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'It always seems impossible until it is done'

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## GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 1

*TOPIC: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.*

**Q) Revivalism and reformism were natural corollaries of the newly emerging idea of nationalism in colonial India. Discuss. (250 Words)**

### Background:-

- In the 19th century, the idea of national identity emerged from literature, and most Indian writings turned into the voice of enlightenment. This paved the way for India to understand the real, factual position of nationalism by the time it reached the threshold of the 20th century.

### **How both revivalism and reformism are natural corollaries of the emerging idea of nationalism:-**

- By the end of the nineteenth century revivalists were dominant and their aim was not to oppose the advancement initiated by reformists but to create **changes in Hindu society changes as radical as those of social reformers but based in Indian ideals.**
- In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century clear cut distinction could be made between the major revivalist movements and social reform movements in terms of objectives that they both set for Indian society's advancement. But **both revivalists and reformers had reached an essential accord on social questions, similarity of views was present too.**
- Both the groups despite the sharpest of surface disagreements, **the only real dispute between reformers and revivalists was over the authorities from which they derived their inspiration**
  - The reformist movements responded with the time and scientific temper of the modern era.
  - Revivalist movements believed that the western thinking and missionary propaganda would ruin Indian culture and ethos, and thus there was a need to protect the religion. They were also influenced by the rich cultural heritage of India brought to light by the western scholars.
- Both **these movements wanted to change the status quo in the society wherein several deformities had crept in.** All of them, in some way or other, attacked on inhuman practices such as sati, female infanticide, child marriage etc. along with superstitions, complex rituals and so on.
  - The reformers attempted to improve the status of girls and women in society. They all emphasized the need for female education.
  - The reform movements fostered feelings of self-respect, self-reliance and patriotism among the Indians
- While the reformist movements strived to change the fundamental system and structures of the society through gradual changes within the existing institutions; revivalist movements tended to revive former customs or practices and thus take the society back to the glorious past.
- **Literature's role:-**
  - **Patriotic writings proliferated almost spontaneously in different languages, as the resistance of a community against foreign rule.** Rangalal in Bengali, Mirza Ghalib in Urdu and Bharatendu Harishchandra in Hindi expressed themselves as the patriotic voice of that era. **This voice was on the one hand was against colonial rule and on the other for the glorification of India.**
  - The birth of the novel is associated with the social reform-oriented movement of the 19th century. This new genre, borrowed from the West, is characterized by a spirit of revolt, right from its adoption into the Indian system.



- Many novels like Pratap Mudaliyar Charitram (1879), Sri Ranga Raja Charitra (1872) etc were written with didactic intentions and to re-examine evil social customs and practices like untouchability, caste distinctions, denial of remarriage of widows, etc.

### **Conclusion:-**

- It is true that the idea of a modern state took root in Indian society because of India's contact with western ideas, but Indian writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and others made use of this newly acquired concept of nationalism to attack colonial rule, and in the process created their own brand of nationalism, rooted in the soil. **This shows both revivalism and reformism were natural corollaries.**

***Q) Unlike the dark middle ages of Europe, India's middle ages brought about a very rich tradition of devotional literature and poetry which dispels its assumption of a dark period of India's history.***

***Comment. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- India in dark ages was not different from the rest of the world in the sense **that continuous rise and fall of empires and constant battles were omnipresent during that period.** But the development India made in fields of religion, philosophy, literature, science, administration etc are the reasons that this period in Indian history is aptly called medieval period and not the "dark ages".
- Medieval India is also witness to Bhakti and Sufi movements. These were revolutionary religious movements which preached communal brotherhood, salvation through devotion, equality of mankind, shunning superstition to name a few.

### **Middle ages brought about a very rich tradition of devotional literature and poetry:-**

- Indian literature, which had survived through medieval times, has had their revival. Jnaneshwari, Tukaram, Ramdas, Mirabai, Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas and a host of others spearheaded the movement for revival. The South had their strong stalwarts in Kanakadas, Tyagaraja and Subrahmanya Bharati. The movement of revival received impetus through translations of the classics.
- Love poetry:-**
  - The dominating note in bhakti is ecstasy and total identity with God. **It is a poetic approach to religion and an ascetic approach to poetry. It is poetry of connections – connecting the worldly with the divine,** and as a result, the old form of secular love poetry began to have a new meaning in all languages.
- Bhakti also attacked the age-old caste system and devoted itself to the worship of humanity,** because the catch-word of bhakti is that God is there in every human being. The movement was in essence subaltern, as most of its poets belonged to the so-called 'lower' castes.
- The rise of bhakti poetry gave rise to regional languages (Bhasa):-**
  - The conception of bhakti **did away with the elite tradition of Sanskrit** and accepted the more acceptable language of the common man.
  - The power of ancient bhakti poetry in Tamil set in motion what might well be considered a pan-Indian efflorescence.**
  - After Tamil, Pampa's great court epics were composed in Kannada in the 10th century.
  - Devotional literature in Kannada, the Vachanas (sayings) of the various saints of the Krishna, Rama and Shiva cults, is well known. Basavanna was a famous Kannada poet. Allama Prabhu (Kannada) wrote great poetry under the garb of religion.
- Marathi:-**
  - Gyaneswar is the first and foremost bhakti poet in Marathi. He became famous for his poetic contribution to bhakti for Vithal (Vishnu).

- Eknath wrote his short poetic narratives and devotional abhangas (a literary form), and after him it was Tukarram whose songs cast a spell all over Maharashtra.
- **Gujarati poets** like Narsi Mehta and Premananda occupy a prominent place in the galaxy of the Vaishnava poets.
- **Bengali:-**
  - Chandidas, a **Bengali poet**, is acclaimed as a great genius for the lucidity and sweetness of his poems.
  - Sri Chaitanya a great Bengali saint, helped Vaishnavism to turn into a religious and literary movement, made it a living faith and became a source of never-ending inspiration to a host of Bengali poets, including Jiva Goswami.
  - Medieval Muslim Bengali poets like Daulat Kazi and Saiyad Alaol wrote narrative poems based on Sufistic philosophy, betraying a happy cultural and religious synthesis of Islam and Hinduism. In fact, bhakti became a great platform for **Hindu-Muslim unity**.
- Similarly, Vidyapati in Maithili created a new poetic language.
- Lal Ded, a Kashmiri Muslim poetess, gave a new dimension to mystical bhakti.
- In fact, epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata received a rebirth in the new languages. These languages gave a fresh life, a renewed relevance, and a meaningful reincarnation to the great Sanskrit epics, and these epics in their turn provided substance and style to the new languages too.
- **Women Poets of Bhakti**
  - The Alwar women poets like Andal and others, gave expression to their love for the divine.
  - They all wrote small lyrics or poems of devotional fervour, metaphysical depth, and with a spirit of dedication and utmost sincerity. Behind their mysticism and metaphysics is a divine sadness.

### Other Trends in Medieval Literature

- Bhakti was not the only aspect of medieval literature. Love ballads and heroic poetry in Punjabi, known as Kissa and Var, were popular Punjabi medieval forms.
- During the medieval period, Urdu, as a language, came into being. Then, it was Dard and Mir Taqi Mir who gave Urdu maturity and class, and ushered it into the modern period.

***Q) While folk music and dance in India share common themes and concerns, there is a wide variety of forms. Comment.(250 words)***

### Background:-

- India is a land of cultural diversities. Every region in India has its own form of folk music. This rich tradition of folk music is very much alive in not just rural India, but also in urban India as well.

### Common themes and concerns of folk music and dance in India:-

- Music and dance are probably the most elemental art forms, spontaneously expressing the entire garment of human emotions and experiences. **Folk music is more like a daily ritual without affecting the daily lives of people.** People learn it since their childhood and grow up on these songs.
- Folk music and dances of agricultural communities **celebrate the rhythms of daily life, the turn of the seasons, the highlights of the agricultural calendar, religious festivals and important events that punctuate the flow of life, such as births and marriages.**
- Along the entire Himalayan region, from Kashmir to Darjeeling, **folk dancers link arms and sway gracefully in undulating movements**, celebrate the sowing of the wheat crop.
- These dances have formed a vast reservoir from which the classical dances have drawn sustenance.

- **Traditional folk music** is mostly transmitted orally, music with unknown composers, or music performed by custom over a long period of time. The songs have been performed, by custom, over a long period of time, usually several generations.
- They commemorate historical and personal events.
- **Most of the folk music in India is dance oriented and many popular forms of dance like Dandiya, Lavani, Garba, etc. are danced along the tunes of popular folk music**

#### Variety of forms:-

- **Style of similar dances is different:-**
  - Women perform the **Giddha**, characterised by its spontaneous energy. Rajasthani women, their faces covered with flowing veils, are swirls of colour in the **Ghoomardance**, while their counterparts in Gujarat perform the famous **Garba**, dancing in a circle with batons.
  - Gujarati men perform the **Dandiya Ras**, a more vigorous version of the same dance, leaping and crouching in twirling patterns.
- **Different communities:-**
  - In the fishing communities of Maharashtra, men and women link arms and dance together and the women climb on to the men's shoulders to form pyramids. The women's **Lavanidance** from this area is notable for its unabashed sensuality.
- There are also **several forms of dance-drama or folk theatre**, such as the **Nautanki** of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the **Bhava** of Gujarat, the irreverent **Tamasha** of Maharashtra, the Bengali **Jatra**, the spectacular **Yakshagana** of Karnataka and **Theyyam** of Kerala, all of which narrate legends of local heroes, kings and deities.
- **Martial art forms** throughout the country have been stylized to quasi dance forms, notable among which are the martial dances of the North-eastern hill tribes, the **Lazim** dances of Maharashtra, the **Kalaripayattu** of Kerala, and the highly stylized masked **Chhau dances** of Orissa, West Bengal and Bihar.
- **Not all regions use the same instrument.** In fact, the same instrument may not even be called by the same name everywhere. Most of these instruments are made of easily available material like bamboo, clay pots, empty coconut shells, etc.
- **The dieties on whom the songs are made are not constant** all over the country. In some folk music ravana is praised as well.
- **Folk music is mostly in vernacular languages.**

***Q) Examine the changes in Indian cinema brought about by economic liberalization. (250 words)***

#### Background:-

- Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation succeeded in turning India back from the brink of economic ruin. It freed up Indian entrepreneurship and allowed the country to compete in the global marketplace. **Among the beneficiaries of this process of unshackling was Indian cinema**

#### Changes in Indian cinema brought about by economic liberalisation:-

- **Technology access:-**
  - The latest technology became more easily accessible. Liberalisation made it easier for filmmakers and studios to import the latest equipment. This has led to the look of films undergoing a sea change.
- **Digital Intermediate (DI):-**
  - After the arrival of DI, movie makers were able to tweak the print digitally.
- Digital visual effects were becoming possible as technology was becoming available.
- Hollywood opened Indian audiences to the quality of cinema and technology of a much higher standard and that automatically raised the bar for Indian movie makers too.

- **Easy loans:-**
  - Until the 1990s, the norm was to receive film funding from private financiers. In the new millennium, came finance from institutions like banks
  - In 2000, the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) began to offer loans for film production at 15-20% interest per annum. This was to curb the practice of producers investing personal or underworld wealth in projects. It gave the industry encouraging stability and a sense of security.
- **Movie-going experience changed:-**
  - The end of the licence-permit era has led to an explosion of new theatres in every city. Multiplex theatres cropped up.
  - Over the years, the exhibitions business was also transformed, allowing audiences to experience luxury seating and the latest movie projection and sound systems.
- **Price control has largely disappeared:-**
  - Film tickets can have differential pricing for different shows or different days of the week.
- **Distribution process became organized:-**
  - A process that was disorganized began to get structured. The use of statistical analysis, marketing research and audience metrics, unknown three decades ago has become standard.
- **Growing commercialization of cinema :-**
  - The liberalization policy coincided with the rise of movie stars in Hindi and other film industries. In addition, directors brought a globalized sensibility to their films. **This facilitated audience interest overseas.**
  - 1990s also saw a rise in the number of Indians travelling abroad for education or work. **This resulted in a growing market for Indian films.**
- **Multiple roles:-**
  - Liberalization opened up this job for corporate studios. Corporations brought structure to the system.
  - Arrival of corporations also ensured greater presence in foreign markets.
  - Studios like Disney (then UTV), Reliance Entertainment and Eros International would take on the entire task from acquisition of a film to syndication, marketing, and distribution overseas, in addition to investing in the filmmaking process.
  - With established centres across the country, and overseas, these studios managed to set up the right channels to ensure smooth transfer of funds and films.
- **Governments policies also helped:-**
  - Lot of state governments such as Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh came out with an entertainment tax holiday policy in order to encourage a capital-intensive business such as exhibition.
  - After 1998 government granted cinema the status of an industry.
  - National government permitted 100% foreign direct investment in the exhibition business
- **The divide between 'art' and 'commerce' has narrowed**, and many filmmakers even in the 'commercial' space are now willing to take risks and tackle new subjects.
- Prior to liberalization, Hollywood films used to hit the theatres in India months after their release elsewhere. **Now they are part of the mainstream and arrive in India almost simultaneously with their worldwide release.**

#### **Concerns:-**

- On the flip side a lot of filmmakers are focusing more on their marketing campaigns than the content itself.
- **Entry of foreign studios has had its drawbacks, too.** Indian movie makers have not cracked the science behind distribution in foreign markets. Also, most foreign studios who have entered the

Indian market focus on getting the most out of Indian markets, but do not distribute Indian films overseas.

### **Conclusion:-**

- Therefore the role played by economic liberalization to the cinema industry is huge. In 2015, the Indian film industry was worth Rs.13,820 crore and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 10.5% for the next five years, according to the KPMG-FICCI Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2016.

***TOPIC: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues.***

***Q) Lord Curzon brought some much needed reforms in Indian educational, scientific and political system. Critically analyze his role in India's political history. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Lord Curzon occupies a high place among the rulers of British India like Lord Wellesley and Lord Dalhousie. He was a thorough imperialist. In order to make the administration efficient, Lord Curzon overhauled the entire administrative machinery.

### **Reforms by Lord Curzon:-**

- **Educational:-**
  - **Curzon took a serious view of the fall in the standard of education and discipline in the educational institutions.** In his view the universities had degenerated into factories for producing political revolutionaries. **To set the educational system in order, he instituted in 1902, a Universities Commission to go into the entire question of university education in the country.**
  - On the basis of the findings and recommendations of the Commission, Curzon brought in the **Indian Universities Act of 1904**, which brought all the universities in India under the control of the government.
- **Scientific:-**
  - The Agriculture Research Institute in Pusa (Bihar – Bengal Presidency) was established.
- **Political:-**
  - **Administrative:-**
    - Lord Curzon launched many investigative commissions. **He made efforts for police reforms, eliminating the corruption and to promote the economic development.** He provided a revival to conservatism in India by refurbishing the main features of Lord Mayo's policies.
    - Curzon believed in efficiency and discipline. He instituted a Police Commission in 1902 under the chairmanship of Sir Andrew Frazer. Curzon accepted all the recommendations and implemented them.
    - He set up **training schools for both the officers and the constables and introduced provincial police service.**
    - **During Curzon regime, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) was established which covered roughly the areas of upper course of River Indus.**
  - **Military:-**
    - Imperial cadet corps was set up which became an instrument for Indianisation of army later.
  - **Other reforms:-**
    - **Preservation of Archaeological objects**

- Curzon had a passion for preserving the ancient monuments of historical importance in India.
- No Viceroy in India before or after him took such a keen interest in archaeological objects. He passed a law called the **Ancient Monuments Act, 1904 which made it obligatory on the part of the government and local authorities to preserve the monuments of archaeological importance and their destruction an offence.**
- He rescued several historic monuments, including the Taj Mahal in Agra, and starting work on the Victoria Memorial Hall, the governor's house
- **Famine of 1899-1900:-**
  - The **famine relief in the British Provinces was organized** and around 25% of the affected people were relieved as per the official figures
- **Irrigation Commission 1901**
  - **Post famine, there was more emphasis on internal administration reforms.** Towards this direction, the construction of irrigation works in accordance with the broad plans was outlined by an Irrigation Commission under *Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff*.
  - Most important part of this strategy was a network of canals in Punjab comprising a main canal of 2714 kilometers and other link canals.

#### Criticisms:-

- In 1900, then Curzon Government enacted the *Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900* which placed a 15 year limitation on all land purchases and mortgages.
  - **But due to this, peasantry got in further problem because now they were unable to access credit. The government established some agricultural banks and in due course passed *Cooperative Credit Societies Act, 1904*. However, most of the public remained unaware of these measures and thus discontent grew among not only moneylenders, shopkeepers, professionals and the trader class but also the peasantry.**
- **Famine in 1899-1900:-**
  - The **British initiatives were also grossly inadequate because no intervention was done to control the grain prices.** There was no humanitarian consideration in the relief measures. India owed a huge debt to its colonial masters and so Curzon remained economic in whatever efforts he took.
- **Administrative:-**
  - **He did the partition of Bengal, the largest Province of India, to improve its developmental process. This politically motivated the Muslims of the East Bengal. As a result, Curzon also faced a huge agitation by the Congress and the Hindu political and corporate classes of West Bengal.**
  - He partitioned Bengal in 1905 and set the province's Hindu and Muslim populations against each other by **adopting a policy of divide and rule later leading to formation of Muslim league.**
- **Calcutta Corporation Act (1899)**
  - The Viceroy brought in a new legislative measure namely the Calcutta Corporation Act in 1899 by which the strength of the elected members was reduced and that of the official members increased. **Curzon gave more representations to the English people as against the Indians in the Calcutta Corporation. There was strong resentment by the Indian members against Curzon's anti-people measures**
  - CID wing appointed was used to watch on political opponents.

#### Impact:-

- When Lord Curzon made the Bengal Partition effective disregarding the opinion of the Bengalees, **the preparation for revolutionary terrorism went on in full swing.**
- Harmony in India got destroyed.

#### Conclusion:-

- At the beginning Curzon earned the popularity and admiration of the Indian people. He lost the popularity by the act of Partition of Bengal.

**TOPIC: The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.**

**Q) The only noticeable contribution of moderates to India's struggle for freedom is the economic critique of colonialism. Comment. (250 Words)**

**Background:-**

- Congress politics during the first twenty years of its history is roughly referred to as moderate politics.

**Economic critique of colonialism by moderates:-**

- The most significant historical contribution of the moderates was that they offered an **economic critique of colonialism**.
- The early nationalists took note of all the three forms of contemporary colonial economic exploitation, namely, through trade, industry and finance.** They clearly grasped that the essence of British economic imperialism lay in the subordination of the Indian economy to the British economy.
- They** complained of India's growing poverty and economic backwardness and the failure of modern industry and agriculture to grow and they put the blame on British economic exploitation.
- British colonialism had transformed itself in the 19th century by jettisoning the direct modes of extraction through plunder, tribute and mercantilism in favour of free trade and foreign capital investment.** This turned India into a supplier of agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs and a consumer of manufactured goods.
- Dadabhai Naoroji's work focused on the drain of wealth from India into England through colonial rule. **Naoroji's work on the drain theory was the main reason behind the creation of the Royal commission on Indian Expenditure in 1896 in which he was also a member.**

**Other contributions:-**

- Excellent work in legislative councils :-**
  - Legislative councils in India had no real official power till 1920. Yet, work done in them by the nationalists helped the growth of the national movement.
  - They wanted to broaden Indian participation in legislatures.
  - Nationalists were able to transform these councils into forums for ventilating popular grievances, for exposing the defects of an indifferent bureaucracy, for criticising government policies/proposals, raising basic economic issues, especially regarding public finance.
- Early nationalists worked with the long-term objective of a democratic self-government.**
  - The scope of constitutional demands was widened and they demanded self-government like the self-governing colonies of Canada and Australia.
- Also, leaders like Pherozshah Mehta and Gokhale **put government policies and proposals to severe criticism.**
- Administrative:-**
  - The first demand of the moderates was for the Indianisation of the services. An Indianised civil service would be more responsive to the Indian needs. It would stop the drainage of money, which was annually expatriated through the payment of salary and pension of the European officers. **More significantly, this reform was being advocated as a measure against racism.**
  - They demanded Separation of judicial from executive functions.
  - The other administrative demands of the moderates included the extension of trial by jury, repeal of the arms act, and a campaign against the exploitation of the indentured labour at

the Assam tea gardens, Increase in expenditure on welfare i.e., health, sanitation, education, irrigation works and improvement of agriculture, agricultural banks for cultivators, etc.

- **They demanded better treatment for Indian labour abroad in other British colonies**, who faced oppression and racial discrimination there.
- **Military:-**
  - **Moderates demanded that this military expenditure should be evenly shared by the British government.** They demanded higher positions for Indians in the army.
- **Social:-**
  - Some Moderates like Ranade and Gokhale favoured social reforms. They protested against child marriage and widowhood
- **Defence of Civil Right:**
  - **The early Indian nationalists were attracted to modern civil rights, namely, the freedoms of speech, the Press, thought and association.** They put up a strong defence of these civil rights whenever the Government tried to curtail them.
  - The struggle for democratic freedoms became an integral part of the nationalist struggle for freedom.

#### **Limitations:-**

- However British rule, to most of them **seemed to be an act of providence destined to bring in modernization.**
  - The moderate politicians **could not or did not organize an agitation against British rule** because of their still shred an intrinsic faith in the English democratic liberal political tradition.
- Their politics was **very limited in terms of goals and methods.**
- They were secular in their attitudes, though not always forthright enough to rise above their sectarian interests. **They were conscious of the exploitative nature of British rule, but wanted its reforms and not expulsion.**
- They equated liberty with class privilege and wanted gradual or piecemeal reforms.
- Early Congressman had an implicit faith in **the efficacy of peaceful and constitutional agitation as opposed to popular mean of agitation.**
  - **Believed in Petition, Prayer and Protest. They did not go for mass mobilisation.** The basic weakness of the early national movement lay in its narrow social base. It did not penetrate down to the masses. In fact, the leaders lacked faith in the masses.
- Their immediate demand was not for full self-government or democracy. They demanded democratic rights only for the educated members of the Indian society, who would substitute for the masses.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- Despite limitations representation, the historical significance of the early Congress lay in the fact that by providing an economic critique of colonialism and by linking Indian poverty to it, the moderate politicians had constructed a discursive field within which the subsequent nationalists attack on colonialism could be conceptualized.

***Q) Analyse the role played by moderates in securing press freedom during the Indian national movement. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- The national movement from the beginning zealously defended the freedom of the Press whenever the Government attacked it or tried to curtail it. In fact, the struggle for the freedom of the Press became an integral part of the struggle for freedom.

#### **Role played by moderates:-**



- The early phase of the nationalist movement, from around 1870 to 1918, focussed more on **political propaganda and education, formation and propagation of nationalist ideology, training, mobilisation and consolidation of public opinion.**
- **The main aim of these newspapers was to serve the public.** In fact, these newspapers had a wide reach and they stimulated the popular library movement which enabled not only political education but also political participation.
- Many newspapers emerged during these years under **distinguished and fearless journalists.** These included The Hindu and Swadesamitran under G. SubramaniyaAiyar, The Bengalee under Surendranath Banerjee, Voice of India under Dadabhai Naoroji, Amrita Bazar Patrika under Sisir Kumar Ghosh etc.
- Through the newspapers, **a nationalistic rebellion was slowly being pieced together** through words and symbols.
- **Government acts and policies were put to thorough scrutiny.** They acted as an institution of opposition to the Government.
- **Indian newspapers became highly critical of Lord Lytton's administration,** especially regarding its inhuman treatment to victims of the famine of 1876-77.
- **Adapted quickly:-**
  - The vernacular Press Act 1878 passed by British was not imposed on English-language publications.
  - So Amrita Bazar Patrika, a bilingual, adapted to the circumstances and became solely an English weekly, **going on to play an important role in the development of investigative Indian journalism.**
- Tilak who was later termed as extremist **encouraged anti-imperialist sentiments among the public through Ganapati festivals (started in 1893), Shivaji festivals (started in 1896) and through newspapers** Kesari and Maharatta.
- People became politically aware because of newspapers and this **later contributed to mass mobilisation** as well.

***Q) One of the important aims of Swadeshi movement was the building up of a parallel and independent system of 'national education'. Discuss the limitations of the system so created. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Early nationalists had welcomed the spread of western education through English, initiated on a limited scale by the British government. However, the Swadeshi movement was more closely associated with an Extremist criticism of this system, because it neglected vernacular languages and 'indigenous values' in education.
- National Education propagated a sense of pride in learning national traditions and culture in national languages.

### **Independent system of national education:-**

- National education means an education suited to the temperament and needs of the people fitted to build up a nation under modern conditions and absolutely controlled by Indians.
- National education aimed at nation-building in a modern world.

### **It was effective in many ways:-**

- The programme of 'national education' was also tied up with **encouraging more radical forms of politics.**
- **Establishment of institutions:-**

- For propagating learning of Indian traditions and culture along with modern values and developments in own national languages, Tagore established a great education centre, named 'Shanti Niketan' Mukherjee started 'Dawn Society' and Bengal National College and School 1906, with Aurobindo Ghosh as principal.
- **Not all aspects of this programme were revivalist:-**
  - A number of national institutions were set up to encourage technical education and this indicated an acknowledgement of the importance of western science and technical knowhow within education.
  - A National Council of Education was set up in Calcutta in 1906 which designed primary, secondary and collegiate courses, which would combine literary and scientific education with technical training.
- **Proliferation of national schools in districts and mofussil areas:-**
  - These schools were far more politically active than those of Calcutta and caused great anxiety to the government as well.
  - Among them, schools established at Momen Singh, Faridpur and Bakargunj of Bengal were very famous because large number of Muslims and women were enrolled there. Numbers of the lower castes students was also impressive.
- **The national education movement conditioned the later educational developments in the country.**
- **It had sure impact on the development of primary education in the country.** It paved the way for making primary education free, universal and compulsory.
  - G. K. Gokhale introduced two bills on primary education in 1910 and 1911 in the Imperial Legislative Council.
- **Secondary education** was also not free from the far-reaching effects on the national education movement. It influenced the curricula of secondary schools in an effective manner. It gave secondary education vocational and technical bias.
- One of the major demands of the **advocates of national education was instruction through the mother-tongue.** This demand has now completely been fulfilled.
- **School atmosphere was also changed as a result of the national education movement.** "Bandemataram" prayer was introduced in different schools which became patriotic. Portraits of national leaders were found on the walls of school buildings.
- National education movement led to the **development of national consciousness** which in turn strengthened the national movement for liberation.

#### Limitations:-

- Most of the grants from the National Council was concentrated in Calcutta and didn't find their way into the mofussil schools.
- The leaders in the council were also fearful of police repression and thus, curbed grants to institutions that were suspected of having links with samitis or revolutionary organizations.
  - For the similar reasons, the mofussil schools, which were politically active, also lost out on funding.
- Since the knowledge of English determined employment opportunities, vernacular languages were used only in the early school years, and the use of English dominated higher education.
- The Council busied itself with setting up a parallel university, which met with very little success as no Indian-owned national college broke ties with the Calcutta University.
- Radical Nationalists of Bengal **did not incorporate in their programme the item of mass education** as they were unable to for see at that time the revolutionary potentiality in mass education.
- **Difference of opinion among national leaders was also imminent:-**

- The national education movement failed to sustain the type of education it introduced. It was the Moderates of Bengal who controlled the National Council of Education and the institutions affiliated to it in Bengal and other provinces.
- Difference of opinion among national leaders with regard to the concept and pattern of national education gave a rude shock to the survival of the movement
- In spite of their management and control **the national education movement failed after the annulment of partition** as India lacked the power and resources to put through such a programme.
- **The scheme lacked a carefully drawn up blue-print.** Public support was hesitant, as well as uncertain and inadequate.
- **Official administration was also liberalised.** With repression some concessions also came. Students of national schools were allowed to be admitted in the official schools.
- Due to emphasis on revivalism, particularly in the 1st phase of the movement, **the Muslims in general did not sympathise with the national education movement.** This sectarian character of the movement gave a death-blow to its permanency and made it partisan and communal.

#### Conclusion:-

- Despite its narrow reach, the movement paved a way for future movements and education increasingly came into focus.

***Q) Division in Congress between the moderates and the extremists was just faction fighting that plagued organized public life everywhere in India around that time. Examine. (250 Words)***

#### Background:-

- By the end of the nineteenth century, it became quite apparent that moderate leadership of the Congress was unable to bring any significant change in the policies and administration of the British in India.
- It created reaction and thinking grew among young leadership that no good would be served without struggle. **They gradually lost faith in the moderate tactics- prayer, petition and peaceful procession and therefore, proceeded ahead towards the path of confrontation.** It resulted in the rise of radicals within the Congress and that of revolutionary outside it.

#### It was just faction fighting which was part during that time :-

- **Bengal:-**
  - In Bengal **there was division within the Brahmo Samaj and bitter journalistic rivalry between the two newspaper groups, the Bengalee, edited by moderate leader and the Amrita Bazar Patrika, edited by the more radical Motilal Ghosh.**
  - There was also faction fighting between Aurobindo on the one hand and Bipin Chandra Pal on the other over the editorship of Bandemataram.
- **In Maharashtra** there was a competition between Gokhale and Tilak for controlling the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha.
- **In Madras** three factions, the Mylapur clique, the Egmore clique and the suburban elites fought among each other. In Punjab the Arya Samaj was divided after the death of D.Saraswati, between the more moderate College group and the radical revivalist group.
- **So the division in Congress between the moderates and the extremist was just faction fighting that plagued organized public life everywhere in India around this time.**

#### There were other issues as well:-

- But the rise of extremism cannot be explained by terms of factionalism alone. **Frustration with moderate politics was definitely the major reason behind the rise of extremist reaction.**
- **Social :-**

- The social reformism of the moderates inspired by western liberalism also went against popular orthodoxy.
- The various social and religious movements which had revived the faith of Indians in their country and culture were increasing national awakening.
- They brought awareness that a vast country like India had been colonized by a handful of foreigners because of internal weaknesses of Indian social structure and culture.
- **Political:-**
  - **Political strategy of the moderates was founded on the belief that British rule could reformed within. But the spread of knowledge regarding political and economic questions gradually undermined this belief.**
  - The Indian Council Act, 1892 failed to satisfy Indian public opinion. On the other hand, even the existing political rights of the people were attacked.
  - The Curzonian administration magnified this nationalist angst further. Even socially and culturally, the British rule was no longer progressive. **Thus an increasing number of Indians were getting convinced that self-government was essential for the sake of economic, political and cultural progress of the country and that political enslavement meant stunting the growth of the Indian people**
  - The party was being governed by an undemocratic constitution. Although after repeated attempts by Tilak a new constitution was drafted and ratified in 1899, it was never given a proper trial.
- **Ideological:-**
  - In the first twenty years of its existence the Congress remained an 'elite club' representing voices of educated middle class of India.
  - The Congress was also financially broke, as the capitalists did not contribute and the patronage of a few rajas and landed magnates was never sufficient.
  - Further, aside from annual conferences of the Congress, which many termed as a 'three-day tamasha', there was hardly any other political activity for the rest of the year. Thus, the Congress under the leadership of moderates could not reach to the masses.
- **International:-**
  - Several events abroad during this period were another important factor that encouraged upsurge of radical politics in India. The rise of modern Japan after 1868 showed that a backward Asian country could develop itself without western control.

### **Conclusion:-**

- In the initial phases of national movement ideological differences would be common which were taken by British for their advantage but both the groups came together and fought for the cause of independence later.

***Q) The Revolutionaries supplemented the national cause and carried the message of nationalism in the country and outside the country. Discuss in light of the contribution of revolutionaries to Indian freedom struggle. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- The end of 1907 brought another political trend to the fore. The young men of Bengal took to the path of individual heroism and revolutionary terrorism.
- They have been incensed at the repression and the 'mendicancy' of the Congress Moderates and also led to 'the politics of the bomb' by the Extremists' failure to give a positive lead to the people.

### **They supplemented national cause through (ideas):-**

- **Direct action**

- Even though the Extremists had rightly emphasized the role of the masses the need to go beyond propaganda and agitation, demanded self- sacrifice from the youth **they had failed to find forms through which all these ideas could find practical expression.**
- The Extremists waffling failed to impress the youth who decided to take recourse to physical force.
  - Failed to provide a positive outlet for their revolutionary energies and to educate them on the political difference between a evolution based on the activity of the masses and a revolutionary feeling based on individual action, however heroic
- They inspired the people to cast off the yoke of slavery and be **prepared for any kind of sacrifice for the cause of freedom.**
- They **embraced death cheerfully** and were not scared of the physical and mental injuries inflicted upon them by the cruel rulers.
- They decided to **organize the assassination of unpopular British officials.** Such assassinations would strike terror into the hearts of the rulers, amuse the patriotic instincts of the people, inspire them and remove the fear of authority from their minds.

#### **Contribution:-**

- **International examples:-**
  - Ras Behari Bose, Chander Shekhar Azad, Lala Hardyal M.A., Madan Lal Dhingra and . S. Ajit Singh succeeded in expanding the movement of freedom to other countries as well.
  - Barindra Ghosh was sent to Paris to learn the science of Bomb Making and here he came in touch were Madam Bhikaji Cama
  - Madam Cama was already associated with the India House and the Paris India Society.
  - **Shyamji Krishnavarma:-**
    - He started a monthly journal, the Indian sociologist; an organ of freedom struggle of India in 1905.
    - Shyamji established the Indian Home Rule society and a hostel for Indian students living in London, popularly known as the Indian House.
- **The Indian Independence Committee in Berlin**
  - After the outbreak of the First World War, Hardyal and other Indians abroad moved to Germany and set up the Indian independence committee at Berlin.
  - The policy and activities of the Berlin committee and the Ghadar party had greatly influenced the revolutionaries of Bengal.
  - **The committee planned to bring about a general insurrection in India and for this purpose foreign arms were to be sent to India from abroad;** expatriated Indians were to return to mother country, where they were to be joined by Indian soldiers and by the waiting revolutionaries.
- **Ghadar movement** aimed at bringing an armed revolution in India and brought out a weekly called Ghadar.
- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose organized Azad Hind Fauj and gave us the slogan 'Give me blood, I will give you my freedom.
- **India:-**
  - Very soon **secret societies of revolutionaries** came up all over the country. The most famous and long lasting being Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar.
  - Their activities took two forms
    - **The assassination of oppressive officials** and informers and traitors from their own ranks
    - **Dacoities to raise funds** for purchase of arms etc.
  - In 1924, **Hindustan Republican Army (HRA)** was founded at Kanpur by Sachin Sanyal, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee with an aim to organise an armed revolution to overthrow the colonial

government. The most important action of HRA was the Kakori robbery in which official railway cash was looted.

- In 1928 Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru shot dead Saunders, the police official responsible for the lathi charge on Lala Lajpat Rai in Lahore. Sardar Bhagat Singh and his companions faced brutalities of Britishers boldly, cheerfully and willingly for the cause of India. They gave the nationalist movement a new turn
- In 1929, Batukeshwar **Dutt and Bhagat Singh** were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Assembly against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill

#### **Shortcomings:-**

- Revolutionary terrorism **gradually petered out.**
- Lacked a **mass base**
- Despite remarkable heroism, the individual revolutionaries, **organized in small secret groups**, could not withstand suppression by the still strong colonial state.
- The **revolutionaries mainly came from the urban middle class intelligentsia** out of touch with the peasants and workers.
- They **lacked a common plan and central leadership.**
- The British government on its part followed a **ruthless and repressive policy towards them.**

#### **Conclusion:-**

- The contribution of revolutionaries is unparalleled in the freedom movement *as they played a critical role in spreading the message of Indian freedom struggle abroad.*

***Q) The dream of a 'Surat Split' was already conceived by Curzon when he made the statement 'Congress was tottering to its fall and one of the biggest ambitions in my life is to give it a peaceful demise'. Critically analyze. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- In the early twentieth century the nationalism was gaining fervor so Curzon decided to divide Bengal, to break the unity of Indians and to check the growth of nationalism.

#### **British policies led to Surat split:-**

- The new policy, known as the policy of the carrot and the stick, was to be a three pronged one. It may be described as a **policy of repression-conciliation-suppression.**
  - The Extremists, were to be repressed, though mildly in the first stage, the purpose being to frighten the Moderates.
  - The Moderates were then to be placated through some concessions and promises and hints were to be given that further concessions would be forthcoming if they disassociated themselves from the Extremists.
  - **The entire objective of the new policy was to isolate the Extremists. Once the Moderates fell into the trap, the Extremists could be suppressed through the use of the full might of the state.**
  - The Moderates, in turn, could then be ignored. British offered a bait of fresh reforms in the Legislative Councils began discussing them with the Moderate leadership of the Congress.
- The Moderates agreed to cooperate with the Government and discuss reforms even while a vigorous popular movement, which the Government was trying to suppress, was going on in the country. The result was a total split in the nationalist ranks.
- So British were using the divide and style policy.

#### **Ideological differences between moderates and extremists:-**

- There was a **great deal of public debate and disagreement among Moderates and Extremists** in the years 1905-1907, even when they were working together against the partitioning of Bengal.
- The Extremists wanted to extend the Swadeshi and the Boycott Movement from Bengal to the rest of the country. They also wanted to gradually extend the boycott from foreign goods to every form of association or cooperation with the colonial Government.
- The Moderates wanted to confine the boycott part of the movement to Bengal and were totally opposed to its extension to the Government.
- Matters nearly came to a head at the Calcutta Congress in 1906 over the question of its Presidentship. A split was avoided by choosing Dadabhai Naoroji.
- Four compromise resolutions on the Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, and Self-Government demands were passed. Throughout 1907 the two sides fought over differing interpretations of the four resolutions.
- By the end of 1907 the Extremists were convinced that the battle for freedom had begun as the people had been roused. Most of them felt that the time had come to part company with the Moderates
- Most of the Moderates, led by Pherozeshah Mehta, were no less determined on a split. They were afraid that the Congress organization built carefully over the last twenty years, would be shattered.

### **Conclusion:-**

- The Moderates did not see that the colonial state was negotiating with them not because of their inherent political strength but because of the fear of the Extremists. The Extremists did not see that the Moderates were their natural outer defence line (in terms of civil liberties and so on) and that they did not possess the required strength to face the colonial state's juggernaut.
- The only victorious party was the rulers. Even later British applied this policy for dividing congress but congress realized the consequences of split and stayed together.

***Q) Jallianwala Bagh massacre was one of the worst acts of violence in the history of the world and a turning point in India's freedom struggle. Comment. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Recently people paid homage to the commemoration of the 99th anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh massacre. In the incident British brigadier opened fire on an unarmed crowd of peasants in Amritsar and killed 389.

### **One of the worst acts of violence:-**

- Large gathering of 15,000-20,000 people with a majority of Sikhs came together to celebrate the Punjabi harvest festival of Baisakhi in this garden. They had also gathered to revolt against the repressive Rowlatt Act that provided for stricter control of the press, arrests without warrant and indefinite detention without trial.
- **The people were unarmed and British surrounded them and opened fire brutally**. Even after that British was not empathetic but responded with brutal repression in the following ways.
  - Seeking to humiliate and terrorise people, Satyagrahis were forced to rub their noses on the ground.
  - They were forced to crawl on the streets, and do salaam (salute) to all sahibs.
  - People were flogged and villages (around Gujranwala in Punjab) were bombed.
- **For Indians this added the fuel to fire and national movement was taken forward more intensively**

- Leaders heavily criticised the government with Tagore renouncing his knighthood as protest.
- The whole nation came together protesting against British so this incident brought unity to India which was essential for the freedom movement.

#### **Turning point in Indian national movement:-**

- By the end of the 19th century, British rule, in India as well as across the globe, had gained a certain legitimacy even in the eyes of the enslaved public. Till then, most Indians had reconciled with the progressive nature of the colonial rule. **Jallianwala Bagh shattered the faith that the people had in the British sense of justice and fairness.**
- To most Indians, **the massacre of the unarmed was a betrayal of the trust that they had placed on the British to rule them wisely, justly and with fairness.**
- In the eyes of the Indian, the just, fair and liberal British suddenly turned into a ruthless, bloodthirsty tyrant who couldn't be trusted. Jallianwala Bagh revealed the evil that resided in the 'enlightened' empire.
- **Since then, it was a slow but sure downward slide for British rule in India.** It was on this sense of betrayal that Gandhi built his mass movement, which put a premium on breaking the laws made by the rulers.
- As the people began to wilfully break the laws made by the state, the state itself became illegitimate. Now **people actively started demanding for purna swaraj.**

***Q) Although the impact of the Home Rule League movement fell on a much wider community outside their direct membership, the League ultimately could not bring in mass agitational politics in India. Critically comment. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- The home rule movement was the Indian response to the First World War in a less charged but in a more effective way. With people already feeling the burden of wartime miseries caused by high taxation and a rise in prices, Tilak and Annie Besant ready to assume the leadership the movement started with great vigour.

#### **Impact of this movement on a wider community:-**

- The league campaign aimed to convey to the common man the message of Home rule as self-government. It **carried much wider appeal** than the earlier mobilizations did and also attracted the hitherto politically backward regions of Gujarat and Sindh.
  - Spread political awareness in new areas like Sindh, Punjab, Gujarat, United provinces, Central provinces, Bihar, Orissa etc
- The **movement created considerable excitement at the time** and attracted many members of the Indian national congress and the All India Muslim league. It was later joined by Motilal Nehru, Malaviya etc and some of these leaders became heads of local branches.
- **Many of the moderate congressman** who were disillusioned with congress inactivity and some members of Gokhale's servants of India society also joined the agitation.
- The movement **shifted the emphasis from the educated elite to the masses** and permanently deflected the movement from the course mapped by the moderates.
- It created an organizational link between the town and the country which was to prove crucial in later years.
- It prepared the masses for **politics of the Gandhian style.**
- Tilak and Besant's efforts in the **moderate-extremist reunion revived the congress** as an effective instrument of Indian nationalism.

#### **Could not bring mass agitational politics in India because of the following reasons:-**



- Anglo Indians, most of the muslims and non-Brahmins from south did not join as they felt Home rule **would mean rule of the Hindu majority mainly the high caste.**
- The **leagues elicited little response or enthusiasm from India's masses** and the British.
- It was **often divided** upon whether to follow up with public demonstrations or compromise by contesting elections to the legislative councils that were criticized.
- Its **further growth and activity were stalled by the rise of Mohandas Gandhi** and his satyagraha art of revolution and mass based civil disobedience.
- The **moderates were pacified by talk of reforms contained in Montague's statement of 1917**
- Talk of passive resistance by the extremists kept the moderates off from activity from 1918 onwards.
- The **movement was left leaderless** with Tilak going abroad and Besant unable to give a positive lead.

#### Conclusion:-

- The home rule movement lent a new dimension and a sense of urgency to the national movement.

***Q) Komagata Maru incident was an important landmark event in the political history of India.***

***Examine (250 Words)***

#### Background:-

- Several strict immigration policies were adopted on racially discriminatory lines to curb the flow of Indian immigrants in the early 20th century, who were coming to Canada seeking work. One incident which is related to this is the Komagata Maru.

#### Komagata Maru incident:-

- Komagata Maru was a Japanese steamship that sailed from Hong Kong to Vancouver, Canada via Japan in May, 1914. It was carrying 376 passengers who were immigrants from Punjab, India. Of these, only 24 were granted admittance in Canada when the ship docked in Vancouver. **At that time, Canada had laws restricting entry of migrants of Asian origin. Following a two month stalemate, the ship and its 352 passengers were escorted out of the dock by the Canadian military and forced to sail back to India.**
- Adding further insult to the injury, some of the passengers were killed in protests on their return to India, when they were prevented from docking and attempts were made to arrest its leaders who were suspected by the colonial government to be political agitators.

#### Significance of the movement:-

- The Komagata Maru episode attracted **worldwide attention and condemnation for the violation of human rights and racism.**
- This was one of several incidents in the early 20th century in which **exclusion laws in Canada and the United States were used to exclude immigrants of Asian origin**
- The episode further **inspired the Ghadar party** to engage in its struggle against the colonial rule and therefore it indirectly gave a fillip to the Indian struggle for freedom.
  - Further, the inflamed passions in the wake of the incident were widely cultivated by the Indian revolutionary organisation, the Ghadar Party, to rally support for its aims.
  - In a number of meetings ranging from California in 1914 to the Indian diaspora, prominent Ghadarites including Barkatullah, Tarak Nath Das, and Sohan Singh used the incident as a rallying point to recruit members for the Ghadar movement, most notably in support of promulgating plans to coordinate a massive uprising in India.
- The episode also reminds Indians of the **role played by those who lived away from the country** but kept struggling for the Independence of the country.
- It is widely cited at the time by Indian groups **to highlight discrepancies in Canadian immigration laws.**

- After the ship reached India, the Sikhs were treated as law breakers and were detailed which further led to resentment and anger in the Indian community

#### Concerns:-

- The Ghadarites efforts failed due to lack of support from the general population
- Could not impact the colonial structure as well.

#### Conclusion:-

- The legacy of this movement is never forgotten. The recent apology made by Canada to India regarding the incident shows the importance of this movement.

**Q) "If the congress was buried at Surat, it took rebirth in Lucknow, in the garden of Wajid Ali Shah". Analyze.(250 words)**

#### Background:-

- In the early twentieth century the nationalism was gaining fervour so Curzon decided to divide Bengal, to break the unity of Indians and to check the growth of nationalism. This goal started showing fruits with the Surat split.
- Difference between moderates and extremists further widened with moderates opposing the resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott of foreign goods and National Education and also there was an issue with the leadership of congress sessions as well that ultimately led to Surat split

#### Why was it the death of Congress in Surat:-

- The British policy, known as the policy of the carrot and the stick, was to be a three pronged one. It may be described as a **policy of repression-conciliation-suppression**. This approach was successful as after the split the British Government immediately launched a massive attack on the extremists and Extremist newspaper were suppressed.
- Lokmanya Tilak, their main leader, was sent to Mandalay jail for six years.
- **Divide and rule:-**
  - **The Moderates did not see that the colonial state was negotiating with them** not because of their inherent political strength but because of the fear of the Extremists. The **Extremists did not see that the Moderates were their natural outer defence line** (in terms of civil liberties and so on) and that they did not possess the required strength to face the colonial state's juggernaut.
- **The split did not prove useful to either party**
  - The moderates lost touch with the younger generation of nationalists.
  - The British played the game of divide and rule. While suppressing the extremists, Britishers tried to win over moderate national opinion so that former could be isolated and suppressed.
- **In 1909:** Separate electorates were granted to the Muslims during a time when the Congress was at its lowest ebb. The most critical and vocal elements were not a part of the INC. **Thus the British had taken absolute advantage over the INC.**

#### How congress underwent rebirth in Lucknow?

- The Lucknow Session 1916 was special in many respects.
- This session brought the moderates and extremists in Congress on common platform again after nearly a decade.
- Congress and All India Muslim League signed the historic Lucknow Pact.
- Muslim League sought for a sort of joint platform with the congress to put constitutional pressure on the British Government towards making reforms. **The idea was that such joint demand would give an impression of Hindu-Muslim unity. Towards this, Congress and Muslim League negotiated an agreement in Lucknow pact** whose main clauses are as follows:
  - There shall be self-government in India.

- Muslims should be given one-third representation in the central government.etc

### Issues remained:-

- Lucknow Session appeared to have given a perception of Hindu-Muslim unity; but it was signed without regard for its consequences.
- A blunder was committed by approving one third representations of the Muslims on the basis of their being a minority was biggest blunder because **it sowed the seeds of communal politics.**
- This pact made it open and clear that **India has different communities and each one of them has its own interests.**

### Congress unity remained till independence:-

- The clear difference between moderates and extremists slowly faded away with the entry of Gandhi as congress supported it.
- Even later British applied this policy for dividing congress but congress realised the consequences of split and stayed together for instance despite ideological differences between swarajists and non swarajists separate party was not formed .Even socialist party which was formed in 1930's also worked within the aegis of Congress.

***Q) The British conquest of India was an accident rather than the result of a deliberate policy and design. Critically analyze. (250 words)***

### Background:-

- Trading rivalries among the seafaring European powers brought other European powers to India. The Dutch Republic, England, France, and Denmark-Norway all established trading posts in India in the early 17th century. This slowly turned in to a British conquest alone.

### British conquest was an accident:-

- **Industrial revolution:-**
  - The Industrial Revolution in Britain led to the increase in demand for raw materials for the factories there.
- **Need for markets:-**
  - At the same time, they also required a market to sell their finished goods. India provided such a platform to Britain to fulfill all their needs.
- **Weak power in India:-**
  - The death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 was followed by a rapid disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the first half of the 18th century. This gave British an opportunity for political power.
  - The Indian states of the 18th century fought frequent wars of expansion against each other. These **mutually exhausting wars gave the Europeans the opportunity to interfere in Indian political and military affairs.**
  - In the process the European trading companies extracted significant economic concessions from these states. Thus the **decline of the Mughal Empire paved the way for the rise of British power in India.**

### British conquest was much planned:-

- **The desire to control local resources, obtain supplies of cheap goods and exclude competitors from trade pushed the Company towards territorial conquest and war.**
  - In the light of these facts with Battle of Plassey and Buxar they realised their strength and potential to conquer smaller Indian kingdoms and marked the beginning of the imperial or colonial era in **South Asia**.
  - Since then, the British East India Company adopted a threefold strategy of ideological, military and colonial administrative apparatus to expand and consolidate the British Indian Empire.
- **Diplomacy:-**
  - The Company also successfully involved the Nizam of Hyderabad in the war against Tipu Sultan. In general, the Company leaders proved skillful diplomats. They made sure that a lasting alliance of Indian powers against the British never materialized.
  - Means such as intrigue, bribes and efficient espionage were used rather efficiently by the Company in its pursuit of commercial and political ambitions.
- **Defeated other European powers:-**
  - They defeated their foreign rivals in trade so that there could be no competition.
- **Economic and administrative policies:-**
  - **Their new administrative and economic policies helped them consolidate their control over the country.**
  - Their land revenue policies help them keep the poor farmers in check and get huge sums as revenues in return.
  - They forced the commercialization of agriculture with the growing of various cash crops and the raw materials for the industries in Britain.
  - With the strong political control, the British were able to **monopolize the trade with India**.
    - They monopolized the sale of all kinds of raw materials and bought these at low prices whereas the Indian weavers had to buy them at exorbitant prices.
  - **Heavy duties were imposed** on Indian goods entering Britain so as to protect their own industry.
  - Various investments were made to improve the transport and communication system in the country to facilitate the easy transfer of raw materials from the farms to the port, and of finished goods from the ports to the markets.
- **Education:-**
  - Also, English education was introduced to create a class of educated Indians who would assist the British in ruling the country and strengthen their political authority. All these measures helped the British to establish, consolidate and continue their rule over India.
  - 
  - Indian states fell to the advancing Company one by one during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries through the policy of dual government and other policies. Those who were not totally wiped out became part of Wellesley's Subsidiary Alliance treaty system.
  - The consequences of this treaty system were grave for the Indian states. They lost their sovereignty and the real power in their capital shifted to the British residency. Their armies were disbanded and they began to maintain troops generally for ceremonial and internal policing duties only.
- **Doctrine of lapse:-**
  - Some of the Indian states declined due to these developments and this gave the British the excuse to annex them in the future, as was done during the tenure of Lord Dalhousie
  - Dalhousie used the 'Doctrine of Lapse' and the charge of maladministration to annex some Indian states like Awadh (1856), Jhansi and Nagpur (1854) and Satara (1848).
- **British crown and divide and rule policy:-**

- After 1857 revolt the East India Company lost its powers of government and British India formally came under direct British rule, with an appointed Governor-General of India.
- From now they started appeasing some sections and disband others so divide and rule policy was applied and then when congress was formed policy of carrot and stick approach was carried out to maintain their dominance on India.
- **Similarly with constitutional reforms** like Indian council acts 1892,1909 they portrayed that they are open to reforms but which were still curbing Indians in many important departments.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- In contrast to the other European powers the English were led by resolute men of vision who were inspired by notions of empire and civilization.

***Q) Nationalist movement in India prior to arrival of Gandhi was a movement representing the classes as opposed to the masses. Examine (250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Before Gandhi's arrival, the agitations like the famous Revolt of 1857 or the formation of Congress, all involved the few elites fighting for their motherland.
- But it was Gandhi who envisaged that a freedom struggle on a larger scale is possible only through involvement of the larger stakeholders like peasants, workers and other general public. It is this mass mobilization that ultimately resulted in the Quit India Movement of 1947, ending the 200 years of colonial rule.

#### **Pre Gandhian nationalist movement was a class movement:-**

- **Nationalist politics was addressed only by a limited group of western-educated professionals and bourgeoisie**, who were influenced by the ideas and ideals of the British aristocracy or the middle classes.
- **Other communities support:-**
  - The social reform movements like Arya samaj against cow slaughter and other similar movements gave a **communal flavour and made Muslims go in a different direction**.
  - Even during Swadeshi movement the role played by Tilak in Ganesh festival was taken as a way of imbibing Hindu culture and further alienated the Muslims.
- The imperialist government took relief in the fact that the Congress was actually being run by a 'microscopic minority'
- **Differences in the ideologies between moderates and extremists**
  - After the Surat split in 1907, the moderates demanded colonial self-government, while the Extremists put forth their demand of complete independence.
  - Moderates ideology was not directly related to mass mobilization. Even though extremists understood the potential of the masses they could not mobilise them effectively.
  - A few historians opined that both **these groups lost credibility as they failed to achieve their stated goals**.
- Women were not still very active in the movements.

#### **Gandhian movement had mass appeal:-**

- He was already hugely popular with his role played in south Africa. India was already suffering with the consequences of first world war .With Champaran the way he went and discussed directly with the victims made him slowly popular.
- **Everyone could find in it something to identify with.** Truth, non-violence, self-scarifies, self-abnegation, piece, tolerance, universal love, equality and liberty were the ingredients of his technique and strategy.
- And he took utmost care not to alienate any of the Indian classes or community as he considered them to be the construct of Indian pluralism.

- He was aware of the fact that **Satyagraha in the form of non-violent protests** through peaceful gatherings, unity and mass disobedience to unjust laws were the best mechanisms for pressurizing the tyrant authorities than trying to equal them through use of forces.
- Women participated in huge numbers be it Dandi march and later movements .
- Even downtrodden castes like people who were considered untouchables were pulled into the mainstream movement effectively.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- So the pre Gandhian national movement cannot be written off as they effectively prepared the masses for the initiatives of Gandhi.

***Q) Discuss the various forms of protest utilized during Non-Cooperation Movement to build pressure on the British?***

#### **Background:-**

- **Non-Cooperation Movement** was a significant phase of the Indian independence movement from british rule. It was led by Mahatma Gandhi after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. It aimed to resist British rule in India through nonviolent means.

#### **Forms of protest:-**

- The programme of non-cooperation included within its ambit the surrender of titles and honours.
- Boycott of government affiliated schools and colleges
- Boycott of law courts
- Picketing of shops selling foreign cloth was also a major form of the
- Boycott could be extended to include resignation from government service and mass civil disobedience including the non-payment of taxes.
- National schools and colleges were to be set up
- Panchayats were to be established for settling disputes
- Hand-spinning and weaving was to be encouraged
- People were asked to maintain Hindu- Muslim unity, give up untouchability and observe strict non-violence.
- **Kisan sabhas:-**
  - In the Avadh area of U.P., where kisan sabhas and a kisan movement had been gathering strength since 1918 and with Non-cooperation propaganda it became difficult to distinguish between a Noncooperation meeting and a kisan meeting.
- In Malabar in Kerala, Non cooperation and Khilafat propaganda helped to arouse the Muslims tenants against their landlords.
- **Charkhas were popularized on a wide scale** and khadi became the uniform of the national movement.
- Defiance of forest laws became popular in Andhra.
- Peasants and tribals in some of the Rajasthan states began movements for securing better conditions of life.
- **Akali movement:-**
  - In Punjab, the Akali Movement for taking control of the gurudwaras from the corrupt mahants (priests) was a part of the general movement of Non-cooperation, and the Akalis observed strict non-violence in the face of tremendous repression.

#### **Success:-**

- The most successful item of the programme was the **boycott of foreign cloth**.
  - Volunteers would go from house to house collecting clothes made of foreign cloth, and the entire community would collect to light a bonfire of the good.

- The value of imports of foreign cloth fell from Rs. 102 crore in 1920-21 to Rs. 57 crore in 1921-22.
- **Picketing of toddy shops:-**
  - Government revenues showed considerable decline on this count.
- **The educational boycott was particularly successful** in Bengal, where the students in Calcutta triggered off a province-wide strike to force the managements of their institutions to disaffiliate themselves from the Government.
- **Movement was spread almost to all parts of India.**
- It was a truly mass movement where lakhs of Indians participated in the open protest against the government through peaceful means.
- It shook the British government who were stumped by the extent of the movement.
- It saw participation from both Hindus and Muslims thereby showcasing communal harmony in the country.
- This movement established the popularity of the Congress Party among the people.
- As a result of this movement, people became conscious of their political rights. They were not afraid of the government.
- Hordes of people thronged to jails willingly.
- The Indian merchants and mill owners enjoyed good profits during this period as a result of the boycott of British goods. Khadi was promoted.

### **Challenges:-**

- The boycott of law courts by lawyers was not as successful as the educational boycott.
- The movement in Kerala unfortunately took on a communal colour.
- In Assam, labourers on tea plantations went on strike. When the fleeing workers were fired upon, there were strikes on the steamer service, and on the Assam-Bengal Railway as well.

### **Conclusion:-**

- Noncooperation movement was the first mass movement which revolutionised the masses. This movement acted as a stepping stone for future movements where the forms of struggle slightly varied but the principles and essence remained largely same as this movement.

### ***Q) Compare and contrast the swarajists and the no changers?(250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- After Gandhi's arrest (March 1922), there was disintegration, disorganisation and demoralisation among nationalist ranks. A debate started among Congressmen on what to do during the transition period, i.e., the passive phase of the movement.

#### **Swarajists and no changers:-**

- Swarajists wanted an end to the boycott of legislative councils so that the nationalists could enter them to expose the basic weaknesses of these assemblies and use these councils as an arena of political struggle. No changers were against council entry.

#### **Similarities:-**

- Both were determined **to** avoid the disastrous experience **of** the 1907 split at Surat. On the advice **of** Gandhi, the two groups decided **to** remain **in** the Congress but **to** work **in** their separate ways. **There was no basic difference between the two.**
- **Both agreed that civil disobedience was not possible immediately and that no mass movement could be carried on indefinitely or for a prolonged period.** Hence, breathing time was needed and a temporary retreat from the active phase of the movement was on the agenda.

- Both also accepted that **there was need to rest and to reinvigorate the anti-imperialist forces**, overcome demoralization, intensify politicization, widen political participation and mobilization, strengthen organization, and keep up the recruitment, training and morale of the cadre.
- **Both groups of leaders began to pull back from the brink and move towards mutual accommodation.**
  - This trend was helped by several factors:-
    - The need for unity was felt very strongly by all the Congressmen.
    - Not only the no-changers but also the *Swarajists* realized that however useful parliamentary work might be, the real sanctions which would compel the Government to accept national demands would be forged only by a mass movement outside the legislatures and this would need unity.
    - Both groups of leaders fully accepted the essentiality of Gandhiji's leadership.

### Differences

Parameter	Swarajists	No changers
Leaders associated	C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Ajmal Khan	Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari and M.A. Ansari
Objective	Wanted an end to the boycott of legislative councils so that the nationalists could enter them to expose the basic weaknesses of these assemblies.	The 'No-changers' opposed council entry. parliamentary work would lead to the neglect of constructive and other work among the masses, the loss of revolutionary zeal and political corruption
Non cooperation continuation	They argued that entering councils would not be giving up non-cooperation but continuing it in a more effective form by extending it to the councils themselves.	They did not agree with this idea. They advocated, concentration on constructive work, and continuation of boycott and noncooperation, and quiet preparation for resumption of the suspended civil disobedience programme.
Party	Announced the formation of the Congress-Khilafat <i>Swaraj</i> Party better known later as the <i>Swaraj</i> Party.	Congress



## Division

There were internal divisions among the Swarajists. They were divided into the responsivists and the non-responsivists. The responsivists (M M Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, N C Kelkar) wanted to cooperate with the government and hold offices, whereas the non-responsivists (Motilal Nehru) withdrew from legislatures in 1926.

No internal division

## Elections

*Swaraj* Party accepted the Congress programme in its entirety except in one respect it would take part in elections due later in the year.

Did not take part in elections

## Achievements

Defeat of public safety bill, their efforts led to appointment of Simon commission, election of V. Patel as speaker. They have shown determination, grit, discipline and cohesion and have not feared to carry their policy to the point of defiance.

- **Ashrams sprang up** where young, men and women worked, among tribals and lower castes (especially in Kheda and Bardoli areas of Gujarat), and popularised charkha and khadi.
- **National schools and colleges were set up** where students were trained in a non-colonial ideological framework.
- **Significant work was done for Hindu-Muslim unity**, removing untouchability, boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, and for flood relief.
- The constructive workers served as the backbone of civil disobedience as active organisers.

Gandhiji view

Swarajists wanted an end to the mandatory requirement for Congressmen to spin khadi cloth and do social service as a prerequisite for office.

- This was opposed by Gandhi's supporters who became known as the No Changers
- Gandhi relaxed the rules on spinning and named some Swarajists to important positions in the Congress Party.
- He also encouraged the Congress to support those Swarajists elected to the councils, so as not to embarrass them and leave them rudderless before the British authorities.

### Conclusion:-

- Gandhiji and both the pro-changers and the no-changers realised the importance of putting up a united front in order to get reforms from the government.
- So, it was decided that the Swarajists would contest elections as a separate 'group' within the Congress Party

**TOPIC: Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.**

**Q) Dalit movement has today merely remained an effort at mass political mobilization. Critically examine the statement tracing the evolution of Dalit movement.(250 Words)**

### Background:-

- Dalits are one of the most oppressed communities in India who by and large have for thousands of years remained neglected and ignored in the social milieu. The dalits have suffered cumulative domination, protested several sources of deprivation, political powerlessness, exploitation and poverty.
- Dalit movement could be taken as the articulation phase of the numerous faceless struggles against the iniquitous socio-economic formation ordained by the caste system that has occupied vast spaces of Indian history.
- Ambedkar played a significant role in making people aware of the dalit identity which was sustained by many organisations for instance Dalit panther in Maharashtra

### Dalit movements are mostly about political mobilisation:-

- Dalit movement, like identity movements across the world, **has really narrowed its focus to forms of oppressions.**
- Most visible dalit movements have been around **issues like reservations and discrimination in colleges**, and these are issues that affect only a small proportion of the Dalit population.
- Also **dalit movement forsook mass struggles and adopted the electoral path to secure political power.** This process, instead of strengthening dalits, has in many cases emasculated them politically and caused the creation of a separate class of beneficiaries from amongst them, which if at all, had a very tenuous linkage with the Dalit masses. **This class has completely distorted the ideology of dalit liberation.**

- **Worrisome feature in recourse to 'alliance politics' that overtly represents the myopic vision of the dalit leadership** which is strategizing mainly to remain visible in the political
- **Consecutive governments have used dalit leadership to gain the support of dalits for gaining power but have not given a serious thought to their sufferings.**
- The dynamics in rural Dalit politics seems to have moved from challenging the upper castes to finding acceptance and becoming a part of the majoritarian polity that is under construction.

#### **Dalits are fighting beyond just political mobilisation:-**

- What began as isolated struggle of the dalits in obscure villages for land reclamation, **dramatically gained a regional and national dimension**
- Champions of the dalit cause therefore do not fail to **indicate the right to equality both nationally and internationally**
- Dalit movement is **assertion of rights**. That exactly is what Ambedkar and 1970's dalit movements asked for.
- **The scale of social mobilisation of Dalits in Gujarat and Maharashtra, and to some extent in other parts of the country**, has not been seen in recent times. There is palpable anger in the community because of the sense of impunity with which they are being subjected to violence in certain parts of the country.
- **Social hierarchy is challenged** through everyday acts as due to reservation many dalits have attained upward mobility.
- Political power has helped, **but younger Dalits are clear this is one part of a much wider movement.**

#### **Dalit movements should have broader focus:-**

- The mobilisation of Dalit students and the increasing awareness of caste oppression were some positive outcomes amid the troubling instances of attack on dissent and democratic rights in India. **Movements of the oppressed can be sustained and strengthened only if they take up issues of economic justice.**
- **Any Dalit movement to address the needs of Dalits as a group, has to see itself as part of a class-wide movement.** The reason for that is the overwhelming majority of Dalits are wage labourers either in the rural areas or in the informal sector in the urban settings.

#### **TOPIC: Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.**

***Q) Data from NCRB highlights the plight of SCs and STs in India. Highlight its key findings. It is believed that dilution of SCs/STs prevention of Atrocities Act would only worsen their situation. Comment. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Recently several states were affected by violence and clashes following Bandh call given by several SC/ST organisations protesting the Supreme court's recent judgement on SC/ST act. The earlier amendments which tried to make the act stringent did not serve the purpose as well.

#### **Key findings of the NCRB report:-**

- **India has over 180 million Dalits. A crime is committed against a Dalit every 15 minutes.** Six Dalit women are raped every day. Over the last 10 years (2007-2017), there has been a 66% growth in crime against Dalits.
- In fact, the share of false cases under the SC/ST Act has declined over time (2009-2015).

- A total of 40,774 cases were registered under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and other sections of law over alleged crimes against SCs and STs in the year 2016.
- Of these, charge-sheets were filed in 78.3 per cent cases, and the conviction rate was 25.8 per cent.
- **Assaults on women with the intent to outrage modesty**, at 7.7% (3172 cases), reported the highest number of cases of crimes/atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs), followed by rape with 6.2% (2541 cases) during 2016.
- Uttar Pradesh in reporting the maximum number of crimes against Dalits.
- **In cities too**, the trend was reflected with Lucknow reporting 88 cases of crimes against women. This accounted for more than 30% of all crimes against Dalits reported in Lucknow. More than 40 of these cases were of rape.
- **In the case of Scheduled Tribes**, the number of cases stood at 6,568 in 2016. In the case of STs, Madhya Pradesh (1,823 cases) reported the highest number of cases of atrocities at 27.8% followed by Rajasthan with 18.2% (1,195 cases) and Odisha with 10.4% (681 cases).
- In the case of STs, there were 974 rape cases which constituted 14.8% of all crime against them, followed by assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty with 12.7% (835 cases) and kidnapping and abduction with 2.5% (163 cases).
- Based on data it shows that it is **mostly ineffective implementation of the act that is leading to atrocities rather than misuse**.

#### **Implications of supreme court judgement which diluted the SC/ST act :-**

- Data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows that the **proportion of false cases registered under the act has actually fallen**. Moreover, the method of using conviction rates to evaluate whether a law is sound is fraught with danger.
- Given the **upper-caste control of the law and order machinery**, conviction rates in caste-related crimes will be low.
- **Dilution of the act will result in increasing of atrocities against Dalits and also create a rift in the society.**
- **Many incidents happen that don't get reported under the Act** because people who aren't educated don't even know it exists.
- Most Dalits **do not register cases for fear** of retaliation by higher castes.
- Experts say that the **judgment effectively neutralises the Act** which provided some sense of protection to hapless people against oppressive societal prejudices.
- There are studies, such as one by the Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad, which have exposed how **cases of atrocities result in acquittal due to the anti-Dalit attitude of the law enforcement**.

#### **Meaning behind Supreme Court and why this is right:-**

- Supreme court gave the judgement on the pretext **that Innocents cannot be terrorised by the provisions of the SC/ST Act and their fundamental rights need to be protected**.
- **Article 21 of the Constitution equally applies to all the citizens** and none of the provisions of SC/ST Act has been diluted.
- **Enough safeguards are provided so that interests of the innocents are protected from being arrested** and false cases are not encouraged.
- The reasons behind the low conviction, which is 15%, is because cases are registered without proper investigation and a simple accusation leads to an FIR which does not stand scrutiny in a court of law. **This exercise is a way to harass people and is a complete waste of time of both the police and the court.**
- **More cases under the Act are filed in rural areas** as opposed to urban areas where caste identities are blurred. It is easier to **falsely implicate people in rural areas**. So protection to all citizens is necessary.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- The Supreme Court judgement need to be seen in the context of social justice rather than as partisan.

***Q) Discuss the role of Indian women in socio-religious reform movements of the nineteenth century.***

**Background:-**

- In nineteenth century, the women question was center of all socio-religious reform movements. The reformist and renaissance ideals of the enlightenment in Europe have usually been cited by historians as the inspiration for social reforms initiated in nineteenth century India
- Under socio-religious reform movements reformers raised their voice against the evil practices towards women of Indian societies such as sati, child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, polygamy, dowry and devadasi system. Educated women who were now becoming conscious of their natural rights, also came forward to liberate the rest of the women

**Role of Indian women in socio religious reform movements of the nineteenth century:-**

- **Pandita Ramabhai:-**
  - Many woman reformers such as Pundita **Ramabai** also helped the cause of women's upliftment
  - She advocated **women's education** and shed light on the **plight of child brides** and child widows.
  - She founded the **Arya Mahila Sabha**, which is known as the first feminist organisation in India. Its aim was to provide a support network for newly educated women
  - She set up **Mukti Mission for young widows**, and Krupa Sadan and Sharda Sadan in 1889 for destitute women
  - She founded the **Sharda Sadan**, a school for widows. Her greatest legacy was her effort, the first in India, to educate widows.
- **Novelists like Nirupama Devi and Anurupa Devi :-**
  - **They** started getting referred to in the Bengali literary circles and **were even given memberships of literary clubs** which were dominated by men.
- **Swarnakumari deb:-**
  - Imitating Ramabai's Arya Mahila Samaj, elite women formed similar sectarian and local organizations. In 1886, Swarnakumari Debi Rabindranath Tagore's sister, started **Sakhi Samiti (Women's Friendship League)** to spread knowledge among women and widows.
- **Lilabati Mitra** helped Bidyasagar in 1890s to perform widow re-marriages by sheltering willing grooms.
- **Kamini Roy** was active in the Ilbert Bill agitation, organising girls at the Bethune School to hold meetings and wear badges supporting the Bill. She worked with Banga Mahila Samiti in their social reform projects.
  - She was a feminist at an age when merely getting educated was a taboo for a woman.
- **Savitrabhai phule** along with her husband founded the first girls school in Pune run by native Indians at Bhide Wada in 1848. She worked to abolish discrimination and unfair treatment of people based on caste and gender
- **Gowri laxmi Bai:-**
  - In Kerala by a Royal Proclamation in 1812 she abolished the purchase and sale of all slaves and granted them independence excepting those attached to the soil for agricultural purposes.
  - Castes like the Ezhavas, Kaniyans etc. were given independence from their Lords. A restriction put on the Sudras and others regarding the wearing of gold and silver ornaments was removed.
- **Women's organisations:-**
  - The primary goals of most women's associations were to improve women's literacy and health by abolishing child marriage, enforced widowhood, and purdah.

- By the late nineteenth century several women's organisations began to be formed in several parts of India such as the **Banga Mahila Samaj** and the **Aghorekamini Nari Samiti** in Bengal, the **Satara Abalonnati Sabha** in Maharashtra, the **Mahila Seva Samaj** in Bangalore etc.
  - Some of these were practical social reform movements and others were discussion platforms for women.
- Education was foremost on their list, followed by child marriage and the problems of widows and dowry.
- Aghorekamini Nari Samiti** was based on the principle of self-help and trained women to attend the sick and spread education amongst themselves.
  - Aghorekamini Nari Samiti mobilised opinions against the ill-treatment of women workers by the tea planters.
- Banga Mahila Vidyalyaya**(Bengali Women's College) :-
  - It** was the first women's liberal arts college in India. Established at Kolkata in 1876, by the liberal section of the Brahmo Samaj, it was successor of Hindu Mahila Vidyalyaya (School of Hindu Women) set up in 1873 by Annette Akroyd.
  - Banga Mahila Vidyalyaya was merged with Bethune College in 1878.

### Conclusion:-

- Therefore women played a significant role in bringing out social reforms when the society was still largely conservative. Slowly more women got included in the movement and ultimately participated in huge numbers in the Indian freedom struggle as well.

***Q) Despite huge voter turnout of females in India, their political participation remains appallingly low, and needs to be increased. Critically analyze.(250 words)***

### Background:-

- India has more female population than that of the United States. Women turnout during India's 2014 parliamentary general elections was 95.63%, compared to 67.09% turnout for men.
- But India ranks 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in Parliament. The 16th Lok Sabha has only 64 women among its 542 members, a mere 11.8 per cent which is even less than Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### Reasons why political participation remains low for women:-

- There has been concern over the role of women as proxies for male family members :-**
  - Quotas like 33 per cent of seats are reserved for women at local level are neither meritocratic nor useful because women in politics are simply representatives of the men who would have been in politics.
- Training issues:-**
  - The **issue of training** has become an increasing concern with preparing women for the role of leadership. It was found in Tamil Nadu that women lack the education and training to understand procedures in panchayats.
- Cultural and social barriers :-**
  - Familial influence** can be a barrier or a support system for female elected officials in terms of connections.
  - Domestic responsibilities, prevailing cultural attitudes regarding roles of women in society and lack of support from family** were among main reasons that prevented them from entering politics.
  - Discrimination** continues to be a widespread barrier to women's political participation:-

- A 2012 study of 3,000 Indian women found the barriers in participation, specifically in running for political office, **in the form of illiteracy, work burdens within the household**, and discriminatory attitudes towards women as leaders
- Discrimination **is further perpetuated by class**. Dalit women, of the lowest caste in India, are continually discriminated against in running for public office. **Dalit women experience harassment by being denied information, ignored or silenced in meetings**, and in some cases petitioned to be removed from their elected position
- **Lack of confidence and finance** were the other major deterring factors that prevented women from entering politics.
- **Violence:-**
  - Significant barrier to women's capability of participating in politics to be the threat of violence.
- Unlike men, **there are fewer opportunities for women** to get involved in organizations to gain leadership skills.
- **There is little public space for women as men** have dominated the political arena for many years in India
- **Education:-**
  - Literacy among Indian women is 53.7%, which is much lower than literacy among men reported at 75.3%. Illiteracy limits the ability of women to understand the political system and issues.
  - Problems with exploitation, such as women being left off of voters lists, have been reported as illiteracy limits the ability of women to ensure their political rights are exercised
- Despite the reservation of seats at the local levels, **there are no similar quotas in relation to elected seats at the national and state level.**
- Another obstacle faced by women is the **lack of access to information and communication technologies (ICT)** which also been used to attack women

#### **Why political participation of women is necessary:-**

- According to Harvard research women have tended to invest significantly more than their male counterparts on the **provision of public goods** like health, education, and roads.
- Recognising the significance of roles of women in decision making process in the society is critical to **strengthen women's agencies for building a progressive society** with equality of opportunities among all citizens
- Women are also likely to **bring welfare issues** such as violence against women, childcare, and maternal health to consideration
- There is already enough evidence in the world to show the **positive impact of women's leadership**. Women have successfully built and run countries and cities, economies and formidable institutions
- Studies have revealed that increased women's participation has resulted in a **bigger economic benefit, increased cooperation across party lines and more sustainable conflict resolution.**

#### **Measures needed are:-**

- Empowerment of Indian women can occur through **bridging gaps in education, renegotiating gender roles, the gender division of labour and addressing biased attitudes**
- **Introduction of quotas:-**
  - Women Reservation Bill needs to be passed and is certainly a positive step in the right direction.
- **ICT can be used to raise awareness of women's political activism** and to organize campaigns for advocacy

- **Conducting training** such as developing media skills, designing campaigns and building knowledge of key national and local policy issues along with long term mentoring has assisted in building women's confidence to take on leadership roles beginning at grassroots levels.
  - **Providing skill building and leadership training** for women civil society members, women's organizations, and female journalists
  - Promote community and sport programs that foster leadership skills for girls and women and promote gender equality.
- Support women's leadership in the workplace through greater inclusion in executive positions and on corporate boards.
- Support **women's coalitions** to work more effectively within and with political parties and representative bodies.
- Encourage **political parties** to
  - Remove all barriers that discriminate against the participation of women
  - Develop their capacity to analyse issues from a gender perspective and develop gender-sensitive election manifestos
- Promoting **coalition building and networking** among women representatives and decision-makers to strengthen women's influence up and down the decision-making chain.
- Supporting **gender sensitive parliaments** through induction training for MPs on gender issues, mainstreaming gender impact reviews into parliamentary committee work, gender analysis of proposed laws, the introduction of tools for gender-sensitive budgets, support for cross-party women's caucuses, and women's mentoring programmes.
- Incorporate men, especially fathers and sons, in training focused on supporting and promoting girls and women as leaders and decision makers.

**TOPIC: Role of women and women's organization.**

**Q) Amongst the many issues that constrain equality of employment for women, law of the land is the most significant barrier. Examine (250 Words)**

### **Background:-**

- Women's access to employment and entrepreneurial activity is one of the legs economic development stands on. But in India a mere 27% of working-age women were working in paid jobs in 2015-16.
- According to the International Monetary Fund, many countries would gain from a 15% to 34% increase in GDP from closing gender gaps in female labour force participation and female entrepreneurship

### **Law is the most significant barrier:-**

- International:-
- Globally, the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2018 report notes, **7 billion women are legally restricted from taking up the same jobs as men.**
- 104 countries legally prevent women from specific jobs. **Russian law bars women from getting employed in 456 types of work** deemed too "hard" or "hazardous" for women.
- **Impact of gender-based legislation on women's employment outcomes**
  - Many countries impose restrictions on women's access to market work and on the kind of work that women may do. Numerous African countries require by law that a woman acquire her father's or husband's permission to work outside the home, while in other places women may not open or operate an individual bank account.



- In addition, restrictions on work hours and industry of work are often introduced as protective measures to women engaged in potentially hazardous jobs.
- These restrictions appear to be associated with lower female participation rates and higher labour market segregation.
- India, too, has strictures in place that restrict women's employment.
  - These **barriers include** restricting women's ability to access institutions (such as obtaining an ID card or conducting official transactions), own or use property, build credit, or get a job.
  - **There is no system of universal state welfare benefits for periods of unemployment or for old age. Women without the financial support of a man must rely on the wider family structure** if they are unemployed or underemployed, and this reliance is exacerbated when they have dependants.
  - Existing differences in parental leave between men and women could increase the perceived cost of employing women and therefore diminish their employment opportunities

#### **Other issues that constrain equality of employment for women :-**

- Part of the answer lies in the **methods employed to measure women's work. A woman's work in her own household is not counted as an economic activity, and does not get reported in the national income statistics.** This is unlike the case of services by a paid domestic help, which is considered an economic activity and is counted in the national income.
- **Social norms are a key factor underlying deprivations and constraints throughout the lifecycle:-**
  - In India, social factors play a significant role in reducing women's labour participation. Husbands and in-laws often discourage women from working, while, in many parts of the country, restrictions are imposed even on their movements outside the household.
- **Massive withdrawal:-**
  - **Lower wages than men** could be one reason for massive withdrawal of educated women from the work force.
  - **Staggering numbers of women who have withdrawn from the labour force and attend to domestic duties.** In 2009-10, the total number of women attending to domestic duties in India was 216 million, which was larger than the entire population of Brazil
- **The key reason for large-scale and increasing joblessness among Indian women is that there are not sufficient jobs.**
  - **The slow generation of employment** is linked to a specific feature of India's economic transition.
- **Gender sorting into different jobs, industries, and firm types** explains much of the pay gap. Throughout the world, women are concentrated in less-productive jobs and run enterprises in less-productive sectors, with fewer opportunities for business scale-up or career advancement.
  - **The jobs that are available are marginal, low paying, insecure and backbreaking,** like construction in the recent past. Then, there **are issues of safety for women** or absence of facilities like crèches.
- **Gender segregation in access to economic opportunities in turn reinforces gender differences in time use and in access to inputs, and perpetuates market and institutional failures.**
- For instance, women are more likely than men to work in jobs that offer flexible working arrangements (such as part-time or informal jobs) so that they can combine work with care responsibilities.
  - **But because part-time and in- formal jobs often pay lower (hourly) wages than full-time and formal jobs,** a high concentration of women in these lower-paying jobs weakens the incentives to participate in market work and thus reinforces the specialization in nonmarket (including care) and market work along gender lines within the household.
- **Lack of education:-**

- **Women are still less educated (in some countries) and more likely to suffer career interruptions than men** (primarily because of childbearing). Because education and work experience are valuable inputs into production, gender differences along these dimensions contribute to differences in productivity and earnings.
- **Safety issues:-**
  - In addition, sexual harassment both at work and also while travelling to work is a major barrier to women's access to job opportunities.
- **Poor working conditions not only reduce the quality of jobs but also push prospective female workers away from the labour markets** and curb companies ability to retain skilled and experienced workers.
- **Limited access to assets and property rights** limits women's ability to start or grow a business.

#### **Way forward:-**

- Public and private policies and actions can promote equality over a lifetime. This includes **education and training during youth and creating opportunities for women to participate in paid work** during their economically productive years.
- Creating more jobs and ensuring better working conditions for women will encourage greater female participation in the economy.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- As more women join the workforce, the voices against gender-based inequalities will grow louder. Empowering women and girls is vital in order to achieve twin goals: ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity.

#### **TOPIC: Population and associated issues.**

***Q) Reduced fertility and mortality rate leading to a rapid increase in working age population poses several challenges. Discuss while suggesting a way forward.(250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Demographic Dividend refers to the rise in the rate of economic growth due to a rising share of working age people in a population.
- India's demographic dividend- i.e. its working-age (15-59 years) population, as of now, largely consists of youth (15-34 years), and as a result its economy has the potential to grow more quickly than that of many other countries including neighbouring China.
- According to economists, the working population in India is set to rise considerably over the next decade or more. By 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 years of age, compared with 37 in China.

#### **Impact of reduced fertility and mortality rate on working age population:-**

- The decrease in fertility and the associated decrease in the dependency ratio, in turn lead to an **increase in the share of the population concentrated in the working ages** and hence in the ratio of the working age to the non-working age population.
- Dependency ratio:-
  - The proportion of workers rises sharply, even as the proportion of dependants falls. In many countries, the ratio of workers to dependents goes up, giving a **huge boost to per capita income**.
  - India will see a significant rise in working age adults India's dependency ratio that is the number of dependents to working people is low at 0.6, compared with the developed countries. That ratio is going to decline further with fertility rates continuing to fall.
- For the next few decades India will have a **youthful, dynamic and productive workforce than the rest of the world**.

### ▪ **Declining fertility and age structure:-**

- Declining fertility rates have changed the age structure of India's population, resulting in a bulge in the working age-group. This "demographic dividend" has improved the dependency ratio leading to the hypothesis that **the bulge in working population will lead to acceleration in growth.**

### Challenges:-

- A demographic trend where the proportion of persons aged 15-24 in the population increases significantly compared to other age groups which paired with **limited employment opportunities may contribute to increased poverty, hunger, malnutrition, poorer health, lower educational outcomes, child labour, unsupervised and abandoned children, and rising rates of domestic violence.**
- Having a greater proportion of people in the working age group can mean faster per capita economic growth, but only if their full potential is realized. **State of employment in the country shows that India is still far from deriving any real advantage from its demographic dividend.**
  - This is perhaps due to the poor employability of the workforce, which is severely affected by a deficit in educational attainment and health
- **Some dilemmas:-**
  - There are already difficulties in determining if women engaged in housework, particularly in rural India, are doing so under duress, being unable to find a job.
  - Another dilemma lies in deciding if youth, nominally enrolled in educational institutions but still looking for a job, are part of the labour force.
  - Problems also arise in deciding if workers who work in casual jobs for short durations are to be considered among the working or the unemployed.
- **Lack of skill:-**
  - **The growth in the working-age ratio is likely to be concentrated in some of India's poorest states** and that the demographic dividend will be fully realized only if India is able to create gainful employment opportunities for this working-age population.
  - Since most of the new jobs that will be created in the future will be highly skilled and lack of skill in Indian workforce is another serious challenge.
- **Low human capital base due to**
  - **Education constraints:-**
    - There are serious problems with Indian higher education. These include a shortage of high quality faculty, poor incentive structures, lack of good regulation
    - India is home to the world's largest concentration of illiterate people in the world
  - **Health:-**
    - At the primary level, there are also serious problems with health and nutrition that impact the effectiveness of education and the capacity for learning.
  - In future large proportion of older working aged people who face longer periods of retirement, accumulate assets to support themselves.

### Advantages:-

- **Higher savings:-**
  - The younger population will have **both more savings and higher spending due to the raising higher disposable income.**
  - Higher savings along with better and more investment opportunities nowadays leads to higher household savings which increases the overall capital formation in the economy. This provides for future industrial investments and propels the economy into higher growth path in the long run.
- Higher income increases the effective demand in the market there by **increasing the overall consumption and the market growth of business** in the current period of time

### ▪ **Outsourcing of jobs:-**

- With the declining working age population in the other countries particularly developed countries, **more jobs emanating from the developed countries will be outsourced and India can gain from it due to demographic dividend.**
- An increase in the share of a country's working-age (15–64 years) can generate **faster economic growth.** The working-age population is generally more productive and saves more increasing domestic resources for
- **Increased fiscal space** created by the demographic dividend to divert resources from spending on children to investing in physical and human infrastructure
- **Rise in women's workforce** that naturally accompanies a decline in fertility, and which can be a new source of growth
- Additional boost to savings that occurs as the incentive to save for **longer periods of retirement increases with greater longevity**
- Massive shift towards a middle-class society that is already in the making

### **Way forward:-**

- Health and education parameters need to be improved substantially to make the Indian workforce efficient and skilled.
- Enhance, support and coordinate private sector initiatives for skill development through appropriate Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models; strive for significant operational and financial involvement from the private sector
- Focus on underprivileged sections of society and backward regions of the country thereby enabling a move out of poverty; similarly, focus significantly on the unorganized or informal sector workforce.
- Measures should have pan Indian presence and not just concentrated in metropolitan cities as most of the workforce is likely to come from the rural hinterland.
- Investing in people through healthcare, quality education, jobs and skills helps build human capital, which is key to supporting economic growth, ending extreme poverty, and creating more inclusive societies
- New technology could be exploited to accelerate the pace of building human capital, including massive open online courses and virtual classrooms
- Policymakers should have a greater incentive to redouble their efforts to promote human capital so that it can contribute to economic growth and job creation

**TOPIC: Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.**

***Q) India has a rich tribal art, replete with exclusivity but their commercialization has not been realized up to the desired extent. Discuss the impediments faced in their commercialization and measures needed to overcome them. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- India is abundant with incredible art and platforms like tribal art forms are trying to exhibit tribal art in India and abroad and act as a conduit between artists and the public.

### **Impediments faced in the commercialization of tribal art are:-**

- **Lack of awareness :-**

- Most Indians are not even aware of the diversity of Indian folk and tribal art and crafts other than a few styles like Madhubani paintings, Warli etc.
- **Dilution of authenticity:-**
  - Authenticity of ethnic art forms was not being preserved in their modern adaptations. Often, the art forms are relegated to the status of showcase pieces in offices and homes.
- **Earlier efforts were not very successful :-**
  - A major push to promote the tribal and folk arts has come and gone, leaving an imprint in places such as France, which continues to have an annual showcase for folk art but still Indian market is lacklustre
- **Many tribal art forms have died owing to lack of patronage.**
  - Tribal artists till some time ago did not know that their work can be shown and sold at a price tag.
- Tribal art largely remained a neglected child with the **government not doing enough to promote them.**
- **Lack of presentation in sync with international standards:-**
  - Tribal artists have a long way to go in terms of presenting and selling their work, but with time they are gaining confidence in their body of work.
- People think that they too could replicate the work of tribal artists (jewellery or toys).
- The **cost of running a gallery are high** and to draw crowd towards tribal art is another tough task.
- Folk and tribal arts **have not been taken as serious art form**, but dismissed as crafts tradition instead.
- **Priced much lower than works by mainstream artists**
- **Buying folk art is considered not as a good financial investment by people.**

#### **Measures needed to improve commercialization of tribal art :-**

- Platforms need to be encouraged:-
  - Avenues like Tribal Art Forms, with an informed approach in curation, fostering relationships between indigenous artists and the public could help redefine tribal art.
  - Recently held Indian art fair promoted vernacular and tribal art forms.
- **International examples:-**
  - The Australian government, for example, has done a remarkable job in encouraging tribal art and preserving it.
- **Tribal art should be considered as preserving culture:-**
  - Idea of owning a tribal art compared to modern artworks is to preserve it as a cultural embodiment. If this art form is not preserved then it will die a silent death like Singuli art from Maharashtra. Even for Kalighat painting, the actual painters have died or stopped working.
- **Recently government has proposed setting up of a tribal cultural academy to promote the art and culture of Goa's tribal community.** This has to be undertaken seriously at a national scale.
- TRIFED has entered into agreements with e-commerce platforms like Snapdeal and Amazon who will offer their customers various tribal products and produce. Tribal art can also be sold in a similar way.
- At the local level community organisations and Panchayats role is important in identifying the artists and encouraging them.
- **At the larger level the artists need more coverage via media ,awareness in colleges and schools about tribal art.**

***Q) Dalit unrest points towards rumbling of discontent in a community disgruntled by the promises of empowerment. Discuss (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Dalit discontent has been piling up in the recent years. the most significant aspect of the widespread dalit protests across the country against the deemed dilution of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act by a **Supreme Court** order, is the firm, unequivocal assertion of their right to humanity by one of the world's most oppressed groups.

**Promises of empowerment made for dalits:-**

- **Economic:-**
  - Successive governments promised economic empowerment of the Dalits through education, entrepreneurship and skill development.
  - The current government manifesto also stressed on preventing atrocities against the Scheduled Castes (SCs).
- **Constitutional and legal:-**
  - In 2015, the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill passed by Parliament, made several critical changes to the SC/ST act 1989.
    - New activities were added to the list of offences. Among them were preventing SCs/STs from using common property resources, from entering any places of public worship, and from entering an education or health institution.
    - In case of any violation, the new law said that the courts would presume unless proved otherwise that the accused non-SC/ST person was aware of the caste or tribal identity of the victim
    - Special courts have been established in major states for speedy trial of cases registered exclusively under these Acts.
  - Dalits are given fundamental rights of equality, rights against untouchability etc
- **Schemes:-**
  - Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme has been a significant project of the Ministry of Social Justice since Independence.
  - The government is working closely with the Dalit Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DICCII), in order to promote entrepreneurship as a tool of emancipation. **For this purpose Stand Up India was launched.**
  - Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers.
  - Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes.
  - Even though these schemes had an impact on dalits more was needed.

**Reasons for rise of Dalit discontent:-**

- **Political:-**
  - Dalit aspirations for equality, in consequence, became **fodder for patronage politics**, rather than politics of empowerment.
    - Dalits have **now rejected the patronising 'mai-baap' culture of political parties** they don't need them to espouse their cause.
  - **Dalits are poorly represented** in the professions, business, media, and the higher levels of the government including the police, the army, and the judiciary.
    - Recent studies based on available data indicate, for example, that 47 per cent of the Chief Justices of India have been Brahmins as have been 40 per cent of all the other judges
  - Constitution gaurantees scheduled castes in India rights against untouchability, right to equality etc but in **reality the prejudices still remain and caste discrimination still remains oppressive.**

- In politics, caste has been a rallying point in mobilising votes at the time of elections
- The recent Supreme Court decision that diluted the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act has **given rise to the fear that the Dalits are losing the gains they had made in the past.**
- **Social:-**
  - Dalits are still **subjected to violence**, especially in rural areas, their women raped, and their land stolen.
  - Dalits perform the most dangerous and odious forms of labour in Indian society including that of **manual scavenging** or performing low-end 'dirty' wage labour in tanneries.
  - There is **also rampant social discrimination against Dalits**, including through the caste-ridden system of 'arranged' marriages. There is **little social mixing of forward castes with the Dalits** through shared festivals or even routine social interaction.
  - According to a 2010 report by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the Prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes, a crime is committed against a Dalit every 18 minutes.
  - **Brutal thrashing of four Dalit youths in Una**, Gujarat, by cow vigilantes, led to widespread protests across the country
  - The fact that many higher education institutions have failed to fulfil constitutional quotas and the general feeling among the upwardly mobile youths from these communities that they face discrimination in higher educational institutions have only added to the
  - It has also been **accompanied by a decline in the number of scholarships**, increasing fee and denial of fellowships to these dalit students. This led to feeling of alienation among a large majority of these youth.
- **Education:-**
  - The Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme has been a significant project of the Ministry of Social Justice since Independence. But against an outstanding requirement of Rs 8,000 crore, the 2018-19 budget allocated merely Rs 3,000 crore to the scheme.
  - More than 5,10,000 SC students across the country have been facing difficulties due to this funding deficit. **The shortfall could also result in an increase in the dropout rate.**
  - Moreover, the delay in release of funds to the UGC for National PhD Fellowships for SC/ST scholars has caused hardship to many researchers.
- **Economic:-**
  - **Rise of Dalit Entrepreneurs:-**
    - The upward mobility of some Dalits caused by market reforms post-1991, ironically leads to **higher incidence of atrocities in the form of a backlash.**
  - According to socio-economic and caste census 2011, 45% of SC households are landless and earn a living by manual casual labour.
  - Successive census reports on enterprises outside agriculture show that **Dalits own far fewer businesses** than from their share of the total Indian population.
  - India is one of the many countries where weak contract enforcement mean that entrepreneurs depend on trust-based community networks to transact business. There is no shortage of examples of specific businesses being dominated by members of one community. **It is very difficult for a Dalit entrepreneur to break into these networks, a challenge that is perhaps even more difficult than getting bank loans.**
  - According to the NHRC statistics **37 per cent Dalits live below the poverty line**, 54 per cent are undernourished, 83 per 1,000 children born in a Dalit household die before their first birthday, 12 per cent before their fifth birthday, and 45 per cent remain illiterate. **The data also shows that Dalits are prevented from entering the police station in 28 per cent of Indian villages.**

- Discrimination isn't a rural problem alone. **Joblessness among Dalits runs through the urban landscape as well.**
  - According to 2011 Census data, the unemployment rate for SCs between 15 and 59 years of age was 18 per cent, including marginal workers seeking work, as compared to 14 per cent for the general population
- The **contract system, privatisation and disinvestment did their bit to make reservation norms inconsequential.**

#### Way forward:-

- For tribal communities and landless dalits, a starting point would be **implementation of laws** that give them ownership of some land, the primary asset in rural India.
- Structural diversification of the economy** that has produced new jobs and dalit entrepreneurs
- Obvious ways to ensure that the lot of the Dalits is improved are **education, rise in economic status, market reforms** transforming the lives of millions of Dalits living in impecunious conditions.
- Change of attitude** is needed among the ruling classes to stem the tide.

#### Conclusion:-

- The need of the hour, therefore, is integration not confrontation; this is the key to social justice and rise of the subaltern.

#### THE BIG STORY

#### THE BIG SOLUTIONS

How to end untouchability and caste-based discrimination

- BANISH UNTOUCHABILITY IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**  
The government must proactively ensure a discrimination-free educational atmosphere.
- LAND FOR ALL RURAL DALIT FAMILIES**  
State governments should begin implementing the pledge of land reforms and provide pattas of land to all landless Dalits and additionally prevent any grabbing of Dalit-owned land by land mafia.
- PROVIDE VIABLE ASSETS IN CITIES**  
Since most Dalits in urban areas are casual labourers in unorganised sectors, they should be made owners of viable assets they work on, like rickshaws.
- ENSURE FOOD SECURITY**  
Include all Dalit families in the Antyodaya Anna Yojana/Priority households in the National Food Security Act, 2013. Food security must be doggedly pursued during droughts and floods.
- IMPLEMENT THE SUKHDEO THORAT COMMITTEE REPORT**  
Constitutionally guaranteed safeguards should be adhered to in order to prevent hostility against 'students of reserved category'.
- REHABILITATE MANUAL SCAVENGERS**  
Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013 has not been enough. They must be given training in non-sanitary work.

#### *TOPIC: Salient features of world's physical geography.*

**Q) Discuss how the theory of plate tectonics is an improvement over the theory of continental drift. (250 Words)**

#### Introduction:-

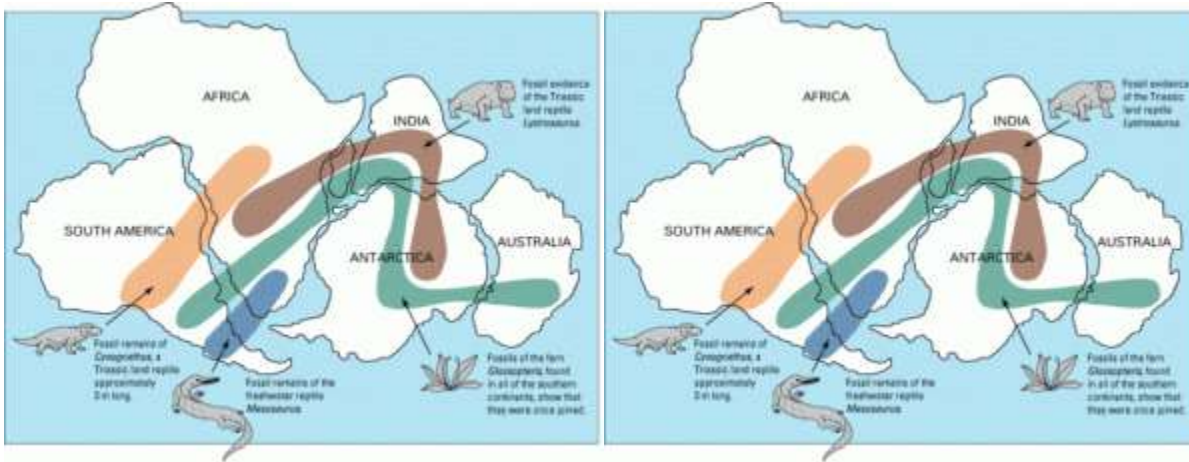
- Continental drift describes one of the earliest ways geologists thought continents moved over time. Today, the theory of continental drift has been replaced by the science of plate tectonics.

#### Continental drift:-

- The theory of continental drift is most associated with the scientist Alfred Wegener. In the early 20th century, Wegener published a paper explaining his theory that the continental landmasses were "drifting" across the Earth, sometimes plowing through oceans and into each other. He called this movement continental drift.
- Pangaea**
  - Wegener was convinced that all of Earth's continents were once part of an enormous, single landmass called Pangaea.
  - According to Wegener's theory, during the Jurassic period, about 200 to 130 million years ago, Pangaea started to break up into two smaller continents, which he called Laurasia and Gondwanaland.



- His theory was inspired by the fact that edges of the continents South America and Africa fit together like **pieces of a jigsaw puzzle**, **fossil remains of the same extinct animal or plant can be found across several continents**, **identical rocks could be found on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean**. **These rocks were the same type and the same age, evidence from ancient glaciers.**
- Scientists did not accept Wegener's theory of continental drift. One of the elements lacking in the theory was the mechanism for how it works, why did the continents drift and what patterns did they follow



### Plate tectonics:-

- Wegener's idea eventually helped to form the theory of plate tectonics, but while Wegener was alive, scientists did not believe that the continents could move.
- Continents rest on massive slabs of rock called tectonic plate. The plates are always moving and interacting in a process called plate tectonics.**
- Plate tectonics is the theory explaining the motion of the outer crust or the lithosphere of earth. Lithosphere is divided into tectonics plates. The crust moves due to convective forces generated within the asthenosphere, fuelled by the internal heat of the earth's core.

### How plate tectonics is an improvement over continental drift theory:-

- Plate tectonic explains the mechanism of the motion of the tectonic plates while continental drift theory left this question completely unanswered.
  - Tectonic plates have been constantly moving over the globe throughout the history of the earth. **It is not the continent that moves as believed by Wegener. Continents are part of a plate and what moves is the plate.**
- Wegener had thought of all the continents to have initially existed as a super continent in the form of Pangaea. However, **later discoveries reveal that the continental masses, resting on the plates, have been wandering all through the geological period**, and Pangaea was a result of converging of different continental masses that were parts of one or the other plates.
- At the time that Wegener proposed his theory of continental drift, most scientists believed that the earth was a solid, motionless body. **However, concepts of sea floor spreading and the unified theory of plate tectonics have emphasised that both the surface of the earth and the interior are not static and motionless but are dynamic.**
  - Sea floor spreading:-**
    - The mobile rock beneath the rigid plates is believed to be moving in a circular manner. The heated material rises to the surface, spreads and begins to cool, and then sinks back into deeper depths. This cycle is repeated over and over to generate what scientists call a convection cell or convective flow
  - The ultimate proof of this was the discovery of "**magnetic stripes**" on the seafloor later in the 1960s: the magnetic domains in oceanic rocks recorded reversal of Earth's magnetic field over

time. The pattern was symmetric to the ridge, supporting the idea of symmetric seafloor spreading. The idea of **subduction zones** was born

- With **plate tectonics** we have a theory that explains Wegener's observations and how lithosphere can be produced and consumed so that Earth does not change its size
- Wegener's continental drift theory lacked was a propelling mechanism. Other scientists wanted to know what was moving these continents around. Unfortunately, Wegener could not provide a convincing answer. **The technological advances necessitated by the Second World War made possible the accumulation of significant evidence now underlying modern plate tectonic theory.**
- **The following two forces are too small to bring in change :-**
  - **Pole-fleeing or centrifugal force:**
    - The spinning of Earth on its own axis creates a centrifugal force i.e. force oriented away from the axis of rotation towards the equator. Wegener believed the centrifugal force of the planet caused the super continent to break apart and pushed continents away from the Poles toward the equator. Therefore, He called this drifting mechanism as the "pole-fleeing or centrifugal force"
  - **Tidal force:-**
    - Wegener tried to attribute the westward drift of the Americas to lunar-solar drag i.e. by invoking tidal force that is the gravitational forces of the sun and the moon .He also admitted that it is probable that pole- fleeing or centrifugal force and tidal force are responsible for the journey of continents. Wegener failed to devise a sound mechanism for the movement of the continents. For Wegener the drifting mechanism was the most difficult question to solve.
- Plate tectonics is the grand unifying theory of geosciences that explains
  - Movement of continents
  - Earthquakes, volcanism most major features on Earth's surface, including mountain building, formation of new lithosphere ,consumption of old lithosphere, mid-ocean ridges

### Conclusion:-

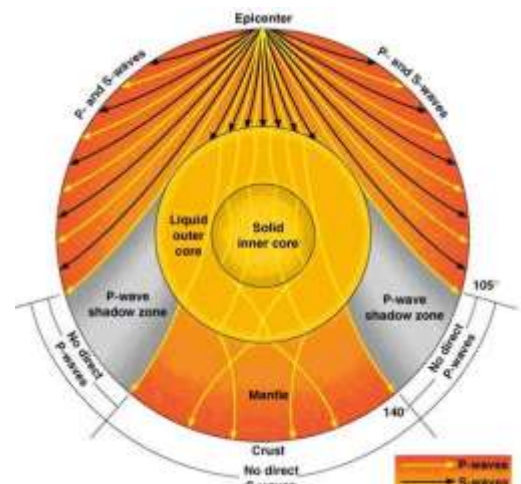
- It took nearly 60 years for the idea of continental drift to be scientifically confirmed in the form of plate tectonic theory. Ultimately it added new dimension in the understanding of the global distribution of earthquakes, volcanoes and identification of disaster prone areas.

***Q) Explain the relevance of seismology in studying the structure of the interior of the earth.(250 words)***

### Background:-

- The structure of Earth's deep interior cannot be studied directly. But geologists use seismic (earthquake) waves to determine the depths of layers of molten and semi-molten material within Earth.
- Because different types of earthquake waves behave differently when they encounter material in different states (for example, molten, semi-molten, solid), seismic stations established around Earth detect and record the strengths of the different types of waves and the directions from which they came. Geologists use these records to establish the structure of Earth's interior.

### Seismic waves:-



- **Seismic waves** are the waves of energy that travel through the Earth as a result of an earthquake and can tell a lot about the internal structure of the Earth **because these waves travel at different speeds in different materials.**
- There are two types of waves that travel through the Earth: **p-waves and s-waves.**
  - **P- Waves are faster and they can travel through both solids and liquids. S-waves are slower and cannot travel through liquids.** For both kinds of waves, the speed at which the wave travels also depends on the properties of the material through which it is traveling.
  - Thus, if there is an earthquake somewhere, the first waves that arrive are P-waves. In essence, the gap in P-wave and S-wave arrival gives a first estimate of the distance to the earthquake.

#### **Relevance of seismology:-**

- Scientists are able to learn about Earth's internal structure **by measuring the arrival of seismic waves at stations around the world.** For example, **they know that Earth's outer core is liquid because s-waves are not able to pass through it.**
- Seismic waves travel in curved paths through the Earth (because of the increasing pressure, materials are more dense towards the core, travel velocity of seismic waves increases).
- Refraction of seismic waves causes them to curve away from a direct path. Reflection causes them to glance off certain surfaces (e.g. core mantle boundary) when they hit it at too shallow of an angle. The result of this behavior, in combination with the fact that S-waves can not travel through liquids is the appearance of seismic shadows, opposite of the actual earthquake site.
  - When an earthquake occurs there is a "shadow zone" on the opposite side of the earth where no s-waves arrive. Similarly earth has a solid inner core because some p-waves are reflected off the boundary between the inner core and the outer core.
- **By measuring the time it takes for seismic waves to travel along many different paths through the earth, they figure out the velocity structure of the earth.** Abrupt changes in velocity with depth correspond to boundaries between different layers of the Earth composed of different materials.

#### **Conclusion:**

- Apart from seismology there are many indirect sources of studying earth's interior like deep ocean drilling, observations of rockin outcrop, samples brought to the surface from greater depths by volcanic activity, measurements of the gravitational and magnetic fields of the Earth, and experiments with crystalline solids at pressures and temperatures characteristic of the Earth's deep interior etc.

***TOPIC: Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.***

***Q) Discuss how climate change will affect the rainfall pattern in India. Also analyze the risks that it poses to food security in India. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- As a result of global warming, the world's climate is changing and its effect is being felt the world over.

#### **Impact of climate change on rainfall pattern:-**

- A new study says **extreme rainfall events are on the rise in India and attributes the trend to man-made emissions.** The trend is likely to become more prominent by mid-century, particularly in southern and central India.

- **Rising temperatures will intensify the Earth's water cycle, increasing evaporation:-**
  - The rate of evaporation from the ocean is increasing as the world warms., **the higher rate of evaporation contributes to more extreme rain and snow events.**
  - Increased evaporation will result in more storms, but also contribute to drying over some land areas.
  - As a result, storm-affected areas are likely to experience increases in precipitation and increased risk of flooding, while areas located far away from storm tracks are likely to experience less precipitation and increased risk of drought.
- **Precipitation over the Krishna basin is likely to increase in the 2020-2050**, and rainfall in the districts in the southern part of the basin is likely to increase by as much as 10 per cent in the kharif season.
- **Decline in precipitation of up to 20 per cent over the Cauvery basin** is projected for the kharif season.
- As a result of depletion of the ozone layer, there will be more heat trapping gases in the atmosphere, which, according to climate models, will shift rainfall/precipitation patterns in two major ways.
  - The first shift is in strengthening the current patterns, which means the wet regions would get wetter and dry regions would get drier. This is because warmer air as a result global warming traps more water vapour, and scientists predict that this additional water will fall in the already wet parts of the earth.
    - **Precipitation is expected to increase in higher latitudes and decrease in areas closer to the Equator.** The northern United States will become wetter while the South, particularly the Southwest, will become drier.
  - The second shift is due to changes in atmospheric circulation, because of which storm tracks would move away from the equator and towards the poles.

#### **How erratic rainfall patterns affect food security:-**

- The crops that are grown for food need specific conditions to thrive, including the right temperature and enough water. **A changing climate could have both positive and negative effects on crops.**
  - **For example, the northern parts of the United States have generally cool temperatures, so warmer weather could help certain crops grow.**
  - In southern areas where temperatures are already hot, even more heat could hurt crop growth.
- Droughts caused by climate change could **reduce the amount of water available for irrigation.**
- Climate change is also likely to cause stronger storms and **more floods, which can damage crops.**
- Higher temperatures and changing rainfall patterns could help some **kinds of weeds and pests to spread to new areas.**
- Other than the effect of high and low rainfall on cropping patterns, it is predicted that phenomena such as **coastal flooding will reduce the amount of land available for agriculture.**
  - Farmers are already finding it difficult to cope with these environmental changes, as almost all crops are season-dependent and rainfall-dependent.
  - Temperature and rainfall changes induced by climate change are likely to further react with other parameters of plant growth like atmospheric gases, fertilizers, insects, plant pathogens, weeds, and the soil's organic matter. **This again is expected to produce unanticipated responses.**
- Based on the predicted climate models, **central and eastern Africa will have increased yields of 10 to 30 per cent** if rainfall increases and improved agricultural technologies are adopted.
- **El Nino provides another example of how agricultural production patterns and food securities are impacted.** In Southern Africa (2016), it severely weakened crop prospects, triggering a 25 per

cent cut in wheat production. **In India too, following a poor monsoon, the area of wheat crop was cut.**

**Way forward:-**

- This also highlights the **need for initiating adaptation and mitigation to avoid the risk and damage due to extreme rain and flooding.**
- Farmers may be able to prepare for climate change by **planting crops during different times of the year, or by planting crops that can survive better in hot and dry conditions.**
- Agricultural adaptation options for this can be grouped as **technological developments, government programmes, farm production practices and farm financial management**

## GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 2

*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) 15th Finance Commission's suggestion to use population figures from 2011 census instead of 1971 census for sharing tax revenue among states has triggered opposition from South India. Examine why. Also comment if southern states are unfairly subsidising northern states. (250 Words)**

### Background:-

- The rise in the demands of autonomy by the southern states have been taken place in the recent years. With the 15<sup>th</sup> finance commission's suggestion to use the population according to 2001 census instead of 1971 census has triggered new insecurities.

### Reasons why southern India is opposing :-

- Using 2011 census data instead of 1971 census data to decide the allocation of tax revenue to states could **lead to a major disruption of southern finances** since southern states have been more successful in bringing down population growth rates after 1971.
- If the previous finance commission had used 2011 population figures entirely instead of as a sub-component southern states **would have received about Rs20,000 crore less over the 5-year period from 2015-2020.**
- Southern states contribute maximum tax revenues to the center, **but due to this decision money can be diverted to the development of northern states.**
- Experts point out that it is a **poor idea to give weightage to population to assess states fiscal needs by the finance commission.**
- The **development needs of an area are not necessarily captured in its population statistics.**
- Redistribution of pooled taxes has been progressive for years, ensuring poorer states get a larger share, both per person and in absolute terms. **The fear among southern states is that the degree of redistribution would increase.**
- Southern states feel that **development is not being rewarded** with this decision of finance commission.
- **The usage of the 2011 Census is being opposed for the same reason the usage of 1971 Census was made mandatory** – to make sure States that have worked on population control do not lose out on benefits.
- **The concerns expressed by the States in 1976 which necessitated the freezing of seat allocation on the basis of 1971 population figures would appear to hold good even today** and have to be addressed to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

### Southern states are unfairly subsidising northern states:-

- The states of the South have nearly reached replacement levels of population growth. **Yet, population is a prominent criteria for devolution of central taxes.**
- They also **get much less funding from the Centre.**
- Their **financial muscle does not translate into political heft.**
- The vastly differing rates of fertility paired with differences in economic growth will also affect inter-state migration which is already moving at a faster pace for southern states.

However despite concerns made by the southern states **India is union of states .Only when federal entities truly support each other does the nation flourish?** Also the less developed states contributed to the economy of the nation with natural resources. It is also the duty of states to consider regional imbalances and strive for the development of the nation as a whole.

**Conclusion:-**

- Balance between more granular criteria like development indicators, fiscal discipline, fiscal disabilities such as per capita income distance is essential.

***Q) In a federal polity like India why is it important for states to have both financial and cultural autonomy? Do you think it's time for India to become a federation of states? Analyse (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- India is termed as a union of states since independence but in the recent times there have been protests and demands by the states for greater autonomy.

**Why is it important for states to have both financial and cultural autonomy/ why is it necessary for India to become federation of states:-**

- While the **constituent units of the union i.e., states have changed**, the relationship between the Union and the States has remained the same.
- **Genuine federalism requires dual centres of fiscal authority**
  - Creating a fiscal structure where the states have greater revenue-raising authority, as well as greater decision making power on spending, **implies a lower reliance on the Union government in fiscal matters as well as governance decisions.**
  - Greater financial autonomy means **reducing the system of the Union government receiving a large proportion of all revenue and then allocating that revenue among the states.**
- Embrace genuine fiscal federalism by permanently creating a fiscal power centre in the states. **For the richer states, this is an excellent solution.**
  - They raise a larger share of the revenue and will benefit immediately.
  - It allows these governments to take on long-term infrastructure and governance projects to benefit its citizens.
- **Citizens of democratically powerful states will benefit in the long run** because fiscal autonomy will put pressure on these governments to take welfare seriously which implies
  - Greater revenue
  - Greater power for state parties governing these states in the long run.
  - Budgetary crisis in these states in the short run need not harm citizens adversely **because India constitutionally guarantees freedom of movement.**
- Some of the instances which show that the states are demanding greater autonomy
  - The recent instance of unveiling of state flag by Karnataka
  - The continued existence of provisions such as Article 356 (President's rule) are threatening states
  - Protests against Jallikattu, imposition of preferences on food, exclusion of women from the Ayyappa shrine at Sabarimala.
  - **So a central authority cannot draw the boundaries of cultural practice in ways that are sensitive to tradition.**
  - **Interstate water disputes**
  - Now, the skewed terms of reference for the 15th Finance Commission have brought the south together in making a strong case for fiscal federalism.

**India cannot be the federation of states:-**

- The units of Indian federation have undergone multiple transformations since 1947. This is because Article 3 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to create new States. **While such a provision can be seen as giving the Union too much power, it has arguably been central to holding India together since it allows the federation to evolve and respond to sub-national aspirations.**



- The government has sought to assuage such concerns by invoking the idea of “cooperative federalism”. The 14th Finance Commission, in 2015, recommended raising the share of States in the divisible pool of Central taxes from 32% to 42%.
- The constitution provided safeguards for federalism already through V th and VI th schedule, Article 370, Special category status, Centrally sponsored schemes etc
- As the regional disparities between states widen further, a strong centre which can provide grants to backward states is very necessary,
- **India is a union of states** /indestructible union of indestructible states which makes sense keeping in mind the cultural diversity in the country. So cultural autonomy should not threaten national integration
- India is in a complex geographical position with rising insecurity across its borders, effective distribution of resources, also riddled with various socio-economic complexities. So states alone are not equipped to deal with these internal and external security challenges. Strong centre is necessary.

### Conclusion:-

- With effective democratic decentralization, fiscal cooperative and competitive federalism, inclusive growth the states can develop and integrity of the nation will not be hampered.

***Q) The debate on federalism in present India revolves around many distinct but inter- related aspects. Examine. Also discuss various contentious issues in the Terms of reference, of the 15th finance commission. (250 Words)***

### Background:-

- India is termed as a union of states since independence but in the recent times there have been protests and demands by the states for greater autonomy.

### Aspects revolving federalism:-

- The units of Indian federation have undergone multiple transformations since 1947. This is because Article 3 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to create new States. Such a provision can **be seen as giving the Union too much power**, it has arguably been central to holding India together since it allows the federation to evolve and respond to sub-national aspirations.
- Any serious political movement around federalism **should question the necessity of retaining such constitutional provisions which are vestiges of colonial rule.**
  - While the flexible nature of federalism under the Constitution has served India well, **the continued existence of provisions such as Article 356 (President's rule) goes against the grain of federalism.**
- States such as Karnataka, Tamilnadu have **asserted their linguistic and cultural rights in the wake of the Centre's interventions such as a promotion of Hindi.**
- **States are perceiving that their progress is being penalised:-**
  - While the southern States contribute to the nation economically, they don't occupy a central space politically and are further marginalised culturally.
  - States are concerned with the centre's approach to fiscal discipline and downsizing government.
- For a long time federalists have been demanding that the **Centre cut down or totally wind up some of the ministries that deal with subjects in the State List.** This is not happening.
- The existing and **largely underutilised Interstate Council**, created under Article 263 and mandated to deal with coordination between States, has been totally ignored.
- **States are unevenly equipped to engage in fair competition**, since regional disparities in the provision of basic needs and social sector services are overwhelming. Moreover, **there are vast**



**differences in governance capabilities**, and while special category States may have withered away with, the need for asymmetric federalism remains.

▪ **14 th finance commission and Cooperative federalism:-**

- The 14th Finance Commission, in 2015, recommended raising the share of States in the divisible pool of Central taxes from 32% to 42%. However, **beyond this measure, the Centre has not inspired much confidence regarding its commitment to federalism.**
- **The Centre directed its axe towards key centrally sponsored schemes in the social sector.** Whether most of the States are sufficiently endowed with governance capabilities to absorb and effectively spend the additional resources that have come their way is a moot point.

***Q) Governor role being misused shows the mandate to centralization of power in states. For instance proclamation of President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh significantly advanced unfinished agenda of limiting partisan federalism.***

▪ **Some of the instances which show that the states are demanding greater autonomy :-**

- The recent instance of unveiling of state flag by Karnataka
- The continued existence of provisions such as Article 356 (President's rule) are threatening states
- Protests against Jallikattu, imposition of preferences on food, exclusion of women from the Ayyappa shrine at Sabarimala.
- **So a central authority cannot draw the boundaries of cultural practice in ways that are sensitive to tradition.**
- **Interstate water disputes**
- Now, the skewed terms of reference for the 15th Finance Commission have brought the south together in making a strong case for fiscal federalism.

**Contentious issues in the terms of reference of the 15th finance commission:-**

- **The Centre's direction to use the 2011 Census instead of the 1971 Census for population data has concerned the southern states.** As the population in these States has stabilised, the concern is that their share of tax allocation would reduce.
- The terms of reference for the 15th Finance Commission **have brought the south together in making a strong case for fiscal federalism.**
- Using 2011 census data will give states with the greatest increase in population an advantage in their share of revenue, relative to prior revenue allocations.
- Using the 2011 census would mean that the policy successes in states like TN, Kerala are punished and the policy failures of badly governed states are rewarded.
- Taking away the resources of successful states at this crucial juncture of their development also affects their future development and welfare outcomes.
- The use of the 2011 census in the 15th FC is merely revealing the symptoms caused by the problem of centralizing fiscal decisions.

**Way forward:-**

- Long-term solution is to **foster genuine fiscal federalism** where states largely raise their own revenue and face hard budget constraints, i.e. fiscal autonomy accompanied by fiscal responsibility.
- Creating a fiscal structure where the states have greater revenue-raising authority, as well as greater decision making power on spending, implies a lower reliance on the Union government in fiscal matters as well as governance decisions.
- India needs to move away from centralization-decentralization thinking, and embrace genuine fiscal federalism by permanently creating a fiscal power centre in the states.

***Q) Critically examine whether the Terms of Reference of 15th Finance Commission violate the principles of fiscal federalism. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- The terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission are a matter of utmost importance to the resources available to the States of India. The terms of reference of this Commission have created apprehension among States about principles of fairness and equity in the distribution of public resources for development.

**Fiscal federalism:-**

- Fiscal Federalism refers to the division of responsibilities with regards to public expenditure and taxation between the different levels of the government.
- Having a Fiscal Federalism mechanism allows the government to optimize their costs on economies of scale, because in this manner, people will get public service which they prefer, and there will be no unnecessary expenditure.
- From the economic point of view also, having a federalized structure helps as it creates a unified market.

**Terms of reference of this finance commission violate the principles of fiscal federalism:-**

- The foremost objective of the Finance Commission is an equitable distribution of financial resources between the two units of the Union. The States in India **today neither have the resources to fulfil their tasks as laid down in the Constitution, nor do they have the right to raise such resources due to the government policy and GST reduced states independence even further.**
- **Using the population data of 2011 as the base for tax devolution** should not reduce the allocation of resources to States that have successfully reduced their rate of population growth.
  - These States have incurred huge fiscal costs in order to achieve a lower population growth and healthy demographic indicators. They have made substantial investments on education, health and directly on family welfare programmes.
- **The current terms of reference go far beyond the constitutional mandate of the Finance Commission.**
  - They intensify efforts to use the Finance Commission **as an instrument of fiscal consolidation** and to impose the ideological and economic agenda of the Central government on the States
  - This aspect is criticized as it is **not the task of a Finance Commission to recommend road maps for fiscal management**
- **Revenue grants:-**
  - The terms of reference state that the Commission may also examine whether revenue deficit grants be provided at all.
  - Revenue deficits are offshoots of the path of development followed by States and cannot be brought down in the short term.
  - To discontinue post-tax devolution of revenue deficit grants would go against the principle of cooperative federalism.
- **Vertical devolution:-**
  - The terms of reference explicitly privilege the **committed expenditures of the Centre.**
  - The Finance Commission should not take a residual approach to the question of vertical devolution. **The approach should not be that of distributing what is left over after providing for the requirements of the Centre.**
- **The terms of reference are unprecedented in asking the 15th Finance Commission to consider proposing performance-based incentives** beyond those relating to fiscal responsibility, population and devolution to local bodies.

- It is not the duty of the Finance Commission to venture into the realm of day-to-day governance. The elected governments of States will decide what policies are appropriate for people.
- **Shortage of revenues to states:-**
  - 14<sup>th</sup> finance commission has provided for 42% devolution however the Centre help with respect to centrally sponsored schemes has been reduced.

**Finance commission have always strived towards fiscal federalism:-**

- According to the Economic Survey Fourteenth Finance Commission recommendations will enhance cooperative and competitive federalism.
  - Will bring about greater fiscal federalism
  - Will give greater autonomy to states on revenue and expenditure

**Conclusion:-**

- India's great wealth rests in its diversity. To recognize this diversity is also to recognise that States will follow diverse paths of development. The Finance Commission must facilitate diversity and a democratic path of development by respecting principles of equity and fairness in allocating resources between the Centre and States in India.

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

***Q) Withdrawal of cases against accused should be the sole prerogative of the state. Critically examine in light of various judicial pronouncements. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- The withdrawal of pending criminal cases against politicians in UP, Rajasthan, MP and Kerala in recent months points at the overpowering stranglehold of the political establishment on all the organs of governance.

**Yes, withdrawal of cases is the sole prerogative of state:-**

- **Legal provisions:-**
  - **Section 321 of Crpc:-**
    - The power to withdraw criminal cases is vested with the public prosecutor or assistant public prosecutor under Section 321 of the CrPC.
    - According to the statute, at any stage before the judgment, the prosecutor can decide to withdraw prosecution against one or all offenders in a case under one or all offences. If such an application is made before the chargesheet is filed, it would lead to discharge. In case the chargesheet is filed, it would lead to acquittal of the accused.
  - **In UP**, through an amendment, permission of the state government for withdrawal of cases has been made mandatory.
  - In cases where the matter relates to the executive powers of the Centre, or comes under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, or is related to damage of central government property, permission from the **Union is needed**.
  - **Judgements which support it:-**
    - Allahabad High Court held that the power of withdrawal can be invoked by the Public Prosecutor/Assistant Public Prosecutor, In-charge of the case when same is made in good faith, in the interest of public policy and justice and not to thwart or stifle the process of law.

**Some concerns were raised though:-**

- **Section 321 is silent on the grounds on which the state government or public prosecutor can push for withdrawal.**

- **Successive judgments by the Supreme Court and various high courts have held that it cannot be whimsical or arbitrary**, and must be guided by public interest and furtherance of justice
  - In *Rahul Agarwal versus Rakesh Jain* in 2005, the Supreme Court observed that even if the government directs the public prosecutor to withdraw the prosecution and an application is filed to that effect, **the court must consider all relevant circumstances and find out whether the withdrawal of prosecution would advance the cause of justice.**
  - If the case is likely to end in an acquittal and the continuance of the case is only causing severe harassment to the accused, the court may permit withdrawal of the prosecution.
  - If the withdrawal of prosecution is likely to bury the dispute and bring about harmony between the parties and it would be in the best interest of justice, the court may allow the withdrawal of prosecution.
- Various court judgments, including from the Supreme Court, have held that even after a case has been withdrawn by a state government and received the consent of the court concerned, it can be **challenged for a judicial review under Article 226 of the Constitution.**
- Courts have also held that besides the victim, **even a third party can intervene and challenge the withdrawal of the case since a crime is committed against the society.**
  - Courts have held that every member of the society has the locus standi to oppose or challenge withdrawal in a criminal case, particularly in case of corruption and criminal breach of trust or cheating.
- While it has not become a norm for governments to withdraw a case, there have been a number of precedents. In 2013, the political party in UP had withdrawn the prosecution against 19 accused in various cases of terrorism. **The decision was shot down by the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court.**
- **Appointment of public prosecutor :-**
  - Given that the appointment of public prosecutors is solely the prerogative of the state government, with some exceptions where the central government can also play a role, **the issue whether public prosecutors can indeed function effectively, independently and fearlessly calls for serious reflection.**
  - Given the prevalence of the politician-bureaucrat-corporate nexus in the country, the probability of public prosecutors to function effectively, independently and fearlessly becomes seriously doubtful.

### Conclusion:-

- The Court has a special duty in this regard as it is the ultimate repository of legislative confidence in granting its consent to withdrawal from the prosecution.

*TOPIC: Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.*

**Q) Simultaneous elections in India would require some major amendments in the constitution. Discuss, in light of the recent Law commission report. (250 Words)**

### Background:-

- The Law Commission of India has 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.

### Constitutional amendments that are needed for simultaneous elections are :-

- **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, provides the statutory basis for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to conduct elections and prescribes qualifications for candidates, procedures for conducting elections and resolution of disputes. **The 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 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 170<sup>th</sup> 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.**

#### Conclusion:-

- In order to start synchronization of the elections, the option of holding the elections in phases as a onetime measure may be viable or conducting general elections along with the elections to assemblies of the former group of states and after 30 months hold elections with the latter group of states are available.

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

**Q) Disruptions in parliament and state legislative assemblies are rooted in anti-defection law and money bills. Discuss (250 words)**

#### Background:-

- The lack of parliamentary discussion of the budget session is part of a trend that has been evident in state legislative assemblies for a while. Almost no legislature business was transacted and discussions and debates neglected in the Parliament is only a reflection of the larger dysfunction in the way parliamentary democracy has been working in India at the state level.
- During the monsoon session last year, both the houses of Parliament lost about 55 hours, causing a loss of Rs 82.5 crore. Moreover, the productivity during in the Rajya Sabha had also dropped drastically to 54% from 72% in the Monsoon Session.

#### Disruptions due to anti defection law –

- The hope expressed by the majority judgment of the Supreme Court in *Kihoto Hollohan v Zachilhu* (1992), that the **speaker will prove to be an impartial and non-partisan arbiter of disqualification disputes**, has been belied.
- **Political party given primacy than individual:-**

- In its present shape, the Tenth Schedule has placed the political party, and not the individual legislator, at the core of parliamentary democracy.
- Legislators are now accountable to the political party on whose symbol they were elected and not to their constituents.
- Their voting behaviour in Parliament makes them answerable to the party through the disqualification process, much before they have to face the electorate in the consequent elections.
- This anti-defection law has empowered political parties at the cost of democratic debate, particularly within Parliament, since defying a party whip can lead to disqualification from the House.
- **Misuse of whip:-**
  - With legislators iron-bound to the party whip, this was played out at the state level, where legislative assemblies are functional for as few days as possible.
  - It weakens incentives of legislators to invest in developing their own viewpoints and express them freely as they cannot use their own stand on different issues to evolve or develop their own political careers.
  - The role of legislators has been reduced to merely instruments in the formation of government from the point of a party, because they are expected to follow the decisions of the party as far as legislative business is concerned.
  - Since MP's can't vote as per the merit of the debate, but must follow the party diktat, there is no reason for MPs to prepare for a debate.
- **Led to lesser debate:-**
  - Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, far from preventing defections, has resulted in lesser debate within Parliament.
- **Affects intra party democracy:-**
  - The effect of anti-defection law is not only manifest in disruptions or the nature of protest and dissent, but is also negative for intra-party democracy.
  - It also accentuates the preexisting tendency of Indian politics to be personality- and dynasty-driven
  - creates an incentive to control a party or to create one, as opposed to creating political capital out of one's own vision or by creating a space within a party.

#### **Disruptions due to money bills:-**

- **Dilution of power of Rajya sabha:-**
  - Unlike the House of Lords, membership is not inherited or based purely on nominations, but filled on the basis of elections, even if these are indirect elections.
  - Further, the Rajya Sabha was supposed to protect the interests of the states in Parliament and help strengthen the federal structure of the Constitution. **But due to money bills this powerful Rajya Sabha is totally diluted.**
- Each time the ruling party wields its whip effectively and uses the money bill route for contentious legislation, the authority and importance of Parliament diminishes. Recent instances like certifying Aadhar bill as money bill raised questions.
- **By getting the speaker to decide various legislations as money bills, the constitutional scheme of the Rajya Sabha is violated.**

#### **What needs to be done:-**

- The key lesson is the **importance of detailed scrutiny by Parliament:-**
  - India can move to a system like that of the British Parliament where every Bill goes through the committee stage in each House. That may take more time to pass a Bill but will ensure that there is adequate deliberation by parliamentarians before they pass a Bill.
- **Restrict the party whip** and invocation of anti-defection law to money bills and confidence votes.

- **Allow debate on all major issues**, and extend sitting of the House where necessary to allow members to express their opinion.
- **Allow members to vote on issues and legislations as per their conscience.**

*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) Fixity of tenure and removal only by impeachment, no doubt, are guarantees for independence. But, do you think there should be some safeguards before the impeachment motion, tabled by the requisite number of Members of Parliament, is admitted? Comment. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Indian Constitution supported independence of judiciary. The proposed resolution of impeachment of the Chief Justice of India is a matter of grave concern, for it brings to fore issues that directly impinge on the independence of the judiciary.

### **Some safeguards are necessary before introducing impeachment motion because:-**

- Even a mere admission of an impeachment motion can **cause an incalculable damage and loss of reputation to the judge under question.**
- Moreover, till the proceedings conclude, **the functioning of the judge concerned comes under a cloud** and even an ultimate exoneration cannot give him or her back the enormous loss of honour.
- The process itself causes great **damage to the institution of the judiciary.**
- Large body of independent judges needs protection and need not be inhibited while going about their **work with any possible threat of an impeachment looming large.**
- Judge is obliged to decide on a variety of matters concerning the government and the political class so a **sincere judge may face flak from vested interests who want to destroy the integrity of the judiciary and initiate the impeachment motion.**
- After the Second Judges case, the power to appoint judges of the higher judiciary vests in the apex court. **Removal being directly connected to appointment, it is only logical that the first filter in the process vest with the judiciary.**
- **The principle of independence of the judiciary on which the Second Judges Case was founded for the aspect of appointment should apply with full vigour** to the initiation of the removal process.
- The **Judges (Inquiry) Act** expressly provides that the presiding officers, before admitting a motion for impeachment, will consult such persons as they deem fit. This needs to be considered.

However in the recent year's issues around Justice Ramaswamy case, Justice Dinakaran raised the questions about the integrity of judiciary. Also the motion of impeachment is very tough and difficult to be passed as the process is very complex and cumbersome and so far none of the chief justice has been impeached.

### **Way forward:-**

- Before admitting a motion of impeachment against a judge of a high court or the Supreme Court, **the presiding officers in Parliament should be obliged to obtain the concurrence of the full court of the Supreme Court.**
- This would be on the administrative side and if it involves a judge of the apex court, that judge would not participate in the sitting.

**Conclusion:-**

- The relation between judiciary and legislature needs to be strong rather than antagonistic. Fearless judiciary is of no threat to a clean government.

***Q) "Judges have an important role to play in strengthening our democracy. But they will have to exercise great discretion and resist the intoxication which comes from the view that judges are the last, best hope of the republic". Critically examine in light of SC judgement on SC/ST Atrocities Act. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- With judgements upholding right to privacy, ensuring freedom of expression through uplifting ban on movies, protection to women, third gender etc **judges played an important role in strengthening Indian democracy and have been the beacon of light for the public.**
- But with instances of judgement like prohibition of liquor on highways, issues raised due to article 142 which ensures extraordinary powers need to be used in rare cases, judicial review etc judiciary has been criticised that powers of legislature and executive are being increasing encroached by it.

**Criticism of Supreme court based on the recent SC/ST judgment :-**

- The upper-caste groups could never come up with credible evidence to bolster their belligerent claims. But due to this judgement the upper caste lobbies will gain.
  - Given the **upper-caste control of the law and order machinery**, conviction rates in caste-related crimes will be low.
- Data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows that the **proportion of false cases registered under the act has actually fallen.** Moreover, the method of using conviction rates to evaluate whether a law is sound is fraught with danger.
- In a majority of cases, **the investigation is abysmal, and the prosecution is worse, witnesses and complainants are intimidated.**
  - There are studies, such as one by the Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad, which have exposed how **cases of atrocities result in acquittal due to the anti-Dalit attitude of the law enforcement.**
  - Most Dalits **do not register cases for fear** of retaliation by higher castes.
- **The stand Supreme court took in this judgement will result in increasing of atrocities against Dalits and also create a rift in the society.**
- **Many incidents happen that don't get reported under the Act** because people who aren't educated don't even know it exists.
- Experts say that the **judgment effectively neutralises the Act** which provided some sense of protection to hapless people against oppressive societal prejudices.
- **Section 18 of the PoA Act specifically bars the application of Section 438 of the CrPC (which provides for anticipatory bail) in respect of offences under the Act.**
- Despite this, the court held that anticipatory bail should be granted until a prima facie case is made out evidently oblivious to the fact that only after investigation it can be seen whether there is a prima facie case or not.

**However the intention behind the judgement shows the intent for which Supreme court was established i.e., uphold rights of constitution like right to equality:-**

- Supreme Court gave the judgement on the pretext **that Innocents cannot be terrorised by the provisions of the SC/ST Act and their fundamental rights need to be protected.**
- **Article 21 of the Constitution equally applies to all the citizens** and none of the provisions of SC/ST Act has been diluted.



- **Enough safeguards are provided so that interests of the innocents are protected from being arrested** and false cases are not encouraged.
- The reasons behind the low conviction, which is 15%, is because cases are registered without proper investigation and a simple accusation leads to an FIR which does not stand scrutiny in a court of law. **This exercise is a way to harass people and is a complete waste of time of both the police and the court.**
- **More cases under the Act are filed in rural areas** as opposed to urban areas where caste identities are blurred. It is easier to **falsely implicate people in rural areas**. So protection to all citizens is necessary.

### **Conclusion:-**

- The Supreme Court judgement need to be seen in the context of social justice rather than as partisan. Also the judiciary needs to ensure that other organs of the government legislature, executive feel that there is no judicial overreach and it maintains balance of power.

***Q) Criminal justice system cannot function without a healthy police and investigative agency. Analyze the statement in light of pending police reforms in India?(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- The avalanche of social and technological changes fuelled by the internet and the new social media are fast changing the nature, intensity and the reach of crime leading to unprecedented lawlessness and frightening dimensions of global terrorism.
- There is an urgent need to strengthen Criminal Justice System and grassroots level policing institutions to prepare police to deal with the present and emerging challenges
- **Criminal justice system** is the set of agencies and processes established by governments to control crime and impose penalties on those who violate laws



### **Issues with present police:-**

- **An overburdened police force :-**
  - Police force is overburdened especially at lower levels where constabulary is forced to work continuously 14-16 hrs and also for 7 days a week. It adversely impacts their performance.
  - While the sanctioned police strength was 181 police per lakh persons in 2016 when the United Nations recommended standard is 222 police per lakh persons.
  - 86% of the state police comprises of constabulary. Constables are typically promoted once during their service. This could weaken their incentive to perform well.
- **Improving police infrastructure**
  - Failure of police infrastructure like vehicles, weaponry. Also audits have found that the POLNET network is non-functional in various states.
    - For example, an audit of the Gujarat police force reported that the network had not been operationalized till October 2015 due to non-installation of essential infrastructure, such as remote subscriber units and generator sets.
  - Funds dedicated for modernization of infrastructure are typically not utilized fully. For example, in 2015-16, only 14% of such funds were used by the states.
- **Political influence :-**
  - Second Administrative Reforms Commission has noted that ministers have used police forces for personal and political reasons.
- **Police accountability :-**

- Police forces have the authority to exercise force to enforce laws and maintain law and order in a state. **However, this power may be misused in several ways.**
- **Poor quality of investigation:-**
  - Crime per lakh population has increased by 28% over the last decade (2005-2015). However, convictions have been low. So it shows the poor quality of investigation.
  - The Law Commission and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have noted that state police officers often neglect investigation because they are understaffed and overburdened with various kinds of tasks.
  - Further, they lack the training and the expertise required to conduct professional investigations.
  - They also have insufficient legal knowledge and the forensic and cyber infrastructure available to them is both inadequate and outdated. In light of this, police forces may use force and torture to secure evidence.
  - Crime investigations may be influenced by political or other extraneous considerations
- **Forensic labs:-**
  - Expert bodies have however said that these laboratories are short of funds and qualified staff. Further, there is indiscriminate referencing of cases to these labs resulting in high pendency.
- **Lack of co-ordination** between center and states is matter related to maintenance of law & order results in ineffective functioning of police force.
- **Police force is not in the position to tackle present problems** of cybercrime, global terrorism, and fatalism because of structural weaknesses.
- **Prevalence of Rank system within the police force results in abuse of power** by top level executive over lower level personnel.

#### **Reforms needed:-**

- **Directions of the Supreme Court in Prakash Singh vs Union of India :-**
  - The Supreme Court ordered the centre and states to set up authorities to lay down guidelines for police functioning, evaluate police performance, decide postings and transfers, and receive complaints of police misconduct.
  - The court also required that minimum tenure of service be guaranteed to key police officers to protect them from arbitrary transfers and postings.
- **Investigation :-**
  - Experts have recommended that states must have their own specialized investigation units within the police force that are responsible for crime investigation.
- The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended that **one way to reduce the burden of the police forces could be to outsource or redistribute some non-core police functions** (such as traffic management, disaster rescue and relief, and issuing of court summons) to government departments or private agencies.
- **Padmanabhaiah commission :-**
  - It has also been recommended that constables, and the police force in general, should receive greater training in soft skills given they need to deal with the public regularly.
- **Housing:**
  - Importance of providing housing to the constabulary (and generally to the police force) to improve their efficiency and incentive to accept remote postings has also been emphasized by expert bodies, such as the National Police Commission.

***Q) Bringing BCCI under the purview of RTI act would complement the structural revamp as enunciated by Lodha Committee and the Supreme Court. Comment.***

**Background:-**

- Supreme court and Lodha committee already highlighted that BCCI is a public body. Law commission viewed it an agency or instrumentality of State, under Article 12 of the Constitution, thereby making it amenable to the writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 32.

**Why BCCI needs to be brought under the ambit of RTI act:-**

- The Law Commission has recently recommended** that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) be brought under the Right To Information (RTI) Act because it exercises state like powers. **Law commission's recommendation was a reiteration of the 2016 Supreme Court order** in the BCCI vs Cricket Association of Bihar case.
- National instances:-**
  - Reports say that the BCCI secretary has gone to the Northeast for the first time to scout for talent this is the first time in the last 60 years. **There is no accountability or transparency.**
  - The uniform of the players of the Indian team contains the national colours and their helmets display the Ashok Chakra.
  - BCCI nominates cricketers for Arjuna awards.
- BCCI's role is monopolistic** in regulation of the game of cricket and has resulted in the Board avoiding public scrutiny, encouraged an environment of opacity and non-accountability.
  - The Supreme Court has also reaffirmed that BCCI is the approved national level body holding virtually monopoly rights** to organize cricketing events in the country.
- Public functions:-**
  - Nature and the character of the functions performed by BCCI are public. With respect to regulation of cricket in India no such legislation exist. BCCI regulates the game and makes laws to that effect.
  - The BCCI's memorandum of association also states that its objects and purposes are to control, improve quality and lay down policies pertaining to the game of cricket in India as well as to select teams to represent India at International level. So law commission thus concludes that the BCCI should also be treated as public authority in terms of the RTI act.
- Government does exercise control over BCCI activities and functioning:-**
  - The BCCI, falling in line with the foreign policy of India, did not recognise a player from South Africa due to their practice of apartheid
  - The cricket matches between India and Pakistan in view of tense international relations were made subject to Government approval.
  - It has received substantial financing from appropriate governments** over the years (in the form of tax exemptions, land grants etc) within the existing legal framework So it can still be termed as a 'public authority' and be brought within the purview of the RTI Act.
- Since all other sports bodies** which are listed as national sports federations are covered under the RTI Act, it is inconceivable as to why BCCI should be an exception
  - Like other sports federations BCCI undertakes activities of organization of national/ international tournaments in the country, selection of sportspersons/ teams, sending them for training and participation in international tournaments abroad.
  - In relation to cricket, BCCI exclusively undertakes these activities in as well as on behalf of India thereby operating and functioning as the National sports federation for cricket.

**Concerns with the recommendations are:-**

- Recommendations of law commission are merely advisories
- Supreme court did not consider BCCI as state

- Until such time as any legislation is brought into force or the courts decide that BCCI is state under article 12 of the constitution of India or comes within the purview of RTI act, the BCCI will neither be considered state or come under RTI act.

### **Conclusion:-**

- Therefore the benefits of bringing BCCI under RTI act is vast as it increases transparency and accountability of BCCI functioning which was the objective of the Lodha committee report.

## ***Q) Critically analyze the process of constitution of benches in the Supreme Court of India.(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- The recent controversy over allocation of cases and constitution of benches in SC and also impeachment motion of CJI of SC has brought into focus the process by which cases are assigned to judges.

### **Process of constitution of benches in supreme court :**

- According to three retired Chief Justices of India (CJIs) **there is no written procedure in the top court that is followed to allocate cases.**
- **When a case is filed, its details and subject matter are scrutinized by the SC registry, which receives and processes all documents.** The cases are categorised **on the basis of subject matter.** There are 47 broad categories such as letter petitions, public interest matters, taxation, service matters and criminal appeals. Each category has multiple sub-categories.
- **The registry notifies the roster for the benches, which is done on the basis of the subjects (or categories), and the CJI approves it.** More than one bench is allocated the same subject matter.
- Details of a fresh case are entered into a computer, which automatically assigns the matter to the bench.
- Benches in the SC usually comprise two judges. Larger ones are formed on the orders of the CJI as and when required.
- The CJI can issue a specific instruction to list a case before a particular bench. CJI, as the master of roster, has the prerogative to mark the sensitive cases to specific benches but that the process should not be arbitrary. As the head of the institution, the CJI also has the discretion to set-up larger benches.
- It's the registry that decides to bring a case to the CJI's notice. The CJI is told by registry officials that a case is sensitive. **It is then left to the CJI to take a call whether he wants to mark it as per the roster, retain it with himself or let another bench hear it.** As per the convention, the CJI, on being informed in advance, either hears the matter or refers it to the top four judges in seniority after him.
- **New roster:-**
  - Under the new system cases will be allocated based on the subject matter they entail, according to a posting on the official website of the Supreme Court.
  - Under the new roster system, **the CJI will hear all special leave petitions (SLPs), and matters related to public interest,** social justice, elections, arbitration, and criminal matters, among others. **These form a big chunk of the important matters heard by the apex court.**
  - Other judges will hear matters related to labour disputes, taxation matters, compensation matters, consumer protection matters etc.

### **Positives:-**

- The **chief justices enjoy a special status** and they alone can assign work to a judge sitting alone and to the judges sitting in division bench or full bench.

- They have the jurisdiction to decide which case will be heard by which bench.
- The apex court has held that a judge or a bench of judges can assume jurisdiction in a case pending in the court, **only if the case is allotted to him or them by the chief justice.**
- Strict adherence of this procedure is essential for maintaining judicial discipline and proper functioning of the court. Also without it **the machinery of the court would collapse and the judicial work of the court would cease by generation of internal strife on account of hankering for a particular jurisdiction or a particular case.**
- The judgment of the three-judge bench in **Prakash Chand**, has further been held that as far as the roster is concerned, which is an administrative function, **the Chief Justice is the 'master of the roster' and he alone has the prerogative to constitute the benches of the court and allocate cases to the benches so constituted.**
  - It has been clarified by the Constitution Bench that this has also been the convention of the Supreme Court and as such is the law. It has been clarified that the convention is followed because of judicial discipline and decorum
- **The Parliament has not made any law so far with regard to formation of benches or laying down the principles for distribution of judicial business or allocation of cases amongst the judges.**
- The Supreme Court, in exercise of its **powers under Article 145**, has been framing rules for regulating the practice and procedure of the court. Presently, the Supreme Court Rules, 2013, is governing the field.

#### Criticism:-

- It is well settled that in discharge of judicial functions, the CJI and other judges exercise the same powers. **The CJI is always the senior-most judge of the court. It has, therefore, been said that on the judicial side, the CJI is only first among equals.**
- One of the grievances raised is that **sensitive and important cases are being heard by junior judges in the apex court.**
- Similarly, the CJI broke convention when he set-up a constitution bench in the medical college case and **did not include any of the top four judges in it, according to allegations made** by senior judges of Supreme court judges. **As per convention, a constitution bench usually comprises one senior judge other than the CJI.**
- There have been instances where cases having far-reaching consequences for the nation and the institution had been assigned by the Chief Justice of this Court **selectively to the benches 'of preference' without any rational basis for such assignment.**
- **Such power can be exercised only subject to the constitutional limitations, particularly, Article 14 of the Constitution.**
  - Article 14 strikes at arbitrariness in State action and ensures fairness and equality of treatment. **The principle of reasonableness, which legally as well as philosophically, is an essential element of equality or non-arbitrariness pervades Article 14 like a brooding omnipresence".** This principle equally applies to all the constitutional authorities.
- In the case of *Maru Ram v Union of India* the Constitution Bench has held that where a power is vested in a very high authority, **it must be presumed that the said authority would act properly and carefully after an objective consideration of all the aspects of the matter, and further, the higher the power, the more cautious would be its exercise.**
- **New roster system:-**
  - It has given impetus to more speculation and has become a stronger ground for **criticism of the prevailing practice at the Supreme Court.**
  - **The roster aggregates all important cases to the Chief Justice of India .Mundane cases with little political significance have been assigned to the other senior judges.**

- **Many questions arise** like whether this roster has been prepared in consultation with senior judges of the Supreme Court or whether the cases have been allocated according to a particular judge's expertise in a subject matter or whether the allocation was transparent
- Experts are concerned that with such move **there is concentration of power in the hands of one person and it violates the foundation of Supreme court called as a court of equals** and the objective criteria has not been followed.
- Experts criticised that the allotment of cases in this manner defies all norms of equity and justice and in disregard for principles of neutrality, impartiality and transparency.

#### Way forward :-

- **The Supreme Court, pursuant to its powers under Article 145(1) of the Constitution should clearly lay down the guidelines for exercising the powers of formation of Benches** and allocation of cases keeping in view the conventions of the Court in this regard.
- In the fast changing situations, it may also be found advisable to **confer the functions of "master of roster" on a committee** comprised of CJI and two senior-most judges like the formation of collegiums
- A just and fair roster must be one that is **divided subject-wise among judges according to their experience and expertise in those subjects.**
  - **Politically sensitive matters should be before the five senior judges of the Supreme Court.** Among them, the allocation of **individual cases must be by random computer allocation** not by the individual decision of any human.
  - For **other cases as well, if there is more than one judge dealing with a particular subject then cases belonging to that subject should be randomly allocated** among the various judges to whom that subject has been allocated.
- The bedrock of collegiums system is collective decision making. When appointments are a collective function, the allocation of important cases must be done collectively or at least in consultation with senior judges of the Supreme Court.
- Transparency in the allotment of cases and Supreme court functioning will only yield more authority to the Supreme Court as the supreme custodian of people's rights

**TOPIC: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.**

**Q) Critically Analyse the recent SC judgement over the issue of CJI being the master of the roster, with alone power to constitute benches. (250 Words)**

#### Background:-

- There have been many controversies in the recent months about the role and powers of CJI but Supreme Court passed a judgement recently declared the Chief Justice of India an "institution in himself" with "exclusive prerogative" to constitute Benches and allocate cases.

#### Points in favor of the judgement:-

- With respect to the administration of the court the chief justice is the "first among equals". The **chief justice**
  - **decides when a case may be listed for hearing**
  - Also decides which judges will hear it.
- The authority is entrusted to the Chief Justice because such an entrustment of functions is necessary for the efficient transaction of the administrative and judicial work of the court.
- There is **no constitutional foundation** on the basis of which the suggestion that senior judges being part of constitution benches can be accepted

- This would intrude into the exclusive duty and authority of the Chief Justice to constitute benches and to allocate cases to them.
- To suggest that one judge is more capable of deciding particular cases or that certain categories of cases should be assigned only to the senior-most among the judges of the Supreme Court has **no foundation in principle or precedent**.
- 1998 Supreme Court judgement held that the Chief Justice of a high court was the master of the court roster and said that it applied to the top court as well.

### Concerns:-

- **Anomalies found recently:-**
  - According to experts, in the issue related to present CJI **assignment of certain particularly sensitive cases to benches is without reference to established norms** and precedents.
  - **Benches are generally constituted by the Chief Justice considering the previous orders** and it is rare to exclude from reconstituted benches the Judges who had heard the matter earlier and are still available.
  - **There appears to be a pattern in distribution of such cases.** Matters involving Constitutional Authorities and certain issues relevant to political spectrum are being marked to certain Benches.
- In Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association v Union of India, the Second Judges Appointment Case:-
  - The Court has decided that opinion of the Chief Justice of India in appointments and transfers is not merely his individual opinion but an opinion formed collectively at the Apex level in the Judiciary
  - It has laid down that the Chief Justice must consult senior Judges, thus paving way for the Collegium system.
- **Choice of determining benches:-**
  - In US Supreme court the Chief justice has no choice in the question of which judges to hear the case because all the 9 judges sit together to hear cases.
  - Similarly in UK 12 judges often sit in the panels of five (or more) so chief justice choice is constrained which is not the case in India where benches are sat predominantly in benches of two.
- **Allocation of cases, if not made transparent, would lead to suspicion.**
  - More internal conflict in the court as the four Supreme court judges had publicly showed the apprehensions that cases were allotted to preferred Benches earlier.
- **Such concentration of power in the hands of one person violates the foundations of Supreme Court as "a court of equals". The Chief Justice of India is only one among equals, with the power to judiciously exercise an important role of constituting benches.**
- Indisciplined exercise of this authority can lead to a complete subversion of democracy.
- Collective decision-making was the bedrock that ushered in the collegium system in 1993. It laid the foundation of consultative procedures for appointment of judges. **When appointments are a collective function, the allocation of important cases must be done collectively or at least in consultation with senior judges of the Supreme Court.**

### Way forward:-

- Based on international experiences Supreme court can consider the following options:
  - A just and fair roster must be one that is divided subject-wise among judges according to their experience and expertise in those subjects must be decided.
  - Politically sensitive matters should be before the five senior judges of the Supreme Court. Among them, the allocation of individual cases must be by random computer allocation not by the individual decision of any human.

- For other cases as well, if there is more than one judge dealing with a particular subject then cases belonging to that subject should be randomly allocated among the various judges to whom that subject has been allocated.

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

***Q) Section 2(g) of the Aadhaar act gives unbridled powers of delegated legislation to the executive. Comment. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- The Supreme Court recently asked if this open-ended clause in the Aadhaar Act 'isn't excessive delegation' if the UIDAI is given the authority to add whatever attribute as biometric.

### **Section 2(g) of the Aadhar act:-**

- Section 2 (g) of the Act says biometric information means photograph, finger print, iris scan, or such other biological attributes of an individual as may be specified by regulations.

### **Why section 2 (g) is needed:-**

- Aadhaar is the best way to prevent money laundering and deliver subsidies and benefits so personal details are necessary.
- It will let the government find the details of Anti-Social elements of the Society as with biological attributes terrorists and other threatening actors can be found out.
- It will curb tax evasion
- Aadhaar has helped in curbing the leakages in the disbursement of benefits under welfare schemes.
- The legitimate State interest runs through the entire Aadhaar Act and it has helped in dissipation of subsidies, prevention of black money and money laundering by linking it with bank accounts.

### **How it gives unbridled powers of delegated legislation to the executive:-**

- The Section has raised concerns **about Right to Privacy of Citizens and Un-regulated Powers to Union Government to Collect Personal Information** including Sensitive Biometrics. The Act leaves it open to the government to add any biological attributes.
- People opposed to the scheme say that **it violated the doctrine of proportionality.**
- According to Supreme Court legislation was too open ended and **gave excessive power to the Unique Identification Authority of India.**
- One obvious concern is the confidentiality of whatever **personal information an individual may not wish to be public or accessible to others.**
- A bigger danger is that **Aadhaar is a tool of unprecedented power for mining and collating personal information.** Aadhaar enables the government to collect and collate all this personal information with **virtually no restrictions.**
- **Private agencies:-**
  - Their access to multiple databases is more restricted, but some of them do have access to a fair amount of personal information from their own databases.
  - To illustrate, Reliance Jio is in possession of identity information for more than 100 million Indians, **harvested from the CIDR when they authenticate themselves to buy a Jio SIM card.**

### **Conclusion:-**

- In the light of the rising cyber security threats and data protection being compromised at global level India needs to be cautious and take precautionary actions to ensure the trust of the public in the government is not lost.



**Q) Skill India mission, to be successful, needs a paradigm shift. Examine in light of Sharada Prasad Committee recommendations. (250 Words)**

**Background:-**

- India is one of the youngest nations. Its median age is 27.3. Skill development holds the key to India's future as a globally competitive economy and the demographic dividend it hopes to reap.
- For this Skill India mission success is the key as its primary goals are
  - To meet employers needs of skills
  - To prepare workers (young and old) for a decent livelihood

**Concerns with the Skill India mission in the current form:-**

- The government set a target of skilling 400 million persons by 2022, till 2016 it had only skilled 10 million people. At this pace, the 2022 target appears to be a far cry.
- India faces a severe shortage of trained workers 2.3 per cent of India's work force has formal skill training compared to 68 per cent in the UK.
- **The targets allocated to them were very high and without regard to any sectoral requirement.** Everybody was chasing numbers without providing employment to the youth or meeting sectoral industry needs.
- **CAG :-**
- The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) have pointed out **flaws in the design and operations of the NSDC and National Skill Development Fund which has resulted in falling short of skill development goals.**
- Majority of them also could not achieve the placement targets for the trained persons.
- There is a **huge ethics and accountability issue** if there is no credible assessment board and when there are too many sector skill councils, each trying to maximise their business.
- **The Sharada Prasad Committee findings:-**
  - The NSDC is responsible for poor implementation of the Standard Training Assessment and Reward (STAR) programme. **It highlighted that only 8.5 per cent of the persons trained were able to get employment.**
  - **NSDC has not been able to discharge its responsibilities for setting up sector skill councils (SSCs)** owing to lots of instances of serious conflict of interest and unethical practices.
    - Sector skill councils (SSCs) became a hotbed of crony capitalism that have tried to extract maximum benefit from public funds.
  - **India has not been able to develop a sound vocational education and training system in the last 70 years.** By providing focus on vocational training for only these disadvantaged categories, India has put a stigma on it
  - **Mindset issue:-**
    - It also has to do with the mindset of employers. They pay poor wages to skilled workers .If a skilled worker gets the same or marginally higher wages than the unskilled person, there is no incentive for him to get skilled.
    - It has also to do with the mindset of the academicians who think that vocational education will dilute value of education
  - **Government is conducting vocational training courses without any connect with the actual industry demand.** Most of them run short term courses with the result that they do not get employment.
  - **Absence of ownership of National Standards:-**
    - There are seventeen Ministries in addition to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship out of which only eight Ministries have developed their own course

curriculum. It has been happening for long, probably, in absence of any national standards.

- **Apprenticeship training is not an integral part of VET:-**
  - It has been conducted as a standalone activity in which ITI graduates as well as fresher from school system can participate. The result has been that it has not been well received either by the trainees or by the employers.
- **Inadequate Financing of VET System**
- **Inadequate Training Capacity in the country**
- **Poor quality outcomes:-**
  - One of the major challenges facing the vocational education/training system in the country is substandard quality leading to non-employment. Basic reason for this has been the absence of national standards and national credible assessment and certification system.
- Large School Drop-outs from schools
- **Huge shortage of qualified trainers** in the vocational education/training system. One cannot imagine quality training without a quality trainer
- **Providing Counselling, Guidance and Employment Services to trainees is as important as providing them skills.** This work was earlier done by the Employment Exchanges in the country. However, with time they have lost their relevance.
- **National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) meets its objectives through NSDC** but its governance structure is flawed. The NSDF is required to oversee the work of NSDC. NSDF board of trustees consists of the chairman of NSDC as its member.

#### **Measures needed to improve:-**

- **Incentivise employers to offer apprentice schemes** that ensure skill training programmes are in sync with industry's requirements.
- **The focus should be in strengthening reading, writing and arithmetic skills.** No skill development can succeed if most of the workforce lacks the foundation to pick up skills in a fast-changing world.
- **Indian government needs to conduct surveys**, once every five years, through the National Sample Survey Office to collect data on skill providers and skill gaps by sector. Such data can guide evidence-based policy-making.
- **Sharada Prasad committee recommendations:**
  - Create a sound and well defined National Vocational Education and Training System of the country which should ensure the following:-
    - At the secondary school level, the children should be sensitized about the dignity of labour, world of work and career options but vocational education and training should start only after 10 years of schooling which is the case in most of the developed world.
    - Every child should be given an option to go for higher vocational education and training.
  - Create National Labour Market Information System, National Occupational Standards, National Competency Standards, National Training Standards, National Accreditation Standards, National Assessment Standards and National Certification Standards and align them to the International Standards
  - **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship should become the owner of all National Vocational Education and Training Standards** and get them developed through intense industry involvement.
  - **Set up state of the art Vocational Education and Training Colleges to impart vocational education and training** with a clear objective of meeting the skills needs of the industry and providing employment to youth.
  - **In-plant apprenticeship training should be made an integral part of the Vocational Education and Training for all trainees.**

- The trainees must learn core skills in the company and devote at least one third of the total training period for this training. In most of the advanced countries, in-plant apprenticeship training is combined with the vocational school training.
- **The industry must come together to contribute towards a National Skill Development Fund**
- All diploma colleges and ITIs should be renamed as VETCs and their capacities should be enhanced to about 500 trainees per annum.
- **There should be one Skill Development Centre (SDC) in a cluster of about 10-12 villages, which would provide skills to the youth so that they can access employment opportunities in the local economy.**
  - The state of Gujarat has already set up a good number of such SDCs called Kaushal Vardhan Kendras which are doing excellent work.
- The two existing Acts i.e. Apprentices Act, 1961 and The Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959 should be repealed and a new Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA) should be enacted.

***Q) The government's plan to roll out an extensive social security plan for workers might prove to be a white elephant. Examine.(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- Recently government accepted the proposal on universal social security cover for 500 million workers, including those in the farm sector, seeking to start the process of putting in place a more secure welfare net.

### **Social security plan:-**

- It is a comprehensive social security system to provide retirement, health, old-age, disability, unemployment and maternity benefits to the 500 million workers.
- This will be the second mass-benefit social scheme after the National Health Protection Scheme.
- The plan is to implement the scheme in three phases over a 10-year period after which the government hopes to make it universal.
- **Three phases:-**
  - The first phase will see all workers getting the bare minimum coverage, which includes health security and retirement benefits.
  - The second phase will see unemployment benefits being added while other welfare measures could be launched in the third phase.
- The 500 million beneficiaries will be classified **into four tiers**.
  - The first will comprise the destitute and those below the poverty line who cannot contribute to security payments with the cost being entirely borne by the government through tax-based schemes.
  - Workers in the unorganised sector who have some contributory power but cannot be self-sufficient may be covered under subsidised schemes in the second tier.
  - The third tier will include those who either by themselves or jointly with their employers can make adequate contributions so as to be self-sufficient.

- The fourth tier will comprise the relatively affluent who can make their own provisions for meeting contingencies or risks as they arise.

### Why such a plan is necessary?

- Not only does the move extend a formal social safety net to the entire workforce, **it could also accelerate the formalization of the economy.**
- **With this move the government will have complete data on the Indian workforce.** This will tell about the job creation picture more reliably and offer retirement benefits to a large number of workers so far out of the social security net.
- **The dire state of finances of workers in the agricultural sector necessitates the provision of such relief.**
- According to a study submitted to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2016, only one percent of the workers have access to social security. The social security system at present caters more to the formal sector. However, even within the organised sector, only over ten percent avail social security in some form or the other. Existing schemes have failed to be inclusive because of various conditions and thresholds imposed to qualify for the plan.
- Seeding the unique identity numbers with Aadhaar will provide data on the entire workforce to the government. **This could help to quicken the process of formalisation and minimise the wastage of resources through the duplication of benefits.**



### Concerns:-

- **It only lightly touches upon the subject of unemployment.**
- **Opposition:-**
  - Households that employ domestic help are likely to show a lot of resistance because of the increase in cost that such a proposal imposes on them. Even small industries may face a similar issue with having to provide social security to all their workers.
- **Without proper labour reforms** the utility of the scheme would be of no use
- **Funding issues:-**
  - Funding such a plan is impossible without a complete revamp of India's current system of budgets.
- **There are already other programmes :-**
  - **Health benefits for workers will for instance get subsumed in the ambitious National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS)** that will be available to 10 crore households, so there is no need to provide for it separately.

### Way forward:-

- In addition to ensuring that workers get a fair wage, the provision of social security also entails actions such as **investing in the skill and training of workers to improve their marketability. A move of this nature and magnitude is therefore necessary.**
- Labour reforms must be linked to the ease of doing business, creating a habitat where jobs can be fostered. Reforms must be linked to worker benefits, while simultaneously easing the compliance burden on small and medium enterprises. **The labour law must be rationalised by defining minimum wages and linking them to inflation.**

- **MGNREGA should be restructured** and linked to apprenticeship programmes in industry and agriculture.

***Q) Death penalty for cases of child rape is unwarranted, especially for a country like India. Discuss, in the light of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- POCSO and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (CLAA) changed the sentencing regime for sexual offences by introducing mandatory minimum sentences. Brutal rapes in India have not decreased despite enforcement of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 which is a piece of legislation which prescribes the death penalty and life imprisonment for sexual assaults

### **Criminal law amendment ordinance 2018:-**

- The Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 2018, amends Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Indian Evidence Act and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

### **Salient Features of the Ordinance:-**

- Minimum Punishment for Rape made Ten Years
- Minimum punishment of twenty years to a person committing rape on a woman aged below 16. Minimum Punishment of 20 years rigorous imprisonment and maximum
- Death penalty/Life Imprisonment for committing rape on a girl aged below 12.
- Fine imposed shall be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses and rehabilitation of the victim
- Police officer committing rape anywhere shall be awarded rigorous imprisonment of minimum ten years.
- Investigation in rape cases to be completed within two months.
- No Anticipatory bail can be granted to a person accused of rape of girls of age less than sixteen years.
- Appeals in rape cases to be disposed within six months.

### **But why death penalty is not the solution:-**

- **Death penalty has never been a deterrent against any sort of crime.** There is little empirical evidence to show that those about to commit a capital offence would stop themselves merely out of the fear of being hanged.
- **Even S. Verma committee decided against recommending the death penalty for rape.** It rightly took into account the possibility of awarding life sentences without remission for aggravated sexual assault.
- **Further, there is a legitimate concern that the country's judicial system has not been consistent in awarding the death penalty.** It will be especially wrong to force judges to compare the relative 'merits' of rape victims based on their age and choose between death sentence and life.
- The Law Commission, while recommending abolition of the death penalty, except in terrorism-related cases, observed that it **is difficult to operate the 'rarest of rare cases' principle without a hint of arbitrariness.**

- **Provision of death penalty in rape cases will only make matters worse by slowing the administration of justice.** Besides, when victim is the sole witness, as in most sexual assault cases, it will induce **murder of rape victims by the perpetrators** of the crime to destroy the evidence.
- **Even when awarded death penalty the accused do not have remorse for their actions** for instance documentary showing the accused blaming victim itself in Nirbhaya case etc
- The following issues need to be looked into instead of enforcing death penalty for effective implementation of laws like POSCO:-
  - The appalling lack of infrastructure and manpower in the criminal justice system.
  - Most districts continue to try cases of child sexual abuse in regular sessions courts, designated as special courts for the sake of compliance
  - Investigations are regularly botched up by an understaffed, poorly trained, overburdened police force which has little to no forensic support. These are not addressed by the ordinance.
  - The fact that the ordinance reduces the time given to the police to file a chargesheet, and to the court to decide appeals against sentencing, **displays a complete lack of understanding about the issues on the ground.**
  - Given the unavailability or unreliability of age-related documents in most parts of the country, **reliance is placed on ossification tests to prove the age of the victim in cases under the POCSO.**

#### How to reduce child rapes:-

- Instead of death penalty, a **combination of heavy financial penalty, life imprisonment with no provision of parole** and prompt delivery of justice through fast track courts can do the job effectively.
- **Awareness is one of the most powerful weapons against child abuse.** Training modules for different children age groups need to be created which teachers can use to impart awareness on these issues to children in school.
  - Such initiatives need the support of civil society and strong voices across justice, education, child welfare and institutions.
- Activists called for more comprehensive reforms, arguing that the **laws and the support system for children should be better integrated.**
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act is already there and some new amendments are also cleared in the cabinet. But **many police and medical personnel still need to be sensitized on it.**
- Making concerted efforts to change the way society raises its sons and daughters.

*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) The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 in its current form has many procedural and legal infirmities. Examine the statement in light of the Supreme Court verdict in Shayara Bano case. (250 Words)**

#### Background:-

- The recent Supreme Court's judgment in the Shayara Bano case held that the practice of talaq-e-biddat (or triple talaq) unconstitutional. This was hailed as a step towards the emancipation of Muslim women and a win in the war against institutional remnants of gender inequality.
- After the judgement government passed Muslim protection Bill in Lok Sabha but there have been criticism about the legal and procedural aspects of the bill.

### **Muslim women bill 2017 failed to be in sync with Supreme Court judgement:-**

- **Legal provisions:-**
  - The Supreme Court had set aside the validity of instant talaq (talaq-e-biddat), **thus rendering its pronouncement ineffective in dissolving a marriage** under Article 141. **But the bill makes the pronouncement punishable with a three-year imprisonment** such an arbitrary exercise of legislative power is liable to be judicially reviewed and struck down for violating the principles of natural justice and rule of law.
  - The question arises of how after rendering talaq-e-biddat inoperative in Section 3, its pronouncement can be considered a cognisable and non-bailable offence in Sections 4 and 7.
  - **Another contradiction is found in Sections 5 and 6 which discuss post-divorce issues such as a "subsistence allowance"** for the woman upon whom instant talaq "is pronounced" and the "custody of her minor children" as if her marriage is dissolved by the mere pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat.
  - It negates the recent Supreme Court ruling by unwittingly favouring a sense of medieval view that the pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat breaks the marriage, and, therefore, needs to be criminalised.
  - The pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat cannot be brought under the definition of emotional abuse mentioned in Section 3 of the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA)**. This view is as legally untenable.
  - That part of the Bill which re-declares triple talaq to be illegal and void is largely surplus since the apex court has already done so under articles 141 and 142.
  - The **present Bill does not provide her any additional benefits** in terms of her rights in marriage and divorce which were already promised under Crpc and PWDVA.
  - The **Bill does not add anything new to the already existing maintenance responsibilities** of the husband covered under various Acts.
  - No country has criminalised triple talaq. It has been made illegal and void. For instance, in Algeria, talaq pronounced outside court is not considered legal.
  - The most significant ground on which the triple talaq Bill fails the test of constitutionality is found in Article 21 which states that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
  - **The Bill does not uphold previous supreme court judgements** like Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India(1978), Puttaswamy v. Union of India(2017) . the procedure imposing penal imprisonment for talaq-e-biddat in the proposed Bill is just unfair and unreasonable.
  - **Bill also constitutes unwarranted punitive deprivation of personal liberty of Article 19**, especially clauses 19(1)d and 19(1)g. Thus, if a man is unjustifiably jailed under the proposed law even for a few weeks, he will be denied of these rights for that period.
- **Procedural infirmities:-**
  - Furthermore, since the present Bill says that triple talaq is cognizable and non-bailable, married Muslim man become vulnerable target as policemen can arrest and investigate the accused with or without the complaint from wife or any other person.
  - It would be difficult for a woman to prove that the man has given her triple talaq in one sitting.
  - Divorce is not a crime. Not fulfilling monetary responsibilities as the law obligates of divorced wife and children or dependents, in case they are unable to maintain themselves is considered as

an offence only after due process of law. **The fact is there are existing laws that have already covered the issue.**

- **Arresting a man for triple talaq in one instance can actually destroy families.** As triple talaq in one instance is illegal, the marriage subsists and it would be the responsibility of the man to maintain his family while utterance of triple talaq will land him in jail for upto 3 years.
  - The dependents would be left to fend for themselves as the man behind the bars won't be in a position to pay for the family expenses.
- Because of the bill innocent men could be forced to undergo the aforementioned humiliating punishments reserved for cognisable and non-bailable offences.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- In the light of additional suggestions given government needs to consult multiple stakeholders and then pass the bill

***Q) Despite a plethora of laws, policies, mechanisms and programmes in place, children in India suffer from a lot of disabilities and problems. Discuss. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Children represents 39% of total population of India and are the future of the country but the amount of issues they are facing are rampant. So there is a need for concentrating on child rights and child protection.

#### **Laws, policies, mechanisms and programmes related to children in India:-**

- **Constitutional provisions:-**
  - Article 14, 15, 21, 21 A, 23, 24 of fundamental rights provide rights to children
  - The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act was notified on 2002, making free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years.
  - **Directive Principles**
    - Article 39(e) and (f), 45, 47, Article 243G read with Schedule 11 – provide for institutionalization of child care by seeking to entrust programmes of Women and Child Development to Panchayat, apart from education, family welfare, health and sanitation and other items with a bearing on the welfare of children.
- **Laws:-**
  - Prohibition of child marriage act
  - Right to education act
  - Child labour act
  - Juvenile justice act
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, the Criminal Law (amendment) Act 2013, the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1972 were formulated to effectively address the heinous crimes of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children
- **Policies and mechanisms:-**
  - **National policy on children**
    - The policy affirmed that survival, health, nutrition, development, education, protection and participation are the undeniable rights of every child and are the key priorities of the policy.
- **National Policy on Early Childhood care and Education**



- - The policy lays down the way forward for a comprehensive approach towards ensuring a sound foundation for survival, growth and development of child with focus on care and early learning of every child.
- A landmark judgment on child rights was pronounced by the Supreme Court of India, which ruled that a man is guilty of committing rape if he engages in sexual intercourse with his wife who is aged between 15 and 18.
- **Programmes:-**
  - 
  - **The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme** is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India and represents one of the world's largest programmes for Early Childhood Development.
    - This Scheme has improved over the years and restructured to address the emerging issues and demands of the time, and has evolved as the foremost tool of to break the vicious circle of child morbidity and mortality along with other objectives.
  - Mid day meal scheme, Sarva shiksha abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao etc.
  - **National Health Mission**
    - The child health programme under the National Health Mission (NHM) comprehensively integrates interventions that improve child survival and addresses factors contributing to infant and under-five mortality.

#### **Where are these laws, mechanisms failing:-**

- **Magnitude of child sexual abuse is extraordinarily high (especially within school premises in the recent past) since the laws are not very stringent.**
- **Child labour:-**
  - lack of effective labour inspections in the informal economy.
  - absence of national legislation to give effect to global conventions on the employment of children in hazardous industries, as well as on the minimum age of work.
  - goal to eradicate child labour by 2025 seems elusive
- **Child education:-**
  - More focus on rote learning is affecting the creativity in children. The laws focus mostly on enrolment but not on quality of the education.
- Despite health initiatives India has largest number of **malnourished children** in the world.

#### **Problems faced by children:-**

- **Child sexual abuse** is an under-reported offence in India and has reached epidemic proportions.
- **Child labour:-**
  - Around 71% of working children are concentrated in the agriculture sector, with 69% of them undertaking unpaid work in family units.
- **Child marriage** is a social evil that adversely affects the physical and mental health of children, denies them opportunities for education and self-advancement, infringes on their bodily autonomy and deprives them of any role in deciding on many aspects of their lives.
- Thousands of children are being **trafficked** from India's remote rural areas and sold into work in cities, often as domestic staff for wealthy families. Between 2011 and 2013, more than 10,500 children were registered as missing from the central state of Chhattisgarh, one of India's poorest states.
- **Disabilities:-**
  - In the general school curriculum, there is nothing about education for children with special needs.
  - 2014 data:-

- India has 20.42 lakh disabled children aged between 0 and 6 years. Around 71% of them – 14.52 lakh children are in rural areas. There are 5.9 lakh disabled children in cities.
- **Mental health of children, problems with Mother's health leading to malnutrition in children, caste discrimination, begging, drug abuse, corporal punishment etc are other issues.**
- **Female foeticide and female infanticide leading to adverse child sex ratio**
- **Children are vulnerable to pornographic abuse.**

#### **Way forward:-**

- **Develop Human Resources for Child Protection – focusing on mid-level cadres:**
  - Facilitate development of a framework for Child Protection social workforce development
  - Develop core trainer groups in states
  - Develop standardized training modules
- **Improve quality of Child Protection Services**
  - Set standards for services through Standard Operating Procedures, guidelines, pilot models of functional structures like Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU), Special Courts etc
  - Enhance monitoring and supervision of ICPS and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) through the judiciary and Commissions for Protection of Child Rights
  - Strengthen medical sector's capacity to respond to violence against children
- **Community-based protection mechanisms**
  - Support formation and strengthening of community based structures from village, block and district level
  - Support the synergy of structures with other community structures like Panchayati Raj Institutions, School Management Committees etc.
  - Build referral linkages with child protection services
  - Develop safe communities model in two cities
- **Strengthen data systems for Child Protection**
  - Create prototype and roll out on ICPS scorecard to advocate for greater investment in the quality of Child Protection Management Information Systems (CPMIS)
  - Generate, analyze and use data to advocate for policies and programmes to strengthen child protection systems
- **International lessons:-**
  - One of the focal reasons as to why child rapes and other assaults are comparatively less aboard is primarily because of the norms that are affixed in the employment process.
    - An educational institution demands a Federal Check Certificate from prospective employees in the United States of America.
    - Obtaining an International Child Protection Certificate, which is nothing but a criminal record check for people looking to work with children is made mandatory in the United Kingdom.
  - Such practices must also be adopted in India and the Government of India must take the sole responsibility of conducting such background checks on individuals and issue certificates which must characteristically certify such a prospective employee.
- The key to successful implementation of POCSO lies in having **infrastructure of trained body of investigators, Public Prosecutors and Special Courts** which requires investment by state governments and the commitment.

***Q) Increasing incidents of rape crime is not necessarily due to lacunae in law but due to poor implementation of law. Critically examine.(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- Sexual abuse is traumatising for anyone who goes through it, but for a child, the scars can run much deeper as they are inflicted at a younger age, in the formative years.
- India ranks among the top five countries with the highest rate of child sexual abuse. A 2013 report 'India's Hell Holes: Child Sexual Assault in Juvenile Justice Homes' by the Asian Centre for Human Rights explained the epidemic proportions of this problem, with over 48,000 child rape cases recorded between 2001 to 2011. There was a 336% increase in child rape cases during this time period.

### **Why rape crime is still rampant?**

- **According to NCRB data for 2015, in 94.8% cases of rape registered under POCSO, the perpetrator was known to the victim.** Even so, cases where people related to the children are involved, a completely different kind of handholding and support is required.
- **The reluctance on the part of the victim not to confide to anyone is a major reason** for the perpetrator roaming free to do it again with another child.
- **Children who bravely complain of sexual abuse are often dismissed or ignored** by the police, medical staff and other authorities
- **The root of the problem lies in an unsupportive societal attitude** towards rape victims, a deficient police and judicial system that result in lower conviction rate (26 per cent of all registered cases as per National Crime Records Bureau).
- The **stigma associated with sex education** leads to parents not educating children about sexual advances or threats, which could protect them from abuse.
- **Technology misuse:-**
  - Children are at a higher risk due to misuse of technology, and the lack of proper mechanisms to control travelling child sex offenders
  - Technology led to increase the network of offenders simply because it is easier to access and exchange child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online

### **POCSO act :-**

- The POCSO Act was enacted in 2012 to protect children from sexual assault, harassment and pornography.
- The Act also mandated setting up of special courts, where such cases can be tried expeditiously.
- Every stage of the judicial process was intended to be child friendly something that hasn't exactly happened.
- Recently death penalty for child sexual abuse under 12 years is cleared by cabinet

### **Success:-**

- **Ensures protection of the child:-**
  - Law says expressly that courts must **have a child-friendly atmosphere and the victim is not to be exposed to the accused** at any time, including during the recording of evidence, though the accused can hear the child's statement.
  - Courts are using video-conferencing facilities, single-visibility mirrors or curtains while the victim is deposing.
- **POCSO provides for relief and rehabilitation as soon as the complaint is made to the Special Juvenile Police Unit** or the local police, who are required to make immediate arrangements for care and protection. The intent to commit an offence, as defined under POCSO, is also punishable, besides abetment of sexual abuse against a child.

- **Special emphasis has been placed on ensuring the speedy disposal of trials in special children's courts** as well as following of special procedures to keep the accused away from the child at the time of testifying.
- **It included almost all types of physical abuse.**

#### **Issues involved in implementation:-**

- For monitoring and implementation of the provisions of POCSO, the Act enjoins that the **National Commission and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights**. Such Commissions are either only partially-functional or effectively non-functional.
- **Appointing support persons:-**
  - There is a provision of appointing support persons to help the victims. This appointment has to be done by the Child Welfare Committee. This is not implemented effectively.
- **Lack of communication:-**
  - Communication at every stage with the victim is crucial, and this is given least importance. Infrastructure and a child-friendly environment will be of no use if there is lack of sensitivity in communication.
- **Recording child's statement:-**
  - The law also says the child's statement should be recorded at a place where he/she usually resides or at the place of his/her choice, and as far as practicable by a woman police officer not below the rank of sub-inspector. This provision is often not followed
- **Victim turns hostile**
  - It is a problem in most cases. Most victims while recording their statement under CrPC Section 164, give one version but during their testimony before court, they change their statement.
  - A report by the National Law School Bangalore, which analysed 667 judgments between 2013 and 2015, shed light on this phenomenon. **It stated that alleged victims turned hostile in 67.5% cases, and testified against the accused in only 26.7% cases.**
  - Once a POCSO case is filed, the long winded proceedings give the accused ample time to try and pressure the victims or their families to backtrack on their complaints.
  - The situation is even more complicated when the accused is a family member. In such cases, the conviction rate drops even further.
  - Majority of these victims are from the lower economic strata, so they are more vulnerable to pressure.
- **Low conviction rate:-**
  - While the number of cases reported under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has increased since the law came into effect in 2012, the conviction rate remains abysmally low.
- Other intersectionalities of caste and class, socio-economic conditions, physical and/or mental disability which make some child sexual abuse victims more vulnerable
- **Death penalty alone does not do justice as :-**
  - Death penalty has never been a deterrent against any sort of crime. There is little empirical evidence to show that those about to commit a capital offence would stop themselves merely out of the fear of being hanged.
  - Even S. Verma committee decided against recommending the death penalty for rape
- **Lack of infrastructure:-**
  - Under the Act, courts hearing POCSO cases are supposed to have certain infrastructure. But there are several instances where the available amenities were inadequate

#### **Measures needed are :-**

- **Victims turning hostile :-**
  - The need to be separated from the family in cases where the alleged perpetrator is a family member.

- **There needs to be clear coordination between victims and prosecutors.**
- The **process can be shortened** so that prosecutors do not get enough time to take the victim on their side.
- **More facilities and resources are needed** for the prosecution department and also there ought to be special courts to exclusively look after POCSO cases, many courts hear other cases as well.
- **Police investigation needs to be efficient.**
- **Delay in getting forensic reports must be avoided** as these reports become even more important when cases involve mentally disabled children. The pendency rate has reduced to 50 per cent.
  - Moreover, the latest method for DNA testing must be used in deciding cases.
- There is huge pendency of the cases in the POCSO court and it is nearly impossible for the judge to dispose them quickly. For this, **the rationalisation of work should be considered by the High Court**, which should set a benchmark that judges deal with only this number of cases.
- There should be a **committee to look for the most vulnerable places** from where most cases are coming.
  - Accordingly, **there should be awareness, education, and policing.**
- Experts recommended that the state **should institute specialists and interpreters who can help communicate with these children** and do the required handholding.
- **Software professionals can develop apps for tracking the traffickers and child sexual abuse offenders. Business houses should prioritise protection of children as part of the corporate social responsibility.**

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

***Q) Despite swift improvements in literacy levels, quality of education and learning outcomes have not improved significantly. In the light of above statement, critically analyse the key proposals of SSA-2 project? What are the various impediments faced by govt and other stakeholders, in improving the quality of education. Discuss. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- According to the World Development Report 2018 “Learning to Realise Education’s Promise”, India ranks second from the bottom after Malawi in a list of 12 countries where some Grade 2 students were found to be unable to read a single word from a short text.
- India also tops the report’s list of seven countries in which some Grade 2 students could not calculate simple two-digit subtractions shows the apathy of the quality in Indian education.

### **SSA-2 project and its proposals:-**

- Recently cabinet has approved a slew of reforms for school education in the country, which could be considered as the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-2 project.**
- As per this, **the Sarva shiksha abhiyan, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and teacher training would be integrated into a single scheme from Classes I to XII.**
  - The integrated scheme will be in place from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2020, with an estimated allocation of ₹75,000-crore over the period, a 20% increase over the current allocation.
  - **It aims to support the States in universalising access to school education from pre-nursery to Class 12 across the country.**
- **The government would focus on educationally backward districts, disabled students and women.**

- **There would be a shift to digital blackboards from Class 9 to college education in the next five years.**
- The government was also looking at **basing education on learning outcomes and will provide a 20% incentive to the States for a learning-outcome based education.**
- **Skill courses** which are now functional from Class 9 to Class 12 would begin from Class 6 in future. This was **aimed at enhancing the employability of students.**
- **Demerits:-**
  - Every level of education be it primary, secondary etc have their unique issues and intricacies to be dealt with. Combining the multiple schemes can dilute these.
  - The basic lack of infrastructure in schools is not effectively considered.
  - Budgetary allocation for education is still abysmal but the targets of this project are huge .So can lead to expenditure overlays.

#### **Various impediments in improving quality of education:-**

- **Government:-**
  - The inexorable shift to private school education along with the Right to Education Act represents a failure of the public-school system. Government are the last choice of parents to send their children to.
  - **A large number of government schools do not have full-time headmasters/principals. The lack of effective leadership has contributed to indiscipline among teachers** leading to declining academic standards
  - Total educational outlays have consistently fallen short of that mark.
- **Teachers:-**
  - Teacher shortages, absenteeism, corruption in recruitment and transfers
  - Lack a culture of accountability for performance for teachers as teacher absenteeism continues to plague the system,
- **Students:-**
  - There has been sharp deterioration in abilities in reading, writing and other comprehensive skills.
  - Inefficient teaching methods, such as rote learning, which focuses on memorisation as opposed to critical reasoning, are still widespread at the primary and secondary school level.
- **Parents:-**
  - Focus mostly on examinations and results rather than learning.

#### **Way forward:-**

- Public-school system must be swiftly and radically revamped.
- Teacher training institutions, of which the District Institutes of Education and Training constitute needs to be reformed .
- **Centre has also approved an increase in the outlay for making educational loans interest-free for students with modest financial means for studying in universities and colleges charging high fees. The interest subsidy will last till one year of their passing out of college. This needs to be implemented.**
  - Ten-lakh students will get educational loans up to Rs. 7.5-lakh in the next three years. Students with an income below Rs. 4.5-lakh (per annum) will be eligible for it

#### **Conclusion:-**

- India continues to have the largest number of young people anywhere. By ensuring they get a world-class education over the next few decades, India will be well on its way towards becoming a developed nation sooner than expected.

***Q) Our focus on rankings has led us to ignore the deeper malaise that plagues Indian universities. Discuss. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- All over the globe, **academic institutions mature with time, and hence, they last hundreds of years with growing grace but this is not the case in India.** This brings to notice the **issues and challenges being faced by universities in India.**
- Focus on rankings can help to reform and modernise higher education, encouraging universities to professionalise services and management, and improve the quality of their programmes and facilities for students and faculty.

**Rankings are necessary because:-**

- Rankings will bring transparency to the education system as the institutes are funded by the public. It will also increase the level of competition among them.
- Idea behind these rankings is to promote quality education and encourage competition to make the institutes perform better and set new benchmarks of performance.

**Problems with focusing only on rankings:-**

- Rankings **have placed a new premium on status and reputation**, with a strong **bias towards long-established and well-endowed institutions.**
- **Rankings perpetuate a single definition of quality at a time when higher education institutions, and their missions, are diversifying.** By focusing primarily on research intensity, other dimensions, such as teaching and learning, community engagement, innovation and social and economic impact are ignored.
- **In addition, higher education institutions are complex organisations with strengths and weaknesses across various departments and activities.** Excellence can be defined differently depending upon the criteria or indicators/weightings which are used. By aggregating the score across the various indicators, rankings reduce the complexity of higher education to a single digit score, and exaggerate differences.
- If the government were to allocate funds based on this list any time soon, **institutions would receive and lose funding so rapidly** that they would have to operate in a state of semi-emergency all the time.
- Some public institutions do not take part of the rankings as well.
- **There is no methodology to take into account the innovative potential of this patents in the rankings** as only number of research papers and patents are accounted to. So there is more focus on output orientation in the rankings.
- **Every country's education system is different** so the local intricacies are neglected international rankings.
- Although Indian universities do not feature in the top universities in the world **the quality of education is improving slowly.**

**Problems in Indian universities:-**

- Since Independence Indian focus on expanding the higher education sector has been to provide access. **This has led to a situation where research and scholarship have been neglected.**
- Also the infrastructure of many universities is abysmal.
- Governments and their regulators have also weakened the abilities of universities by
- **Unless the government spending on higher education doubles**, India's institutions and students therein will remain impoverished.
- **Teaching quality is bad.**
- **Issues with the latest move to provide graded autonomy to institutions**

- With this move, the institutions will have to generate their own funds for many of the freedoms they are being granted
- So, they would be subject to the dictates of the market. Consequently, professional courses may get money but not the core social sciences or sciences
- There would be pressure to move towards paying courses
- Those not catering to the markets would be marginalised and the generation of the socially relevant knowledge would decline

#### **Way forward:-**

- A systematic, coherent, and transparent approach is needed to determine the suitability of universities to pursue objectives of excellence.
- The scrutiny of universities before starting programmes or schools should come down, as they are expected to assume greater responsibility in having self-regulating mechanisms and internal quality assurance systems.
- Taking **inspiration from the Project 5-100 initiative**, India could consider empowering 50 of its top universities in every possible manner to seek global excellence.
- RUSA can prove be a real game changer for higher education in the country
- Government can establish **all India educational services** which was recommended by the Subramanian committee.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- Governments should aim to develop a diverse range of universities each with specialist world-class expertise, to attract high-achieving students and high-skilled labour. Building such a world-class higher education system would enable countries to mobilise and leverage the potential of the whole system for the benefit of society at large.

***Q) There is an urgent need to establish an authority, on lines of TRAI, NGT, to curb the unethical practices prevalent in India's private healthcare sector. Critically analyze. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- In the recent years private healthcare sector is under intense scrutiny. Long list of malpractices, violation of the protocol for diagnosis and medical duties, overcharging and exploitation by big hospitals, negligence, and ethical violations were reported at private hospitals across India.
- **Lack of regulation has continued over the years even as more private health establishments have been set up**, which is particularly troubling in a country where there is low penetration of medical insurance and more than 60% of healthcare expenditure comes out of the patients pockets

#### **Yes, a regulatory authority is necessary because:-**

- The report published by the National Pharmaceutical Price Authority (NPPA), which analysed patient bills from four prominent private hospitals of the National Capital Region, highlights that the **government measure to protect common man from the big corporate hospitals is simply not working**.
- Patients and health groups asserted that the unethical practices of private hospitals are a direct outcome of the regulatory vacuum which allows them to cash in on vulnerability of patients.
- Most recently, **the Maharashtra FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has sent to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority** a report on startling overpricing of medical devices by leading hospitals.
- Projections by global market research analyst Frost & Sullivan show that the worth of private healthcare industry is expected to reach US \$280 billion in 2020 from the current \$45 billion. So proper regulation is necessary.



- **A regulatory authority can ensure the following:-**
  - **Doctors and hospitals do not prefer prescribing and dispensing non-scheduled branded medicines instead of scheduled medicine.**
  - The profit margins in the non-scheduled devices used in the three cases (syringes, cannula and catheters) are exorbitant and clearly a case of unethical profiteering in a failed market system. This will be checked.
- **Problems with clinical establishment act:-**
  - **Doctors, especially those associated with private clinics and hospitals, are dictating the terms of Clinical establishment act** to such an extent that states are succumbing to the pressure .
  - Even states like Karnataka and West Bengal that took their own initiative to regulate the private healthcare sector are concerned. Despite Karnataka was the first state to introduce such a law even before CEA **not a single case has been registered under it in the past 10 years.**
- **Problems with other laws and institutions:-**
  - **Every state has a Nursing Homes Act, drawn up around the 1950s, which not at all attuned to the kind of healthcare institutions in the country** The Acts require all establishments to be registered and their licences can be cancelled, but there are no provisions on malpractice or overbilling and so on.
  - **The Medical Council of India is supposed to set standards but it only registers doctors on the medical register of India.**
  - State medical councils enrol doctors on state medical registers. Very rarely does the council resort to suspending a licence of a doctor.
- There is virtually no oversight of doctors or deficient or unethical treatment by the national or state medical councils.

#### **Concerns:-**

- Having a central regulator alone will not improve public healthcare system which is still abysmal in India and is one of the reasons for people to depend on private hospitals.
- Several politicians have invested in private healthcare industry so they don't want these hospitals to be regulated.
- **Pricing regulation can lead to substandard delivery.**
- **Weakened public sector would further reduce the government's ability to regulate the private sector**
- Enforcement is a problem **because health is a state subject**

#### **Way forward:-**

- **Implement CEA provisions strictly:-**
  - For instance, under the law, a health establishment should have sufficient sitting space, provision for proper waste management and must adhere to certain set standards if they have facilities like operation theatre and labour room.
  - In case of any discrepancy, the law allows patients or their kin to lodge complaints upon which action will be taken against the establishment.
  - CEA also talks about maintaining data related to patients.
  - CEA, if implemented in letter and spirit, can go a long way in checking corruption in the healthcare industry.
- **The regulatory body has to be high-powered**, politically independent and represent all sections of stakeholders, particularly patients and NGOs active in the field.
- The regulator should insist on transparency i.e., hospitals need to clearly publicise their rates for standard treatments and procedures.
  - Also, there should be normative rates for different types of hospitals as not all private hospitals are located in costly cities.

- **The foremost job of regulators is to ensure that doctors are not paid commissions for referring patients** to diagnostic centres or bringing them to hospitals.
- **Need medical tribunals starting with an ombudsman at the sub-district level, a district forum, a state forum and a national forum.** They can look into these specific cases of malpractice, negligence, apathy and overbilling.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- Achieving high standards in healthcare and empowerment of patients is not possible without standard-setting and strong regulation

***Q) Incidents of mass copying and question paper leaks represent the deep rooted malaise that affects our education system. Discuss how technology can be exploited to prevent such incidents. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- The challenge of preserving the sanctity of major public examinations is acquiring gargantuan proportions as leak of examination papers has become a recurrent phenomena and is a sign of a growing malaise in society.

#### **Challenges with technology:-**

- Technology will require significant investments by both government and the private sectors and it may take a few years to implement the same across the country
- Other issues like
  - Setting up of servers
  - Installation of software
  - Usage of network connectivity in the colleges' etc need to be looked into.
- With lakhs of students taking examinations every year implementing the online option would not be easy and the costs would also be a concern.

#### **But Technology use is the right decision to bring transparency in the examination system:-**

- Paper leaks can happen at three stages – paper setting, paper printing and paper distribution.
  - For paper setting itself, there should be multiple question papers which are finalised by a computerised programme selecting from a database of questions contributed by teachers.
  - For the second stage of printing, the work should be handed over to only a few trustworthy people and the punishment should be severe.
- When examination centres are properly embedded with IT-based equipment **it will translate into high bandwidth and internet-linked video cameras that transmit live images to a central monitoring centre** and also store recordings on remote and secure servers.
- **It will instill a sense of fear for the potentially errant examinee** that his/her examination may be declared null and void at any time in the future based on the video recordings.
- These monitoring systems should also be linked with proctoring teams that can be dispatched at short notice.
- **Well-crafted artificial intelligence-based computer systems can be put in place** to produce effortlessly an intelligent and balanced question paper just a few hours before an examination. It can then be transmitted in an encrypted format by email to individual examination centres. Each of these centres must have high-speed printers to produce the physical papers. This will overcome the leakage of question paper during transportation and printing.
- **There should be a well-defined time duration for question paper upload**, secret key delivery and question paper printing.
- **Another alternative to eliminate printing is to have a large screen in each room** on which the entire question paper can be projected..

- **The Automated Integrated Examination System (AIES) is need of the hour with appropriate security measures:-**
  - If effective measures and architecture are introduced in the Indian University examination system, it will go a long way to instill efficiency in the examination system and will be able to check the examination malpractices and fraudulent acts associated with the management of examination system.
  - Centralised database will help in reducing the redundancy in database in addition to maintaining consistency, integrity and security of data.
- **Remote Proctoring**
  - Remote Proctoring process is the method to invigilate remote candidate with the help of technology. Technology can simplify the process with the help of remote invigilation and proctoring.
- To keep the paper leaks in check, CBSE officials should be deployed at every centre under CCTV camera surveillance

**Other initiatives that can help in having effective examination system :-**

- Making more sets of question papers restructuring the pattern of papers to make them more applied knowledge-based rather than rote memory-based, being proactive and taking action instantly.
- Man educational institutions with highly competent individuals of integrity, and to provide institutions with a degree of freedom and autonomy. .
- Responsibility and accountability should be fixed. Preventive measures will help restore the faith of innocent students.
- There must be some control of the government over private coaching centres. There is a need to break the nexus between officials and coaching centres.

***Q) Discuss how Ayushman Bharat will transform Indian healthcare system by creating a robust primary healthcare system and provide a secured access to secondary and tertiary healthcare. Also, discuss the challenges involved in implementation of the scheme. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- India is concerned with many health issues be it malnutrition, infant mortality, rising non communicable diseases, growing number of deaths due to cancer etc. The national health protection scheme or the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme is the step in the right direction which can give impetus to healthcare in India.

**Benefits:-**

- Aims to roll out comprehensive **primary health care with Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)** serving as the people-centric nuclei. A nationwide network of 1.5 lakh HWCs will be created by transforming the existing sub-centres and primary health-care centres by 2022. This will constitute the very foundation of New India's health care system. **HWCs will help unleash a people's movement for a healthy India.**
- **Aims to provide health cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year for hospitalisation in secondary and tertiary care facilities.**
  - In one go, 40% of people, neonates to young and old, will have access to facility care for almost all the medical and surgical conditions that could occur in a lifetime.
  - The programme will cover half a billion people and would align with what the State governments are doing already, with significant resources coming from the Centre.
  - Many State governments would extend the benefits to additional beneficiaries through their own resources.

- This mission **enables increased access to in-patient health care for the poor and lower middle class**. The access to health care is cashless and nationally portable.
- It **spurs increased investment in health and generate lakhs of jobs, especially for women**, and will be a driver of development and growth. It is a turning point for the health sector.
- The scheme will replace Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana under which, the government provided Rs.30,000 annually for healthcare. Under NHPS, Rs.30,000 is increased to Rs. 5 lakhs.
- Will bring healthcare system closer to the homes of people.
- The new program would be a vast expansion of health coverage, allowing people to visit the country's many private hospitals for needs as varied as cancer treatment and knee replacements.

#### **Challenges:-**

- The amount of Rs 5 lakh per family is a massive and unexpected hike from the existing fund of Rs 1 lakh per family. This amount is 17 times bigger than the RSBY scheme and will cover 40% of India's population.
- Though it improved access to health care, **it did not reduce out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE), catastrophic health expenditure or health payment-induced poverty**.
- The NHPS addresses those concerns by sharply raising the coverage cap, but shares with the RSBY the weakness of **not covering outpatient care which accounts for the largest fraction of OOPE**.
- **Universal health insurance through private hospitals has not worked for the poor anywhere.** Biggest beneficiaries are the private hospitals and insurance companies. **There is no substitute for public health care.**
- The government's proposals do little to prevent poor health in the first place. India is plagued by increasing levels of water and air pollution, some of it worsened by pro-business policies. Malnutrition, poor sanitation and lack of proper housing also remain major problems.
- **Earlier programme failures cast new doubts:-**
  - In its final iteration in 2016-2017, the RSBY also targeted 5.9 crore families, and managed to enroll 3.6 crore families. **Thus the government's announcement today of reaching ten crore families is also vastly ambitious**
  - There is evidence to show that despite efforts towards pushing for increased insurance coverage, neither have the poorest been reached out to nor has there been efficient financial protection.

#### **Way forward:-**

- The public healthcare needs to be strengthened especially in rural areas.
- The government needs to provide adequate funding to improve the quality of services as well.
- In a federal polity with multiple political parties sharing governance, an all-India alignment around the NHPS requires a high level of cooperative federalism, both to make the scheme viable and to ensure portability of coverage as people cross State borders.

***Q) Examine the reasons behind India's poor performance in sporting events such as Olympics. Discuss whether the provisions of National Sports University Bill will help India arrest that decline. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- In the light of the amazing performance by Indians in commonwealth games 2018 development of sports in the country need attention.

#### **Reasons behind poor performance in sporting events such as olympics :-**

- **Lack of proper health, education, public information** and physical connectedness e. a population's ability to travel.

- There is little 'physical connectedness' in remote, isolated villages so many sporting jewels may go undiscovered.
- In rural India, where life expectancy and primary school enrolment are below the world average and where there is more limited access to the outside world both physically and communication-wise, much of the effective participating population is lost.
- Also most of the people from socially backward classes have constraints in access to education, good nutrition, health
- **Lack of interest:-**
  - Sport has always taken a back seat to studies for young Indians, or in any case the parents of young Indians.
- **Lack of infrastructure:-**
  - Not enough good sports facilities and good sports academics.
  - Not well maintained playgrounds at the local level, equipment was not available
- **No proper support staff**
- **Not enough athlete-friendly sports policies** which is changing slowly and the government is set to pass national sports university bill as well.
- Corruption, favouritism, apathy and bad **management among sports governing bodies** as turn-off to young Indian sportspeople
- Chronic lack of resources has undermined athletes performance. **There is no proper system for athlete selection and training from a young age.**
- **Social stratification has meant different castes tended not to play sport together .**

#### **National sports university bill:-**

- **Objectives of the university are :**
  - Research, development and dissemination of knowledge in physical education and sports sciences
  - Strengthening physical education and sports training programmes
  - Generating knowledge capabilities, skills and competence at various levels
  - Training talented athletes to help them to evolve into international level athletes.
- **Proposes a university with exclusive focus on the creation of a high standard of infrastructure for the development of sports sciences and the training of athletes.**
  - It is to facilitate bachelors and master's degrees, research and training in various areas related to sports.
  - The university is also to double up as the national training centre for select disciplines.
  - The university will also be empowered to establish outlying campuses within and outside India.
  - Apart from academic programmes and research, the university and its outlying campuses are to impart training to elite athletes, sports officials, referees and umpires and evolve as centres of excellence in various disciplines.
- The university is **intended to fill several gaps that exist in the national sports environment**, including in areas such as sports science, technology, management and high performance training.
- **Authorities of the University:**
  - The Bill provides for several authorities under the University like
    - the Court, which will review the broad policies and programmes of the University
    - the Executive Council, which will be the principal executive body
    - the Academic and Activity Council, which will conduct the general supervision over academic policies etc
- **The Executive Council:**
  - The Executive Council will conduct all of the University's administrative affairs.
- **Role the central government:**

- The central government will review and inspect the functioning of the University. The Executive Council may take action based on the inspection report. .
- **Funding:**
  - The University will be required to maintain a fund which will be credited with the funds that it receives from the central government, state government, and fees and money received from any other sources (grants and gifts).
- **Disputes and appeal procedure:**
  - Any student or candidate whose name has been removed from the rolls of the University and who has been debarred from appearing for the examinations may appeal to the Executive Council. The Council may confirm, modify or reverse such a decision.
  - Any dispute between the University and any employee will also be referred to a Tribunal of Arbitration.
- To make the university a world class one, **a memorandum of understanding** has been signed by the Government of India with two Australian universities
- The university **is proposed to be established within a period of two financial years**, with effect from 2017-18 to 2018-19. The total expenditure towards its establishment is estimated to be Rs. 524 crore, which includes expenditure for the establishment of outlying campuses. Land for the university has been granted by the Government of Manipur free of cost.
- The university's **chancellor is to be appointed by the Centre**. The chancellor should be an eminent person in the field of sports who is either a sportsperson himself or a sports administrator or sports academician. He or she would hold office for a term of five years and not be eligible for reappointment.

#### Importance:-

- Proposed NSU **represents the first effort to establish a sports university** on a national scale and with a national perspective.
- The Draft Bill is a **commendable effort to help fill the sports knowledge and education void** and it is fairly comprehensive with respect to the manner in which it details the functioning and the establishment of the NSU and associated institutions.
- For the Government of India, **the establishment of the NSU would also be a valuable avenue towards assimilating the north-east of India into the sporting mainstream**.
  - Setting up of National Sports University in Manipur will result in giving an opportunity for youth of country in general and of North Eastern States in particular for pursuing courses such as BPED, MPED, Diploma/certificate courses in coaching, physiotherapy, fitness, sports management, sports journalism
- Parliamentary panel felt that the proposed university would prove to be an umbrella institute at the national level and would synchronise all the sports related activities right from spreading the sports culture throughout the country to producing the medal winning sportspersons at global level.

#### Concerns:-

- The bill is silent on how the NSU as well its various centres will integrate with and work with the existing national sports governance and administrative framework, including the Indian Olympic Association, the Sports Authority of India and the various National Sports Institutes to carry out the activities specified and achieve its objectives.
- Parliamentary Committee was concerned about the availability of funds for the University and felt that at any point of time it should not suffer due to resource constraints.

#### Way forward:-

- Proposed sports university should use information technology to provide online courses to students in other parts of the country, the Parliamentary Standing Committee

- Corporate sector should be approached for contribution under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative requesting for setting up of chairs, fellowships and scholarships in the varsity
- Private companies need to step in to try to fill the gaps in funding for Olympic sports.
- India needs to learn from the example of countries such as Australia and the UK, which have dramatically increased their medal count by investing in elite selection and training programmes.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- The proposed NSU, if established and operated properly within a clearly defined framework, will serve as a vital part of India's sporting growth.

***Q) Aspirational District Programme (ADP) is a marked shift in India's governance model, that embodies cooperative as well as competitive federalism and efficiency in resource utilization, as its key determinants. Critically analyse. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- India will not be able to sustain robust growth without focusing on all states and regions. Ensuring progress in areas facing the most severe challenges and improving conditions in remote and rural regions are prerequisites for India to reach the next stage of its economic and human development. **Through its massive scale and innovative use of data, the aspirational districts programme (ADP) will help India move towards its goals.**

#### **Aspirational district programme :-**

- The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) is a radical departure from the country's previous development strategies in its scale, scope and ownership.
- The 115 districts were chosen by the Union government in consultation with State officials on the basis of a composite index of the following:
- **Education, health and nutrition, financial inclusion, agriculture, skill development and basic infrastructure.**
- A minimum of one district was chosen from every State.
- The largest concentration of districts is in the States which have historically under-performed such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, or which are afflicted by left-wing extremism such as Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.
- These 115 districts account for more than 20% of the country's population and cover over 8,600 gram panchayats.

#### **How is it different from previous programmes:-**

- With continuously updated data dashboards, those running the programme on the ground can alter strategies after accurate feedback.
- The programme shifts the focus away from output and draws **attention to socio-economic outcomes**. Through its large-scale efforts to collect, distill and disseminate data, the programme is **grounded thoroughly in evidence**.
- The programme is informed by the failures of the past and therefore has a more contemporary vision of how public services are best delivered to those who need them most.
- **Sensitive approach:-**
  - Deliberately, the districts have been described as **aspirational rather than backward** so that they are viewed as islands of opportunity and hope rather than areas of distress and hopelessness.
- **Utilization of resources:-**

- There is no financial package or large allocation of funds to this programme. **The intent is to leverage the resources of the several government programmes that already exist but are not always used efficiently.**
- **Competitive federalism:-**
  - This programme takes the principle of competitive federalism down to district administrations. Each district will be ranked on the focus areas which are disaggregated into easily quantifiable target areas. **So as not to bias the rankings on historical achievements or lack of them, the rankings will be based on deltas or improvements. The rankings will be publicly available.**
- **Up-to-date statistics on health, education and other dimensions of development lend the programme a rigour that an observational approach could not.** Through ADP, data is advancing policymaking in three important ways: strengthening analysis and monitoring, enhancing accountability and transparency, and taking into account the heterogeneity across districts and states.
  - Data from these districts will help government and other organisations grasp the complexities of a given district better. **They will help assess outcomes and monitor progress.**
  - They also facilitate rankings, spurring competition between districts.
  - The programme is pioneering the democratisation of development data in India.
  - **Till date, no other developing country has undertaken a data-driven programme of this massive scale to advance the holistic development of one-fifth of its population.**
- **Cooperative federalism:-**
  - The composite district-level data allows government to take into account the huge variation within India. With districts as diverse as Dantewada and Bastar in Chhattisgarh that are affected by leftwing extremism and Baksa in Assam where access to education is a challenge, **a one-size-fits-all strategy will not work.**
  - The ADP brings together all levels of government, from central and state officers driving operations, to the district collectors implementing innovative measures on the ground. It also tracks progress through real-time data collection. A critical aspect of the programme's approach is its focus on district-specific strengths.
  - **The ADP echoes the government's belief that states and districts should have a greater voice in their development.**
  - It truly embodies India's shift toward cooperative federalism. The local, state and central governments work together to design, implement and monitor measures to drive development in the districts.
  - The strong belief that underlies this strategy is that each district's advantages and challenges are different.
- **The ADP has opened its door to civil society and leveraged the tool of corporate social responsibility to form partnerships** which will bring new ideas and fresh energy with boots on the ground from non-government institutions to join the official efforts. The force multiplier on outcomes from such participation is potentially massive.
  - For example, NITI Aayog is working with Piramal Foundation to strengthen public systems particularly in health and education.

### **Challenges:-**

- **Local government is in a unique position to understand the complexities of the districts.** They can experiment with different measures to enhance socio-economic development on the ground. Panchayats are neglected.
- Some of the states (West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha) **have already opted out of the scheme**, reducing the total number of identified backward districts from 115 to 102. This further **reduces any limited benefit that ranking of districts may offer.**



- **The three states have objected to the criteria set up by the centre for identifying backward districts without taking states into confidence.**
- Orissa **also objected appointment of 'prabhari officers'** citing the move would infringe country's federal structure.
- **State government in its conditions has also demanded allocation of more funds** for the most backward districts.
- Data collection and analysis on monthly basis is a **very hectic process** which needs resources and efficient workforce.
- The districts which are backward **need to compete with the best performing so quick transformation might be difficult and be flawed as well.**
- Also there might be **conflicts between centre and states**. Work might be affected during elections etc

#### **Way forward:-**

- For the programme to succeed there is a need for effective monitoring which can be done by **social auditing**
- **Increase the awareness amongst the people** and even some of them can be given work as volunteers.
- With lack of digital literacy and infrastructure at local level compiling the enormous data and updating it is a humongous task.
- Seeking rapid transformation of these districts on specific parameters such as health, education and nutrition need to happen alongside unlocking of their development potential.
  - In this context, recognising development trajectory of each district, relentlessly tracking district's progress on its chosen interventions and indicators is probably a better approach.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- Without improving human development and strengthening the economic situation of these regions, India as a whole cannot achieve significant progress. So this programme is moving in the right direction.

***Q) A decade since its conception and passage of law, RTE still suffers from several implementation challenges. Critically examine.***

- Right to education act 2009 changed the phase of education in India. Based on the 2017 ASER survey the 14-year-olds are among the first to have benefitted from the RTE Act's provisions of no-detention and free and compulsory education.
- As the ASER report shows, a direct consequence of the RTE has been that most tend to continue to stay within the formal education set-up, even after the Act folds up at age 14.

#### **RTE's implementation challenges:-**

- **Issue with notification regarding admissions under RTE:-**
- Five States (Goa, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Telangana) have not even issued notifications regarding admissions under the RTE.
- **Private schools:-**
  - Section 12(1)(c) of the Act mandates private unaided schools to reserve 25% of seats for children from economically weaker sections (EWS), in the age bracket of six to 14 years. This enabled economically marginalised communities to access high quality private schools, at the expense of the State but this was not implemented properly.

- States have to notify per-child costs to pay the private schools, on behalf of the children admitted under this provision. **However, out of 29 States and seven Union Territories, only 14 have notified their per-child costs.**
- There is no data to record the number of students being admitted in private schools under section 12(1)(c) of the act. **So poor children might not even be benefiting under this Act.**
- **Centre-state issues:-**
  - In 2017-18, of the 15 States which submitted their reimbursement claims to the Central government, only six were approved. **Many of the claims of the States were not provided funds by the Centre,** as they had not notified the per-child costs.
- Schools are refusing to admit children under the RTE provision, citing **non-payment of dues by State governments.**
- **Discrimination of caste and gender:-**
- A large number of Dalits, Adivasis and girls discontinue education because of discrimination in schools. And more than 60 per cent of urban primary schools are overcrowded,
- **Quality of education deteriorated:-**
  - About 50 per cent of Indian students cannot do basic mathematics or read a short story when they complete elementary education.
  - Also due to no detention policy children learning outcomes are getting compromised.
- **Poor infrastructure despite strict norms**
- **Quality of teachers is also not good.**

#### **Measures needed to improve RTE are:-**

- The Government must insist on **fixing teachers' accountability in public schools** and learning outcome-based recognition for all schools, be it public or private schools.
- **Proper rules should be framed to implement the RTE Act in consultation with all stakeholders, including community leaders,** teachers, and school managements. The government should ensure complete transparency in the functioning of private schools
- **Public expenditure increase:-**
  - Among Asian countries, the ratio of per student public expenditure in tertiary relative to primary education is less than four in Malaysia, two in Indonesia and one in Thailand and Korea. In India, it is over nine.
- **Teachers quality:-**
  - Teachers have very less limited accountability i.e., to the education department bureaucracy.
  - Teachers are rarely reprimanded for non-performance. So this needs change
- **TSR Subramanian committee recommendations are as follows:**
  - Government should establish Indian Education Service (IES) as an all Indian service with officers on permanent settlement with state governments, but cadre controlling authority vested in HRD Ministry.
  - Education has been given comparatively low priority by both the Central and State governments, judged by the budgetary support provided thus far. This must change if anything of significant value is to be achieved. Without further wait, the outlay on education should be raised to at least 6% of the GDP.
  - Minority schools should be made to reserve 25% seats for candidates of economically weaker sections (EWS).
  - There should be restrictions on Campus politics.
- **Focus needs change:-**
  - Education policy in India is focused on inputs rather than learning outcomes

- Education policy has a strong elitist bias in favour of higher education as opposed to primary or secondary education.

### **Conclusion:-**

- The intrinsic value of a sound education system in enabling the citizenry to enjoy fulfilling lives and participate in robust democratic processes is important. For both its intrinsic value as well as its instrumental value, reforming Indian dysfunctional education system is of paramount importance.

***Q) Taking cues from Rajasthan's Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana, on which the centre's National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS), critically examine the nature of issues that will be faced by this scheme. (250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- At state level there are schemes offering free healthcare to poor segment of the population. For instance, Aarograshri in Andhra Pradesh, Vajpayee Arogyashree in Karnataka, Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana in Rajasthan, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPJAY) in Maharashtra, Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana in Goa among others.
- The National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) is a magnified form of all these and is far bigger than its predecessors

### **Features of Bhamshah swasthya Bima yojana :-**

- Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana (BSBY) by Rajasthan government was launched with the aim of providing cashless healthcare services to poor, ensures a cover, under the NSFA, of up to Rs 3 lakh for people below and above poverty line.
- The scheme provides an annual cover of Rs 30,000 for not so critical illnesses and increases it to Rs 3 lakh for critical illness from the list of diseases specified under the yojana.
- These packages listed under BSBY for specific diseases fall under secondary and tertiary (more specialised and advanced) categories.
- An estimated 4.5 crore people are covered under this insurance scheme.
- For women in Rajasthan, the Bhamashah Card serves as a single platform offering a spectrum of services, and is an important document to avail the scholarship for the girl child, from her birth, under Mukhyamantri Rajshri Yojana announced in 2016.
  - It also becomes the key to availing medical care for 1,715 diseases listed under the Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana (BSBY).
- It is the first household-level identity scheme to create a comprehensive dataset with the objectives of financial inclusion, women's empowerment, by designating women as head (mukhiya) of the family, and effective government service delivery (direct transfers and non-cash benefits).
- **Like all other health insurance schemes, the basic aim was to reduce out-of-pocket expenses in times of illness to the poor and provide them financial security.**
- In addition, the idea was also to create a wide health database, which would help policy decisions later. The scheme was envisaged as being the instrument by which to bring about a revolution in healthcare in the rural areas, as **the private sector would be encouraged to open hospitals in rural areas, thereby reducing the burden on government facilities..**
- State went for the **insurance agency model**, with The New India Assurance Company, roped in after a bidding process. In fact, they removed the concept of a third party administrator in order to reduce costs.

### **Features of NHPS:-**

- The scheme seeks to provide health cover to 10 crore economically vulnerable families.
- Every family will be provided Rs. 5 lakhs annually for secondary and tertiary health care.
- 2000 crores is allocated for the scheme in the budget 2018.
- The overall investment required for the scheme is estimated to be around Rs. 10,000 crores to Rs. 12,000 crores.
- The Premium for every household is expected to be Rs.1000 to Rs. 1200 annually.
- The scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme. The centre intends to bear 60 percent of the cost. Remaining 40 percent will be borne by the states.
- The scheme will replace Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana under which, the government provided Rs.30,000 annually for healthcare. Under NHPS, Rs.30,000 is increased to Rs. 5 lakhs.
- The centre will face an annual burden of around Rs. 5000- 6000 crores towards premium. The rest will be come from state governments.
- NITI Aayog expects that at least 50% of the beneficiaries will use the scheme in the first year.

#### **Issues that will be faced by NHPS:-**

- The amount of Rs 5 lakh per family is a massive and unexpected hike from the existing fund of Rs 1 lakh per family. This amount is 17 times bigger than the RSBY scheme and will cover 40% of India's population.
- Though it improved access to health care, **it did not reduce out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE), catastrophic health expenditure or health payment-induced poverty.**
- The NHPS addresses those concerns by sharply raising the coverage cap, but shares with the RSBY the weakness of **not covering outpatient care which accounts for the largest fraction of OOPE.**
- **The NHPS too remains disconnected from primary care.**
- **Universal health insurance through private hospitals has not worked for the poor anywhere.** Biggest beneficiaries are the private hospitals and insurance companies. **There is no substitute for public health care.**
- **The government's proposals do little to prevent poor health in the first place.** India is plagued by increasing levels of water and air pollution, some of it worsened by pro-business policies. Malnutrition, poor sanitation and lack of proper housing also remain major problems.
- In real terms and as a percentage of GDP, **there is a decline in the health budget this year.**
- **Earlier programme failures cast new doubts:-**
  - In its final iteration in 2016-2017, the RSBY also targeted 5.9 crore families, and managed to enroll 3.6 crore families. **Thus the government's announcement today of reaching ten crore families is also vastly ambitious**
  - There is evidence to show that despite efforts towards pushing for increased insurance coverage, neither have the poorest been reached out to nor has there been efficient financial protection.
- **Issues with Bhamshah Swasthya Bhima yojana which raises doubts for NHPS as well are:-**
- Critics have rounded off the yojana's response to patients as something on the lines of "exclusion". **According to people serving at trauma and emergency desks, the problem lies in the use of BSBY during medical emergencies.**
  - The patient has to show the Bhamashah Card within an hour at the counter to avail the benefits under BSBY. The one-hour window in the case of emergencies is definitely creating problems for patients.
- In case of BSBY, **technical issues relating to the card, or insufficient understanding of BSBY eligibility dampens spirits at the wrong time.**
- When technical issues relating to the card strike its holder, she has very little energy left to understand factors behind the glitches or her inability to use the card for BSBY.

**Lessons for NHPS based on constraints from BSBY:-**

- **Issue 1:-**
  - **Significant increase in the number of health insurance claims under Rajasthan scheme due to the increasing incidence of fraudulent claims** made easy by the fact that hospitals were being allowed to admit a sizeable number of patients without a biometric authentication.
  - **Solution:-**
    - Given the disputes between the insurer and the Rajasthan government on the issue of de-empanelment of hospitals for fraud it is best the **fraud management be centrally monitored and not left to 29 states and seven Union territories.**
- **Issue 2 – Identity parameters:-**
  - A decision also has to be made at the earliest on what identity parameters are to be used. In the case of Bhamashah, at least two members of the family's biometrics were on the card in which case, biometrics for other family members would not always be available
  - 75% of those availing the scheme are being identified using biometrics. In the rest of the cases, **the Medical Officer In-Charge (MOIC) is allowed to bypass the need for Aadhaar authentication.** This is where a large proportion of the cases of fraud is detected by the insurance company in Bhamashah
  - **Solution**
    - Given the role of Aadhaar-based biometrics in weeding out but not eliminating fraud, **it is imperative that NHPS not accept such a low authentication ratio**
- **Issue 3-pricing:-**
  - In the case of Bhamashah, when the price was very low, this led to huge losses as claims ratio raised drastically the premium shot up 3.4 times in the second phase.
  - While insurance companies or reinsurers may be prepared to take on such losses for one state, doing it at an all-India level is quite different. **The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana, for instance, is running at losses of 104%**
  - For NHPS to be successful, fixing these loopholes is critical.
- **Free drug counters for Bhamashah Card holders can be replicated in NHPS as well**
- **Issue-4:-**
  - People were being misled by private healthcare centres to cough up funds despite the insurance cover. Poor quality of services being delivered, and the lack of a mechanism to monitor that.
  - **Solution:-**
    - Thus, the health facilities should be taken back by government under its full control, and infrastructure and human resources at public health facilities must be improved.
    - Monitoring is important. While public-private partnerships are essential for effective service delivery, **an independent mechanism to ensure quality service to review, audit, and assess these institutions and take timely recourse are essential.**
  - The integrated approach to healthcare sector through the two schemes – BSBY and the Arogya Rajasthan campaign that compiles health data of rural population in the state and provides people with e-health cards **will improve the health sector and encourage preventive health.**
  - **Communication to increase awareness levels among beneficiaries is of paramount importance.** The communication strategy should utilise text messages on phones as well as advertisements in television, radio, and newspapers, street plays, etc, whatever works for the region.

- A grievance redressal mechanism for beneficiaries must be in place.
- Involvement of one or several rural healthcare NGOs would be beneficial in many respects
- There should be a mechanism to connect patients to the right hospitals in time. Suppose a hospital is unable to provide treatment at that point because of non-availability of doctors or infrastructure, that hospital should be able to help the patient reach the correct healthcare facility. **Hospitals must be made liable for this, and this will also check their tendency to deny treatment or services to patients.**

*TOPIC: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.*

***Q) Facebook's current privacy crisis and questions about how Google gathers, uses and stores our personal information demonstrate an urgent need to review and replace inadequate and outdated ways to regulate data and information. Comment. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- The 2016 US election was a warning that social media platforms pose risks that need to be considered seriously by regulators in free societies. Social media platforms are allowed to collect personal data and use it for "social experimentation," without regulation.
- Societies have allowed these digital platforms to function without much regard to the risks of propaganda and bias they create. It's time to reign them in through effective regulation.

#### **Mechanisms available at present:-**

- **International:-**
  - To protect the privacy of its individual users, the European Union is to implement the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018.
    - Aimed at harmonising data privacy laws across Europe, it will impose stiff penalty of up to 4% of the company's worldwide turnover in the event of a breach.
    - Many companies will also have to ensure that even their vendors are fully compliant with the GDPR as a condition for running their businesses.
  - Private companies regulate through privacy agreement between the digital platforms and the users.
- **India:-**
  - Online content, whether on the Internet or in mobile media, is regulated through the **Information Technology Act 2000 (amended in 2008)** and the rules formulated under the act.
  - Besides, other laws governing content in all media include provisions (including those for defamation, incitement to offence, obscenity etc) in **the Indian Penal Code, the Cinematograph Act, the Copyright Act, the Broadcasting Regulations, the advertising code, etc.**
  - Establishment of **Indian computer emergency response team (CERT-In)** as a nodal agency to look after cyber threats.
  - Setting up of **cyber police stations** to deal with cybercrime related cases.
  - Launched **Cyber Swachhata Kendra** to clean botnets.

#### **Constraints with the present ways to regulate data and information:-**

- For too long, regulators have turned a blind eye to the use of data, emboldening digital platforms to do as they please **with no oversight.**

- **Existing privacy laws in India don't deal with social media abuse.** Current legal recourse is through laws for defamation, sexual harassment, intimidation and so on.
- A law as widespread as **Section 66A can definitely lead to a chilling effect on free speech.**
- **The American government has done little to help in this regard:-**
  - The Federal Trade Commission merely requires internet companies to have a privacy policy available for consumers to see. A company can change that policy whenever it wants as long as it says it is doing so.
- **But the sheer expanse of the Internet and the anonymity it grants makes it difficult to track down people.**
- Unlike mainstream media that falls under comprehensive regulation, **online platforms have scope for wrongdoing due to the lack of binding rules, and the ability to keep owners and editors private like in the case of fake news sites.**
  - In the absence of such crucial information, **there is no understanding of the liability and the credibility of the information that is being hosted on their respective sites.**

#### **Solutions needed are:-**

- **India needs to have a legal framework for data protection.** It will create a vital and necessary framework against which rights and responsibilities can be articulated, and digressions thereof evaluated.
  - A proper data protection law with an effective enforcement mechanism would ensure recognition for India as a trustworthy global destination for **data-based businesses and privacy-conscious consumers while also protecting the Right to Privacy of the people in India.**
  - Along with law there is a need for strong independent watchdog institutions to ensure that the organisations handling our data do not go astray.
- **Need better guidelines around the ethical use of data, especially around profiling and social manipulation.**
- **Need a more proactive approach, where social platforms disclose broadly their data mining goals and policies** and demonstrate that they are not violating the implicit intentions of users who entrusted them with their data.
- **Ultimate control of data must reside with the individuals who generate it;** they should be enabled to use, restrict or monetise it as they wish.
  - Therefore, **laws should enable the right kind of innovation — one that is user-centric and privacy-protecting.**
- **Committees recommendations:-**
  - **Srikrishna committee :-**
    - Committee has proposed the **creation of a strong Data Protection Authority(DPA).**
    - Some of the recommendations, such as **applying the law to both government and private data collectors, fines against violators and direct compensation to complainants,** are progressive.
  - **Justice AP Shah group** emphasized on taking the informed and individual consent of users before the collection of their personal data.
- **International agreements** form an important node in a web of solutions needed to address security and the rule of law in cyberspace. Given India's vision of a Digital India and considering the surge in cybercrime, it would be beneficial for India to join Budapest Convention
- Experts have pointed to the importance of aspects such as following basic **cyber hygiene and a periodic review of the security facets of one's profile on various web platforms,** especially on social media, where users tend to share personal information.
  - When there are no legitimate security or public interest reasons, users should have the right to have their data destroyed.

***Q) Legal tools are ill-suited to tackle the problem of fake news. Critically analyse. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- With the advent of new age digital and social media, fake news has pervaded all spheres of life.
- Governments in countries as diverse as Ireland, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Malaysia, the Philippines and India have taken legal action purportedly in an attempt to combat fake news. The impetus for these actions escalated after revelations about Russian attempts to influence elections in the United States and France by orchestrating the spread of fake news through social media.

**Legal action needed:-**

- Lack of uniform guidelines, regulation and policy regarding such fabricated content needs to be addressed urgently.
- **Germany has initiated to levy charges on fake news spreading sites.** Legal tools will become suited to curb the security challenge with better monitoring system, capacity building in analyzing the news trend.
- Under section **153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, it is an offence to promote or attempt to promote “disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities”. **Any ‘fake news’ which attempts to spread such hate would already fall under this section.**
- Law Commission in its 267th Report recognised this and proposed adding two new provisions to the IPC to do precisely this. **Additional measures to ensure better implementation of fake speech laws would also be welcome, and might actually make purveyors of such fake news think twice.**

**Legal action is insufficient:-**

- **International examples:-**
  - **Malaysian law**
    - The law creates no incentive for the platforms to verify accuracy and they are exempt from liability as long as these platforms did not “know” that it was fake.
    - In addition, the law has nothing to say about bots that may cause the fake news to be spread widely.
    - Malaysian law’s utter inability to tackle the real problem illustrates the fact that legal tools are ill-suited to tackling the fake news problem.
  - **Germany’s stringent new law** against offensive online content has led to some absurd results, including the taking down of posts lampooning peddlers of fake news.
- The law always has struggled with regulating speech content which is visible in failure of legal efforts against hate speech, obscenity, virtual child pornography, etc.
- People suffer from affirmation bias the urge to seek information that affirms their prior beliefs. This cannot be curbed by law.
- Any legal action would also be futile because of the speed at which these news spread and damage is done within minutes.
- Laws will look like a draconian measure to **stifle any voices** the government doesn’t like, for instance. Laws which restrict freedom of speech and expression have frequently been used on dissidents before this. The fear is that the legislations will also be abused in the same way.
- Users creating hate content and sharing it can be booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). But **the sheer expanse of the Internet and the anonymity it grants makes it difficult to track down people.**



- Unlike mainstream media that falls under comprehensive regulation, **online platforms have scope for wrongdoing due to the lack of binding rules, and the ability to keep owners and editors private like in the case of fake news sites.**

#### **Way forward:-**

- Basic regulation for digital media outlets like compulsory and online registration of details need to be implemented strictly.
- Robust surveillance and compliance mechanism need to be implemented effectively so that source of news is verified before.
- People need to be aware what is fake news or not .

#### ***TOPIC: India and its neighborhood- relations.***

***Q) Critically comment on the extent and implications of poor unity in South Asia in general and India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (IPB) in particular. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- India-Pakistan-Bangladesh account for approximately 95% of South Asia's GDP and population. Along with China, they account for 18.5% of global GDP and 41% of global population.

#### **Extent of poor unity in south Asia :-**

- **India-Pakistan rivalry, further complicated by China-Pakistan proximity and India-China hostility.**
- **Souring of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations :-**
  - **Commercial ties between the two countries had generally been affected by a slow paced development in trade diplomacy** since last few years.
  - Besides issues of non-tariff barriers, including **visa issues** to Pakistani businessmen hinder commercial contacts between our two countries.
  - **Both states have also withdrawn their diplomatic missions and Pakistan also avoided attending the SAARC Sanitation Conference**
  - The bilateral trade of Pakistan and Bangladesh is also not very significant.
- **India Pakistan:-**
  - Pakistan and India have potential trade capacity of \$20 billion compared to the **current \$3 billion.**
  - **Terrorism, border disputes and militancy in Kashmir** are leading to harmful impact on the South Asian region as a whole.
  - Aircargo flights are encumbered by **limited access to Indian airspace by Pakistan and vice-versa.**
- **India Bangladesh :-**
  - **Underdeveloped transport and logistics services** and bureaucratic procedures are deterring India-Bangladesh cross border trade, which can grow by 300%.
  - **India-China tug of war over Bangladesh.**
  - **Illegal migration, land and maritime boundary issues, insurgency, drug trafficking.**
  - The growing trade deficit is also a great concern for Bangladesh. Despite Dhaka's repeated requests, **India has been tardy in relaxing tariffs and non-tariff barriers** and opening up the market of Indian provinces bordering Bangladesh.
  - **Another thorny issue is shooting at the border by Indian guards.**

- Although India and Bangladesh have started exploring opportunities using Ashuganj inland port, **regional inland waterways remain unexplored.**
- **Connectivity issues in south Asia :-**
  - The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC) has a pivotal position in developing joint investment agreements but **sluggish progress in infrastructural development has rendered the corridor nearly comatose.**
  - Due to cross-border barriers and lack of transport facilitation among IPB, **freight movement is taking place along expensive routes, escalating investment cost.**
  - Movement of trucks across the international frontier is confined by **absence of cross-border agreements between India and Bangladesh and India and Pakistan.**
  - **Rail connectivity is restricted due to technical problems** of different gauges, track structures, signalling and so forth. Absence of a multilateral agreement has restricted the realisation of the railway potential.
- **Water disputes:-**
  - The three largest trans-boundary river basins, Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra, are all within China-India-Pakistan-Bangladesh. **This represents a huge potential for water-sharing and hydro power projects across the basins, but political mistrust is an impediment.**
  - The Zangmu hydroelectricity dam **has raised concerns in India over downstream water supply.** This damming, along with that of the Ganga, **could exacerbate Bangladesh's downstream water scarcity.**
- **Other issues:-**
  - IPB fail to attract sufficient tourists due to poor civil aviation connectivity, complex regulations and lack of visa liberalisation procedures.
  - **Communalism has cast a pall of darkness over South Asian region.** Religious zealots, who hardly practice their respective religions, are the main communal and sectarian activists fomenting troubles and dividing their society; thus undermining national solidarity.

#### However there are still good relations among the countries:-

- India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (IPB) have **common sociocultural bonds and people-to-people connectivity remains positive.**
- **India continues to be the natural choice for external investors including Chinese multinational enterprises like Alibaba and Xiaomi.** In 2016, foreign direct investment to Pakistan rose by 56%, largely due to Chinese investment in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure.
- **China has already pledged \$38 billion to Bangladesh under the BRI.** Synergetic integration of the economic corridors with other BRI projects can accelerate inward investment into IPB
- **Trade relationship has improved significantly between India and Bangladesh.** India has provided zero duty access of Bangladeshi products thereby addressing the tariff related issue to a great extent.
- **Bangladesh, Cambodia and China have signed a framework to strengthen digital regional trade.**
- **Pakistan- Bangladesh:-**
  - Despite problems in trade relations, Pakistani and Bangladeshi entrepreneurs continue to participate in annual exhibitions/trade fairs like Dhaka Trade Fair and Expo Pakistan.

#### Implications of poor unity in south Asia :-

- **Chinese factor:-**
  - China is injecting huge funds into physical infrastructure such as Pakistan's Gwadar port project and \$20 billion in various Indian industrial and infrastructural projects. China has committed

\$1.4 billion for building Colombo Port City and is set to invest \$1 billion more. So the influence of China is increasing in South Asia.

- A surge in Chinese economic and diplomatic involvement in South Asia poses a serious rival for Indian influence in its neighbourhood. For instance Maldives Nepal moving towards China.
- China's increasing role in Nepal, Indian ocean, Srilanka is causing concerns to India.
- **Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan are paying the price of regional disintegration.**
- **Trade is still not up to the mark and is way below potential.**
- **Impacts the security issues and terrorism and makes border management more vulnerable.**
- **The role of SAARC is diminishing and south Asia trade is taking toll.**

#### Way forward:-

- **China can lead in transport and transit agreements to facilitate smooth movement of freight and passenger vehicles across IPB** resulting in integration with China and also South Asia.
- With greater electricity generation and utilisation of domestic energy endowments, **combined efforts of BCIM, CPEC and the proposed China-Nepal-India (CNI) Economic Corridor under BRI, can capitalise on regional energy potential.**
- **Digital connectivity can act as the gateway** to a holistic transformation of the region via the CIPB conduit.
- China is unable to attract students from South Asia against the improved facilities provided by the U.S. and U.K. Only 5% of outbound students of IPB go to China, compared to 22% to the U.S. **If these opportunities are tapped, it would enhance mobility of both tourists and students.**
- **India thus needs to strengthen the various regional groupings in this region like the ASEAN and the BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). Importantly, they should work together to resolve all the issues.
- **India and Bangladesh need to strengthen their military ties.** Much more can be done in terms of increasing visits, contacts at various level as well as by selling military hardware.
  - Apart from initiating joint exercises, India should consider the China model of gifting hardware in the initial instance, and offer technical expertise that Bangladeshi military is in need of.
- Commonalities like shared history, more or less common language, common heritage, literature, art, and culture can be enhanced through track II diplomacy, which in turn can be expanded and taken to another level through skilled diplomacy of leaders
  - Through shared goals, means, and institutions (like SAARC) every regional state including these three can achieve their interests and get satisfactory status on the regional and international level.

#### Conclusion:-

- Strategic collaboration that rises to the occasion, looking beyond historical animosity and misgivings, can unlock a new era of regionalism whose benefits far outweigh negatives.

***Q) With Nepal joining China's OBOR initiative and an increasing engagement of between the two countries it is time for a revisit in our foreign policy vis a vis Nepal. Comment. (250 Words)***

#### Background:-

- India has age old unique, time tested ties of friendship with Nepal. The relationship between the two countries is deeply and intricately intertwined by geography, civilisational bonds, and cultural and social enmeshing.

- However the Madhesi crisis and the economic blockade at the India-Nepal border in 2015 created some strains but the strain in relations could not have been sustained for long which is visible in the recent visit by Nepal's PM to India.

#### **Growing proximity of China –Nepal relations:-**

- Recently **10 agreements were signed between the two countries**. The one related to trade and transit and the other on connectivity have attracted international attention for their security implication in the South Asian region.
- As per the transit treaty with China, **Nepal has now secured transit rights for trade with third countries through the Chinese territory.**
- China decided to supply petroleum products to Nepal, apart from building petroleum storage facilities in this country.
- Nepal has opened flood gates for the Chinese to operate in all sensitive areas, including Kathmandu, Pokhara and down up to Lumbini, which is just 25 km from the Indian border.
- **China's activities have been steadily expanding in Nepal after Kathmandu's support for OBOR materialized.**

#### **India needs to revisit its foreign policy with respect to Nepal:-**

- **Nepal and India have an open border where trade and business is prominent.** No other country in the region can allow free and unrestricted movement of people across their border as India and Nepal have done even after delineating the border more than 200 years ago.
- Even after so many years relations remained the same. The impression that India is trying to "micro-manage" Nepal's affairs has persisted.
- Nepal is moving to diversify its relations beyond India
- Despite deep ties, India is no longer exercising the same influence over Nepali politics and does not command the same levers to shape Nepali elite opinion and society.
- Nepali society particularly the hill dominated Kathmandu bureaucracy, media, civil society institutions is becoming more autonomous of Indian influence. Their emotional investment in India is limited.
- The momentum behind recent economic connectivity initiatives like the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Initiative and the operationalization of the BBIN-affiliated Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) demonstrate how both India and Nepal can mutually gain from connectivity initiatives.

#### **India has already taken care of the issues:-**

- **Twelve-point joint statement was issued recently highlighting the resolve of the countries to take their bilateral relations to newer heights** on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit.
  - Three agreements, on a rail project connecting an Indian border town with Kathmandu, on inland waterways connectivity and on agricultural development in Nepal, were signed.
- **The primacy of India in Nepal has not declined**
  - Nepal's currency is pegged to the Indian currency
  - Nepali and Indian workers can work freely in each other's countries, without visas and work permits.
  - Nepal and India gain tremendously from remittances from the other. Nepalis can own property in India. Generations of Nepali students have studied in India.
  - This 'special relationship' takes concrete cultural forms. Nepalis and Indians visit each other's country for religious pilgrimage.
  - There is abundant informal trade that exists across the open border.

**What more needs to be done?**

- To enhance people-to-people relations, Nepal and India must resolve contentious issues relating to the border, including the two major areas of dispute at Susta and Kalpani.
- India must respect Nepal's sovereignty as mutual respect is a key in bilateral relations and India should not meddle in the internal political affairs of Nepal or panic over China's growing investment in Nepal.
- India needs to finish the infrastructure projects on time for instance Pancheswar project has been pending for over 20 years now.
- India will have to focus on connectivity as a leverage to increase its strategic influence in the neighbourhood.
- By reviving the Gujral doctrine and India's willingness to provide non-reciprocal, unilateral, and preferential benefits to its smaller neighbours, the government has signalled intent to position India as a credible and leading power across the region.

**Conclusion:-**

- With the status of Asia rising day by day in the international arena India needs to strengthen its neighbourhood policy

***Q) Chinese charm offensive has cast a dark shadow over India Nepal relations. Analyze the statement in light of recent developments in India Nepal relations. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- India has age old unique, time tested ties of friendship with Nepal. The relationship between the two countries is deeply and intricately intertwined by geography, civilisational bonds, and cultural and social enmeshing. However the role of China in Nepal is raising multiple questions

**Recent issues between India Nepal which led China into the picture:-**

- There is a persistent perception among a large section of Nepalis that India was primarily responsible for the five month "blockade" of the Indo-Nepal border in 2015-16 which caused such hardship for common Nepalis.
- **Above Kalapani, there is no demarcation (of the boundary) between India and Nepal till China border. This could lead to problems in the coming time.** After Doklam, Bharat is very concerned about Kalapani dispute. **It may provide an opportunity for China to flare up the issue along with a Communist government in Nepal.**
- **China, meanwhile, in a departure from its strictly hands-off approach in Nepal, started lobbying in Kathmandu for the continuation of the Oli government,** with whom Beijing had signed a slew of bilateral agreements in March 2016.
- **Military:-**
  - **China invested heavily in Nepal's security forces,** particularly in its police and paramilitary forces. It even opened up a police academy to train the APF, the Nepali paramilitary force deployed to guard the Nepal-Tibet border, in order to check the possible infiltration of "Free Tibet" activists into Nepal.
  - China rethinking its Nepal policy was the recently announced **military drills between the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Nepal Army, the first ever between the two countries.** Before this, Nepal Army had conducted such drills only with the U.S. and Indian armies.
  - After the Doklam crisis, China is getting more aggressive in creating strategic challenges for India in Nepal.

- Nepal has opened flood gates for the Chinese to operate in all sensitive areas, including Kathmandu, Pokhara and down up to Lumbini, which is just 25 km from the Indian border.
- **China's activities have been steadily expanding in Nepal after Kathmandu's support for OBOR materialized.**
- **Economic:-**
  - Nepal and China also signed a bilateral assistance agreement worth 1 billion RMB (\$145 million). Most of this money will go into post-earthquake reconstruction and upgrading Nepal-China road links.
  - Last year Nepal played host to the first-ever "Nepal-China Think Tank Conference," where experts from various fields in China listed the great benefits Nepal would be entitled to if it embraced the "One Belt, One Road" idea.
  - When New Delhi imposed an undeclared border blockade against Nepal in 2015-16, Oli signed watershed trade and transit framework agreements with China. For the first time, Nepal could now import its oil from China and use Chinese roads, railways and ports for third-country trade.
  - Recently **10 agreements were signed between the two countries.** The one related to trade and transit and the other on connectivity have attracted international attention for their security implication in the South Asian region.
  - As per the transit treaty with China, **Nepal has now secured transit rights for trade with third countries through the Chinese territory.**
  - China decided to supply petroleum products to Nepal, apart from building petroleum storage facilities in this country.
- **Cultural diplomacy:-**
  - Since the blockade, besides stepping up security cooperation, the Chinese government has ramped up its cultural diplomacy with Nepal as well. For instance it has recently started teaching Chinese to Nepali tourism professionals. China is also encouraging more of its citizens to visit Nepal and has announced that 2017 will be "Nepal Tourism Promotion Year."

#### **India Nepal relationship is strong:-**

- **China role is only minimal because:-**
- Trade through China to Nepal has many technical as well practical problems. First, building such a railway track across the tallest mountains of the world would be a very costly affair. This is over and above the steep environmental and socio-economic challenges to be faced especially by Nepal.
- **Bharat has always stood up with Nepal in the moment of crisis.** India was the first responder after the devastating earthquake in Nepal with the Indian government mobilising resources and manpower to ensure relief reached the spot within hours.
- Besides, India and Nepal are seen to share a special relationship, with an open border and Nepalese nationals living and working in India, besides being welcome to serve in the Indian Army.
- **Twelve-point joint statement was issued recently highlighting the resolve of the countries to take their bilateral relations to newer heights** on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit.
  - Three agreements, on a rail project connecting an Indian border town with Kathmandu, on inland waterways connectivity and on agricultural development in Nepal, were signed.

#### **How to strengthen the relationship:-**

- **Completion of the ongoing process of updating the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship:-**
  - India must recognise that as in all other developing economies, Nepal's aspirational young population is also looking beyond the open Indian border for opportunities, and its desire to turn his "land-locked" country into a "land-linked" country with a merchant navy must be considered positively.
- **People-to-people inter-dependence must lead the relationship** along with civil society and business-commercial level interactions.

- **India's major foray should be in innovation and technology transfer**, multidisciplinary dialogues, educational and technical institutions, local and global migration management and skills and capacity-building.
- India needs to finish the infrastructure projects on time for instance Pancheswar project has been pending for over 20 years now.
- **Nepal could be the fountainhead of climate change knowledge and connect to India's larger dynamics of the management of the ecology of hills and mountains.**

***Q) The Simla Agreement was much more than a peace treaty seeking to reverse the consequences of the 1971 war. Comment.(250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- The 1971 India-Pakistan war and the Shimla Agreement of 1972 are some of the most important events of the 20th century history of the Indian subcontinent.
- The decisions taken/not taken at Shimla continue to affect the Indian subcontinent and even more importantly the rationale, mindsets and logic on display then continues to be part of Indian decision-making on war and peace even years after the event.

### **Shimla agreement:-**

- Shimla Agreement was signed between India and Pakistan
- Main agenda at Shimla was to deal with the aftermath of the 1971 War and usher in durable peace between India and Pakistan.
- The following principles of the agreement also show that it was a peace treaty
  - A **mutual commitment to the peaceful resolution of all issues** through direct bilateral approaches
  - To build the foundations of a cooperative relationship with **special focus on people to people contacts**
  - To uphold **the inviolability of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir**, which is a most important CBM between India and Pakistan, and a key to durable peace.

### **How it was much more than a peace treaty:-**

- It was a **comprehensive blue print for good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan.**
  - Under the Shimla Agreement both countries undertook to abjure conflict and confrontation which had marred relations in the past, and to work towards the establishment of durable peace, friendship and cooperation.
- The Simla Agreement contains a set of guiding principles, mutually agreed by both the countries while managing relations with each other. These emphasize:
  - Respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
  - Non-interference in each other's internal affairs
  - Respect for each others unity, political independence
  - Sovereign equality and abjuring hostile propaganda.
- Two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them.
- In order progressively to restore and normalize relations between the two countries step by step, it was agreed that
  - Steps shall be taken to resume communications, postal, telegraphic, sea, land including border posts, and air links including overflights.
  - Trade and co-operation in economic and other agreed fields will be resumed as far as possible.
- Exchange in the fields of science and culture will be promoted.

### **Conclusion:-**

- Even though the agreement was in the interests of bringing peace in the relations of both the countries it adversely impacted the future of Kashmir and despite being in a winning position India could not use its diplomacy to the mark.

***Q) Critically examine how far India has managed to fulfill its national interests through the exercise of its foreign policy. Discuss in light of the overall objectives of India's foreign policy?(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- Foreign policy is a strong determinant that marks the states, position, capability and credibility with other states, in the region and in the International Community. The significance of analyzing this determinant to be as a failure or success being the by-product of states, is to make people realize the limitations, stakes and transitional impacts that are related with this one determinant.

### **Objectives of India's foreign policy :-**

- **National interest has been the governing principle of India foreign policy** even at the time ,of Nehru who was inspired by the ideal of world peace, toleration and mutual respect among nations. In operational terms, the idea of national interest takes the form of concrete objectives of foreign policy.
- The foreign policy of India also aims at
  - **maintaining international peace and security**
  - **To oppose imperialism**
  - **To stand against the apartheid policy**
  - **To propagate the peaceful and political settlement of international disputes**
  - **To foster peaceful coexistence**
  - **To remain non-aligned and non- committed and to maintain the unity and solidarity of the third world.**
  - Ensure all pervasive national economic development and to expand the area of external trade as well as of accelerating the pace of development.
  - **Settle international disputes through peaceful means**
- **Principle of Panchashila which spoke of:**
  - Mutual respect of the state for one another's geographical solidarity and sovereignty
  - Mutual agreement for not to interfere each other's internal affairs
  - Maintenance of equality
  - Providing mutual advantages to each other and
- Maintenance of peaceful co-existence
- **Gujral doctrine:-**
  - Gujral doctrine was a five-point roadmap which sought to build trust between India and neighbours, of solution to bilateral issues through bilateral talks and to remove immediate quid pro quos in diplomatic relationship between India and her neighbours.
- **Doval doctrine:-**
  - which has come to stand for a fear-evoking, no-mercy policy towards terrorists and the deployment of a hard line vis-a-vis neighbours with expansionist tendencies.
- **Dehyphenation recently in the approach towards Israel and Palestine**

### **How India achieved national interests through its foreign policy :-**

- **International role:-**
  - India has played an active role in the deliberations of the United Nations on the creation of a more equitable international economic order.
  - India raised the issues such as end of colonialism and apartheid, sovereign equality of all nations, collective self-reliance of developing countries and democratization of international



institutions. **These issues were of vital importance to newly liberated developing countries.**

- **Policy of non-alignment also enabled India to play a constructive role in disarmament and world peace**, which were required for the peaceful development of third world countries.
- **Regional cooperation:-**
  - An important achievement of India's foreign policy has been the promotion of regional co-operation in south Asia. India is an active member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), IOR-ARC, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, East Asia Summit etc.
- India has also emerged as the leading player in the global affairs. It has joined new global groups like G-20, IBSA, and BRICS which gives more scope to India to play a larger role in Global affairs.
- 
- **Sharing of Ganga Water with Bangladesh:**
  - It is in pursuance of Gujral doctrine that late in 1996 India concluded an agreement with Bangladesh on sharing of Ganga Waters. This agreement enabled Bangladesh to draw in lean season slightly more water than even the 1977 Agreement had provided.
- **Military:-**
  - India succeeded in developing friendly relations with other neighboring countries and was instrumental in the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. This increased India's reputation
- **Connectivity :-**
  - For linking India better especially the North eastern regions India is implementing projects like trilateral highway, BBIN corridor and good relations with ASEAN with the act east policy.
- **Nuclear agreements**
  - While India has, and will, remain committed to nuclear disarmament, to be achieved in a time bound framework, it has consistently and in a principled manner **opposed such discriminatory treaties as the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and has refused to give up its nuclear options** until all countries in the world including nuclear weapon states embrace the idea of universal nuclear disarmament in a phased
- **Trade and economic growth:-**
  - India has since the start been wise enough to utilize its geostrategic location to trade and enhance trade
  - The new economic policy, 1991 based on liberalization and privatization was in response to cope with the emerging global economic order brought out by the process of globalization.
  - It protects its interests of free trade via WTO forum
- **Social:-**
- India has also played responsible role with respect to other issues of UN such as environmentally sustainable development, protection of human rights, at various international forums.

### **Failures:-**

- **Neighbourhood countries:-**
  - However, India's defeat in 1962 against China was a setback to India's policy of friendly relations with neighboring countries.
  - Border disputes have not been settled yet leading to unrest across the border impacting Indian economy as well.
- India does not interfere in other countries internal affairs which makes it not taking any string decisions related to Syrian civil war, refugee crisis etc.
- India stand on terrorism could not be converted into convention internationally.
- SAARC growth is stagnated due to India Pakistan rivalry .
- The one belt one road policy of China is considered as one of the failures of Indian foreign policy
- At WTO there is a stalemate between developed and developing countries regarding food security .

- The non alignment motive of India is questioned after India signed LEMOA with US
- The social development has not improved dramatically despite India being one of the fastest economies .Human development indicators like malnutrition, poverty are still rampant in India.

### **Conclusion:-**

- Principal criterion in the conduct of foreign policy for India ought to be lifting the poor from poverty. So India's policy's single minded focus should be on economic development. Without the necessary economic strength, India cannot strengthen its military.

***Q) Discuss the role India can play in the commonwealth of nations and also, discuss why an egalitarian and an inclusive migration policy is vital for increasing the relevance of the organization.(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- Commonwealth of Nations is known as the former British Commonwealth. It consists of 53 member countries. The members have a combined population of 2.3 billion people. Hence the potential is huge.

### **Role India can play in the Commonwealth of Nations:-**

- India is already the largest member country with 26% of the Commonwealth's internal trade, to become more active, with a long-term possibility of playing a leading role.
- **Without interference from China:-**
  - India can operate without interference from China .It would help India strengthen its presence in areas where China is increasingly active, **for example in Africa where India is building a development role, and in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere such as the Pacific and Caribbean** where it could strengthen its relationship with the Commonwealth small island states.
  - It can also gain clout against one belt one road initiative of China and other important issues .
- **Vulnerable states:-**
  - Commonwealth had the added attraction that it looked after and advocated the interests of small states, including small islands. This is a category of country in the international system that is of particular interest to India.
- **Trade:-**
  - India is the top recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) from within the Commonwealth group of countries, and the second biggest source of investment after the UK.
  - Especially after BREXIT UK needs more investment and India can provide that.
- Especially in the light of raising cybercrimes and data being threatened India can gain **technology transfer** to deal with such issues and also Make in India.
- India's growing IT human capital can play a huge role in private sector of UK.

### **However many have already criticised the relevance of this organisation:-**

- The total budget was less than £50 million in 2012. With such small budgets, there is very little the organisation can do for its 53 members with diverse needs.
- Former secretary generals have all spoken of their disappointments about the incompetence of the commonwealth Secretariat.

### **Problems with current policy:-**

- **Lack of official recognition of the immigration issue and in particular over UK treatment of the so-called Windrush generation** (These are men and women who, often as children, had come to Britain between the late 1940s and early 1970s with their families, as part of post-war efforts to address intense labour shortages)

- They are being treated as undocumented migrants. In some cases they have been denied life-saving National Health Service treatment and even deported.
- **Labour mobility, a demand of businesses globally and certainly of India's IT sector**, was nowhere to be seen. Post-Brexit London is likely to welcome trade in goods from the Commonwealth, not services.
- Immigration anomaly **has left many people being denied health services**, prevented from working, and facing destitution, detention and possible deportation despite having lived in the country for decades. Thousands are encountering serious immigration problems because they have no documents.
- Currently people are advised to provide several documents as evidence for every year they have lived in the UK, **which can be very hard to gather**

**Why an egalitarian and an inclusive migration policy is necessary for increasing the relevance of the organisation:-**

- Sending a message of openness would indicate a real willingness to revisit and revitalise the organisation.
- Rising inequity can defeat the mutual goal of sustainable development
- Non-inclusive migration policy can dampen the economic growth and suffocate merit due to lack of opportunity.
- Will lead to shared prosperity and equitable development
- UK inclusive stand can lead to positive impact on change in the stance of protectionist tendencies and immigration.
- The Commonwealth remains a great platform for development aid, democratic values and educational opportunities, but its relevance is unlikely to increase unless it adopts a more egalitarian and inclusive attitude to its next generation of Commonwealth citizens.

***TOPIC: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests***

***Q) In the light of the recent developments that are taking place in the Korean peninsula, India should stop being a passive observer of the Korean geopolitical theatre. Analyse. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- The drastic changes in the Korean peninsula be it diplomacy superseding in the relations between north and south Korea, US- north Korea ready for talks raises questions about India's role in this sensitive geopolitical region.

**Yes, India needs to play a greater role:-**

- After Korea's Independence in 1945, India was chairman of a nine-member UN Commission that was set up to hold elections in Korea. **India maintained a balance between the two Koreas, even though India's diplomatic effort was marginal during those years.**
- A more active engagement with the leadership of the two Koreas **would better prepare India for potential historic changes in the region.**
- India and South Korea should have a thoroughgoing discussion on Northeast Asia. **The parties involved must break the barrier of Seoul's traditional prism of only contacting the Six-Party dialogue partners.**
  - To improve its strategic weight, South Korea needs new Asian partners beyond China. **India has always advocated for de-nuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and asked for dialogue and peaceful resolution of the crisis.**
- **Policy designs such as Sunshine Policy and Northeast Asia Peace Initiative (NAPCI)** have been the main policy directives for South Korea over the last two decades. Involving India in the Northeast Asian peace process will be instrumental in strengthening India-Korea relations.

- **The enduring regional tensions in South Asia especially between India and China create a common interest for India and South Korea to discuss a collaborative approach for regional stability.**
- Moreover, South Korea's key interest in managing their nuclear neighbour on the Korean Peninsula, is similar to **India's considerations toward Pakistan.**
- **India has relations with both the countries.**
  - South Korean company KIA is setting up a plant in India. India implemented a plan to launch a strategic initiative, "Korea Plus" to facilitate Korean FDI in India and forge larger economic cooperation in pursuit of the Act Asia Policy..
  - There is also good import-export relationship between India and North Korea .so greater involvement can be made.
- **Also regional security is threatened if Korean peninsula is unstable so India needs to play a greater role.**

#### **India needs to be a passive observer:-**

- India has been kept out of diplomatic discussions pertaining to the region so far.
- India's foreign policy is rested on the principle of non interference on the internal politics of other nations.
- Indian resources is still limited in terms of economic clout, military strength, diplomatic resources

#### **Conclusion:-**

- Global events have effect on India and world has become very integrated whole. So India needs to play a greater role to ensure its rising clout around the world and especially East Asia.

***Q) Differentiate between global order and international order. Is it in India's interest to seek or acquire greater responsibilities in the international order? Comment. (250 Words)***

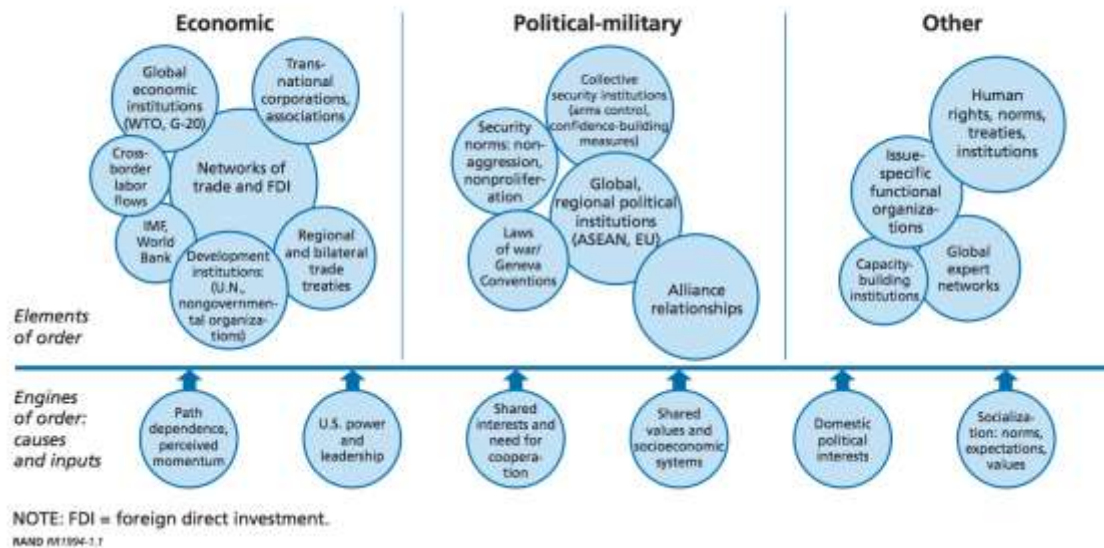
#### **Global order :-**

- The distribution of power and authority among the political actors on the global stage. It is the system controlling events in the world, especially a set of arrangements established internationally for preserving global political stability.
- The Commonwealth was the foundation of a new world order.

#### **International order :-**

- The International Order is defined as the body of rules, norms, and institutions that govern relations between the key players on the international stage. Today, this body includes a nexus of global institutions, such as the United Nations, and the World Trade Organization; bilateral and regional security organizations.
- The international order was constructed following World War II to manage geopolitical exigencies wrought by the Cold War.

## Snapshot of the Elements and Engines of the Liberal International Order

**Yes, it is in India's interest to acquire greater responsibilities:-**

- India has on numerous occasions worked with both developing and developed countries to frame rules that advance India's objectives.
- Framework conventions on climate change and tobacco control would not have been produced had India not worked behind the scenes to shape those rules. **Greater role is expected in nuclear disarmament and arms control, reforms in international institutions etc.**
- Trade negotiations from the Uruguay Round onward** have seen an India willing to concede when liberalization increases market access for Indian products. **India has had the capacity to play this role.**
- The leadership role being played by India in International solar alliance, Paris agreement even after US pulled back, being one of the fastest growing economies in the world India is ready to play greater responsibilities.
- India is already part of leadership role in the organisations like BRICS, SCO, SAARC, ASEAN etc.
- US and Western countries that lead the international order are open to meaningfully sharing power with rising powers like India.

**No:-**

- India's overriding focus on securing its periphery and improving its growth trajectory serve as constraints to higher ambitions in the international order.
- India's diffidence when dealing with crises in Syria and Libya testify to the difficulties that come with greater responsibilities.
- Occasionally, India's economic interests conflict with or complicate policy choices, as was the case when the US began to walk back on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, a move that could imperil import of crude oil from Iran.

***Q) Critically analyse whether the process of removal of judges in India needs to be revised? Also highlight the key short-comings Of Judicial Standards and Accountability bill, 2010. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Constitution has provided for the impeachment of judges on the grounds of proven misbehaviour. Removal of a Supreme Court or High Court judge is governed by Articles 124 (4) and (5) and 217 (1)

(b) and 218 of the Constitution on the ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity. This shows the judicial independence at the same time there is a need for judicial accountability.

#### **Constitutional provisions related to judicial independence:-**

- The constitution of India adopts diverse devices to ensure the independence of the judiciary in keeping with both the doctrines of constitutional and Parliamentary sovereignty.
- Article 142 provides that “the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.
  - One of the important instances of application by the Supreme Court of Article 142 was in the Union Carbide case.
- **The High Courts and Supreme Court are the only institutions that can really take on the government, and hold them to account.** It should therefore not be easy for these judges to be removed on the whims of the powers that be.
- **Other jurisdictions with similar legal systems** have also been careful to have a difficult impeachment process for the higher judiciary to discourage the executive from freely wielding the axe on judges it doesn't like, including the United Kingdom, which also requires addresses passed by special majority in the legislature.

#### **Process of removal of judges need to be revised:-**

- In the last two decades, there have been instances about **judicial impropriety**. Three notable cases concerning Justices Soumitra Sen ,P. Dinakaran Justice Ramaswamy have arisen.
- Comments by retired judges speaking about a **high percentage of impropriety in the judiciary and reports of judges being asked to resign after an in-house review** .
- With the sheer volume of such cases rising coupled with the problem of the Information Commission in India mandating disclosure of assets of all judges, **the Judiciary finds itself bearing the heat of Judicial Accountability:**
- **Method pursued by the legislature in the Act of 1968 falls abysmally short of the mark** as the same makes judges susceptible to a political process of voting which may or may not impeach judges despite a 3-member committee holding the Judge guilty. **Such an event is a travesty of natural justice as there is propensity for a ‘guilty’ judge to be let off on the whims of a political process of voting.**
- Entire process concerns **of a possibility of harming judicial independence**. This stems from a possibility of Judges being harassed to toe the ideology of a party in majority or face their wrath in an impending motion of impeachment.
- In regard to investigation and proof of misbehaviour alleged against Justice V. Ramaswami of the Supreme Court, a three-member committee was appointed under the Judges (Inquiry) Act. This committee unanimously found the charges levelled against Justice V. Ramaswami proved but the motion for his removal in the Lok Sabha failed because of political considerations.
- Major problem in the case of impeachment of High Court judged is that **these measures include those of transferring errant judges to other high courts as a form of punishment.**
- **The words “misbehaviour” or “incapacity” have neither been defined nor clarified in the Constitution.**
- The process of removing a judge is too elaborate and somewhat cumbersome.

**The judicial standards and accountability bill was brought to ensure judicial accountability however it fell short in the following issues:-**

- The **key issue is whether the balance between independence and accountability is maintained by the proposed mechanism in the Bill.** The Oversight Committee has non-judicial members which might impinge on the independence of the judiciary.
- The **Bill penalises anyone who breaches the confidentiality of complaints.** It is questionable whether a penalty is needed for a frivolous complaint that remains confidential.
- The Scrutiny Panel has judges from the same High Court. **This is different from the in-house procedure of the Supreme Court.**
- The **Oversight Committee has non-judicial members.** The procedure of the Committee is not an in-house procedure of the judiciary. It is not clear whether the power of the Oversight Committee to impose minor measures is constitutionally valid.
- The **Bill does not mention whether a judge has the right to appeal to the Supreme Court against an order of removal issued by the President** after Parliament finds him guilty of 'misbehaviour'.

#### **Way forward:-**

- However, an in-house finding may help hasten it in flagrant cases. The possibility of getting a motion passed in Parliament is brighter, and the charge of the process being misused for partisan ends is reduced. That **internal mechanisms work with due regard for institutional integrity is something that should be welcomed.**
- Most importantly, the In-House Procedure also needs to include a plan for how to deal with allegations against the CJI himself –currently the Procedure is silent on this point.
- Permanent body like **National Judicial Commission must be set up** whose composition of 5 members is shuffled every 5 year.
- The Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, the Dinesh Goswami Committee on judicial reforms and other bodies have stressed the need for effective measures to deal with misbehaviour of judges and have also suggested various ways to check the growing evil. There is an urgent need for punitive correctives in the superior judiciary.
- There needs to be some thought about giving **more teeth to the CJI when it comes to High Court judges especially perhaps by allowing him to temporarily suspend the judge themselves (rather than relying on the Chief Justice of the relevant High Court).**
  - This is not something which can be done in every instance of alleged misconduct after all, Constitution does not grant the CJI administrative powers over the High Court. However, such an order was passed in Justice Karnan's case on the judicial side, so it is a possibility.
- Introduce time limits for Parliament to deal with impeachment motions

***Q) The recent trade war between US and China signals that there are looming threats over free trade. Comment. Also discuss the implications of such trade war on developing countries like India. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Global stock markets have been rattled again by fears of a trade war between the world's two largest economies after China retaliated to US's plan to impose tariffs on up to \$60bn (£42.4bn) worth of Chinese products. This is raising questions whether free trade is threatened.

#### **Looming threats over free trade :-**

- **Instances leading to trade war are :-**
  - The US current account deficit averaged 2.5% during the seven-year period of deficit from 1984 to 1990, but **after China's entry into the WTO, the US trade deficit averaged 5.02% (2002-08).**

- China's low-cost products and rising consumption of the US led to unprecedented trade deficit of the US since 2001. **In fact, its trade deficit of \$566 billion in 2017 is the largest trade gap since 2008.**
- **US announced heavy tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from China**, which are suffering from overcapacity. Though these measures are intended to address unfair trade practices by China as reflected by the number of anti-dumping cases against China and the undervalued yuan.
- The US administration rattled market bulls by calling for 25% tariffs on \$50 billion in imports from China. China fired back with a plan to impose import duties on \$50 billion worth of American products.

#### **Trade war might not happen:-**

- Neither the U.S. nor China had announced kick-off dates for the harsher round of tariffs.
- China's imports from the U.S. come to around \$170 billion (2016 figures). America's imports from China, at nearly \$480 billion, are nearly three times as large and nearly all of these imports are consumer goods. **China simply can't afford to squeeze the U.S. with tariffs, because the U.S. has so many more imports to squeeze.**
- The United States and China are the world's two largest economies, two of the most closely integrated. **With roughly \$650 billion in goods and services flowing across the Pacific every year, the trading relationship between the U.S. and China is second in size only to that between the U.S. and Canada.**

#### **Implications of such trade war :-**

- A protectionist standoff between the U.S. and China would **drive up consumer prices in both economies** raising the likelihood that the **central bankers will raise interest rates to head off inflation.**
- **Hitting Chinese manufactures in high-technology sectors could hurt U.S. businesses** that have plants in China, where labour and manufacturing costs are lower.
  - **S. technology firms would be caught in the crossfire of a trade war**, darkening the outlook for a crucial sector already under attack for accelerating the dissemination of "fake news" and failing to safeguard users' personal data.
- **This would affect not only US businesses but also American and Chinese consumers:-**
  - Retailers such as Walmart import goods from China, so prices would go up and living standards would be squeezed.
  - And since US goods are sold worldwide, if they are reliant on parts from China, consumers here in the UK and in the rest of the world would also be affected.
  - The same applies to Chinese consumers and producers, particularly since about half of Chinese exports are made by enterprises with foreign investors.
- Trade war among major economies **would affect multilateral trading system globalisation and** disrupt global supply chains
- **Tariffs create 'deadweight' losses, encouraging production and consumption inefficiencies a net welfare loss to the US itself and to the global economy.** Also, tariffs shrink global growth.
- The imposition of tariffs on aluminium and steel inputs that have forward-linkages **will hurt competitiveness of the final goods produced in industries such as automotive**, machine tools and electronics, as was witnessed in the early 1980s when the US automotive companies lost competitiveness to their Japanese counterparts.
- **The whole integrity of WTO is at peril** because the attitude US has taken.
- **India:-**
  - Diminished US-China trade engagement could have positive results for countries such as Brazil and India from a trade perspective, at least in the short run.



- For instance in the case of soybean there could be a cascading impact in terms of openings for India to enter other markets
- In the long term, a full-fledged trade war is not good for India. It **invariably leads to a higher inflationary and low growth scenario.**
- Increase in interest rates in the US has implications for emerging economies such as India, both for the equity and debt markets.
- The three external risk factors higher tariffs, rising interest rates, and elevated bond sales will come at a time when the domestic banking system is grappling with a renewed stress of bad loans.
- US-China trade war could accelerate the transition. US companies that rely heavily on imports from China **would be forced to redesign their supply chains around tariffs. Multinationals and their suppliers would look for alternative facilities outside China.** This is bad news for China but might benefit India.

### **Conclusion:-**

- India needs to be cautious certainly must not take the lead in forging an anti-US front with China. Its strategic relationship with both the countries need to be nurtured.

***Q) Instead of unilateral military action, Syria needs an aggressive multilateral diplomacy to find an immediate end to violence and more so to find a long-lasting political solution. Comment. (250 Words)***

### **Background :-**

- A peaceful uprising against the president of Syria seven years ago has turned into a full-scale civil war and has been detrimental to the people in the region.

### **Problems with unilateral military action:-**

- Recently the U.K. and France joined hands with the U.S. to punish Mr. Assad's regime through the launch of the missiles. **This approach is only escalating the devastating, multi-sided conflict.**
- Many groups and countries are involved militarily each with their own agendas making the situation **far more complex and prolonging the fighting.** Such divisions have led both sides to commit atrocities, torn communities apart and dimmed hopes of peace.
- **The conflict has left more than 350,000 people dead,** devastated cities and drawn in other countries.
- **UN estimates 13.1 million people will require some form of humanitarian help** in Syria in 2018.
- This military approach led to displacement of millions of people moving to neighbouring countries and even to Europe leading to **refugee crisis and unrest.**
- Huge numbers of losses in livelihood, property, affected generations of children .civilian casualties, more bloodshed, need for peace, multilateral interests of different countries etc.
- Both the sides have nuclear arsenal's and **triggering the war militarily alone can even lead to third world war.**
- Multiple stakeholders are involved not just to end the war but also ensure the sustainability of livelihood for the people in these regions and improve their quality of life. **This cannot be fulfilled with military approach alone.**
- **Syrian sovereignty has been encroached by multiple actors.**

### **Why multilateral diplomacy is necessary?**

- The ground reality in Syria is so complex that a sudden collapse of the regime would push the country and the millions who live in relative stability in regime-held territories into further misery. **This can be achieved by multilateral diplomacy.**
- If long lasting solution in Syria is needed, U.S., Russia, Iran and all other involved players have to **have open diplomacy.**
- Multilateral interests are involved which can be better negotiated among all stakeholders, **initiation of peace efforts need to be done by multi diplomacy.**
- **Chances of reconciliation, relief and international monitoring is needed** to get appraisal of the ground situation.
- Diplomatic efforts have a broader perspective of **ensuring a peaceful life for the refugees and development of the nation.**

#### **Way forward:-**

- The U.S. and Russia have to work together under a UN mandate and with Syria government to establish the democratic government.
- Need of the hour is providing the relief to the people on the humanitarian ground, monitoring of the situation by international organisations and UN intervention.

***Q) Despite immense potential of EU-India Broad-based Trade & Investment Agreement (BTIA), the Agreement has been in limbo for a long time now. Discuss the issues that hinder its finalisation.(250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Since 2007, India and the European Union have been negotiating a comprehensive free trade agreement officially known as Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) covering trade in goods and services besides rules pertaining to cross-border investments, competition policy, government procurement and state aid.
- This legally binding agreement would cover almost a fifth of the world population and, therefore, its impact and implications (both positive and negative) would be significant.
- At a time when the US protectionism is on the rise, it makes sense to push forward for the early revival and conclusion of the negotiations which have been stalled for long.

#### **Potential of EU-India broad based trade and investment agreement :-**

- The EU (excluding the UK) is India's largest trading partner, with total bilateral trade of around \$77 billion (FY17), accounting for almost 12% of India's total trade. The BTIA can only further the numbers.
- The **EU is concerned about China flooding global markets with inexpensive steel** and the strength of China's relationship with EU member states themselves is heterogeneous, with China trying to make inroads into Eastern and Central Europe through infrastructure investments. **This makes it vital for India to cement its bonds with the EU further.**
- With **around €100 billion** in bilateral goods and services trade last year, India and the EU have a lot to gain from a trade deal.
- **Services sector in Indian economy:-**
  - **India seeks improved market access Mode 1 (ITeS/BPO/KPO) and Mode 4 (movement of software professionals).** There are many barriers to movement of professionals including cumbersome rules on work permits, wage parity conditions, visa formalities and non-recognition of professional qualifications. **These rules also vary across different European countries that India would want harmonised and relaxed access to.**

- **India also seeks data secure status as the high cost of compliance with the existing data protection laws and procedures renders many of its backend service providers uncompetitive.**
- **EU's thrust areas**
  - **The EU seeks further liberalisation of FDI in multi-brand retail and insurance, and opening up of the currently closed sectors such as accountancy and legal services.**
  - **European banks have been eyeing India's relatively under-tapped banking space**, but are wary of the restrictive rules on priority sector lending and obligation on financial inclusion.
  - **EU wants India's import duties on wines and spirits and dairy products substantially reduced, and also on automobiles.**

#### **Issues causing delay to sign the agreement are:-**

- **Differences on intellectual property rights (IPR)**
  - India fears that any commitment over and above the WTO's intellectual property rights (TRIPS, or Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) will undermine its capacity to produce generic formulations
  - Further, data exclusivity measures (which allow pharmaceutical companies to exclusively retain rights to their clinical test results for a certain time period) would delay the production of generic medicines. **That explains India's strong opposition to the proposal.**
  - EU is not granting "data secure" certification to India- a condition that facilitates the cross-border transfer of personal data, key to a number of companies' services, especially in the IT industry.
- **Trade in agriculture and food items:-**
  - There is a fear that the EU dairy products will flood Indian markets if import duties are reduced.
  - India wants the EU to cut its agricultural subsidies while the EU has interests in India reducing its duties on dairy products, poultry, farm and fisheries.
  - Thus, both India and the EU have strong defensive interests with respect to agriculture and food items, which would be difficult to reconcile.
- **India wants a greater ease of movement of temporary skilled workers** to provide services in the EU and the EU wanting greater market access for its automobiles and its wines and spirits.
  - There were efforts to harmonise rules on work permits and visas across the union, but they have met with limited success. Moreover, the recent surge in populist sentiments against immigration has reduced policy space for ceding ground on Mode 4.
- **The lack of political will on FDI in retail in India** and lack of willingness to open Indian legal services for European law firms undermine India's negotiating capacity on critical issues.
- **India's automobile companies** fear that reduced duties on cars under the EU-India BTIA will impact their market share and flood India with coveted European cars. Besides, European automakers will have no incentive to set up a local manufacturing base in India.
- **Disagreement on whether the protection of foreign investments will be part of the BTIA or** dealt with in a stand-alone treaty.
- The EU is also seeking greater market access in the services sector, particularly banking, retail trade, telecommunications, legal and accounting services.
- India has also expressed its opposition to the inclusion of sustainable development issues related to labour and environment under the proposed agreement.

#### **Way forward:-**

- Improving India's investment climate is a better way to promote investment and job opportunities.
- Similarly, strengthening its IPR regime will help attract more FDI and aid R&D. India shouldn't press on clauses like exhausting domestic legal remedies before proceeding for international arbitration under its investment rules.

- The, EU, too needs to be flexible on its demand for TRIP+ rules that encourage ever-greening and hurt the cause of innovation.

### **Conclusion:-**

- Both India and the EU have enough trade complementarities and can gain a lot by opening up their respective markets. With the eventual phasing out of export subsidy schemes, India will need preferential access to the large European market to maintain or improve its comparative tariff advantages that can come through a free trade pact with the EU

***Q) Critically examine whether India needs to maintain a policy of strategic non alignment between USA and China to avoid becoming a swing state. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- In the current geopolitical situation where China and US are at extreme ends and crisis being triggered every day for instance the recent step of imposition of tariffs taken by US and China responding has become complicated for India. India have the following three options :-

### **Nonalignment:-**

- India should stick to a new version of non-alignment where it can maintain equidistance from both China and the US. This will **help India avoid becoming a pawn in a bigger US-China war.**
- The policy of strategic autonomy recommended that India should not take sides in the rivalry between China and the U.S. The report emphasised that **for its strategic and foreign policy to be successful, India must sustain domestic economic growth, social inclusion and democracy.**
- Economic agreements with both the countries can materialise well if India follows the approach
- **Concerns with this approach:-**
  - It fails to address the scenario where the dispute like Doklam standoff is not between the US and China but between India and China.
  - Equidistance from both the US and China will have to be artificially manufactured because it does not exist naturally. India has a territorial dispute with China, not with the US.
  - The US supports India's elevation in the UN and the NSG, China doesn't.
  - India is raising a mountain strike corps to fight the People's Liberation Army, not the US military. **It is, therefore, monumentally not wise to talk of equidistance here.**

### **India being close to Chinese camp:-**

- **Recent efforts by China can be beneficial for India:-**
  - China helped in **grey-listing Pakistan at the financial action task force (FATF) to combat money laundering and terrorist financing**
  - Recently, **China and India have initiated discussions to jointly use their leverage in oil price negotiations.**
- The two countries have an **enviable track record of cooperation in global climate change negotiations.**
- The border dispute can be resolved amicably.
- The peace settlement between India and Pakistan can be a reality.
- Greater voice for India in international platforms.
- **Challenges remain:-**
  - China has refused to accommodate India's interests in other spheres.
  - India was disappointed with the outcome of the latest joint economic group (JEG) meeting where Beijing yet again failed to take seriously **India's concern on rising bilateral trade imbalance and lack of market access for Indian goods in China.**
  - India has, once again, taken up the issue of its entry into the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) with China but a breakthrough seems far away.**

- **China has been insisting on simultaneous entry of India and Pakistan into the NSG** and is unlikely to budge from that position.

#### **American camp:-**

- **External balancing through a close US partnership is essential for India.** External balancing may also **help build India's own capabilities through cooperation on defence production.**
- **In order to be assertive against aggressive China India** has joined the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, **a coalition seen by many as a counterforce to China's rise in the Indo-Pacific.**
- The India-U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement was in this respect truly the "game changer". India came to be seen as a positive, stabilising influence as far as the global and the regional environment was concerned. **Non-alignment clearly had no place in this milieu.**
- India has many benefits in many fields:-
  - Defence
  - Civil aviation: C-17 Globemaster-III strategic airlift aircraft, and M777 ultra-light howitzers
  - Education
  - Technology etc
- China's more assertive posturing on the global stage is helping drive India and the U.S. together. Both the countries are wary of China's rising naval presence in the Indian Ocean.
- India continues to have territorial disputes with China like Doklam standoff
- **However some concerns are put forward:-**
  - With US India affinity increasing Russia is drifting away from India and the emergence of a Russia-China-Pakistan trilateral can take place.
  - In Institutions like BRICS & SAARC, India will lose its say.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- A partnership of near equals like IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) with similar interests without any ideological conflict is probably the best model to follow.
- Something on the lines of the G-15 organised by India and like-minded countries some years ago could be put together with the objective of dealing with the kind of issues like climate change, terrorism and protectionism.
- **The members may have links with the U.S., China and Russia, but should be able to work together without the undue influence of the three.**

***Q) India's should have a proactive engagement with Nordic countries and seek their cooperation in achieving shared commitments and interests. Critically analyse. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- As India engages advanced economies in Europe and elsewhere in a bid to derive investment, technology, commercial contacts, immigration and education privileges, and other benefits, **the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland) arguably have something more important to offer. For both political and economic reasons, the Nordic Model provides India a worthy object of study.**
- Nordics do not see themselves as a mere sub-region of Europe. They value their own unique international identity.

#### **Shared commitments and interests between India and Nordic countries :-**

- **When India was non-aligned, Sweden was neutral.**
- Both **championed decolonisation** and a more just global order.
- India and Sweden led the campaign for **nuclear arms control and disarmament.**

- The **idea of mediating conflicts**, which is very much part of the India's internal and international experience, is quite dear to the Nordics

#### **India will benefit because:-**

- **Defence:-**
  - **Sweden might be neutral but it always had strong defence industry** and possibility with an aerospace partnership around the sale of **Gripen fighter aircraft to India.**
- **Innovation:-**
  - India is in the hope of igniting the innovation revolution in India and the Nordic region is an impressive champion of technological innovation.
  - As a region that helped advance the idea of an efficient welfare state, the Norden can be **important partner for India's own experiments to strengthen its social sector through technological and policy innovation**
- **Sustainability:-**
  - Nordic countries have built some of the world's most sustainable, smart and attractive cities. The Nordic countries are frontrunners in relation to sustainable urban development and efficient land use. Creative and innovative Nordic forces are thriving, particularly within the fields of design, architecture and landscape planning. **This can help in the success of smart cities.**
  - The Swedish government will be providing more than \$59 million for innovation cooperation with India in the field of smart cities and sustainability
- Sweden has been a strong supporter of **India's "Make in India" campaign too.**
- **Cyber security:-**
  - When India is being the victim of cyber-attacks, India and Sweden have decided to set up a common task force on cyber security and are working towards finalizing a bilateral agreement on exchange.
- **International:-**
  - India received key support from the Nordic countries for its membership of the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)** and a seat at the **United Nations Security Council** as a permanent member.
  - **The NSG support from the Nordic states is particularly significant because there was a time when these states had adopted a strong moralistic approach on India's nuclear programme.**
  - Today, there is a recognition and acceptance of India's credentials as a responsible nuclear actor **despite not being a formal member of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT).**
- Nordic countries perform exceptionally well in the human development indicators and strive for a welfare state .India can learn from them.
- With the Joint Action Plan, meanwhile, the two nations will try to enhance cooperation in key areas of **renewable energy, women's skills development and empowerment, space and science, and health and life sciences.**
- **Issues such as trade, growth, global security, smart cities, renewable energy, climate change , maritime solutions, port modernisation, food processing, health, life-sciences and agriculture were also on the agenda of India's broader engagement with the Nordic countries.**
- Both sides work towards **supporting free trade as a catalyst for achieving inclusive growth** and realising the **Sustainable Development Goals** at a time when major economic powers are becoming protectionist and tariff wars are becoming the new normal.
- **Skill :-**
  - Nordic countries have very less population Indians can use their IT platforms to manage the skill demand in these countries through INSTC etc.

#### **Concerns:-**

- **Past disturbances:-**

- A citizen of Denmark involved in an arms drop in West Bengal in 1995 became the subject of an extradition dispute that coloured India's relations with that country.
- More recently, India and Norway expressed differences over a child welfare spat involving an Indian couple.
- India's concerns with trade liberalisation as it wants to protect its farmers.
- Distance is a concern and people- people contact is minimal.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- As India redefines its foreign policy priorities in Europe and as a changing Europe comes to terms with a rising India, India's engagement with the Nordic states has immense potential.

***Q) Despite the historical hesitations, a rejuvenated Commonwealth would lend greater depth to India's global outreach. Analyze (250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Indian Prime minister's visit to the CHOGM summit recently had reaffirmed India's commitment to a strong India-UK partnership.
- The UK is India's fourth largest inward investor and the Indian diaspora in the UK of around 1.5 million is not only one of the largest ethnic minority communities but also one of the most productive, contributing around 6 percent to the country's GDP.

#### **Historical hesitations:-**

- Though Jawaharlal Nehru decided to join the Commonwealth as he viewed it as a platform where India could develop connections with other erstwhile colonies as well as partly to balance Pakistan, his **successors did not seem to be particularly interested in the grouping and viewed it largely as a colonial relic.**
- India's growing divergence with Britain and the West during the Cold War and an inward economic orientation severely limited India's possibilities with the forum.
- As Britain itself turned to Europe, the Commonwealth began to lose much of its lustre in London.
- When India opened up to the world, politically and economically, after the Cold War, India could have made something out of the Commonwealth. **But with its focus on the US and China on the one hand and South Asia on the other, the Commonwealth simply fell off India's mental map.**

#### **Commonwealth will lend greater depth to global outreach:-**

- **Global interests:-**
  - India is already playing major role in international forums and its global interests are expanding .So India must make the best use of all available multilateral forums, including the Commonwealth.
  - It can become a platform to demonstrate its leadership credentials. From trade and security, from connectivity to global governance, there are enough opportunities to tap into.
- **Economic:-**
  - As the soon-to-be largest economy in the forum, India can significantly increase its levels of economic assistance, give more to the maintenance of the Secretariat, boost the current efforts on capacity building, and above all, **open its economy to facilitate trade liberalisation across the Commonwealth.**

- Promoting trade and development cooperation among members including support for Small Island, developing and least-developed countries and collective measures by members against the removal of democratically elected governments by unlawful means.
- **No Chinese interference:-**
  - Commonwealth will be one platform where Chinese presence will not hinder Indian ambitions. Taking leadership at this platform will help India project a sense of seriousness about its growing global profile.
  - It would help India strengthen its presence in areas where China is increasingly active, **for example in Africa where India is building a development role, and in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere such as the Pacific and Caribbean** where it could strengthen its relationship with the Commonwealth small island states.
  - It can also gain clout against one belt one road initiative of China and other important issues.
- **Fight for other states:-**
  - India is home to 60 percent of the Commonwealth's population (and a substantial number of people of Indian descent live in other member states), and one-quarter of intra-Commonwealth trade involves the country.
  - **Consequently, India is the most obvious member to lead a revitalization process to serve not only its own interests but also the interests of other countries** who want the Commonwealth to emerge as one of many poles in a nonhegemonic regional and global order.
- **UN permanent seat:-**
  - The aspiration for India to take a more prominent place in international institutions manifests principally in its bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council gets impetus with a more prominent role in the Commonwealth would fit well with this aspiration..
- **Asia pacific:-**
  - India could weigh the option of forming a distinct subgroup of Asia Pacific countries; there are eighteen such countries in the Commonwealth. Further, **India could become an economic bridge between the Asia Pacific subregional cooperation to enhance economic and trade relationships with the nineteen African members of the Commonwealth.**
  - **A greater Asia-Pacific orientation to the Commonwealth could buttress India's effort to balance China.** The Commonwealth could provide a discrete, viable platform to bring together Asian and South Pacific countries on security and economic issues.
  - It offers a great deal in terms of furthering meaningful cooperation in the areas of counterterrorism, maritime security, and combating organized crime and money laundering—all of which are critical to India's future security needs.
- By piloting and participating in a collaborative effort to reinvent the Commonwealth for the twenty-first century, it can demonstrate its collegial and consultative leadership style.

### Concerns:-

- Many British intellectuals are deriding London's new enthusiasm for the Commonwealth as **mere nostalgia for the colonial era**. They warn against the illusion that the Commonwealth can be a substitute for the European Union.
- The total budget was less than £50 million in 2012. With such small budgets, there is very little the organisation can do for its 53 members with diverse needs.



- Former secretary generals have all spoken of their disappointments about the incompetence of the commonwealth Secretariat.
- **Labour mobility, a demand of businesses globally and certainly of India's IT sector**, was nowhere to be seen. Post-Brexit London is likely to welcome trade in goods from the Commonwealth, not services.

### Way forward:-

- Commonwealth needs a focus on bringing greater economic prosperity for the peoples of the forum through an enhanced trade and investment relationship.
- The Commonwealth could devote considerable energies towards the promotion of sustainable development and maritime security, which pose existential challenges to the many small and island states in the forum.
- The Commonwealth can become more valuable to its member states if it directs its aid and assistance to a few major priority areas rather than spreading its resources on a range of issues.
- The Commonwealth remains a great platform for development aid, democratic values and educational opportunities, but its relevance is unlikely to increase unless it adopts a more egalitarian and inclusive attitude to its next generation of Commonwealth citizens.

### Conclusion:-

- The younger generation in India have no connect to the idea of the Commonwealth. India has an opportunity to reinvent the very idea of the Commonwealth in India's image.

***Q) There is an urgent need for cooperation in the field of regulation, amongst the medicine regulatory agencies of the BRICS countries. Analyse.(250 words)***

### Background:-

- The potential role of BRICS in the promotion of universal health coverage an umbrella goal for health in the post-2015 development framework in the international arena have risen enormously in recent decades.
- BRICS countries represent around 25% of the world's gross national income, more than 40% of the world's population and about 40% of the global burden of disease.
- Although great attention has been paid to their economic performance, less widely noted is the fact that they are also well positioned to exert a significant influence on global health.
- Inter-BRICS health cooperation is gaining momentum and represents a promising channel for improving health as illustrated by the yearly meetings of their ministers of health. Such cooperation provides the countries with a valuable platform to share their experiences and to work together to address key public health issues, including neglected tropical diseases.

### Why is there the need for cooperation in the field of regulation amongst medicine regulatory agencies:-

- **The increasing internationalization of the medical profession raises the issue of safeguarding the practice of medicine and the use of the medical workforce.** These years, medical education is showing trends that also **dominate other fields of higher education.**
- Within the framework of internationalization, globalization, and cross-border education, and driven by the **development of information and communication technology as**

**well as by pronounced migration of medical doctors**, there are economic and managerial consequences such as commercialization and privatization in a variegated mix of for-profit and not-for-profit providers.

- Potential role for BRICS in the development **of universal health coverage**. In 2012, BRICS countries stressed the importance of universal health coverage as an essential instrument for the achievement of the right to health.
- BRICS countries **vary greatly in terms of their burdens of disease, health systems, interests in the global pharmaceutical trade, engagement in the international arena and much else**.
- The emergence of BRICS as a distinct entity with increasing levels of multinational coordination in health and other activities is **applying pressure to both the existing and emerging mechanisms and processes of global governance**.
  - Some nations that once provided such leadership have largely withdrawn and this has left a gap that BRICS could conceivably fill.
- Brazil, China and India are leading in the **manufacturing of low-cost medicines and vaccines**.
- **Health issues:-**
  - BRICS continue to **face major health problems**. Although life expectancy has improved, **non-communicable diseases** have increased significantly in these countries.
  - BRICS account for half of the 8.6 million people developing tuberculosis every year. The BRICS countries could serve as sources of innovative ideas to develop and advance key areas of TB and MDR TB control.
  - To cope with global health challenges, such as common chronic non communicable diseases including cancer and cardiovascular diseases, and increasing medical costs, different countries need to integrate traditional medicine into the their modern medical and healthcare systems.
- Movement of physicians into and out of countries is inevitably a factor in determining the content of licensing provisions both in regard to the maintenance of internal standards for immigrating physicians and in ensuring that internal national licensing standards are acceptable elsewhere.
- **International cooperation is the key to enhancing the role of medical regulatory authorities as the primary vehicle for public protection in health care**. The BRICS Countries medical regulators somehow have not been able to live up to the expectations of coming together as a cohesive unit in terms of accepting these challenges.
- **Traditional medicine:-**
  - Development of co-operation in the sphere of traditional medicine within the BRICS space is a result of evolutionary processes in politics and economics, as well as confirmation of the effectiveness of traditional medicine from the positions of modern science
  - Support for development of traditional medicine by the Countries governments is also dictated by the interests of carrying for their citizens health and complies with the relevant WHO Strategy
- BRIC nations play an increasingly important role in funding cooperative health projects in developing countries.
- **Their growing economies have lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty**. Marked improvements have also taken place in health outcomes, and substantial progress made towards achieving the sustainable Development Goals.
  - Strengthened surveillance systems, as part of robust health and service management information systems, will be indispensable for managing services as well as for ensuring accountability and transparency in the health systems of the future.
  - Medical technologies and health technologies for communicable diseases will determine not only much of the innovative potential of personal and population health services to improve the health of future generations, but also the cost of those services.

- Drug discovery and development is also responsible for another substantial part of the affordability and equity equations.

#### Steps already taken :-

- BRICS' ministers of health met for the first time in Beijing in July 2011 to discuss their role in providing wider access to quality and affordable drugs around the world. They signed the Beijing declaration, which called for collaboration with international health organizations, as well as with each other.
- **Understand the medical regulatory systems of these diverse countries and to proceed with the comparative analysis.**
  - The Centre for Health Policy and Planning (CHPP) has undertaken the study for the purposes of increasing the level of understanding and identify similarities and differences amongst medical regulation in the India and in other similar regulatory jurisdictions which shall further help CHPP in developing the policy towards further strengthening the collaborations between the BRICS countries.
- The government recently gave its nod to the signing of a pact with medicine regulatory agencies of BRICS nations on cooperation in the field of regulation of medical products for human use.
  - The MoU would facilitate better understanding about the regulatory aspects between the parties and could help in increasing India's export of medical products to BRICS countries

#### Conclusion:-

- At the global level they offer a solid distinctive voice and perspective on global health. For these countries, health is an essential element in social and economic development and they are becoming increasingly important partners in international development. **BRICS are truly contributing to reshaping the international health-cooperation landscape.**

*TOPIC: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.*

***Q) Discuss the significance of the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act (CLOUD Act) for India which was recently signed by the US President. (250 Words)***

#### CLOUD act:-

- The CLOUD Act (Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data) is a set of regulations handling how data stored in one country can be accessed by an entity in a different country
- It will enable the U.S. government to enter into agreements with like-minded states for cross-border data sharing.

#### Significance:-

- With the enactment of the CLOUD Act, an Indian officer for the purposes of an investigation will no longer have to make a request to the U.S. government but can **approach the company directly.**
- India in the first half of 2017 requested data from Facebook 9,853 times, of which only 54.3% were met. Over the years, requests from Indian law enforcement to American service providers have been on a steady rise. **This act makes the process easier** and would also limit the activities similar to Cambridge Analytica in future.
- **Cross-border crimes such as cases of online radicalisation** would require agents to access data that are stored abroad. The act helps enforcement agencies to solve the crime fast.
- It reflects a **growing consensus in favour of protecting Internet users around the world** and provides a logical solution for governing cross-border access to data.
- Introduction of this bipartisan legislation is an important **step toward enhancing and protecting individual privacy rights, reducing international conflicts of law** and keeping us all safer.

#### Concerns:-

- Among many commitments, to qualify for an executive agreement, **India will need to ensure that its authorities collect, retain, use and share data as per an established procedure.**
- In addition, Indian laws must provide for electronic data requests to be reviewed by a court or other independent authority. **As of now, India falls short of these requirements.**
- Concerns are raised that **this will erode privacy protections around the globe.**

#### **Conclusion:-**

- Passage of the CLOUD Act, therefore, sets the stage for ongoing public debates about privacy and human rights standards for government access to data. It provides an opportunity to promote improvements in privacy and human rights practices with partner nations around the globe.

***Q) Intensification of trade war between US and China offers many benefits to countries like India but it also poses certain serious threats to our economy. Analyse. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- The US administration rattled market bulls by calling for 25% tariffs on \$50 billion in imports from China. China fired back with a plan to impose import duties on \$50 billion worth of American products.
- This led to questions that trade war between America and China is in line.

#### **Benefits:-**

- Diminished US-China trade engagement could have positive results for countries such as Brazil and India from a trade perspective, at least in the short run.
  - For instance in the case of soybean there could be a cascading impact in terms of openings for India to enter other markets
- US-China trade war could accelerate the transition. US companies that rely heavily on imports from China **would be forced to redesign their supply chains around tariffs.**
  - **Multinationals and their suppliers would look for alternative facilities outside China.** This is bad news for China but might benefit India.
- Even if tariff walls went up, India's large market and relatively swift growth would force multinationals who wanted a piece of that **growth to manufacture locally.**
- India would receive a **large boost from a China on the hunt for new supply chains.**
- If China goes ahead with its proposal to slap a 25 per cent tariff on polyethylene and liquid propane, which were among 106 American goods targeted, **buyers in the Asian nation may look elsewhere for alternatives to pricier US supplies. And the energy-rich Middle East with plenty of petrochemical supplies looks well-suited to meet the substitution requirements.**

#### **Threats :-**

- In the long term, a full-fledged trade war is not good for India. It **invariably leads to a higher inflationary and low growth scenario.**
- Increase in interest rates in the US has implications for emerging economies such as India, both for the equity and debt markets.
  - Higher interest rates do make the option of investors borrowing cheap money in the US and investing in Indian equities significantly less attractive.
- The three external risk factors **higher tariffs, rising interest rates, and elevated bond sales** will come at a time when the domestic banking system is grappling with a renewed stress of bad loans.
- India cannot grow on a sustained basis until it exports and free trade is in existence. With the trade war free trade might affect global economy and in turn India's as well.
  - **The whole integrity of WTO is at peril** because the attitude US has taken.
- Trade war among major economies **would affect multilateral trading system globalisation and** disrupt global supply chains.

- A blow to Chinese exports could ripple through the supply chains that stretch across the region, robbing other economies of growth opportunities and jobs.

### **Conclusion:-**

- US and China need to negotiate the issue amicably and not put the free trade under threat as this would not affect other economies but also their own too.

### ***TOPIC: Devolution of power and finances upto local levels and challenges therein***

***Q) "No panchayati Raj is better than bad panchayati raj". On the occasion of silver Jubilee year of panchayati Raj, discuss we have true democratic decentralization.(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- Twenty-five years have gone by since India passed the 73rd/74th Constitutional Amendments (CAs) heralding decentralised governance, and 23 years since all the States passed the conformity legislations ushering in the third tier of government in Indian federal polity. This was a momentous event, a paradigm shift in democratic governance and fiscal federalism.
- The rationale for decentralisation comes from the need to strengthen participatory democracy, facilitate responsive governance, ensure greater accountability and enable public service delivery according to diversified preferences of the people.

### **Positives:-**

- The 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution (1992) clearly prescribes that the Panchayats should be institutions of self-government through **which powers are devolved to the people as to the participation in the process of planning for economic development and social justice, and implementation of schemes and programmes for these purposes**
- Decentralization of power to the panchayats is **seen visualized as a means of empowering people and involving them in decision making process**. Local governments being closer to the people can be more receptive to local needs and can make better use of resources.
- Many of **the grassroots representatives are from the subjugated** and marginalized sections of the society, namely women, the SCs, STs and OBCs
- Now the **state has to perform its role as coordinator rather than service provider**, steps for decentralization of power till the grassroots level is a positive step in the changing scenario in which centralised state is replaced by the decentralized system
- The constitution mandates a one-third reservation for women in panchayat assemblies and allocates a portion of panchayat spending for **women's planning**.
- The new system brings all those who are interested to have voice in decision making through their participation in PRIs.
- **Gram sabha** played a significant role in enhancing the transparency and accountability of panchayats
- Kerala showed the way **in activity mapping** and amended the Panchayat and Municipality Acts as early as 1998.

### **Issues:-**

- After a quarter century of decentralisation, **local expenditure as a percentage of GDP is only 2 per cent** compared with the OECD (14 per cent), China (11 per cent), and Brazil (7 per cent).
- As the constitutional amendments do not provide a separate list for local governments, the Eleventh Schedule that lists 29 subjects for PRIs, and the Twelfth Schedule with 18 subjects for urban local governments, **carry no operational meaning because almost all local functions are State-Concurrent**.
- **Role of states:-**

- Core functions like water supply, sanitation, link roads, street lighting, maintenance of community assets, etc, **continue to be in the hands of State governments.**
- The MPLAD and MLALAD (local area development) continue to bypass local governments.
- The **mission-based administration of schemes by some States (Gujarat, Kerala) dampen the smooth growth of democratic decentralisation.**
- States like Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan abolished local taxes. Haryana created a rural development agency under the chief minister.
- The constitutional framework does not prescribe any pattern, standard or model of decentralisation which again is left to the discretion of State governments.
- Most States have not complied with the requirement of having to appoint gram sabhas (243 A), ward committees (243 sabhas) and metropolitan planning committees. **There have been several attempts to postpone elections** though they are required to hold them well before the expiry of the prevailing elected or before six months.
- **The mandate to establish a district planning committee to prepare a draft development plan has been violated and distorted in most States.** In all States, parallel bodies encroach on the functional domain of local governments and continue to grow unchecked.
- **Vulnerable sections:-**
  - **Empowerment of women and inclusion with dignity of the excluded (inclusion on the terms of the excluded) is a distant dream** despite a quarter century of decentralised governance. Women, adivasis and dalits remain largely excluded.
  - In some places in Tamil Nadu, for instance, rich and powerful caste Hindu groups either forced Dalit aspirants to keep off the polls, or fielded handpicked farm workers as candidates, or 'auctioned' the PRI posts to the highest bidder.
  - Majority of panchayat presidents are ignorant about the need to fight untouchability.
  - Women sarpanches often act as proxies of their male counterparts
- **Financial control:-**
  - **India lacks a credible financial reporting system** when it comes to local governments. The Union and State budgets are vital instruments of financial control and management.
  - **State Finance Commissions**, a counterpart of the Union Finance Commission, are not independent bodies in most States.
  - The Constitution assigns decentralisation including funding entirely to the discretion of State governments. **It does not clearly assign the functions or sources of finance, but leaves it entirely to the discretion of the States.**
  - While this may be to evolve the system of decentralisation appropriate to a State considering the strength of its history, economy and capacity, **it also hinders the process.**
  - The State legislatures are required to make laws to ensure maintenance of accounts and auditing of such accounts by panchayats and municipalities. **The record of experience is that these provisions have been observed in their violation rather than compliance in most of the States.**
  - local bodies do not have any independent revenues. There is no separate list of tax bases assigned to them in the Constitution and they have to depend on the State governments to levy the taxes that the States choose to devolve.
  - There is also the problem of administrative capacity and interest groups resisting payment of taxes and user charges.
- Many panchayats do **not have basic amenities and lack infrastructure** to carry out even day-to-day works.

### Way forward:-

- Clarity in the assignment of functions and the local governments should have clear and independent sources of finance.
- There should be clear mechanisms to ensure that States comply with the constitutional provisions, particularly in the appointment and implementation of the recommendations of the SFCs.
- Sustainable decentralisation comes from the demands of the people and advocacy should focus on a decentralisation agenda. **Indeed, the framework needs to be evolved to accommodate the demand for decentralisation.**
- Only education and knowledge, and pro-active interventions by emancipatory socio-political movements, can help achieve this. **The media can also play a significant agenda-building role in bringing this about.**
- In the NREGA programme, 40% of the money allocated is for the material component, whereas the remaining 60% is for salaries. These funds are available with the states and can be used to build panchayat bhavans

## GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 3

*TOPIC: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.*

***Q) What do you understand by unpublished price-sensitive information (UPSI). Discuss the steps taken by the SEBI in preventing trading based on UPSI. Also discuss further measures needed to prevent trading based on UPSI. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Trading based on unpublished price sensitive information is among the most serious offences in the stock market.
- Sebi has stepped up on improving its surveillance mechanism after prescient messages, related to the financial results of several blue-chip companies, including Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and Tata Motors, were being circulated on WhatsApp.

**Unpublished price sensitive information:-**

- Any information which is of concern directly or indirectly to a company which is not generally known or published by such company for general information but which after publishing is likely to materially affect the price of its securities in the market shall be considered as unpublished price sensitive information.
- In accordance with the said Regulation “no insider” shall either on his own behalf or on behalf of any other person shall deal in securities of a company listed on any Stock Exchange on the basis of any unpublished price sensitive information

**Steps taken by SEBI to prevent trading based on UPSI:-**

- **Sebi has conducted massive search and seizure operations on persons directly or indirectly connected to these companies whose earnings were leaked.**
- **Besides, it had also put out advisory and asked companies involved to conduct an internal enquiry against people in possession of the information**
- SEBI is working on **formalising information sharing with other enforcement agencies** armed with advanced technologies.
- The regulator is also building techniques to scan social media platforms and nab those benefitting from the stock market by trading based on insider tip-offs.

**Concerns:-**

- Experts said innovative practices were essential as the violators were often intelligent to not leave any trace on formal channels. **Although the regulator is aware of several such manipulations, establishing a connection with some insiders becomes a challenge.**

**Measures further needed are :-**

- The importance of fair trading should never be neglected as when the trust is broken down the effect on markets would be rampant.
- **It is proposed to introduce measures to address the issue of major announcements by listed companies so as to reduce the element of uncertainty in the market** and to dis-incentivise misuse of UPSI by insiders,
- **Sebi is planning to use analytical and statistical tools, such as artificial intelligence,** to establish the link between those passing sensitive information and the ones trading based on it.
- **Sebi is considering making changes in the legal framework to mandate market intermediaries,** such as stock exchanges and brokers, to carry out necessary surveillance of client trading activity.
- **Based on Viswanathan committee suggestions :-**



- **SEBI is considering asking companies to frame a policy on how to handle unpublished price-sensitive information, or UPSI, and convey the policy to employees;** monitor big share price changes before important events like earnings releases
- Conduct background checks on employees dealing with such information
- Identify people involved in major deals and ensure information given to junior or external teams is on a need-to-know basis
- Create separate work spaces with secured access for those preparing and discussing issues that are price-sensitive.
- Considering changes to the so-called model code of conduct. The code includes the principles a company must follow to prevent insider trading and leakage of price-sensitive information.
  - This (rule changes) also assumes importance as most of the companies under (WhatsApp) probe have so far not identified the source of the leak.
- Committee has suggested some short- and medium-term measures for improved surveillance of the market, as well as issues of high frequency trades, harnessing of technology and use of analytics in surveillance.

***Q) Employment generation has been the core of India's policy making in recent years and a number of initiatives have been taken by the government in this regard. Discuss in the light of 2018 budget proposals. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- A recent World Bank report had sent alarm bells ringing in the country claiming that over 30% of India's population aged between 15 and 29 years are NEETs (Not in education, employment or training). India is increasingly focusing on job creation.

#### **Employment generation has been the core of India's policy making :-**

- 2018 budget proposals :-
  - The two new initiatives under **the Ayushman Bharat programme-setting up of 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres and the flagship National Health Protection Scheme**-are not only expected to address health care but also "generate lakhs of jobs, particularly for women.
  - **Proposed to set a target of Rs 3 lakh crore for lending under MUDRA for 2018-19** after having successfully exceeded the targets in all previous years. **The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, which provides access to institutional finance to small business units and entrepreneurs, has already led to 5.5 crore jobs** since its launch in 2015.
    - The big budgetary support positively affects textile units and helps them gain back the momentum needed to create more jobs and value addition.
  - **Government will contribute 12% of the wages of the new employees in the EPF for all the sectors-instead of a select few at present-for next three years.**
    - To incentivize employment of more women and to enable higher take-home wages, the Budget has also proposed to amend the EPF Act to reduce women employees contribution to 8% for first three years of their employment while the employer's contribution will continue at 12%.
  - **The facility of fixed term employment** moreover will now be extended to all sectors (instead of just apparel and footwear sector). This will help in bringing more employees in the formal sector to some extent and increase job creation.
  - Budget has announced that **the Government will set up a model aspirational skill center in every district of the country under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra Programme.**
  - Enhancing infra spending, creating rural markets, giving tax sops to small industries

- The **proposal to increase agricultural credit by 10%** to Rs 11 lakh crore and a host of other policies, along with allocation for rural economy, would revive demand and create opportunities for the MSME sector, crucial for jobs and growth.
- **Lowering the Corporate tax for Companies with turnover upto 250 crores** would facilitate companies with surplus revenue that would help them in expanding and generating employment.
- There were **many initiatives taken to boost agricultural sector** through operation green to achieve the target if doubling the farmers income

#### **Concerns:-**

- To create quick jobs, the budget mentioned that the government is rolling out fixed-term contractual jobs across industry segments. **Some experts say this will fuel the so-called hire-and-fire system.**
- **Reducing the EPF contribution should not have been done.** This is a compulsory saving that is a very good support in the long run as it has an EEE (exempt, exempt, exempt) tax treatment.
- **An industrial and trade policy is needed.** For 20 years after economic reforms began in 1991 there was no National Manufacturing Policy, and the Policy, when it came in 2011, was not even implemented.

#### **Way forward:-**

- There should be **cluster development** to support job creation in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- **Align urban development with manufacturing clusters to create jobs.** AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) is aimed at improving infrastructure for small towns. **Infrastructure investment by the government always creates many jobs.**
- Public investments in health, education, police and judiciary can create many government jobs
- Skill development need to be encouraged through vocational education.

***Q) Evaluate the role Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) has played in improving Ease of Doing Business. Discuss the changes required in IBC in light of Injeti Srinivas Committee recommendations. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- In India, **lack of resolution** of insolvency is one of the significant factors for the failure of credit market in the country. The present legislations governing insolvency are fragmented, multi-layered and the adjudication of insolvency matters take place in multiple forum, resulting in an **unpredictable regime.**
- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has been hailed as an **excellent reform** for India that will play a critical role in improving the ease of doing business.

#### **IBC and ease of doing business :-**

- **Speedy closure** will help firms on the verge of brink in two ways, i.e. either restructure the firm or sell-off the assets to **recover** the money.
- It will promote **efficient allocation** and greater availability of credits for businesses, as it frees up capital.
- Development of **financial markets** such as bond market, due to clarity on repayment for debtors.
- **Other country experience:-**
  - **US Bankruptcy Code** provides for fairly quick liquidation or reorganisation of the company.
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) would boost entrepreneurship and promote ease of doing business.

- The code would facilitate insolvency of corporates in a timely manner to maximise value of their assets.
- The code was meant to prevent insolvency, if possible, and allow stakeholders to take a call by providing a market-driven, time-bound mechanism for resolution of insolvency
- Wherever the resolution of insolvency is not possible, the **code promotes ease of exit as required and provides facilitators for quick resolution.**
- The code also **ensures optimum utilisation of resources** within a firm or releasing unutilised resources for efficient users for closure of firms.
- The **code provides economic freedom to exit and a mechanism to address failures.** It enables an honest firm to come in, get out and realise potential of every person.
- **Creditor rights** as one set of stakeholders in conduct of corporations are **weak in India.** Bankruptcy code strengthens creditor rights dramatically. This also changes the balance of powers between equity holders and debt holders in a corporation. **This will have a big impact on corporate governance.**
- The Code seeks to consolidate and amend laws relating to reorganisation and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time-bound manner.
- This will improve the **ease of doing business, promote entrepreneurship, develop debt market and consequently, develop the economy.**

#### Concerns:-

- PSU banks have not been able to achieve significant improvement in recoveries even post the enactment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- The companies in the race to acquire sick companies have to declare the remainder of the debt as profit and pay income tax on it.

#### Changes recommended by the committee:-

- The committee called for sweeping changes in the law **aimed at easing insolvency rules for small enterprises and providing relief to home buyers by treating them as financial creditors** while deeming the amount raised from them for real estate projects as financial debt.
- **MSME's:-**
  - The committee proposed that **promoters of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) who are not wilful defaulters should be allowed to bid during the insolvency process.**
  - If adopted, that would vastly improve the prospects of such companies being acquired and revived, thus saving jobs, instead of going into liquidation.
  - **It said the government should make exemptions and modifications in the IBC for MSMEs.** It suggested that operational creditors of important MSMEs should get paid more than the liquidation value due to their indispensability.
- Committee has also proposed that complete exclusion from the insolvency process under Section 29A (d) for being convicted of certain crimes as stipulated in the IBC be pegged instead at six years from the date of release from imprisonment.
- **The committee also suggested providing for an adequate period of time for obtaining necessary clearances after the approval of resolution plans by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).**
  - It said timelines should be specified, with a maximum of one year to obtain approvals. Currently, lenders have 270 days to get a resolution plan approved, after which a company goes into liquidation.
- On the issue of **home buyers**, the committee said, it may be prudent to explicitly clarify that creditors fall within the definition of financial creditor.
- **In order to make the IBC process more robust, the committee has suggested barring persons who enter into any backdoor arrangement with corporate debtors formally or informally,**

directly or indirectly, from bidding for insolvent company by bringing them within the scope of the definition for connected persons.

- This reinforces the law's provisions aimed at keeping out willful defaulters from bidding unless they have paid their dues.
- The committee also **addressed the issue of representation of a large number of lenders in the committee of creditors** and suggested an amendment to allow voting by email to speed up the process.
- The committee felt that since many guarantees for loans of corporates are given by promoters, any stay on the actions against their assets can lead to the filing of frivolous applications intended at creating delays and protecting their assets.

***Q) In the wake of the current Indian banking system crisis, discuss what measures should be taken by the government to prevent such incidents in the future. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- With recent scams in banks like the PNB, Bank of Baroda, IDBI etc coming to the forefront the need for the regulation of banking system has become imperative

#### **Current banking system crisis:-**

- Banks in India fare poorly in giving loans and in dealing with an NPA.
  - The last year saw banks take blow after blow- be it the forced recognition of **bad loans** or taking companies to **bankruptcy** court
- The fraud in PNB is a **case of operational risk arising on account of delinquent behaviour** by one or more employees of the bank and failure of internal controls
- RBI was also criticised as it regularly inspects banks and is expected to address these very risks.
- There are problems in the working of the RBI board, the process through which regulations are made, the process through which licensing and investigations are done, and the quasi-judicial process through which punishments are awarded
- Public sector banks lack Professional management
- Political Pressure and interference forces Public sector banks to lend to not so commercially sound projects

#### **Recently government has already taken measures like:-**

- Recapitalization plan for banks
- Bank board bureau etc
- **Mission Indradhanush** to make the working of public sector bank more transparent and professional in order to curb the menace of NPA in future.
- Government has also proposed to introduce **Bankruptcy code** which will make it easier for banks to Recover the loans from the debtors.
- RBI's Framework resolution etc

#### **Measures needed by the government:-**

- The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) new framework for the resolution of stressed assets makes it mandatory to report non-performing accounts above Rs5 crore on a weekly basis. **This will make tracking easier.**
- **It will be important for the banking system not to become part of an excessive build-up of leverage in the corporate sector.**
- **Corporate governance:-**
  - Acceptance of the Kotak committee recommendations will **help improve the level of corporate governance.**
  - **PJ Nayak committee on corporate governance:-**

- It suggested that government banks should be brought under the Companies Act rather than the Bank Nationalisation Act as that would allow them to improve their performance and create good governance structure at the board level, and yet meet objectives of nationalisation.
- **Continued efforts to strengthen the framework to protect the interest of minority shareholders** will push managements in the corporate sector to take more prudent decisions.
- **IMF suggestions:-**
  - The provision of public capital should be complemented with improved governance and meaningful restructuring of PSBs as well as exit of weak banks.
  - Along with further empowering the Reserve Bank of India over PSBs, it has also suggested increasing the supervisory resources of insurance regulator IRDAI, and enhancing SEBI's oversight of capital markets and financial market infrastructure.
  - Urged the Indian government to consider privatizing weak public sector banks (PSBs) by selling their viable assets rather than merging them with stronger banks,
- Increasing the central bank's independence, expanding other financial regulators resources, introducing a risk-based solvency regime, and enhancing safety net measures such as deposit insurance and emergency liquidity assistance to **improve financial stability**.
- **Bring more financing to healthy firms.**
  - For this, four non-bank channels of financing need to be opened up. They are capital account liberalisation, NBFCs, the bond market and distressed asset funds (ARCs).
- **Role and function of RBI requires reform**, so as to focus RBI upon its two deliverables: Price stability, and soundness of banks.
- **International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS):-**
  - Assets must be carried at an estimate of prospective market value, and conservative accounting practices must be followed, through which the accounting value of the asset is shaded on the lower side. **The simple application of the IFRS would go a long way in addressing the failures of banking regulation in India.**
- **Use of block chain technology** can also be adopted as will not only reduce the time for transactions but also improve the database management and each and every transaction can be traced
- **Review of NPA'S/Restructured advances:-**
  - Need to assess the viability case by case. Viable accounts need to be given more finance for turnaround and unviable accounts should either be given to Asset Reconstruction Company or Management/ownership restructuring or permitting banks to take over the units.
- **Improving credit risk management:-**
  - This includes credit appraisal, credit monitoring, and efficient system of fixing accountability and analyzing trends in group leverage to which the borrowing firm belongs to
  - Banks should conduct necessary **sensitivity analysis and contingency planning** while appraising the projects and it should built adequate safeguards against such external factors.
- **Strengthen credit monitoring:-**
  - Develop an early warning mechanism and comprehensive MIS(Management information system) can play an important role in it.MIS must enable timely detection of problem accounts, flag early signs of delinquencies and facilitate timely information to management on these aspects
- **Enforce accountability**-Till now lower ring officials considered accountable even though loaning decisions are taken at higher level. Thus sanction official should also share the burden of responsibility.

- **Restructured accounts** should be treated as non performing and technical write offs where Banks remove NPA'S from their balance sheets Permanently should be dispensed with.

***Q) Examine the impediments to the growth of agricultural exports in India. Discuss the steps taken by government to boost agricultural exports. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Recently agriculture ministry announced the government's resolve to increase the value of the country's agricultural exports to \$100 billion by 2022-23. The Dalwai Committee Report on doubling farmers' incomes also talked of a similar target.

### **Agricultural exports in India:-**

- Agricultural export is 10 per cent of Indian exports and is the fourth-largest exported principal commodity.
- Globally, exports in agricultural products is over \$1,500 billion annually as per the latest data from WTO and **India's share is less than \$35 billion at present**

### **Impediments to the growth of these exports:-**

- India had imposed a ban on export of wheat in 2007 and on non-basmati rice in 2008. Although the ban on rice and wheat exports was lifted in 2011, **it came too late for wheat traders to exploit the advantage of a massive drought in key supplier Russia and others in the Black Sea region.**
- The draft Agricultural Export Policy that has been put in the public domain has a target of \$60 billion by 2022-23. The different targets also reflect a **disconnect within the government and show inter-ministerial coordination in poor light.**
- **Price competitiveness that restricts exports**
- The biggest hurdle comes from **uncertain domestic marketing and trade policies.** The inherent "consumer bias" in these policies makes the trading environment unstable and unpredictable. **Any rise in domestic prices almost immediately leads to the imposition of market restrictions.**
- **Exports are restricted through the use of minimum export prices and bans** while the Essential Commodities Act is used to regulate private participation. This harms India's image of a reliable supplier of agri-products and ensures that the country does not get the best price for its exports.
- **Restricting markets and compensating farmers through higher MSPs based on the new formula (cost A2+FL+50 per cent) will be an inflationary and unsustainable solution to the woes of the country's agriculturists.** It is likely to hit agri-exports adversely, especially rice and cotton.
- **Developed countries give heavy subsidies to their farmers leading to price incompetency for Indian farmers as their exports become costly.** Also WTO restrictions on amount of subsidies to be given to a certain limit brings in complications for India.

### **Steps taken by India to boost agricultural exports:-**

- The draft Agri-Exports Policy rightly identifies two steps: **Identify commodities in which India holds a global comparative advantage and develop clusters in states to create value chains for these commodities.**
- **Crop diversification, focus on allied sectors and food processing and tapping global markets** are among the steps the government is taking to meet the target.
- **Draft national agriculture trade policy has sought a stable trade policy regime with limited government interference for key farm items** including the politically-sensitive onion and pulses
  - **Reforms in the APMC Act, streamlining of mandi fee and liberalisation of land leasing norms are among the raft of measures suggested in the draft policy,** formulated by the commerce ministry aimed at helping realise the government's goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022.

- Also, the policy is aimed at providing an assurance that processed agricultural products and all kinds of organic products will not be brought under the ambit of any kind of export restrictions, including the imposition of minimum export price, export duty and an outright ban.
- **The government has resorted to impose curbs on onion exports almost every year and periodically slapped restriction on cotton and sugar exports as well.** An export ban on key pulses and oil seeds was in effect for a long time. However, in recent years, the fluctuations in farm trade policy have reduced considerably.
- **SAMPADA scheme**
- Mega food parks

#### Way forward:-

- The draft policy said that there is a **need to ensure greater interaction between the various research organisations and industry bodies** which will enable the research bodies to work on industry specific requirements
- The ministry will work on **developing agri-parks in India.**
- This **consumer bias in policies must be redressed** and a balance should be struck between meeting the needs of food-insecure consumers and income-insecure farmers.
- Policymakers should support agri-exports while ensuring environmental sustainability. **Exports of rice must be properly assessed.** Cultivating one kg of rice in Punjab or Haryana needs about 5,000 litres of irrigation water.
- **Government must develop efficient global value chains and liberalise land lease markets across all states.** It should encourage contract farming on a medium- to long-term basis.
- Exporters and processors must be encouraged to **buy directly from farmer-producer organizations (FPOs)**, bypassing the inefficient APMCs.
- **Major investments are needed at the back-end** to create infrastructure for global and domestic value chains, ranging from produce aggregation to its sorting and grading, packaging, storing and linking the hinterlands to ports for export markets.
- **The private sector can be an effective player in creating such value chains**, but it needs to be enabled by institutional reforms. These investments could have a multiplier effect on the rural economy.
- An international report urged the government to launch 'Grow In India' campaign aiming for substantial gains in agri-exports with a single authority to monitor India's international agricultural trade-both exports and imports.

***Q) Indian economic policy has not allowed firms to be created and to grow and prosper at the levels required for adequate job creation. Examine. (250 Words)***

#### Background:-

- Creating good jobs requires having more firms in operation, and these firms being more productive. Having more firms and more productive firms requires increases or improvements in physical capital, embodied human capital, disembodied knowledge, and physical and institutional infrastructure.
- The tendency of firms to avoid productivity-enhancing technologies and remain small to avoid transparency has been dubbed the Peter Pan Syndrome. **Yale university study found that firms tended to remain small to avoid transparency, a result of more technology, and thus avoid the risk of getting slapped with higher taxes and more regulation.**

#### Problems with economic policy which is making firms not create jobs are-

- Policy deficiencies include restrictive labour laws, but also inefficiencies in access by firms to financing, land, electricity, transport, and so on.

- Labour-intensive SMEs employing between 10 and 200 are affected by dysfunctional and rigid laws. For instance, **the Industries Disputes Act** that mandates firms with over 100 employees to secure state approvals before closing down, laying off or dismissing employees, **deters entry and expansion of small firms.**
- There are 200 central and state labour laws
- Furthermore, **firms have been restricted in shutting down (related to those restrictive labour laws), which inhibits new entry as well.**
- The constraints in education have included high costs and poor incentives for education delivery by existing institutions, **as well as restrictions on entry or on operations by new providers. So the growth of human capital has been unnecessarily stunted.**
- **The steps taken for improving the ease of doing business and the foreign investments regime have proved insufficient** in restarting the private investments cycle. As a result, new jobs are not getting created.
- Youth were no longer job seekers, but job creators and for this the government launched an ambitious Rs 10,000-crore **Startup India programme** in 2015 to spur entrepreneurship. Some 5,300 DIPP recognized startups created 40,000 jobs alright, but the promised 1.8 million jobs by 2020 under the Startup action plan has not taken place.
- **Lack of skills:-**
  - Just 5 per cent of the current workforce have required skills making it difficult to embrace productive employment and needs immediate attention
- **Make-in-India's primary goal is to renew interest in the country as an investment destination, has been also widely advertised by the government as a method to boost employment but it has been very unsuccessful in creating employment.**
- With the declining numbers in employment and the rise in FDI, especially given the majority of which is through Private equity investment **is proof that very little correlation between such investments and job creation exists.**
- **While the DIPP is preparing the industrial policy document, it is essential that trade policy is consistent with such an industrial policy.** Otherwise the two may work at cross purposes and undermine each other's objectives. This is precisely what has happened over many years.
  - Excessive imports have been decimating Indian manufacturing.
  - An inverted duty structure has the following features: higher duty on intermediate goods compared to final finished goods, with the latter often enjoying concessional customs duty. As a result, **domestic manufacturers face high tariffs since the last 12-15 years, leading to higher raw material cost at home, emanating from the unfavourable inverted duty structure.**
- AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) aimed at improving infrastructure for small towns. Infrastructure investment by the government always creates many jobs. **But the programme does not take into account whether the infrastructure investment under it is taking place in towns which have clusters of unorganised sector economic activities.**

#### Way forward:-

- **For Make-in-India to be truly successful, 'Made in India' must be as important as 'Own in India'. Without this balance, neither can this initiative nor India have a sustainable future.**
- **An industrial and trade policy is needed.**
- **There was no National Manufacturing Policy after economic reforms and the Policy, when it came in 2011, was not even implemented.**
- There should be **cluster development to support job creation** in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)
- **Align urban development with manufacturing clusters to create jobs.**



- The availability of jobs close to where the skilling is conducted will also enhance the demand for skilling
- Public investments in health, education, police and judiciary can create many government jobs. More government expenditure in health means more jobs in government and better health outcomes.

***Q) Should military budget be increased for India, a developing country committed to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens? Critically examine.***

### **Background:-**

- India is a country located in a dangerous neighbourhood and facing both internal and external threats. Comprehensive national security helps a nation attain its aspirations, and robust security is a subset of that

### **Yes, military budget needs to be increased:-**

- **Modernisation of equipment:-**
  - 68% of Indian military equipment was in the bad state, and two, with the new budget allocation of 1.47% of GDP, the sustenance of at least 24 capital projects is in jeopardy.
- **More funds are required:-**
  - The Army received Rs. 268.2 billion for modernisation as against its demand for Rs. 445.7 billion.
- **Security issues led to diversion of the funds:-**
  - With the Doklam crisis and the necessity of mobilising the Siliguri-based Corps, along with other priority resources from many other sectors to make up existing deficiencies and optimise the Corps capability, the Army expended almost its entire allocation of the transportation budget.
- **Revenue budget:-**
  - The revenue budget amounts to a little over 80%, leaving little for capital expenditure through which modernisation is to be executed.
- **Military power is meant not only for fighting wars but also for deterring them.**
  - A strong military enhances international credibility and strengthens a country's position in bilateral and international negotiations. It enables a country's leader to impose his will on the adversary.
  - With China –Pakistan increasingly focussing on defence spending India needs to be prepared

### **No, there are other priorities that need focus :-**

- India's defence budget is the fifth-largest in the world, and military expenditure certainly **impacts on development programmes which are aimed at lifting India's 224 million people out of poverty.**
- **India needs to focus on development on human resources like health, education to utilise the demographic dividend .**These areas are already under funded. So more military budget will only increase the strain on these.
- India is already facing challenges with hunger, malnutrition and obesity ,caste discrimination etc these need immediate focus.

### **The following areas need improvement:-**

- **Rational strategy is needed:-**
- Lack of a national security strategy, a national strategic culture and a transformational approach towards its military capability prevent it from obtaining optimum benefit from its defence expenditure.
- **Defence manufacturing indigenously need to take place** emphasising on quality to reduce the costs of imported equipment.

- Efficient and skilled manpower need recruitment along with good incentives
- Involve private sector as well as government is already strained with monetary resources and have different social commitments.

***Q) Discuss how rating agencies impact the economy of any country. In this backdrop, analyze whether moving away from Western dominated rating agencies would be beneficial for India.(250 words)***

### **Background:-**

- Credit rating agencies have played a crucial role in international debt markets for more than 150 years. There are more than 70 agencies around the world. But three dominate, controlling 91% of the global market. They are Standard & Poor's, Fitch and Moody's. But they have often attracted controversy.

### **Impact of rating agencies on economy:-**

- **The ratings act as a kind of moral suasion that compels developing countries to pursue more prudent and sensible monetary and fiscal policies.** Sovereign ratings serve as an incentive for sound monetary and fiscal policies because performance on these policies forms an integral part of the rating methodologies.
- **A favourable rating enables governments and companies to raise capital** in the international financial market.
- **Institutional investors in both the developed and developing world rely heavily on rating agencies** in making investment decisions.
  - This is because credit ratings are essentially opinions about credit risk. Ratings provide insight into the credit quality of an individual debt issue and the relative likelihood that the issuer may default.
- **Credit rating agencies provide an opinion about the credit quality of borrowers** such as governments, corporates, financial institutions, and their related debt instruments such as bonds. The opinions by the rating agencies tend to have an **important effect on the cost of financing for governments and companies.**
- **Downgrades from investment grade to non-investment grade can elicit unfavourable, and costly, market reactions.**
  - For example, South Africa is just a notch above investment grade rating by both Standard & Poor's and Fitch. Any further downgrade would cause a significant escalation in the cost of raising finances. That's why countries pay a lot of attention to their credit ratings.
- Such rating agencies can have a global impact, **affecting the fiscal fortunes of nations**, due to flight of capital, as witnessed during the East Asian crisis of the 1990s. Recent downgrades of U.S. and European sovereign debt have been criticised, with the relegation of Greece, Portugal and Ireland to "junk" status, **leading to a sovereign-debt crisis, along with ensuing unemployment and eurozone instability.**

### **Yes, there is a need for moving away from western global rating agencies because:-**

- **The credibility of credit rating agencies took a knock during the financial crisis.** They were criticised for failing to do a diligent job in evaluating the credit worthiness of bonds in the lead up to the crisis. Some had punitive fines imposed on them by US financial regulators.
- Such credit rating agencies have been criticised for failing to predict the 1997 Asian financial crisis and then downgrading such countries several notches during the event
- India's stand:-
  - India has lashed out at global rating agencies saying **they are far detached from ground realities .**

- **In past too, India has questioned the methodology used by global rating agencies** saying the nation compares favourably with other emerging countries on metrics such as default risk **.The control of intelligence and information is so biased in many ways.**
- Concerns over methodologies of the three global agencies (S&P, Fitch, Moody's) saying that these constrain growth in emerging nations. Ratings of multilateral banks like the BRICS-promoted NDB were affected by the parent countries' ratings, despite having deep capital buffers.
- Critics claim that the frequent downgrades of developing countries are unjust and serve Western political interests.
- Critics have also attacked the **rating agencies' "issuer-pay model"**. Under this system, credit rating agencies are paid by the institutions being rated (debt issuers) and not by the investors who use the information, **creating a conflict of interest**. Critics also argue that this **entrenches geopolitical biases**.
- **India can use the proposed BRICS credit ratings agency :-**
  - BRICS agreed to set up an independent rating agency **based on market-oriented principles, saying it would further strengthen the global governance architecture.**
  - New agency would compensate for the perceived bias in the global financial architecture. It would also create competition and offer investors, issuers and other stakeholders a wider choice and a more diverse view on credit worthiness

#### **No:-**

- Whether the new rating agency satisfies a financial need or is politically motivated, and if it will be competent to provide an independent, objective and credible credit service.
- **China has already expressed concerns about the credibility of a new agency.**
- Analysts have also strongly criticised the probable adoption of the existing issuer-pay model which would mean the **current model is simply replicated.**
- Considering that the three major rating agencies control more than 90% of the world's ratings business, **establishing a new one wouldn't be easy and could take years**, or even decades.
- There have been previous attempts to launch new ratings agencies. All failed to take off.
- Adopting a new model might not fly given that the **main users of the credit rating information are global pension and mutual funds**, which currently use at least one of the big three rating agencies. They are, therefore, **unlikely to trust any ratings from the new BRICS agency** with a yet-to-be-tested rating model.
- **Investors will be sceptical about the new BRICS rating agency's ability to compensate for losses** in the event that it issues false ratings, as the big three did in the US.

#### **Way forward:-**

- **The biggest task for a new BRICS credit rating agency is to convince investors, particularly those from the US and Europe, that the ratings assigned are politically impartial.** One way of doing this would be to adopt the "investor-pays model" where investors subscribe to ratings released by the agencies, and the subscription revenues become its source of income. **This would ensure transparency and credibility while avoiding conflicts of interests.**

***Q) India presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges for global investors and businesses. Discuss. (250 words)***

**Background:-**

- According to a statement by the World Bank, Private investments in India is expected to grow by 8.8% in FY 2018-19 to overtake private consumption growth of 7.4%, and thereby drive the growth in India's GDP in FY 2018-19. This shows the global investors are interested to invest in India.

**Opportunities India ensures:-**

- With the **escalation of gross domestic product**, the potential return from the investment in India has increased. India has shown stable and higher growth rate.
  - It is a major economy and in the years to come is projected to have one of the highest growth rates globally.
- Various studies suggest that inflation rate and the inflow of foreign direct investment are inversely correlated. **Declining inflation rate in India is one of the determinants attracting higher foreign investment.**
- **The foreign reserve of India has increased over the years.** With respect to the reform of India and opening the Indian market to foreign trade, it has paved the path to inflow of foreign currency to the country and investment.
- **The country's large market size** in any sector presents a compelling investment opportunity.
- India is the third-largest and fastest-growing domestic aviation market in the world.
- **With rising incomes, immense growth opportunities** will emerge in the coming decades across telecom, aviation and other such infrastructure sectors.
- **The consumption of goods and services is expected to rise** to levels approximating those of more developed markets such as China and the US.
- India is home to more than 12,000 **start-ups**.
- **Educated and English-speaking workforce and well-established IT sector**
- **It also has set up business and cultural connections with Europe and the US** an area where India is arguably more advanced than China.
- **Government initiatives:-**
  - The Indian government has also been a proactive supporter of this inbound investment, through initiatives like Make in India, the Smart City program, Digital India, E biz portal, BEST, Invest India etc.
  - The government has been offering incentives like relaxing 87 FDI norms across 21 sectors.
  - Government amended legislation to increase the foreign investment cap in insurance and pension from 26% to 49%.
  - Further, the government permitted 100% FDI in retail trading of food products with the condition that the food products have to be manufactured or produced in India.
  - In order to increase Japanese investments in India, the government had asked the states to focus on strengthening the single window clearance system for fast-tracking approval processes.
  - Under the Finance Act 2017, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) exempted employee stock options, FDI, and court-approved transactions from the long-term capital gains tax.
  - Moreover, the government is also planning to scrap the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) which, in turn, will enable the foreign investment proposals requiring government approval to be cleared by the ministries concerned, thereby improving the ease of doing business in the country.
- **Vast potential in telecom, food processing, infrastructure, civil aviation, renewable energy etc**
- **Moody upgraded India's rating.**

- **Cheap labour** came out to be the most encouraging factor for overseas investors. This is primarily because of the country's young population.

#### Challenges remain:-

- **Average return available per user may challenge the viability of the business model.**
- In a business such as telecom that requires significant capital expenditure, a low average revenue per user is a real challenge.
- **The lower per capita income in India** leads to a low revenue per user. This phenomenon poses a challenge for prospective businesses.
- The **inequality in the whole process** lead to the increase in inequality in development across sectors.
- **The manufacturing sector** is not performing as expected.
- Land **acquisition ,environmental clearances** have become a hurdle
- **Tax disputes** with private companies like Vodafone discourage investment .
- Internal security challenges with rising communal instances , left wing extremist areas and other insecure areas.
- **Rising NPA** is making banks sceptical about lending loans to corporates.
- **Supply chain and logistics issues make it unattractive.**

#### Way forward:

- Encourage MSME 's
- Make tax regime easy to comply.
- Encouraging Masala bonds
  - This bond brings a **new and diversified set of investors** for Indian companies, and more liquidity in foreign exchanges, apart from bank funding and the corporate bond market in India.
- India need to work on skill India mission and enhance the quality of education to strengthen the human capital.
- NPA resolution through strong asset reconstruction agencies.

#### *TOPIC: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.*

***Q) Inclusive growth in India requires policy measures to address poverty more than they address income inequality. Critically analyze***

#### Background:-

- Inclusiveness is a multi-dimensional concept. Inclusive growth results in lowering the incidence of poverty and reducing income inequality.
- Inequalities that include, social exclusion, discrimination, restrictions on migration, constraints on human development, lack of access to finance and insurance, corruption – are sources of inequality and limit the prospect for economic advancement among certain segments of the population, thereby perpetuating poverty.
- To achieve inclusiveness in all these dimensions requires multiple interventions and success depends not only on introducing new policies and governments, but on institutional and attitudinal changes.

#### Inequality and poverty:-

- Poverty ratio is equally important as the Gini coefficient in analysing issues relating to growth and distribution.
- Since 1980, while the Chinese economy has grown 800% and India's a far lower 200%, inequality in China today is considerably lower than in India. The share of the top 1% of the Chinese population is 14% as opposed to the 22% reported for India. **India has lower per capita income, persistent poverty and by all accounts rising inequality.**

- **The scale of poverty in India remains massive.** The Planning Commission had estimated it at 363 million in 2011-12. Poverty had declined rapidly since the reforms, it actually declines only after about one and a half decades from 1991.
  - In India, the situation hasn't worked out as well for the poor. **While the economy has grown, incomes have remained low for many.**
- But if growth is accompanied by reduced inequality, the impact of growth on poverty reduction will be heightened. **High and rising inequality dissipates the impact of growth on poverty; it can act as an impediment to growth and it is ethically objectionable in itself.**
- **The more impressive decline in poverty in China has been due to less initial inequality in land, reforms in land use, better health and the higher literacy.** India lags behind in all these features. Disadvantaged communities, caste and gender discrimination too are impediments in mitigating poverty in India.
- More rapid poverty reduction would require more growth, a more pro-poor pattern of growth, and success in reducing the antecedent inequalities that limit poor people's access to economic opportunities

#### **Focussing only on income inequality does not reduce poverty:-**

- Economic policies that encompass growth with equity and social policies that improve the capabilities of the poor and redistributive income policies are vital to reduce poverty and income inequality.
- According to Simon Kuznets only after reaching a certain level of economic development an improvement in the distribution of income occurs. **In this context, measuring inequality is not the same as measuring the changes in level of poverty.**
- **Even if the Gini coefficient remains the same or picks up, the poverty ratio can be declining.** This has been true of India. The decline in poverty is much higher particularly in the period 2004-05 to 2011-12 in spite of rise in inequality. **Thus the changes of the poverty ratio is an equally important indicator to monitor.**
- **Increasing income disparity**
  - **In contrast to the achievement in the reduction in poverty, income inequality has grown**
  - While India's inequality has increased from 33 per cent in 1993 to 37 per cent in 2010. Although China's poverty is much reduced, her income inequality is higher than in India.
- **India's vast strides in economic growth have not led to a more equitable distribution of incomes. In fact inequality has grown as the rich grew in an exponential manner, while the improvement of incomes of the poor was much less.** Low literacy levels, especially inadequate primary school enrolment are reasons for the widening income disparities. Literacy and primary education, though rising is still inadequate.

#### **Comprehensive approach is necessary:-**

- There is need to spread health and education far more widely amidst the population.
- **Economic growth while reducing poverty does not ensure equitable income distribution.** The initial conditions of land ownership, education and health and social stratification have an important bearing on the impact of growth on the equitable distribution of incomes.
- Interventionist policies that redistribute resources or entitlements have an important impact on the extent of equity in incomes that is achieved. **Improvements in literacy and education reduce inequality of incomes. Public expenditure on these is very important and therefore government revenues must be adequate to enable the fiscal space for such expenditure.**
- **The manner of raising tax revenue could also be important in reducing inequality.** Progressive income tax systems, including recurrent property taxes, high taxes on luxury expenditure of the affluent, capital gains taxes and death duties would enable better income distribution by reducing incomes of the rich and enabling policy interventions that enhance the entitlements of the poor.

- Diversification of agriculture is necessary as without the development of this sector poverty in India cannot be tackled and income inequality cannot reduce.

**TOPIC: Major crops cropping patterns in various parts of the country.**

**Q) Can shift in cropping and consumptions patterns reduce India's micronutrient deficiencies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Examine. (250 Words)**

#### **Background:-**

- According to a latest study, **three-quarters of Indians consume less than the ideal number of calories a day, and more than half have protein deficiency**
- The deficiencies of micronutrients were more prevalent: nearly nine in 10 Indians are iron-deficient, 85% do not meet the required intake of vitamin A, and two-thirds have zinc deficiency.

#### **Shift in cropping patterns and consumption patterns reduce India's micronutrient deficiencies:-**

- A shift to wheat, millets from polished rice could reduce India's micronutrient deficiencies to
- **Micronutrients can be met by reducing the intake of rice** and replacing them with coarse cereals such as bajra and ragi, along with legumes, dark, leafy vegetables, and coconut. These dietary changes could also reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions in India by up to 25%.

#### **Shift in cropping patterns and consumption patterns reduce India's green house gas emissions:-**

- Researchers suggested that shifting consumption away from livestock products is a major opportunity for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and may also provide health, food security and other environmental benefits, though this is context-specific.
- The livestock sector is also responsible for anthropogenic ammonia emissions, which contribute to acid rain and acidification of ecosystems.
- The intensified rice and wheat cropping systems consume most of the fertilizer and irrigation water in India and are major sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Land use changes, irrigation, soil nutrient drainage, fertiliser application practices, and changes in crop and livestock patterns all contribute to changes in soil carbon.
- Whereas conventional production and the current meat oriented nutrition patterns lead to high green house gas emissions
- Shift to chicken and legumes from beef and eggs, along with leafy vegetables and coconut could reduce greenhouse gas emission.

#### **Way forward:-**

- Food systems that would allow healthy choice of food and facilitating the process of intelligent food synergies with home as the centre point of the activity and caregiver as the change agent with effective participation from family members is required.
- Tracing the path that leads these changes and intervening at these critical points may result in overall health and nutrition security especially micronutrient security.
- There is a tremendous reduction potential, if products are organically produced and if there is a shift to vegetarian-based diets.

***Q) Although Green Revolution has improved food security; it has evoked new nutritional deficiencies. In the light of the given statement, discuss the need for improving the production of coarse grains in India. Also, analyse the recent budgetary proposals initiated by the government in this regard? (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Around 500 million people, or more than two-thirds of the Indian population, are now affected by deficiencies in protein and micronutrients.

### **Green revolution led to nutritional deficiencies:-**

- **India's 'green revolution' in the mid-1960s, which focused on wheat and rice to meet food security demands, for the decline of the area of coarse cereals.** While wheat and rice received research, extension and market support, on the supply side, there was a marked shift away from coarse grains, with consequences for dietary micronutrients.
- **The consumption of millets has declined in countries that saw the Green Revolution, which gave food security through high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat even though it is very nutritious.**

### **Why India needs to improve the production of coarse grains in India :-**

- Shifting away from white, polished rice to a diet that includes more wheat and coarse grains can improve how Indians deal with micronutrient deficiencies, as well as reduce greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions associated with paddy cultivation.
- **Nutrient deficiency can be overcome within existing household budgets by diversifying diets to include coarse cereals, pulses, and leafy vegetables, and by reducing rice intake.**
- If the suggested dietary changes are made, India's agricultural GhG emissions could be reduced by up to 25 per cent. Rice paddies are a man-made source of methane, a GhG, but one that can be controlled.
- Millets have low glycemic value, **which means they release energy slowly and, therefore, keep blood sugar levels stable.** Besides, they are nutritious and in the light of the non communicable diseases they are increasingly seemed out for.
- Chemicals and monoculture are also responsible for water scarcity, pests, social marginalization, erosion
- Supply side moved away from coarse grains to fine grains/cash crops like soybeans/cotton causing nutritional def.
- NSS (National Sample Survey) report said that Consumption Expenditure of 2/3rd population is protein / micronutrient deficient.

### **Recent budgetary proposals:-**

- With coarse grains accounting for one-third of the cultivated land in the state, there would be significant gains for farmers growing bajra, jowar, maize, pulses and oilseed, as the government would make sure that they get support prices that are one-and-a-half times the input cost.
- Farmers who typically come under small and marginal categories and those who don't have irrigation facilities will get the maximum benefits.
- Farmers growing pulses such as moong, moth bean and urad would also benefit.



**Q) What do you understand by Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF). Discuss its economic and environmental benefits vis a vis conventional farming practices. (250 Words)**

### **Background:-**

- The *neoliberalization* of the Indian economy led to a deep agrarian crisis that is making small scale farming an unviable vocation. Privatized seeds, inputs, and markets are inaccessible and expensive for peasants.
- Indian farmers increasingly find themselves in a vicious cycle of debt, because of the high production costs, high interest rates for credit, the volatile market prices of crops, the rising costs of fossil fuel based inputs, and private seeds. Under these circumstances Zero budget natural farming can be an effective alternative.
- Over 25 lakh farmers in different parts of the country, including Kerala, have adopted the zero budget farming technology.

### **Zero budget natural farming :-**

- 'Zero Budget' means without using any credit, and without spending any money on purchased inputs. 'Natural farming' means farming *with* Nature and *without*
- It is considered 'zero budget' because the costs of the main crop are offset by the income that farmers earn from intercrops during the agricultural season

### **The four-wheels of zero budget natural farming**

- water vapour condensation for better soil moisture
- Seed treatment with cow dung and urine based formulations
- Mulching
- Ensure soil fertility through cow dung and cow urine based concoctions

### **Economic benefits over conventional farming practices:-**

- Low input cost:-
  - Agriculture in its prevailing form requires farmers to rely **heavily on inorganic external chemical inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides.** Zero budget' farming promises to end a **reliance on loans and drastically cut production costs, ending the debt cycle for desperate farmers.**
- **Higher yield:-**
  - **Besides reduced input cost, farmers practising ZBNF gets higher yields.** In AP Yields of five crops (paddy, groundnut, black gram, maize and chillies) have increased by 8-32 per cent for ZBNF farmers.
  - Farmers are able to get five quintals of red gram under ZBNF compared to three quintals under non-ZBNF.
  - Farmers use bio fertilizers and that make the soil fertile, thus giving higher yields.
- **It has the ability to solve the food and farm crisis in the country** by cutting the cost of production and doubling productivity and production
- **Net income raised:-**
  - There will be increase in net income for farmers and **will improve the cash flow of poor and vulnerable farmers, and may enhance their ability to deal with economic shock**
  - Crop cutting experiments from 2016 and 2017 indicate that ZBNF farmers in AP earn better net incomes and can raise their disposable incomes. Farmers vulnerable to economic shocks have an important safety net against short-term shocks.
- **Food and nutritional security:-**

- As a result of increased crop yields, **ZBNF farmers may be able to improve food and nutritional security for their families.**
- The practice of intercropping growing multiple crops in proximity to each other is encouraged under ZBNF as it ensures vulnerable communities access to a suite of nutritional sources and income generating crops throughout the year
- In the long-run, due to the use of local inputs, the project is likely to contribute to **maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds and crops.**

#### **Environmental benefits:-**

- it is free from health hazards, as no chemical or organic materials are used for farming
- Prevailing agricultural practices such as mono-cropping decrease soil moisture content, causing tremendous stress on water resources. **Zero budget natural farming requires only 10 per cent water and 10 per cent electricity than what is required under chemical and organic farming.**
- It utilises only natural resources as inputs. It also **increases the fertility of the soil.**
- Fertilisers and pesticides have been shown to have adverse impacts on farmers as well as consumers. **Farmers are exposed to contaminants when applying chemical inputs to their crops. By replacing such external inputs with locally made natural concoctions, inoculums, and decoctions, the project could help in reducing the incidence of non-communicable diseases**
- ZBNF can **help prevent over-extraction of groundwater**, enable aquifer recharge, and eventually contribute to increasing water table levels.
- **ZBNF might help farmers build resilience against extreme climate events by improving the fertility and strength of the soil.**
  - ZBNF farmers have shown that crop losses due to droughts, floods and other extreme events have been lower than in non-ZBNF farms.
- By reducing the need for irrigation and eliminating external chemical inputs, **ZBNF could reduce the material footprint per capita and material footprint per unit of value added in agriculture.**
  - Wide-scale adoption of ZBNF would help reduce the release of harmful chemicals to the air, water and soil.
- **Zero budget natural farming eliminates chemical fertilisers and pesticides, and would help reduce ocean acidification and marine pollution from land-based activities.** It might help to reduce the leaching of nitrogen and phosphorous from the soil into groundwater or surface water, and eventually into rivers and oceans.
  - High concentration of ammonium nitrate in fertilisers, and hazardous chemical pollutants from pesticides which run-off into rivers and oceans can severely impact aquatic life. The use of natural concoctions in **ZBNF will help to reduce the contamination and degradation of rivers and oceans**
- By eliminating the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, **ZBNF will vastly reduce the need for, and use of energy along their value chain.**
- By restoring the quality of soil and water-related ecosystems, **it decouples agricultural productivity and growth from ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss.** This decoupling of growth and resource-use provides a sustainable livelihood to farmers and allied value chain actors
- Globally, as few as 30 crops constitute 90 per cent of the calorie intake of people. **ZBNF may improve the potential of crops to adapt to and be produced for evolving climatic conditions.**

#### **Way forward:-**

- **Policy support needed in the following areas:**
  - There are no other official policies to promote ZBNF.
  - A particular challenge is marketing. Many farmers sell their natural produce as if were chemically grown, to private traders or at government wholesale yards, with no price

differential. Other farmers rely on their own local marketing networks, such as to some organic shops and individual customers, **but policy support in this area is crucial.**

- The agriculture ministry plans to offer cash incentives to farmers who take up 'yogik' farming, 'gou mata kheti' and 'rishi krishi' is right step in promoting Zero budget natural farming in India.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- The implementation of this project at scale will impact a multitude of stakeholders, and also help India progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (UN) to facilitate the post-2015 development agenda.

***Q) India's water crisis demands that paddy cultivation requires several checks and balances. Discuss in light of the Kashmir government's directive to its paddy farmers. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Agriculture consumes 83% of India's water resources. Food security is threatened globally due to climate change and adverse weather events. Water intensive crops like sugarcane grown in Maharashtra was one of the reasons for the state's water scarcity. Similarly paddy consumes lot of water for cultivation so Kashmir government provided an advisory regarding paddy cultivation and this represents the seriousness of the issue.

#### **Problems with paddy cultivation/why checks and balances are needed in paddy cultivation:-**

- Paddy cultivation is heavily water-intensive on an average, it needs more than 1,400 mm of water against, say, 600 mm for pigeon pea or 500 mm for soybean.
- Tamil Nadu, that has done little to wean farmers in the Cauvery basin off Samba cultivation, already faces a severe water crisis
- Water-demand varies across states given differing weather conditions. In Punjab, over 5,330 litres go into producing 1 kg, while in Bengal this needs 2,700 litres.

#### **Government measures :-**

- The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana is a good policy initiative that would accelerate public investment in both micro and macro irrigation.
- Deen dayal Anyodaya mission
- A principle objective of the **National Water Mission** is to increase water use efficiency by 20 per cent. This objective is eminently realisable when we look at some focus areas that would help achieve this.

#### **Kashmir government directive to paddy farmers :-**

- Kashmir, faced with a prolonged dry spell, has asked farmers not to cultivate paddy this year. issued the advisory to farmers in six districts in North Kashmir even though some varieties grown there are known to be comparatively water-efficient. It has instead urged them to sow pulses and other crops that consume less water.
- Irrigation department will not supply water in the districts for paddy cultivation and the crop is grown in over 1.4 lakh hectares in the state should send a strong signal to farmers.
- The department has already advised farmers to go for other cash crops which are less dependent on water like maize and pulses
- **Positive :-**
  - If this approach is followed by other water-stressed states like Tamil Nadu and Punjab they will benefit greatly.
  - Tamil Nadu with the festering Cauvery problem will also meet partial resolution if they let farmers know in no uncertain terms that paddy won't get any irrigation support in a dry year.
  - **Will check water scarcity and educate farmers about the crisis .**

- Shows the ready approach of the government to prevent disaster like drought beforehand by taking precautions.
- **Negative:-**
  - Getting farmers to stay off paddy, though, can be a long march given **many of them believe the soil is best suited to paddy cultivation, not other crops.**
  - Kashmir government proposal **was only an advisory** not a directive.
  - Shifting to other crops would **shoot up the food deficit in the region**, where rice is the staple food.
  - **Shifting to other crops would increase their economic woes.**
  - **has exposed the government's failure to create water harvesting infrastructure.** The rainfall that we get and the water from abundant glaciers is totally lost in absence of harvesting infrastructure.

#### **Way forward/What should be checks and balances needed in Agriculture:-**

- **Increased water conservation and promoting cultivation of less water-intensive crops can go a long way towards coping with the crisis.**
- **Adopt drought-resistant crop varieties** as has been done in some parts of Odisha for paddy/rice through the help of the International Rice Research Institute. This can maintain productivity and income of the farmers and also ensure price stability to the consumers.
- Small vegetable-growing farmers in Himachal Pradesh, have long adopted Israel's water-saving technology through the assistance of the Mother Dairy retail chain that procures their fresh produce. **It is an opportune time to scale up technology adoption.**
- **Biotechnology, drip irrigation:-**
  - Through a combination of research and development to develop higher yielding varieties, better agronomic practices, and improved agriculture extension services, higher yields are within reach even while using the same amount of water.
- **Micro-irrigation deserves greater attention:-**
  - Study by the National Mission on Micro-Irrigation shows a 22 per cent to 40 per cent saving in water across different horticulture crops.
- water saving agronomic practices can be readily implemented. **The most obvious example of this practice is direct seeding of rice.**

#### **TOPIC: Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints.**

***Q) The guarantee of payment and a viable minimum wage rate, that is pegged on the prevailing market rate, are indispensable to the raison d'être of MGNREGA. Comment. (250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Timely payment of wages is central to the rights-based realisation of minimum guaranteed income under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, which tracks the implementation of the act, found that 64%, 86%, and of the orders for wages in February and March respectively remained unprocessed.

#### **Present wage payment issues:-**

- **Problems with national electronic fund management system:-**
  - In 2016-17, when there were accumulated arrears of ₹ 12,000 crore states like Jharkhand and Tripura ensured payments to workers through their resources. **Now, with the national electronic fund management system, this is no longer possible.**
  - A serious implication of this is the **violation of the rights of workers who are entitled to receive full payment of their wages within 15 days of working in the programme.**

- Sometimes payments are not transferred to the accounts of the MGNREGA workers and suppliers for three to four months, even more in some cases, **all due to pending Fund transfer orders**
- **Centralised:-**
  - **The centralised mechanism reverses the process of strengthening panchayati raj institutions**
  - In many of the states, for the first time, gram panchayats opened bank accounts, and received money on a regular basis in their accounts. **These processes that empowered gram panchayats became redundant after the introduction of the NeFMS and FTOs.**
- **Low wages:-**
  - While the Ministry of Rural Development revises the wages on an annual basis based on the consumer price index for agricultural labourers, **the minimum and actual wages for agricultural labour in many states are now higher than the MGNREGA wages.**
  - MGNREGA wages were lower than minimum wages in 17 states .So people will look for alternatives.
  - Actual average wage rate in the states was lower than the mandated wage rate. In Telangana, for instance, the actual average wage rate was found to be Rs 131, as against the stipulated Rs 180, a pattern that was found across states.
- **Principal reasons for such delays were infrastructural bottlenecks,** (lack of) availability of funds and lack of administrative compliance.
- **Centre-state tussle:-**
  - Central government blocked funds for 19 states since many of them had not submitted audited reports to the Centre. The issue persisted and wages were delayed for several weeks before the payments finally began to trickle in. **In this tussle between the Centre and states, it is the workers who continue to suffer.**
- **Rejected payments:-**
  - There are cases of failed transfers to the workers account. Payments get rejected primarily due to technical reasons such as incorrect account numbers in the system, mismatch of names in the account and the Aadhaar etc.
  - For such payments, a fund transfer order has to be regenerated, which could take up to several days.
- **There was irregular measurement of work,** and that wage payment was not based on actual work, but was being done to match the average daily wage rate

#### **Guarantee of payment and minimum wage payment are needed because:-**

- The **current method by which the delays are being calculated lead to a violation of the spirit of the law.** The government should take into account the entire delay until the labourer receives the wages in his/her account. To that end the delay days should be counted from the 16th day after the muster closure, until the credited date.
- **There appear to be no accountability norms on the Centre for its delays..**
- **Credited but not Disbursed:**
  - For an alarming number of workers, the NREGA MIS indicates that their payments have been credited but upon updating their passbook, one doesn't notice any payments made to their accounts. This phenomena is rampant across several states.
- **The large delays are dissuading workers from taking up NREGA work.** And the meagre amount of compensation is not providing any inspiration to the labourers. This will only increase migration and stress on urban areas .

- More recently, the NREGA budget has increased a little in money terms but it is still lower in real terms than in 2010-11 despite rapid economic growth.
- Due to the lower budget, **the wages of NREGA workers have stagnated** in real terms since 2009, even as the wages and pensions of government employees went up by leaps and bounds.

### Way forward:-

- **The payments infrastructure requires seamless coordination between the Centre, states, payment agencies and the administrative bodies.** There should be clearly defined responsibilities for each one of them.
- **Making local monitoring systems and ombudsman more effective, while ensuring the scheme remains demand-driven**, similarity in the schedule of rates across similar states with similar working conditions need to be ensured
- **The revised method of calculating the delays** would mean sharing of responsibility of the compensation between the Centre and the states and the norms should be clearly specified and made available publicly.
- Data on fund disbursement to state governments and the processes followed therein should be **available in the public domain**. Absence of such well-defined norms imply that the baton of accountability is being passed around from the Centre to the states and vice versa.
- **Transparency:**
  - Data on rejection for compensation should be made public. It is important for the authority rejecting the compensation to provide justified reasons and evidence for the same
- New norms for NREGA wages based on the notion of living wage and consisted with the recommendations of the 15th labour conference as well as Supreme Court judgments on the matter need to be considered.

### Conclusion:-

- So timely payment is not merely a question of political or bureaucratic efficiency but a question of life and death for those on the margins of subsistence.

**TOPIC: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices.**

***Q) Schemes to ensure that farmers get fair returns will come a cropper unless trade and tariffs are synced with minimum support prices. Analyse. (250 Words)***

### Background :-

- Overall approach to agriculture is marked by reactive, rather than clear-sighted, proactive thinking. **Almost all policies are geared towards 'price'.**
- It is assumed that getting this right is the panacea for all the problems. It is not surprising that the focus **has deflected from enhancing productivity**, which is the right answer to most problems in agriculture.
- Despite schemes like Direct income support, **MSP** for crops will be at least **5 times** the production cost in the budget were announced more needs to be done to make farmers get effective income.

### Why trade and tariff need to be linked with MSP :-

- **Increasing the MSP more to suit the interests of farmers rather than linking it with market dynamics has distorted the pricing system.**

- Hence, when the MSP of soyabean is increased, market prices would increase even if the crop is good, as the MSP sets a benchmark. **The MSP hence becomes an income-setter rather than a fair market price. Its contribution to inflation has also been distinct.**
- **By forcing sales of higher quality at the base price, both farmers and traders are put in a spot.** Such policies will induce farmers to lower their standards and pitch for lower varieties. Buyers would be reluctant to pay a higher price for a lower quality, and this can lead to a stalemate.
- Trade policy is warped for farm products. At times, there are bans on exports. **In times of shortage the time taken to recognise a shortage and import through a bidding process is long and time consuming.** Often by the time imports arrive prices are already on the descent.
  - **If there is a cyclical failure, the government runs the risk of being blamed for having exported the commodity in the previous years. This was an issue with sugar in 2010. Hence, both exports and imports of farm products along with their strategies have to be defined for easy implementation.**
- MSP has resulted in crops like rice being grown in Punjab and Haryana which are not suitable for it. **This impacts soil health and results in problems like overexploitation of ground water and decreases productivity in the long run.**
- The recently announced rise in minimum support price of agri commodities by the government is **not the best way to increase farmers' income.**
- Given that MSP procurement is too small compared to the harvest, it can't sway the market price. MSP alone is not a good thing if **the country is into free trade and want highest quality, lowest cost product for the ultimate buyer-the consumer.**
- **Large carry-over stocks in many crops is one of the reasons for the price decline.** In the recent years, production of some agri commodities both in the domestic and in the international market has increased significantly
- **High domestic price of crops makes them uncompetitive in the export market.**

#### **Way forward:-**

- The MSP should be linked with procurement which in turn should not be open-ended or else there will be distortion in the market.
- Rather than protecting the income of farmer, the incentives should be to increase productivity, which can mean access to seed and irrigation.
- Making the NAM (national agriculture market) real is a long-term solution but linking the same with contract farming or direct sale in towns and cities could be better still.
- Prices should always be determined by the market to reflect the demand-supply dynamics, and there should be no intervention.

***Q) Farm support policies and subsidies provided by rich nations to their farmers distort farm produce prices globally and also cause environmental hazards. Analyze in the light of effects of these subsidies on countries like India. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- The Agricultural Act of 2014 or the US Farm Bill, 2014, budgets for nearly \$1 trillion for the next 10 years, or an equivalent of over ₹650 thousand crore per year. There are similar subsidy provisions in Europe, Canada, China, and Japan, incentivising production in economies that have no comparative advantage to continue farming. The impact of this is huge and global.
- A mere 5% of the population in Europe works in agriculture, and yet, nearly half of the EU budget is reserved for agricultural subsidies. Three-fourths of all agricultural subsidies in the US go to just 10% of the nation's farms or farm businesses.

**Farm subsidies given by developed nations are affecting farm prices globally :-**

- Price discovery process in the US or Europe that has already factored in farm subsidy becomes a developing nation's benchmark for the price setting process.
- Every time prices go up in India the government imports or allows imports by private bodies. **The imports are largely sourced from heavily subsidised origins and at the lowest prices.**
  - These prices become the benchmark for Indians farmer
- Developed members have more than 90 per cent of global Aggregate Measurement of Support (trade-distorting subsidies) entitlements amounting to nearly \$160 billion which is beyond their de minimis. In contrast most developing members have access only to de minimis resulting in a major asymmetry in the rules on agricultural trade

**Effects of these subsidies on countries like India :-**

- The subsidies that rich nations give their farm businesses make farming in developing nations **financially unsustainable.**
- They drive the poor farmer from the developing nation into **debt and poverty by driving them out of the market.**
- The subsidies **create environmental hazards by promoting monoculture** through subsidisation of single crops. **This destroys diversity in nutrition inputs.**
- Subsidies distort global trade by **causing false efficiencies of production, inducing countries to specialise in sectors that they do not have a natural advantage in.**
- The subsidies to the rich make **agriculture a loss-making enterprise.**
- **Most of the developed nations farm produce are not even meant for their own consumption.**
  - For instance Based on New York times report in 2013 post the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) subsidised US corn swamped Mexico, destroying the Mexican corn farmers livelihoods by rendering their farms unsustainable
- Without the provision of a real alternative, **this will result in the farm sector bearing the brunt of the ever-growing inequity.**
  - If such financial unsustainability continues, there will continue to be an exponential migration of farmers out of farming. **This comes with multiple societal costs, including loss of national food security.**
- **In the absence of the rich nation subsidies, the farmers could be competitive, and even environmentally sustainable food producers.**

**Way forward:-**

- There should be increased pressure through mechanisms such as the WTO to dismantle agricultural intervention systems and expose the already battered Indian farmer to the distorted market.
- There is continued need for agriculture to receive the protection of the community and the state. Removing these protections would only create an uneven playing field for the farm sector.

***Q) Despite a number of on-going schemes for agriculture, doubling farmers' income remains a distant dream. Discuss the steps taken by government for doubling farmers' income and furthermore what needs to be done to realize the vision. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Indian agriculture is undergoing a tough time with farmer suicides still taking place .So tackling farm distress is essential to government's target of doubling farmers income by 2022

**Steps taken to double the income of farmers in the recent years:-**

- Assurance of purchase of all crops for which MSP is declared **is a positive step.**
- The Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund, with a corpus of Rs 2,000 crore, is to be set up for developing and upgrading agricultural marketing infrastructure in the Gramin Agricultural Markets and



Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs). **This will enable farmers in remote locations who are devoid of any institutional mechanism to connect to markets.**

- **Operation Green** on the lines of Operation Flood to tackle the volatility of tomato, onion and potato prices is a positive development.
  - reduce price volatility in these commodities, thereby helping farmers augment incomes on a sustainable basis. It also aims to provide these vegetables to consumers at affordable prices.
- The long-standing demand of income **tax exemption for farmer producer organisations** has been fulfilled
- **A Rs 10,000 crore fund** to finance the infrastructure requirements of fisheries, aquaculture and animal husbandry **will generate rural employment and supplement farmer incomes.**
- **Government proposed to raise the minimum support price (MSP) of all crops to 1.5 times that of the production cost.**
- **GobarDhan' scheme** launched for galvanising organic bio agro resources , management and conversion of cattle waste to compost fertilizers, bio-gas and bio-CNG
- **Amendments to NABARD act:-**
  - Role of Nabard is critical to achieve the objective of doubling farmers' income and increasing the infrastructure in the rural areas.
  - This bill will enable Nabard to fulfill its commitment. Farmers, rural artisans and labourers would benefit and their income will increase.

#### **Issues:-**

- Government should have simultaneously announced acceptance of the **Ramesh Chand Committee's** recommendations on the calculation of MSP, **which it has not.**
  - Debates started thereafter whether it is 'real' or 'nominal' income, and whether it will be done in five years or six years.
- Many of last year's budget announcements have not been materialised due to lack of allocations.
- **Climate change worries have not been addressed**
- **Agriculture R&D has been ignored.**
- **There is no mention of the balanced use of fertilisers.**
- The subsidy allocated in Budget 2018 may provide a temporary solution to the crop burning issue, but it may do nothing to help address the larger water crisis.

#### **What more needs to be done :-**

- Focusing too much on increase in production can be detrimental to farmers' prices, as is being witnessed now.
- **The focus should be on multiple allied sectors like dairy, fisheries, poultry, horticulture or skill-based earning to his portfolio, depending on the farmer and the geography.**
- **Make doubling farmer's income the central theme of all schemes, programmes and institutions of the agriculture ministry**
- **Rewrite the mandate of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR)** and all associated institutions, including the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) to focus research on increasing net farm returns of farmers
- **Make Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) responsible for providing technical assistance to farmers** to continuously increase their income.
- **Merge most of the schemes of the agriculture ministry into one Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- (RKVY) type scheme** and ask district plans to be made clearly focused on farmers' incomes.
- **Act immediately on the market:-**

- **E-National Agriculture Market(e-NAM)** has not delivered for most of the farmers. So address information asymmetry and the weaknesses in marketing infrastructure, particularly in procurement.
- Take a close look at the existing schemes and provide for innovation and convergence to achieve the single desired objective of increasing farmers' income
- **Danger of discouraging mixed cropping and crop diversification**
  - A limited number of crops are notified by states under PMFBY. This can act as an impediment to crop diversification.
  - PMFBY will have to make insurance relevant to farmers by including more and more crops under notification and by allowing insurance for mixed cropping.

**TOPIC: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.**

***Q) Road traffic accidents are a leading cause of death in India, and a major contributor to socio-economic losses, disability burden, and hospitalization. Discuss different parameters that should be involved in measuring road safety. What are the initiatives taken by the government to address the issue. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Road traffic fatalities constitute 16.6% of all deaths, making this the sixth leading cause of death in India. Burden of out-of-pocket expenditure is the highest for such injuries and is particularly high for poorer households in rural areas, and those seeking treatment at private health facilities with no health insurance.

**Measures already taken:-**

- India adopted a multi-pronged approach to ensure and promote safety on roads. These include
  - Use of road engineering measures to enhance safety
  - Improved vehicle safety standards
  - Education and awareness for drivers and general public
  - Enforcement of road safety laws and post-crash response and trauma care facilities.
  - The government has identified and rectified many accident black spots. Total 789 black spots were identified of which 140 spots have already been rectified.
- The **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2017** which is in Parliament provides stricter penalties for traffic offences for increased compliance and will go a long way in making Indian roads safer.
- Road safety audit of 3,000 km of central and state highways
  - Also planning to engage the state governments to undertake safety audits of state highways and district roads
- The government has endorsed the United Nations Safe System Approach and is introducing road safety as part of school curriculum
- Asking all states and particularly those reporting high number of accidents to take measures including traffic rule enforcement, removing liquor vends along national highways, notifying speed limits, streamlining issuance of driving licences and to have a robust emergency rescue system to save lives,
- Have an autonomous agency for road safety – national road safety board,
- The **roadmap for Decade of Action was finalized recently** after India became a signatory to the UN call to reduce accidents, injuries and deaths across the globe.

- To grade the safety of Indian cars and make them safer **an agency will be set up -the Bharat National Car Assessment Programme**. Even scooters and motorcycles in India will have automatic headlamps on.
- **A district level committee will be constituted under the chairmanship of local Lok Sabha MP in every district to monitor road security, to identify black spots, to suggest road security measures etc.** This committee will also involve and take help of local polytechnic students in improving the road conditions of the district.
- **States:**
  - **Maharashtra-**
    - i) Accident Prevention checking/ standing duty at Accident spots:
      - With a view to curb the tendency of rash driving, jumping signals at junctions by driving at excessive speed, non-stopping of buses at scheduled bus stops, not allowing sufficient time to passengers for boarding/alighting, etc.
      - During the checking the drivers/conductors are suitably instructed and the drivers/conductors committing breach of instructions are reported and disciplinary action is taken.
    - ii) Night checking: This special check is carried out twice in a month
    - iii) Counselling Bus Drivers:
      - With a view to make accident prevention more effective drivers are counselled personally by the Officers of Traffic
      - Officers and are sent to Traffic Training Centre for refresher training course.
  - **Delhi:**
    - In public works department a cell dedicated to road safety will be created to identify the black spots in the city, road safety enforcement.

#### **Parameters needed to be involved in measuring road safety:-**

- **Pedestrian Rights / Road Safety:**
  - Hence, it's imperative to have zebra crossings on busy roads, cycling tracks and no-vehicle days so that pedestrians feel safe on the road.
- **Road Lighting and Maintenance / Road Safety For Children:**
  - Well-lit roads, city squares and public spaces are the hallmarks of any urban establishment. They not only make citizens feel safe, but also result in less number of accidents. Keeping in mind energy conservation, it is also essential that cities use solar-powered lights
- **Motor Laws and Traffic Control:**
  - For any city's roads to be safe, there need to be strict laws against drunken driving and efficient traffic management, specially during peak hours and in congested areas. Chennai races past other cities in this aspect, followed by Ahmedabad and Kolkata.
  - 
  - One of the most productive measures to bring down accidents is zero tolerance enforcement. Strong policing reduces the risk for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and two-wheeler riders, who must be compelled to wear helmets.
- **Emergency Services / Road Transport Infrastructure / Heavy Vehicle Traffic Management:**
  - Ahmedabad is the best city when it comes to providing emergency services such as police, ambulance and fire. Other cities can emulate this.
- **Road cleanliness:-**
  - To increase citizen participation, there should also be incentives for undertaking cleanliness drives.
- **International:-**
  - **Sustainable Safe Road System in Netherland:-**

- It aims to prevent crashes and even if it occurs it intends to minimize the consequences, which include increase in size of zones to 30km/hr in, built up areas and 60km/hr outside built up areas.
- Implementation of the Sundar Committee on Road Safety and Traffic Management which recommended the creation of a safety board through legislation.
- Without empowered oversight, it is impossible to eliminate systemic corruption in transport departments in vehicle certification and licensing of drivers, and poor monitoring of roadworthiness of commercial vehicles.
- **Develop awareness:**
  - lack of awareness of basic traffic rules, absence of traffic signage and change the situation where neither passenger nor commercial vehicles come equipped with basic safety features.
- **Police harassment need to reduce:**
  - The general public are reluctant to help accident victims for fear of getting caught up in court battles, whilst medical help is often too little too late.
  - Traffic police need better road infrastructure and technology to police speeding and drunk driving two primary causes of road accidents and enforce penalties.

***Q) Discuss the benefits and limitations of offshore wind energy generation, in relation to onshore wind energy generation. Also discuss steps taken by Indian government to harness offshore wind energy. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Following its plans to achieve 5 GW project capacity by 2022 in wind energy India is trying to explore offshore wind energy which has not yet been explored in the country before
- The development assumes significance given the 1,000 megawatts (MW) size of the project, with the government's plan to set up at least 5 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind capacity by 2022.
- India has an estimated 127 gigawatts (GW, or 1,000 MW) of offshore wind power potential, mostly off the coasts of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

#### **Off shore and on shore wind energy generation:-**

- Offshore wind power or offshore wind energy is the **use of wind farms constructed in bodies of water**, usually in the ocean on the continental shelf, to harvest wind energy to generate electricity.
- Wind turbines harness the energy of moving air to generate electricity
- Onshore wind refers to turbines located on land, while offshore turbines are located out at sea or in freshwater.

#### **Benefits:-**

- Offshore wind turbines are being used by a number of countries to harness the **energy of strong, consistent winds that are found over the oceans**.
- Offshore **winds tend to blow harder** and more uniformly than on land.
- Wind speeds of only a few miles per hour can **produce a significantly larger amount of electricity**.
- Offshore **wind speeds tend to be faster than on land**.
- **Offshore wind speeds tend to be steadier than on land**. A steadier supply of wind means a more reliable source of energy.
- **Many coastal areas have very high energy needs**. Building offshore wind farms in these areas can help to meet those energy needs from nearby sources.
- **Offshore wind farms have many of the same advantages as land-based wind farms**.

- They provide renewable energy
- They do not consume water
- They provide a domestic energy source
- They create jobs
- They do not emit environmental pollutants or greenhouse gases.
- These support larger wind turbines and so generate higher amounts of power. Given their location, these facilities **face minimal space constraints and physical obstructions to wind flow**

#### **Limitations:-**

- Offshore wind farms can be expensive and difficult to build and maintain.
- **High costs and transmission losses**
- Wave action, and even very high winds, **particularly during heavy storms or hurricanes**, can damage wind turbines.
- The production and installation of power cables under the seafloor to transmit electricity back to **land can be very expensive.**
- Effects of offshore wind farms on marine animals and birds **are not fully understood.**
- Offshore wind farms built within view of the coastline may be **unpopular among local residents**, and may affect tourism and property values.

#### **Steps taken by Indian government to harness offshore wind energy :-**

- In 2013, national institute of wind energy set up a **100-metre mast in the Rameshwaram town (TN)** to measure wind speeds in the region. The NIWE has been studying the data and says the results obtained from the measurement campaign are promising and encouraging.”
- In 2015, the country released its first **National Offshore Wind Energy Policy**, which involves wind energy mapping of the country to identify high-potential locations to be offered to firms for development through a bidding process.
- More recently, in 2018, government said it was exploring options to **set up a small government-owned offshore wind farm near the Pamban island off the Tamil Nadu coast.** The idea is to have four or five windmills with a capacity to generate 6 MW of power each.
- Meanwhile, one of India’s largest windmill manufacturers, **Suzlon, has set up its own offshore met station off the coast of Gujarat to collect wind data and study the region’s potential**
- The government-owned research and development agency, National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE), has sought expressions of interest from wind power companies to **set up an offshore wind farm with a capacity of around 1,000 megawatts (MW) in the Gulf of Khambat, off the coast of Gujarat**
- Development of offshore wind is a timely progression for India. The resource offers much higher PLFs that position it closer to base load generation, and now with larger sized turbines it is much more viable.

#### **Concerns:-**

- Success of this venture will depend **on whether the government decides to subsidise the sector.**
- However, it **will be a few years before India can see an offshore wind farm.**
- The **call for expressions of interest is merely a preliminary step**, as the document released by the NIWE doesn’t yet mention details of the project and only talks about a meeting of those interested in the idea.
- Besides, **there is no word yet on how the power from offshore farms will be priced..**
- This (Gulf of Kambhat) is just a pilot project and people are **sceptical about its technical feasibility**
- Another major constraint is grid. As there is no clarity on how to make transmission lines available.
- **Issues with manufacturing or procuring equipment:-**
  - Offshore wind farms typically have larger turbines of around 6 MW capacity (as against the average of 2.5 MW machines used onshore) and longer windmill blades.

- But most firms in India don't yet make such high-capacity machines, so components will have to be imported.
- The factories' configuration has to be changed. In terms of logistics, putting larger blades on Indian roads is next to impossible. **That's the reason wind blades on average are smaller in India than in China as the roads are smaller here. This might dampen investor interest.**

### **Conclusion:-**

- The government's plan will put India in the same league as other countries investing in offshore wind energy. Globally, there's around 14,300 MW of installed offshore wind energy capacity, 88% of it in European waters and the rest in China, Japan, South Korea, and the US. If India is able to achieve the 5,000 MW target it will be one of the first markets to do so on a large scale.

***Q) It is imperative for India to increase its energy consumption while ensuring climate justice. Discuss how government of India aims to balance its energy demands with environmental protection. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- India is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. Indian cities dominate the list of the most polluted on the planet. Renewable energy can not only transform thousands of villages and towns across this vast country, it can put also India on an accelerator into the future
- Renewable energy, , accounted for 18.37 per cent of the total installed power capacity in India in 2017.
- Because of economic and population growth, India's annual per-capita electricity consumption is expected to triple, from 1075 kWh in 2015-16 to over 2900 kWh in 2040.

### **How India aims to balance energy demands along with environment:-**

- The Government of India has announced policy initiatives such as electricity and housing for all, accelerated infrastructure development, Make in India, electrification of transport, etc. which call for more electricity and on a reliable basis.
- **Focus on Clean energy:-**
  - Price of supplying solar power to the grid is falling fast. That in turn gets more companies to invest more money and create more jobs. And storing power for cloudy days has become less of a problem as the price of batteries has fallen.
  - India is initiating many proposals in renewable energy be if the latest proposal on offshore wind energy generation, nuclear power plants, international solar alliance ,targets in Paris agreement, moving towards biofuels and electric vehicles, focus on strengthening public transport etc .
- **Increase efficiency of energy consumption:-**
  - Energy-efficiency is extremely important and can be promoted by setting appropriate prices and this is particularly important where energy prices are rising..
  - Ultra mega power plants have the natural advantage of scale and project level benefits which the normal power projects do not have and, therefore, they tend to be of lower risks and hence lower tariffs.
  - Bharat stage standards :-
    - Union Government in October 2016 had decided to skip one stage and migrate to BS-VI directly from BS-IV to fight the growing pollution. It was part of concerted efforts of Government to reduce vehicular emissions and improve fuel efficiency with an aim to reduce carbon footprints and keep environment healthy

- Energy rating labels are labels that provide information about an appliance's energy consumption. In India, BEE (Bureau of energy efficiency) regularises these labels. It's the government's way to standardise energy consumption levels and help consumers make an informed decision.
- **Aims to offset the environmental loss:-**
  - India is striving towards the goal of 33% forest cover. It has taken measures like forest rights act, most recently draft national forest policy, afforestation programmes etc

#### **Way forward:-**

- **Indian economy's energy mix needs to be remodelled** through investments in clean renewable sources of energy like solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and low-emissions bioenergy, and by raising the level of energy efficiency through investments in building retrofits, grid upgrades, and industrial efficiency.
- **Affirmative capital allocation towards creating solar parks and associated infrastructure and green corridors is particularly critical** to achieve India's ambitious renewable energy targets of adding 175 Gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy, including addition of 100 GW of solar power, by the year 2022.
- Drafting committees need to examine the paradigm shifts occurring in storage and electric vehicles to promote new technologies in renewable energy, such as smart grids, smart homes, battery storage and concentrated solar heat and power.

#### **However there are some concerns with the government approach :**

- In the recent draft national energy policy some concerns were there :-
  - Despite the fact that existing coal plants are running at low efficiencies, the DNEP relies on coal power to sustain the nation's base load requirement to meet rising energy demand. It proposes that coal will fuel 67% of India's power generation in 2022.
  - Ministry of Coal continues to push its ambitious targets to raise coal production to 1.5 billion tonnes by 2020
  - DNEP fails to highlight the gradual substitution of internal combustion engines with electric vehicles.
- Solar energy equipment manufacturing is still costly.
- Off shore wind energy would still take time to materialise.
- Compensatory afforestation act is largely criticised as it is leading to deforestation and loss of rights to forest dwellers.

**TOPIC: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.**

***Q) Cryptocurrencies are hailed as the future of digital currency. In light of the government's aim to go cashless, discuss whether a Central Bank Digital Currency would help India achieve this aim? (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Reserve Bank of India's statement on developmental and regulatory policies, which accompanied the monetary policy statement recently said that an in-house group in the central bank will come up with suggestions on the desirability and feasibility of introducing central bank digital currency. This step takes RBI into an area which has triggered debate within many central banks and shows that cryptocurrencies are the currencies for the future.

#### **Central bank digital currency and India's readiness:-**

- CBDC is not a well-defined term. However, it is envisioned by most to be a new form of central bank money. That is, a central bank liability, denominated in an existing unit of account, which serves both as a medium of exchange and a store of value.
- CBDC is a digital form of central bank money that is different from balances in traditional reserve or settlement accounts

#### **It could help India go cashless:-**

- With the spread of formal banking services, primarily on account of advances in communications technology, **soon many Indians will be able to transact almost all the time without using cash, if they so choose**
- Availability:-
- **Currently, access to digital central bank money is limited to central bank operating hours**, traditionally less than 24 hours a day and usually five days a week.8 CBDCs could be available 24 hours a day and seven days a week
- **CBDC could also reinforce the resilience of a country's retail payment systems:-**
  - Should payments in private sector infrastructures be disrupted due to technical problems or because a bank providing credit transfers was under stress, **households and businesses could still make digital payments via CBDC**, something especially important if cash had (largely) disappeared.
  - CBDC could **reduce the concentration of liquidity and credit risk in payment systems**
- RBI cites three factors:
  - Rapid changes in the landscape of the payments industry,
  - Emergence of private digital tokens
  - The rising costs of managing fiat paper/metallic money.
- **Banknotes allow anonymous transactions** so a reduced use or elimination of banknotes would help fight illegal activities.

#### **Challenges:-**

- The elimination of cash is currently not feasible. Not everyone has a bank account, a credit/debit card, or access to electronic payment systems via a smart phone or computers. **People cannot be forced to have or use these tools.**
- **CBDC can exacerbate risks in a banking system struggling to remain credible:-**
  - **Commercial banks reliance on customer deposits may become less stable, as deposits could more easily take flight to the central bank in times of stress.**
  - The introduction of a CBDC would raise fundamental issues that go far beyond payment systems and monetary policy transmission and implementation. **A general purpose CBDC could give rise to higher instability of commercial bank deposit funding.**
  - In case of any crisis, people might shift deposits towards the central bank leading to the collapse of the entire financial system. This makes the scope of e-currency much wider from monetary policy to financial regulation.
- **Bank for International Settlements (BIS) suggested that state-backed crypto might destabilize commercial banks customer deposits, negatively impacting the efficiency of financial intermediation.**
- Different **implications for payment systems, monetary policy transmission** as well as the structure and stability of the financial system.
- **Introducing a CBDC could result in a wider presence of central banks in financial systems:-**
  - This, in turn, could mean a greater role for central banks in allocating economic resources, which could entail overall economic losses should such entities be less efficient than the private sector in allocating resources.



- **It could move central banks into uncharted territory and could also lead to greater political interference.**
- If RBI will look at this decentralized digital currency as a substitute for cash i.e., it will not bear interest and will serve as an instrument to make retail payments then CBDC of this kind do not have many takers.
  - Even Denmark's central bank is disinclined to switch to this system though the Danish society is one of the most digitalized in the world.
- **International example:-**
  - **Ecuador's CBDC:-**
    - Under the project, only the central bank could issue electronic dollars and the state-owned mobile phone company (CNT) could facilitate mobile transactions.
    - An individual could open bank accounts at the central bank, and it was expected that by 2015 around 500,000 accounts will be opened. **However there were fewer than 5,000 accounts, making the entire scheme unprofitable.**
  - Central banks would also have to take account of AML/CFT concerns and requirements if they were to issue CBDC. **Issuing a CBDC that does not adequately comply with these and other supervisory and tax regimes would not be advisable**
  - **Cyber-security is currently one of the most important operational challenges for central bank systems and the financial industry more generally.** Cyber-threats, such as malware, and fraud are risks for nearly every payment, clearing and settlement system. **They pose, however, a particular challenge for a general purpose CBDC,** which is open to many participants and points of attack.
  - **India's digital literacy is still largely less and cash is predominantly used for transactions.**
  - Depending on design, central banks' seigniorage income could also be affected. Relatedly, if CBDC was interest bearing, **the central bank would be directly exposed to stakeholders that might at times exert pressures to raise interest rates**
  - **Prohibiting banks from offering any services to entities dealing with virtual currencies, RBI joins the chorus of other central banks which have either banned or warned against virtual currencies.** It is ironic to see central banks banning the very ideas which led to the development of the CBDC idea in the first place.

#### **Way forward:-**

- Any steps towards the possible launch of a CBDC **should be subject to careful and thorough consideration. Further research on the possible effects on interest rates, the structure of intermediation, financial stability and financial supervision is warranted.**
- The effects on movements in exchange rates and other asset prices remain largely unknown and also deserve further exploration.
- More generally, central banks and other authorities should continue their broad monitoring of digital innovations, keep reviewing how their own operations could be affected and continue to engage with each other closely.
- Besides consequences for financial stability, effects on the efficiency of financial intermediation need to be carefully considered
- Robust mitigation methods of cyber-risk would therefore be a prerequisite for CBDC issuance.

**Q) Explain the difference between public and private blockchain. Also discuss its application in digitalization of land records. (250 Words)**

### **Background:-**

- As many as two-thirds of civil cases are pending in Indian courts deal with land related disputes. So to make land management effective NITI Aayog recently announced that it will bring out a discussion paper on leveraging blockchain technology for land records management.

### **Difference between public and private blockchain:-**

- In a public blockchain like bitcoin, all participants are allowed to create or modify the blockchain, while in a private blockchain, like what has been envisioned for land records, only select participants are given that responsibility.
- The sole distinction between public and private blockchain is related to**
  - Who is allowed to participate in the network**
  - Execute the *consensus* protocol and maintain the shared ledger.**
- Openness:-**
  - A public blockchain network is completely open and anyone can join and participate in the network.** The network typically has an incentivizing mechanism to encourage more participants to join the network. Bitcoin is one of the largest public blockchain networks in production today.
    - little to no privacy for transactions and only supports a weak notion of security.
  - A private blockchain network **requires an invitation and must be validated by either the network starter or by a set of rules put in place by the network starter**
    - Businesses who set up a private blockchain, will generally set up a *permissioned* This places restrictions on who is allowed to participate in the network, and only in certain transactions. Participants need to obtain an invitation or *permission* to join.
    - Only the entities participating in a particular transaction will have knowledge and access to it.
    - Will allow them to retain control and privacy
- Power :-**
  - One of the drawbacks of a public blockchain is the substantial amount of computational power that is necessary to maintain a distributed ledger at a large scale.
  - Low computational power in private blockchain
- In fact, this **private system will have lower costs and faster speeds than a public blockchain platform can offer.**
- The benefit of public blockchain **is every transaction is public and users can maintain anonymity.**
- Decentralised:-**
  - A public blockchain is most appropriate when a network needs to be decentralized
  - It is also great if full transparency of the ledger or individual anonymity are desired benefits.
  - In private blockchains, the owner of the blockchain is a single entity or an enterprise which can override/delete commands on a blockchain if needed. **That's why in its true sense it is not decentralized** and hence can just be called a distributed ledger or database with cryptography to secure it.
- Private blockchain is much less secure and closed** as compared to public blockchain because it can be edited/written or read as when wished and deemed fit by the benefiting parties

### **Similarities: (extra)**

- Public and private blockchain have many similarities:
  - Both are decentralized peer-to-peer networks, where each participant maintains a replica of a shared append-only ledger of digitally signed transactions.
  - Both maintain the replicas in sync through a protocol referred to as consensus.
  - Both provide certain guarantees on the immutability of the ledger, even when some participants are faulty or malicious.

#### **Applications of blockchain in digitalization of land records:-**

- Andhra Pradesh is currently working with private firms to secure land records** in its new capital, Amaravati, using blockchain.
- A blockchain-secured record-keeping process will collect, store and provide access to information quite differently than a conventional process. After reaching consensus on what constitutes a valid record, **market participants use cryptography and consensus algorithms to create or modify records.**
- There is **no need for a central authority to keep records** as they are distributed across a system of networked computer nodes.
- All participants can see and use the latest version of the record without relying on anyone else.** In short, data stored using blockchain is **secure, transparent, easy to access, and hard to dispute.**
- Not hard to imagine lenders seeking blockchain security for land records as **it would dramatically cut down risks in lending against property.**
- In fact, the first step in pooling information on mortgages across lenders had already started with the setting up of the Central Registry of **Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest of India (CERSAI).**
- Overlaying blockchain on lands pledged against those mortgages could be a great start. Similarly, the newly set up information utility, **National e-governance Services Ltd (NeSL), could also be used to drive blockchain-based record-keeping for underlying collateral like land.**

#### **Challenges exist:-**

- While blockchain could ensure integrity and indisputability of future changes, it cannot resolve differences that exist today.
  - Questions like what benefit would blockchain provide to a land whose area is not captured correctly, whose ownership is contested, whose liens are not fully recorded and whose value is underreported are still vague
- Because blockchain expert developers are scarce in the market for now, the **implementation cost might be higher.**

#### **Conclusion:-**

- The Central government has created a Government Land Information System (GLIS) to reflect details of all its land holdings. While the benefit of securing these records with blockchain is low today, it will pay off in future as government monetizes them

***Q) Discuss how technology can be employed to deal with the problem of plastic waste management? (250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Plastics and plastic packaging are an integral and important part of the global economy but most of the 150 million tons of plastics produced around the world every year end up in landfills, the oceans and elsewhere.

- The annual consumption of plastic in India is nearly 12.8 million tonnes, and expected to rise at a compound annual growth rate of 10%. Globally, only 14% of plastics is recycled.
- In India, more than 15,000 tonnes of plastic waste is generated every day, a third of which remains uncollected.

### Technology role :-

- **Plastic eating bacteria:-**
  - Scientists have accidentally created a mutant enzyme that can aid in combating the scourge of pollution from plastic, especially Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) plastic, which is used to make plastic bottles.
- **Plastic waste for 3D printer filament :-**
  - Using plastic waste through converting plastic waste as a filament for plastic 3D printer. Compared to the plastic recycling method, the process of turning plastic waste into a printer's filament consumed energy three times less than the recycling, based on the results.
- **Plastic Fuel**
  - Collected plastic waste is shredded and then poured into an oxygen-free chamber that is set to 400 degrees Celsius. Plastic starts melting and entails gas and fuel which are separated in the distilled and filtered stages.
- **Plastic Waste as Road Construction Material**
  - This process comprises of four major steps; Segregation, Cleaning, Shredding and Collection.
- **Focusing on the recycling of plastics** not only avoids plastics from going to the landfill, but is a sustainable way to reduce the demands on finite raw materials and minimize environmental impacts.
- **'Plastone' block** can be used for flooring, especially in outdoor; it can be a cheap and strong substitute for cement blocks
- **Concrete Bricks**
  - Scientists developed a way to granulate plastic bags and mix them with concrete to form bricks with significant environmental benefits. The material blend keeps the plastic used out of landfills and eliminates the need to add the typical mined aggregate to the concrete mix.
- **Gaias homes startup builds affordable homes out of recycled plastic.**

### Concerns with present technology :-

- Plastics must be sorted for recycling, **which adds effort and expense.** Plastics, or polymers, are composed of large molecules, so most do not mix when heated, similar to the interaction between oil and water.
- Chemical recycling involves using a catalyst to break down plastics to produce lower-molecular-weight products, a process the researchers say has **been hindered by high energy costs.**
- Usage of plastic has not reduced .
- Community awareness is still lacking in India .
- Micro plastics are very difficult to be detected and recycled.
- In 2016, India issued a new regulatory framework for plastic waste management but **implementation remains a problem**

### Way forward:-

- The focus must be on redesigning products, and developing alternatives. **Recycling and recovery of plastics for reuse by the industry and as raw material in sectors such as construction will considerably reduce plastic waste.** A successful transition must involve the private sector.
- **Reduction of packaging, banning single-use plastic items or charging an extra fee to use them, and introducing deposits for recyclable items** like drink containers can immensely help achieve desirable results.
- Successful anti-plastic campaign can be effective only if the **regulatory mechanism is robust and encompasses the entire gamut of plastic pollution sphere.**

- The informal sector inclusion could have resulted in comprehensive regulations and ensured better confidence of all stakeholders.
- There is an urgent need for India to set global benchmark standards in plastic waste management and a refined and improved set of plastic waste management rules can help achieve that.

**TOPIC: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.**

**Q) Discuss the merits and demerits of recent draft defence production policy. (250 Words)**

### **Background:-**

- With the aim of creating up to 30 lakh jobs and a total turnover Rs. 1.7 lakh crore in defence goods, the Union government has prepared its draft Defence Production Policy, 2018.
- The vision of the policy is to make India among the top five countries of the world in the aerospace and defence industries, with the active participation of the public and private sectors, fulfilling the objective of self-reliance as well as the demand of other friendly countries

### **Features:-**

- The draft policy says the **government's aim is to achieve a turnover of Rs. 1,70,000 crore (approximately \$26 billion) in defence goods and services by 2025**, involving additional investment of nearly Rs. 70,000 crore (about \$10 billion) creating employment for nearly 2-3 million people.
- It also hopes to achieve exports of Rs. 35,000 crore in defence goods and services by 2025
- The policy aims to create an environment that **encourages a dynamic, robust and competitive defence industry as an important part of the 'Make in India' initiative**".
- The policy also hopes to **reduce current dependence on imports and to achieve self-reliance in development and manufacture** of several weapon systems/platforms.
- **The policy proposes to increase the foreign direct investment (FDI) cap** in niche technology areas to 74% under the automatic route.
- **Private sector:-**
  - **The government will list its requirements in terms of platforms and weapon systems for the next decade** to help private sector companies understand the opportunities
  - **It will also simplify procedures for private firms to enter defense production**, i.e., liberalize the regime by issuing licenses in 30 days and pruning no-go areas to a small 'negative list' for licensing
  - **The government will also do away with capacity assessment**, except for critical projects
- **Taxes:-**
  - In the area of taxation, **the government has proposed rationalization of taxes on import of capital goods for services** and inputs for defense and aims to prevent inversion of taxes
- **The policy also plans to export defence goods worth \$5 billion to other countries.** It also plans on setting up Defence Export Organisation in partnership with the industry and market domestically produced goods overseas.

### **Positives:-**

- By giving a leg-up to defense manufacturing, **India hopes to transform itself into a global leader in cyberspace and AI (artificial intelligence) technologies.**
- It pushes for increased indigenisation of defence production not **just for purposes of self-reliance, but also to widen India's export to other nations.**
- **The policy also attempts to make it easier to do business.** It calls for increased participation of MSMEs, start-ups and other players from the private sector in the defence industry.
- **The Government also wants greater interaction between private and public sector.**

- This policy aims at fusing together technologies from Ordnance Factory Board, Defence Public Sector Undertaking and private players.
- It aims at advancing and boosting the existing public sector defence production units through skill development and overall program management.
- **It creates open competition in the industry.** By opening the sector to private players, the policy is determined to create a driving force for increased productivity and innovation.
- By inviting the private actors, India sees an opportunity to maximise returns on money.
- **The document also seeks to take advantage of the fact that India has emerged as a top destination for Research & Development (R&D) in the world.** It proposes that India utilise this opportunity and catapult itself as a hub for defence related Intellectual Property (IP).
- **The Simplified Make-II would be facilitated easily through this draft policy** and will launch itself as an initiative to make it easier for industries to enter defence sector
- **The broad policy accelerates domestic defence production and thereby makes it feasible for India to have its own market.** Indigenous defence production will attract more investors which eventually will lead to massive market creation.

#### Negatives:-

- Private defence industry has welcomed the announcement of explicit targets, **but points out that close oversight would be needed to achieve them. The key to its success lies in how vigorously it is implemented.**
- **R&D incentivisation across industry is falling.** Earlier, there was tax exemption of 200 per cent of the R&D spend, which will be fallen to 100 per cent from 2020.
- **There is scepticism within industry above how exports can be scaled up** fifteen fold in just seven years, from the current level of about \$330 million.
- To boost defence exports to \$5 billion, there is a need for a body like Israel's SIBAT, in which the military and the highest levels of government together facilitate arms sales abroad. **The draft policy unfortunately limits itself to export promotion by DPSUs/Ordnance factories.**

#### Way forward:-

- Its success will lie in its implementation strategy, **a periodic review mechanism, and ensuring accountability for non-compliance.**
- **There must be a higher targeted incentivisation for defence R&D and product development.**
- It must contain a formal commitment that orders will not be given on "nomination" to DPSUs and ordnance factories, so **that there is a true level playing field.**
- **It should mention export promotion initiatives** such as providing low-cost capital to defence exporters from the growing foreign exchange reserves which could be detailed in separate export facilitation guidelines.

**TOPIC: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio- technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.**

**Q) Machine learning and artificial intelligence will transform businesses and governance. Discuss. What are some of the potential uses of AI in governance sector? (250 Words)**

#### Background:-

- The convergence of Big Data and Cloud powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning will be the next game changers.
- **Accenture said AI has the potential to increase India's annual growth rate of gross value added (GVA) by 1.3 percentage points, lifting the country's income by 15 percent by 2035.**

**How machines learning and artificial intelligence will transform business and governance:-**

- **India is creating unstructured data at a very rapid pace** and has datasets in volume that very few countries possess.
- **Businesses:-**
  - In the Budget 2018, the Government of India announced efforts to enhance research in disruptive technologies like AI, Big Data, IoT and Robotics. **This will boost digital inclusion, innovation, and manufacturing; thereby creating multi fold employment opportunities** directly contributing to the upsurge of Indian economy.
  - Machine learning, inclusive of all its various subdomains such as deep learning, is providing us with the ability to dramatically **amplify ability to extract insights from data and perform complex tasks at scale.**
  - Advertisers **can craft and time messages tailored to each person's behaviour.**
  - For now, deep learning is making shopping faster and easier. San Francisco-based Stitch Fix, for example, provides personalized clothing recommendations based on shopper preferences.
- **Governance:-**
  - The **potential for AI in healthcare is awe-inspiring.** It promises to predict disease in time to prevent it, speed drug development, and help doctors diagnose and treat cancer.
  - **In agriculture, Blue River Technology** (recently acquired by John Deere) pioneered the use of deep learning to help farmers monitor livestock, manage crops, and pinpoint weeds.
  - AI is even changing sports helping coaches plan strategy, providing insights that improve player performance, and predicting game outcomes.
  - **Financial services companies like banks and investment firms are among the earliest adopters of deep learning.** Many are already using it to augment investment research, improve investment performance, and bolster fraud detection.
  - **Criminal justice and public safety** is another area that could benefit from A.I.
  - **I. that is embedded in robotics**, such as self-driving vehicles, could be a big opportunity for government as well.
  - **Partnerships:-**
    - Microsoft is having partnerships with a number of governments in this regard. They worked with Singapore government to actually help them create bots to better engage their customers.
    - In India, for instance Microsoft is working on the applicability of AI on improving approach to agriculture and crop sowing.
  - AI could be of great usage in various fields, **including public health, law and order, education and even city sanitation and cleanliness.**
  - Government today is over-burdened and there is lack of capacity to do the multitude of tasks it has taken upon itself. **AI is an important answer to capacity building**

### Concerns:-

- **Unemployment at 'the end of jobs':-**
  - Self-driving cars for example could put millions of truckers out of work
- **Inequality:-**
  - With automation, there'll be less of a need for a traditional human workforce and revenues will go to fewer people
- **Security :-**
  - Cyber security wars will escalate should AI get into the hands of people with malicious intent.
- **Concerns about the possible military uses of AI** have grown to the point that over 20,000 researchers have recently signed a letter warning policy makers of the dangers of autonomous weapons that use algorithms to strike specific targets.
- In rural and remote India, **Internet penetration is very low** and as a result AI will have limited or no applicability there and will actually create a digital divide.

**Way forward:-**

- **Ensure interpretability of AI systems:**
  - Decisions made by an AI agent should be possible to understand, especially if they have implications for public safety or result in discriminatory practices.
- **Empower users:**
  - The public's ability to understand AI-enabled services, and how they work, is key to ensuring trust in the technology.
- **Responsible deployment:**
  - The capacity of an AI agent to act autonomously, and to adapt its behaviour over time without human direction, calls for significant safety checks before deployment and ongoing monitoring.
- **Ensure accountability:**
  - Legal certainty and accountability has to be ensured when human agency is replaced by the decisions of AI agents.
- **Consider social and economic impacts:**
  - Stakeholders should shape an environment where AI provides socioeconomic opportunities for all.
- **Open Governance:**
  - The ability of various stakeholders, whether in civil society, government, private sector, academia or the technical community to inform and participate in the governance of AI is crucial for its safe deployment.

***Q) Artificial Intelligence will revolutionize the farming sector in India. Critically comment. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- One of the most important tasks, globally, is to provide food of sufficient quantity and quality to sustainably feed and nourish the growing world population. In order to do that, according to the World Economic Forum, there is the immediate need to promote smarter agricultural growth which is triggered by Artificial intelligence.

**Artificial intelligence benefits farming sector:-**

- **Crop and Soil Monitoring**
  - **AI also has the potential to positively impact soil health.** Companies such as Trace Genomics are able to extract the DNA from soil, analyze its microbial community, and provide AI-based recommendations for maximizing soil health and crop yield.
- **Predictive Agricultural Analytics:-**
  - Various AI and machine learning tools are being used to predict the optimal time to sow seeds, get alerts on risks from pest attacks, and more.
  - Determining the right time to sow crops is often one of the biggest challenges for Indian farmers where drought and excess rainfall can be equally serious challenges. Microsoft India – AI-based Sowing App helps farmer with this.
- **Supply Chain Efficiencies:**
  - Companies are using real-time data analytics on data-streams coming from multiple sources to build an efficient and smart supply chain.
- **Disease, pest or nutrient deficiency :-**
  - Artificial intelligence (AI) app named Plantix **identifies the crop type in the image and spits out a diagnosis of a disease, pest or nutrient deficiency.**



- It also aids farmers by recommending targeted biological or chemical treatments for ailing plants, reducing the volume of agrochemicals in groundwater and waterways that can result from overuse or incorrect application of herbicides and pesticides.
- Allows farmers to slash insecticide and herbicide use, reduce damage to wildlife and human health, and minimize issues related to resistance to pesticides.
- A group of researchers at Cornell University recently published research explaining how they built and trained a neural network able to identify brown leaf spot disease on cassava leaves with 98-percent accuracy.
- **Deep learning models:-**
  - Ag-tech companies are testing deep learning as a tool to **boost productivity and reduce environmental impacts** while helping farmers carry out tasks that people now perform.
  - Deep learning models will help guide robots and drones in monitoring fields for pests and predators, tracking crop and livestock diseases etc.
- Artificial intelligence applied to agriculture can potentially optimize and increase yields, **improve farm planning, optimize resources, and considerably prevent waste.**

#### Concerns:-

- AI advances could lead to greater efficiencies but also **job losses**.
- Deep learning models have improved a long way, **but once you go outdoors, there are so many factors** like lighting conditions, shadows, weather, dust and other factors **that can affect their accuracy**.
  - If poor-quality images are fed into a deep learning model, the algorithm is more likely to misidentify the plant or its ailment.
- In India where digital divide is huge farmers will be unable to use this technology atleast in the short term.

#### Way forward:-

- Farmers need to be equipped with training that is up-to-date to ensure the technologies are used and continue to improve. **This will help to prove the value of these tools over the long haul.**
- Additionally, **extensive testing and validation of emerging AI applications in this sector will be critical as agriculture** is impacted by environmental factors that cannot be controlled unlike other industries where risk is easier to model and predict.

#### Conclusion:-

- Society envisions a world where it moves beyond food pyramids, plates, and generic advice a world where DNA analysis, artificial intelligence, and food databases are combined for reaching tailor-made nutritional patterns.

***Q) There is an urgent need to revise Form 27 and patent working disclosure under Section 146(2) of Patents Act, in the interest of state's sovereign right and duty to preserve public health. Critically analyse.(250 Words)***

#### Background:-

- Patent experts have made a representation to the central government to amend Form 27 under Section 146(2) of Patents Act, 1970 to bring in uniformity in the method of calculation of value of a drug, whether it is imported or manufactured in the country.

#### Provisions explanation:-

- **Form 27 seeks information to ensure that the patented material is adequately supplied in India.** If the supply of the patented invention does not cater to the demands, statutorily the reasonable requirement of the public with regard to the patented invention is deemed as not

met. **This will be a ground to seek compulsory licensing of the product within India. The underlying rationale is to protect public health.**

- **Indian Patents Act (Section 146) empowers the Controller to require a patentee or a licensee to furnish statements of how the invention has been commercially worked in India.** It also requires the patentees and every licensee to furnish the prescribed statements regarding the invention. The Controller also has the right to publish the information received.

#### **Why form 27 needs urgent revision:-**

- **The current Form 27 does not mention any specific valuation guidelines.**
  - Taking advantage of it, patentees employ different methods to calculate product value.
  - Some patentees declare value of product taking into account taxes and import duties, while some declare the value of product minus all the taxes and sales margins of intermediaries.
- It is observed that patentees declare certain value and quantity of the product in Form 27, **but they declare different value and quantity of the product while filing infringement suit in the court.**
- **A discrepancy has been noticed in most of the patentees country wise import declaration.**
  - They do not specify how the value of product has been arrived at, whether the value of product arrived at landed cost is gross or exclusive of handling charges such as free on board (FOB) or cost insurance and freight (CIF) value
  - Some patentees declare over invoicing of value of imported product, while some declare product MRP containing taxes.
- Form 27 is totally outdated and the **concept of “One Patent – One Product”** has lost its relevance in the present context in business practices and business strategies in India and the globalised world.
- **Patented product should be available to people at reasonable price to ensure working of patent but Form 27 fails to do so.**
  - Paragraph 3(i)(b) of Form 27 which requires patentees to state the quantum and value of the patented product manufactured in India or imported from other countries, fails to capture the actual sale of the patented invention in India.”
- **Form 27 should be amended to make sure that patentees should submit details such as**
  - Estimated demand of the patented invention or product
  - Extent to which the demand has been met (i.e. availability)
  - Details of any special schemes or steps undertaken by the patentee to satisfy the demand.
- **Rectification of E-Filing version of Form 27 should be done to enable patentees and licencees to submit full and complete working information.**
- **Vague requirement on disclosing licensing information**
  - **Lack of emphatic specificity** in paragraph 3(ii) of the Form which requires patentees to disclose licenses and sub-licenses granted during the year so they do not disclose it. The amendment to Form 27 be done to remove it.
- **Quantum of product should also be indicated in clear terms. Lack of precision on this count has meant that patentees such as Bayer have used conflicting and confusing terminology to indicate quantum (packs vs boxes etc).**
  - Where there are patient assistance programmes, quantity and price must again be clearly indicated in Form 27. Here again there are various gaps in the Form 27 filings by Bayer in relation to the Nexavar patent.
- **Vague wording**
  - Form 27 requires patentees and licencees to “give whatever details are available” without mandating such disclosure in stronger terms, given that it is a statutory mandate under section 146.
  - Naturally, as the Writ Petition rightly argues, the patentees and licensees had taken advantage of this ‘loose’ provision and provided virtually insignificant, incomplete information.
- **Insufficient information pertaining to working of patent**

**Why revision need not be done:-**

- In case, the patentee refuses to license or exercise unreasonable conditions for issuing the license, then that 3rd party can approach the Patent Office for issuance of compulsory license. **This is in line with trips and Doha Declaration as well.**

**Way forward:-**

- The government **need to introduce uniformity in the method of calculation of value of a product, to rule out discrepancy.**
- Form – 27 should mandatorily capture
  - The potential manifestations of the patent
  - Related multiple patents covering the same product
- Knowledge of related patents and potential manifestations of the patent is crucial for de-bottlenecking especially when patents go haywire.

***Q) In the wake of rising privacy concerns, EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) are a huge respite. Critically analyse. Also, discuss the effect of these regulations on India. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- In the light of growing concerns about privacy of persons due to exponential growth of digital platforms *The European Union (EU) has taken the lead in amending its existing data protection laws through the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).*

**General data protection regulation:-**

- GDPR prescribes **how companies that deal with data of EU citizens could handle and store it with third parties.**
- The **three objectives mentioned in the GDPR are:-**
  - Protection of natural persons when their data is processed
  - Protection of their fundamental rights and freedoms with respect to data protection
  - Freedom of movement of personal data for processing purpose.
- The Regulation confers protection to data subject as a matter of right.
- The penalties for not doing so could be 4% of the erring company's global annual turnover or €20 million (about Rs 160 crore), whichever is more.

**How is it a respite in the light of growing privacy concerns :-**

- GDPR also sets **new data protection standards** in place, which is likely to be adopted by other countries as well.
- GDPR will be **the most comprehensive dedicated legislation on data protection ever formulated.**
- GDPR **goes further than the principles of data retention**, lawful purpose and necessity of information mentioned under the IT Act.
- Additional principles mentioned in the GDPR are data integrity, protection from unlawful processing or damage and fairness and transparency in processing.
- GDPR also provides for regular revision of data collected for achieving data accuracy
- Significantly, the principle of accountability is a notable feature of GDPR. Under this, the controller has been given the responsibility to uphold the principles mentioned and to demonstrate compliance with them.
- Definition of consent has been considerably expanded under Article 4(11) of the GDPR.
- Meaning of valid consent and demonstration of a valid consent are important elements of the GDPR.

- The General Data Protection Regulation (or better known as GDPR) will give consumers stronger rights by strengthening the control they have over their personal data. **For European residents, GDPR actively empowers consumers to keep businesses in check.**

#### **Concerns:-**

- Biggest problem firm's face while trying to comply with GDPR is the **lack of clearly-defined guidelines.**
- There is **no single authority to certify the level of compliance.** This leaves a **lot of subjectivity** and hence can cause confusion amongst smaller companies that may not have easy access to the right legal entities.
- 65% of organizations are still not confident that their GDPR data will stay within the EU.
- Recently UK government report found that **less than half of businesses are aware of the upcoming GDPR laws.**
- Confusion still reigns over the GDPR's right to be forgotten.
- Only 55% maintain audit trails for data consents, collections updates, and deletion.

#### **Impact of these regulations on India:-**

- Concerns:-
  - Many Indian companies will **have to comply with GDPR** as they have access to or hold personal data of EU citizens.
  - While most companies are still in the initial phase to set up compliance frameworks, **it is worrying to see that a majority are not really concerned about the law.**
  - Europe is an important market for start-ups operating in the business-to-business (B2B) segment and mobile gaming. **Hefty fines and strict regulations could hinder a firm's operations or lead to a complete shutdown, especially of start-ups.**
  - GDPR is enforceable even if companies do not have an office in the EU or do not operate in the EU, but handle private data of EU citizens.
  - Due to the differences in regulatory practices, the legal parameters have been ambiguous which make compliance more complex and difficult to achieve. The Indian government has concerns with regard to the following issues:
    - The Indian IT/BPO industry requires an increased free flow of data to be transferred from the EU
    - The regulation will limit EU companies outsourcing options which will result in **obvious opportunity losses for businesses in India**
    - **India's relatively weak data protection laws make India less competitive** as outsourcing markets in this space when other economies are updating their regulatory practices to ensure seamless inter-state operability
    - Largely inflexible, **GDPR reduces the extent to which businesses can assess risks** and make decisions when it comes to transferring data outside the EU
    - The regulations target service providers **directly who will have to face high costs such as investing "cyber insurance"** whilst adopting new technology. Non-compliance will result in severe penalties.
- Opportunities:-
  - Indian companies that have operations in EU are looking to revise contracts with their vendors and customers to include GDPR.
  - By drawing upon the regulatory practices of GDPR, **India could develop an over-arching data protection regime that would extend to all government and business practices as this will only boost growth in the long run.**

- GDPR is an excellent opportunity for India to update its regulatory practices and effectively implement the fundamental right to privacy. The IT/BPO sector should use this as a stepping stone to move up the value chain by strengthening its automation portfolio and make the industry more competitive in the global market.

### Way forward:-

- India could draw on an over-arching data protection regime by building on GDPR. GDPR will strengthen data protection measures of enterprises and empower them and their customers, if followed in the right word and spirit.
- **A risk-based approach to data privacy** can significantly reduce the potential of non-compliance violations or a breach.
- Adoption of smart cost-efficient ways to address cyber security.
- **End-to-end Encryption** to ensure compliance
- **A provision for Indian citizens to claim penalties** if businesses fail to obtain clear consent
- **Distinguishing between personal and sensitive data.** Individual names and email IDs are personal but freely available. However, a person's sexuality, race, net worth or investment decisions are sensitive data which require stronger protection.
- **Clear rules regarding portability of customer data**– what can or cannot be shared with or without consent.
- **Professional training for employees** to acquire specific skill sets to develop a stronger data protection regime

**TOPIC: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.**

**Q) Examine how poaching has been curbed in Kaziranga. Also examine what it takes to step up conservation in Kaziranga. (250 Words)**

### Background:-

- Kaziranga lost over 500 rhinos in the last two decades of the twentieth century but the latest rhinoceros census in Kaziranga reported a gain of 12 rhinos since 2015.

### How poaching has been curbed in kaziranga :-

- The enforcement has reined in a **battery of hostile informers used by the civil administration.** In connivance with their controllers, this lot was apparently shielding poachers.
- **Protection act by the frontline staff and the police force of the neighbouring districts ever since 2001.**
- The park is also making efforts to monitor the wildlife by using drones since the officials believe the poachers are well-armed and on a constant lookout to strike.
- Better landscape management and **willing involvement of local communities in conservation efforts.**
- **Present government broke the decade-long tradition of offering political patronage to monetise Kaziranga's rhinos.**
- **Assam government had amended the Wildlife (Protection) Act 2009 by raising the penalty for second offences** against wildlife such rhino to minimum of seven years and maximum of life imprisonment and fines.
- The state government had also installed gadgets such electronic eyes, used dog squads and set up a special task force to protect rhinos

### Issues that need to be dealt to improve conservation in Kaziranga are:-

- The local issues such as
  - porous border all around
  - lack of sophistication of equipment to deal with
  - growing population around its fringe areas have always been challenges while tackling poaching and need to be dealt.
- But the new issues such as **rising prices of rhino horns in the international market, easy availability of illegal arms, involvement of militant groups, use of sophisticated arms such as AK series rifles and silencers, counter fire on forest staffs, poor intelligence network must be fully addressed .**
- **Police need to provide enough priority to such trans-national crime.** Majority of police personnel need to be aware that wildlife laws define the duties of police along with forest staffs.
- Need for **effective coordination between police and forest officials** for reducing poaching.
- **Infrastructure update, use of new technology and creating new habitats for rhinos** is recommended by forest officials.
- Growing conflict in and around Kaziranga between the interests and rights of local and indigenous people and the need to protect threatened species. **So conservation need to consider human rights and social issues.**

***Q) The goal of bringing one third of India's geographical area under forest cover seems like a distant dream. In light of the steps suggested in Draft National Forest Policy, critically examine whether this distant dream can be made a reality? (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Despite deforestation and human encroachment, the country's forest cover has remained stable around 20% since Independence. This is because the loss of natural old-growth forests is compensated on paper by expanding monoculture plantations. This shows the challenges in achieving one third forest cover.

### **Steps suggested by draft national forest policy:-**

- National Forest Policy will be an overarching policy for forest management, with the aim of bringing a minimum of one-third of India's total geographical area under forest or tree.
- NFP, 2018 talks about **climate change mitigation through sustainable forest management.**
  - To address the issue of climate change, **NFP, 2018 contributes to the forestry-related Nationally Determined Contribution Targets** and by integrating, "climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in forest management through the mechanism of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus) so that the impacts of the climate change is minimised".
  - The Bonn Challenge, for instance, lays emphasis on landscape approaches a model aimed at improving the ecology of a landscape as a whole in order to benefit local livelihoods and conserve biodiversity.
  - The NDC lays emphasis not only on carbon sequestration but also adaptation to climate change through a strengthened flow of benefits to local communities that are dependent on forests and agriculture for sustenance.
  - This also reflects the spirit of India's policy framework on forests which lays emphasis on a landscape approach to manage forest and tree cover, so that the flow of multiple ecosystem services including food security, climate mitigation and adaptation, conservation of biological diversity and water supplies is secured.

- The draft policy document **also talks about degraded land and how it can be improved by undertaking afforestation activities** using public private partnership models.
- **The lands available with the forest corporations which are degraded and underutilised will be managed to produce quality timber with scientific interventions.**
- **Public private participation models will be developed for undertaking afforestation and reforestation activities** in degraded forest areas and forest areas available with Forest Development Corporations and outside forests.
- While the role of forests as climate change mitigation factor has been recognised, the draft NFP is **vague on the issue of forests rights for forest dwelling communities.**
- The document proposes creation **of a community forest management** mission, bringing government, community and private land under the new proposed management system .
  - As far as community forest resources management under Forest Rights Act is concerned, the new policy will address the same under participatory forest management and the same will be addressed through the proposed community forest management mission.
- **Proposes the levy of a green tax for facilitating ecologically responsible behaviour** and supplementing financial resources essential to address forestry issues
- The policy states that forest land diversion projects related to mining, quarrying, construction of dams, roads and other linear infrastructure need to adopt special caution.
- **It states that a National Board of Forestry and State Boards of Forestry are to be established** to ensure monitoring of the spread of the forest areas and management of forest cover
- **It calls for developing “sound ecotourism models” with the focus on conservation while** supplementing the livelihood needs of local communities.
- **The draft policy indicates that CAMPA funds from diversion of forest land by industry are to be used for purchasing wildlife corridors** from people.
- The policy also asks for management plans for city forests, parks, garden and woodlands to nurture and sustain urban health, clean air and related benefits.
- Telangana Haritha Haaram (THH) flagship programme of Telangana Government that envisages increasing the tree cover of the State from assumed 24% to 33% of the total geographical area.
  - **It is envisaged that in 3 years a massive plantation drive of 230 crore seedlings with 120 crore in possible outside forests, 100 crore through natural rejuvenation and 10 crore in urban areas.**

#### Concerns:-

- Due to the rising population **there is enormous pressure on forest land for extraction of forest based industries and encroachment for extension of agriculture.**
- The rising conflicts between conserving forests for generating ecosystem services and diversion for developmental project poses one of the biggest challenges in managing the forest resources.
- **The policies adopted in the World Bank project under Joint/Community Forest Management were not sustained**, as the village level Van Samrakshan Samithis (VSS) groups in rare cases took stewardship of forest conservation saw it as temporary employment.
- **The wide spread corruption have had tremendous impact on forests too.**
- Riding the wave of **globalisation, market forces** penetrated deep inside as forest produce were systematically looted.

#### Way forward:-

- Identify and reduce the dependency. For instance fuel wood via LPG connections and promoting fast growing timbers in forest fringes, Grazing via stall feeding or rotational grazing, controlling commercial exploitation of forests, adopt zero-tolerance to fires setting targets to reduce fires by 50%, 25% to 10% etc.
- **Increase surveillance and setup legal cell in forest department to follow-up on court cases.**

***Q) CAF act is not only anti-forest but also anti-forest dweller. Discuss in the light of recently notified draft rules of CAF act. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- **Recently the Indian government** notified the draft Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Rules, 2018 to facilitate utilization of over Rs50,000 crore among states to expand India's forest cover. They specify the activities that would be allowed or restricted in a forest area.

### **How CAF act and draft rules are Anti forest:-**

- CAF fund's growth over the past decade is a **measure of the forest destruction under way in India.**
- Evidence establishes that **CA plantations destroy natural forests, harm biodiversity, undermine the rights and nutrition of local communities, and disguise rampant misuse of public funds.**
- **Subverts forest rights act and PESA:-**
  - By allocating more than Rs50,000 crore, **the Act enables the forest bureaucracy to entrench its control over forests and subvert democratic forest governance established by the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 and Panchayats (Extension to Schedule Areas) Act (Pesa), 1996.**
- **Places a huge fund at the unilateral disposal of the forest bureaucracy,** giving it unchecked powers to undertake plantations on private and common property resources when corruption allegations are rampant.
- **Provide no meaningful safeguards against the forest bureaucracy** implementing compensatory plantations on dense forests, and where FRA claims have been issued, are pending or have to be filed.
- Consultations are not stipulated for all afforestation projects, and need not even involve the affected gram sabhas. **This indicates a blindness to conflicts under way across forested landscapes.**
  - Since the CAF Bill was floated, forest rights advocates report that over 2,500 gram sabhas across India have opposed it.
- An ongoing study of 2,479 compensatory afforestation projects across 10 States by forest rights groups has shown that over 70% were on existing forest land, including dense forests.
- **Forest departments are taking over village resources, which includes existing old-growth forests,** because there is a severe paucity of land to service the thousands of afforestation projects that have been floated.
- The draft rules state that compensatory afforestation work can be carried out in consultation with a gram sabha or Van Sanrakshan Samiti, but Van Sanrakshan Samiti is not a legal body and cannot be equated with Gram Sabha

### **How CAF act and draft rules are Anti forest dweller:-**

- It is also a potent indicator of **the scale of resource appropriation from some of India's most marginalised citizens, namely Adivasis and other communities, living in and around forests.**
- The act reduces these communities displacement, hardship and loss of livelihood and food sources to a monetary value to be paid to the state.
- The law and now its draft rules spells **further capture of Adivasi lands in the name of compensatory afforestation.**
- **The rules provide for mere "consultation" with communities in the planning of compensatory afforestation** which is a step backward from the consent provisions in the FRA and the 2014 Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act.
- Expert study chronicled **multiple forms of state violence against villagers protesting against such plantations** (including beatings, arrests, criminal cases, food insecurity and forcible takeover of land).



**Conclusion:-**

- The CAF Act needs to be integrated with the FRA and PESA by centering the role of gram sabhas and incorporating land and forest rights guarantees. Only then India's target of 33% forest cover would be achieved.

***Q) There is lack of seriousness in prosecuting offenders under wildlife protection act. Discuss the reasons behind high acquittal rates in wildlife related crimes. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Wildlife crimes were among the three major crimes worldwide, next only to illegal arms and drug trades. Removing a species from the flora and fauna will have an impact not only on the forest, but also on humans

**Provisions regarding prosecuting offenders in the wildlife protection act:-**

- Offences in relation to animals specified in Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II of the Act carry a prescribed penalty of not less than three years imprisonment, which may extend up to seven years and a fine of not less than Rs10,000. These cases are non-compoundable.
- South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network India joined (SAWEN) to work with seven other South Asian countries to fight against trans-border wildlife crime through communication, coordination, collaboration, capacity building and cooperation in the region.

**Reasons behind high acquittal rates in wildlife related crimes:-**

- Recent book titled "State of India's Environment 2017: In Figures" suggests a **worrying 52 per cent increase in poaching and wildlife crimes between 2014 and 2016.**
- **Maharashtra, for instance, recorded only 17 convictions of the 147 court orders between 1995 and 2014, with a success rate of 11.56 per cent.**
- **Most of the poaching cases either do not come out or are simply attributed to various other 'non-suspicious' factors.**
- Every forest guard is so burdened that even if they see a tiger carcass lying there with suspected situation of being poached, **they would simply try and not register it.**
- Even if the dead animals are brought on record, **it will be hassle to transport it and then appear at the court as witness.**
- Chances of forest guards spotting a carcass before decomposing are slim. In most cases, the carcasses rot before being sent for investigations so authorities cannot prove the cause of death.
- **Rate of conviction is abysmal, owing to the lack of evidence:-**
  - **The latest data available from National Crime Records Bureau of 2014 says that the out of 5,835 cases reported under environment-related offences, 770 cases were reported under the Wildlife Protection Act, for which, 134 people were arrested and fewer were convicted.**
- **There are only a few labs to do DNA profiling** and these are overburdened to the extent that there are over 3000 pending cases in the court awaiting the completion of laboratory examination.
- In case the accused is caught red-handed with the animal parts, **the witnesses turn hostile or the prosecution authorities do not shown up in court.**
- Even in cases where the accused is proven guilty, **wrong sections under the Wildlife protection act are cited**, The accused are not sentenced to the mandatory minimum punishment prescribed under the Act.

**Measures needed further are:-**

- To meet the challenges posed by wildlife trafficking, **stronger institutions and law enforcement are needed. Equally important is take action to simultaneously reduce poverty through expanded livelihood opportunities and the involvement of indigenous and local communities in decision-making**, as well as general awareness raising.

- **Police need to provide enough priority to such trans-national crime.** Majority of police personnel need to be aware that wildlife laws define the duties of police along with forest staffs.
- Need for **effective coordination between police and forest officials** for reducing poaching.
- **Infrastructure update, use of new technology and creating new habitats for rhinos** is recommended by forest officials.
  - Electronic-eye technology, or E-eye for short, provides around-the-clock monitoring of sensitive regions.
- **International collaboration:-**
  - UNDP supports an integrated approach to combat illegal trade in wildlife and forest products. We support countries to diversify rural livelihoods, manage human-wildlife conflict, strengthen protected area management.

***Q) We need ecologically robust and socially just solutions to cope with decreasing forest cover and increasing development pressures. Critical analyse the draft Forest Policy, 2018 in the light of the above statement. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- Forests are among the first casualties as human populations explode. It is estimated that between 1950 and 1980, around 50 lakh hectares of forestland was diverted for non-forestry activities and India is unable to reach the national goal of 33 per cent. Yet forestlands continue to be diverted for non-forestry purposes in an ad hoc manner.
- In the light of the contemporary challenges like climate change, human-wildlife conflict, intensifying water crisis, increasing air and water pollution and deteriorating environment a new policy is necessary.

### **Draft forest policy 2018:-**

- The **overall objective and goal of the present policy is to safeguard the ecological and livelihood security of people**, of the present and future generations, based on sustainable management of the forests for the flow of ecosystem services.
- **Features:-**
  - Public private participation for afforestation in degraded forest areas
  - Public-private participation models will be developed for undertaking afforestation and reforestation activities in degraded forest areas and forest areas available with forest development corporations and outside forests
- **Promoting urban greens**
  - It says the management plans for urban green will be prepared and implemented in consonance with the development plan of cities.
- **Measures to safeguard ecosystems from forest fire (map the vulnerable areas; develop and strengthen early warning systems)**
  - It proposes to restrict schemes and projects which interfere with forests that cover steep slopes, catchments of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, geologically unstable terrain and such other ecologically sensitive areas
- The draft calls for state boards of forestry headed by state ministers in charge of forests to be established for ensuring inter-sectoral convergence, simplification of procedures, conflict resolution, among other things
- Afforestation in catchment areas for river rejuvenation and water recycling

- The ecologically sensitive catchment areas shall be stabilized with suitable soil and water conservation measures, and also by planting suitable trees and grass like bamboo
- Economic valuation of forests
- Forest certification to provide premium on forest produce
- Integration of climate change concerns in forest management
- Promote agro-forestry and farm forestry
- Management of north-eastern forests
- Besides, **it had suggested launching a national forest streams revival programme in mission mode to tackle the water crisis.**

#### **Positives:-**

- **It addressed the issue of forest fires**, stating that adequate measures would be taken to safeguard ecosystems from forest fires, map the vulnerable areas and develop and strengthen early warning systems and methods to control fire, based on remote sensing technology and community participation.”
- The latest draft of National Forest Policy **has omitted any reference to a green tax or a national stream revival programme.**
- **It emphasized on integrating climate change concerns into forest management** while noting that forests acts as a natural sink of carbon dioxide thereby assisting in climate change mitigation.
- **To tackle rising human-wildlife conflict**, the draft outlined short-term and long-term actions.
- The draft policy document **also talks about degraded land** and how it can be improved by undertaking afforestation activities using public private partnership models.
- **It seeks to sync it with the country's forestry-related 'Nationally Determined Contribution' targets under the Paris Agreement** where India has promised to rapidly increase its forest cover so that an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent is created by the year 2030.
- The draft policy also talks about the need to stimulate growth in the forest based industry sector. This sector being labour intensive can help in increasing green jobs. Forest corporations and industrial units need to step up growing of industrial plantations for meeting the demand of raw materials

#### **Negatives:-**

- The draft NFP 2018 mentions major forestry issues ailing the forest sector, but it doesn't provide answers to them as to how these objectives will be achieved considering the competitive demands for forestlands.
- New draft also says efforts will be made to achieve harmonization between policies and laws like Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 . **People may see it as an attempt to weaken role of gram sabhas (village councils)**
- While the role of forests as climate change mitigation factor has been recognised, **the draft NFP is vague on the issue of forests rights for forest dwelling communities**
- **Continues to speak about private participation in forest management, which was criticized in 2016.**

#### **Conclusion:-**

- There is a need for a comprehensive approach for successful forest management like ensuring proper funding, filling the vacancies (the necessity of which was very visible in the recent Theni forest fire incident), effective implementation of provisions etc
- Government must heed scientific advice on this crucial issue. The funds lying with CAMPA present a great prospect to de-fragment the last remaining patches of old-growth natural forests

***Q) What is Green Technology? Discuss India's progress in transitioning to Green Technology. (250 Words)***

**Background:-**

- Air pollution, the collapse of natural food systems and extreme weather events have demonstrated the urgency to find cleaner forms of growth in India and the world.

**Green technology:-**

- The term green tech refers to: technology that is considered environmentally friendly based on its production process or supply chain; a means of energy production that is less harmful to the environment than more traditional ways of generating energy, such as burning fossil fuels.

**India progressed:-**

- India has a **sizable industry in low-carbon environmental goods and services (LCEGS)** and the third-highest LCEGS sales in Asia (second highest in terms of proportion of GDP) .
- India engages in **frugal innovation**, which is immensely useful, but not captured by patent data.
- About 13% of the country's **high-value patents** are related to green tech in line with the world average.
- India Green technologies include **green buildings, carbon capture and storage, climate change mitigation technologies related to production and processing goods, and water-related adaptation technologies.**
- In trade, **India specialises in smart grids, wind energy, hydel and biofuels.**
  - In India' export basket, the share of wind energy is 1.7 times the world average and the share of smart grid technologies is over double the world average.
  - Wind energy is a strategic opportunity. India enjoys 10 GW of wind turbine manufacturing capacity, which is three times higher than domestic demand, providing an export-growth window..
- India's **low-carbon exports have tripled** in the period between 2001 and 2013.
- India's **lower labour costs give it an additional competitive edge.**
- **Smart grids** also present a significant economic opportunity. India can capitalise on its comparative advantage in smart-grid technologies to boost exports.
- India initiating measures like international solar alliance, moving towards electric vehicles, BS VI standard show that India is effectively transitioning to green technology.

**Concerns:-**

- Transmission and distribution losses are very high: over 20% is lost in distribution nationally, some states report losses in excess of 40%.
- There are intellectual property issues with respect to technology transfer.
- India's renewable energy especially is still costly to produce.

**Conclusion:-**

- Evidence shows that pricing carbon or phasing out fossil fuel subsidies can boost green innovation, making India more competitive in the industries of tomorrow.

***Q) The maritime industry poses significant emission threats and there is an urgent need for a global consensus on industry specific emission reduction targets. Critically analyse. (250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- **As the engine of global trade, the shipping industry is instrumental in daily lives. 90% of the world's goods are transported by ship, and seaborne trade supports the economies of developed and developing nations alike but this sector has been detrimental to environment.**
- Recently the strategy embraced by a committee of the International Maritime Organization would lower emissions from container ships, oil tankers, bulk carriers and other vessels by at least 50 percent by the year 2050 vs where they stood in 2008.

### **How maritime industry poses significant emission threats:-**

- Maritime industry accounts for 2-3% of global greenhouse gases, but **its emissions are projected to increase by as much as 250% by 2050 without intervention.**
- The industry is also a large emitter accounting for around 2.4% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, equivalent to Germany.
- Shipping in recent years has been responsible for about 800 million tons annually of carbon dioxide emissions
- Ships, by burning heavy fuel oil, create not only carbon dioxide emissions but **also significant emissions of black carbon, or soot.** Black carbon is a short-lived but powerful climate-change driver.
- **Fuel consumption is increasing.** Total shipping fuel consumption increased from 291 to 298 million tonnes (+2.4%) from 2013 to 2015.
- **Shipping GHG emissions are increasing despite improvements in operational efficiency for many ship classes.** Increasing emissions are being driven by rising demand for shipping and the associated consumption of fossil fuels.
- Noise pollution caused by shipping and other human enterprises has increased in recent history.

### **Urgent need for global consensus on industry specific emission reduction targets :-**

- Failure to commit to full decarbonisation by mid-century will **create serious investment uncertainty for the industry.**
- **Pollution from ships is a major concern,** but one that has been largely overlooked in recent years.
- Despite its major role in polluting the planet, shipping was **not accounted for in the Paris agreement on climate change.**
- Low lying island states like Marshall islands, pacific islands etc are threatened by rise of sea level so reducing GHG of shipping sector is important for the survival of these states.
- **Tremendous investment has been made in recent years in a range of new fuel and technology solutions to help shipping mitigate its environmental impact.** Currently the industry burns a range of heavy fuel oils and residual oil products left over from hydrocarbon cracking in refineries. These fuels are extremely carbon intensive and so one of shipping's main priorities is to pioneer alternative, low and zero carbon fuels to help manage its decarbonisation pathway.
- Since the sector has major international components **it is not the responsibility of any single country to regulate as part of a domestic climate-change strategy.**

### **Why emerging or developing countries are opposing :-**

- Major emerging economies are resistant to the idea of a cap on emissions, preferring to **focus on cutting emissions relative to each tonne of cargo shipped.** With volumes of seaborne trade set to rise, that approach would not guarantee emissions cuts in absolute terms.
- China, India, Brazil and six other countries say a greenhouse gas emissions cap would be fundamentally unfit for the sector because as long as world trade is growing, shipping will grow

too. **This responsive characteristic of shipping makes it impossible to determine its peak emissions in the same way that a country could do**

- They argue that it would be unproductive to **have two complex and interrelated negotiations occurring in parallel.**
- They are concerned that discussions **would lead to an absolute target that could constrain economic growth**
- **There is a confusion on how** responsibilities would be divided between developed and developing countries.
- For shipping to decarbonize, current fuel oils would have to be replaced by biofuels or, perhaps ultimately, hydrogen or batteries. **But such innovations so far are being tested only in smaller ships, rather than the largest vessels**
- **Also exports, food security complicated by regulating maritime emissions are some other issues.**

#### **Way forward:-**

- Focus should be on rules for gathering fuel consumption data from ships. It is the first part of an agreed “three-step approach” that could ultimately in five years or more lead to energy efficiency regulations.

#### **Conclusion:-**

- **Absolute reductions in ship emissions will require concerted action to improve the energy efficiency of shipping and to develop and deploy alternative fuel and propulsion concepts.**

***Q) Tropospheric ozone adds yet another factor to the existing nexus of poverty, malnourishment and climate-change effects that challenge food and nutrition security in some of the agriculture intensive regions of the world. Analyse the given statement with regards to India. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Ozone is the third most important greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide and methane. There's substantial evidence that ozone is one of the most phytotoxic (toxic to plants) air pollutants, causing significant damage to agricultural crops worldwide.
- Ozone levels have doubled since pre-industrial times due to anthropogenic emissions. Motor vehicles are the main anthropogenic sources of ground-level ozone precursors. Other anthropogenic sources of VOCs include emissions from the chemical and petroleum industries and from organic solvents in small stationary sources such as dry cleaners.

#### **Tropospheric ozone implications on agriculture and food security:-**

- South Asia's Indo-Gangetic plain experience higher levels of ozone concentration enough to affect **crop physiology, growth and yield.**
- Ozone enters plant leaves through stomata pores that facilitate gas exchange where it reacts with cellular components, producing a series of chemical reactions that create **strong oxidative stress.**
  - Damage ranges from visible leaf injuries such as yellowing (chlorosis) and stippling and localised cell deaths (necrosis), to subtle physiological changes such as reduced photosynthesis and premature senescence. **These effects ultimately reduce crop yields.**
- China and India are important examples of countries where ozone pollution **already threatens crop production.** In India, up to 14 and 6% yield losses in wheat and rice, respectively, are estimated to have been caused by ozone.

- Instability of these food systems due to ozone will have far-reaching socioeconomic implications via **changes in food prices, farm incomes, consumer behaviours and nutritional access for different groups of society, including women.**
- Studies indicate that crop losses due to environmental factors like ozone often **hit farmers by increasing debts and intensifying workloads** as well as altering gender relations.

#### **The prevalence of poverty, malnourishment and climate change in agriculturally intensive areas :-**

- Fundamental role of food systems and agriculture are heavily affected by climate change, but at the same time are also major drivers of climate change.
  - Number of undernourished people has increased for the first time again in a decade with 815 million people going hungry every day. This spike is due mainly to conflict and economic downturns, but also the **impact of climate change, particularly prolonged droughts**
  - Estimates by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change show that **climate change might increase the risk of hunger and malnutrition by up to 20 percent by 2050.**
- **In the Gangetic plains there is already enormous stress on food production with efficiency of yields of rice and wheat considerably reducing. Also poverty is rampant in these areas as majority are considerably depending on agriculture.**

#### **How poverty, malnourishment and climate change coupled with tropospheric ozone will affect the agriculture and food security:-**

- **Urban poverty:-**
  - Rapid growth of the urban economy, largely unplanned, has also meant haphazard growth of urban centres and proliferation of urban slums lacking in basic amenities such as decent shelter, safe drinking water and toilets and sanitary facilities. **This has implications for the absorption dimension of food security**, since lack of safe drinking water and sanitation leads to poor biological utilisation of food and repeated episodes of morbidity.
- Crop yields are affected so poor cannot afford the food and become more malnourished diluting the concept of food security.
- Ozone air pollution and climate change pose major threats to global crop production, with ramifications for future food security.
- Climate change puts millions of people in a vicious cycle of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty.

#### **Way forward:-**

- Recognising these challenges, **scientists should consider integrating ozone pollution in seasonal crop-yield forecasts.**
- A recent report highlights the importance of ozone-monitoring networks in rural areas for assessing background ozone concentrations and the frequency of high ozone episodes. This is particularly important because air-quality monitoring is generally focused on urban and semi-urban areas.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation must be integrated into the entire food system: from production to transportation, from processing to food consumption, and in both rural and urban areas.
- Reducing deforestation; restoring degraded lands and forests; eliminating food loss and waste; enhancing soil carbon sequestration; low-carbon livestock – these are only a few known solutions to address hunger, poverty and sustainability at the same time.
- Climate-smart agriculture is one of the solutions that have been proposed to fight climate change. It is an approach that aims at combining food security and development, adaptation to climate change as well as reducing and removing emissions, whenever possible.

***Q) Even though Indian Meteorological Department has predicted a normal monsoon this year, the long-term challenge for Indian agriculture is to make the most of the rainfall that we get. Comment.(250 Words)***

### **Background:-**

- An estimate of water used to grow rice and wheat, measured in cubic metres per tonne, shows that India uses more than China does. Even though Indian meteorological department has predicted a normal monsoon this year, India's water problem lies in inefficient usage of available resources and exploiting the existing resources further.

### **Magnitude of water crisis in India :-**

- **Urban areas:-**
  - No Indian city supplies 24×7 drinkable water to all of its residents. In many cities, including Bengaluru and Chennai, water scarcity has reached crisis levels and in Delhi, every summer brings intense water scarcity for the disadvantaged sections.
  - India's cities are teetering on the brink of an unimaginable water crisis because of **unplanned growth and low priority to provision of safe drinking water.**
- **Rural India:-**
  - In rural India, zooming agricultural production over the years has mostly been fuelled by **heavy use of groundwater** because **not enough investment was made for using surface and rainwater through canals and reservoirs.**
  - Agriculture consumes 83% of India's water resources.
- **Gross mismanagement and neglect by governments**, coupled with an unbridled destruction of resources. For instance just 18% of rainwater is used effectively while 48% enters the river systems, most of which just flows into the ocean.
- **Stressed Aquifers :-**
  - Studies by NASA using satellite imagery show that the Indus basin, which includes the high food producing states of Punjab and Haryana, is one of the **most stressed aquifers in the world.** If the current trends continue, by 2030 nearly 60% of Indian aquifers will be in a critical condition. This means that some 25% of the agricultural production will be at risk -a devastating scenario.
- These are **leading to problems between states like the water disputes** of Cauvery river, **encroachment of water bodies** like the event on floodplains of Yamuna river, cultivating water intensive crops like sugarcane in water stressed states like Maharashtra etc further accelerate the water issue.

### **Measures needed for using the most of the rainfall :-**

- It is vital for **the Centre to arrive at a policy that gives constructive advice to farmers on the ideal cropping mix** and help them get the cost-plus-50% margin.
- **The Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water drawn up by the Centre should be pursued scientifically**, to help States with the most water-stressed blocks get adequate funds to build artificial recharge structures.
- For those farmers who choose to continue with wheat and rice, **transfer of expertise and provision of equipment that enables efficient utilization of water is vital.**
- **Farm ponds, percolation tanks, water reservoirs and small and medium-sized dams** can help retain more surface water while increasing the groundwater recharge.
- **Rainwater harvesting can play an important role** in supplementing municipal supplies and taking the load off precious groundwater resources.
- **A mix of traditional and modern technologies needs to be urgently put in place to tackle India's impending water crisis.** This includes **watershed development programmes**, increasing



the efficiency of irrigation by replacing the prevalent flood irrigation with **drip or sprinkler systems and creation of desalination plants** to convert seawater into drinkable sweet water.

- **Increased water conservation and promoting cultivation of less water-intensive crops can go a long way towards coping with the crisis.**
- **Adopt drought-resistant crop varieties** as has been done in some parts of Odisha for paddy/rice through the help of the International Rice Research Institute. This can maintain productivity and income of the farmers and also ensure price stability to the consumers.

***Q) Agriculture has a huge role to play in helping India deal with its water woes. Examine.***

### **Background:-**

- India's biggest problem is that of rampant water-waste in agriculture that consumes around 78% of India's total freshwater resources.
- Just rice and sugarcane consume more than 60% of the irrigation water in the country while occupying just around 24% of the total gross cropped area

### **Agriculture contributes to water crisis:-**

- **Rural India:-**
  - In rural India, zooming agricultural production over the years has mostly been fuelled by **heavy use of groundwater** because **not enough investment was made for using surface and rainwater through canals and reservoirs.**
- **Stressed Aquifers :-**
  - Studies by NASA using satellite imagery show that the Indus basin, which includes the high food producing states of Punjab and Haryana, is one of the **most stressed aquifers in the world.** If the current trends continue, by 2030 nearly 60% of Indian aquifers will be in a critical condition. This means that some 25% of the agricultural production will be at risk -a devastating scenario.
- **Subsidies:-**
  - No crop diversification efforts will work so long as free electricity offsets the costs of pumping out groundwater
  - A survey by the Punjab agriculture department indicates that in the last eight years, more than 54 per cent of farmers have installed water guzzling submersibles, and more than 45 per cent have got their motors renewed to increase the power, or simply purchased higher capacity motors.
- **Inefficient irrigation methods:-**
  - Irrigation for agriculture alone accounts for over 80% of water use in India, more than any other sector. However, much of this water is applied inefficiently using flood irrigation, which remains the prevailing irrigation practice among farmers in India.
  - This results in considerable losses of water around 60% of water applied in the form of surface run off, percolation and bare soil evaporation that does not contribute to any increases in yield.
- **Paddy cultivation:-**
  - **Paddy cultivation is heavily water-intensive on an average,** it needs more than 1,400 mm of water against, say, 600 mm for pigeon pea or 500 mm for soybean.
  - Tamil Nadu, that has done little to wean farmers in the Cauvery basin off Samba cultivation, **already faces a severe water crisis**
  - **Water-demand varies across states given** differing weather conditions. In Punjab, over 5,330 litres go into producing 1 kg, while in Bengal this needs 2,700 litres.

### **Huge role to play in helping solve India water crisis:-**

- **Shifting rice cultivation in water-scarce areas** like Punjab to Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, etc, and sugarcane cultivation to the traditional sub-tropical regions like UP and Bihar instead of Maharashtra.
- **Using drip irrigation:-**
  - The water saved through drip technology in one hectare of sugarcane area can bring an additional 2.29 ha area under conventional irrigation and double this area, if drip irrigation is adopted in cotton; this means additional output worth up to Rs 1.95 lakh.
- It is vital for **the Centre to arrive at a policy that gives constructive advice to farmers on the ideal cropping mix** and help them get the cost-plus-50% margin.
- **The Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water drawn up by the Centre should be pursued scientifically**, to help States with the most water-stressed blocks get adequate funds to build artificial recharge structures.
- For those farmers who choose to continue with wheat and rice, **transfer of expertise and provision of equipment that enables efficient utilisation of water is vital.**
- **Farm ponds, percolation tanks, water reservoirs and small and medium-sized dams** can help retain more surface water while increasing the groundwater recharge.
- **Increased water conservation and promoting cultivation of less water-intensive crops can go a long way towards coping with the crisis.**
- **Adopt drought-resistant crop varieties** as has been done in some parts of Odisha for paddy/rice through the help of the International Rice Research Institute. This can maintain productivity and income of the farmers and also ensure price stability to the consumers.
- To curb the unsustainable practice of giving free electricity, **a system where power consumed at each point is accounted for needs to be put in place.**
  - In Punjab if implemented properly, paddy cultivation automatically gets costlier ultimately leading to a reduction in its acreage, making the diversification plan successful.

***Q) India will get buried under mountain of debris if it doesn't address its solid waste management issues. Discuss the magnitude of the problem and ways to address it keeping global best practices in mind.***

### **Background:-**

- As the Indian economy expands and material consumption rises, a major challenge at hand is the management and containment of solid waste.
- Specific targets under the Sustainable Development Agenda also highlight proper waste management as an important pillar for development.

**OECD:** Municipal waste is collected and treated by, or for municipalities. It covers waste from households, including similar waste from commerce and trade, office buildings, institutions and small businesses, yard and garden, contents of litter containers, and market cleansing. Waste from municipal sewage networks and treatment, as well as construction and demolition is excluded.

### **Magnitude of the problem :-**

- Already today, 62 million tonnes of garbage is generated annually by the 377 million people living in urban India. Even worse is the fact that more than 45 million tonnes, or 3 million trucks worth, of this garbage is untreated and disposed by municipal authorities every day leading to health issues and environmental degradation.

- **The volume of waste generated in the cities is projected to reach 125 million tonnes per annum by 2031** and the disposal system today focuses on collection and transportation of this waste only.
- **Waste segregation being virtually absent has resulted in resource wastage, environmental pollution and health/safety hazards**, due to leaching and methane generation from wet solid waste in the landfills.
- Due to unscientific disposal, **GHG emissions from solid waste in India increased by 3.1% yearly between 2000 and 2010.**
- **Unsegregated waste also undermines the waste-to-electricity option of disposal**, given high wet waste content pushes the overall calorific value to a level below the required threshold.
- **While 95 commercial composting plants exist, only 14% of the capacity is utilised.**
- Nearly 75% of the waste generated in India is not treated and openly dumped onto fallow lands, leaching lethal chemicals into the ground, toxic fumes into the air and poison into the water systems. The critical impact on public health is immeasurable and can be witnessed as a rapid rise in pulmonary diseases, cancer occurrences, birth deformities etc.
- According to World Health Organisation, 22 types of diseases can be prevented or controlled by improving solid waste management in India.

#### **Ways to address it :-**

- **Global practices:-**
  - **Japan:-**
    - India could learn from Japan that managed to reduce its waste generation by a fifth over 2000-2013 by **promoting Extended Producer Responsibility**
    - Its Containers & Packaging Recycling Act aims at reducing the generation of packaging waste by mandating thinner and lighter packaging, use of returnable containers, and even recycling packaging from imports made by a firm.
    - It also places some responsibility on consumers
      - The Automobile Recycling Act of 2002 requires automobile buyers to deposit a recycling fee and mandatorily return an end-of-life vehicle to the dealer.
  - **South Korea:-**
    - Ingenious approaches have been promoted across the world for reducing resource consumption and increasing resource recovery from waste materials.
    - The Korean government has **promoted the “SSSR Campaign” (Ahnabada Campaign), which stands for “Save, Share, Swap, and Reuse,”** to bring the reuse of goods into everyday habits, and has hosted marketplaces for exchanging or trading second-hand goods.
  - **The pragmatic ‘Zero Waste’ philosophy** promotes absolute recycling and reuse of all products, restricting the amount of dumped waste to near zero.
    - It emphasises on designing and managing products and processes to reduce the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserving and recovering all resources, and not burning or burying them.
    - Implementing Zero Waste would ideally eliminate all discharges to land, water, or air that may be a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health. The philosophy ultimately focuses on eliminating waste.
- **Indian initiatives:-**
  - To maximise benefits along the waste value chain, **the Solid Waste Management Guidelines 2016** have detailed the most appropriate steps to improve the waste management paradigm in the Indian context and minimise environmental impact of the same.

- Minimum generation of waste by reusing and recycling, in tandem with proper segregation and treatment practices is the most preferred approach to tackle the challenge this sector poses.
- 50-60% of waste generated in typical Indian cities is organic and biodegradable, concluding that composting would be the devoted method to solve half of India's waste problems.
- In line with the mandate of the rules as identified, some successful initiatives being steered in the country are:
  - Tirunelveli, a small city in the state of Tamil Nadu has been announced as the first to have achieved 100% source segregation of municipal solid waste. The organic biodegradable waste is collected by the municipality on a daily basis while plastic waste is collected only once a week on Wednesdays.
  - HasiruDala in Bengaluru strives to integrate marginalized informal waste workers including waste pickers in the solid waste management framework by utilizing their expertise in the domain.
- Propelling sanitation to the top of the policy agenda under the flagship Swachh Bharat Abhiyan programme. **The Clean India Dashboard tracks programme achievements, 24×7.**
- **Constraints with Indian approach:-**
  - India had no operational sanitary landfill though these are mandated by the SWM Rules.
  - SWM Rules directs urban local bodies (ULBs) to fix and levy user charges but this is hobbled by the fact that most state governments have not devolved that power to local governments.
  - India's waste predicament presents numerous social and environmental challenges for urban local bodies (ULBs), whose prerogative covers MSW management.
- An effective waste management strategy must figure **waste segregation at source and appropriate treatment of different components.**
- The wet solid waste, primarily biodegradable organic waste, can be then processed in a decentralised manner through **composting and biomethanation.**

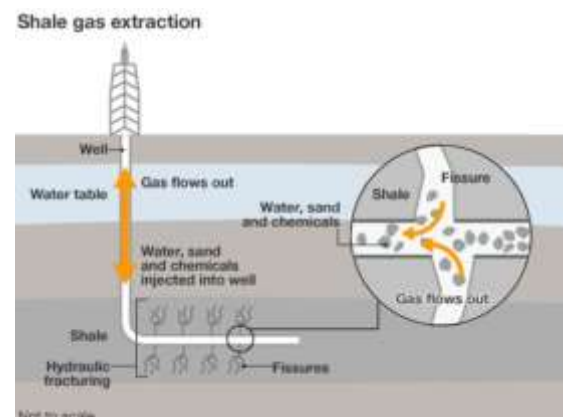
### Conclusion:-

- As India's own economy grows faster and further, the country will face an insurmountable waste crisis, unless the government puts a high priority on waste management. **We must demand our right to live in a clean and healthy natural environment**

***Q) Fracking might make us less dependent on conventional fossil fuels, but it does so at a huge cost. Discuss in the context of whether it is justified for India to start fracking.(250 words)***

### Fracking:-

- It is the hydraulic fracturing of shale rock that, together with horizontal drilling, unleashes abundant natural gas.
- Fracking is the process of drilling down into the earth before a high-pressure water mixture is directed at the rock to release the gas inside
- Water, sand and chemicals are injected into the rock at high pressure which allows the gas to flow out to the head of the well.



- The process can be carried out vertically or, more commonly, by drilling horizontally to the rock layer and can create new pathways to release gas or can be used to extend existing channels.

### Advantages:-

- Fracking allows drilling firms to access difficult-to-reach resources of oil and gas.
- In the US it has significantly boosted domestic oil production and driven down gas prices

### Disadvantages:-

- **Environmental concerns:-**
  - Extensive use of fracking in the US, where it has revolutionised the energy industry, has prompted environmental concerns.
- **Use of water:-**
  - Fracking uses huge amounts of water, which must be transported to the fracking site, at significant environmental cost.
  - The massive amount of water used in the fracking process has led to water shortages in some drilling areas.
- **Groundwater contamination:-**
  - Environmentalists say potentially carcinogenic chemicals used may escape and contaminate groundwater around the fracking site.
- **Tremors:-**
  - Fracking process can cause small earth tremors. Recent earthquake in South Korea may be linked to fracking
- **Reliance on fossil fuels:-**
  - Campaigners say that fracking is simply **distracting energy firms and governments from investing in renewable sources of energy**, and encouraging continued reliance on fossil fuels.
- **The long-term impact of weakening underground rock formations through the fracturing technique is widely questioned.**

### India should start fracking:-

- Fracking has led to substantial **increases in U.S. domestic oil and gas production**, thereby significantly reducing the need for oil imports.
- **Fracking-created oil boom** has also had beneficial effects on the economy as a whole, playing a significant part in the **reduction of gasoline and natural gas prices** and creating **hundreds of thousands of jobs**.
- In the U.S., where shale gas has been commercially exploited for two decades, the prices of fuel and **electricity have dropped**.
- If India commercially exploits shale deposits, **it could meet its ever-increasing energy demand, decrease oil and gas imports, and improve the balance of payments**.
- To gain such benefits, the government introduced a policy on shale gas and oil in 2013, permitting national oil companies to engage in fracking

**No, the consequences are very drastic:-**

- Countries like Germany and France and subnational governments like Scotland have banned fracking.
- As fracking consumes large amounts of water (average 15,000 m<sup>3</sup>/well) and relatively larger surface area, **it is bound to impact irrigation and other local requirements.**
- In the U.S. experience, out of 260 chemical substances, 58 have been identified to pose a risk to **human life and environment, eight are carcinogens** and 17 are toxic to freshwater organisms.
- Further, as 25-90% of the fluid is not retrieved and cracks in the shaft are possible, there is a **high risk of pollution to nearby underground water.**
- Fracking has other impacts such as increased **air emissions (including greenhouse gases) and seismic activity.**
- **Legal issues:-**
  - If the risk from fracking to underground water materialises, **courts can hold the state responsible for it, stop the activity, and order other corrective and preventive measures.**
  - **Fracking might face the 'precautionary principle', which has been incorporated into law.**
    - **It dictates** that where there is a significant risk to the environment or human health, precautionary measures must be undertaken, irrespective of any scientific uncertainty. Therefore, **the government would be obliged to adopt measures to reduce those risks.**
  - The Model Bill for the Conservation, Protection, Regulation and Management of Groundwater, 2016, sets a priority for use of groundwater. Only after satisfying these priorities can underground water be used for other purposes

**Conclusion:-**

- India needs to take decision looking into all multiple options but based on international experiences for now the government should impose a moratorium on fracking.

***TOPIC: Linkages between development and spread of extremism. Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.***

***Q) Repealing AFSPA is a pre-requisite for establishing long term peace in violence hit Jammu and Kashmir. Comment.(250 words)***

**Background:-**

- Recently centre has announced that it revoked the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from Meghalaya .In Arunachal Pradesh, the impact of AFSPA was reduced to eight police stations
- Right now AFSPA is effective in the whole of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh

**Why is there the need to repeal AFSPA:-**

- Human rights groups are opposing it as being aggressive. Manipur's Irom Sharmila has been one of its staunchest opponents, going on a hunger strike.

- Its scrapping has been recommended by various committees headed by Jeevan Reddy and Santosh Hegde . Its core impunity has been frowned upon by the Supreme Court.
- The law results in the armed forces of the state carrying out atrocities against citizens and **producing more alienation and inspiration for violence than is quelled by use of the law.**
- The army need to return to its primary task on the disputed borders, especially when the Line of Actual Control too has become active
- **State law and order machinery, comprising the state police and central paramilitary forces, need time to assume responsibility. With the army's permanent presence in the state,** the paramilitary forces, especially the CRPF in large numbers, has been pushed to the shadows, with little certainty that it will be able to perform under crisis or a war-situation.
- **Draconian provisions:-**
- AFSPA provides India's Armed Forces and operational adjuncts such as Assam Rifles and Rashtriya Rifles both immunity and impunity in areas that the Act is enforced, **to kill at will anyone even on the merest suspicion of breaching law and order, of being a rebel sympathizer.**
- It gives the army powers to search premises and make arrests without warrants, to use force even to the extent of causing death.
- **Abuse of power:-**
  - AFSPA derivatives have over the decades led to gross abuse of power in Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, and elsewhere, especially with non-combatants written off as collateral damage in the greater interest of the nation.
- **Atrocities:-**
  - AFSPA has never stopped rebellion. It has instead bred resentment against India by protecting prejudices and atrocities. There have been instances where army was accused of rapes, fake encounters in the AFSPA enforced regions.

#### **The act is necessary in the present circumstances because:-**

- **Terrorism:-**
  - Terrorism would never have been rooted out in Punjab or Mizoram without the AFSPA and without the tough measures that were taken by the security forces operating under the protection of the Act.
  - The induction of the army becomes imperative to battle the terrorists and maintain the territorial integrity of the country.
  - Lifting of AFSPA from urban areas/large towns in J&K will result in terrorists seeking shelter in such areas and rebuilding their bases, as has been witnessed in Manipur's capital Imphal post-2004.
  - Administrative support including convoys carrying army personnel and stores moving to the Line of control pass through urban areas in the hinterland and are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Hence AFSPA cannot be applied in pockets of J&K along the Line of control while withdrawing the act from the remaining areas.
- **State and non-state actors role:-**
  - While there may be a comparative decline in terrorist violence, **there is no change in the Pakistani ideology and will to support proxy war in J&K.** The infrastructure to support such a proxy is all intact and being regularly upgraded.
  - Between 35 and 42 training camps are active in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
  - Moreover, counter-terrorist operations by the army are not restricted to the Line of Control but cover the entire state.

- **The mere fact that the provisions of AFSPA have to be invoked in a particular area *ex facie* establishes that handling the law and order situation had gone beyond the control of the state government:-**
  - The army personnel operating in those circumstances need to enjoy at least similar powers as the police force. So, just as Section 45 of the Criminal procedure code disallows arrest of public servants and just as Section 197 provides impunity against prosecution, Section 7 of the AFSPA gives similar protection to the army personnel.
- **Apex court said that the conferring of powers vide Section 4 of AFSPA could not be held arbitrary or violative of Article 14, 19 or 21 of the Constitution.** In fact, having considered the role and circumstances under which the armed forces have to operate, the Supreme Court extended the scope of powers vested vide 4 and 6 of AFSPA so as to include by implication, the power to interrogate the person arrested.

### Way forward:-

- **Revocation:-**
  - The revocation of AFSPA from any area needs a concerted view of all organs of the state and Centre. **A suggested way is to convert these areas into police administered areas/police districts as was done for Srinagar initially without revoking AFSPA.**
  - Subsequently, as the situation improves, while evolving the revocation, **an exit strategy needs to be worked out for gradual withdrawal of armed forces from the specified area** leading to a smooth transition.
- India has to balance the need for a stringent law with the basic principles of ensuring human dignity and human rights.
  - Individual freedom has to be balanced with the freedom of other individuals and with reasonable demands of the community and the general public. **It is the duty of the state to harmonise the rights of the individual with the requirements of the community**
- Set up dedicated trial courts/ tribunals to hear cases associated with serious AFSPA violations and include civil society and political members in such courts/ tribunals etc

### **TOPIC: Disaster and disaster management.**

**Q) "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch" is a misnomer term, given the complexity of the problem. Comment. Also, discuss its effects on marine and human life. (250 Words)**

### Background:-

- Marine debris and pollution consisting mostly of plastic trash is accumulating in oceans around the world. Twice the size of Texas, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch stretches for hundreds of miles across the North Pacific Ocean and is one of the most frightening examples of just how much human activity is violating the planet.

### Great Pacific garbage patch :-

- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the world's largest collection of floating trash and the most famous. It lies between Hawaii and California.

### Magnitude of the issue and the term is a misnomer :-

- The name "Pacific Garbage Patch" has led many to believe that this area is a large and continuous patch of easily visible marine debris items such as bottles and other litter akin to a literal island of trash that should be visible with satellite or aerial photographs. This is not the case.



- **Phrase 'garbage patch' is misleading as**
  - It is not visible from space
  - There are no islands of trash
  - It is more akin to a diffuse soup of plastic floating in oceans.
- **Microplastics make up 94 percent of an estimated 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic in the patch.** But that only amounts to eight percent of the total tonnage. As it turns out, of the 79,000 metric tons of plastic in the patch, **most of it is abandoned fishing gear.**

#### **Impact on marine and human life:-**

- Ghostnets, a term coined to describe purposely discarded or accidentally lost netting, drift through the ocean, entangling whales, seals, and turtles. **An estimated 100,000 marine animals are strangled, suffocated, or injured by plastics every year.**
- **Of the 1.5 million Laysan albatrosses that inhabit Midway, nearly all are likely to have plastic in their digestive system.** Approximately one-third of their chicks die, and many of those deaths are due to being fed plastic by their parents.
- **Indirect harm to species via the food chain**
  - Besides the particles danger to wildlife, on the microscopic level the floating debris can absorb organic pollutants from seawater, including PCBs, DDT, and PAHs.
  - These toxin-containing plastic pieces are also eaten by jellyfish, which are then eaten by fish. **Many of these fish are then consumed by humans, resulting in their ingestion of toxic chemicals**
- **Spreading invasive species:-**
  - **Marine plastics also facilitate the spread of invasive species that attach to floating plastic in one region and drift long distances to colonize other ecosystems.** Research has shown that this plastic marine debris affects at least 267 species worldwide.
- Because the garbage blocks sunlight, algae is not growing as it should. **With less algae, the entire food chain is experiencing a negative disruption.**
- In addition, the plastics floating in the ocean are leeching harmful chemicals into the water, which are likely entering the food chain.

***Q) Of late incidents of forest fire are on the rise. Discuss the causes behind forest fires, approaches of fighting forest fires and ways of mitigating them?***

#### **Background:-**

- In India, states where forest cover is thick, like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the North-East, are often prone to forest fires.
- They pose a threat not only to the forest wealth but also to the entire regime to fauna and flora seriously disturbing the bio-diversity and the ecology and environment of a region.
- According to NDMA report in 2012, about half of India's forests were prone to fires.

#### **Causes behind forest fires:-**

- **Natural causes:-**
  - Natural causes such as lightning which set trees on fire. High atmospheric temperatures and low humidity offer favourable circumstance for a fire to start.
- **Manmade causes:-**
  - In most of the cases in India, due to heavy population, human habitations have often gone closer to thick forest, resulting in forest fires.
  - The problem has been aggravated with rising human and cattle population and the increase in demand for grazing, shifting cultivation and Forest products by individuals and communities.
- **Type of forests:-**

- The bulk of forest fires in India occurs in the tropical dry forests of India an umbrella category encompassing scrub, savanna grassland, dry and moist-deciduous forests. Almost 70% of forests in India are composed of these types.
- **No fire forest policy:-**
  - The roots of India's current fire crisis lie squarely in the blanket implementation of a no-fire forest policy. This 'one-size-fits-all' approach of fire protection is perhaps incompatible with the ecology of India's tropical dry forests.
- **Invasive species:-**
  - Supply of fuel by ample invasive species present in the forests also aid the spread of forest fires. Authorities have failed in preventing the spread of such species.
- **Burning forest lands is an environment management practice carried out by villagers in order to enhance their livelihoods.** This gives the villagers easy access to many forest resources that can be turned into income.
  - An example is the guchhi (*Morchella Esculenta*), a mushroom with a very high selling price, which is known to grow well on burnt forest land.
- **Ownership of forests:-**
  - Villagers believe that the future of the forests is in the hands of government officers and not their own.

#### Approaches used to fight forest fires and their lacunae:-

- Helicopters or aeroplanes or ground-based personnel spray fire retardant chemicals, or pump water are utilised to fight the blaze. **This is very expensive and usually not practiced in India.**
- Contain the fire in compartments bordered by natural barriers such as streams, roads, ridges or fire lines.
  - A fire line is a line through a forest which has been cleared of all vegetation. Once the blaze has burnt out all combustibles in the affected compartment, it vanishes out and the neighbouring compartments are saved.
- Set a counter fire:-
  - The counter fire rushes towards the wildfire, leaving a stretch of burnt ground. As soon as the two fires meet, the blaze is extinguished.
- To have enough people with leafy green branches to beat the fire out. This is mostly practised in combination with fire lines and counter fires.
- **Lacunae:-**
  - Traditional methods of fire prevention are not proving effective and it is now essential to raise public awareness on the matter, particularly among those people who live close to or in forested areas.

#### Measures needed are:-

- **Manpower:-**
  - **Increase the number of fire fighters** as well as equip them properly with drinking water bottles, back-up supplies of food and water, proper shoes or boots, rakes, spades and other implements, light, rechargeable torches, and so on.
  - **Seasonal labour** could be contracted during the fire season. With adequate training, they would serve to fill gaps along the line.
  - In case of forest fires, the **volunteer teams are essential** not only for fire fighting but also to keep watch on the start of forest and sound an alert.
- Adopt **safe practices in areas near forests** factories, coalmines, oil stores, chemical plants and even in household kitchens.
- **Arrange fire fighting drills frequently.**
- **Extra funds** should be used for hiring more Forest Department field staff to put out fires during the fire season and to patrol the forests during other times.

- **With the help of mobile applications**, SMS or through the website, citizens can help track forest fires whenever they occur and bring them to the attention of local authorities.
- **Discontinuing the claimed 'forest plantations'** would help control forest fires, which in turn would help rejuvenation of fire-stressed forest ecosystems. This would help indigenous forests grow back.
- Villagers have to be informed about **innovative practices and technologies** that can take them away from intentional forest fires without having to substantially increase their work.
- There is no need for paved paths or tourist 'facilities' within reserve forests as these are not tourist attractions

**TOPIC: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;**

***Q) Discuss the role of media in spreading extremism in Kashmir. Also discuss some peace-building measures that can be taken to tackle the problem of radicalization of youth in such areas. (250 Words)***

#### **Background:-**

- Many countries have suffered for decades from groups, both internal and external and including both State and non-State actors, wielding violence against civilians as political strategy. In this context, the media is critical in providing verifiable information and informed opinion.
- During the tense environment of a crisis, with populations on edge and tempers flared, this becomes all the more important. However the relationship between extremism and media is becoming a perverse symbiotic relationship

#### **Role of media in spreading extremism:-**

- Terrorist and militant groups devise spectacles of violence to continue drawing the world's attention, and the **media incentivized to provide wall-to-wall coverage due to huge audience interest.**
- Research has found that sensationalist media coverage of acts of militancy results in more such acts being committed.
- At the same time, **militant and extremist groups have increasingly sought to use the media to promote their agendas, create fear and recruit followers.**
- The Coverage of extremist leaders ideas and speeches in newspapers and televisions raise the chances of youth with socio economically poor background to indulge in these activities.
- Media in light of gaining maximum viewership and TRPs, do not consider the stereotyping impact being spread across the nation as they portray stone pelting in Kashmir.
- **Channels select staunch anti-national figures to represent hardliners from the Valley and nationalists who strongly oppose them on the other.**
  - A recent press release, post the visit of the central home secretary to J&K revealed that only students of four colleges were involved in agitations, other institutions ran normally. The attendance in state board exams was almost hundred percent.
- **Role of social media:-**
  - **Social media enables antisocial people to become social.** It helps lone wolves find the pack. More than a means to perform socially deviant roles collectively, **social media offers a platform to do it anonymously.** The Spreading of fake news further degraded the condition.
  - Social media is used by Pakistan to project fake atrocities and anti-religious behaviour by security forces to incite youth to take to the streets.
  - Viral videos that capture militants at play and leisure, shocking videos of alleged rights excesses committed by security forces on Kashmiri civilians, the alleged use of instant messaging platforms to mobilise stone pelters and recruit foot soldiers for militants and the frequent gags on internet are bringing a paradigm shift in the narrative of the Valley's conflict

**Peace building measures to be taken:-**

- **Army has shown that sporting events bring everyone together, hence these must be increased across the state.**
- Only 16% of Kashmir's population is under its fold. Bulk of its 8 million Muslim-population is still not radicalized. To prevent any further erosion, **the government needs to address the socio-political and economic concerns of the Kashmiris**
  - **Simultaneously opening avenues for employment**, within and outside would open doors to those seeking a better life.
- The same social media which militant groups used to glamourize militancy and draw local youth into their ranks should **now be deployed by the families and the state to bring them back.**
- **Closer surveillance by security agencies of what is being said on social media** so that radicalisation can be detected and prevented at a much earlier stage.
- **Arresting the problem by counselling and reforming**, instead of arresting the potential recruits of the global terror network.
- **Counter-radicalisation law:-**
  - **This law must criminalise glorification of jihad in peaceful ways by editors and Islamic clerics. It must protect security agents and provide them legal cove**
- Some suggested measures are:
  - Creation and promotion of inter-faith tourist circuits
  - Restoration of mutual trust, job creation
  - Modernisation of Madrasas
- **Media:-**
  - Journalists must resist the urge to sensationalise matters
  - They must keep a global perspective, and pay attention to the words they use, the examples they cite, and the images they display.
  - They must avoid speculation and finger-pointing in the immediate confusion following an attack when nothing is known, yet the demand for information is perhaps the strongest of all.
  - They must consider carefully the fact that there is something inherent in terrorism as a violent act that provokes a fear in many that is far disproportionate to the actual level of risk.
  - And most of all, they must avoid fostering division and hatred and radicalisation at both margins of society.

***Topic: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate***

***Q) NCTC would be a game changer for fortifying India's national security and intelligence network. Critically examine.***

**Background:-**

- Post 2011 terrorist attack in Mumbai India had also announced an ambitious plan to create a single overarching body for counter terrorism purposes by combining two distinct intelligence systems.

**NCTC:-**

- NCTC was meant to subsume the Multi Agency Centre (MAC), an intelligence-sharing fusion centre functioning under the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and its operatives were to have arrest powers throughout India.

- It will have the power to conduct **searches and arrests** in any part of India.
- It will **collect, collate and disseminate data** on terrorism.
- It will also maintain a database on terrorist and their associates including their families.
- In short, NCTC will serve as a **single and effective point of control** and coordination of all counter terrorism measures.

#### Significance:-

- **The formation of NCTC is highly justified to coordinate counterterrorism efforts all the way through a vast country like India.** Without an effective NCTC or a similar organisation, **the planning and execution of India's counter-terrorism policies will remain mired in systemic weaknesses.**
- **Such a body is required to meet the growing threat of terrorist violence** which recognises neither national nor international boundaries, especially for a country like India, which faces a high level of threat.
- A overarching single agency with all the necessary intelligent inputs and power to operate will **lead to faster decision making.**
- NCTC will eliminate **multiple bureaucratic hurdles and checks.**
- **Sharing intelligence inputs will be easier** if there is a single agency with the data base of the terrorists.
- **International:-**
  - Realizing the seriousness of the threat from trans-national terrorism, almost all major democracies including **the US, UK, and other European countries have been able to enact and create central agencies to tackle the menace**, within the framework of their respective federal structures, placing national security concerns above partisan politics.
- **Coordination:-**
  - Counterterrorism is shared responsibility of center and states as terrorists do not distinguish between boundaries of states. **As a nodal agency NCTC would operate closely with other law enforcement and investigating agencies and also state governments** in seeking to
    - Counter terrorism threats from the neighbouring countries primarily from Pakistan and Bangladesh based terrorist groups
    - Countering home grown Islamic extremists
    - Separatist threats from north eastern states
    - Threats from Maoist insurgency and last but not the least, nascent vigilantism from fringe Hindu groups
  - **States have no such capacity and capability to weaken and destabilize the terrorist networks and their logistic lines within India.** States are not also able to handle the terror activities with their imperfect and inadequate security infrastructure and of course with inherent lack of political will. **For that reason NCTC is crucial and key to prevent perplexity and disorder concerning intelligence efforts**, and also to ensure that it would be a focal point where intelligence is analyzed and draws operational conclusions.
  - **The role of NCTC in gathering intelligence and** coordinating the different intelligence and other security agencies and carrying out operations **is the central and decisive in combating terrorism in India.**
  - NCTC would get outlook to identify those engaged in terrorism at all levels of involvement, to reveal their hide outs and resources of recruitment
  - It will also help in tracking terrorist weapons and channels of supply, to discover their methods for funding terrorism, warn against future attacks and thus prevent India and also disrupt terrorist organization's communication networks.

**Challenges:-**

- **Overlapping with NIA**
  - National Investigation Agency (NIA) was established after the 26/11 attacks.
  - So, the establishment of a new NCTC would only add to the bureaucratic tangle in intelligence sharing and counter terrorist action.
- **Comparison with other countries:-**
  - USA's NCTC deals only with strategic planning and integration of intelligence without any operational involvement.
  - UK's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, which too plays a purely coordinating role.
  - But the Indian NCTC will have not only intelligence functions but also powers to conduct operations, raids and arrests in any part of India.
- **Objections raised by States:-**
  - States object that **policing/public order is a State subject** and NCTC is an encroachment on their rights and thus an attack on the federal structure.
  - **States also object that NCTC is a part of Intelligence Bureau**, which is controlled by the Home Ministry. As wide powers are given to the NCTC, the agency could be directed solely at the behest of Home Ministry without taking the consent of the State concerned. So, there will be political mileage to be generated in respect of searches and arrests against opponents.
  - **States also object to the wide powers given to NCTC** and therefore demand trimming down of powers to search, seizure and arrest
- The turf war between different intelligence agencies operating under different government ministries has also hampered consensus on the establishment of NCTC.

**Way forward:-**

- Indian Government should focus on **revamping the counterterrorism architecture** by making the NCTC an independent institution with executive powers working under the direction of an honest and robust executive, accountable to the country on all matters relating to internal security
- In order to be accountable to Parliament, it would be coherent and rational to place the NCTC under a new Ministry of Internal Security, by appointing a highly qualified professional with vast experience in security related matters to direct and coordinate counterterrorism efforts.

***Q) Establishment of a Defence Planning Committee will facilitate comprehensive and integrated planning for defence matters. Examine.***

**Background:-**

- In a significant defence policy reform the government has revamped the existing defence planning system by establishing a Defence Planning Committee (DPC) under the chairmanship of the National Security Adviser (NSA).

**Defence planning committee:-**

- A permanent body, comprising the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), service chiefs, Defence Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Secretary (expenditure) in the Finance Ministry
- It will prepare a draft national security strategy besides undertaking a strategic defence review and formulating an international defence engagement strategy.

**Problems with defence planning at present which makes proper defence planning important are :-**

- **The extant system of defence planning resulted in**
  - The provision of less than adequate resources to meet numerous security challenges
  - Chasing goals that were not of immediate priority:-

- Very high emphasis on acquisitions.
- Duplication and wastage of scarce resources
- Giving less than required focus on new technological advancements while pursuing manpower driven military modernisation
- A defence R&D and manufacturing base losing its sight on self-reliance.
- There is little coordination between ministries, and the bureaucracy and the military are often not on the same page. **This leads to situations as witnessed recently where the military submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on defence that this year's defence budget barely made room for modernisation.**
- In all cases before **there was usually strong disagreement in discussions on what constituted national security. So the future of the formulation of a National Security Strategy (NSS) remained doubtful.**

#### **Why defence planning committee is needed?**

- The DPC is a permanent institutional mechanism with a specified charter which means that **it not only can make recommendations, but can also follow up on their implementation.**
- The DPC has top bureaucrats from three important ministries, and is chaired by the NSA .
  - The composition of the committee reflects its goal of bringing both military and civilian components of defence planning on one platform. This is absolutely vital for a modern defence strategy that is nimble and adaptable to changing security realities.
- This committee **should help the armed forces prioritise their procurement plans** to reflect diplomatic and financial realities.
- The DPC would also give the armed forces **an institutional role in higher policy formulation**, which has been lacking so far.
- It is intended to **facilitate a comprehensive and integrated planning for defence matters** which is a vital ingredient in defence preparedness, which was conspicuously missing in earlier mechanisms .
- The defence planning process is expected to **become more rational** as well as provide a much needed boost to defence preparedness.
- DPC **would clearly articulate the key national security/ defence/ military goals** as well as prioritise defence and security requirements as per the likely available resources
- At the same time it can **provide adequate focus on emerging security challenges, technological advancements, and establishing a strong indigenous defence manufacturing base.**
- **There's a yawning gap between the expectations of the armed forces and the diplomatic priorities and financial capacity of government.** The new committee is expected to bridge these various needs, and refine recommendations for defence procurement by taking a long-term view of security.
- Realisation seems to be finally dawning that defence preparedness isn't solely about buying the most advanced aircraft or warship. It also entails strategic diplomacy and prudent resource allocation based on available financial capacity. **The new committee should get all stakeholders in India's defence to pull in one direction.**

#### **Concerns:-**

- Past record of the reports of government appointed committees on national security are not implemented by the government so this move is bound to be met with scepticism.
- Overdependence on this committee also carries the danger of **over-centralisation of national security initiatives in one official, the NSA.** This personality-centric decision-making may not be healthy in a democratic system where the government is accountable to the citizens through Parliament.

**Conclusion:-**

- While the setting up of the committee is a welcome development, this cannot be a substitute for a virtual top down restructuring of the institutions and ministries involved in defence and security planning.



## GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 4

*Topic: Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;*

***Q) Around the world, the effects of alarmingly high economic inequality are spilling over into politics and society. In this light, discuss the ethical issues involved in reducing inequality around the world. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

It is not great wealth in a few individuals that proves a country is prosperous, but great general wealth evenly distributed among the people. It is the struggling masses who are the foundation and if the foundation be rotten or insecure, the rest of the structure must eventually crumble. This is exactly correct in the current scenario where rich are growing richer and poor are becoming poorer.

**This economic insecurity** is a driving force behind violent conflicts in the Middle East, the rise of fascist elements in some European countries and rise of chauvinistic supremacist identities and other social problems even in United states.

**Economic inequality can give wealthier people an unacceptable degree of control over the lives of others. Economic inequality can undermine the fairness of political institutions ,economic system itself.**

Despite all of the proclaimed ideals, poverty and its concomitant human rights deprivations persist on a massive scale. They persist even while global average income is increasing and the world on the whole is doing quite well.

**There are people who want to change this picture but yet some believe that current income disparities are fair because they are a result of free markets.**

Some want **absolute equality but pushing for absolute equality could erode the incentive to work**, leading to widespread economic breakdown.

**Some argue that the rich needs to be taxed and poor need to be ensured basic minimum income but others argue that with this the people who worked hard to improve their life and merit are not being appreciated.**

**Addressing the challenge of economic insecurity will require a balance between ensuring equality and poverty eradication.**

Economic prosperity, if it does not ensure justice to all, will not lead to long-lasting peace, well-being, and development in the world. Those who are denied justice and even a minimum means of life will rise against the powerful who deny them justice and oppress them in different ways. Development in solidarity is necessary for peace and harmony in this world.

***Q) Discuss whether death penalty is justified for gruesome crimes like rape?***

**Answer:-**

The heinous crimes which are coming to light almost everyday in India be it kathua, unnao, Indore etc make a dent in people's conscience thinking about the magnitude of this problem along with other gruesome crimes in India.

Death **penalty should be imposed when collective conscience of the society is so shocked**. It should be retained for extreme crimes that shock society or those that affect national security.

Death penalty when delivered can aid in protection of the moral conscience of society. Justice delayed is justice denied so the death penalty would provide instant justice to the victim and their families. Element of fatality in death penalty can be expected to deter perpetrators in further committing crimes.

**However it should not be forgotten that the death penalty has never been a deterrent against any sort of crime.** There is little empirical evidence to show that those about to commit a capital offence would stop themselves merely out of the fear of being hanged. Even J.S. Verma committee decided against recommending the death penalty for rape. It rightly took into account the possibility of awarding life sentences without remission for aggravated sexual assault.

Further, **there is a legitimate concern that the country's judicial system has not been consistent in awarding the death penalty.** It will be especially wrong to force judges to compare the relative 'merits' of rape victims based on their age and choose between death sentence and life. The Law Commission, while recommending abolition of the death penalty, except in terrorism-related cases, observed that **it is difficult to operate the 'rarest of rare cases' principle without a hint of arbitrariness.**

**Provision of death penalty in rape cases will only make matters worse by slowing the administration of justice.** Besides, when victim is the sole witness, as in most sexual assault cases, it will induce murder of rape victims by the perpetrators of the crime to destroy the evidence.

Even when awarded death penalty the accused do not have remorse for their actions for instance documentary showing the accused blaming victim itself in Nirbhaya case etc

The root of the problem lies in an unsupportive societal attitude towards rape victims, a deficient police and judicial system that result in lower conviction rate (26 per cent of all registered cases as per National Crime Records Bureau). Instead of death penalty, **a combination of heavy financial penalty, life imprisonment with no provision of parole and prompt delivery of justice through fast track courts can do the job effectively.**

Given the growing involvement of juveniles in heinous crimes like rape, instead of prescribing minimum age, **a combination of age, criminal bent of mind and the accused intention to commit the crime should be considered.** So the long-term solution lies in bringing an attitudinal change towards women through education and concerted efforts **at gender sensitisation.**

To tweak Martin Luther King's words, **the arc of the moral universe must bend towards a more empathetic version of justice rather than a retributive one.**

***Q) "Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people." Comment. (250 words)***

Integrity can be described as the strength of someone's honesty and ethical standing. A person with strong integrity is less likely to be influenced by those of a lesser moral value. You can have honesty without integrity, but you cannot have integrity without honesty.

For instance a person finds a wallet on the side of the road pick it up and takes it for himself. When questioned by a family member as to who the wallet belongs the person states his intention that he found it and intends to keep it. The person is exhibiting the trait of honesty but not integrity as he makes no effort to return the wallet to the rightful owner. He is stealing essentially even if he is been honest.

Honesty is about telling the truth, both in word and deed. Integrity goes a bit further. It means being true to who you are, what you say, and what you believe. And doing so even when no one is around to see.

For instance before students enter the taekwondo training floor, they bow to the national flags kept there as a sign of respect. But even when no one is around a person of integrity bows. Integrity demands that you make that sign of respect, that bow, even if no one in the world is around to see you do it.

Honesty and integrity in administration enhances trust in the government machinery by the people and encourages the civil servants to act in public interest

***TOPIC: Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;***

***Q) Briefly discuss Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy and its relevance today. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

**At the heart of Dr. King's philosophy was the concept of service.** He believed that a person's worth should not be measured by his or her colour, culture, or class but rather by his or her commitment to making a better life for all.

**Some of the principle values he focussed on are:-**

- **Courage :-**
  - King believed that if you had nothing you were willing to die for, you had nothing you were living for.
- **Non-violence :-**
  - Revolution is a social, political and cultural transformation that humans bring to their world through what they think and feel and do, and the values that they assign to their thinking, feeling and doing. **In the case of King, this value was non-violence.** The revolution that accompanied it was the democratisation of America. As such, his greatest achievement is, without doubt, his **non-violent struggle against injustice.**
- **Soul force :-**
  - The power of a person's love and humanity to awaken other people's
- **Justice:-**
  - He considered that an injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere and had to be confronted.
  - Concept of democracy necessarily compelled further action against injustice.
- **Community:-**
  - He believed that oppression of any part of the human family hurt the whole human family.
- **Love:-**
  - Even the enemy is a neighbour who must be loved into doing right—for the enemy's sake as well as for the sakes of his or her victims.
- **Suffering and sacrifice:-**
  - Those who would stand up for justice must be willing to endure much for the sake of their cause.
- **Human dignity:-**
  - All people deserve to be treated with equality and respect simply because they are human beings.
- **Forgiveness:-**
  - The victim must forgive the victimizer and make room for repentance and
- **Faith:-**
  - Eventually right will prevail because the universe is founded upon justice.
  - He challenged the social and political injustice of American society with ideas and values that met **the demands of contemporary humanism and inclusive emancipation.**

#### **Relevance:-**

King's civil rights campaign played a pivotal role in ending racial segregation and the denial of voting rights to African Americans in the southern states. It also created a **cultural shift in attitudes on race issues**

Half a century after the end of racially discriminatory statutes in the US, there are **stark limitations of mere equality.** The **informal segregation of black and white communities** in some parts of the US, caste discrimination in India, religious fundamentalism, rich-poor gap still exist.

The racist bias in the criminal justice system means that black people continue to account for 40 per cent of the prison population, despite being only 12 per cent of the population overall in US.

The only way to honour the civil rights icon is to depart from the path of self-defeating hate that **world finds itself stuck on today.**

**King thereby laid the foundation for a revolution of values in American society, but also for our world, beyond the ideals and actions of any other American of his generation. He created a new**

image of America an image of compassion and justice, which can overcome its own evils of arrogance, pride and prejudice.

***Q) "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy" – Dr Martin Luther King. Comment. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

Martin Luther King was famous for using nonviolent resistance to overcome injustice, and he never got tired of trying to end segregation laws. At a time when white people were considered superior he forced a nation to live up to the true essence of the words of the Constitution.

The statement aptly applies to his life as it highlights the fact that there were occasions in his life where doing the right thing was not easy and had even threatened his life but with courage he stuck to his values of ensuring all men are equal with his non violence resistance.

Tough situations bring out the person's true character whether the person has integrity or not. There are multiple examples in international arena for instance **Gandhi** was single person who **fought** against the British with the weapons of truth and non-violence by persuading countrymen to walk on the path of non-violence. With integrity and conviction leaders faced the harshest treatments yet they did not go back in their motives for national movement for instance Bhagat Singh role in Indian freedom struggle.

Similarly being a civil servant there are multiple ethical dilemmas ,political pressure ,stress faced on a daily basis but the right administrator would try to impart justice to the society even in such circumstances standing up for the values he/she believes in gaining the trust and loyalty of the people. For instance the multiple transfers of IAS and IPS officers in India, people fighting for some officers transfers etc.

Therefore the true test of character is in adverse circumstances only. The strength and courage to abide by one's principles will make the society just, free of corruption and ensure a ethical society

***Q) Discuss how and why compassion can act as an ethical and practical tool in conservation of wildlife and nature. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

Animals think and feel and need people to be more compassionate towards their needs. But, still, there are some people that just don't get why compassion towards animals is an ethical choice that humans should be making. This is evident when people hurl stones at dogs in streets, use violence on animals etc.

Poaching, deforestation etc show that humans disrespect nature but they fail to understand that When the animals and nature are gone, economic prospects for humans diminish as well. So it is both practical and ethical to have compassion towards wildlife and nature.

However there are incidents like Chipko movement where people were courageous to fight for the environment . Similarly compassionate conservation principles have been steadily growing. Predation by carnivores is being successfully managed using fencing, fladry, and guard animals rather than through shooting, trapping, and poisoning programs.

Compassion towards wildlife and nature will ensure people make choices which are not harmful to the environment for instance after seeing the level of plastic in oceans is drastic they can take precautions before using non biodegradable things like plastic.

Although millions of animals are killed in the name of conservation around the world each year, there is good cause to be optimistic. Acceptance of the intrinsic value of wild animals in nature and an associated motivation to prevent harm to those animals, is often reported as an almost universal ethic among a wide variety of stakeholders.

Leonardo da Vinci said “and the time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look upon the murder of men.” So this change is happening. So compassion for other species can also nurture compassion for fellow humans. Empathy isn’t a zero-sum game.

**Q) “Courage is knowing what not to fear”. Critically analyse. (150 Words)**

Maya Angelou said that “**Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you** can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage “. To uphold one’s self respect, stand for the right, justice even in simple scenarios for instance when a person commits the mistake owning his/her mistake needs courage.

Especially in public administration the role of courage is immense as brave decisions for the larger benefit of the society need to be taken every day. Courage is a value that is prerequisite for integrity of public servants. It is also essential to stand up for one’s beliefs conviction and attitude. Due to unpredictable nature of the work a civil servant carries out, only courage can guide to face the future challenges and yet maintain integrity.

However some argue that a courageous person is not one who is not afraid of anything, but rather one who is able to overcome those fears. Despite the force of fear, there have been many people throughout history who have been capable of confronting their most intimate fears and demonstrating the courage it takes to move forward. There are stories of those who showed that courage, despite having a lot to lose, and risking their own life in the process for instance role of Nelson Mandela fighting apartheid, social activists fighting for social causes like Medha Patkar, Malala etc.

Therefore people need to understand that success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the *courage* to continue that counts.

**Q) "Treat others as you would have others treat you". Critically analyse the given golden rule of reciprocity. (150 Words)**

**Answer:-**

The Golden Rule, "do unto others as you would have them do to you", on account of its simplicity is the most universal moral code known; appearing in nearly all cultures, being derived from multiple teachers, religions and philosophies at different times in different ways.

It is the principle which is visible in the tenets of Indian constitution as well which upholds, equality, treating everyone equally, ensuring respect irrespective of case, gender, sex etc.

The Rule is accepted by most People across the world. It is really easy to understand and Practice in real life. It is the rule which teaches humans to use their compassion and empathy towards others. Rich philanthropists donating for poor countries can be seen in this context as well if they think that they already have more and that can be redistributed to the poor.

**Unfortunately, the ethic of reciprocity does not work.** It is merely a goodwill gesture, and does not generate or sustain good morals in times of adversity or struggle. **It is based around doing what you think is best – it's all down to subjective, personal opinion.** Therefore, it only works for people who are already thinking moralistically. **It doesn't work on natural thugs, and, it doesn't allow any active, effective or aggressive resistance to immoral rulers.** Sometimes, treating people nicely just doesn't cut it **when it comes to making positive social change.**

Violent warrior is going to have a very different idea of what normal conduct is. One who fights for survival is both willing to attack others, and defend himself, and **upholding the ethic of reciprocity appears to tell him that it is ok for him to attack others**, just because it's something he expects to happen to him too.

It can be argued that the Golden Rule as a guide for human behaviour leaves them vulnerable to others who may not see its value as we do. Many may argue that those who practice the Rule are often pushed aside by their more assertive colleagues. **They see the Rule as a recipe for weakness.**

Just because some version of the traditional Golden Rule can be found from culture to culture and religion to religion **does not mean that people within that culture or religion actually believe it to be true, much less practice it.** It says nothing about the way others want to be treated relative to one's own desires of how to be treated, which preferences are morally superior to others and what makes certain preferences for behaviour morally superior to others.

Immanuel Kant portrayed that, the rule is not sensitive to different Situations. For instance a Convict can ask Judge to release him as the Judge might not want himself to be sent to Prison.

Therefore the Rule can not be a sole guide to actions of an individual. In the current world with violence being rampant, crimes against children and women occurring every day there is a need to not be lenient towards the accused.

The rule is necessary but it depends on the situations and interpretations made by different people.

***Q) Scientific Temper is one of the attributes that Pandit Nehru wanted all of us Indians to cultivate. Discuss how cultivating scientific temper can help India progress. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

Scientific temper involves the application of logic and the avoidance of bias and preconceived notions in arriving at decisions, and becomes particularly valuable while deciding what is best for the community or the nation. Since the Upanishadic or Mahabharata times, arguments, disputations, questions and dialogues have characterised Indian thought.

The scientific method calls for inquisition. **The scientific method helps us make better decisions and provides a rational outlook towards problems that we are facing** especially in administration when civil servants have ethical dilemmas.

A scientific person questions the status quo. And often this leads to innovation both in technology as well as social sphere. Saying that scientific temper could serve as an engine for social growth as well as economic growth is not false.

Elements of fairness, equality and democracy are built-in in scientific temper. Twin features of internal pluralism and external receptivity have been woven into the development of Indian thought over the ages. This richness of the tradition of argument has shaped India's social world and the nature of Indian culture. It has deeply influenced Indian politics and the development of democracy in India and emergence of its secular priorities.

Despite Jawaharlal Nehru's advocacy of Scientific Temper, we are witnessing a phenomenal growth of superstitious beliefs and obscurantist practices. The influence of a variety of godmen and miracle makers is increasing alarmingly. In an age when man has travelled to the moon and returned safely, astrological predictions based on the movements of planets or the lines of one's palm or the number of alphabets in one's name, are widely believed. Food fads, irrational health practices are on the increase. People believing fake whatsapp videos showing mount Kailas as the first nuclear reactor of the world, intrusion of theology in science etc.



In such a situation of social and cultural malaise, a major role of Scientific Temper is to revive confidence and hope and to dispel fatalistic outlook. The campaign to promote Scientific Temper must inculcate values like equality and dignity of all human beings, distributive justice, dignity of labour, and social accountability of one's actions. All these are essential for bringing about social, economic and cultural transformation of our country.

**Q) "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains". Critically comment. (150 Words)**

**Answer:-**

In the era of human history before rigid social structures developed, people were able to exercise free will. Man is born free without any chain or fetters, regardless of creed class, race and nation. A newly born baby takes his breath as a free mortal; his conscious is free from the thought that he is a slave or free citizen, a prince or penniless. In a world dominated by flashing mobile phones and social media. Man may indeed be born free, but in the 21st century, the chains may be even harder to see.

Rousseau explains how man went from this state of autonomy to the modern condition, dominated by inequality, dependency, violence and unhappiness. When people are in society, they are in chains. The society places all sorts of rules on them that limit their freedom. This also gives way to what Rousseau called the **"right of the strongest", where a reign of inequality destroys man's original state of happiness and freedom.**

The chain of slavery, poverty, class, sect are really a mark of ugliness on the face of this beautiful world. **Despite slavery being an unacceptable phenomenon in our civilized world but unfortunately, many nations are enslaved under the foreign domination even in the twenty first century.** The third World is bond by the chains of slavery imposed on it by the economically developed countries in different forms.

The **caste system never lets people forget their birth, people addicted to social media, people restricted by laws of the society curbing their freedom** for instance women in Saudi Arabia system makes it nearly impossible for victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse to obtain legal redress because the police often insist that women and girls obtain their guardian's authorisation to file a complaint – even when the complaint is against the guardian so true freedom is a myth. Even in Indian constitution there are restrictions on freedom of expression .

Man is enslaved by the chains of society some chains hurt this soul and **few chains prevent him from proceeding towards destruction.** The delicate chain of relationship is unquestionably, the beauty of life. Family is the soul of social life and parental, matrimonial and fraternal relationships are a strong chain for human beings but this chain does not hurt an individual but instead it embellishes human life with love respect attention and dedication.

**The chain of laws prevents, man from becoming a beast.** Without the implementation of laws, human society could present the picture of a jungle where the rule of might is right prevails. Such a society

does not ensure even the basic human rights. Society may legitimately coerce its people only when they agree to be ruled by that society. He believes that people joined together in societies in order preserve their lives and make cooperation between people possible. They willingly **made a "social contract"** in which they agreed to be ruled by the state in order that their lives can be improved through increased safety and cooperation.

But on the other hand the **chain of slavery ,ignorance, racial discrimination and many social evils should be eliminated from human society**. Man should be set- free -from the slavery of his fellow human beings as it is against the dignity of mankind. **Man is born free and he should be given the right to enjoy his freedom within the limitations only then this world can become a model of peace which is the ultimate goal of mankind.**

**TOPIC: Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.**

**Q) Science brings society to the next level, ethics keep us there. Critically analyse. (150 Words)**

**Answer:-**

Ethics, according to the definition quoted above, would depend on beliefs held by individuals or a group of individuals whereas, science is a search for truth which may contradict even the most popular beliefs. Society, more or less, defines the ethics of work, of politics, of business. Therefore, **the relationship between science and the ethics is close to that between science and the society.**

Having produced something ,**science goes back to the society in search of audience the consumers.** This cycle enables new things to be created. If science were not separated from the society and ethics , we would have still believed earth the centre and everything else going around it. There would have been no Galileo's if science could not withdraw from the society in effect from the religion.

- What is commonly thought today is that scientists and philosophers are two kinds that never meet. However, this has not always been the case. For instance, in Ancient Greece, the Cradle of Civilization, knowledge was not split into different branches. **Not until recent times, has science diverged from ethics.**

**Science transformed the way of life in the world for instance** Japan is one of the world's heaviest consumers of nuclear power despite having faced the horror of the atomic bomb. **So** Nuclear power is just one of the outcomes of scientific research which can be used in both a ruinous way or a fruitful way.

Within the last 10 years, the creation of fast, low-cost genetic sequencing has given the public direct access to genome sequencing and analysis, There are so many advances made in science that humans are able to live longer, use driverless cars,3D printing, initiatives towards sustainability etc.

However when science is advancing ethical values and principles are neglected like for instance in genetics very sensitive information is collected with little or no guidance from physicians or genetic counselors on how to process the information. At the same time it is due to advancements in science that vulnerabilities have increased be it **climate change, intrusion of privacy by hacking etc leading to inequity, poverty, violence, neglecting human dignity etc..**

**Artificial intelligence is creating new implications as these systems operate without human control** and are designed to function and make decisions on their own, the ethical, legal, social and policy implications have grown exponentially.

In the recent Cambridge analytica incident with technology social media platforms started buzzing but identities were lost and personal space is intruded. Similarly ISIS using technology for violent ends shows that science if used in a good way can create wonders and if its in wrong hands can destroy the world.

When a society is strictly ethical people might perceive that development is not taking place for instance So there is a need to strike a balance between what we can do and what we should do so science and ethics need to be balanced. If science overpowers ethics humans will become part of lab experiments like during holocaust.

*TOPIC: Attitude: content, structure, function; its influence and relation with thought and behavior; moral and political attitudes; social influence and persuasion.*

***Q) "Our Republic and its Press will rise and fall together" – J. Pulitzer. In light of above statement, comment on whether stringent laws will check the menace of fake news. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

Journalism is in a state of considerable flux. New digital platforms have unleashed innovative journalistic practices that enable novel forms of communication and greater global reach than at any point in human history.

But on the other hand, disinformation and hoaxes that are popularly referred to as "fake news" are accelerating and affecting the way individuals interpret daily developments. In addition, growing polarisation of society on ideological lines has made the job of spreading fake news easier.

**Stronger government action is necessary. For instance Thailand has stringent laws against fake news.** Britain has announced the creation of a fake news rapid response unit to reclaim a fact-based public debate. Germany already has an anti-fake news law on its books that provides for a fine of up to 50 million euros (\$61.3 million). With the exception of a few free speech extremists, these moves have largely been accepted both in the relevant countries and in the court of international opinion as necessary and proportionate

Users creating hate content and sharing it can be booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). But the sheer expanse of the Internet and the anonymity it **grants makes it difficult to track down people.**

The most important challenge here is to **ensure that such state-led efforts are not used as a tool for censorship.** Everyone has a responsibility to combat the scourge of fake news. This ranges from supporting investigative journalism, reducing financial incentives for fake news, and improving digital literacy among the general public.

**Unprecedented threats to journalists and media outlets in major democracies and new moves by authoritarian states to control the media**, including beyond their borders.

**Journalists can often be accused of generating fake news and there have been numerous cases of legitimate journalists being arrested or their work being subject to official scrutiny.** In Egypt, an Al-Jazeera producer was arrested on charges of “incitement against state institutions and broadcasting fake news with the aim of spreading chaos.

**Overly restrictive regulation of internet platforms in open societies sets a dangerous precedent and can encourage authoritarian regimes to continue and/or expand censorship.** This will restrict global freedom of expression and generate hostility to democratic governance.

Governments around the world can do is to encourage independent, professional journalism. **It is important for news organizations to call out fake news and disinformation without legitimizing them.** Technology firms should invest in technology to find fake news and identify it for users through algorithms and crowd sourcing and strengthen online accountability.

An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know the right and courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue without which popular government is a sham and a mockery. The power to mould the future of the Republic will be in the hands of the journalists of future generations.

***Q) Public outrage over crimes against women have a very short memory which represents a lack of empathy. This apathy is why crimes against women continue unabated. Discuss. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

Violence in general is a coercive mechanism to assert one's will over another, in order to prove or feel a sense of power. As many as 39 crimes against women were reported every hour in India, up from 21 in 2007, according to Crime in India 2016 report by National Crime Records Bureau. Added to this the recent ghastic incident like Kathua rape case show that daughters of India are abused in magnanimous proportions.

Violence against women has to be seen in the context of the **Indian society in transition** which has committed itself to the values of equality and justice, but which is unable to make the dominant socio-economic segments and the male population relinquish their traditionally held rights and power over the weaker segments and women.

In many spheres of life, such as marriage customs, occupations, norms of everyday social behaviour, there is a cultural lag, and even a backlash when the hitherto powerless groups seek to demand their newly available rights. Violence thus becomes both a symptom and a cause of social tensions.

After some cases due to media exposure public outrage is visible as in the form of candle march after the Nirbhaya case in 2012 and after that government tries to bring in reforms so the protest dissipates. People due to their jobs and employment tend to neglect the issue after some days. The issues with women safety still largely remain unaddressed.

Lack of empathy is visible as most often woman victim is held responsible for the crime that took place on her, women so easily discarded of as bad character and loose morals if she stays outside late at night etc.

The most crucial and terrible aspect of crimes against women is the fact that the attack especially sexual assault seems to be directed against the female species as a whole, and not against individual women or even women of a sexually active age. The showing of power of dominance is visible when lower caste women and even children are abused.

Patriarchal ideology that governs social structure in Indian society is mainly responsible for the violence perpetrated against women. There is a well-known saying in India "You have nowhere to go to complain against the rain or the husband." Premised upon male dominance, Indian society compels women to subordination, subservience, and dependence on men in all spheres of life.

There are various reasons why the existing legal structures do not provide adequate protection to women. In cases of sexual crimes, the onus of proof is on the victim rather than on the accused (as is the case in other types of crime); the accused tends to be given the benefit of the doubt on the principle that a man is innocent until proven guilty; and the rate of conviction is low in rape cases partly because the civil rights of the accused are protected. For instance in the recent SC Court judgment in *Rajesh Sharma vs State of UP* SC has diluted Section 498A which means that even legal safeguards for crimes against women are under threat.

Women constitute almost half of the world's population and for a society to make some genuine progress women's role is very important as well. Hence crimes against women need effective laws, people should have a sense of responsibility and crisis of conscience should be overcome by playing a larger role of ensuring safety of women in the society.

**TOPIC : Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world.**

**Q) Discuss the significance of Indian philosophy in the history of philosophy. (150 Words)**

**Answer:-**

Indian philosophy is based upon four purusharthas of life that are known as artha, karma, dharma, and moksha. These are 4 basic ends of life, and an individual should follow the recommendations as described in Vedas, to have a fulfilling life.

Talking of philosophies or way of thinking, while it is spiritualism in the east, it is materialism and logical and scientific in the west. **Indian thinking is characterized as spiritual and mystical in nature,**

**western thinking is scientific, logical, rational, materialistic and individualistic.** Individualism that is so very important in the west leads to individual rights while, in Indian context, social responsibility is given prominence. Philosophy in the west is separate and independent of religion. Reason and logic are given primacy to other aspects of life in western philosophy. The pursuit of truth and inner happiness have been kept above everything else in Indian living.

**Despite the differences Indian philosophy has influenced western philosophy in many ways:-**

- In appreciation of complexity of the Indian philosophy, **T S Eliot wrote that the great philosophers of India “make most of the great European philosophers look like schoolboys”.**
- Arthur Schopenhauer used Indian philosophy to **improve upon Kantian thought.**
- The 19th century American philosophical movement **Transcendentalism** was also influenced by Indian thought.
- **Vedic hymns lead to deep cosmological concepts**
- The similarities reveal that, even when philosophers in India and the West were grappling with the same problems and sometimes even suggesting similar theories, **Indian thinkers were advancing novel formulations and argumentations.**
- Problems that the Indian philosophers raised for consideration, but that their Western counterparts never did, **include such matters as the origin (utpatti) and apprehension (jnapti) of truth (pramanya).**
- Problems that the Indian philosophers for the most part ignored but that helped shape Western philosophy include the question of **whether knowledge arises from experience or from reason and distinctions such as that between analytic and synthetic judgments or between contingent and necessary truths.**
- Vedichymns, Hindu scriptures dating from the 2nd millennium BCE, are the oldest extant record from India of the process by which the human mind makes its gods and of the deep psychological processes of mythmaking leading to profound cosmological concepts.
- The Upanishads contain one of the first conceptions of a universal, all-pervading, spiritual reality leading to a radical monism
  - Also contain early speculations by Indian philosophers about nature, life, mind, and the human body, not to speak of ethics and social philosophy.
- **The distinction as well as the relation between the body, mind, and the self;**
- **The nature of knowledge and the types of valid knowledge**
- **The nature and origin of truth**
- **The relation of realism to idealism**
- **The problem of whether universals or relations are basic**
- **Moksha, or liberation – its nature and the paths leading up to it.**

**Western philosophy also influenced Indian philosophy in the following ways :-**

- Many epistemological, logical, and even metaphysical doctrines were debated and decided on purely rational grounds that did not directly bear upon the ideal of moksha.
- Western philosophy of liberalism had its influence later in India during the colonial rule which triggered the rational thought in Indians and made them stand up for social evils.

So both the philosophies have their place in the history of philosophy and ultimately led to development and moving of thought.

*TOPIC: Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.*

**Q) What is conflict of interest? Why is conflict of interest such an important issue in the financial sector? Examine (150 Words)**

**Answer:-**

Over the past few years, public sector banks have faced a barrage of criticism because of their pile of bad loans and recently because of the discovery of frauds, comparisons have been made with some of India's top private banks, not just in terms of operational efficiency and lower bad loans, but also on governance.

**Conflict of interest:-**

**Conflict of interest** is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties. A conflict of interest can exist in many different situations.

For instance a public official whose personal interests conflict with his/her professional position. Instances of the largest shareholder appointing himself as CEO, deciding his salary and then appointing his son to a key post and higher royalties to the parent company are some of the serious conflict of interest issues in India which don't receive necessary attention.

Conflict of interest is seen as a **moral issue and not strictly a legal one** accompanied by criminal culpability in India so it is hardly surprising that blatant violations are virtually seen every day.

**Conflict of interest situation if left unchecked can hinder or even cause the collapse of the banking sector.** It happened in 2008, when the global financial markets collapsed under the massive weight of the numerous low quality collateralised debt obligations (CDOs) that were issued.

At investment banks, analysts are tempted to tailor reports that keep the underwriting business going, at the reputed consulting firms, a favourable audit report could provide a gateway to more (non-audit) business **have been affecting interest of customers who expect fair investment advice.**

Banks or financial entities, which are granted a licence by the banking regulator, can leverage and lend the public deposits that they mobilise. **It is a business to which trust and confidence are central, and any erosion of which can lead to a run on deposits** as has happened earlier in India and elsewhere in the world.

The fallout effect of conflict of interest is **often detrimental to economic growth and dampens market forces** for instance fall in the ICICI bank shares in the stock market by 6% after CBI enquiry into Videocon loan.

Better oversight, higher levels of **corporate governance**, vigilant groups such as credit-rating agencies, consumer watchdogs, shareholder activism etc have helped. RBI is planning to create a fund from which payments will be made to rating agencies to replace the existing practice wherein the borrower or the issuer company pays the agency rating its credit worthiness.

The priority must be to frame a modern law relating to conflict of interest, along the lines of what exists in the statute of the other countries like the United States and also ensure them to their work ensures ethical governance.

***Q) One of the cornerstone of Indian foreign policy is the ideal of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam. India's record of upholding human rights at international forums does not reflect India's belief in this ideal. Critically comment with examples. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

The concept of Vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the world is one family) is taken from the Maha Upanishad, to elucidate the country's global outlook. Its significance in India's foreign policy is that India is part of non alignment where it supports countries which are suffering and do not take sides in the international powers. It is in the light of this concept that India supported South Africans as family against apartheid , Fought for liberation of Bangladesh, doing development efforts in Afghanistan etc.

According to human rights watch 2018 India continued to abstain, and even played a negative role, in country-specific resolutions at the international forums like UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and General Assembly.

**India's non interventionist approach is visible in west Asian incidents of Syrian civil war, Rohingya issue in Myanmar etc.** India committed to providing aid for large-scale infrastructure and socio-economic development projects in Rakhine State, **but did not call on the government to check abuses by its security forces or to amend its discriminatory citizenship law that effectively keeps the Rohingya stateless.**

**Several countries, including the US, Norway, South Korea, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, and Sweden raised concerns over restrictions on civil society and called on India to ensure freedom of association and ratify human rights conventions, including the Convention against Torture.**

However mutual non interference in domestic affairs as per Panchsheel is the policy of India's foreign approach so if any Indians are harmed abroad India takes action for instance Indians evacuated during Kuwait crisis.

India also takes lead for developing countries at WTO summits, UN etc where it supported Palestinian cause and supported UN sanction against Israel. Also India believes in a democratic, systemic approach to world issues and thus focuses on efforts such as bringing into force a **comprehensive convention on international terrorism.**



India's stature as a regional power is increasingly accepted by the world. It can play a greater role for human rights by being part of organisations like SAARC, BRICS etc.

***Q) Search engines like google are intricately linked to our lives, given the volume and nature of information we search over these entities. Discuss the ethical concerns revolving around search engines. (150 Words)***

**Answer:-**

Search engines provide Internet users with access to important information by directing them to links to available online resources on a plethora of topics, many are inclined to see search engine technology in a positive light. However, search engines can raise a number of ethical controversies.

**Ethical concerns :-**

- **Search-engine bias and the problem of opacity/non-transparency**
  - Major search engines systematically favour some sites over others in the lists of results they return in response to user search queries
  - **Search algorithms do not use objective criteria in generating their lists of results for search queries.**
  - Search engine technology, as well as computer technology in general, is value-laden and **thus biased because of the kinds of features typically included in their design.**
  - Concerns affecting objectivity and bias in the context of search engines are also closely related to controversies pertaining to the **lack of openness or transparency.**
    - Search engine companies do not always disclose, either fully or clearly, their practices with respect to
      - Whether (and to what extent) they collect information about users
      - What they do with that information once it has been collected.
  - **Personal privacy and informed consent**
    - One set of privacy issues emerges because **search engine companies can collect personal information about search engine users.**
    - **It is not clear that most people have voluntarily consented** to having information about them placed in databases or in online forums that are accessible to search engines
    - Search engines can also be used to find information about people, their activities, interests, and backgrounds. In the Amy Boyer case she was stalked using her information from the search engines and was murdered later.
  - **Monitoring and surveillance**
    - There is a track of user's search queries.
    - Individual searches made by a particular user could theoretically be analyzed in ways to construct a profile of that user that is inaccurate.
  - **Censorship and democracy**
    - **Advertising:-**

- Major search engine companies such as Google **direct hundreds of millions of users towards some content and not others, towards some sources and not others.**
- Any **kind of filtering on the Internet is equivalent to censorship** because it blocks out some forms of expression
- **Moral accountability issues for search engine companies**
  - Search engines also have provided links to Web sites whose content is either illegal or considered morally controversial
- **Emerging (cyber)security issues** in the context of the Internet of Things also has threat to the security of a nation's critical infrastructure and military defense systems as well

Therefore search engines contribute significantly to the social construction of knowledge i.e., not only do they provide access to knowledge, but they also increasingly play a crucial role in the constitution of knowledge itself but need to be used responsibly and there needs to be regulation over the user's data.

***Q) What do you understand by "Digital library of life". Discuss the significance and ethical issues involved in the project.(250 words)***

#### **Background:-**

- An international consortium of scientists is proposing a massive project to sequence, catalog and analyze the genomes of all known eukaryotic species on the planet, an undertaking the researchers say will take 10 years, cost \$4.7 billion and require more than 200 petabytes of digital storage capacity.
- The greatest legacy of the Earth biome project will be the gift of knowledge a **complete Digital Library of Life that contains the collective biological intelligence of 3.5 billion years of evolutionary history.**

#### **Significance:-**

- **Economic:-**
  - Human genome project yielded at least \$1 trillion to the U.S. alone, according to a 2013 Nature study .So this project will provide immense monetary benefits.
  - Detailed sequences of every species on the earth could be many multiples of that and could benefit the world and not for just the U.S. alone.
- **More knowledge about evolution and origin of life:-**
  - Being able to create their detailed genetic sequences will reveal unexpected, evolutionary connections among the genus, orders and families that make up the so-called Tree of Life.
- **Global collaboration will benefit all:-**
  - For instance, the Large Hadron Collider at CERN has not only helped Indian physicists but also given a boost to Indian industries, in that they have designed specialised equipment for the machine. **The EBP will have similar spin-off benefits**
- **Innovation:-**
  - Sequencing such a large number of organisms will require innovative computation- and-storage solutions and the programming acumen of many thousands across the world.
- **Health and food security :-**

- The integration of new genetic technologies, such as genetic testing, into the practice of clinical medicine that will guide future discoveries for generations.
- So far, scientists have only sequenced the DNA of 0.2 percent of all known eukaryotic species. That's helped scientists discover and understand a number of medications that exist in nature, from morphine to aspirin. So with the other 99.8 percent of un-sequenced species the inventions may be huge and could lead to the discovery of even more drugs.
- It could help researchers hone in on new sources of food to nourish the planet's growing population.
- **Better knowledge about conservation:-**
  - Earth BioGenome Project will give us insight into the history and diversity of life and help us better understand how to conserve it.
  - Project could help us protect species and ecosystems endangered by climate change.
- **Multiple areas:-**
  - It will lay the scientific foundation for a new bio-economy that has the potential to bring innovative solutions to health, environmental, economic, and social problems to people across the globe, **especially in under-developed countries that have significant biodiversity assets.**

### Ethical issues :-

- **Privacy and fairness in the use of genetic information**, including the potential for genetic discrimination in employment and insurance
- **Ethical issues surrounding the design and conduct of genetic research** with people, including the process of informed consent.
- There are concerns that government agencies or law enforcement authorities use genome research to **invade privacy and predict behaviour.**
- **Fight for perfection:-**
  - With Human genome project concerns about parents beginning to use the results of genome research to begin the process of seeking out the Perfect Baby. Offspring considered grotesque, revolting, impaired, repugnant or offensive could be eliminated.
  - Similarly species and creatures which don't fit proper criteria might be eliminated slowly.
- This project **threatens to alter the nature of human existence**
- **Genetic screening is only one of the moral dilemmas** our culture will soon face as the result of fast-moving genetic research.
- As technology is more advanced in **developed countries they might reap the benefits** more and sense of dependency on them might increase in future.

### Conclusion:-

- Life is sacrosanct so when scientists are trying to explore it there needs to be adequate safeguards followed to protect the interests of the people world over.

**TOPIC: Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.**

**Q) There is a clear public disenchantment with anti-corruption mechanisms. Critically analyse in the light of dramatic drop in the total number of complaints received by CVC in 2017. (150 Words)**

**Answer:**

The main purpose for which CVC had been established was to ensure all sorts of corruptions in government sector could be well prevented and addressed minutely. The 23,609 complaints received in 2017 by the CVC was less than half of almost 50,000 complaints received in 2016, and the lowest in the previous five years.

**Reasons why dramatic in the total number of complaints received by CVC in 2017:-**

- Explained by the **improved system for weeding out duplication of complaints** and a few other streamlining exercises undertaken in recent years.

**Public disenchament against corruption mechanisms in India :-**

- **Public was losing its trust in anti-corruption bodies** because of their perceived inefficiency, quality of investigations and possible manipulations at various levels.
- A recent survey by Transparency International (TI) organization, **states that India has the highest bribery rate among the 16 Asia Pacific countries surveyed.** Nearly seven in 10 people who accessed public services in India had paid a bribe.
- When CVC receives a complaint, the CVC calls for inquiry reports from the appropriate agencies
- As per the laid down procedure, the inquiry/ investigation reports are required to be sent to the Commission within a period of three months. **However, it is observed that in a majority of cases, there is considerable delay in finalising and submitting reports to the Commission.**
- **Consistent drop in the quality of investigation:-**
  - While the early steps such as raids and Preliminary Enquiry are well publicised, the follow-ups, including investigation and charge sheet are weak.
  - According to the CVC's annual report, based on the CBI's investigations, **the CVC provided the first stage of advice in 171 investigation reports of CBI. Of them, only 30% resulted in criminal proceedings.**
  - Similar drop in the number of punishments given out by the CVC, too, is visible.
- CVC's annual report has stated that it has observed that during the year 2017, **there were some significant deviations from the Commission's advice by various Ministries.**
  - The Ministry of Railways refused to follow its recommendation in six investigations against senior officials.
- **Low civil service salaries coupled by systems that allows little or no access redress mechanisms are main reasons behind corruption.** In other words people with limited resources are further disempowered by an additional hurdle in accessing public services through having to pay bribes. **This cycle continues when redress mechanisms are inaccessible,**
- Lack of enforcement capacity and regulatory complexity are deep causes, or foundational characteristics of India's institutions. **Inadequate regulation of political finance and shortcomings in public sector recruitment and postings** are more proximate offshoots of India's institutional infirmities.

- These four drivers give rise to three distinct types of malfeasance: **facilitative, collusive and extractive corruption.**

#### **What more can be done :-**

- Government should
  - Notify the original Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2011
  - Appoint a Lokpal
  - Initiate other steps for strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms.
- Continuous exchanges between stakeholders: govt/citizens/business/media
  - **Increasing the level of transparency about government performance produces the greatest returns when it is accompanied by reforms** that enhance the bargaining power of ordinary citizens, improve coordination and collective action, or strengthen the State's ability to punish impunity.
- **Technology-based solutions work best with concerted institutional support, and when they decentralise enforcement, circumvent middlemen bureaucrats, and empower ordinary citizens.**
  - For example, a technologically innovative programme in Andhra Pradesh used biometrically authenticated smartcards to decentralise payment-making authority for the rural jobs guarantee scheme and social security pensions, resulting in a more than 40% reduction in leakage.

***Q) Code of conduct rules reduce the domain of ethics to mere legalism. Critically comment.(250 words)***

Codes of conduct represents the set of enforceable rules that should be followed by a person in an organisation. Codes, along with other measures, have helped some companies dig themselves out of scandals, and **have helped many companies build a healthier work climate and reputation.**

Code of conduct is not enforced effectively as it is considered as mere formality. Unless enforced proper punishment cannot be meted out. Also morals are internal so just by enforcing a law people do not change their work ethics . The arrest of an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer on probation, for cheating during the civil services examination shows that imposition of code of conduct

Code of conduct consists of provisions general to all employees so some acts which are not mentioned might be considered ethical despite their unethical nature.It becomes a legal impediment in governance due to its rigidity which can affect the public servant leading to policy paralysis.

A well-written code of conduct **clarifies an organization's mission, values and principles**, linking them with standards of professional conduct. The code articulates the values the organization wishes to foster in leaders and employees and, in doing so, **defines desired behavior**. As a result, written codes of conduct or ethics can become **benchmarks** against which individual and organizational performance can be measured.

Additionally, a code is a **central guide and reference for employees** to support day-to-day decision making. A code encourages discussions of ethics and compliance, **empowering employees to handle ethical dilemmas they encounter in everyday**

A code serves as a public statement of what the company stands for and its commitment to high standards and right conduct.**Code of Conduct outlines specific behaviours** that are required or

prohibited as a condition of ongoing employment. It might forbid sexual harassment, racial intimidation or viewing inappropriate or unauthorized content on company computers.

**Strict code of conduct in financial sector would ensure ethics in the employees** and would have avoided and punished instances like recent Nirav Modi scam where ethics of the bank employees was under question.

Preventing corruption and improving the public service management are the main goals of the promotion of ethical standards for the civil servants. Therefore there is need to imbibe ethical nature in children from school level itself. Along with that there is a need for top down compliance in the organisations for effective enforcement of code of conduct.