefit.
- Even the urban poor need assistance and special affirmative action programs will be able to ensure their continued upliftment.
- Income based reservation will see to it that people from high income groups are barred from advantages given that they have already received the benefits of economic upliftment.
- Many castes are making attempts to be classified as backward to avail the benefits. Consider the Patels or Patidars of Gujarat who are an economically and politically dominant community. Given that the Patels have worldwide presence as entrepreneurs and NRIs, it seems ironical that they are demanding caste based reservation for their community.
- Caste based reservation has failed to assimilate SC and ST within the mainstream.
- Income based reservation will ensure that the creamy layer does not make off with a majority of the benefits while those from poorer sections yet belonging to minority communities are left on the sidelines.
- Discrimination is still rampant against members of SC and ST community especially in rural areas. Reservation in the name of caste has done nothing to prevent this.
- The poor, educated youth will benefit from income based reservation and get a chance to access a brighter future.

Findings of The India Human Development Survey, and its last two rounds of 2004-05 and 2011-12

- In terms of their **annual per capita mean income (APCMI)**, *Jatavs* (a type of Dalit) are not at all doing better than other important Dalit jatis of UP: They earned only Rs 6,135 a year in 2011-12, against Rs 6,643 for the Pasis and Rs 9,077 for the Dhobis.
- Among the *Mahars*, for instance, the socioeconomic differentiation is as pronounced as among the Jatavs. Here again, the richest 20 per cent earned 10 times more than the poorest 20 per cent (Rs 68,401 against Rs 7,254).
- To be a Dalit in UP and to be a Dalit in Maharashtra is not the same thing in terms of income, education and occupation.



- Dalits are not catching up yet — far from that — even if the growth rate of their APCMI is among the highest. It was more than 200 per cent between 2004-05 and 2011-12 — a record — but *Mahars* were still earning 40 per cent less than the Brahmins of Maharashtra and 27 per cent less than the Marathas.
- The socioeconomic differentiation within the Dalit jatis is as pronounced as in other caste groups. To address the problems of the most disadvantaged, a class element has to be taken into account within each jati.

Negatives of Economic-status based reservation for SC, ST and OBCs

- The “creamy layer” formula — which relies on class-related criteria — would not do either because of the stigma still associated with untouchability.
- Surveys show that when the same CV was sent to a potential employer in response to a call for applications, those with a Brahmin name were much more likely to result in a call for job talk/interview, compared to the CV bearing a Dalit name — which generated a large number of negative responses (or no reply at all).
- Indeed, in institutions where there is no reservation for SCs (the judiciary, Rajya Sabha, etc.), Dalits remain massively under-represented despite the fact that they have, in their ranks, a large number of people with the required diplomas and skills.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Unlike the historical debates, the ‘economic criterion’ today is not proposed as a competing idea to caste and community, but as an allied one.
- ❖ By validating the 10 per cent quota for the “general category”, the Supreme Court has unintentionally opened a window of opportunity for revisiting the reservation policy in favour of the needful Dalits.

Q) Discuss the key features of Official Secrets Act. Has the act become archaic and irrelevant in today's times ? Critically analyse in the light of recent incidence of 'Stolen documents' in Rafale case. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article discusses the nuances of the Official secrets Act in the backdrop of recent Attorney-General's request for criminal action against those responsible for making stolen documents on the Rafale deal public.

Key demand of the question:

The question wants us to write in detail about the key features and provisions of the Official Secrets Act and evaluate its relevance as of today.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with a brief discussion of the current context of Stolen documents of the Rafale case.

Body:

What is the issue?

What are the key features of OSA?

Trace the evolution of the Act.

notable convictions so far under the Act?

A comparison with similar laws in other countries.



Conclusion:

Conclude with significance of reforms required by the Act.

Introduction:

- The alleged irregularities in the **Rafale aircraft deal** between India and France was published in 'The Hindu' Newspaper. The Attorney General raised an objection in court seeking dismissal of the review petitions.
- This was on the ground that the reports cited documents "stolen" from the defence ministry. The Official Secrets Act was used as a shield against allegations of wrongdoing in the Rafale deal.

Body:

- Official Secrets Act, a colonial-era law meant for ensuring secrecy and confidentiality in governance, mostly on **national security and espionage issues**, has often been cited by authorities for refusing to divulge information.
- Governments have also faced criticism for **misusing the law against journalists and whistleblowers**.

Key features of OSA:

- The Official Secrets Act was first enacted in 1923 and was retained after Independence.
- The law, applicable to **government servants and citizens**, provides the framework for dealing with **espionage, sedition, and other potential threats to the integrity of the nation**.
- The law makes **spying, sharing 'secret' information, unauthorised use of uniforms, withholding information, interference with the armed forces in prohibited/restricted areas**, among others, punishable offences.
- If guilty, a person may get up to 14 years' imprisonment, a fine, or both.
- The information could be any reference to a place belonging to or occupied by the government, documents, photographs, sketches, maps, plans, models, official codes or passwords.
- OSA was amended and made stricter in 1967, widening the scope of Section 5 ("Wrongful communication. etc., of information") and enlarging the scope of Section 8 ("Duty of giving information as to commission of offences").

The notable convictions so far:

- The most recent conviction under the Official Secrets Act came in 2018.
- The Delhi court held former diplomat Madhuri Gupta, who had served at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, guilty under the OSA.
- She was sentenced to 3 years in jail for passing on sensitive information to Pakistan's ISI.
- In 2017, journalist Poonam Agrawal was charged under OSA for conducting a sting operation on an Army official who criticised the **sahayak system in the Army**.
- Journalist Tarakant Dwivedi alias Akela was booked for criminal trespass under the Official Secrets Act on May 17, 2011, 11 months after he wrote an article in Mid-Day about how sophisticated weapons bought after 26/11 were being stored in a room with a leaking roof at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai.
- In 2002, the then Kashmir Times journalist Iftikhar Gilani was arrested and charged under the OSA. The case was in relation with allegedly possessing secret documents relating to the deployment of troops in the Valley. The state later withdrew the case.

OSA in other contemporary democracies:

- Several countries including the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand continue to use the legislation to protect state secrets.
- In 2001, Canada replaced its OSA with a **Security of Information Act**.
- The "official secrets" come under the Espionage Act in the U.S.A
- In 2018, a Myanmar court awarded seven years' jail to two Reuters journalists for illegally possessing official documents on the military's alleged human rights abuses against Rohingya Muslims.
- Malaysia has also been accused of using the OSA to silence dissidence.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations way back in 1966, specifically includes the right to freedom of expression, defined as "the freedom to seek, receive and impart the information and ideas of all kinds".
- ❖ India being a signatory to ICCPR makes it necessary to repeal the archaic OSA as suggested by **Goswami Commission** had suggested in the late 1970s as well as the **Second ARC**.



Q) Debate whether the assertion of 10% quota law can act as a step towards classless and casteless society ? Critically analyse. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The question is in relevance to the recently proposed quota facility for the economically weaker sections by the government of India. It is important to evaluate the shift in the idea of reservation from socially weaker sections to economically weaker sections.

demand of the question:

The answer must explain why is the paradigm shift, What is that the government claiming and how far is it right? One must weigh the pros and cons of such a policy. The main demand of the question is to analyse if the above reform in reservation system is going to make our Indian society – casteless and classless in reality.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction

Brief upon the recent decision of the government on providing the quota for EWS.

Body

Discussion should analyse the Supreme Court’s past decision of – “attainment of economic equality as the final and only solution to the besetting problems”.

Discuss – the pros and cons of amendment; to create 10% reservation for the poor in the unreserved category violated the basic structure of the Constitution and breached the 50% ceiling.

Relevance of Article 15(6) and Article 16(6).

Is reservation the only solution to empower the weaker and backward section?

Conclusion

conclude with significance of reservation in Indian history since independence, and how gradually we need to move towards a casteless and classless society that requires no reservation as a tool to bring equality among people.

Introduction:

- The President of India has given his assent to the bill providing **10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions to the economically weaker sections in the general category.**
- The legislation will be known as the **Constitution (103 Amendment) Act, 2019** and it shall come into force on such date as the Centre notifies.

Body:

Reservation leads to casteless and classless society:

- The 10% quota law is a step towards a classless and casteless society, the Union government has indicated in the Supreme Court.
- The Centre referred to the court’s past decisions that called for the “attainment of economic equality as the final and only solution to the besetting problems” of the country. The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, was meant to benefit the economically weaker sections of society who were not covered by the existing schemes of reservation.
- It said the law was meant to benefit a large section of the population of 135 crore people, who are mostly lower middle class and below the poverty line.



- The government quoted **the 2010 report of the Commission for Economically Backward Classes**, chaired by Major General S.R. Sinho (retired), which said 18.2% of the general category came under the below poverty line (BPL).
- The Government took support of the **13-page affidavit quoted from a 1985 Constitution Bench judgment in K.C. Vasanth Kumar vs Karnataka**, which quotes Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi to drive home the point that the economy of a family, and not its caste, should be the determining factor of social and educational backwardness.
- Article 15(6) and Article 16(6) are enabling provisions for advancement of the economically weaker sections and are, in fact, in conformity with the principle of reservation and affirmative action, It argued that a “mere amendment” to an Article would not violate the basic structure of the Constitution.
- Furthermore, the 50% ceiling applied to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The new provision dealt with the economically weaker sections. “The limit of 50% is only applicable to reservation under Articles 15(4), 15(5) and 16(4) and does not apply to Article 15(6).”

The **pros** of the reservation Act are:

- **Alleviation of Poverty:** It is expected to help the needy among the higher castes.
- **Reduces ghost beneficiaries:** In some cases, it is expected to eliminate the desperation of those who, in the past, would resort to obtaining **fake Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST)** certificates that were used to seek entry into professional courses.
- **Removes Prejudice:** The reservation will prevent these higher castes from holding reservations responsible for national disintegration and perpetuation of casteism, as they widely believe.
- **Reduces Unwanted Adoptions:** The legislation is also expected to keep savarna-caste aspirants from seeking adoption into SC/ST families in order to procure SC/ST certificates.
- **No deceptive self-characterisation:** Ironically, the 10% quota can help these savarnas retain their authentic caste identity. In this way, they can now avoid facing humiliation in courts of law on account of being exposed as fake caste certificate holders.

The **cons** of the reservation are:

- **Discredits the moral foundation of the principle of social justice:**
- The **principle of social justice** calls for ‘**equal treatment of equals**’ and ‘**affirmative action for less advantage sections**’.
- Constitution outlines special provisions for **only four classes** – SCs, STs, Backward Classes and Anglo Indians in the Articles 330-342 under Part 16.
- The provision is clearly mentioned as reservation is explicitly for ‘social exclusion and discrimination’. Notably, the “**socially and educationally backward classes**” was the target group in quotas for OBCs.
- **Unfairness or an element of injustice** is rooted in the practice of **untouchability**, whereas pure economic backwardness is rooted in the systemic inability to provide jobs to the higher castes.
- The **lack of opportunities is not due to untouchability**, but due to the **inability of the state and the market to provide enough jobs for the qualified and the needy**.
- The new reservation policy has transformed from a policy meant to provide a level playing field for those **suffering from historical discrimination and those who are weaker sections of the society to a policy meant as a dole for those sections of society who are poor and lack jobs**.
- The **Indira Sawhney case** had further held that **social backwardness cannot be determined only with reference to an economic criterion**.
- **Violation of DPSP:**
- The **Article 46**, which is a non-justiciable Directive Principle, says that the state shall promote educational and economic interests of “weaker sections”, in particular SCs and STs, and protect them from “social injustices” and “all forms of exploitation”.
- While the **103rd Amendment mentions Article 46 in its statement and objects**, it seems the government overlooked the fact that upper castes neither face social injustice nor are subjected to any form of exploitation.
- Moreover, the Constitution makes provisions for commissions to look into matters relating to **implementation of constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes (Article 338), Scheduled Tribes (338A) and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (339)**, but has not created any commission for the economically backward classes.



- **Violation of Basic Structure Doctrine:**

- The 10% reservation will be in addition to the existing cap of 50% reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes, taking the **total reservation to 60%**.
- This would leave other candidates with just 40% government jobs or seats, amounting to **violation of Article 14 (Right to Equality)**, which is a part of **Basic Structure**.
- The 60% reservation will also lead to **“sacrifice of merit”**.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Reservation to the weaker sections is a positive affirmative action needed for their welfare. The 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act though is a beneficial move for the **“forward poor”**.
- ❖ Similar moves by previous governments have been judicially reviewed and struck down. It is prudent to look at other alternatives to alleviate the conditions of EWS.

Q) Has the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) turned out to be less of a boon and more of a Bane to the Marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society ? Critically analyse. (250 words)

The hindu

why this question:

The article analyses in detail the government of India's flagship scheme of Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) with special focus on how it affects the

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the salient features of the scheme very briefly and discuss the challenges that the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System is posing against the vulnerable and the marginalized sections of the society.

Directive word:

Critically Analyse – When asked to ‘analyse’, we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Introduce by highlighting the significance of Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS).

Body:

Discuss the key features of the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) how it works, what are the provisions associated with it? Etc.

Discuss how Aadhar implementation creates scope for inflicting damage on the poor and the unprivileged.

E.g. When benefits are paid through Aadhaar-enabled means such as the Aadhaar Payments Bridge System (APBS), the first step is to seed the list of beneficiaries with the corresponding Aadhaar numbers; Seeding is a tedious operation and it has to be done each time a new scheme is inducted. Those who have failed to comply are simply removed from the lists. Poor people often find themselves deprived of their rights in the process; Whenever ABBA has been imposed in the PDS, large numbers of poor people have been deprived of their food rations. Meanwhile, evidence from Jharkhand suggests that ABBA is of little use in reducing PDS corruption. Nevertheless, the central government is determined to make ABBA compulsory for food rations, with cosmetic exemptions; Another source of confusion is the APBS's “last Aadhaar-linked account” (LALA) rule, whereby Aadhaar becomes a financial address and money is automatically sent to a person's LALA. This rule often sent people's money to unwanted or unknown destinations, such as someone else's account or an Airtel wallet etc.



Conclusion –

Conclude by suggesting a way forward, how can the government overcome the challenges.

Introduction:

- **Aadhar Payment Bridge System (ABPS)** is used by the Government departments and agencies for the transfer of benefits and subsidies under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme launched by Government of India. It is a unique payment system implemented by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.
- It uses Aadhar numbers issued by UIDAI & IIN (Institution Identification Number) issued by NPCI. The basic idea of the APBS is that **a person's Aadhaar number becomes his/her financial address**. Instead of having to provide multiple account details to receive a bank transfer, one only has to provide Aadhar number.

Body:

Banes of APBS:

- **Unreliable seeding of Aadhar with bank account:**
 - It is alleged that when Jan Dhan Yojna was launched, seeding of Aadhar was done without due verification
- **Inconsistencies between Aadhar database and bank database:**
 - Due to haphazard seeding, there are inconsistencies between Aadhar database and bank database which led to discontinuation of benefits and subsidies for a large number of poor beneficiaries.
- **Diverted Payments:**
 - It is often found that benefits are transferred to others account under APB system.
 - A recent study of the Indian School of Business (ISB), based on an analysis of more than 10 million payments in 2014-18, concludes that 38% of all the APBS payments of MGNREGA wages in Jharkhand “redirect wages to a completely unrelated account”.
- **Uninformed consent:**
 - It is alleged that bank accounts have been mass-mapped onto the APBS without following due process of consent.
- **E-KYC issues:**
 - Compulsory e-KYC became a nightmare for poor people, for a number of reasons: some did not know what they were supposed to do, others had problems of biometric authentication, others still struggled with inconsistencies between the Aadhaar database and the bank database.
 - Among the worst victims were **old-age pensioners**. To this day, in Jharkhand, many pensioners are struggling to understand why their pension was discontinued after e-KYC was made compulsory.
- **Account Mapping:**
 - It is found that benefits are transferred to beneficiary rarely used account.
 - Last year, Airtel allegedly opened its customer account to airtel payment bank without following due consent and verification norms and mapped this accounts to which subsidy payments would be directed.
- **Lack of accountability:**
 - The ABPS is a very opaque payment system and few people have a clear understanding of it. When people have problems of diverted or rejected payments, there is no proper mechanism to resolve the issue.
 - There is no agency that is responsible for enforcing the consent norms and other “guidelines” issued by the NPCI.

Boon of APBS:

- APBS has led to digitization of a large number of retail payment transactions which were predominantly either in cash or cheque.
- Eliminates inordinate delays, multiple channels & paper-work involved in the existing system.
- In case of change in bank account, customer is not required to convey the bank account details or change in bank details to the Government Department or Agency.
- Customer not required to open multiple bank accounts for receiving benefits and subsidies of various social welfare schemes – Customer just need to open one account and seed his/her Aadhaar number in the bank account to start receiving benefits and subsidies directly into his/her Aadhaar Enabled Bank Account.
- It helps the government to serve the goal of financial inclusion and reframe subsidy management program.

Way forward:

- Responsibilities should be clearly assigned in enforcing the consent norms and other guidelines issued by the NPCI.



- The RBI may be the nominal regulator, but the real action is at the NPCI, the UIDAI and other strongholds of the Aadhaar lobby and accordingly accountability should be assigned where any negligence should not go unnoticed.
- Supreme Court's recent judgement in the Aadhaar case makes Aadhaar mandatory for availing facilities of welfare schemes and government subsidies as it empowers the poor and marginalised.
- An independent and participatory review of the system is long overdue.

Topic – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Q) Critically examine the success of Pradhan mantri Ujjwala Yojana scheme ? (250 words)

[Livemint](#)

Why this question:

The article analyses in detail the government of India's flagship Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) scheme.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss the salient features of the scheme very briefly and discuss the successes of the scheme over the past schemes for the same target population with same intent and bring out the challenges that the scheme is facing and suggest a way forward.

Directive word:

Critically Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Introduce by highlighting the significance schemes to vulnerable sections of the society in the context of PMUY.

Body:

Discuss the key features of the scheme – replace unclean cooking fuels used in the most underprivileged households with clean and more efficient LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas), LPG connections with a support of Rs. 1,600 per connection. Target revised to 8 crore- to be achieved by 2019-20 etc.

Discuss the beneficiaries

Status of the scheme as of today, what are the challenges facing the scheme- Affordability and Inactive gas cylinders, Issues with LPG distribution, Safety Issues, Identification of Beneficiaries etc.

Conclusion –

Conclude by suggesting a way forward.

Introduction:

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas for providing LPG connections to women from **Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**. India is home to more than 24 Crore households out of which about 10 Crore households are still deprived of LPG as cooking fuel and have to rely on firewood, coal, dung – cakes etc. as primary source of cooking.
- The PMUY has helped the spread of LPG cylinders predominantly in the urban and semi-urban areas with the coverage mostly in middle class and affluent households. It aims to safeguard the health of women & children



by providing them with a clean cooking fuel – LPG, so that they don't have to compromise their health in smoky kitchens or wander in unsafe areas collecting firewood.

Body:

Achievements:

- The oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) estimates that LPG coverage in India (the proportion of households with an LPG connection) has increased from 56% in 2015 to 90% in 2019. There is a significant increase in eastern states, with 48% of the beneficiaries being SC/STs.
- The government reports show that around 80% of the beneficiaries have been refilling cylinders, with average per capita consumption being 3.28 cylinders.
- PMUY has resulted in an additional employment of around 1 Lakh and provide business opportunity of at least Rs. 10,000 Crore in last 3 Years to the Indian Industry.
- The scheme has also provided a boost to the 'Make in India' campaign as all the manufacturers of cylinders, gas stoves, regulators, and gas hose are domestic.
- PMUY reduces these ill-effects by providing clean fuel and cutting out on drudgery. Increased use of cooking gas will shrink the incidence of tuberculosis in India, based on the statistics from the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) on TB prevalence.
- PMUY has helped in reducing the drudgery for women. The time saved can be used in socio- economically productive activities like **Self-Help Group activities**.
- The **World Health Organisation** hailed PMUY as decisive intervention by the government to facilitate the switch to clean household energy use, thereby addressing the problems associated with Indoor Household Pollution.

However, given the **scale** of the scheme there are some **implementation shortcomings** of the scheme

Cost issues:

- Consumers were paying market price for refills till the loan repayment for stove and first refill was made. This led to some consumers not going in for such refills.
- **Economic Burden:** The **increased monthly expenditure** has shied many consumers away from LPG and lured them back to firewood and cow-dung cakes.
- The **CEEW study** across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha found people were unwilling to pay upfront Rs.900-1,000 for a 14 kg refill.
- A **CRISIL Study** shows that of those surveyed, 86% said they had not shifted from biomass to LPG because the price of installing a connection was too high. Almost the same number – 83% – said the price of refills was too high.

Administrative issues:

- The government claims that around 80% of the beneficiaries have been refilling cylinders, with average per capita consumption being 3.28 cylinders. But there are implementation issues with the scheme in Madhya Pradesh, for instance.
- Aadhar seeding also faces issues caused by data discrepancies, especially where the spelling of names is concerned as a result of which applicants can find themselves unable to register for the scheme.

Logistic issues:

- Lack of LPG cylinder bottling plants near rural areas and connectivity issues especially in the tribal areas.
- Last-mile connectivity and delivery still poses a great challenge.

Safety and Behavioural issues:

- Safety has been another concern about distribution of LPG connection, especially to BPL families. Lack of awareness and safety amenities in beneficiary households have increased the likelihood of accidents.
- Cow-dung cakes lying around the house all the time. Hence, LPG cylinders are used on special occasions or during some kind of emergency or when it's entirely too hot to burn wood.
- The CRISIL report also noted that 37% of households in rural areas procure cooking fuel for free.
- **Agency:** Most rural women do not have a say in determining when a refill is ordered, even though the connection is in their name.

Way Forward:

- **Increase Affordability:** A case in point is state-run fuel retailers introducing a 5kg refill option to make purchases affordable.



- **Increase Accessibility:** Gas Agencies should be set up within 10km radius, especially in the rural and remote areas to increase accessibility.
- **Increase Availability:** Alternatives like Gas-grid and piped connections in cities and areas near the bottling plants can free up the cylinders for other areas.
- **Promote 'Give it up':** The initiative of the government to persuade the well-off to give up the LPG subsidies has added to the corpus of PMUY. Similar initiatives can be promoted.
- **Encourage Private Players** to set up LPG franchises at rural areas.
- **Sensitization and Education** of safe use of LPG through **LPG Panchayats, NGO's etc.**

Q) Would a universal basic income reduce poverty in India ? Do you think it will strengthen the State's ability to deliver on its promise of a guaranteed minimum standard of living for every poor Indian. Discuss. (250 words)

Ushering in a new social contract – The Hindustan times 7March2019

Why this question:

The article discusses the role of Minimum income and how it can help the State deliver a basic standard of living for every poor family. Under this context it becomes important to analyze the pros and cons of the Universal basic income concept.

Key demand of the question

The answer must weigh the pros and cons of the concept of Universal basic income as to how the minimum income proposal would not absolve the state of its core responsibilities of providing food, education and healthcare for the poor but however It will strengthen the State's ability to deliver on its promise of a guaranteed minimum standard of living .

Directive word

Discuss– this is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question. we also have to discuss about the related and important aspects of the question in order to bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

One can start with facts and details of the research on the anonymous "London Patient" of HIV and the stem cell transplant involving CCR5-delta 32 homozygous donor cells.

Body:

What is Universal Basic Income (UBI)?

Why Universal Basic Income?

How does it work, pros and cons.

challenges that the state may face in Implementation of UBI.

Case studies supporting your opinion.

Conclusion:

UBI, though a noble idea, but should not completely outdo the existing essential social services/schemes related to education and health which are not only the core functions of the state but also indispensable for meaningful and dignified individual existence. However, the alternatives to UBI can be explored like direct benefits transfers, conditional cash transfers and other income support schemes which also hold the potential to yield the above mentioned benefits.

Introduction:

- Universal basic income is a form of social security in which **all citizens or residents** of a country regularly receive an **unconditional sum of money**, either from a government or some other public institution, in addition to any income received from elsewhere. The payment is enough to cover the cost of living. The goal is to provide financial security.



- The state of Sikkim recently announced that UBI will be implemented in state by 2022.

Body:

- It characterises the basic income in five divisions — **Periodic** (being paid at regular intervals, not lump sum), **cash payment** (not in kind or vouchers, leaving it on the recipient to spend it as they like), **individual** (not to households or families), **universal** (for all), and **unconditional** (irrespective of income or prospects of job).

Rationale behind UBI:

- The average Indian family's monthly income in 1938 was Rs 25.
- Today, the average Indian family's monthly income is roughly Rs 50,000, a 2,000 times increase since 1938.
- The poorest 10% of Indian families earn a mere Rs 5,000 a month.
- 25 million Indian families earn just a tenth of what the average Indian family earns.
- And, 50 million households earn just a fifth of the average Indian family.
- While the Indian economy continues to grow, the much touted trickle down impact of economic development seems elusive to the poorer sections of our society.
- There is a real risk of the bottom quarter of Indian families being left behind completely.
- The plan to ensure a basic minimum standard of living for every Indian family that was envisaged by Nehru and Bose in 1938 is applicable even today.

The pros of UBI include:

- **Fights Poverty and vulnerability:** Poverty and vulnerability will be reduced in one fell swoop. It increases equality among citizens as envisaged in our DPSP.
- **new social contract:** A social contract that will empower citizens with the freedom of choice. UBI treats beneficiaries as agents and entrusts citizens with the responsibility of using welfare spending as they see best; this may not be the case with in-kind transfers. Nobel laureate **Amartya Sen** had also propounded that **choice** should be given to people, which will lead to development.
- **Better targeting of poor:** As all individuals are targeted, **exclusion error** (poor being left out) is **zero** though inclusion error (rich gaining access to the scheme) is 60 percent.
 - **Example:** The India Human Development Survey found that in 2011-12 about half of the officially poor did not have the BPL card, while about one-third of the non-poor had it.
- **Fighting technological unemployment:** With IR4.0 on the rise, there is an increase in the automation leading to loss of many white and blue collared jobs. UBI can act as a sort of security net for the millions of people who will be left jobless by the tech revolution.
- **Supporting unpaid care workers:** Those with ill or differently abled relatives are often forced to quit their jobs and look after them full-time. UBI would allow care-workers to support themselves, encouraging care work and taking pressure off public services that provide care to the sick and elderly.
- **Expanding the middle class:** The economic growth of high-income countries is making the rich richer, but having very little effect on the working classes. The research of economists **Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty** showed that "the bottom half of earners went from making 20 percent of overall income in 1979 to just 13 percent in 2014. The top 1 percent, on the other hand, have gone from making 11 percent to 20 percent. The pie has gotten vastly bigger, and the richest families have reaped bigger and bigger pieces from it." UBI would help balance this inequality and expand the ever-shrinking middle class.
- **Insurance against shocks:** This income floor will provide a safety net against health, income and other shocks.
- **Improvement in financial inclusion Payment:** transfers will encourage greater usage of bank accounts, leading to higher profits for banking correspondents (BC) and an endogenous improvement in financial inclusion. Credit – increased income will release the constraints on access to credit for those with low income levels.
- **Psychological benefits:** A guaranteed income will reduce the pressures of finding a basic living on a daily basis.
- **Ending abuse:** Those who suffer domestic abuse, mainly women, become trapped in violent situations because they don't have the means to leave them. UBI would make leaving an abusive partner easy, and would unleash the potential of countless people trapped by domestic violence.
- **Administrative efficiency:** A UBI in place of a plethora of separate government schemes will reduce the administrative burden on the state.

The cons of UBI:

- **Conspicuous spending:** Households, especially male members, may spend this additional income on wasteful activities.
- **Disincentive to work:** A minimum guaranteed income might make people lazy and opt out of the labour market.



- **Gender disparity** induced by cash Gender norms may regulate the sharing of UBI within a household – men are likely to exercise control over spending of the UBI. This may not always be the case with other in-kind transfer
- **Implementation:** Given the current status of financial access among the poor, a UBI may put too much stress on the banking system.
- **Poor fiscal capacity:** India doesn't have the fiscal capacity to implement Universal Basic Income. Economic Survey calculations showed that a **75% universality rate with an annual Universal Basic Income of Rs 7,620 per year at 2016-17 prices will cost about 5% of the GDP.** Economist Pranab Bardhan showed that inflation-indexed Universal Basic Income of Rs 10,000 at 2014-15 prices—about three-quarters of that year's poverty line—will cost about 10% of the GDP.
- **Distort labour Market:** Universal Basic Income can create distortions in the labour market. A steady, permanent and guaranteed income without any work is likely to affect labour mobility and participation. It can cause a rise in the wages too.
- **Political economy of universality:** ideas for self-exclusion Opposition may arise from the provision of the transfer to rich individuals as it might seem to trump the idea of equity and state welfare for the poor.
- **Exposure to market risks (cash vs. food):** Unlike food subsidies that are not subject to fluctuating market prices, a cash transfer's purchasing power may severely be curtailed by market fluctuations.

Economic Survey 2016-17 views:

- Universal Basic Income should replace the welfare scheme. The Economic survey wants UBI to replace and NOT supplement the existing social welfare, anti-poverty schemes like MGNREGA, PMJSY etc
- Economic Survey has suggested **replacing all current cash transfers** with universal basic income.
- Survey in a bold step ensured that **universal basic income will not be distributive** in nature. The burden to distribute the income will not be shared by the rich.
- The Survey points out that the two prerequisites for a successful UBI are: **functional JAM** (Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile) system as it ensures that the cash transfer goes directly into the account of a beneficiary and **Centre-State negotiations** on cost sharing for the programme.

Conclusion:

- ❖ UBI holds a **lot of potential as a welfare scheme**, however in its present form needs to be re-evaluated. There is a need for a 10-fold increase in resource mobilisation combined with increasing the tax base for funding.
- ❖ However, the alternatives to UBI can be explored like direct benefits transfers, conditional cash transfers and other income support schemes which also hold the potential to yield the above mentioned benefits

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Q) The Health care system in India requires major improvements to make it universal. Discuss the major challenges being faced by the Healthcare system in India ? What steps should be taken to strengthen the existing state of Health infrastructure in the country ? (250 words)

[The hindu](#)

Why this question:

The article provides for a close examination of the challenges being faced by the Healthcare system in India. It highlights the need of strengthening primary health care system.

Key demand of the question:

The question wants us to bring out the overall importance of a strong and efficient health infrastructure in the country. It wants us to highlight the status of health infrastructure in India , the challenges it is facing and the suggestive measures to improve the same.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Discuss the significance of healthcare infrastructure in India. Relate it to development aspect of the country.



Body:

Discuss the challenges specific to Indian healthcare system on multiple dimensions – policy level, finances, infrastructure, schemes and their failures etc. Then move onto discuss what needs to be done to improve the existing scenario – strengthening of primary healthcare system, increased finances, infrastructure development, dedicated delivery of schemes etc.

Conclusion –

Conclude with how the system of healthcare is crucial for the development of the country thus it is very important for the government to focus on augmenting the current system marred with loopholes.

Introduction:

- Post Independence there has been a significant improvement, in the health status of people. Public health and health services have been synonymous in India.
- This integration has dwarfed the growth of a comprehensive public health system, which is critical to overcome some of the systemic challenges in healthcare. Poor strata of population have denied proper health care due to lack of universal healthcare.

Body:

The major challenges faced by healthcare system in India are:

- **Finance:** At about **1.3% of the national income**, India's **public healthcare spending** between 2008 and 2015, has virtually remained stagnant. This is way less than the global **average of 6 per cent**. It is a herculean task to implement a scheme that could potentially cost Rs 5 lakh per person and benefit 53.7 crore out of India's 121 crore citizenry, or roughly about 44% of the country's population. **Over 70 per cent of the total healthcare expenditure** is accounted for by the private sector.
- **Crumbling public health infrastructure:** Given the country's crumbling public healthcare infrastructure, most patients are forced to go to private clinics and hospitals. There is a shortage of **PHCs (22%)** and **sub-health centres (20%)**, while **only 7% sub-health centres and 12% primary health centres meet Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) norms**.
- **High Out of Pocket Expenditure:** Reports suggest that 70% of the medical spending is from the patient's pockets leading to huge burden and pushing many into poverty. Most consumers complain of rising costs. Hundred days into the PMJAY, it remains to be seen if private hospitals provide knee replacement at Rs 80,000 (current charges Rs 3.5 lakh) bypass surgery at Rs 1.7 lakh (against Rs 4 lakh).
- **Insurance:** India has one of the lowest per capita healthcare expenditures in the world. Government contribution to insurance stands at roughly 32 percent, as opposed to 83.5 percent in the UK. The high out-of-pocket expenses in India stem from the fact that 76 percent of Indians do not have health insurance.
- **Doctor-Density Ratio:** The **WHO** reports the doctor-density ratio in **India at 8 per 10,000 people** as against **one doctor for a population of 1,000**. To achieve such access, merely increasing the number of primary and secondary healthcare centres is not enough.
- **Shortage of Medical Personnel:** Data by **IndiaSpend** show that there is a staggering shortage of medical and paramedical staff at all levels of care: 10,907 auxiliary nurse midwives and 3,673 doctors are needed at sub-health and primary health centres, while for community health centres the figure is 18,422 specialists.
- **Rural-urban disparity:** The rural healthcare infrastructure is three-tiered and includes a sub-center, primary health centre (PHC) and CHC. PHCs are short of more than 3,000 doctors, with the shortage up by 200 per cent over the last 10 years to 27,421. Private hospitals don't have adequate presence in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and there is a trend towards super specialisation in Tier-1 cities.
- **Social Inequality:** The growth of health facilities has been highly imbalanced in India. Rural, hilly and remote areas of the country are under served while in urban areas and cities, health facility is well developed. The SC/ST and the poor people are far away from modern health service.
- **Poor healthcare ranking:** India ranks as low as 145th among 195 countries in healthcare quality and accessibility, behind even Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
- **Commercial motive:** lack of transparency and unethical practices in the private sector.
- **Lack of level playing field between the public and private hospitals:** This has been a major concern as public hospitals would continue receiving budgetary support. This would dissuade the private players from actively participating in the scheme.



- **Scheme flaws:** The overall situation with the National Health Mission, India's flagship programme in primary health care, continues to be dismal. The NHM's share in the health budget fell from 73% in 2006 to 50% in 2019 in the absence of uniform and substantial increases in health spending by States.

Steps taken up currently:

- The **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017** advocated allocating resources of up to two-thirds or more to primary care as it enunciated the goal of achieving "the highest possible level of good health and well-being, through a preventive and promotive healthcare orientation".
- A 167% increase in allocation this year for the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)** — the **insurance programme** which aims to cover 10 crore poor families for hospitalisation expenses of up to ₹5 lakh per family per annum.
- The government's recent steps to **incentivise the private sector to open hospitals** in Tier II and Tier III cities.
- Individual states are adopting technology to support health-insurance schemes. For instance, Remedinet Technology (India's first completely electronic cashless health insurance claims processing network) has been signed on as the technology partner for the Karnataka Government's recently announced cashless health insurance schemes.

Measures needed to strengthen the existing state of Health infrastructure in the country are:

- There is an immediate need to **increase the public spending to 2.5% of GDP**, despite that being lower than global average of 5.4%.
- The achievement of a distress-free and comprehensive wellness system for all hinges on the performance of health and wellness centres as they will be instrumental in reducing the greater burden of out-of-pocket expenditure on health.
- there is a need to depart from the current trend of erratic and insufficient increases in health spending and make substantial and sustained investments in public health over the next decade.
- A **National Health Regulatory and Development Framework** needs to be made for improving the quality (for example registration of health practitioners), performance, equity, efficacy and accountability of healthcare delivery across the country.
- Increase the **Public-Private Partnerships** to increase the last-mile reach of healthcare.
- **Generic drugs and Jan Aushadi Kendras** should be increased to make medicines affordable and reduce the major component of Out of Pocket Expenditure.
- The government's **National Innovation Council**, which is mandated to provide a platform for collaboration amongst healthcare domain experts, stakeholders and key participants, should encourage a culture of innovation in India and help develop policy on innovations that will focus on an Indian model for inclusive growth.
- India should take cue from other developing countries like Thailand to work towards providing **Universal Health Coverage**. UHC includes three components: Population coverage, disease coverage and cost coverage.
- Leveraging the **benefits of Information Technology** like computer and mobile-phone based e-health and m-health initiatives to improve quality of healthcare service delivery. **Start-ups** are investing in healthcare sector from process automation to diagnostics to low-cost innovations. Policy and regulatory support should be provided to make healthcare accessible and affordable.

Conclusion:

- ❖ India needs a holistic approach to tackle problems in healthcare industry. This includes the active collaboration of all stakeholders public, private sectors, and individuals.
- ❖ A more dynamic and pro-active approach is needed to handle the dual disease burden. A universal access to health makes the nation fit and healthy, aiding better to achieve the demographic dividend.

Q) A recently published Lancet report stated that India's goal to end the epidemic of Tuberculosis by 2025 is too ambitious and unrealistic. Critically analyse. (250 words)

In TB reality check. Lancet report says Indian, global goals unrealistic Mint e-paper front page. 21-03-2019

Why this question:

The article talks about a report in British medical journal Lancet that recently published that the goal of India to end TB by 2025 is too ambitious and unrealistic. The article talks in general the high prevalence of TB and also points towards optimism of ending TB in India but not before 2045.



Key demand of the question:

The question expects us to discuss in detail the current scenario of tuberculosis prevalence in India, the efforts being taken by the government in this direction to eliminate it by 2025. You must critically analyse using facts and figures and justify whether the goal set by the government of India is achievable in near future.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Re- assert the importance of TB elimination in India.

Body:

Explain Briefly the current status of TB in India – use the facts from the article such as – According to the World Health Organization’s “Global Tuberculosis Report 2018”, India accounted for 27% of the 10 million people who had developed TB in 2017, besides making up 32% of global TB deaths among HIV-negative people, and 27% of combined TB deaths. The disease remains a major public health challenge, and was responsible for 1.6 million deaths worldwide in 2017.

Then justify how eliminating TB by 2025 is a laudable vision, but difficult to achieve, considering the complexities of managing the situation, which requires equitable high quality of care to every person from diagnosis to treatment, cutting the transmission rapidly with a combined strategy of early diagnosis treatment of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) and improving socioeconomic conditions.

Highlight the features and lacuna of National Strategic Plan prepared by the center in 2017.

What needs to be done – leveraging private partnership, increased political will, financial resources and increasing research to develop new ways to diagnose etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude with optimism that such a goal is not unachievable if right set of actions are taken.

Introduction:

- Tuberculosis (TB) remains the biggest killer disease in India, outnumbering all other infectious diseases put together — this despite our battle against it from 1962, when the National TB Programme (NTP) was launched.
- According to the **World Health Organization’s “Global Tuberculosis Report 2018”**, India accounted for **27% of the 10 million people**, who had developed TB in 2017, besides making up **32% of global TB deaths among HIV-negative people, and 27% of combined TB deaths**.
- The Lancet report says that India’s goal to end the epidemic by 2025 was too “ambitious”, “unrealistic”, and, therefore, unattainable.

Body:

TB Situation in India:

According to WHO 2018 Global TB Report,

- India accounted for 27% of the total new TB infections in 2017- the highest in the world
- There has been a 1.7% reduction in tuberculosis cases and 3% reduction in deaths from 2016
- India has 24% of the world’s drug-resistant TB burden- the highest in the world
- There was also 8% reduction in rifampicin–first-line TB drug–resistant tuberculosis (RR TB) and MDR-TB

India’s efforts to eliminate TB:

- In 2018, Indian government launched **Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis (JEET)**, to increase the reporting of TB cases by the private sector.



- **National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination (2017-2025)** was launched in 2017. The government also called for the elimination of TB by 2025, five years prior to the international target (2030).
 - The NSP plans to provide incentives to private providers for following the standard protocols for diagnosis and treatment as well as for notifying the government of cases.
 - Further, patients referred to the government will receive a cash transfer to compensate them for the direct and indirect costs of undergoing treatment and as an incentive to complete treatment.
- **“Nikshay,”** (2012) an online tuberculosis reporting system for medical practitioners and clinical establishments was set up. The aim is to increase the reporting of tuberculosis, especially from the private sector.
- In 1992, the WHO devised the **Directly Observed Treatment-Short Course (DOTS) strategy** and advised all countries to adopt the strategy to combat the menace of tuberculosis. The DOTS strategy is based on 5 pillars:
 - political commitment and continued funding for TB control programs
 - diagnosis by sputum smear examinations
 - uninterrupted supply of high-quality anti-TB drugs
 - drug intake under direct observation
 - accurate reporting and recording of all registered cases
- The Indian government has been implementing Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant TB (PMDT) services, for the management of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and TB-HIV collaborative activities for TB-HIV

Challenges to achieve TB free India by 2025:

- **Poor socio-economic conditions:**
 - Poverty remains a stark reality in India with associated problems of hunger, undernourishment and poor and unhygienic living conditions.
 - According to GTB Report, 2018, a majority of TB patients (6lakhs) in India are attributable to undernourishment.
- **Underreporting and misdiagnosis:**
 - According to GTB Report 2018, India is one of the major contributors to under-reporting and under-diagnosis of TB cases in the world, accounting for 26% of the 3.6 million global gap in the reporting of tuberculosis cases.
 - Biomarkers and other diagnostics that identify individuals at highest risk of progression to disease are inadequate.
- **Treatment:**
 - Inequitable access to quality diagnosis and treatment remains a major issue in combating tuberculosis. Further, the private sector which contributes a major part of TB care is fragmented, made up of diverse types of healthcare providers, and largely unregulated.
 - Standard TB treatment is not followed uniformly across the private sector, resulting in the rise of drug resistance.
- **Follow-up treatment:**
 - Though the reporting of TB cases has increased lately, the reporting of treatment outcomes has not been robust.
 - The absence of consistent follow-up of treatment regimens and outcomes may result in relapse of cases and MDR-TB and XDR-TB. India has already been facing the problem of increasing MDR-TB cases
- **Drugs:**
 - The drugs used to treat TB, especially multidrug-resistant-TB, are decades old. It is only recently that Bedaquiline and Delamanid (drugs to treat MDR-TB) has been made available. However, access to such drugs remains low.
- **Funds:**
 - The RNCTP remains inadequately funded. There has been a growing gap between the allocation of funds and the minimum investment required to reach the goals of the national strategic plan to address tuberculosis.
- **Issues with RNCTP:**
 - Weak implementation of RNCTP at state level is another major concern. The Joint Monitoring Mission report of 2015 pointed out that the RNCTP failed to achieve both the main goals of NSP 2012-2017- Providing universal access to early diagnosis and treatment and improving case detection.
 - Major issues with RNCTP include: human resource crunch, payment delays, procurement delays and drug stock-outs



- **R&D:**
 - R&D for new methods and technologies to detect the different modes of TB, new vaccines, and new drugs and shorter drug regimens have been slow, as compared to other such diseases like HIV/AIDS.
- **Social Stigma:**
 - According to a study which assessed social stigma associated with TB in Bangladesh, Colombia, India, India had the highest social stigma index.
 - Patients often hesitate to seek treatment or deny their condition altogether for fear of social discrimination and stigmatization.

Way forward:

- It is important to **address the social conditions and factors** which contribute to and increase vulnerability to tuberculosis. Concerted efforts should be made to address the issues of undernourishment, diabetes, alcohol and tobacco use.
- **Increased political will, financial resources and increasing research** to develop new ways to diagnose, treat and prevent TB will help achieve the goal.
- **Private sector engagement** in combating TB needs to be strengthened. The private sector should also be incentivised to report TB cases. Example: **The Kochi Model**— Increasing TB cases reporting from private sector
- There is an urgent need for **cost-effective point-of-care devices** that can be deployed for TB diagnosis in different settings across India.
- **Universal access to drug, susceptibility testing at diagnosis** to ensure that all patients are given appropriate treatment, including access to second-line treatment for drug-resistant TB.
- To ensure public participation — a missing element in the RNTCP — in public-private participation mode.
- **Mass awareness campaigns** like 'TB Harega Desh Jeetega' can play an important role in breaking social taboos regarding TB.

Conclusion:

- ❖ India has the highest TB burden in the world. Given our inter-connected world and the airborne spread of TB, we need collective global action. Ending TB in India will have massive global impact in addition to saving the lives of tens of millions of India's people over the next 25 years.
- ❖ Even if ending TB by 2025 is not complete, pulling the TB curve down by 2025 and sustaining the decline ever after is a possibility.

Q) 'Despite various efforts for eradication of Leprosy by the government in India, India still accounts for 60% of new leprosy cases annually'. Explain by giving reasons. (250 words)

[Livemint](#)

Why this question:

The article centers on the inadequacies in our bout against leprosy, which we often assume is a challenge that has been dealt with. The article does out with a foremost health crisis that impacts the most vulnerable section of our society.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must discuss leprosy as major health challenge still persistent in India. We need to reflect the poor state of affairs with respect to eradication of the program, the steps taken so far in dealing with leprosy, how they have managed to improve the situation from the past till present, and the new challenges that have arisen, and our view on tackling the leprosy problem.

Directive word:

Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Briefly highlight the leprosy challenge the country is facing and highlight the observation mentioned in the article regarding the growing incident of leprosy cases amongst the socially marginalized.

**Body:**

Highlight the steps taken by the government such as the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, National Health Policy, multi drug therapy treatments etc., trace from past to present.

Present the problems faced by leprosy patients, along with the deficiencies in government's strategy.

Point out the flawed policy regime, discriminatory laws etc.

Discuss what needs to be done, suggest way forward – improved nationwide Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC), multi drug therapy (MDT), significance of Personal Laws Amendment Bill, 2018 etc.

Conclusion –

Emphasize that leprosy's persistence reflects poorly on a country aspiring to become a world power, thus its high time to focus on the issue with all vigor and make efficient efforts to resolve.

Introduction:

- India accounts for 60% of all new cases reported annually, with over 1.3 lakh new cases in the year 2016-17, according to the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP).
- India figures among 22 nations considered to have a 'high burden' for leprosy according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Body:**Present Status in India:**

- One person is diagnosed with leprosy roughly every four minutes in India, accounting for 60% of all new leprosy cases annually
- Leprosy was officially declared eliminated as a public health concern in India in 2005 when new cases fell to less than 1 per 10,000.
- Yet India still accounts for the largest number of leprosy affected people in the world.
- Official data says that the number of new Leprosy cases detected during 2016-17 is 135485 and the prevalence Rate per 10000 population as on March 2017 for India is 0.66.
- The current global prevalence is estimated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to be 0.23 per 10000 population.
- In 2017, India along with Brazil and Indonesia are the only countries where more than 10000 new cases are reported per year.
- Two out of three new global Leprosy cases are detected in India, according to official data.

Reasons for continued high burden:

- Major concerns include undetected new cases, problems with leprosy integration, the presence of leprosy in children, and paucity of education and training for livelihoods.
- It is highly unlikely that India achieves elimination of Leprosy at the state or district levels any time soon.
- Leprosy is becoming more of a disease of most marginalized and underserved populations in far-flung areas.
- In the Adivasi community the percentage of Leprosy patients have increased from 13.3% in 2009, to an alarming 18.8%.
- The earlier gains in containing the disease have stagnated and we are at risk of a re-emergence of Leprosy as a public health problem in substantial areas of the country.
- Rampant stigma against the disease prevents patients from seeking medical treatment.
- A large number of leprosy affected fall in the category of persons with disabilities as they hesitate to come forward for

Government Interventions

- India is currently running one of the largest leprosy eradication programs in the world, the **National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP)**.
- The **National Health Policy 2017 (NHP)** has elimination of Leprosy as a national level target.
- **Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC)** is being implemented by the Union Health Ministry.
- **SPARSH Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC)** was launched on 30th January 2017 to promote awareness and address the issues of stigma and discrimination.
- Since 1984, leprosy has been completely curable at any stage with **multi drug therapy (MDT)**—a combination of Rifampicin, Dapsone and Clofazimine—for a period of six months or one year depending on the severity of the disease
- The Lok Sabha passed the **Personal Laws Amendment Bill, 2018**, removing leprosy as a ground for divorce.



- A **public interest litigation** filed by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy has challenged 119 statutory provisions that continue to provide legal sanction to discrimination against people affected by leprosy.

Way forward:

- The emphasis must shift to more policy level changes and sustaining quality of services.
- The government must implement the key recommendations of the Law Commission on rights and special privileges.
- To reduce the burden, it is important to develop a **multi-pronged approach** that includes public education campaign, sustainable livelihood programmes, skill training workshops and generate employment, identify interventions to dispel stigma and mainstream the affected people.
- **Continued training of medical officers, nurses, physiotherapists, and paramedical workers** about quality diagnosis and treatment of leprosy must also be given prime focus.
- **Public education** on the fact that leprosy can be cured and is not to be feared is imperative.
- Those who have been cured at an early stage and can work often need to be given opportunities to learn skills and trades that would enable them to work.

Conclusion:

- ❖ **Mahatma Gandhi** had an enduring concern for people afflicted with leprosy. His vision was **not just to treat them, but also to bring them to mainstream to our society**.
- ❖ India, which is among the endemic countries, has been advised to include strategic interventions in national plans to meet the new targets, such as screening all close contacts of persons affected by leprosy; promoting a shorter and uniform treatment regimen, and incorporating specific interventions against stigmatisation and discrimination.

Q) The demographic dividend of India is bound to turn into a curse if the education system is not overhauled over the next decade. In this context critically analyze the issues and challenges faced by the education system in the country and justify the need for a systemic approach to reforming education system in the country. (250 words)

[Livemint](#)

Why this question:

The article highlights an approach to reform the education system in India, it recognizes that piecemeal initiatives are unlikely to improve student learning, thus its high time to take up a systemic approach to reform the current system to save the demographic dividend from turning into a demographic disaster.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects you to provide for a detailed picture of the scenario, you must detail upon the issues and challenges being faced by the system and highlight the need for systematic approach as a solution.

Directive word

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with highlighting the importance of education system for the country's progress on all fronts.

Body:

Current Issues of Education system in India

Necessity of a systematic approach; its impact

Way forward

**Conclusion:**

Conclude with what way can we shorten the distance between the nation's current state of education and its aspirations, end the answer with optimism, quote examples of government's initiatives policies in this direction.

Introduction:

- India's demographic dividend depends on the learning level of students. The quality of education has a direct bearing on any economy.
- The ASER report by NGO Pratham shows the **prevalence of learning deficit and the poverty of basic reading and arithmetic skills among students in Indian schools.**

Body:

The issues and challenges faced by education system in India are:

- **Expenditure on Education:**
 - The expenses on education as a percentage to GDP, India lags behind some developed/ developing nations.
- **Infrastructure deficit:**
 - Dilapidated structures, single-room schools, lack of drinking water facilities, separate toilets and other educational infrastructure is a grave problem.
- **Student-teacher ratio:**
 - Another challenge for improving the Indian education system is to improve the student teacher ratio.
 - In India, this ratio is very high as compared to certain comparable countries in the world. For example, while in developed countries this ratio stands at 11.4, in case of India, it is as high as 22.0.
- **Corruption and leakages:**
 - The transfer of funds from the central to state to local governments to school leads to involvement of many intermediaries.
 - The fund transfer is drastically reduced by the time it reaches the true beneficiaries.
 - High rates of corruption and leakages plague the system, undermine its legitimacy and harm the many thousands of honest headmasters and teachers.
- **Quality of Teachers:**
 - Lack of well trained, skilled and knowledgeable teachers which provide the foundation for a high quality education system.
 - Teacher shortages and poorly qualified teachers are both a cause and effect of poorly paid and managed teaching cadres.
- **Non-Academic burden:**
 - The teachers are overburdened with senseless reports and administrative workload. This eats into the time which is necessary for teaching.
 - A study by the **National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA)** revealed that **teachers spend only around 19 percent of their time teaching** while the rest is spent mostly on non-teaching administrative work.
- **Poor salary:**
 - Teachers are paid miserly salaries which affect their interest and dedication to work. They will look for other avenues like tuitions or coaching centers and coax the students to attend it.
 - This has dual effect, **firstly the quality of teaching in schools drop and secondly, the poor students are forced to spend money despite constitutional provision of free education.**
- **Teacher Absenteeism:**
 - Absence of teachers during school hours is rampant. The lack of accountability and poor governance structures add to the woes.
- **Lack of Accountability:**
 - **School Management Committees** are largely dysfunctional. Many exist solely on paper.
 - Parents are often not aware of their rights and if they are it is difficult for them to make their voice heard.
- **High drop-out rates:**
 - The drop-out rates in schools, especially girls, is very high.
 - Many factors like poverty, patriarchal mindset, lack of toilets in schools, distance to schools and cultural elements lead to children dropping out from education.



- **School closure:**
 - Many schools are closed to low student strength, lack of teachers and infrastructure. The competition posed by private schools is also a major challenge to government schools.

A systemic approach to reforming education system in the country needs the following:

- The current approach, mainly academic in nature, recognizes that **piecemeal initiatives** are unlikely to improve student learning.
- A **new systemic approach** to reforming education is now emerging in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- It is **accompanied with administrative reforms** that create an enabling environment for these new practices to take root.
- It involves **aligning all stakeholders and orienting their collective efforts** towards following a single and “comprehensive transformation road map” towards better learning outcomes.
- **Academic interventions** involve the adoption of grade competence framework instead of just syllabus completion.
- **Effective delivery of remedial education** for weaker students like after-school coaching, audio-video based education.
- Administrative reforms that **enable and incentivize teachers** to perform better through data-driven insights, training, and recognition. **Example:** Performance based increments in Salary.
- Together with human enablement, a **seamless ecosystem or a system enabler** (often a **technology platform**) is also set up.
- This **streamlines communication** and saves teachers’ valuable time that they might have otherwise spent on administrative tasks, such as leave applications, allowance claims, transfers and service book updates.
- It is also important to **track the performance of the schooling system** on a regular basis to course correct where needed.
- Therefore, a **robust accountability system** is required wherein there is a clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders, and the administration is empowered to act where necessary.
- This involves **frequent real-time, data-enabled review meetings at the block, district, and state levels**.
- These states have also developed user-friendly dashboards that assist education officials and the state leadership in decision-making.

Outcomes:

- Haryana has already seen significant progress in its learning outcomes, with grade-level competence seeing an increase from 40% in 2014, to approximately 80% currently, as per the ongoing third-party assessments.
- Systemic changes have led to Rajasthan’s steady rise among states to the top of the education chart in NAS in 2017.
- The changes are reinstating parents’ faith in the public education system, with states like Himachal Pradesh witnessing a reverse migration of students from private schools to government schools, as learning levels of government and private schools begin to converge.

Way forward:

- **Digitization:**
 - **Create a single-window system for infrastructure and mainstream fund-flows:** In Bihar, only around 10 percent of the schools fulfil infrastructure norms. A study revealed that files for renovating schools often go on a two-year journey through various departments.
 - The same can be applied for teacher salaries and school funds. These can be transferred directly from the State to the teachers and schools. There is no need to involve the District or Block in this process.
 - Leveraging the **audio-visual edutainment** to make education more interesting and easier to understand for the children. This will **improve the quality as well as reduce the drop-out rates**.
 - Implementing **bio-metric attendance for teachers and students for every class** can help reduce absenteeism.
- **Empower School Management Committees by using mobile phones:**
 - To develop a system that **facilitates School Management Committee** members by fostering democratic accountability.
 - Social audits should also be carried out for effective functioning.
- **Better pre-service teacher training** coupled with transparent and merit-based recruitments is a lasting solution for teacher quality.



- Improve the **quality of teacher education** by making teacher training mandatory. Example: **National Council for Teacher Education Act amendment bill, Diksha portal** to train teachers.
- Increase the **public spending on education to 6% of GDP** as recommended by many committees like the recent **TSR Subramaniam committee**.
- Teachers are rarely reprimanded for non-performance, while there are recommendations for **removal of non-detention policy**. The blame is squarely on the children, such an attitude must be wiped out.
- **Education policy in India** is focused on inputs rather than learning outcomes; It has a strong elitist bias in favour of higher education as opposed to primary or secondary education. This needs a change by coming out with a new policy.

Conclusion:

- ❖ State-wide campaigns, driven by the state's political and bureaucratic leadership, re-energize parents and the community at large, and channel the attention of all stakeholders towards better learning outcomes.
- ❖ Only when we align incentives of all stakeholders, and enable them while holding them accountable, can we shorten the distance between the nation's current state of education and its aspirations.

Q) "Reverse innovation can transform industries in India, and the world", Comment. (250 words)

HOW INDIA BUILDS: CHEAPER, FASTER, LOCAL- 8 Mar 2019mint ePaper Vijay Govindarajan & Mahesh Sriram

Why this question:

The article highlights the significance of reverse innovation in India with special focus to Health, education and energy industry and in what way reverse innovation can recreate foreign technologies by harnessing local know-how.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must address how reverse innovation can transform healthcare, education and energy industries specifically in India, thus one must explain in detail what is Reverse innovation, way about, its benefits for Indian industries and what needs to be done.

Directive word:

Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with the definition of Reverse innovation, highlight the recent beginning of it in Health industry of India.

Body:

What is Reverse Innovation? Explain with examples like Tata Motors – Tata Nano, Tata – Swacch – World's cheapest water purifier etc.

Trends, Strategy, and the advantages it brings to India.

How would Reverse Innovation benefit India – lead to further boom in industrialization, overall development of the entire eco-system, will lead to one world, one market" phenomenon.

Highlight the key industries that are already benefiting from It – Health, education, energy; state examples.

Conclusion:

Conclude with the importance of suggest way forward.

Introduction:

- Reverse innovation, also known as **trickle-up or bottom-up innovation**, is the process whereby goods developed as inexpensive models to meet the needs of developing nations, such as battery-operated medical instruments in countries with limited infrastructure, are then repackaged as low-cost innovative goods for Western buyers.

Examples:

- **Tata Nano:** While companies like Ford set up its global automobile platform in India and catered to the niche premium segments in India, Tata introduced the Tata Nano for the price conscious consumer in India in 2009. Tata plans to launch Tata Nano in Europe and U.S. subsequently.
- P&G's (**Vicks Honey Cough**) honey-based cold remedy developed in Mexico found success in European and the United States market.



- **Nestle's Maggi** brand – Low-cost, low-fat dried noodles developed for rural India and Pakistan found a market in Australia and New Zealand as a healthy and budget-friendly alternative.

Body:

- At the heart of reverse innovation is recreating foreign technologies by harnessing local know-how. Reverse innovation uses locally available resources to create products that can give foreign tech a run for its money.
- The heart of reverse innovation is about harnessing abundantly available local know-how and ingenuity and packaging the product/service in a manner that is easy to use and easy to repair.

Healthcare:

- Reverse innovation can transform healthcare in India, and the world.
- **Ayushman Bharat** (National Health Protection Scheme) is said to be the world's largest government-funded health insurance programme covering 100 million families up to ₹5 lakh every year.
- The scheme allows 500 million Indians to avail secondary and tertiary care at any empanelled hospital, anywhere in India.
- Albeit well-intentioned, meeting this enormous demand is a formidable challenge considering we have so few hospitals and doctors, with a majority of them in tier-I cities.
- The only way to fix the demand-supply gap is by promoting breakthrough innovations in healthcare delivery.
- Such innovations can be exported to rich countries like the US. That is the potential of reverse innovation.
- For instance, Narayana Health offers open heart surgery for ₹1.3 lakh, Aravind Eye Care provides cataract surgery for ₹6,500, and Care Hospital provides total knee replacement for ₹2.5 lakh. In the US, similar procedures cost more than ₹1 crore, ₹2.6 lakh and ₹21 lakh, respectively.
- Despite their ultra-low prices, medical outcomes of these exemplars are as good as any in the world. In addition, they are highly profitable.

Case Study: India has less than 20,000 ophthalmologists. In 2011, Forus launched its first product, **3netra Classic**, which screens cornea and retina for four major conditions—cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and cornea issues. In the US, the same tests require three expensive instruments. **3netra** is portable and can be taken on motorcycles; screening can be done in five minutes by a minimally trained technician; the physician can diagnose via telemedicine. **3netra** is priced at \$10,000. Competitive offerings from multinationals are \$30,000, are not portable and require trained technicians.

Advantages: It reduces the **burden on expensive hospital infrastructure** since simple cases can be handled at the **community level (spokes)**, while only those needing specialized treatment need to come to the **hospitals (the hub)**. It also **lowers the non-medical expenses for patients**—loss of wages when they are away from work, cost of travel and room and board. The wicked problem of **income inequality** can be solved by extending the productive life of his patients and empowering them to earn more.

Education:

- The cost of higher education keeps soaring. The very rich do not mind the high cost and the very poor get outright scholarships.
- It is the large middle class that is squeezed out of high-quality American universities.
- We need to educate millions in India. We cannot follow the American education model in India, with the principle of exclusion.
- India must come up with breakthrough education delivery models that can provide world-class education to the masses at very low costs.
- Once India fine-tunes such business models, they can be adapted in the US.

Energy:

- Since crude oil prices have declined, the pressure has declined in the US to innovate renewable energy. Yet, global warming is a real threat.
- Given the carbon emissions of petrol, India has no choice but to do radical innovations to generate energy from wind and sun.
- India has the potential to be a global leader in wind and solar energy.

Conclusion:

- ❖ Reverse innovation will address three of the country's most pressing agendas: economic growth, job creation (especially in rural India), and reduction of income inequality. From ultra-affordable healthcare to power



solutions to transportation and to futuristic technologies like augmented reality, 3D printing and robotics, the potential of reverse innovation is endless.

Q) The recent incident of wrong medicines post vaccination at the Primary health Centre of Hyderabad point to a looming public health emergency that necessitates a renewed focus on mitigating the hazards of poor health infrastructure . Discuss and critically analyze government policies for dealing with the crisis ? (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Why this question:

Recently one infant died and 22 others were in a critical condition after the staff of an urban primary health centre in Hyderabad allegedly administered them the wrong medicine – tramadol instead of paracetamol – after vaccination. The alleged mistake took place because of the similar packaging on the two drugs available at the health centre.

Key demand of the question:

The question is in the backdrop of the complacent and irresponsible behavior of the primary health care Centre in Hyderabad that lead to innocent loss of life. In this answer you must bring out the issues associated with the Healthcare industry and what needs to be done to address these issues.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with the importance of the primary healthcare centers in the Indian model of health infrastructure.

Body:

- the challenges, issues and concerns associated with such incidents in the health industry.
- What needs to be done ?
- Redressal?

Conclusion:

Conclude with how the Industry needs to gear up , strict action needs to be taken against the irresponsible and wrong doers, stringent policies should be put in place to keep a check on such issues.

Introduction:

- Primary Health Centre (PHCs) (public health centres) are **state-owned rural health care facilities in India**. They are essentially single-physician clinics usually with facilities for minor surgeries, too. They are part of the government-funded public health system in India and are the **most basic units of this system**. Presently there are 28,863 PHCs in India.
- In a recent incident at Nampally primary health center, two infants died and 32 others were admitted to further treatment after the staff allegedly gave the wrong medicine

Body:

- India has made reasonable progress in improving access to last-mile healthcare over the last decade. However, the improved access has not reached the 29 states equally.

The various challenges concerning the healthcare industry in India are: India’s healthcare suffers from **quality, quantity, footprint, access and affordability issues**.

- **The quantity issue:**

- The WHO estimates that India spent about \$267 per capita on health care in PPP adjusted terms in 2014—China spent three times that amount, Brazil five times, European nations 10 times and the US 20 times.



- India spends only about **5% of GDP** on public healthcare. Most countries spend two or more times that number.
- This allocation impacts infrastructure, supply of critical equipments, the number of hospitals and doctors, specialists, nurses and assistants.
- There aren't enough skilled healthcare professionals in India despite recent increases in MBBS programmes and nursing courses. Shortage is compounded by inequitable distribution of these resources.
- **The quality issue:**
 - India suffers from an acute shortage of secondary and tertiary hospitals
 - Significant shortfall in specialists and specialized equipment
 - **Rigid regulatory framework** combined with corrupt enforcement.
 - **Inadequate feeder system** from preventive health to primary care to secondary and tertiary referral, acute shortage of post-graduate seats for medical education.
 - India does not have an overarching national policy for human resources for health.
 - The dominance of medical lobbies such as the Medical Council of India
 - Medical Negligence as seen in the Nampally incident.
- **Access and affordability issues:**
 - Primary health centres (PHCs) are not present in many villages and wherever present they are severely undermanned.
 - This deeply impacts prevention and early detection.
 - **High Out of Pocket Expenditure:** Costs of medical treatment have increased so much that they are one of the primary reasons driving people into poverty
 - Recent incidence of the cut in the supply of oxygen cylinders to the hospital in Gorakhpur highlights the failure of procurement management in the Indian public health system.
 - The inefficiency in the procurement process results in both shortages and wastage.
 - Research showed that the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) has failed to cover an adequate number of poor house
 - There is lack of all things important to human settlements—sanitation, disease surveillance, primary healthcare, tertiary hospitals, life-saving equipment, political will and public health response.

Measures needed:

- A **prevention and early detection system** is a must if costs of the whole system for the country are to be contained. Implementation of **preventive and promotive health activities** in an integrated and comprehensive manner
- Increasing the number of drugs under price control. The government must consider bringing more medical devices under price control with the aim of making healthcare more accessible.
- The health ministry could also look at **standardising the cost of certain treatments**, so the prices don't vary across hospitals.
- Progressively raising public health expenditure to **5% of GDP**.
- Location of health services and facilities should be such that these are **easily accessible and available to people**, especially the under-privileged sections.
- **Human resource planning, human resource development** would ensure a motivated workforce. **The ANM's and ASHA workers** who form the **ground-force of public healthcare** should be paid at timely intervals and taken care of.
- Identification and specification of the **role of public and private sectors in health** should be encouraged.
- Effective involvement of the **indigenous systems of medicine** in provision of health care services
- Developing and using an **appropriate health technology** so as to have locally relevant health technologies which fit into the local socio-cultural milieu.
- **Strengthening of international partnership** in health by integrated involvement of international organisations. Sharing experiences and expertise in health among various countries especially in the South East Asian countries
- Public procurement policy experts say that there is a dire need to have **procurement specialists** in government hospitals. Introduce **e-tendering and direct payment** into the bank account of the vendor or service provider of medical equipments to maintain transparency.
- **Technology** like **Telemedicine, the E-health initiative** should be deployed for human health development, an iterative, data-driven and user-centric approach is required.



- Enactment of **public health Acts** to provide the basic legislative underpinning for public health action.
- The **Swachh Bharat campaign** could also use such technical expertise to maximize its impact in reducing exposure to diseases.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The **National Health Policy (2017)** calls for **upgradation for all 150,000 sub-centres** in the country as '**Health and Wellness Centres**' to provide improved primary care, with basic preventive, diagnostic, curative and referral facilities. As the required policies come through, it is time we define the right models to empower nurses and paramedics to deliver more at the last mile.

Q) Discuss the Implication of the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2019 that was held recently in India. What are the key challenges faced by entrepreneurs in our country ? suggest some measures to address them. (250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship was recently held at Grambharti near Gandhinagar in Gujarat. FINE is an initiative being systematized by Rashtrapati Bhavan in association with the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and the National Innovation Foundation-India. The question thus becomes relevant from the point of paper – I.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must bring out the significance of the festival and the key challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the country and measures to address them.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Keywords:

Innovation, entrepreneurship, socio-economic development, science and innovation etc.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with the highlights of the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship(FINE).

Body:

Discuss at a broader level, the importance of such events to encourage innovation in the country. How FINE will provide for a platform for innovators for building linkages with potential stakeholders to develop their ideas into implementable projects for the larger social good. It will provide a window to showcase creative and innovative solutions for social development through innovation emerging from grassroots, student ideas and other technologies.

Conclusion:

Conclude with optimism, India is at a turning point of innovation and such events encourage the spirit on innovation among the youth.

Introduction:

The Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship 2019 (FINE) is an initiative being organised by **Rashtrapati Bhavan** in association with the **Department of Science and Technology, Government of India** and the **National Innovation Foundation-India**. FINE 2019 festival is a celebration of **creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship**.

Body:

Implications of FINE:

- It will recognise, respect, showcase, reward innovations and to foster a supportive ecosystem for innovators.
- FINE will provide a platform for innovators for building linkages with potential stakeholders to develop their ideas into implementable projects for the larger social good.
- It will provide a window to showcase creative and innovative solutions for social development through innovation emerging from grassroots, student ideas and other technologies.
- It will help promote grassroots level innovation can provide the solution to diverse needs of the country.
- It will provide us the best possibility of ensuring that every young Indian will have an opportunity to realise his or her true potential

**Key challenges faced by the entrepreneurs:**

- **Funding:**
 - The funding scenario is still in nascent stage in India.
 - They can think of getting seed funding and venture funding on their ideas, but the process of getting funding from these sources is not easy as it looks.
- **Policies :**
 - Government is the single largest enabler for the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
 - Government's role in ease of doing business and helping companies start is vital to ensuring success.
- **Bureaucratic inefficiencies:**
 - Firstly, there are a large number of procedures to be followed and clearances to be obtained to start and operate a business.
 - Secondly, each of these procedures can take an inordinately large amount of time.
 - Taxes like **Angel tax** that falls under corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies as it takes the focus of entrepreneurs away from building a product or service to responding to tax notices and filing appeals.
 - **Difficult exit processes** pile up the investments done leading to **Non-Performing Assets**.
- **Corruption:**
 - While under no circumstances, corruption can be justified, it is a bitter truth that it is rampant in many government departments.
 - Even private sector is not spared by bribes, unwarranted objections.
 - Corruption has also spawned a business of 'consultants' whose only activity is to mediate between the corrupt officials and those seeking favours from them.
- **Labour:**
 - Lack of manufacturing capability in India has been attributed to red tapism and corruption, but the low productivity of labour is also a big factor.
 - **Stringent labour laws** governing lay-off of employees make it very difficult to fire workers in case of non-performance or during times of financial distress when it becomes imperative to lay-off workers to maintain the financial viability of the business operations.
- **Ecosystem Limited to Big Cities:**
 - The startup ecosystem in India is limited to big cities including Bangalore, Delhi, Bangalore, Pune and Chennai etc.
 - There are very few resources that are actually working toward strengthening the startup ecosystem.
- **Weak Education System:**
 - Indian education system is very weak especially when it comes to educating about entrepreneurship.
 - Students hardly get to know about entrepreneurship during their school studies.
 - Finding a team with right approach could be challenging for entrepreneurs especially when they are looking for people of non-tech skills.
- **Grey Market and Counterfeit Goods:**
 - The grey market refers to the flow of goods through a distribution channel not authorized or intended by the manufacturer.
 - Usually, this happens when the price of a product in the domestic market is much higher than in other nearby markets.
- **Social Capital:**
 - Social capital has been defined as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition

Way forward:

- **'The Startup India'** is a flagship program intended to reduce the rules and regulations burden from Startups.
- In case of taxes, exemptions are given all along easing compliance and reducing regulations. **Startup India Hub** is a single-point of contact for providing help to new businesses.
- A **well established infrastructure to support innovations** with the assistance of the big companies need to be set up.
- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** including **Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU)** is Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- With its demographics, the size of the economy and a **well-functioning capital market**, India stands a real chance of projecting itself as a preferred destination for investments.



- Laws passed the **Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, IBC** will help resolve the disputes quickly
- **Labour laws** should foster an enabling environment so far as employment practices are concerned.
- Faster reforms in the power sectors, facilitation of entry and exit of firms, level playing field for small and large firms, improvement in access to finance will lead to improvements in ease of doing business norms.
- For attracting new investment, both foreign and domestic, several macroeconomic issues have to be addressed. These include **political and economic stability, law and order maintenance, quality physical infrastructure, and buoyancy in financial markets.**

Conclusion:

- ❖ Innovations by themselves are not enough. We must also build an ecosystem for converting innovations into enterprises. This requires support for start-ups and for incubating young innovators.
- ❖ Therefore, India must work towards translating innovative ideas into accessible and affordable products and services for its people. At the end of the day, innovation is all about people, and that's a resource that India has in abundance.

Q) Discuss what is West Nile Virus; its causes and spread along with Long-Term Outcomes of Human West Nile Virus Infection. Suggest what can be India's best defence. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article captures stock of the public health measures for controlling West Nile Virus. It reports upon the case study from Malappuram District of Kerala suffering from West Nile Virus (WNV).

Key demand of the question:

Discuss causes, spread, transmission, symptoms, prevention and treatment of west Nile Virus, discuss what measures should India take to prevent the prevalence of such disease epidemics.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Introduce by stating the current conditions of the prevalence of the virus in India.

Body:

In brief discuss – what is west Nile virus?, origin, causes of the virus manifest. Then discuss its spread, methods of transmission, What is India's preparedness with respect to it. What should India do to manage such epidemics and mitigate them well within time.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward – suggest steps to overcome.

Introduction:

- Commonly found in **Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and West Asia**, the West Nile Virus (WNV) is a **viral infection** which is typically spread by **mosquitoes** and can cause neurological disease as well as death in people. A section of the media has reported that a seven year old boy from **Malappuram District of Kerala** is suffering from a West Nile Virus (WNV).

Body:

- First detected in a woman in West Nile district of Uganda in 1937, the virus was later identified in birds (crows and columbiformes) in Nile delta region in 1953. According to the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, the virus is a member of the **flavivirus genus** and belongs to the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex of the family Flaviviridae. The largest outbreaks of the virus were recorded in Greece, Israel, Romania, Russia and USA.

Transmission of the WNV:

- Human infection is most often the result of **bites from infected mosquitoes**. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on **infected birds**, which circulate the virus in their blood for a few days.
- The virus eventually gets into the **mosquito's salivary glands**. During later blood meals (when mosquitoes bite), the virus may be injected into humans and animals, where it can multiply and possibly cause illness.
- The virus may also be transmitted through contact with **other infected animals, their blood, or other tissues**.



- A very small proportion of human infections have occurred through organ transplant, blood transfusions and breast milk. There is one reported case of transplacental (mother-to-child) WNV transmission.
- **Horses, just like humans, are “dead-end” hosts**, meaning that while they become infected, they do not spread the infection.
- Symptomatic infections in horses are also rare and generally mild, but can cause neurologic disease, including fatal encephalomyelitis.

India's preparedness with respect to WNV:

- It is highly prevalent in India. Febrile illness and encephalitis cases in epidemic form were observed in Udaipur district of Rajasthan, Buldhana, Marathwada and Khandesh districts of Maharashtra.
- The **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and officials from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** has reviewed the Kerala's preparedness and actions taken to deal with West Nile Fever (WNF).
- The **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** is an institute under the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Kerala has been advised to follow the **National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme guidelines** of personal protective measures to prevent mosquito bite. It has also been recommended to carry out vector surveillance and control measures
- There is no definite treatment of the disease. Prevention of the disease can be done by preventing mosquito bite, using repellents and wearing full sleeves.
- There is no vaccination or specific treatment available for the virus but medical practitioners advice that it is important to recognize the disease and manage the symptoms.

Way forward:

- Health care workers caring for patients with suspected or confirmed WNV infection, or handling specimens from them, should strictly follow standard infection control precautions.
- The samples taken from people and animals with suspected WNV infection should be handled by trained staff working in suitably equipped laboratories.
- The PHCs should be aware of such incidences and quickly help in reporting to the higher authorities.
- ASHAs and ANMs can help in better co-ordination at the grass-roots level.

Q) List down the highlights of National Health Policy, 2017. What are the challenges facing it ? What strategies can be adopted for ensuring quality health care in India?

Discuss. (250 words)

[Livemint](#)

Why this question:

The article covers primarily the hurdles and issues being faced by the National Health Policy, 2017, it gives a good overview of NHP. It thus is important from mains point of view and to prepare health related topics of GS paper II.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must highlight the key goals of the policy, discuss in detail the challenges and the necessary strategies that need to be adopted for ensuring quality health care in India.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Briefly highlight the positives of the NHP 2017 .

Body:

Answers must discuss the following aspects :

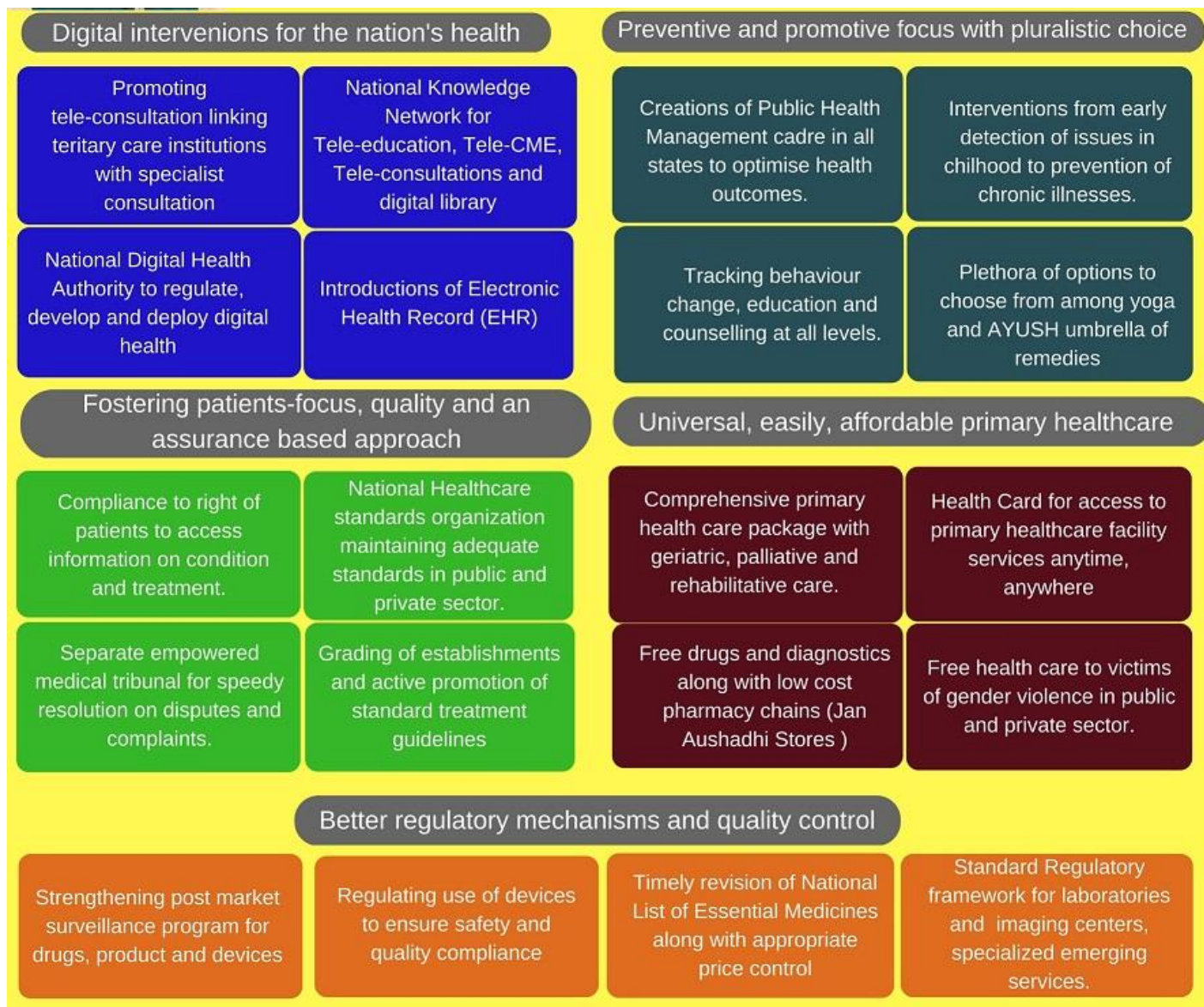
- Highlight the salient features of the policy.
- Explain the positives and lacunas.
- Discuss the challenges therein – information asymmetry, lack of penetration of private healthcare in vulnerable areas etc.
- What should be done? – More health professionals need to be deployed for primary care in rural areas, involving private sector, robust health data etc.

Conclusion –

Conclude with significance of such a health policy and need for development of infrastructure conducive for it.

**Introduction:**

- The primary aim of the National Health Policy, 2017, is to inform, clarify, strengthen and prioritize the role of the Government in shaping health systems in all its dimensions.
- Investment in health, organization and financing of healthcare services, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health through cross sectoral action, access to technologies, developing human resources, encouraging medical pluralism, building the knowledge base required for better health, financial protection strategies and regulation and legislation for health.

Body:**The key targets of the NHP -2017 are:**

- Increase Life Expectancy at birth from 67.5 to 70 by 2025.
- Reduce Fertility Rate to 2.1 by 2025.
- Reduce Infant Mortality Rate to 28 by 2019.
- Reduce Under Five Mortality to 23 by 2025.
- Achieve the global 2020 HIV target (also termed 90:90:90 global target).
- To reduce premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory diseases by 25 per cent by 2025.
- Reducing the prevalence of blindness to 0.25 per 1000 persons by 2025.
- The disease burden to be reduced by one third from the current levels.
- Elimination of leprosy by 2018, kala-azar by 2017 and lymphatic filariasis in endemic pockets by 2017.



The challenges facing it are:

- It fails to make **health a justiciable right** in the way the Right to Education 2005 did for school education. May lead to laxity by Govt with respect to implementation
- **Silent on Health Governance:** On bringing Health under concurrent list (from state list) on similar lines as education, and NHSO can't work effectively without it
- Public health spending still lower than other comparable nations. The lack of capacity to use higher levels of public funding for health.
- Less focused other health-related aspects like mental health, genetic disorders.
- Flawed one-size fits all approach regarding allocation of resources.
- A **health cess** was a path-breaking idea that was proposed in the draft policy but it was dropped.
- Although a major capacity expansion to produce MBBS graduates took place between 2009 and 2015, this is unlikely to meet policy goals since only 11.3% of registered allopathic doctors were working in the public sector as of 2014.

Measures needed:

- **More health professionals** need to be deployed for primary care in rural areas.
- Contracting of health services from the private sector may be inevitable in the short term.
- No more time should be lost in forming regulatory and accreditation agencies for healthcare providers at the national and State levels.
- Without oversight, unethical commercial entities would have easy backdoor access to public funds in the form of state-backed insurance.
- For the new policy to start on a firm footing, the Centre has to get robust health data.
- To **reduce high out-of-pocket expenditure**, early deadlines should be set for public institutions to offer essential medicines and diagnostic tests free to everyone.
- India can learn from UK, uses 'a **weighted capitation formula**' that accounts for a locality's socio-economic characteristics to equitably allocate funds

TOPIC: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- application, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures. Role of civil services in a democracy.

Q) "Lately, the Indian statistics and the institutions associated have however come under a cloud for being influenced and even controlled by political reflections." Critically analyse. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The Indian statistical system is perhaps facing its sharpest criticism in recent memory. The data released by the government recently are being openly questioned. The question is in the background of resignation of two members of the National Statistical Commission—including the acting chairman—last week, while protesting the delay in the publication of employment data, among other things.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must critically analyse the topic in question, provide for recent incidences that are evidences of such anomaly in indicating the achievements of the government; National Sample Survey Office – unemployment rate, involvement of NITI Aayog in the release of new gross domestic product (GDP) etc.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.



Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with the highlights of the recent incidences that prove the political interference in publishing reports in their favor and fear.

Body:

The answer should capture the following aspects:

- Discuss at a broader level, amidst recent controversies regarding jobs and GDP data made headlines, why the statistical system in the country needs to be reassessed.
- What are ill effects of such an anomaly?
- Why is it important to improve the Statistical system?
- Significance of Statistical systems and their role in economy and development.

Conclusion:

Re-stress on the importance of statistical systems and the reforms needed to keep them unbiased.

Introduction:

- For decades, India's statistical machinery enjoyed a high level of reputation for the integrity of the data it produced on a range of economic and social parameters.
- A group of 108 economists and social scientists working around the world, have issued an appeal to convince the Indian government to stop suppressing uncomfortable data, restore access to public statistics and re-establish the independence and integrity of institutions.

Body:

Recent controversies regarding data anomalies:

- Over the past two months, Indian national statistics and the organisations that administer them have faced a volley of criticism.
- In recent, two independent members of the **National Statistical Commission** resigned in protest, over alleged suppression of economic data by the government.
- More recently, amidst growing scepticism regarding India's official statistics, more than a hundred scholars comprising economists and social scientists released a statement decrying the fall in standards of institutional independence, suggesting political interference as the cause.
- **Kaushik Basu**, a former chief economist of the World Bank, also recently regret strongly the declining credibility of India's official statistics.
- There has been a controversy over NSSO figures not being released after a draft report had indicated that employment generation was slow.
- The **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy** has pegged job losses in 2018 at 11 million based on its regular employment surveys.
- The back series, released in November, adjusted the GDP numbers for the period using new methodology with the base year as FY12 and has scaled back growth in from the peak of 10.3% in FY11 to 8.5%.
- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** for 2017-18 which the government has stubbornly, and inexplicably, refused to release — till date
- The **CAG's FRMB report for 2016-17** is highly critical of the continuation of off-budgeting practices which suppresses budget deficit numbers.

Ill effects of such an anomaly:

- It only helps in diverting attention from real issues to the trivial ones while the condition of economy goes from bad to worse.
- Economic statistics as a "public good" that was vital for **policy-making and informed public discourse in democracies** where citizens seek accountability from their governments.
- For decades, India's statistical machinery has enjoyed a high level of reputation for the integrity of the data it produced on a range of economic and social parameters. The **credibility will be wiped out**.
- **Transparency and Accountability** which are the chief characteristics of good governance is lost. It masks the government's performance thereby creating a curtain of opacity.
- **Reduces the trust of foreign investors in Indian Economy**, thereby hampering the economy further.
- It **increases the trust deficit** between the citizens and government machinery.
- **Institutional independence, integrity, reliability and impartiality** of the statistical organisations is at stake.

Importance of improving the Statistical system:

- The *Indian National Sample Survey* is respected the world over. Not just because of its size, but also for its sample design, that uses methods make perfect by some of the world's most reputed statisticians.



- This **distinguished history**, which India can claim with pride, makes the recent undermining of the **credibility of our statistical output** especially regrettable.
- We can, however, ensure that when we look back on this several years from now, it represents an anomaly rather than a lasting, irreparable loss of institutional credibility.
- It is also imperative to use the scientific methods for data collection and estimation and their timely dissemination, which form vital public services.
- India, with its vastness and complexities, poses tremendous challenges for data collection.
- The dualistic nature of the economy means a large unorganised sector coexists with the organised sector that the data collection systems are unable to fully cover.

Conclusion:

- ❖ This is the time for all professional economists, statisticians, independent researchers in policy — regardless of their political and ideological leanings — to come together to raise their voice against the tendency to suppress uncomfortable data, and impress upon the government authorities, current and future, and at all levels, to restore access and integrity to public statistics, and re-establish institutional independence and integrity to the statistical organisations.

Topic –India and its neighborhood- relations, Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Q) Discuss the current state of India Pakistan relations and comment on the way forward for relations between the two countries ? (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question

The article discusses the status of India Pakistan relations which has seen heightened levels of acrimony in the days gone by with things coming to a head with the threat of war looming. The article touches upon these issues and discusses ways to de-escalate the tension.

Key demand of the question

The question expects us to bring out the status quo of relations between India and Pakistan, highlight that the threat of war is looming large over the countries. Thereafter, we need to give our view based on reasoned arguments about the next course of action.

Directive word

Comment – When you are asked to comment, you have to pick main points and give your 'opinion' on them based on evidences or arguments stemming from your wide reading. Your opinion may be for or against, but you must back your argument with evidences.

Structure of the answer

Introduction – Explain that relations between the two countries is at its nader.

Body

- Discuss the reasons which led to the current sequence of events
- Discuss about the possible course of actions going forward such as release of IAF pilot which could set the course for de-escalate of tension between the two countries, ways through which Pakistan can be brought to the dialogue table and how international pressure can be built for ensuring that Pakistan takes credible action against terror groups on its soil
- Give your view on what should be the best course of action for India

Conclusion – Give a fair and balanced view and discuss way forward.

Introduction:

- The recent spate of events between India and Pakistan after the terror attack at Pulwama has put the bilateral relations at an all time low. It has created a war-type situation between the neighbours.

Body:

Recent events:

- The Indian Air Force's (IAF) precision strike on a **Jaish-e-Mohammed** terror camp at Balakot was responded by an impetuous Pakistan retaliating the following day and was quickly thwarted. Pakistan claimed an Indian MiG fighter was shot down and its pilot captured.



Current state of relations with Pakistan:-

- Bilateral relations stalled in 2016 following the Pathankot and Uri attacks.
- The inaction of Pakistan towards the non-state actors on its soil has further added to the mistrust between neighbours.
- With the rampant use of high calibre weapons such as mortars and even artillery in the borders in Jammu and Kashmir, civilian casualties and the destruction of their habitats have risen steadily.
- Pakistan has violated the ceasefire over 600 times so far this year, the highest in the last one decade.
- In September 2016, India launched 'surgical strikes' as retaliation for the Uri attack but this has not reduced infiltration.
- Since Burhan Wani's death, local recruitment by radical groups is also on the rise.
- India has successfully stalled the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit since 2016.
- But limits to the policy of isolating Pakistan are also apparent.
- Over the last five years, the bilateral trade trajectory has been volatile. From a high of \$2.70 billion in 2013-14, it fell to \$2.40 billion in 2017-18. During this time, while Pakistan's exports to India were fairly consistent, India's exports decreased.
- The judicial battles fought at ICJ over the curbing of consular access to Indian prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav has added to more animosity.
- The issues of water sharing raised due to the dams built on Indus and its tributaries are a bone of contention despite Indus Water Treaty, 1960.

The best possible course of action for India is

- **Strategic:**
 - It is time to define the **nature and scope of our conflict** with Pakistan.
 - As the dominant power in South Asia and one of the world's leading democracies, India must find a proper answer to what could otherwise become a serious existential crisis.
 - India need to establish a national security doctrine in order to deal with all security issues
 - Surgical strikes with support of the global countries.
 - Strong intelligence network both inside as well as outside the country with effective dissemination to the stakeholders.
 - Water issues should be resolved through the mechanisms provided by the Indus Basin Treaty and should not be allowed to degenerate into a serious source of conflict.
- **Diplomatic:**
 - Creating International pressure on Pakistan to curb state sponsored terror.
 - There is a strong need for India to change its approach from Responsive to Proactive.
 - Gaining support of global players to designate terror organizations and its entities as global terrorists.
 - India needs to engage and develop relationships with countries from important organizations like SCO, BRICS and try to enable solutions for the issue of cross border terrorism.
 - This must be bolstered with **Dialogues at the highest level to track 2 diplomacies.**
 - More avenues for **people to people contact** need to be encouraged.
- **Economic:**
 - Imposing economic and political sanctions on Pakistan and asking the world to follow suit.
 - The recent move of removing MFN status, increasing of import duty to 200%.
- **Technological:**
 - Advance technology like drones, thermal imaging etc can be used to monitor the activities in the border and track any violations beforehand.
- **Against cross-border firing:**
 - To reduce the destruction of civilian habitats is to lower the calibre of the violations. The two sides could consider withdrawing heavy artillery to 50 km behind the zero line.
 - The two Director-Generals of Military Operations, along with their delegations, could consider holding regular meetings every six months. Data show that every time the leaderships of the armed forces meet, ceasefire violations come down
 - Establishing more flag meeting points between local commanders and responding quickly to meeting requests could lead to better communication and reduced misunderstandings resulting in fewer ceasefire violations.
 - Confidence-building measures should be pursued to alleviate the "trust deficit" but should not be used as a substitute for the resolution of disputes.

**Conclusion:**

- ❖ There is a need to embrace an overarching strategic stability regime and to shun aggressive security doctrines to reduce the possibility of a nuclear conflict.
- ❖ The problems of terrorism and Non-State Actors need to be addressed jointly through institutionalised mechanisms. Indeed, India should focus on a different type of a surgical strike; it's a strike that could push Pakistan out of its terror past and military dependency.

Q) “Nuclear weapons offer us nothing but a balance of terror, and a balance of terror is still terror”. Critically analyse the statement in the backdrop of recent failure of denuclearization talks between the US and the North Korea. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article brings out the failure of talks held at Hanoi recently between US and North Korea, the recent conflicts between US and North Korea are being tried to be turned into a diplomatic opportunity, but the failure of talks hint at the arms race both the States are engaging in.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects the appreciation of arms race between the two countries in terms of Nuclear power.

Directive word

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start by bringing out the recent tensions between North Korea and the U.S. that have escalated to the point where any military action on either side would likely lead to another all-out war between the two.

Body:

Body should discuss the following broad aspects in detail –

- Nuclear power; balance of power or terror? Explain through background and associated facts.
- Recent escalations between the two countries.
- North Korea's Nuclear complex – its impact on Asian countries and specifically with respect to India.
- Need for courageous diplomacy to denuclearize.

Conclusion:

Conclude with how priority should be to normalize ties between North Korea and important countries so as to move towards a non – nuclearized world.

Introduction:

- A tense period in 2017 arised when the US and North Korean leaders exchanged insults and threats as latter carried out a series of missile and nuclear tests. US President Trump called Kim “rocket man” and warned that the U.S. would “totally destroy North Korea” if it had to defend itself or its allies.
- In 2018, North Korea announced that it would suspend nuclear and missile testing, and shut down the site where its six previous nuclear tests were carried out. A meeting between the two leaders was held at Singapore. The recent Two-day meeting between leaders ended abruptly without a deal on denuclearisation.

Body:

• **Balance of Power:**

- The theory in international relations suggests that national security is enhanced when military capability is distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate all others.
- If one state becomes much stronger than others, the theory predicts that it will take advantage of its strength and attack weaker neighbours, thereby providing an incentive for those threatened to unite in a defensive coalition.
- Some realists maintain that this would be more stable as aggression would appear unattractive and would be averted if there was equilibrium of power between the rival coalitions.



- **Balance of Terror:**

- The possession of credible nuclear capability by both sides created fear and the possibility of **Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)** produced deterrence that none of the parties ever attempted to use its nuclear weapons against the other.
- Balance of Terror provided the world with a very precious gift, the gift of peace, security and international stability. It acts as a deterrent against usage of nuclear weapons.
- With the possession of nuclear weapons by several nations today' the challenge of national security becomes very precarious in the present globalized world.

Nuclear Power: Balance of Terror or terror?

- balance of terror is similar to balance of power in that both policies are aimed at increasing the capability and consequently the security of a state by creating deterrence and the fear of attack in the mind of the adversar
- BoP and BoT policies are different in that while the former relies on conventional weapons and alliances, the latter is solely based on the nuclear strategy.
- The balance of terror is quite distinct from the balance of power. All major powers have the wherewithal to obtain a second-strike capability. Unless a state attains nuclear primacy, the balance of terror is remarkably egalitarian.
- Example: USA may grow a hundred times as powerful as North Korea but the balance of terror will hold regardless. This will not prevent the relationship from becoming ever more asymmetric. North Korea will not be able to deter unilateral USA actions that violate its sovereignty.
- However, the control of the nuclear power in a nation imperatively decides whether it acts as a balance of terror or terror itself.
- In the scenario of USA and North Korea, both are headed by reactive Presidents who may take decisions to use the nuclear weapons leading to global damage.

Most recent status of relations between USA and North Korea

- North Korea-US relations are hostile till date that developed primarily during the Korean War. The two nations are separated by the Pacific Ocean. Since the Korean War, US has maintained a strong military presence in South Korea.
- North Korea warned it faced a food shortfall of around 1.4 million tonnes this year, highlighting the importance that lifting the economic sanctions would have on the country.
- In the most recent talks, the American president said Kim wanted all sanctions on North Korea lifted, but didn't offer sufficient dismantling of the country's nuclear program in exchange.
- However, A statement from a North Korean official after the summit said the North wanted only "partial" relief from sanctions in exchange for dismantling "all the nuclear material production facilities" at the country's main nuclear site at Yongbyon.

North Korea's Nuclear complex and its impact on India

- India has had longstanding diplomatic ties with North Korea and even under pressure from the United States, it refused to reduce its diplomatic engagement with Pyongyang.
- India has been North Korea's second largest trading partner after China, bilateral trade came down to around \$130 million in 2016-17 from around \$209 million in 2014-15.
- India considers the nuclear proliferation in North Korea as a threat to its "own national security". A stable and peaceful Korean peninsula is in India's interest.
- New Delhi holds China and Pakistan—both nuclear power nations—responsible for the rise of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and wants the linkages between North Korea and China and Pakistan to be probed by the international community.
- The matter of deep concern is that DPRK has acted in violation of its international commitments which goes against the objective of the denuclearization of Korean peninsula.

Conclusion:

- ❖ **Diplomatic solutions** are the best solution any day instead of this continued "frozen war" involving both show of words and missile tests comes up.
- ❖ Also, China which supplies a lot of different supplies and aid to DPRK and is also its largest trading partner should take some steps which help towards controlling these tests of the totalitarian North Korea.



Q) In the backdrop of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue to be held this year, the stakes India has in the Indo-Pacific region are optimally high. Critically analyze. Also examine whether India is on the right course to play a significant role in the region. (250 words)

epw

Why this question:

In continuation of the process of engaging the global strategic community in an annual review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, the second edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) – 2019 is to be held on 05 and 06 March 2019 at New Delhi and this event is significant with respect to India's role in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects one to appreciate the India's opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region, the challenges and the emerging role of India in the regional grouping as the United States administration fervently promotes the "Indo-Pacific" as an alternative geopolitical construct to mobilize a large number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region to contain Chinese and Russian influence.

Directive word

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Examine – When asked to 'Examine', we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with how the geopolitical construct of "Indo-Pacific" has gained considerable significance in international relations recently and India's role is significant at this point.

Body:

Body should discuss the following broad aspects in detail –

- About the of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue.
- Role that India is playing in the Indo – pacific region.
- What are the implications for India and others?
- Geopolitical significance. Etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude with India's strength at the Dialogue, how India is already on the right path and further continued engagements is beneficial to it.

Introduction:

- The idea of an **Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD)** was first conceptualised and conducted in 2018, as the apex level conference of the Indian Navy, organised by the **National Maritime Foundation** as the Navy's Knowledge Partner.
- The permanent theme of this annual dialogue is a **review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region**. The aim is to **focus attention on the Indo-Pacific, as a maritime geographical-entity, while deliberating aspects of great relevance to regional geopolitics**.

Body:

IPRD will build upon the foundation laid by the inaugural edition and will examine five fresh themes:

- Practical solutions for achieving cohesion in the region through maritime connectivity;
- Measures to attain and maintain a free-and-open indo-pacific;
- A regional approach to the region's transition from a 'brown' to a 'blue' economy;
- Opportunities and challenges arising from the maritime impact of 'industry 4.0'; and
- How the twin conceptualisations of 'sagar' and 'sagarmala' might best be made mutually-reinforcing on a regional level.

**Role and Implications for India in the Indo – pacific region:**

- Indo-Pacific is a **multi-polar region** that is contributing more than half of world GDP and population.
- India appears to have set a **long-term plan** during which it will build its capabilities—**economic and military strength, network of military facilities and agreements to access military facilities in countries across the Indo-Pacific, expanding economic and military ties.**
- The Indo-Pacific, as described in the **National security strategy**, represents the most populous and economically dynamic part of the world and stretches from the west coast of India to the western shores of the United States.
- India has always been a country with great national ambitions and is one of the most important advocates of the concept of “ **Indo-Pacific Strategy**”.
- With opening of economy, India has been connecting with its **Indian Ocean neighbours** and **major maritime powers of the world.**
- With impetus to **Blue Economy**, there has been a **new reliance on the sea for energy and mineral resources.**
- India has been engaging with regional actors on **bilateral as well as multilateral framework.**
- From **Look East policy**, there has been a graduation towards **engage East policy** with growing economic relations with the ASEAN, China, Japan and Australia.
- India is also in the mode of enhancing its maritime presence throughout the Indian Ocean Region.
- The proponents of the concept among the Indian policy makers defend India’s role in ‘Indo-Pacific’ by stating that it preserves the ‘strategic autonomy’.
- Strategic autonomy is a step ahead from the Non Alignment idea as it talks about giving “maximum options (to India) in its relations with the outside world”.
- It is believed that the Indo-Pacific construct seeks to establish a **plural, inclusive and open security architecture.**
- This allows India to create a **web of cooperative relations with all the stakeholders based on mutual interest and benefit.**
- China is the main security threat to U.S. primacy in Asia. It also has a long-standing border dispute with India. That gives India and the U.S. a shared interest in countering China’s growing military power and territorial revisionist tendencies etc.
- India can take this opportunity to promote the **justification and rationalization of its interests** in Southeast Asia, expand its presence in East Asia, strengthen its political, economic and military cooperation with the United States and its allies, and comprehensively increase India’s influence in international affairs.

Challenges in the Indo-Pacific:

- China’s aggression and debt trap diplomacy, which impinge sovereignty, is going to test Indian diplomacy. The various consultation groups will help India develop common strategies to keep the seas open and secure and preserve a rules-based order.
- Maritime security would include the vital responsibility of safeguarding the sea lanes of communication in the Indian Ocean whose geo-strategic importance cannot be over-emphasised. Its four key choke-points- the Strait of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca, and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Suez Canal- if closed for any reason can play havoc with global trade and energy flows.
- India’s enormous responsibilities for safeguarding its long coast line, its island territories, its off-shore economic assets and its EEZ. The two vital choke points in the Indian Ocean region- the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca- which are critical for unimpeded international energy and trade flows are of operational concern to the Indian Navy.
- China is very active in India’s maritime space but takes a different view when it comes to the South China Sea considered as “**Beijing’s Lake**”. India, as well as the international community in general, would not want it to become a Chinese lake either.
- The rule-based global order is also coming under tremendous pressure in the region with countries violating established norms with impunity.
- Multilateral institutions seem utterly helpless while countries continue with activities detrimental to regional peace.
- North Korea’s nuclear programme, developments in the South China Sea and increasing cyber violations are examples of this trend.



Way Forward for India:

- **Economically and strategically**, the global centre of gravity is shifting to the Indo-Pacific. If the region's stakeholders don't act now to fortify an open, rules-based order, the security situation will continue to deteriorate—with consequences that are likely to reverberate worldwide.
- With **joint military exercises**, India will develop interoperability and standard operating procedures, which will help in any joint military operation or even possibly a military alliance in the future.
- The **Quad Security cooperation** among **Japan, India, the US and Australia** is increasingly plausible. The time has come to proactively further this cooperation to ensure prosperity and stability in the whole of Indo-Pacific.
- Groups like **ASEAN** and **APEC** will have to collectively approach China. Standing up to it and physically stopping illegal Chinese construction will gain international attention and the sympathy and backing of major powers.

Conclusion:

- ❖ India is already assuming her responsibilities in securing the Indo-Pacific region.
- ❖ A strong India-US partnership can anchor peace, prosperity and stability from Asia to Africa and from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific.
- ❖ It can also help ensure security of the sea-links of commerce and freedom of navigation on seas.

Q) A battle around data is the new obverse in the US-China trade war. Critically analyse the statement in the background of recent US-China trade wars. (250 words)

Livemint

Why this question:

The articles provide for a coverage of the recent US-China trade wars and the use of data as a new paradigm shift in it. It examines the role of Data in the context of Trade wars of today's world.

Key demand of the question:

The answer should discuss primarily the role of data in a different role in analyzing the trends and aiding the Trade war strategies and approaches.

Directive word

Critically analyse – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Briefly narrate the background of the recent China- US trade wars, discuss the importance of the data being analyzed by both the countries in the same context.

Body:

Discussion of the answer should cover:

- What is the issue ? why is there a changing trend in the approaches to the Trade wars.
- Importance of Data analysis; changing trends.
- Facts proving the use of data – like Ghidra by NSA of USA etc.

Conclusion –

Conclude with what needs to be done, how countries should first set limits from overdoing it.

Introduction:

- Trade war is a situation where countries restrict each other's trade by imposing tariff or quota on imports. Trade tensions are a manifestation of the strategic competition between the two countries China and USA.
- US had imposed tariffs on as much as 25 percent on \$34 billion in Chinese imports. China responded with retaliatory tariffs of 25% on US goods worth an equivalent \$34 billion, including soybean, automobiles, and marine products such as lobsters.

Body:

There is now a changing trend in the approaches to the Trade wars:

It appears that the background battle between American and Chinese intelligence agencies for hegemony over sensitive data is yet another frontier in the ongoing US-China trade war.

- **Big Tech Companies and Data:**
 - NSA realizes that it has other tools at its command, including access to detailed location data for the billions of people worldwide who use Big Tech platforms.



- Big Tech companies are all US based and that is where their data resides.
- Despite Apple Inc's capitulation last year to the Chinese government, where it promised to keep data from Chinese iCloud users in China, other firms have exited the Chinese market.
- Besides, being a US company, it is entirely possible that Apple keeps a mirror of its China users' data in a database that resides in the US.
- The fact that these data are available to **US intelligence agencies** on their own native soil allows them the comfort that they can **always access such data should they want or need to**.
- **Ghidra and Data:**
 - The NSA has released a powerful open-source reverse-engineering hacking tool called Ghidra into the public domain.
 - Ghidra reduces programming code down to the level of "Assembler" language, which is an expression of programming code down to the level of machine level instructions into the binary 1s and 0s that are understood by computer chips.
 - Ghidra's release levels the playing field and has been welcomed by many.
 - However, not all experts are convinced that this is a selfless gesture, because they believe that the Ghidra code may well have "back doors" into computer systems and telecommunications networks.
- **Hegemony of USA:**
 - the NSA and its sister agencies are making sure that non-US governments will not have an easy time if they seek to access similar back doors to user data.
 - NSA told that China's Huawei and ZTE were not to be trusted because they could allow China's government a back door into communications infrastructure, thereby giving Chinese intelligence agencies broad access into personal data and other sensitive information.
 - Huawei now faces a ban on its equipment in the US as legislation passed last year restricted its equipment in the US.
 - Huawei's chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of founder Ren Zhengfei, faces potential extradition from Canada to the US over charges of Iran sanction violations.

Conclusion:

- ❖ As the experts proclaim, **Data is the new oil** and the future trade wars will be fought over the data.
- ❖ The ease of crippling another nation without any collateral damage makes Cyber-war a lucrative option for many countries. With the US-China trade war currently reducing on a direct front is changing its form into a data war.

Q) Should India jump on the bandwagon of engaging the Taliban or continue to hold arrangements with the government in Kabul ? Critically analyse amidst the rising valid concerns. (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The India Afghanistan relationship is not a simple bilateral engagement. India's Afghan policy is driven by many extraneous factors such as its geographical constraints, its search for a transit route to Central Asia through Afghanistan and Iran, its troubled relationship with Pakistan and the growing threat of terrorism in India and Afghanistan and the recent coming of Trump's policy etc.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must revolve around the need for India's big role in engaging with Afghanistan and India's stance towards Taliban. Emphasize that India has a greater role to play in reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan and thus India can not lack ambition in this direction.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with narration of recent geopolitics involved in Afghanistan's current government's engagement with that of other countries excluding India.

**Body:**

- Draw a map of the location, mark some relevant information showing geo-political significance of Afghanistan.
- Then move onto discussing the current relationship between India and Afghan also trace the same historically.
- Handling Taliban – what should be India's stand?
- Then discuss the policy shift of US and its implication on the overall equation of geopolitics in the region.
- What should be India's role in current context.

Conclusion:

Conclude by re- asserting India's significant role in Afghan and Taliban affair.

Introduction:

- India's Afghan policy is driven by many extraneous factors such as its geographical constraints, its search for a transit route to Central Asia through Afghanistan and Iran, its troubled relationship with Pakistan and the growing threat of terrorism in India and Afghanistan and the recent coming of Trump's policy.
- India recently sent two former diplomats as "non-official" participants at the recent "Moscow format" multilateral meeting that included Taliban delegates. Indian government-nominated representatives sharing the table with a Taliban delegation for the first time is notable.

Body:**India's current relationship with Afghanistan:**

- India's development assistance has been the source of its considerable influence and goodwill among Afghan citizens.
- Major projects, such as the Salma Dam and Parliament building in Kabul, that began in 2008-09, have now been completed.
- Last year India and Afghanistan agreed to initiate an ambitious and forward-looking 'New Development Partnership', according to which India agreed to take up 116 high-impact community development projects to be implemented in 31 provinces of Afghanistan, including in the fields of education, health, agriculture, irrigation, drinking water, renewable energy, flood control, micro-hydropower, sports infrastructure and administrative infrastructure.
- India has been giving a lot of non-lethal military assistance. In 2016 four MI 25 attack helicopters were given to Afghanistan.
- India is the biggest regional donor to Afghanistan and fifth largest donor globally with over \$3 billion in assistance.
- India has built over 200 public and private schools, sponsors scholarships and hosts Afghan students.
- India has shied away from involving itself in full scale war in Afghanistan.

India's traditional position with Taliban:

- India was among the countries that had refused to recognise the Taliban regime of 1996-2001.
- India watched Taliban's growth with concern, assessing early that it was being driven by Pakistan's army and the ISI.
- The Kandahar hijack of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 forced India to negotiate.
- At other times, it supported anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan.
- Throughout the 1990s, India gave military and financial assistance to the Northern Alliance fighting the Pakistan-sponsored Taliban regime in Afghanistan.
- Meanwhile the 9/11 attacks and the US crackdown leading to the fall of the Taliban regime took place.
- When the Taliban re-emerged in 2006-07 to once again challenge US forces, India maintained it was not going to talk with the Taliban.

India should engage with the Taliban as there are a host of concerns:

- **USA's diminishing role:**
 - A period of adjustment has become essential following US President unilateral announcement that US is pulling its troops out of the conflict-ridden country.
 - Another development is the "framework" deal between the US and Afghan Taliban after six days of discussions at Doha.
 - The Afghan war has already become the longest war in US history. With the passage of time, the conflict has not only become more intense – it has also become more complicated



- **Control of Afghan government:**
 - The Afghan government controls barely half the country, with one-sixth under Taliban control and the rest contested.
 - Most significant is the ongoing depletion in the Afghan security forces because of casualties, desertions and a growing reluctance to join
 - Afghanistan launched the Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation and also made an unconditional dialogue offer to the Taliban. The Taliban rejected his overture, declaring that they were ready to engage in direct talks only with the Americans.
- **Increasing Taliban attacks:**
 - Recently there has been a spike in violence, with the Taliban carrying out a set of coordinated assaults around Afghanistan, rejecting an offer of a three-month ceasefire by President of Afghanistan and laying siege to Ghazni city.
 - The violence this year has also put 2018 on course to be the deadliest year for Afghan civilians, with an average of nine people killed every day, according to UN data.
- **Pakistan factor:**
 - The major challenge is the cooperation of regional players. Peace in Afghanistan and the wider region can only be achieved through a multilateral mechanism involving the US as well as major regional players, including Pakistan, Russia, Iran, China, India and Saudi Arabia.
 - Despite six months of concerted American punitive actions on Islamabad, the Pakistan establishment is not shutting down support for Taliban fighters.
 - The role of Pakistan is going to expand significantly, with the US depending upon it to implement the interim deal. This will be a diplomatic victory for Pakistan.
- **Iran factor:**
 - US administration's collision course with Iran is another hurdle to realising its South Asia policy. Iran is a neighbour to both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and any action against Tehran will have consequences on the region.
 - US is also against Iran which is important to give access to the sea to landlocked Afghanistan through Chabahar port- which is in India's interests etc.
- **Islamic state:**
 - After losing occupied territories in and around Mosul, IS is now slowly enlarging its presence in neighbouring countries, particularly Afghanistan.
 - It is now targeting mainly the Shias and the Hazara minority, joining forces with the Taliban thereby changing the dynamics of the war in Afghanistan.
- **Indian interests would be hurt:**
 - More fighting and political instability in Afghanistan would be damaging, as much for Indian interests as for regional stability.
 - Delhi is concerned about the vital role that all the powers are giving to Pakistan. Iran and Russia, two of India's closest allies during the Northern Alliance's battle against the Taliban regime in the 1990s, seem out of sync with Indian interests.
 - An emboldened Taliban is sure to impinge on security scenario in India's troubled Kashmir Valley. The outfit seems positioned to emerge as the ideological bulwark of Kashmir's renewed insurgency.
 - US criticism of India's Afghan policy and the plans to exit could cast serious doubt on the US's role as a strategic ally for India.

Way forward:

- The U.S.'s eventual pullout as Afghanistan's peacekeeper is inevitable, **close bilateral consultations** should be made to help Afghanistan according to its own needs.
- India has **always supported for Afghanistan's democracy**. Use of her '**soft power**' – ranging from telecommunications to education, community development programmes can be pushed forward.
- India's best course with Afghanistan remains its **own regional strategy**, not becoming a part of any other country's strategy.
- India must seek to **build capacities and capabilities** of Afghan nationals and **its institutions for governance and delivery of public service**, develop socio-economic infrastructure, secure lives and promote livelihood.
- **Inactive SAARC** must now be revived to strengthen the regional co-operation in South Asia.



- **Tier-II diplomacy and involving other stakeholders:** India, which has been against holding talks with the Taliban for a long time, finally sent two retired diplomats, at the 'non-official level', to join them at the Moscow peace talks.
- **India's participation, however, is crucial, even though it is at a non-official level.**
- Continuing the efforts of **implementing mega infrastructure projects, providing military equipments and training to Afghan personnel** on the sidelines.
- Use of regional groupings like SCO to combat the terrorism emanating from Afghanistan.
- Echoing the Afghan stand, India has been asserting that the peace process must be **"Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled."**

Conclusion:

- ❖ Defeatism or a lack of ambition for the India-Afghanistan relationship at this juncture would be much more detrimental to India's interests than anything the Taliban's return to Afghanistan's political centre-stage can do.

Topic– Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora

Q) What do you understand by Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) ? Critically analyze its significance in India-US trade ? (250 words)

The hindu

Why this question:

The article is in the backdrop of the Trump's declaration of the end of preferential trade terms for India under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme. The article provides for more details on the same.

Key demand of the question:

The answer should discuss the following – What is Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) , its objectives, historical context with respect to Indo-US economic relations, did it benefit India in the past and what will be the consequences of it on India due to this move.

Directive word

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Discuss the context of GSP in Indo – US economic relations.

Body:

Discussion of the answer should capture the following points :

- How the withdrawal of the GSP benefit is expected to adversely affect exports from India.
- What is the objective of GSP?
- Who are the beneficiaries under GSP?
- Which are the product groups covered under GSP?
- What is the difference between GSP and the usual trade arrangement under WTO?
- What is the new Trump administration's approach on GSP?
- Impact of GSP withdrawal on India.

Conclusion –

Conclude with the impact that the removal of GSP indicate a tough trade position by the US; especially for countries like India who benefited much from the scheme.

Introduction:

- Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a **preferential tariff system extended by developed countries** (also known as preference giving countries or donor countries) **to developing countries** (also known as preference receiving countries or beneficiary countries).
- It involves **reduced MFN Tariffs or duty-free entry of eligible products** exported by beneficiary countries to the markets of donor countries. GSP has been given on **non-reciprocal basis** yet the US has linked it with market access and tariff reduction which is against the basic tenets of GSP.



- Example: The USA's GSP sets zero tariffs for certain goods from a set of 121 developing countries to foster their trade and economic development. The GSP programme accounts for some \$5.6 billion of India's exports to the U.S. in 2017, making India the largest GSP beneficiary. The Indian government confirmed that the United States has given a 60-day withdrawal notice to India on the GSP benefits, which amount to duty reduction of \$190 million per annum.

Body:

The objective of GSP:

- The objective of GSP was to give development support to poor countries by promoting exports from them into the developed countries.
- According to the USTR, GSP promotes sustainable development in beneficiary countries by helping these countries to increase and diversify their trade with the United States.
- GSP provide opportunities for many of the world's poorest countries to use trade to grow their economies and climb out of poverty.
- GSP also boosts American competitiveness by reducing costs of imported inputs used by U.S. companies to manufacture goods in the United States.

The product groups covered under GSP:

- The products covered under GSP are mainly agricultural products including animal husbandry, meat and fisheries and handicraft products.
- Chemicals, gems and jewellery, engineering and textiles are among the Indian industrial sectors that benefit from the GSP.
- Other products which are generally the specialized products of the developing countries.

Benefits of GSP to India:

- Indian exporters benefit indirectly – through the benefit that accrues to the importer by way of reduced tariff or duty free entry of eligible Indian products
- Reduction or removal of import duty on an Indian product makes it more competitive to the importer – other things (e.g. quality) being equal.
- This tariff preference helps new exporters to penetrate a market and established exporters to increase their market share and to improve upon the profit margins, in the donor country.

Reasons for GSP withdrawal on India:

- S. President has announced that he intends to end preferential trade terms for India under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme.
- The reason attributed to it is that India has not assured the United States that it will provide equitable and reasonable access to the markets of India.
- According to the US Trade Representative, India has implemented a wide array of trade barriers that create serious negative effects on United States commerce.
- India had failed to take the necessary steps to meet the GSP criterion, despite intensive engagement, it said.
- India's new e-commerce rules — which have impacted American companies like Amazon and Walmart (majority owner of Flipkart), price controls on medical devices (cardiac stents), tariffs on ICT products like smart watches and high-end mobile phones and lack of greater market access for the U.S. dairy industry are among the issues that have caused trade friction between the two countries.

Impact of GSP withdrawal on India:

- India exports nearly 50 products of the 94 products on which GSP benefits are stopped.
- In total India exports nearly 1,937 products to the US under GSP. According to the Washington Post, 90 percent of Indian/Brazilian exports to America face normal US tariffs and hence will remain unaffected from the exit of the GSP program.
- Removal of GSP indicates a tough trade position by the US; especially for countries like India who benefited much from the scheme. The US was insisting India to reduce its trade surplus.
- India is the 11th largest trade surplus country for the US and India enjoyed an annual trade surplus of \$ 21 bn in 2017-18.
- The US decision to withdraw duty benefits under its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme will have a marginal impact on few domestic sectors such as processed food, leather, plastic, and engineering goods, exporters body FIEO.
- India is predominantly exporting intermediate and semi-manufactured goods to the US under the GSP, the same has helped in cost-effectiveness and price-competitiveness of American downstream industry.



- The GSP withdrawal will also impact the competitiveness of many manufacturing sectors and will hit the consumers at the same time.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The issue of Indian tariffs being high has been raised from time to time. It is pertinent that India's tariffs are within its bound rates under WTO commitments, and are on the average well below these bound rates.
- ❖ India's trade-weighted average tariffs are 7.6 per cent, which is comparable with the most open developing economies and some developed economies.

Q) The recognition of the disputed area of Golan Heights would mark a major shift in US policy. Critically analyse. (250 words)

[Indianexpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Why this question:

The question is in the recent move of US President Trump backing Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights, a long-disputed piece of territory. Thus the recognition of the disputed area would mark a major shift in US policy, thus it becomes important for us to understand the nitty-gritties of the situation from geopolitical angle.

Key demand of the question:

The answer must revolve around the significance of Golan heights, Israel had captured much of the Golan from Syria in a 1967 war and annexed it, this move was not endorsed internationally. And amidst such a situation the marked policy shift of US around the Israeli Prime Minister's re-election campaign calls for evaluation of the significance.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Begin with quoting the locational facts of Golan heights.

Body:

- Draw a map of the location, if possible mark some relevant information showing geo-political significance of the region.
- Then move onto discussing strategic importance of Golan heights. Presently 2/3rd area of Golan Heights is under the control of Israel. Remaining part is under control of Syria.
- Importance of Golan Heights: It provides strategic significance to Israel as Damascus (Capital of Syria) is clearly visible from Golan Heights. The Soil of Golan Heights is so fertile that it is useful to cultivate Vine yards and Orchards.
- Then discuss the policy shift and its implication on the overall equation of geopolitics in the region.

Conclusion:

Conclude with possible consequences and realignment of global powers.

Introduction:

- The Golan Heights, a rocky plateau in south-western Syria, has a political and strategic significance which belies its size. **Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in the closing stages of the 1967 Six-Day War.** Most of the Syrian Arab inhabitants fled the area during the conflict. An armistice line was established and the region came under Israeli military control. Almost immediately Israel began to settle the Golan.
- US President Donald Trump said recently it was time to back Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

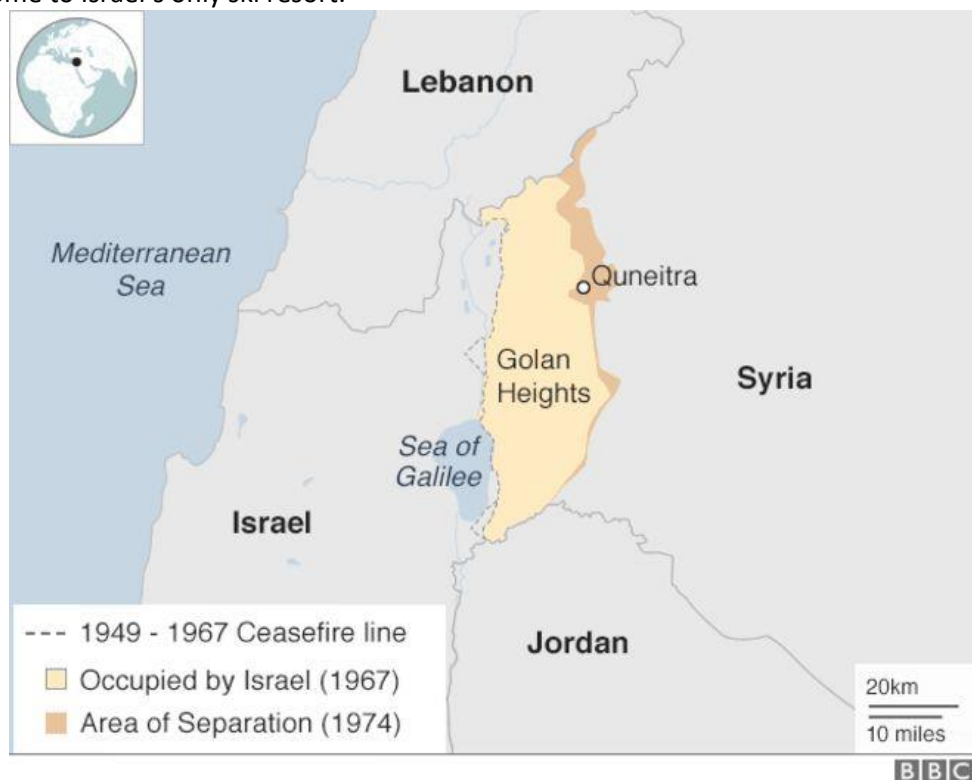
Body:

The recognition of the disputed area of Golan Heights would mark a major shift in US policy.

- Southern Syria and the capital Damascus, about 60 km (40 miles) north, are clearly visible from the top of the Heights.
- The heights give Israel an excellent vantage point for monitoring Syrian movements. The topography provides a natural buffer against any military thrust from Syria.



- The area is also a key source of water for an arid region. Rainwater from the Golan's catchment feeds into the Jordan River. The area provides a third of Israel's water supply.
- The land is fertile, and the volcanic soil is used to cultivate vineyards and orchards and raise cattle. The Golan is also home to Israel's only ski resort.



Challenges posed by the recognition:

- Combined with last year's Jerusalem declaration, the decision could encourage Israel to begin annexing territory in the West Bank. This would permanently extinguish any remaining possibility for a two-state solution.
- United Nations Resolution 242 passed immediately after 1967 war and unanimously to endorse a "land for peace" agreement that would exchange Arab peace and recognition of Israel for a return of occupied territory. Neither side wanted to act first. As a result of the diplomatic stalemate, Israel continued the occupations and began building Jewish settlements on the newly controlled lands.
- Syrians in the occupied Golan face calculated Israeli efforts to restrict their building and land use, destroy their enterprises, cleanse their Arab culture, manipulate their Syrian identity, and suffocate their freedom of movement
- The decision (to formally recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to relocate the American embassy to the contested city) reversed decades of consistent U.S. policy that encouraged negotiations as the avenue to resolving territorial disputes, including on the status of Jerusalem.
- Palestinian leaders have since refused to meet with American officials, meaning that their voices will be notably excluded from Trump's Middle East Peace Plan.
- Russian President may use this as a pretext to justify Russia's annexation of Crimea. China is already claiming South China Sea. Their actions may be emboldened.
- It may also encourage Pakistan to take similar action in PoK region in India

Conclusion:

- ❖ Thus, the shift in American policy would harm the Middle Eastern peace and put an end to the two-state solution.
- ❖ It also goes against the rule-based order of the world threatening world harmony. The possible changes in the geopolitics make it imperative for India to deal more diplomatically with the Middle East nations.

Q) "Balkanizing the world by raising barriers would convert unequal prosperity to collective poverty." Discuss in the light of Brexit Issue ? (250 words)

[Livemint](#)



Why this question:

The article is by ex RBI Governor Raghuram G. Rajan, He analyses the affects of possible BREXIT outcome by articulating multiple factors associated to it.

Key demand of the question:

The question expects us to shed some light on the complications surrounding Brexit, the implication of the deal on India countries across the world and evaluate how it will affect the prosperity - poverty equation.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Brief upon the Brexit issue.

Body:

Discuss the following aspects :

- Explain in short Why the clamor for Brexit? – Economic reasons, Immigration issues, Sovereignty Issue etc.
- What will be the impact of Brexit? – economic, geopolitical etc.
- Factors that would create disbalance and lead to unequal prosperity getting converted to collective poverty. (take cues from the article to justify this point well)

Conclusion:

Conclude with what needs to be done to overcome the situation (the article best explains it, take cues again from the article).

Introduction:

- Despite 2 years of Brexit vote, Britain remains as divided as ever, over the issue of leaving the EU.
- Demonstrations demanding a reconsideration of the issue and a new referendum have been aplenty on the streets of U.K. Contrarily; there have also been mobilisations by pro-leave lobby albeit in smaller numbers as things are already moving in their favour

Body:

The clamour for Brexit:

- **Economic reasons:** The primary contention was that economically, Britain loses more than what it gains.
 - The first issue being that of membership fees paid – about 340 pounds per year per household
 - Secondly, it was said that EU's policies were too protectionist and did not favour competitiveness to the extent that would be beneficial for the British economy
 - Post the Sovereign Debt Crisis, EU introduced Fiscal Compact and tighter control on national budgets. Britain was not comfortable with these ideas
 - Germany's proposal to impose taxes on financial transactions (Tobin Tax) also did not find favour with London, which is an important financial hub
- **Immigration issues:**
 - Half of British legal migrants come from EU. There is this feeling that they have a negative impact on UK born workers. Adding credence to local fears was the fact that since 1997, 3/4th of jobs created are taken up by EU immigrants
 - EU's obligation on its members to accommodate more refugees also did not find favour with UK. Especially at a time when the refugee influx in Europe is at an all time high in light of multiple crisis in Middle East and Africa
 - There is also this perception that immigrants pose a threat to national security
- **Sovereignty Issue:**
 - EU is a transformative idea in many senses. One of the things that it leads to is the weakening of national sovereignty.
 - EU has been pushing for creation of an Ever Closer Union which would accord greater decision making powers to European Parliament, while, limiting the authority of British Parliament.

Impacts on UK:

- **Economic:**
 - EU is a large market. 45% of British exports are directed towards EU. EU is the largest market for UK's exports and one of the major sources of UK's imports. Except Germany and Sweden, UK has a positive Balance of Trade with all other countries of EU. Post Brexit, access to EU markets would suffer for UK
 - Britain has emerged as a major financial hub. Post Brexit, the financial/services sector in UK would take a hit. We have already seen the London Exchange soaring down post Brexit



- Immigrants to EU are better educated and skilled and offset the demographic disadvantage. That advantage will be lost for UK
- **Geopolitical:**
 - It raises questions over the future of Scotland and Northern Ireland. Their desire to stay in UK was preconditioned on UK remaining a part of EU.
 - The Scots have already started demanding for a referendum on Scotland's future in UK. Even in Northern Ireland violence erupted post the Brexit vote
 - In an interconnected world, being a part of multilateral organizations is key to influence policy matters.
 - No country can do it alone in a rapidly changing international environment.
 - Similarly UK would lose some of its leverage now that it has voted for Brexit. Pursuit of sovereignty in purist terms in an interconnected world is a utopian idea

Factors that would create misbalance and lead to unequal prosperity getting converted to collective poverty:

- As markets expand across political borders, participants prefer a common governance structure that eliminates annoying regulatory differences and transaction costs.
- As inter-regional trade and capital flows increased, demands for seamless regional borders and harmonized national regulation became louder. National governments, therefore, increased their powers and functions at the expense of regions and local communities.
- As globalization accelerated in recent decades, national governments acceded to international agreements and treaties that limited their sovereign powers. They have also ceded some powers to international bodies
- Disempowerment of the local communities causes further collateral damage. When opportunity leaves economically marginal communities, despair and social dysfunction typically set in. The number of broken families increases, as do rates of substance abuse and crime.
- Far from being a source of pride and social cohesion, the community becomes a repository of collective sorrow, if not shame. And its members look to alternative sources of identity and social solidarity, including nationalism.
- Populist nationalist leaders pledge to make their country "great again" by ridding it of the constraints imposed by international agreements.
- As they grab power back from the international arena, such leaders are tempted to resist the further devolution of power and funding to regions and communities.
- Instead, populist nationalists could turn more dangerously against the international system, presenting their supporters with a continuous parade of external villains to blame for their plight.

Way forward:

- As growth slows and their populations age, developed countries will need both export markets and some immigration—the first to support demand, and the second to pay for the pensions and health care of ageing populations.
- In this age of artificial intelligence, companies and traders can surely handle some national regulatory differences.
- We must bring the powers back to the country level, provided global markets remain open
- Local engagement and solutions, aided by national governments, are required as people are more adapted to globalization and technological changes.
- Political parties could play a constructive role in restoring powers, funding, and often health to many communities.
- Rebuilding a strong sense of positive community identity would likely make adversarial nationalism less appealing.

Conclusion:

- ❖ To the extent that it weakens support for virulent nationalism, devolution may make the world a little more prosperous—and a lot safer.

Topic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

Q) Discuss the significance of resolution for sustainable nitrogen management led by India in the United Nations Environment Assembly. (250 words)

Reference



why this question:

In a significant first, India piloted resolutions on two important global environment issues relating to Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management at the fourth session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) which was held in Nairobi recently. Thus the question is important to ponder upon from the exam point of view.

Key demand of the question:

The global nitrogen use efficiency is low, resulting in pollution by reactive nitrogen which threatens human health, eco system services, and contributes to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion. Thus the answer must appreciate the significance of such a step by providing facts to justify the need for sustainable carbon management.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Introduce by appreciating India's initiative to lead such an initiative and that too on a global platform.

Body:

In brief discuss the following points :

- What do you understand by Sustainable Nitrogen management?
- Discuss the salient features of Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management – recognizes the multiple pollution threats resulting from anthropogenic reactive nitrogen, acknowledges the benefits of nitrogen, notes the initiatives like the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM), International Nitrogen Management System as a science support system for policy development across the nitrogen cycle and the initiatives taken by South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) etc.
- Indian scenario; efforts India is taking in this direction.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance of such a step and way forward.

Introduction:

- Nitrogen is found in all living organisms. In fact, it is like carbon and is indispensable for survival of life on Earth.
- **The resolution for sustainable nitrogen management** in the **United Nations Environment Assembly-4**, which for the first time was led by India, has made experts believe that it can help **establish an international coordination for nitrogen** similar to what exists for carbon.

Body:

Rationale behind the **Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management:**

- Nitrogen is essential to all life on Earth as it forms an important component of life-building and propagating biochemical molecules like proteins.
- But overuse in agriculture in the form of fertilisers and other fields have made this important element more bane than boon. This is why many scientists have called nitrogen the **"new carbon"**.

Situation in India:

- India is under the grip of nitrogen pollution, finds the country's first assessment on the impacts of the nutrient.
- The nitrogen (N) being used for agricultural purposes is rampant but also increasing emissions from the transport boom in the country.
- India consumes 17 Mt (million tonnes) of nitrogen fertiliser annually as per the data of the Fertiliser Association of India.
- 67 per cent remains in the soil and seeps into the surrounding environment causing a cascade of environmental and health impacts.
- India as a country was using and emitting huge amount of nitrogen, and its related toxic components.
- The India Nitrogen Assessment found that nitrates not only affected surface water but also polluted groundwater sources.
- Nitrogen in the form nitrous oxide (N₂O) is also a greenhouse gas (GHG) and a fast rising contributor to global climate change.



The salient features of **Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management**:

- The resolution titled, '**Sustainable Nitrogen Management**', recognizes the multiple pollution threats resulting from anthropogenic reactive nitrogen, with adverse effects on the terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments and contributing to air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and highlights ways to better manage nitrogen.
- The resolution supports exploring options for better management of the global nitrogen cycle to achieve the SDGs, including through the "sharing of assessment methodologies, relevant best practices and guidance documents and emerging technologies for recovery and recycling of nitrogen and other such nutrients."
- The resolution recognised the threats of pollution due to human emissions of reactive nitrogen on "the terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments".
- It also acknowledged the benefits of nitrogen use for food and energy production.
- It noted that global use of reactive nitrogen is extremely inefficient as 80 per cent of all nitrogen used is lost to the environment creating a cascade of impacts, from pollution affecting human health and ecosystem services to green house gas emissions which lead to climate change and also ozone depletion.
- The UNEA resolution did recognise the various initiatives taken by organisations around the world on nitrogen pollution including the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) and the International Nitrogen Management System.
- The member states will "report on the progress achieved in the implementation of this resolution in UNEA-6."

Steps taken in India to curb Nitrogen pollution:

- Indian government might have inadvertently taken certain steps like **mandating neem-coated urea production** which can abate a crisis.
- Neem-coated urea releases nitrogen at a slower pace giving plants time to absorb it, hence leading to an optimal usage.
- Reducing the use of nitrogen fertilisers and increasing that of recycled manures offers the prospect for Indian farmers to produce food more securely and profitably, while saving the government a huge amount of money.
- One of the most prominent ways of doing this is so-called '**precision agriculture**', which uses hi-tech approaches to apply just the right amount of nitrogen at just the right time for the plant's needs.

Way forward:

- The establishment of "an intergovernmental coordination mechanism on nitrogen policies, based primarily on existing networks and platforms and consider the case for developing an integrated nitrogen policy".
- A coordinated effort from various UN organisations like the Food and Agricultural Organization for better management of the nitrogen cycle on the planet.
- This would mean sharing of methodologies, practices and technologies for recycle and recovery of nitrogen and other such nutrients to ensure the Sustainable Development Goals are met.
- Global bodies should coordinate on data sharing and calculating the benefits of successful nitrogen management.
- member countries must take all the necessary national and regional initiatives to support this global initiative to prevent further accumulation of reactive nitrogen compounds that damage our health, biodiversity and climate

Conclusion:

- ❖ The **International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)** which has been at the forefront on the subject of nitrogen pollution welcomed the UNEA4 resolution for Sustainable Nitrogen Management.
- ❖ It further "appreciated the Indian leadership and South Asian unity for global action on this very important global topic."

Q) Discuss in brief the composition and objectives of United Nations Environment Assembly also bring out the recent initiatives taken by UNEA to set global Green agenda. (250 words)

Reference

Why this question:

The Fourth Environment Assembly of the United Nations was held in Nairobi recently, with special focus on the theme of "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production". In this context it becomes necessary for us to ponder on the topic from the point of GS paper III.



Key demand of the question:

The question is to be answered in three sections viz. the structure and composition of the UNEA, Its objectives and then the recent initiatives taken by it.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Explain Briefly the significance of such institutions.

Body:

Discuss the composition of the UNEA; world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. How it addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today. Its salient features, mode of working etc.

Then move on to explain the importance of the "Blueprint for change" adopted by the Environment ministers of more than 170 countries under United Nations Environment Assembly recently. The agenda of the meet included – Innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production patterns to get high priorities to combat increasing pollution, rapid global warming and depletion of resources. improved national resource management strategies with integrated full lifecycle approaches and analysis to achieve resource-efficient and low-carbon economies etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude with importance of the institution and its significance in managing the global environment.

Introduction:

- The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. It addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today.
- Understanding these challenges and preserving and rehabilitating our environment is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Body:

Composition of UNEA:

- The Environment Assembly sets the global environmental agenda in cooperation with UN institutions and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- The meetings of the Assembly are governed by its Rules of Procedure.
- The **Assembly is led by a Bureau and its President**. The UN Environment Assembly Bureau assists the President in the general conduct of business of the UN Environment Assembly. The Bureau is composed of ten Ministers of the Environment for a term of two years, and follows geographical rotations.
- The Assembly is the governing body of the UN Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the successor of its Governing Council, which was composed of 58 member States. The UN Environment Assembly, with a universal membership, is now composed of 193 Member States.
- It gathers ministers of environment in Nairobi, Kenya every 2 years.
- **The Committee of Permanent Representatives** is the inter-sessional intergovernmental body of the Assembly.
- The Committee is led by accredited Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme, which account for 118 members.
- The Committee of Permanent Representatives was formally established as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council (now the UN Environment Assembly) in May 1985. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis led by a five-member Bureau elected for a period of two years.

Objectives of UNEA:

Under the overall theme Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production, the 2019 UN Environment Assembly will address the following three focus areas:

- Environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting biodiversity loss;
- Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management;
- Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change.



- Improve national resource management strategies with integrated full lifecycle approaches and analysis to achieve resource-efficient and low-carbon economies
- Address the damage to our ecosystems caused by the unsustainable use and disposal of plastic products, including by significantly reducing single-use plastic products by 2030
- Work with the private sector to find affordable and environmentally friendly products

The above objectives would be done by:

- Encouraging resilient farming practices
- Managing natural resources sustainably to tackle poverty
- Promote the use and sharing of environmental data
- Significantly reduce single-use plastic

Conclusion:

- ❖ The 2019 UN Environment Assembly will contribute towards a holistic, inclusive, and participatory approach to development that is underpinned by human rights and recognizes the inter-linkages and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development.