

GSSCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

IAS 2026

PRELIMS TEST SERIES 2026

PRELIMS PRACTICE PROGRAMME

POLITY

TEST: #05

**Political dynamics; Governance,
Schemes, Policy and initiatives; Recent
Developments**



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Prelims Test Series 2026

Question Booklet: PTS-5449

GENERAL STUDIES

POLITY - 5

Time Allowed: One Hour

Maximum Marks: 100

INSTRUCTIONS

1. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE EXAMINATION, YOU SHOULD CHECK THAT THIS TEST BOOKLET DOES NOT HAVE ANY UNPRINTED OR TORN OR MISSING PAGES OR ITEMS, ETC. IF SO, GET IT REPLACED BY A COMPLETE TEST BOOKLET.
2. **Please note that it is the candidate's responsibility to encode and fill in the Roll Number carefully without any omission or discrepancy at the appropriate places in the OMR Answer Sheet. Any omission/discrepancy will render the Answer Sheet liable for rejection.**
3. You have to enter your Roll Number on the test booklet in the Box provided alongside. **DO NOT** write anything else on the Test Booklet.
4. This Test Booklet contains **50** items (questions). Each item is printed in English. Each item comprises four responses (answers). You will select the response which you want to mark on the Answer Sheet. In case you feel that there is more than one correct response, mark the response which you consider the best. In any case, choose **ONLY ONE** response for each item.
5. You have to mark all your responses **ONLY** on the separate Answer Sheet provided. See directions in the Answer Sheet.
6. All items carry equal marks.
7. Before you proceed to mark in the Answer Sheet in response to various items in the Test Booklet, you have to fill in some particulars in the Answer Sheet as per instructions sent to you with your Admission Certificate.
8. After you have completed filling in all your responses on the Answer Sheet and the examination has concluded, you should hand over to the Invigilator **only the Answer Sheet**. You are permitted to take away with you the Test Booklet.
9. Sheets for rough work are appended in the Test Booklet at the end.
10. **Penalty for wrong answers:**

THERE WILL BE PENALTY FOR WRONG ANSWERS MARKED BY A CANDIDATE IN THE OBJECTIVE TYPE QUESTION PAPERS.

- (i) There are four alternatives for the answer to every question. For each question for which a wrong answer has been given by the candidate, **one-third** of the marks assigned to that question will be deducted as penalty.
- (ii) If a candidate gives more than one answer, it will be treated as a **wrong answer** even if one of the given answers happens to be correct and there will be same penalty as above to that question.
- (iii) If a question is left blank, i.e., no answer is given by the candidate, there will be **no** penalty for that question.

1. Consider the following statements regarding the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY):

1. The scheme aims to incentivise formal employment by providing financial support for the first-time registration of new employees under the EPFO.
2. Under the scheme, the government pays both the employee's and the employer's EPF contributions for eligible new hires.
3. It covers only women employees in the age group of 18–40 years.
4. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

2. Which of the following statements regarding the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) are correct?

1. The Urban Challenge Fund was announced in the Union Budget 2025–26 with a corpus of Rs. 1 lakh crore.
2. It supports projects in areas like “Cities as Growth Hubs,” creative redevelopment, and urban water & sanitation.
3. The scheme is entirely funded by the central government without the need for external financing.
4. At least 75% of the project cost must be raised through bonds, bank loans, or PPPs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

3. Which of the following best describes a key feature of the Jal Jeevan Mission?

- (a) It provides free bottled water to rural households during summer months.
- (b) It focuses on ensuring functional household tap connections with water quality monitoring and community participation.

(c) It mandates rainwater harvesting in all urban households as its primary objective.

(d) It aims to replace all existing groundwater sources with desalination plants.

4. Consider the Following:

Assertion (A): In India, the effectiveness of pressure groups is often greater at the state level than at the national level.

Reason (R): State-level policy decisions are frequently influenced by localised socio-economic issues and electoral considerations, making governments more responsive to region-specific pressure group demands.

Select the correct answer:

- (a) Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are correct, but R is not the correct explanation of A
- (c) A is correct, but R is incorrect
- (d) A is incorrect, but R is correct

5. Which of the following statements regarding the functions of the Chief Secretary of a State in India are correct?

1. The Chief Secretary acts as the principal advisor to the Governor on certain administrative matters, especially those involving constitutional discretion.
2. The Chief Secretary is the statutory head of all state government corporations and exercises full executive control over them.
3. The Chief Secretary serves as the Secretary to the State Cabinet, ensuring proper documentation and follow-up on cabinet decisions.
4. The Chief Secretary has the exclusive authority to appoint District Collectors without any approval from the political executive.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

6. Consider the following statements:

1. Interest groups are concerned to protect or advance the interests of their members whereas cause group seek to advance particular ideals or principles.
2. Interest groups mainly work on the issues related to poverty reduction, education and the environment whereas cause groups concentrate on business and trade issues.

Which of the above statements is/are *incorrect*?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. Which of the following Supreme Court cases highlights its attempt to decriminalize politics in India?

1. Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India (ADR), 2002
2. Ramesh Dalal vs Union of India, 2005
3. Lily Thomas vs UoI, 2013
4. Manoj Narula vs UoI, 2014

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

8. With reference to the anti-defection law, consider the following statements:

1. It bars the defectors from contesting the bypolls to vacancies caused by their exit.
2. Courts can intervene at any stage in the Tenth schedule proceedings.

Which of the above statements is/are *incorrect*?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

9. Which of the following statements regarding the National Education Policy, 2020 are correct?

1. Compulsory allocation of 4% of GDP in education sector by the Union Government.
2. Aims to bring the uncovered age group of 3-6 years under school curriculum.
3. The policy envisages setting up a Gender Inclusion Fund.
4. National Educational Technology Forum to be created to provide a platform for free exchange of ideas on use of technology to enhance learning.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2 and 4 only

10. Match the following schemes/programmes related to education with their provisions:

| <i>Scheme / Programme</i> | <i>Provisions</i> |
|---------------------------|---|
| A. STARS | 1. Improving quality of school education through teacher training |
| B. NISHTHA | 2. Promote Quality Assurance in Higher Education |
| C. NEAT | 3. Improve learning assessment & facilitate school-to-work shift |
| D. Paramarsh | 4. Use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalised |

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- | A | B | C | D |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| (a) 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| (b) 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| (c) 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| (d) 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 |

11. With reference to the National Family Health Survey – 6 (NFHS-6), consider the following statements:

1. NFHS-6 is the first round to be coordinated solely by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai.

2. Unlike previous rounds, NFHS-6 will not collect biomarker data on anaemia due to concerns about the measurement methodology.
3. NFHS-6 provides district-level estimates for many key health indicators.
4. The survey uses Paper-Based Personal Interviewing (PAPI) to ensure standardisation of responses.
5. Disability-related questions have been excluded in NFHS-6 to avoid inconsistencies and respondent confusion.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2, 4 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

12. With reference to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 by Pratham, consider the following statements:

1. ASER 2024 focuses primarily on rural India and uses household-based surveys to assess children's schooling and learning levels.
2. The 2024 edition has included modules on digital literacy and life skills for older children.
3. The ASER survey is conducted exclusively in government schools to assess the quality of classroom teaching.
4. ASER does not provide district-level estimates and limits its findings to the state and national level only.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1 and 2 only

13. With reference to the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), consider the following statements:

1. The WGI measures six broad dimensions of governance.
2. One of the parameters is Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism.

3. Government Effectiveness in WGI focuses only on the fiscal performance of the government.
4. Regulatory Quality in WGI captures the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.
5. Rule of Law in WGI assesses perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

14. Consider the following:

Assertion (A): India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) aims to create a domestic market mechanism where emission reductions can be traded as carbon credits among obligated and voluntary entities.

Reason (R): The CCTS/ETS is designed only to facilitate the trading of renewable energy certificates for meeting Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs).

Select the correct option:

- (a) Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- (b) Both A and R are correct, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- (c) A is correct, but R is incorrect.
- (d) A is incorrect, but R is correct.

15. Consider the following statements regarding Mission Karmayogi:

1. It is a national capacity building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants.
2. It will support a transition from "roles-based to rules-based" HR management.
3. It provides for a Public Human Resources Council headed by Cabinet Secretary for providing strategic direction to the task of Civil Services Reform.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

16. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I:

In India, any NGO receiving foreign contributions must be registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 or obtain prior permission for each specific contribution.

Statement-II:

Under the FCRA, foreign contributions can be received in not more than two bank accounts designated exclusively for that purpose.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

17. Which of the following steps have been undertaken to strengthen transparency and accountability of rural development schemes in India?

1. Geo-tagging of assets
2. Social Audit of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS and PMAY-G
3. Aadhaar Based Payment System
4. Direct Benefit Transfer

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

18. Consider the following statements about Right to Property in India:

- 1. A citizen's right to own private property is a human right but the state can take possession by following due procedure and authority of law.
- 2. After the 44th amendment, 1978, state can even claim adverse possession of private property of a citizen through the act of trespassing under Article 300A.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

19. With reference to the India Justice Report 2025, consider the following statements:

- 1. The report evaluates the capacity and performance of four key pillars—Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid—across Indian states and ranks them accordingly.
- 2. It reveals that over 75% of prisoners nationwide are undertrials, with Delhi reporting undertrial figures exceeding 90%.
- 3. The police-to-population ratio nationwide remains below the sanctioned strength, reflecting persistent vacancies in sanctioned posts.
- 4. Himachal Pradesh is ranked second among small states (population under 10 million) in the “Prisons” category, highlighting better infrastructure and rehabilitation measures.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2, and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3, and 4 only
- (d) All four

20. With reference to the Government of India, consider the following information:

| Organisation | Some of its functions | It works under |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Directorate of Enforcement | Enforcement of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 | Internal Security Division-1, Ministry of Home Affairs |
| 2. Directorate of Revenue Intelligence | Enforces the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 | Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance |
| 3. Directorate General of Systems and Data Management | Carrying out big data analytics to assist tax officers for better policy and nabbing tax evaders | Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance |

In how many of the above rows is the information correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All the three
- (d) None

21. With reference to the Bhartiya Nyay Samhita, 2023 (BNS), consider the following information:

| Provision / Feature | Key Aspect | Remarks on Accuracy |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Community Service | Introduced as a form of punishment for certain petty offences | First time in Indian criminal code history |
| 2. Trial Timelines | Mandates that trials for offences against women and children should be completed within 6 months | Binding on all subordinate courts with no scope for extension |
| 3. Mob Lynching | Recognised as a specific offence with imprisonment up to life | Punishment severity varies with number of offenders and nature of crime |

In how many of the above rows is the information correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All the three
- (d) None

22. With reference to India's Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), consider the following statements:

- 1. The Border Security Force (BSF) is responsible for guarding India's land borders during peacetime and preventing trans-border crimes.
- 2. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the primary force for counter-insurgency operations across the country, including Left Wing Extremism areas.
- 3. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) guards India's border with China and is also deployed for high-altitude rescue operations.
- 4. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) provides security to industrial undertakings, airports, and other critical infrastructure in both public and private sectors.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

23. Consider the following:

Assertion (A): Coalition governments in India require consensus-building among multiple political parties before major policy decisions are finalised.

Reason (R): This is because coalition governments are generally based on a Common Minimum Programme agreed upon by the constituent parties.

Select the correct option:

- (a) Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are correct, but R is not the correct explanation of A
- (c) A is correct, but R is incorrect
- (d) A is incorrect, but R is correct

24. Consider the following statements:

1. Despite being the nucleus of our representative democracy, political parties didn't find any mention in the constitution.
2. As per the Central Information Commission, Political Parties are Public Authorities and thus, come under the ambit of RTI.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

25. Consider the following statements regarding "None of the above (NOTA)" used in the Indian elections:

1. NOTA was first used in 2014 general election.
2. NOTA is available for each and every elections in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

26. Consider the following statements regarding the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM):

1. NCMM aims to ensure a steady supply of critical minerals essential for the clean energy transition and high-tech manufacturing.
2. It is implemented under the Ministry of Mines with an inter-ministerial governing council.
3. The Mission also focuses on overseas acquisition of critical mineral assets to reduce import dependency.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

27. Consider the following statements regarding the SVAMITVA scheme:

1. Creation of accurate land records for rural planning and reduce property related disputes is one of the objectives of SVAMITVA scheme.
2. Establishment of Continuous Operating Reference System (CORS) under the SVAMITVA scheme supports in accurate Geo-referencing, ground truthing and demarcation of lands.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

28. Which of the following is/are the advantage(s) of separation of secretariat and executive organization in India?

1. Secretariat officials can plan keeping in view aggregate national interests as they are freed from the responsibilities of day-to-day administration.
2. It encourages specialization and avoids over-centralization.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

29. Arrange the following in top-down hierarchy within a Ministry under the Government of India:

1. Department
2. Division
3. Wing
4. Branch
5. Section

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1-2-3-4-5
- (b) 1-4-5-3-2
- (c) 1-3-2-4-5
- (d) 1-4-3-5-2

30. Consider the following statements regarding the concept of Good Governance:

1. According to the World Bank, Good Governance primarily refers to the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.
2. UNDP's framework on Good Governance emphasizes participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision as its core characteristics.
3. In India, the emphasis on Good Governance is reflected in constitutional provisions such as Directive Principles of State Policy, which provide normative guidance for citizen-centric administration.
4. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC) equates Good Governance with e-Governance, stating that technological interventions alone ensure transparency and accountability.
5. The concept of Good Governance goes beyond mere government functioning, involving civil society, private sector, and community institutions in partnership with the state.

Which of the above statements correctly reflect the idea of Good Governance?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- (c) 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

31. Which of the following represent the weaknesses of the existing organizational structure of the Government of India?

1. Proliferation of Ministries/Departments with weak integration and coordination.
2. An extended vertical structure with too many levels.
3. A national outlook amongst the public functionaries.
4. Reverse delegation and risk-avoidance in decision making.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 4 only

- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 2, 3 and 4 only

32. Consider the following statements regarding the e-GramSwaraj:

1. It is a user friendly web-based portal, launched by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.
2. It aims to bring in better transparency in the planning, progress reporting and accounting.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

33. Which of the following statements regarding the social mobility is *incorrect*?

- (a) Social mobility is the ability of a child to experience a better life than their parents.
- (b) Relative social mobility is an assessment of the impact of socio-economic background on an individual's outcomes in life.
- (c) Global Social Mobility Index that encompasses five determinants of social mobility, has been created together by the World Bank and UN Food and Agriculture Organization.
- (d) Global Social Mobility Index focuses on drivers of relative social mobility instead of outcomes by looking at policies, practices and institutions.

34. Consider the following statements regarding the women reservation Act:

1. The bill reserves 1/3rd seats for women in both houses of the Parliament and state legislative assemblies.
2. The reserve seats will be rotated after publishing of decennial census.
3. It will not be applicable on the seats reserved for Schedule tribes.

Which of the statements given above is/are *incorrect*?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) All of the above

35. Consider the following statements regarding the Citizen's Charter in India:

1. The concept of Citizen's Charter was first introduced in the United Kingdom in 1991 and later adopted in India in the late 1990s on the recommendation of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission.
2. Citizen's Charter in India aims to make administration accountable, citizen-friendly, transparent, and to ensure delivery of services in a time-bound manner.
3. As per Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Citizen's Charters must necessarily include commitments to service standards, redressal mechanisms, and the expectations from citizens.
4. Implementation of Citizen's Charters in India has been fully effective, with most government organizations having measurable performance evaluation mechanisms.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

36. Which constitutional amendment act (CAA) lowered the voting age to 18 years from 21 years:

- (a) 61st CAA
- (b) 89th CAA
- (c) 67th CAA
- (d) 69th CAA

37. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I:

The decline in Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in India is transitioning towards a population stabilisation phase.

Statement-II:

A lower TFR is correlates with improvements in women's education and access to family planning services across the country.

Which of the following is correct with respect to above given statements?

(a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

(b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I

(c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect

(d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

38. The Doctrine of Covverture, as applied in the British era, influenced the legal treatment of marital rape in which way?

(a) It treated marital rape as a criminal offense, independent of the marital relationship.

(b) It merged the identities of husband and wife, leading to the non-criminalization of marital rape.

(c) It granted married women independent legal status, which influenced the criminalization of marital rape.

(d) It allowed married women to own property separately from their husbands, leading to legal recognition of marital rape.

39. Which of the following frameworks introduced under NEP 2020 aims to facilitate credit transfer and academic flexibility in higher education?

(a) National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR)

(b) National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA)

(c) National Credit Framework (NCrF)

(d) Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH)

40. Consider the following statements with respect to 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' Scheme:

1. The Ministry of Women and Child Development set a goal of increasing the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) by 3 points annually.

2. The scheme promotes zero-budget advertising while emphasising increased spending on activities that deliver tangible results on the ground.

3. This scheme is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Education.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

41. Consider the following statements regarding Eklavya Model Residential Schools:

1. The scheme aims to establish model residential schools specifically for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes throughout India.
2. The Ministry of education is the nodal ministry overseeing this scheme.
3. The curriculum of these schools will align with the respective state education boards, and instruction will be provided primarily in the regional language of the area.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only One
- (b) Only Two
- (c) All Three
- (d) None

42. Which one of the following statements correctly describes the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC):

1. ONDC is a digital platform that enables online transactions between buyers and sellers in India.
2. ONDC is a government-led initiative that seeks to create a common digital infrastructure for e-commerce players in India.
3. ONDC is a private consortium of e-commerce companies in India that aims to streamline their operations and increase efficiency.
4. ONDC is a certification program for Indian e-commerce websites to ensure that they meet certain standards of quality and security.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

43. Consider the following pairs regarding the various levels of functionaries in a department and their administrative heads:

1. Wing: Joint Secretary
2. Division: Director
3. Section: Under Secretary

How many of the pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

44. Consider the following:

1. Gujral Doctrine
2. Look East Policy
3. Act East Policy
4. Connect Central Asia Policy
5. India's nuclear doctrine

Which of following is the correct chronological order of the above doctrines/policies adopted by India?

- (a) 1-2-4-5-3
- (b) 1-2-4-5-3
- (c) 2-1-4-3-5
- (d) 2-1-5-4-3

45. Which of the following are responsible for providing executive direction required in the implementation of the policies laid down by a Ministry?

- (a) Attached Offices
- (b) Sub-ordinate Offices
- (c) Section of a department
- (d) None of the above

46. Under which of the following doctrines, the government can take the possession of property which has no ownership?

- (a) Doctrine of Incidental or Ancillary Powers
- (b) Doctrine of Territorial Nexus
- (c) Doctrine of Escheat or Bona vacantia
- (d) Doctrine of Laches

47. Consider the following acts:

1. Industrial Disputes Act, 1947
2. Trade Unions Act, 1926
3. Minimum Wages Act 1948
4. Essential commodities act 1955

Under how many of the above Acts, the Government of India categorizes some services as ‘public utility service’?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

48. Consider the following departments:

1. Department of States
2. Department of Internal Security
3. Department of Official Language
4. Department of Home
5. Department of Border Management

How many of the above departments come under the Ministry of Home Affairs?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

49. Consider the following statements regarding the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005:

1. The Act provides a legal guarantee of at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
2. Wages under MGNREGA are linked to the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) to account for inflation.
3. The Gram Sabha is empowered to recommend works to be taken up and to conduct social audits of MGNREGA projects.
4. The cost of wages is borne entirely by the Union Government, while material costs are shared between the Union and the State Governments.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

50. Consider the following departments under the Ministry of Defence (MoD):

1. Department of Defence
2. Department of Defence Production
3. Department of Defence Research and Development
4. Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare
5. Department of Military Affairs

Which of the above form part of the Ministry of Defence?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5



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GENERAL STUDIES

POLITY - 5

Answer Key

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Q. 1 (c) | Q. 11 (a) | Q. 21 (b) | Q. 31 (b) | Q. 41 (a) |
| Q. 2 (a) | Q. 12 (d) | Q. 22 (d) | Q. 32 (b) | Q. 42 (b) |
| Q. 3 (b) | Q. 13 (c) | Q. 23 (a) | Q. 33 (c) | Q. 43 (a) |
| Q. 4 (a) | Q. 14 (c) | Q. 24 (a) | Q. 34 (c) | Q. 44 (d) |
| Q. 5 (b) | Q. 15 (a) | Q. 25 (d) | Q. 35 (b) | Q. 45 (b) |
| Q. 6 (b) | Q. 16 (c) | Q. 26 (d) | Q. 36 (a) | Q. 46 (c) |
| Q. 7 (d) | Q. 17 (d) | Q. 27 (c) | Q. 37 (a) | Q. 47 (a) |
| Q. 8 (c) | Q. 18 (a) | Q. 28 (c) | Q. 38 (b) | Q. 48 (d) |
| Q. 9 (b) | Q. 19 (b) | Q. 29 (c) | Q. 39 (c) | Q. 49 (a) |
| Q. 10 (b) | Q. 20 (b) | Q. 30 (b) | Q. 40 (b) | Q. 50 (d) |

1. Correct Option: (c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Identify the Theme and Context

- Read Statement I carefully — in assertion–reason type questions, this is usually the “main fact” or “effect.”
- Ask yourself: *Which scheme / policy / event is being referred to?* Recall **when** it was launched, **why**, and **what problem** it addresses.
- For PM-VBRY: Recall it was announced in the Union Budget 2024–25 to boost **formal employment** through EPFO-linked benefits.

Step 2 – Break Down the Scheme into 3 Key Dimensions

For schemes, it’s useful to mentally recall:

- **Objective:** Why was the scheme introduced?
- **Mechanism/Benefits:** How is the objective achieved?
- **Coverage / Eligibility:** Who benefits? Any conditions?

For PM-VBRY:

- Objective → Promote formal sector hiring.
- Mechanism → Govt pays employee + employer EPF contributions for new hires.
- Coverage → All eligible employees aged 18–40; not gender-specific.

Step 3 – Test Statement I (Assertion)

- Is it factually correct based on the **core objective**?
- In PM-VBRY, Statement I says: *“The scheme aims to incentivise formal employment by providing financial support for the first-time registration of new employees under the EPFO.”*
 - Yes, this matches the scheme’s aim → **Mark as correct.**

Step 4 – Test Statement II (Reason candidate 1)

- Does it state a **mechanism or cause**?
- Is it factually correct?
- Does it **logically explain Statement I** (i.e., if Statement II is true, would Statement I happen)?

For PM-VBRY:

- Statement II says the government pays both employee and employer EPF contributions for eligible hires.

- Correct — and it is **the actual reason** the scheme achieves Statement I’s goal.

Step 5 – Test Statement III (Reason candidate 2 or alternative)

- Check for **trap qualifiers** (“only,” “all,” “none,” specific numbers).
- Compare with your memory or reference — is it factually correct?
- For PM-VBRY: Statement III says it’s only for women aged 18–40.
 - Incorrect — coverage is **not gender-restricted**.

Step 6 – Match to the Answer Pattern

- In Assertion–Reason or “How many correct” formats, always ask:
 - Are both correct?
 - Does one explain the other?
 - Or is only one correct?

For PM-VBRY:

- Statement I: Correct.
- Statement II: Correct and explains I.
- Statement III: Incorrect.
- This matches **“Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I”** → Option C.

Step 7 – Double-Check for Common UPSC Traps

- **Date Confusion:** Schemes often have similar names from different years (e.g., PMRPy vs PM-VBRY).
- **Coverage Mistakes:** Gender, age limit, geography, or sector-specific limits are frequent pitfalls.
- **Mechanism Misrepresentation:** Funding source or implementing agency swapped to confuse aspirants.
- **Terminology Swap:** “Subsidy” vs “Contribution” vs “Grant.”

2. Correct Option: (a) 1, 2, and 4 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Scheme Background (Concept Anchoring)

When faced with questions on newly announced schemes, UPSC often tests:

- **Origin:** Where and when it was announced.
- **Objectives & target areas**
- **Funding pattern:** Central vs external vs private participation.
- **Unique operational clauses**

Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) — Key facts:

- **Announcement:** Union Budget 2025–26.
- **Purpose:** To stimulate large-scale investment in transformative urban infrastructure projects and to make Indian cities globally competitive.
- **Corpus:** Rs. 1 lakh crore (seeded by central government allocations).
- **Key thematic areas:**
 - **Cities as Growth Hubs** – developing urban economic clusters.
 - **Creative Redevelopment** – reimaging brownfield sites and underutilised urban spaces.
 - **Urban Water & Sanitation** – improving urban resilience and service delivery.
- **Funding Structure:** Unlike centrally sponsored schemes with heavy central grants, UCF has a **blended finance model**: central government seed + mandatory external mobilization.
- **Clause:** States/urban local bodies (ULBs) must raise **at least 75%** of project costs from bonds, bank loans, PPP models, or other institutional financing.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement with Elimination Strategy

Statement 1: *The Urban Challenge Fund was announced in the Union Budget 2025–26 with a corpus of Rs. 1 lakh crore.*

- This is a direct factual recall. Correct.

Statement 2: *It supports projects in areas like “Cities as Growth Hubs,” creative redevelopment, and urban water & sanitation.*

- Matches official scheme description — these are indeed the focus areas. Correct.

Statement 3: *The scheme is entirely funded by the central government without the need for external financing.*

- Trap statement — sounds attractive but contradicts the actual design of the UCF.
- UCF is explicitly based on **co-financing**, with most funding to come from private/market sources, not fully central.

Statement 4: *At least 75% of the project cost must be raised through bonds, bank loans, or PPPs.*

- This is correct and is the main differentiator from earlier fully government-funded schemes.

Step 3 – Narrow Down with Option Elimination

- From Step 2: Correct = 1, 2, 4; Incorrect = 3.

- Option that matches this combination: **a) 1, 2, and 4 only.**

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

UPSC uses **multi-statement questions** on new schemes to:

- **Test basic recall** (Statement 1 – factual detail).
- **Test conceptual clarity** (Statement 2 – objectives).
- **Introduce a plausible trap** (Statement 3 – “entirely central funded” is a tempting overgeneralisation).
- **Test attention to operational specifics** (Statement 4 – mandatory co-financing clause).

Aspirants who rely only on press snippets often fall for Statement 3, assuming all large corpus funds are centrally financed.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Fix the basics from the Budget/Economic Survey** – For new schemes, note corpus size, funding model, and thematic focus.
- **Identify the “trap” language** – Words like “entirely,” “only,” “always,” are red flags unless you are 100% sure.
- **Eliminate confidently** – Even if you are unsure about all statements, correctly identifying one false statement narrows options.
- **Link to older schemes** – Compare UCF’s blended finance model to AMRUT or Smart Cities Mission for memory reinforcement.
- **Use current affairs recall patterns** – Budget announcements in Feb are highly probable for Prelims in May/June.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- **Q glance:** Big corpus + urban theme → recall 2025–26 Budget.
- **Statement 1:** Rings a bell → Budget mention of Rs. 1 lakh crore UCF → Mark correct.
- **Statement 2:** Matches my memory of urban growth + water sanitation focus → Mark correct.
- **Statement 3:** “Entirely central funded” → I remember co-financing clause → Eliminate.
- **Statement 4:** Yes, 75% external financing required → Correct.
- **Match:** 1, 2, 4 → Option a.

3. Correct Option: (b) It focuses on ensuring functional household tap connections with water quality monitoring and community participation.

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Scheme Background (Concept Anchoring)

When faced with scheme-based questions, UPSC often tests:

- **Origin/Ministry:** Launched in 2019 under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- **Objective:** Universal Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) for rural households; service-delivery focus (adequate quantity, prescribed quality, regularity, and convenience).
- **Design Features:**
 - Water quality monitoring & surveillance (WQMS) through district labs, portable test kits, and community involvement.
 - Community participation via Paani Samitis/VWSCs for planning, implementation, operation & maintenance.
 - Source sustainability (rainwater harvesting, aquifer recharge, greywater management) through convergence (e.g., MGNREGS, SBM(G), watershed programmes).
 - Capacity building and ICT dashboards for transparency and monitoring.
- **What JJM is NOT:** It is not an urban programme (that's largely AMRUT 2.0/urban missions), not a bottled-water distribution scheme, and not a desalination-replacement mission (desalination is context-specific, not universal).

Step 2 – Evaluate the Options with Elimination Strategy

Option (a): Free bottled water to rural households during summer months

- **Why it's wrong:** JJM is about **piped, in-premises tap connections** and service delivery standards, not bottled-water distribution or seasonal relief measures.

- **Verdict:**

Option (b): Functional household tap connections with water quality monitoring and community participation

- **Why it's correct:** This directly captures JJM's essence—FHTC + WQMS + community ownership (VWSC/Paani Samiti). It reflects both service quality and governance design.

- **Verdict:**

Option (c): Mandates rainwater harvesting in all urban households as its primary objective

- **Why it's wrong:** Two traps here—"urban" (JJM is rural drinking water) and "primary objective" (JJM's primary objective is FHTC; while source sustainability includes rainwater harvesting, it's not the sole/primary goal, and not urban-only).

- **Verdict:**

Option (d): Replace all existing groundwater sources with desalination plants

- **Why it's wrong:** Desalination is **not** a universal JJM feature—only relevant for specific coastal/island contexts. JJM emphasises **source sustainability**, **not** replacing groundwater everywhere.

- **Verdict:**

Step 3 – Narrow Down with Option Elimination

- From Step 2: Only (b) matches the **core objective** and **key features** of JJM.
- Therefore, (b) is the correct answer.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

UPSC frequently checks whether candidates can:

- **Differentiate between scheme objectives vs supporting activities** (e.g., FHTC vs rainwater harvesting).
- **Spot domain shifts** (rural vs urban).
- **Avoid absolutist traps** ("all/only/replace") that don't fit programme design.
- **Recognize governance features** (community participation, monitoring) rather than just infrastructure buzzwords.

In this question:

- (a) tempts you with a relief-measure frame (not JJM).
- (c) mixes **urban** and **primary objective**—both are off.
- (d) uses an **absolutist** and **technocratic** trap (desalination everywhere).
- (b) alone reflects JJM's **service delivery + quality + community** triangle.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Fix the scheme triad:** Aim (FHTC) → Features (WQMS, VWSC, source sustainability) → Coverage (rural).

- Guard against traps:** Words like “only,” “all,” “replace,” “urban” in a rural scheme are red flags.
- Prioritise service delivery language:** “Functional,” “adequate,” “quality,” “regular” are core to JJM.
- Cross-map with other missions:** Urban water reforms → AMRUT; sanitation → SBM; convergence → MGNREGS/Watershed.
- Eliminate confidently:** If one option alone captures both the objective and operational design, pick it.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Read:** “Key feature” + “Jal Jeevan Mission” → recall FHTC + WQMS + community.
- Scan options:**
 - (a) Bottled water? Not JJM → out.
 - (b) FHTC + WQMS + community → perfect fit.
 - (c) Urban + “primary objective” rainwater harvesting → mismatch.
 - (d) “Replace all” with desalination → absolutist/incorrect.
- Mark (b)** without hesitation.

4. Correct Option: (a)

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

When UPSC frames Assertion–Reason questions on **political processes** like pressure groups, they are testing:

- Nature of pressure groups in India:** Informal associations that seek to influence policy without seeking direct political power.
- Effectiveness at different levels:**
 - National level:** Larger scope, diverse and competing interests, bureaucratic and parliamentary processes more formalised, media focus is diffused.
 - State level:** More direct access to decision-makers, localised issues (agriculture, industry closures, regional identity) have greater salience, and governments are often more dependent on smaller, targeted vote banks.
- Why responsiveness is higher at state level:** Electoral politics in states often hinge on specific caste, community, or sectoral issues that pressure groups can mobilise around effectively.

- Examples:**
 - Farmers' unions** influencing procurement policies in Punjab and Haryana.
 - Student groups** in Assam influencing policies on migration and language.

Step 2 – Evaluate Assertion and Reason Individually

Assertion (A): *In India, the effectiveness of pressure groups is often greater at the state level than at the national level.*

- This aligns with political science research and examples from Indian politics (e.g., regional trade unions, linguistic groups).
- Verdict:** Correct.

Reason (R): *State-level policy decisions are frequently influenced by localised socio-economic issues and electoral considerations, making governments more responsive to region-specific pressure group demands.*

- This explains why state governments respond quickly to such groups — survival in state politics often depends on narrow, intense constituencies.
- Verdict:** Correct.

Step 3 – Check the Link Between A and R

- R provides the causal reasoning for A:
 - If governments at the state level are more responsive to localised socio-economic and electoral demands, then pressure groups operating at that level can exert greater influence.
- Verdict:** R is indeed the correct explanation of A.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

UPSC often uses Assertion–Reason to test **conceptual cause-effect clarity**, not just factual recall:

- Trap 1:** Both A and R are correct but unrelated — common in political science where correlation ≠ causation.
- Trap 2:** R might be factually correct but only a partial explanation.
- This question works because:
 - A is a broad observation about **relative influence**.
 - R drills down into the **political mechanism** that makes that observation true.
- This tests your ability to logically link **political structures** (state vs national governance) with **sociological realities** (localised issues, vote banks).

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Decouple A and R:** First decide if each is correct independently.
- **Test the causality:** Ask — “If R is true, does it necessarily lead to A being true?”
- **Use real-world recall:** Think of case studies (e.g., Tamil Nadu fishermen associations influencing state-level marine policies vs negligible national impact).
- **Beware of overgeneralisation:** Just because a statement sounds logical doesn't mean it explains the assertion.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Read A → recall that regional issues like Jat reservation protests or Maratha quota stir immediate state action. → Seems correct.
- Read R → yes, state politics revolves around such localised demands; electoral compulsions force responsiveness. → Correct.
- Link: If governments are more responsive to local demands, then pressure groups targeting those demands will be more effective at that level. → Explanation fits perfectly.
- **Mark option (a)** without hesitation.

5. Correct Option: (b)

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

When UPSC frames statement-based questions on the functions of the Chief Secretary, they are testing:

- **Nature of the post:** The Chief Secretary (CS) is the senior-most IAS officer in the state, head of the state secretariat, and principal coordinator between departments.
- **Functional domains:**
 - *Cabinet Secretariat role* – prepares agenda, records minutes, ensures follow-up on cabinet decisions.
 - *Governor-Government channel* – serves as the key link for administrative communication between the Governor and the Council of Ministers.
 - *Coordination & supervision* – resolves inter-departmental issues, oversees policy implementation, handles crisis management.
- **Limitations in authority:**
 - Not the statutory head of all state corporations – these have separate boards/MDs as per their Acts.

- Does not hold exclusive appointment powers for key posts like District Collectors – political executive approval is required.

- **Examples:**

- In Maharashtra, the CS coordinated state-wide drought relief measures through multiple departments.
- In Assam, the CS facilitated urgent communication between the Governor and CM during a constitutional disagreement.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: The Chief Secretary acts as the principal advisor to the Governor on certain administrative matters, especially those involving constitutional discretion.

- In practice, the CS briefs and advises the Governor on administrative issues, but constitutional advice formally flows from the Council of Ministers.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 2: The Chief Secretary is the statutory head of all state government corporations and exercises full executive control over them.

- Incorrect – state corporations have separate legal heads and boards; CS may sit on some boards ex officio but is not the statutory head of all.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 3: The Chief Secretary serves as the Secretary to the State Cabinet, ensuring proper documentation and follow-up on cabinet decisions.

- This is a textbook function of the CS – part of the Cabinet Secretariat role at the state level.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 4: The Chief Secretary has the exclusive authority to appoint District Collectors without any approval from the political executive.

- Incorrect – appointments of District Collectors require approval of the political executive; CS only processes and recommends.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Check the Link Between Statements and the Role

- Statements 1 and 3 are aligned with the real functions of the CS.
- Statements 2 and 4 make absolute claims that are factually incorrect in the Indian administrative context.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

UPSC often uses such questions to test understanding of *actual institutional functions vs. exaggerated claims*:

- Trap 1: Assigning statutory powers to posts that are largely coordinative/administrative.
- Trap 2: Using absolute terms like “exclusive authority” to mislead.
- This question works because:
 - It mixes correct and exaggerated statements.
 - It tests both the functional role and the limits of the CS’s powers.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Recall the *official description* of the post’s functions from ARC reports or state rules of business.
- Eliminate absolute/exaggerated statements (“all corporations”, “exclusive authority”).
- Retain statements that match known duties (Cabinet Secretary role, Governor liaison).
- Use practical recall of examples to validate correctness.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Read Statement 1 → CS does brief Governor → seems correct.
- Read Statement 2 → “statutory head of all” sounds too sweeping → incorrect.
- Read Statement 3 → yes, CS is Cabinet Secretary at state level → correct.
- Read Statement 4 → appointments need political nod → incorrect.
- Final link: Correct statements are 1 and 3 only. → Mark option **(b)** confidently.

6. Correct Option: (b) 2 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

When UPSC frames questions on **interest groups vs cause groups**, they are testing:

- **Interest Groups:**
 - Formed to protect/advance the specific interests of their members.
 - Examples: business associations, trade unions, professional bodies.
 - Focus: economic benefits, sectoral advantages, member welfare.

• Cause Groups:

- Formed to promote a particular cause, ideal, or principle, often with no direct material benefit to members.
- Examples: environmental groups, human rights organisations, anti-corruption movements.
- Focus: broad public interest or ideological goals.

- **Key Distinction:** It lies in *membership-driven interests vs value-driven causes*.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: *Interest groups are concerned to protect or advance the interests of their members whereas cause group seek to advance particular ideals or principles.*

- This is exactly the standard textbook distinction.

- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 2: *Interest groups mainly work on the issues related to poverty reduction, education and the environment whereas cause groups concentrate on business and trade issues.*

- This is factually reversed.
 - Poverty reduction, education, environment → usually cause group domain.
 - Business and trade → interest group domain.

- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Apply the “Incorrect” Filter

- We are asked for **incorrect** statements.
- Statement 1: correct → exclude.
- Statement 2: incorrect → include.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- It reverses domains to mislead – a frequent UPSC trick in polity and political science.
- It tests not just memorisation but conceptual clarity about *who pursues what*.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Identify the defining feature of each category.
- Check if the examples/domains match the category.
- Eliminate statements with reversed roles.
- Watch for “incorrect” or “correct” framing – a common source of mistakes.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Read Statement 1 → matches definition → keep aside as correct.

- Read Statement 2 → seems reversed (cause groups do poverty/environment, interest groups do trade/business) → incorrect.
- Asked for incorrect → pick Statement 2 only → mark **(b)** confidently.

Correct Answer: (b) 2 only

7. Correct Option: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

When UPSC frames a question on *decriminalisation of politics* in the context of Supreme Court judgments, it is testing your ability to:

- Identify landmark judicial interventions that aim to keep criminals out of legislatures and ministries.
- Distinguish between cases dealing with *transparency in candidature, disqualification of legislators, and ministerial eligibility*.
- Recognise that decriminalisation is not only about conviction-based disqualification but also about *voter empowerment* through information and the moral responsibility of the executive to avoid inducting tainted individuals.

The Problem of Criminalisation in Politics

- According to ADR reports, more than 40% of sitting MPs in recent Lok Sabhas have had criminal cases pending against them.
- Criminal elements enter politics due to weak enforcement of election laws, long trials, and loopholes in the Representation of the People Act (RPA).
- The judiciary has stepped in multiple times to strengthen democratic integrity.

Judicial Theme:

Decriminalisation measures focus on:

- **Transparency:** Ensuring voters have access to candidates' criminal, financial, and educational backgrounds.
- **Immediate disqualification:** Preventing convicted representatives from continuing in office.
- **Moral guidance:** Advising executives against appointing tainted persons to ministerial positions.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Case Individually

- **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) v. Union of India, 2002**

- **Background:** Based on a PIL by ADR demanding disclosure of candidates' criminal, financial, and educational background.
- **Judgment:** Supreme Court directed the Election Commission to collect and publicise such information from all candidates.
- **Significance:** Empowered voters to make informed choices; first major judicial push for electoral transparency.
- **Link to decriminalisation:** Public exposure of criminal antecedents acts as a deterrent and enables public pressure.

- **Verdict:** Correct.

- **Ramesh Dalal v. Union of India, 2005**

- **Context:** The question was whether a legislator's disqualification should be immediate upon conviction, even for offences committed before election.
- **Judgment:** Held that if an MLA/MP is convicted for an offence under the RPA, disqualification takes effect from the date of conviction, regardless of when the offence occurred.
- **Link to decriminalisation:** Closed a loophole that allowed convicted persons to retain office until appeal.

- **Verdict:** Correct.

- **Lily Thomas v. Union of India, 2013**

- **Background:** Section 8(4) of the RPA allowed convicted legislators to remain in office if they filed an appeal within 3 months.
- **Judgment:** Struck down Section 8(4) as unconstitutional. Convicted MPs/MLAs now stand immediately disqualified upon conviction for offences with imprisonment of 2 years or more.
- **Link to decriminalisation:** Eliminated legislative protection that perpetuated criminalisation.

- **Verdict:** Correct.

- **Manoj Narula v. Union of India, 2014**

- **Context:** PIL sought bar on appointing ministers with criminal charges.
- **Judgment:** Court did not impose a legal ban (respecting separation of powers) but emphasised constitutional morality and advised the PM/CMs not to induct persons with serious criminal charges into the Council of Ministers.
- **Link to decriminalisation:** Though advisory, it reinforces the ethical obligation of the executive to maintain clean governance.

- **Verdict:** Correct.

Step 3 – Check the Thematic Link to “Decriminalisation of Politics”

- All four cases directly or indirectly address the cleansing of political offices:
 - ADR: Transparency for voters.
 - Ramesh Dalal: Immediate disqualification.
 - Lily Thomas: No safe harbour via appeal.
 - Manoj Narula: Ethical restraint in ministerial appointments.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Combines well-known and relatively lesser-discussed cases.
- Uses the full spectrum: legal mandates (ADR, Lily Thomas) + clarifications (Ramesh Dalal) + moral advisories (Manoj Narula).
- Without deep recall, one might wrongly exclude 2 or 4.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Identify if the case relates to elections, eligibility, or ministerial appointments.
- Ask: “Does this judgment aim to reduce or deter criminal presence in politics?”
- Be cautious – some advisory judgments are still relevant to the theme.
- In doubt, recall that UPSC often includes such moral-precedent cases as part of the “decriminalisation” basket.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- ADR → Yes, transparency = deterrence.
- Ramesh Dalal → Yes, conviction leads to instant disqualification.
- Lily Thomas → Yes, struck down protective clause in RPA.
- Manoj Narula → Yes, even if advisory, discourages criminally charged ministers.
- All fit → choose (d).

Correct Answer: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

8. Correct Option: (c) Both 1 and 2

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

When UPSC frames a question on the **anti-defection law** (Tenth Schedule of the Constitution), it is testing both **statutory understanding** and **judicial interpretation**.

- **Purpose of the Law:** Introduced by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985,

to curb political defections that destabilise governments, especially those driven by lure of office or money.

• Provisions under the Tenth Schedule:

- A legislator is disqualified if they **voluntarily give up membership** of their party or disobey the party whip without prior permission.
- Applies to both Parliament and State Legislatures.
- Independent members cannot join any party after election; nominated members must join a party within six months or remain unattached thereafter.

• Decision-making Authority:

- The Presiding Officer (Speaker/Chairman) decides disqualification cases.
- In *Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu* (1992), the Supreme Court upheld the law but allowed **judicial review** only **after** the Presiding Officer has made a decision.

• 91st Constitutional Amendment (2003):

Strengthened the law by removing provisions that protected splits by one-third members and limiting size of Council of Ministers to 15% of House strength.

• Recent Interpretations:

- *Shrimanth Balasaheb Patil v. Karnataka Legislative Assembly* (2019): Upheld Speaker’s power to disqualify defectors till the end of the Assembly term, effectively preventing them from contesting bypolls in that term.
- This is a judicially evolved principle, not an automatic blanket ban in the law.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: It bars the defectors from contesting the bypolls to vacancies caused by their exit.

- The Tenth Schedule itself does **not** impose a general ban on defectors contesting bypolls.
- However, as per the 2019 Supreme Court ruling, the Speaker can impose disqualification for the remainder of the Assembly term, which makes them ineligible to contest any bypoll during that term.
- Since the statement treats it as an **absolute statutory provision**, it is **overstated**.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 2: Courts can intervene at any stage in the Tenth Schedule proceedings.

- *Kihoto Hollohan* (1992) settled that judicial review is available **only after** the Presiding

Officer delivers a decision, except in rare cases of jurisdictional errors (like exceeding constitutional authority).

- Statement's wording "at any stage" is misleading — courts cannot routinely step in mid-way.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Apply the "Incorrect" Filter

- Both statements are incorrect → Answer is (c).

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Both statements are *plausible sounding* but wrong when tested against constitutional text and case law.
- UPSC often tests candidates' ability to separate **law as written** from **law as interpreted by courts**.
- Use of absolute terms ("bars", "at any stage") is a deliberate trap.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Recall statutory provisions first — check if the wording exactly matches the law.
- Then recall relevant case law — see if it modifies, limits, or expands the interpretation.
- Watch for absolute terms — they are often incorrect unless explicitly in the Constitution/statute.
- Apply the "incorrect/correct" filter last — many errors in prelims happen because candidates forget the question's demand.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement 1 → Law doesn't have a blanket ban; SC ruling allows Speaker to impose term-long ban → incorrect.
- Statement 2 → Judicial review is post-decision; "any stage" overstates scope → incorrect.
- Both are wrong → Mark (c) confidently.

Additional Exam-Relevant Pointers:

- Recent cases in Maharashtra (2022) and Manipur (2020) have reignited debates over Speaker's impartiality — 2nd ARC and several committees have suggested shifting disqualification power to an independent tribunal.
- Anti-defection provisions aim for stability but have been criticised for stifling legitimate dissent within parties.
- Knowing this nuance helps answer Mains questions on whether reforms to the Tenth Schedule are needed.

Correct Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2

9. Correct Option: (b) 2, 3 and 4 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** is India's first education policy of the 21st century, replacing the 1986 policy (revised in 1992). It aims to transform both school and higher education through:

- Universal access and quality improvement.
- 5+3+3+4 curricular structure replacing 10+2.
- Early childhood care inclusion.
- Strong focus on equity, inclusion, and technology integration.

Key relevant features for this question:

- **Funding target** — NEP 2020 does not "compulsorily" fix a GDP allocation but aspires to increase public investment in education to **6% of GDP**, not 4%. It is a long-term goal for both Union and States.
- **Early childhood care** — Incorporates the **3–6 years** age group into formal schooling through the new foundational stage (part of 5+3+3+4 structure).
- **Gender Inclusion Fund** — Proposed to support equitable quality education for all girls and transgender students.
- **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** — To be created as a platform for the free exchange of ideas on technology use in education.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: Compulsory allocation of 4% of GDP in education sector by the Union Government.

- Incorrect — NEP talks about raising **overall public investment** in education to 6% of GDP, involving both Union and States; it does not mandate 4% allocation and does not make it "compulsory."
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 2: Aims to bring the uncovered age group of 3-6 years under school curriculum.

- Correct — The foundational stage (ages 3–8) covers pre-school (Anganwadi, Balvatika) plus Grades 1–2.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 3: The policy envisages setting up a Gender Inclusion Fund.

- Correct — Proposed for targeted support to disadvantaged groups in achieving equity and inclusion.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 4: National Educational Technology Forum to be created to provide a platform for free exchange of ideas on use of technology to enhance learning.

- Correct — NETF is envisaged as an autonomous body to facilitate technology integration in teaching, learning, and assessment.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Step 3 – Apply the “Correct Statements” Filter

- Correct: 2, 3, 4.
- Incorrect: 1.
- → Option (b) fits.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Combines factual recall (specific NEP provisions) with numerical traps (“4% of GDP” instead of “6%”).
- Rewards knowledge of exact wording — “aspiration” vs “compulsory provision.”
- Tests awareness of specific institutional innovations like NETF and targeted funds.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Be alert to number traps — UPSC often changes targets or years.
- Distinguish between *mandatory legal provisions* and *policy goals*.
- Keep NEP’s structural reforms (5+3+3+4), equity measures, and tech initiatives on fingertips.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement 1 — Wrong number (6%, not 4%) and not compulsory → eliminate.
- Statement 2 — Yes, foundational stage covers 3–6 → keep.
- Statement 3 — Yes, Gender Inclusion Fund → keep.
- Statement 4 — Yes, NETF → keep.
- Correct ones: 2, 3, 4 → (b).

10. Correct Option: (b) 3 – 1 – 4 – 2

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

UPSC frequently frames *match-the-following* questions that link **flagship education schemes** with their **objectives or target beneficiaries**. The trap usually lies in confusing similar-sounding initiatives or mixing up their target levels (school vs higher education) and

implementation focus (capacity building, quality assurance, technology, etc.).

Let’s recall each scheme in detail:

- **STARS (Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States)**
 - Launched in 2020 with World Bank assistance.
 - Implemented in six states — Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
 - Focus: Strengthen learning assessment systems, improve classroom instruction, and facilitate the transition from school to work through skill integration.
 - Also supports teacher development indirectly by improving governance and accountability in school systems.
- **NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads’ and Teachers’ Holistic Advancement)**
 - World’s largest teacher training programme.
 - Aim: Improve **quality of school education** by enhancing competencies and motivation of teachers and school principals.
 - Covers foundational literacy and numeracy, learner-centric pedagogy, inclusive education, and use of technology in classrooms.
 - It is **directly linked** with teacher capacity building — making it distinct from STARS, which focuses more on systemic improvements and assessments.
- **NEAT (National Educational Alliance for Technology)**
 - Initiative under the Ministry of Education (AICTE) in PPP mode with ed-tech companies.
 - Uses **Artificial Intelligence** to personalise learning for individual students, making it adaptive to their pace and understanding.
 - Targets higher education learners and aims to bridge learning gaps through technology-driven tools.
- **Paramarsh**
 - UGC scheme launched in 2019.
 - Objective: Promote **Quality Assurance in Higher Education** by mentoring non-accredited institutions through hand-holding by accredited ones.

- The end goal is to help these institutions achieve NAAC accreditation.
- This is higher education-specific, unlike NISHTHA or STARS which are school-focused.

Step 2 – Match Each Scheme with Its Provision

| Scheme / Programme | Code | Provision |
|--------------------|------|--|
| A. STARS | 3 | Improve learning assessment & facilitate school-to-work shift |
| B. NISHTHA | 1 | Improving quality of school education through teacher training |
| C. NEAT | 4 | Use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalised |
| D. Paramarsh | 2 | Promote Quality Assurance in Higher Education |

Step 3 – Verify the Sequence in Options

A – 3, B – 1, C – 4, D – 2 → This matches option (b).

Why Each Link is Correct

- **STARS** → 3: Core design is about *assessment reform* and *employability readiness* — not direct teacher training.
- **NISHTHA** → 1: The name itself reflects its focus on *holistic advancement of school heads and teachers*.
- **NEAT** → 4: The only scheme here explicitly using AI to tailor learning.
- **Paramarsh** → 2: Exclusively for *quality assurance* in higher education via NAAC mentoring.

Step 4 – Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- **Overlap trap** – Teacher training (NISHTHA) vs teacher-supportive reforms (STARS).
- **Level trap** – Higher education (Paramarsh, NEAT) vs school education (STARS, NISHTHA).
- **Technology trap** – AI integration in NEAT vs technology-aided training under NISHTHA (different scope).
- **Acronym confusion** – Many aspirants remember the acronyms but not the exact objectives.

Step 5 – How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Identify the target group first** – teachers, students, institutions.

- **Classify the education level** — school vs higher education.
- **Spot technology-based schemes** — usually unique and easier to match.
- **Link to funding/agency** — e.g., World Bank for STARS, UGC for Paramarsh, AICTE for NEAT, NCERT/SCERT for NISHTHA.

Example of Exam Thought Process

- STARS → World Bank, assessment & employability → Code 3.
- NISHTHA → Teacher training → Code 1.
- NEAT → AI personalisation → Code 4.
- Paramarsh → NAAC mentoring, higher education → Code 2.

→ Final sequence = 3 – 1 – 4 – 2 → Option (b).

11. Correct Option: (a) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)** is India's most important large-scale, multi-round survey conducted to gather essential data on population, health, and nutrition.

NFHS-6 Special Features (2023–24):

- Coordinated **solely** by the *International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai* — earlier rounds involved multiple coordinating agencies.
- Will **not** collect biomarker data on anaemia — first time in NFHS history — due to concerns about the accuracy of the measurement methodology.
- Provides **district-level estimates** for many indicators, enhancing granularity for local-level policy making.
- Uses **Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)**, not paper-based methods, to improve data accuracy.
- **Excludes disability questions** on the advice of the Technical Advisory Committee, to avoid inconsistencies with NSSO data and respondent confusion.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: *NFHS-6 is the first round to be coordinated solely by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai.*

- Matches official description; previous rounds had multi-agency coordination, but NFHS-6 is fully IIPS-led.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 2: Unlike previous rounds, NFHS-6 will not collect biomarker data on anaemia due to concerns about the measurement methodology.

- True; this exclusion is a key change in NFHS-6.
- Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 3: NFHS-6 provides district-level estimates for many key health indicators.

- True; district-level granularity is a stated improvement over previous rounds.
- Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 4: The survey uses Paper-Based Personal Interviewing (PAPI) to ensure standardisation of responses.

- Incorrect; NFHS-6 uses Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) for higher accuracy and data quality.
- Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 5: Disability-related questions have been excluded in NFHS-6 to avoid inconsistencies and respondent confusion.

- True; exclusion recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee due to mismatch with NSSO disability data.
- Verdict:** Correct.

Step 3 – Apply the “Correct Statements” Filter

- Correct: 1, 2, 3, 5.
- Incorrect: 4.
- Option (a) is correct.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Uses new developments in a recurring scheme/survey.
- Introduces a trap option (PAPI vs CAPI) to test attentiveness to detail.
- Combines factual recall (features) with conceptual understanding (why certain changes were made).

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Identify unique features of the latest round (NFHS-6 here).
- Be alert to terminology traps — e.g., PAPI vs CAPI.
- Eliminate statements based on obvious factual contradictions.
- Recall policy rationale — why certain questions or indicators are included/excluded.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement 1 → Yes, unique to NFHS-6 → Keep.

- Statement 2 → Yes, first time no anaemia biomarker → Keep.
- Statement 3 → Yes, district-level estimates → Keep.
- Statement 4 → No, uses CAPI not PAPI → Remove.
- Statement 5 → Yes, disability questions excluded → Keep.
- Remaining correct statements: 1, 2, 3, 5 → **Option (a).**

12. Correct Option: (d) 1 and 2 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), conducted by the NGO Pratham, is one of India's most credible household-based surveys assessing school participation and basic learning outcomes, particularly in rural areas.

Core ASER features to keep in mind:

- Coverage:** Primarily rural India.
- Methodology:** Household-based surveys, which test children whether they attend government schools, private schools, or are out of school.
- Focus:** Basic reading and arithmetic skills, school participation, and since 2024, also digital literacy and life skills for older children.
- Outputs:** Generates district, state, and national-level estimates — historically district-level has been a hallmark, though in some special thematic rounds the coverage may differ.

ASER 2024 Special Points:

- Rural, household-based methodology continues.
- Added new focus modules: **digital literacy** (technology usage, ability to search, navigate, and evaluate online information) and **life skills** (problem-solving, decision-making, confidence).
- Not confined to government schools — it samples all enrolled children regardless of school type, and also those who are out of school.
- District-level data is part of the standard design; however, in our modified question, we present a false statement excluding this to create the intended correct option.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: ASER 2024 focuses primarily on rural India and uses household-based surveys to assess children's schooling and learning levels.

- This is correct and matches the very definition of ASER's approach.
- Rural household-based surveys are ASER's unique identity compared to school-based surveys like NAS (National Achievement Survey).
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 2: The 2024 edition has included modules on digital literacy and life skills for older children.

- True. This is one of the defining new features of ASER 2024.
- Digital literacy covers skills like operating devices, searching for information, understanding online safety.
- Life skills modules assess practical problem-solving, teamwork, and confidence levels among adolescents.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 3: The ASER survey is conducted exclusively in government schools to assess the quality of classroom teaching.

- Incorrect. ASER is **household-based** and not confined to any one type of school; it covers all children, whether in government schools, private schools, or not enrolled at all.
- Also, it does not directly assess "quality of teaching"; rather, it measures **learning outcomes at the child level**.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 4: ASER does not provide district-level estimates and limits its findings to the state and national level only.

- Incorrect. ASER's strength is that it produces **district-level estimates**, which are crucial for localised educational interventions.
- The statement contradicts ASER's long-standing design.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Apply the "Correct Statements" Filter

- Correct: 1 and 2.
- Incorrect: 3 and 4.

Correct option = **(d) 1 and 2 only**.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- UPSC often tests **methodology and scope** of important surveys rather than just the findings.
- This question introduces **two traps**:

- The "government school only" assumption — many aspirants confuse ASER with school-based surveys.
- The "no district-level estimates" claim — contradicts ASER's foundational purpose.
- It mixes **permanent features** (rural focus, household-based) with **current edition updates** (digital literacy, life skills).

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Identify survey type:** Household vs school-based.
- **Spot edition-specific changes:** New modules in ASER 2024 = digital literacy + life skills.
- **Challenge absolute statements:** Words like "exclusively" or "does not provide" often signal incorrect options unless supported by core facts.
- **Link purpose to output:** ASER's design → household-based → multiple school types → district-level estimates.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- **Statement 1** → True by definition of ASER.
- **Statement 2** → Matches current edition's highlight modules.
- **Statement 3** → Sounds too exclusive; recall ASER covers all types of schools → False.
- **Statement 4** → Contradicts the well-known fact that ASER is used for district-level insights → False.
- Remaining correct statements: 1, 2 → Option **(d)**.

13. Correct Option: (c) Only four

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

The **World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)** is a long-standing research dataset that compiles and reports aggregate indicators for over 200 countries and territories, measuring six key dimensions of governance.

Purpose:

- To provide a comparative view of governance performance worldwide.
- Based on over 30 data sources from survey institutes, think tanks, NGOs, and international organizations.

Six Dimensions of Governance Measured by WGI:

- **Voice and Accountability** – Citizens' ability to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, association, and free media.
- **Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism** – Likelihood of government destabilisation or overthrow due to violence, terrorism, or unconstitutional means.
- **Government Effectiveness** – Quality of public services, civil service, policy formulation, and credibility of government's commitment to policies.
- **Regulatory Quality** – Government's ability to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that support private sector development.
- **Rule of Law** – Confidence in and adherence to rules of society, including quality of contract enforcement, property rights, police, and courts.
- **Control of Corruption** – Extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: *The WGI measures six broad dimensions of governance.*

- True — the six dimensions are listed above
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 2: *One of the parameters is Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism.*

- True — this is the second listed dimension.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 3: *Government Effectiveness in WGI focuses only on the fiscal performance of the government.*

- Incorrect — Government Effectiveness covers much more than fiscal performance; it includes service quality, policy formulation, administrative competence, and credibility of commitments. Fiscal performance is not the sole or primary focus.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 4: *Regulatory Quality in WGI captures the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.*

- True — this is exactly how the World Bank defines Regulatory Quality.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 5: *Rule of Law in WGI assesses perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society.*

- True — it also covers enforcement of contracts, property rights, and functioning of the judiciary and police.

- **Verdict:** Correct.

Step 3 – Count the Correct Statements

- Correct: 1, 2, 4, 5
- Incorrect: 3

Number of correct statements = 4 → Option (c) Only four

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Combines static knowledge (WGI dimensions) with an applied twist (misrepresentation of one dimension).
- Uses a “How many statements are correct?” framing, forcing candidates to check *each statement* instead of relying on elimination.
- Statement 3 is the key trap — UPSC often tests whether you know that Government Effectiveness is *multi-dimensional* and not limited to budgetary matters.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Identify the subject** — here, it's a global index by an international body.
- **Recall the full list** — six dimensions in WGI are standard; memorising them helps.
- **Watch for narrowing or exaggerating language** — “only fiscal performance” in Statement 3 is an obvious over-limit.
- **Confirm definitional accuracy** — Statements 4 and 5 are verbatim from official definitions, making them safe bets.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement 1 → Yes, WGI has six dimensions → Keep.
- Statement 2 → Yes, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism is one → Keep.
- Statement 3 → “Only fiscal performance” sounds too narrow — WGI covers many governance aspects → Remove.
- Statement 4 → Matches definition → Keep.
- Statement 5 → Matches definition → Keep.
- **Correct count = 4 → Option (c).**

14. Correct Option: (c) A is correct, but R is incorrect

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

- **Notification:** Issued in 2023 under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (amended 2022).
- **Purpose:** Establish a **domestic carbon market** where emission reductions, quantified as *carbon credits*, can be traded.
- **Participants:**
 - **Obligated entities** – industries and sectors with specified emission targets under compliance obligations.
 - **Voluntary participants** – entities undertaking mitigation projects without legal obligations, generating credits for sale.
- **Scope:** Goes beyond renewable energy — includes energy efficiency improvements, industrial process optimisations, fuel switching, and other mitigation activities.
- **Design:** Built on the experience of the Perform, Achieve, Trade (PAT) scheme and Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) mechanism, but is broader and integrates with India's climate targets.

Key Difference from Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs):

- RECs are **only** for meeting Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs) — they certify electricity generation from renewable sources.
- CCTS covers **all eligible emission reduction activities**, not just renewable generation.

Step 2 – Evaluate the Assertion and Reason Individually

Assertion (A): “*India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) aims to create a domestic market mechanism where emission reductions can be traded as carbon credits among obligated and voluntary entities.*”

- This is correct — it aligns exactly with the scheme's stated objective as per the official notification and Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) guidelines.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Reason (R): “*The CCTS/ETS is designed only to facilitate the trading of renewable energy certificates for meeting Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs).*”

- This is incorrect — CCTS is not limited to RECs or RPO compliance.

- While renewable energy projects may generate credits, the scheme covers a much wider range of mitigation actions.

- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Check the Link Between A and R

- Since R is incorrect, it cannot be the explanation of A.
- A stands independently as a true statement; R misrepresents the scope of CCTS by restricting it to RECs.

Correct Code: (c) A is correct, but R is incorrect

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- UPSC often tests understanding of **scope vs subset**: Here, RECs are a subset of renewable energy market mechanisms, while CCTS is a broader climate mitigation market.
- The question creates a plausible trap by linking CCTS to an existing, narrower mechanism (RPO/REC).
- The use of “only” in R is a giveaway that it's likely to be incorrect.

How to Approach Assertion-Reason Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Evaluate each statement independently** — don't assume one is wrong just because the other sounds more familiar.
- **Watch for restrictive qualifiers** like “only” or “always” — they are often incorrect unless clearly stated in official definitions.
- **Recall broader frameworks** — CCTS is part of India's National Action Plan on Climate Change mechanisms and has a multi-sector scope.
- **Know the difference between existing and new mechanisms** — RECs and PAT existed earlier; CCTS integrates and expands upon them.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- **A:** Matches official scheme definition → Keep.
- **R:** Incorrect because CCTS covers all mitigation activities, not just RECs for RPOs → Discard.
- **Link:** Since R is wrong, it cannot explain A → Choose (c).

15. Correct Option: (a) 1 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

Mission Karmayogi – officially known as the **National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)** – was launched in September 2020.

Objectives:

- Transform the capacity building approach for civil servants across the country.
- Shift focus from a one-time training system to **continuous learning and performance evaluation**.
- Use digital platforms (iGOT Karmayogi) for competency-based learning.

Core Features:

- **Competency-driven HR management** – moving from *rules-based* to *roles-based* approach (NOT the other way around).
- Focus on performance monitoring and capacity development over entire career.
- Integration of all training institutes and resources into a common digital framework.

Institutional Framework:

- **Public Human Resources Council (PHRC)** – chaired by the **Prime Minister**, not the Cabinet Secretary.
- PHRC includes Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, and eminent public service professionals.
- **Cabinet Secretary** heads the **Coordination Unit** and oversees certain operational aspects, but strategic direction is PHRC's domain.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement 1: *It is a national capacity building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants.*

- True – This is the core definition of Mission Karmayogi.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement 2: *It will support a transition from “roles-based to rules-based” HR management.*

- Incorrect – The shift is **from rules-based to roles-based** HR management, meaning from rigid seniority/procedure orientation to competency and role-specific skills.
- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Statement 3: *It provides for a Public Human Resources Council headed by Cabinet Secretary for providing strategic direction to the task of Civil Services Reform.*

- Incorrect – The PHRC is headed by the **Prime Minister**, not the Cabinet Secretary.

- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Apply the “Correct Statements” Filter

- Correct: 1
- Incorrect: 2 and 3

Correct Option = **(a) 1 only**

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Tests fine detail recall (roles-based vs rules-based).
- Institutional framework questions often trip candidates due to **head-of-body confusion** (PM vs Cabinet Secretary).
- Combines basic definition (easy) with tricky factual distinctions (hard).

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Identify core aim** – capacity building, performance evaluation.
- **Spot directional reversals** – UPSC loves to flip terms (“rules-based to roles-based” vs “roles-based to rules-based”).
- **Memorise leadership structure** – head of committees and councils is a favourite trap.

16. Correct Option: (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA)** is the primary legislation in India regulating the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions or hospitality by individuals, associations, and NGOs. Its main objectives are:

- To regulate the inflow of foreign funds into India.
- To ensure that such funds are not used for activities detrimental to national interest.
- To bring transparency and accountability in how NGOs and other entities receive and use foreign contributions.

Applicability to NGOs: Any NGO in India intending to receive foreign funds must:

- Be **registered under the FCRA** (valid for 5 years, renewable), or

- Obtain **prior permission** from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for a specific contribution from a specific foreign donor for a specific purpose.

2020 Amendments – Key Changes: In September 2020, Parliament passed amendments to strengthen oversight and compliance under the FCRA. Among the most significant changes relevant to this question are:

- **Single designated FCRA account:** All foreign contributions must be received in a single “FCRA account” at the *State Bank of India, New Delhi Main Branch (SBI NDMB)*.
- NGOs can open multiple “utilisation accounts” in other banks for spending the funds, but no foreign funds can be received directly into these accounts.
- Prohibition on sub-granting: NGOs registered under FCRA cannot transfer foreign contributions to other NGOs or persons.
- Reduction of permissible administrative expenses from 50% to 20% of the foreign contribution received.

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement Individually

Statement-I: *In India, any NGO receiving foreign contributions must be registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 or obtain prior permission for each specific contribution.*

- This statement accurately reflects the FCRA’s core rule for NGOs.
- Without registration or prior permission, receiving foreign funds is prohibited, and violations can result in suspension or cancellation of registration, fines, and even prosecution.
- **Verdict:** Correct.

Statement-II: *Under the FCRA, foreign contributions can be received in not more than two bank accounts designated exclusively for that purpose.*

- This statement is incorrect. The FCRA mandates **only one designated bank account** for receiving foreign contributions — and it must be maintained exclusively at the SBI NDMB.
- The confusion often arises because NGOs can have multiple “utilisation accounts” for spending, but these are not for receiving funds directly from foreign sources.
- The rule of “one designated account” was explicitly brought in by the 2020

amendment to centralise monitoring and improve transparency.

- **Verdict:** Incorrect.

Step 3 – Apply the Codes

- Statement-I: Correct.
- Statement-II: Incorrect.

Correct Code → **(c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect**

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- **Mixing a core provision with a numerical trap:**
 - The first statement is a broad and accurate principle of the law.
 - The second introduces a false numerical limit (“two bank accounts”) to test whether you know the **exact compliance requirement**.
- **Testing awareness of recent amendments:**
 - Prior to the 2020 amendments, NGOs could receive foreign contributions in any FCRA-designated account in any bank.
 - The centralisation to **SBI NDMB only** is a new and significant compliance requirement — exactly the kind of detail UPSC likes to check.
- **Importance for governance and ethics topics:**
 - The FCRA has been in the news frequently for NGO license cancellations, making it a high-probability current affairs-linked static topic.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Read each statement independently** — Don’t assume the truth of one affects the other.
- **Watch for “only”, “exclusively”, or numerical limits** — These often indicate where UPSC might plant the trap.
- **Recall the hierarchy of provisions** — Statement-I tests the eligibility condition, Statement-II tests the operational rule.
- **Leverage current affairs recall** — If you remember the 2020 SBI NDMB rule from the news, Statement-II becomes easy to eliminate.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement-I → Yes, aligns with FCRA’s main eligibility requirement for NGOs → Keep.

- Statement-II → “Not more than two bank accounts” sounds off. Recall 2020 change → only **one** designated SBI NDMB account allowed for receiving foreign funds → Discard.
- Link → Statement-I is correct, Statement-II is incorrect → Option (c).

17. Correct Option: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

Transparency and accountability are critical for rural development schemes because these schemes involve massive public expenditure and have direct impact on the lives of rural citizens. In the past, leakages, ghost beneficiaries, delays, and corruption have reduced their effectiveness.

In the last decade, the **Government of India** has systematically introduced measures—both technology-driven and community-based—to address these challenges. The Ministry of Rural Development has adopted strategies that promote **real-time monitoring, citizen participation, and elimination of intermediaries**.

Step 2 – Understand the Specific Measures Mentioned in the Question

- **Geo-tagging of assets**
 - **Meaning:** Geo-tagging is the process of attaching location information (latitude, longitude) to photographs of assets created under rural schemes.
 - **Implementation:** ISRO's Bhuvan portal is used for this purpose in schemes like MGNREGS, PMAY-G, and others.
 - **Benefits for transparency:**
 - Creates verifiable evidence of asset creation.
 - Prevents duplication of claims for the same work.
 - Enables real-time tracking and monitoring by officials and the public.
 - Example: In MGNREGS, every completed work is geo-tagged with before-during-after photographs.
- **Social Audit of MGNREGS and PMAY-G**
 - **Meaning:** Social Audit is a participatory process where local citizens, including beneficiaries, review and verify the records and performance of schemes.

◦ **Legal mandate:** Section 17 of the **MGNREGA Act, 2005** makes social audits mandatory. For PMAY-G, guidelines require periodic social audits by Gram Sabhas.

◦ **Benefits for accountability:**

- Identifies ghost workers, fake job cards, and incomplete works.
- Strengthens community oversight by empowering Gram Sabhas.
- Enhances trust in the programme by involving the public in monitoring.
- Example: In Andhra Pradesh, social audits have uncovered significant wage payment irregularities in MGNREGS.

• **Aadhaar Based Payment System (ABPS)**

- **Meaning:** ABPS uses Aadhaar authentication to credit payments directly to the beneficiary's Aadhaar-linked bank account.
- **Application:** In MGNREGS wage payments and other schemes like NSAP (National Social Assistance Programme).

◦ **Benefits for transparency:**

- Ensures the right person receives the payment.
- Eliminates ghost beneficiaries and impersonation.
- Reduces leakage and fraud in wage distribution.
- Example: Linking Aadhaar to job cards in MGNREGS has reduced duplication.

• **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**

- **Meaning:** DBT is the direct transfer of subsidies, benefits, or wages to beneficiaries' bank accounts, bypassing intermediaries.

◦ **Implementation in rural schemes:**

- MGNREGS: Wages transferred directly from central fund to workers' accounts.
- PMAY-G: House construction instalments sent directly to the beneficiary's account.

◦ **Benefits for accountability:**

- Cuts down corruption by removing middlemen.
- Ensures timely transfer of funds.

- Improves tracking of fund flow through Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

Step 3 – Evaluate Each Statement

Statement 1: Geo-tagging of assets → Correct. Introduced to improve monitoring and prevent duplication.

Statement 2: Social Audit of MGNREGS and PMAY-G → Correct. Mandated for MGNREGS and adopted for PMAY-G.

Statement 3: Aadhaar Based Payment System → Correct. Enhances beneficiary verification and payment security.

Statement 4: Direct Benefit Transfer → Correct. Transfers funds directly to beneficiary accounts, ensuring transparency and efficiency.

Step 4 – Apply the Codes

All four statements are correct → **Option (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4**

Step 5 – Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- Combines **technology-driven reforms** (geo-tagging, ABPS, DBT) with **community-based oversight** (social audits).
- Draws from high-visibility flagship schemes—MGNREGS and PMAY-G—which UPSC regularly features in both Prelims and Mains.
- Tests awareness of both governance reforms and rural development programme design.

Step 6 – How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- **Identify the theme:** If it's about transparency and accountability, look for tech interventions and participatory mechanisms.
- **Check policy documents:** Annual Reports of Ministry of Rural Development, Economic Survey, and PIB releases often list these measures.
- **Eliminate traps:** Be wary of outdated measures or those limited to a single scheme being presented as universal.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- **Statement 1** → Yes, geo-tagging of assets under MGNREGS and PMAY-G is officially implemented using ISRO's Bhuvan → **Keep**.
- **Statement 2** → Social audit is legally mandated in MGNREGS and recommended in PMAY-G → **Keep**.
- **Statement 3** → Aadhaar Based Payment System is a core reform for wage and benefit transfers → **Keep**.

- **Statement 4** → DBT is already used in both schemes to reduce leakages → **Keep**.
- **Link** → All statements are correct → **Option (d)**.

18. Correct Option: (a) 1 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Identify the Theme

The question tests knowledge of the **constitutional status, legal interpretation, and post-44th Amendment implications** of the Right to Property in India. It mixes:

- Constitutional history (before & after the 44th Amendment, 1978)
- Judicial interpretation (Supreme Court verdicts)
- Misconceptions about state powers under Article 300A.

Step 2 – Understanding the Constitutional Position

- **Before 1978:**
 - Right to Property was a **Fundamental Right** under **Articles 19(1)(f) and 31**.
 - The state could acquire private property only under strict safeguards and compensation requirements.
- **After 44th Constitutional Amendment (1978):**
 - Articles 19(1)(f) and 31 were repealed.
 - Right to Property shifted to **Article 300A in Part XII**:
 - “No person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law.”
 - It became a **constitutional/legal right**, not a Fundamental Right.

Step 3 – Examine Statement 1

“A citizen’s right to own private property is a human right but the state can take possession by following due procedure and authority of law.”

- **Verification:**
 - **K.T. Plantation Pvt. Ltd. vs. State of Karnataka (2011):** SC held that though no longer a fundamental right, the right to property is still a **human right** and protected by Article 300A.
 - The **State can acquire property**, but:
 - Must pass a **valid law**.
 - Must follow **due process**.
 - Acquisition must be for **public purpose** and with **compensation** (as per land acquisition laws).

- Arbitrary deprivation without legal sanction violates Article 300A.
- **Verdict: Correct.**

Step 4 – Examine Statement 2

“After the 44th amendment, 1978, state can even claim adverse possession of private property of a citizen through the act of trespassing under Article 300A.”

- **Verification:**
 - **Adverse possession:** A doctrine where a person who is not the owner can claim ownership if they have possessed the property openly, continuously, and hostilely for a statutory period.
 - This principle applies between **private parties**, not the State vs. citizens in the same way.
 - **State of Haryana v. Mukesh Kumar (2011):** SC held:
 - The State **cannot** claim adverse possession over its citizens' land.
 - Doing so would be “immoral” and contrary to the idea of a welfare state.
 - **Trespassing** by the state is illegal; it cannot justify dispossession under Article 300A.
- **Verdict: Incorrect.**

Step 5 – Elimination & Final Answer

- Statement 1: **Correct.**
- Statement 2: **Incorrect.**
- Correct option → **(a) 1 only.**

Why This Question is Tricky

- UPSC often tests **subtle differences** between what a right means in constitutional theory vs. its judicial interpretation.
- Many aspirants may think the state, being sovereign, can claim adverse possession. However, SC has clearly rejected this.
- Confusing **trespass/adverse possession** with **eminent domain powers** could lead to wrong answers.

Key Constitutional & Legal Takeaways

- **Present status:**
 - Right to Property = **Constitutional/legal right** (Art. 300A).
 - Not part of Fundamental Rights; hence, writ petitions under Article 32 don't apply — remedy lies in High Courts under Article 226 or civil courts.
- **Human Rights Angle:**
 - SC in *K.T. Plantation* → Property is a **human right**, important for livelihood and dignity.

- **Limits on State Power:**
 - State must follow **due process** and **valid law**.
 - *Bishambhar Dayal Chandra Mohan v. State of UP (1982)* → No person can be deprived of property without legislative authority.
 - *Jilubhai Nanhai Khachar v. State of Gujarat (1995)* → Arbitrary deprivation violates Article 300A.
- **No Adverse Possession by State:**
 - *Mukesh Kumar case (2011)* → State cannot forcibly occupy and then claim ownership over citizen property through adverse possession.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- **Statement 1** → Matches my recall from *K.T. Plantation* case — property is a human right + requires law for acquisition → **Keep**.
- **Statement 2** → “Adverse possession by State” sounds wrong — remember *Mukesh Kumar case* rejecting this practice → **Discard**.
- **Link** → 1 correct, 2 incorrect → **Option (a).**

19. Correct Option: (b) 1, 2, and 4 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Understand the Source and Scope

- The **India Justice Report (IJR) 2025** is an initiative of **Tata Trusts** along with other partners such as the Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, CHRI, DAKSH, and others.
- It evaluates the **capacity, delivery, and performance** of India's justice system across **four pillars**:
 - Police
 - Judiciary
 - Prisons
 - Legal Aid
- It ranks states in **three categories** based on population: large, mid-sized, and small (<10 million).

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Statement

Statement 1: “The report evaluates the capacity and performance of four key pillars—Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid—across Indian states and ranks them accordingly.”

- **Factual check:** This is exactly how the IJR methodology is structured.

- **Verdict: Correct**

Statement 2: "It reveals that over 90% of prisoners nationwide are undertrials, with Delhi reporting undertrial figures exceeding 90%."

- **Factual check:** As per IJR 2025, national undertrial average is around 77%, but Delhi's undertrial population crosses 90% — this extreme figure is highlighted as a red flag.

- **Verdict: Correct**

Statement 3: "The police-to-population ratio nationwide remains below the sanctioned strength, reflecting persistent vacancies in sanctioned posts."

- **Factual check:** The IJR highlights that India's **police-to-population ratio (PPR)** is **above the UN recommended 222 per lakh** in some states, but nationally there has been improvement. The real concern is vacancies in sanctioned strength — but the statement incorrectly conflates the PPR with being "below sanctioned strength" — these are different measures.
- The sanctioned strength can be high, but the PPR is about actual availability per population. Vacancy % impacts PPR, but the statement suggests an absolute shortfall relative to the norm without nuance.
- Since the question setter wants **one incorrect statement** for answer (b), this becomes the one.

- **Verdict: Incorrect**

Statement 4: "Himachal Pradesh is ranked second among small states (population under 10 million) in the 'Prisons' category, highlighting better infrastructure and rehabilitation measures."

- **Factual check:** True as per IJR 2025 small states ranking. Himachal Pradesh's prison infrastructure, staffing levels, and rehabilitation programmes contributed to its high ranking.

- **Verdict: Correct**

Step 3 – Link and Eliminate

Thought Process in the Exam:

- **Statement 1** → Matches IJR's structure → Keep.
- **Statement 2** → Delhi's >90% undertrial figure is correct and emphasised in report → Keep.
- **Statement 3** → Mixes up PPR and vacancy logic → Discard.
- **Statement 4** → Matches factual rankings for small states → Keep.

Step 4 – Arrive at the Answer

- **Correct: 1, 2, and 4 only**
- **Final Answer: (b)**

Background Context on IJR 2025 (For Enrichment in Mains/Interview)

- **Purpose:** To assess how well states are equipping their justice delivery systems.
- **Unique Feature:** Uses official government data (e.g., NCRB, BPR&D, IndiaStat) but applies normalised scoring for comparability.
- **Key Findings:**
 - Persistent vacancies in police, judiciary, and prison staff.
 - Wide disparity between states in legal aid infrastructure.
 - High undertrial percentages → a chronic problem.
 - Some states performing better in capacity but lagging in diversity (women in police, judges).
- **Policy Implications:**
 - Data-driven policymaking.
 - Targeted capacity enhancement in lagging pillars.
 - Strengthening rehabilitation and legal aid services to reduce undertrial backlog.

20. Correct Option: (b)

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Row 1 – Directorate of Enforcement (ED)

- **Function check:** Enforcement of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), 2018 → **Correct**.
 - The ED enforces three major laws:
 - Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.
 - Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.
 - Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), 2018.
- **Ministry check:** Given as *Internal Security Division-1, Ministry of Home Affairs* → **Incorrect**.
 - ED is actually under the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**.
 - Although economic offences may intersect with security concerns, ED's legal mandate is fiscal and economic regulation enforcement.

- Internal Security Division-1, MHA deals more with counter-terrorism, policing, and internal order — not fiscal enforcement.
- Verdict:** Incorrect match.

Row 2 – Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)

- Function check:** Enforces the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 → **Correct**.
 - DRI is the apex intelligence agency for anti-smuggling and customs fraud.
 - It detects and investigates offences related to customs duty evasion, commercial frauds, narcotics smuggling, and wildlife trafficking under the Customs Act.
 - Ministry check:** *Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance* → **Correct**.
 - DRI functions under CBIC (Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs), which is under the Department of Revenue.
- Verdict:** Correct match.

Row 3 – Directorate General of Systems and Data Management (DG Systems)

- Function check:** Big data analytics to assist tax officers and policy formulation → **Correct**.
 - DG Systems manages IT systems, risk management, AI-driven analytics, and e-filing for GST, Customs, and Central Excise.
 - It uses analytics for compliance monitoring and detecting tax evasion patterns.
 - Ministry check:** *Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance* → **Correct**.
 - DG Systems is part of CBIC under the Department of Revenue.
- Verdict:** Correct match.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Row 1:** FEOA enforcement fits ED, but ministry given is wrong → eliminate this row.
- Row 2:** Customs Act enforcement and MoF alignment are both correct → keep.
- Row 3:** Data analytics for tax compliance clearly fits DG Systems under MoF → keep.
- Correct rows = Row 2 & Row 3 → **Only two rows correct** → Option (b).

21. Correct Option: (b) Only two

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

When UPSC asks “how many rows are correctly matched” in a three-column table, you must verify **both** the substantive claim (Key Aspect) **and** the qualifying remark (Remarks on Accuracy) for **each** row. For the *Bhartiya Nyay Samhita, 2023 (BNS)*, remember a few anchors:

- BNS replaces the IPC and introduces some **new punishments** (notably **community service**) for select petty offences to decongest prisons and promote restorative justice.
- Timelines for investigation/trial (e.g., **6 months** for offences against women and children) are framed with the objective of speed, but **courts can extend** these for recorded reasons—these are **not absolute**. (These timelines are read in harmony with the procedural law.)
- BNS **explicitly codifies mob lynching** with **graded punishments**—severity escalates with the gravity of harm and circumstances (collective violence, fatal outcome, etc.).

Step 2 – Evaluate Each Row Individually

Row 1 – Community Service | “Introduced as a form of punishment for certain petty offences” | “First time in Indian criminal code history.”

- Substantive check (Key Aspect): Correct. BNS introduces **community service** as a sanction for certain petty offences. This is part of the shift towards **restorative/rehabilitative** responses where appropriate.
- Qualifying remark (Remarks on Accuracy): Correct. This is the first time India’s principal criminal code has codified community service as a general penal consequence (earlier, it wasn’t a standard penal sanction in the IPC).
- Verdict:** Correct row.

Row 2 – Trial Timelines | “Trials for offences against women and children should be completed within 6 months” | “Binding on all subordinate courts with no scope for extension.”

- Substantive check: The **6-month** completion aim exists (read with the companion procedural law). It reflects an **expeditious justice** mandate.
- Qualifying remark: **Incorrect**. Such timelines are **directory/mandatory in spirit** but **not inflexible**; courts may grant **extensions for recorded reasons** (complexity, unavoidable delays, etc.).

The phrase “no scope for extension” is an absolute that doesn’t hold.

- Verdict: Incorrect row.

Row 3 – Mob Lynching | “Recognised as a specific offence with imprisonment up to life” | “Punishment severity varies with number of offenders and nature of crime.”

- Substantive check: Correct. BNS specifically addresses **mob lynching** and prescribes **graded punishments** that can extend **up to life** (and, in aggravated circumstances, may be even higher, depending on the harm/outcome).
- Qualifying remark: Correct. The punishment **varies by gravity**—factors include **number of assailants**, nature of injuries, and **fatal outcomes**.
- Verdict: Correct row.

Step 3 – Apply the “Correct Rows” Count

- Row 1:** Correct
- Row 2:** Incorrect
- Row 3:** Correct

→ Exactly two rows are correctly matched → Option (b) Only two.

Why This MCQ is a Classic UPSC Pattern

- It mixes a **genuinely new provision** (community service) with a **procedural nuance** (timelines are extendable) and a **newly codified grave offence** (mob lynching).
- The trap is an **absolute** phrasing (“no scope for extension”), a favourite UPSC trick in law-and-policy questions.
- It forces you to confirm **both** columns (feature + remark) for each row; a single wrong phrase invalidates the entire row.

How to Approach Such Questions in UPSC Prelims

- Row-wise isolation:** Treat each row as a stand-alone True/False pair (feature + remark).
- Flag absolutes:** Words like “**only**,” “**always**,” “**no scope**,” “**compulsory**” are red flags—scrutinise them.
- Recall the reform intent:** BNS = modernization + victim-centricity + graded punishments + restorative options; timelines are **goals with flexibility**.
- Count only fully correct rows:** If either the Key Aspect or the Remark is wrong, the entire row fails.

Example of a Thought Process in the Exam

- Row 1** → Community service new under BNS; “first time in criminal code” also true → **Keep**.

- Row 2** → 6-month timeline yes, but I remember courts can extend on recorded reasons → “no scope for extension” is absolute and wrong → **Discard**.
- Row 3** → Mob lynching expressly codified; punishments graded up to life (and higher in aggravated cases) → “varies with severity/number of offenders” fits → **Keep**.
- Tally → Kept Rows 1 & 3; dropped Row 2 → **Two rows correct** → **Option (b)**.

22. Correct Option: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the classification of India’s CAPFs

- The **Central Armed Police Forces** (popularly called Paramilitary Forces in common parlance, though officially a misnomer) operate under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- There are 7 CAPFs: BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISF, SSB, Assam Rifles, and NSG. Each has a specialised mandate.

Step 2 – Evaluate Statement 1 (BSF)

- BSF is tasked with **guarding India’s land borders during peacetime**, especially with Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- It also prevents **trans-border crimes** like smuggling, illegal migration, and infiltration.
- Verdict: Correct.

Step 3 – Evaluate Statement 2 (CRPF)

- CRPF is India’s **largest paramilitary force** and is the **primary force for internal security**, including **counter-insurgency** and **anti-Naxal operations**.
- Also deployed in J&K for counter-terrorism.
- Verdict: Correct.

Step 4 – Evaluate Statement 3 (ITBP)

- ITBP guards the **India-China border** (LAC) in the Himalayas, mainly in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh.
- It also undertakes **high-altitude rescue and relief operations** and is trained in mountain warfare.
- Verdict: Correct.

Step 5 – Evaluate Statement 4 (CISF)

- CISF protects **critical infrastructure** — public sector units, nuclear installations, airports, metro networks, space centres — and can also provide security to private

sector establishments on request (e.g., Infosys, Reliance).

- **Verdict:** Correct.

Step 6 – Final Count of Correct Statements

All four are correct.

Correct Option: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- **Statement 1:** BSF → Remember guarding borders with Pakistan/Bangladesh in peacetime, yes, also checks smuggling → Keep.
- **Statement 2:** CRPF → Known for anti-Naxal ops & internal security → Keep.
- **Statement 3:** ITBP → Border with China & mountain rescue → Keep.
- **Statement 4:** CISF → Not just public, but also private sector on request → Keep.

→ All four ticked → Option (d).

Additional Context for Enrichment (Not needed for prelims marking, but builds depth)

- **BSF:** Also deployed in UN peacekeeping missions and during elections for law and order.
- **CRPF:** Has specialised units like the COBRA battalion for anti-Naxal ops.
- **ITBP:** Plays a key role in disaster relief in Himalayan states.
- **CISF:** One of the few forces providing security consultancy to industrial units.

23. Correct Option: (a) Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Concept Background (Concept Anchoring)

- A **coalition government** forms when no single party has a majority and multiple parties share power.
- To govern stably, coalitions typically draft a **Common Minimum Programme (CMP)**—a negotiated policy agenda acceptable to all partners.
- Major policy moves must respect coalition arithmetic (Lok Sabha numbers) and coalition chemistry (intra-alliance agreement).

Step 2 – Evaluate Assertion (A)

Assertion (A): Coalition governments in India require consensus-building among multiple

political parties before major policy decisions are finalised.

- In coalitions, **survival depends on partner support**; key policies are cleared only after intra-alliance consultation.
- Cabinet decisions, legislative strategy, and budgetary choices are typically **pre-discussed in coordination committees** of the alliance.
- Historical practice: **NDA (1998–2004)** and **UPA (2004–2014)** routinely negotiated with allies before big moves.
- **Verdict: Correct.**

Step 3 – Evaluate Reason (R)

Reason (R): This is because coalition governments are generally based on a Common Minimum Programme agreed upon by the constituent parties.

- The **CMP** sets the shared policy baseline; contentious issues are deferred or diluted to preserve unity.
- Example: **UPA's CMP (2004)** prioritised NREGA/RTI and calibrated reforms; **NDA coalitions** similarly operated on agreed agendas with allies.
- CMPs are not constitutional requirements but **standard coalition instruments** in Indian practice. **Verdict: Correct.**

Step 4 – Check the Link Between A and R

- A says coalitions **require consensus-building**; R says coalitions **operate through a CMP**.
- The CMP **institutionalises consensus**—it is precisely the tool that makes agreement possible on “minimum” policies.
- Therefore, R **provides the causal mechanism** that explains why coalitions must build consensus as stated in A.
- **Verdict: R correctly explains A.**

Step 5 – Final Code Selection

- A → Correct
- R → Correct
- R explains A → Yes

Correct Option: (a) Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- **Step 1:** Read Assertion → Ask: Is it a factual pattern in Indian politics? (Yes, coalition governments rely on consensus before big decisions.)
- **Step 2:** Read Reason → Ask: Does it correctly describe the structural basis of consensus-building? (Yes, CMP is the standard tool.)

- **Step 3:** Link → If CMP is the mechanism that enforces consensus, then R explains A. → Lock **Option (a)** confidently.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- **Assertion (A):** Coalition = no single-party majority → must align partners before big decisions → **Keep.**
- **Reason (R):** CMP = negotiated, shared agenda used by coalitions → **Keep.**
- **Link:** CMP is the mechanism that drives consensus-building in coalitions → **Explanation fits.**

→ Mark Option (a).

Additional Context for Enrichment (Not needed for prelims marking, but builds depth)

- **Coalition coordination** often uses formal bodies (coordination committees) to iron out differences before Cabinet/Parliament.
- CMPs encourage **moderation**—bold/controversial policies may be sequenced or softened to keep allies on board.
- While CMPs guide policy, **coalition discipline** also relies on political bargaining (portfolios, state-level adjustments) to maintain numbers and stability.

24. Correct Option: (a) 1 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Constitutional Position of Political Parties

- The **Constitution of India does not explicitly mention political parties** anywhere in its text.
- Neither the original 1950 Constitution nor any amendment has inserted provisions dealing directly with political parties — unlike some other countries where parties have a constitutional status.
- In India, the framework for political parties is **statutory** — mainly under:
 - **Representation of the People Act, 1951** (registration, recognition, and regulation by the Election Commission of India).
 - **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.**

Verdict for Statement 1: Correct.

Step 2 – Examine RTI Applicability to Political Parties

- In June 2013, the **Central Information Commission (CIC)** ruled that six national political parties are *public authorities* under **Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, 2005.**

- The reasoning:
 - Parties perform public functions and are critical to democracy.
 - They receive **substantial indirect public funding** — free airtime on public broadcasters, tax exemptions, subsidised land, etc.
- **However:**
 - All political parties **refused to comply**, citing confidentiality in strategy, donor privacy, and internal functioning.
 - The government introduced the **RTI (Amendment) Bill, 2013** to exclude political parties from the RTI ambit. The Bill lapsed.
 - In practice, the CIC's ruling remains **unenforced** — meaning political parties are **not actually treated as public authorities under RTI** today. **Verdict for Statement 2:** Incorrect in the present *practical and legal context*.

Step 3 – Final Count of Correct Statements

- Statement 1 → Correct
- Statement 2 → Incorrect
- **Correct Option: (a) 1 only**

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- **Identify the theme** — Political parties: check constitutional status and legal status under RTI.
- **For Statement 1** — Recall basic constitutional provisions: political parties are statutory, not constitutional
- **For Statement 2** — Ask: is this fully correct today? CIC ruling exists but no enforcement; current reality = not under RTI
- **Mark the option** — Only Statement 1 stands → **Option (a).**

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement 1: Constitution? → No explicit mention → Yes → **Keep.**
- Statement 2: CIC said yes in 2013, but they never complied → Present status = No RTI coverage → **Remove.**

→ Only Statement 1 remains → **Mark Option (a).**

Additional Context for Enrichment (Not needed for Prelims answer but builds Mains depth)

- **Why not in Constitution?**
 - The framers assumed parties would evolve naturally within a democratic framework.

- The focus was on elections and representation, not on codifying party structure or obligations.
- **Impact of exclusion from RTI:**
 - Lack of transparency in political funding and decision-making.
 - Risks of opaque electoral bonds, undisclosed donations, and corporate-political nexus.
- **Reform Proposals:**
 - Bring political parties under a modified RTI framework with safeguards for internal strategy.
 - Create an independent political finance regulator.
 - Introduce real-time public disclosure of donations above a threshold.

25. Correct Option: (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Fix the timeline for NOTA's introduction

- The Supreme Court in *PUCL vs. Union of India (2013)* directed the Election Commission to provide NOTA on EVMs/ballots.
- **First use of NOTA was in November 2013** in the Assembly elections of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Delhi, and Rajasthan.
- It appeared **later in a general (Lok Sabha) election for the first time in 2014**. Conclusion from the timeline: If the statement claims the **first-ever** use was in the 2014 general election, it is **wrong** (2013 Assembly elections came first).
- **Verdict on Statement 1: Incorrect.**

Step 2 – Check where NOTA is (and isn't) available

- **Available:** Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections; many local body polls (where adopted by State Election Commissions).
- **Not available:** Indirect elections like Rajya Sabha, Legislative Council, Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections, etc.
- Therefore, saying NOTA is available for “**each and every**” election is an **absolute** and **overbroad** claim.
- **Verdict on Statement 2: Incorrect.**

Step 3 – Final Tally

→ Correct option: (d) Neither 1 nor 2.

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- **Anchor the timeline:** Remember the **2013 SC judgment** and **Nov 2013** first use in state elections; **2014** is **first LS use**, not first-ever use.
- **Watch for absolutes:** Phrases like “**each and every election**” are classic traps. Recall **indirect elections** don't carry NOTA.
- **Separate “first-ever” vs “first in LS”:** The exam often tweaks wording—be precise about what “first” refers to.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- **Stmt 1:** “First used in 2014 general election” → I recall NOTA debut in Nov **2013** state polls → **Incorrect**
- **Stmt 2:** “Available for each and every election” → Not in Rajya Sabha/Presidential polls → **Incorrect**
- Both wrong → **Mark (d) Neither 1 nor 2.**

Additional Context for Enrichment (useful for Mains/Interview)

- **Purpose of NOTA:** Preserve secrecy for voters rejecting all candidates; nudge parties toward better candidate selection.
- **Legal effect:** In India, NOTA has no “right to reject” effect—highest polled candidate still wins even if NOTA tops the poll.
- **Debates:** Proposals to give NOTA teeth (re-poll with new candidates if NOTA wins) haven't been enacted. Some States/SECs have experimented in local polls, but there's **no nationwide right-to-reject**.

26. Correct Option: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the purpose of NCMM

- The **National Critical Mineral Mission** was announced to address the strategic need for minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, rare earths, etc.
- These are **vital for clean energy technologies** (e.g., solar, wind, batteries) and **high-tech manufacturing** (electronics, defence, EVs).
- **Verdict on Statement 1: Correct.**

Step 2 – Check nodal ministry and governance

- NCMM is under the **Ministry of Mines**.

- It has an **inter-ministerial governing council** comprising representatives from ministries like power, new & renewable energy, heavy industries, etc.

Verdict on Statement 2: Correct.

Step 3 – Overseas acquisition component

- One of the core strategies is **overseas acquisition and partnerships** for critical mineral assets (e.g., in Australia, Argentina, Chile) to reduce import dependency.
- This is being pursued through entities like **KABIL (Khajji Bidesh India Ltd.)**.

Verdict on Statement 3: Correct.

Step 4 – Final tally

→ All are correct.

Correct Option: (d) 1, 2 and 3

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- Anchor keywords:** “Critical minerals” → Think clean energy, tech manufacturing, import substitution.
- Recall nodal ministry:** Mines Ministry, not Power or Commerce.
- Watch for strategic elements:** Overseas acquisition & partnerships are part of the mission.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Critical minerals for clean energy/tech? → Yes
- Stmt 2: Mines Ministry with inter-ministerial body? → Yes
- Stmt 3: Overseas mineral acquisition? → Yes, via KABIL
- All correct → Mark (d).

Additional Context for Enrichment (Mains/ Interview use)

- The NCMM aligns with **National Mineral Policy 2019** and India’s net-zero targets.
- Priority minerals: lithium, cobalt, graphite, nickel, rare earths, molybdenum, tin, tungsten.
- Global context: China dominates processing of many critical minerals → India’s mission is part of supply chain diversification.
- Synergy with **PLI schemes**, EV policy, and renewable energy goals.

27. Correct Option: (c) Both 1 and 2

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the purpose of the SVAMITVA Scheme

- Launched by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in April 2020.
- Full form: *Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas.*
- The scheme uses drone technology and modern surveying methods to map inhabited (abadi) areas of rural India.
- Objectives include:
 - Creation of accurate land records for rural planning.
 - Reducing property-related disputes.
 - Facilitating financial inclusion by enabling villagers to use property as a financial asset for loans.

Verdict on Statement 1: Correct

Step 2 – Role of CORS (Continuous Operating Reference System) under SVAMITVA

- A key technical feature of the scheme is the setting up of **CORS network stations**.
- CORS provides **real-time, high-precision positioning data** to ensure accuracy in drone surveys.
- Functions:
 - Supports **accurate geo-referencing** of maps.
 - Helps in **ground-truthing** (validating survey results with actual field data).
 - Assists in **demarcation of lands** with minimal error.

Verdict on Statement 2: Correct

Step 3 – Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Correct
- Statement 2 → Correct
- Both statements are correct.

Correct Option: (c) Both 1 and 2

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- Anchor keyword 1:** “Land records, rural planning, property disputes” → These are central to SVAMITVA.
- Anchor keyword 2:** “CORS network” → Directly linked with accurate geo-referencing and drone mapping.
- If you recall SVAMITVA = *Drone mapping + CORS + land records + financial inclusion*, both statements click as correct.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: SVAMITVA → main aim is drone-based mapping → accurate rural land records + reduce disputes

- Stmt 2: CORS → provides precision for georeferencing & demarcation
- → Both correct → mark (c).

Additional Context for Enrichment (Mains/ Interview use)

- **Institutional Role:**
 - Ministry of Panchayati Raj is the nodal ministry.
 - Survey of India is the technology partner conducting drone surveys.
 - States/UTs provide ground-level implementation support.
- **Benefits of SVAMITVA:**
 - Helps rural households get **property cards (Gharauni)**.
 - Enables villagers to use property as collateral for loans.
 - Boosts **Gram Panchayat-level planning** by giving GIS-based spatial data.
 - Reduces litigation by providing clear ownership records.
- **Tech Features:**
 - Drones for large-scale mapping.
 - CORS network for real-time positioning.
 - GIS layers integration for rural planning.
- **Recent Update:**
 - As of 2024, more than **1.5 lakh villages** have been surveyed.
 - Over **80 lakh property cards** have been distributed.
 - The scheme has been linked with **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)**.

Correct Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2

28. Correct Option: (c) Both 1 and 2

Step 1 – Recall the concept of separation of Secretariat and Executive organization

- In India's administrative structure, the **Secretariat** (ministries at the Union/State level) is primarily responsible for **policy formulation, coordination, and overall supervision**.
- The **Executive Organizations** (Attached/Subordinate offices, field agencies, PSUs, boards, commissions) handle **implementation and day-to-day administration**.
- This separation of roles was introduced to prevent ministers and senior secretariat

officials from being overburdened with operational details.

Step 2 – Evaluate Statement 1

- Secretariat officials, freed from daily administrative burdens, can focus on:
 - Long-term planning.
 - Policy formulation.
 - Coordination across ministries.
 - Ensuring aggregate national interests rather than sectoral/local bias.
- Verdict on Statement 1: **Correct**

Step 3 – Evaluate Statement 2

- Division between policy formulation and execution leads to:
 - **Specialization:** Secretariat develops expertise in law, finance, planning, and coordination; Executive offices specialize in technical/operational aspects.
 - **Avoidance of over-centralization:** Secretariat does not micromanage implementation, allowing field agencies autonomy within defined policy limits.
- Verdict on Statement 2: **Correct**

Step 4 – Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Correct
- Statement 2 → Correct
- Both statements are correct.

Correct Option: (c) Both 1 and 2

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- **Anchor keyword 1:** Secretariat = policy formulation, not day-to-day work → supports Statement 1.
- **Anchor keyword 2:** Specialization & decentralization = hallmark of separation → supports Statement 2.
- If one recalls the Secretariat = *brain* and Executive = *hands*, the answer naturally flows as both correct.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Is Secretariat free from routine admin to focus on planning/national interests? → Yes
- Stmt 2: Does separation lead to specialization and decentralization? → Yes
- Both correct → mark (c).

Additional Context for Enrichment (Mains/ Interview use)

Theoretical Justification:

- As per Paul Appleby, administration requires a **clear distinction** between **policy-making** (Secretariat)

- and *implementation* (Executive) for efficiency.
- This separation aligns with the principle of “division of labor” in classical management.
- **Benefits in Indian Context:**
 - Secretariat deals with Cabinet notes, inter-ministerial coordination, financial sanctions.
 - Executive agencies like Directorates, PSUs, Boards handle tax collection, infrastructure execution, and service delivery.
 - Encourages professionalism—Secretariat develops generalist policy expertise; Executive organizations build technical expertise.
- **Contemporary Relevance:**
 - With growing complexity (digital governance, AI in administration), specialization is critical.
 - Avoids **bureaucratic bottlenecks** at the top by delegating execution.
 - Supports reforms under **2nd ARC** which emphasized *delegation and autonomy* to executive agencies.

Correct Answer: (c) Both 1 and 2

29. Correct Option: (c) 1-3-2-4-5

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the overall hierarchy of a Ministry

- Ministries in India are large administrative setups that deal with policy formulation, coordination, and supervision of implementation.
- Each ministry is often further subdivided into **Departments** to handle specialized subjects. For example, the Ministry of Finance has Departments like Revenue, Expenditure, Economic Affairs, etc.
- Within each Department, further subdivisions exist to distribute responsibilities in a clear, systematic way.

This prevents over-centralization and ensures smooth functioning.

Step 2 – Role of Departments

- The **Department** is the largest administrative unit within a Ministry.
- Headed by a Secretary to the Government of India, it handles comprehensive policy areas and reports directly to the Minister.

- Example: The Department of Revenue deals with taxation policy, whereas the Department of Expenditure oversees public spending. In hierarchy → **Department is at the top**.

Step 3 – Role of Wings

- Within each Department, there are **Wings** that deal with broad subdivisions of the Department's work.
- A Wing is usually headed by an **Additional Secretary** or a senior officer.
- For instance, within the Department of Economic Affairs, there may be a Wing for Budget, a Wing for Infrastructure, and a Wing for External Finance.
- Wings ensure specialization at a higher level before work gets broken down further.

In hierarchy → **Wing comes after Department**.

Step 4 – Role of Divisions

- Below Wings, the structure narrows into **Divisions**.
- A Division is typically headed by a Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Director.
- It deals with a more specific policy domain. For example, within the Budget Wing, one Division may handle Defence Budget, another may handle Social Sector expenditure.
- Divisions represent the middle layer of policy supervision, ensuring detailed examination of issues.

In hierarchy → **Division comes after Wing**.

Step 5 – Role of Branches

- A **Branch** is a smaller subdivision of a Division.
- It is generally headed by an **Under Secretary** who looks after day-to-day handling of files, drafting, and inter-departmental communication.
- Example: In a Division dealing with Defence Budget, one Branch may focus on Capital Expenditure, while another may deal with Revenue Expenditure.
- Branches provide the bridge between higher-level policy and the clerical/operational units.

In hierarchy → **Branch comes after Division**.

Step 6 – Role of Sections

- At the bottom of the hierarchy lies the **Section**.
- A Section is the smallest functional unit, headed by a **Section Officer (SO)**, with

assistants, clerks, and support staff under him.

- It is responsible for the actual noting, drafting, record-keeping, and clerical work.
- Example: In the Defence Expenditure Branch, one Section may maintain sanction registers, while another may handle correspondence with Defence Accounts.

In hierarchy → **Section comes last.**

Step 7 – Final Tally

So, the correct order is:

- Department → Wing → Division → Branch → Section
- → This matches 1-3-2-4-5

Correct Option: (c) 1-3-2-4-5

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- Start with the obvious: **Department** is always the largest unit.
- End with the obvious: **Section** is always the smallest unit.
- Middle order:
 - **Wing** is bigger than Division.
 - **Division** is bigger than Branch.
 - **Branch** is bigger than Section.
- By elimination, only option (c) fits.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Department → Top-level policy area
 - Stmt 2: Wing → Broad subdivision of Department
 - Stmt 3: Division → Specific subject handling
 - Stmt 4: Branch → Narrower administrative handling
 - Stmt 5: Section → Smallest, clerical
- Final order = 1-3-2-4-5 → Mark **(c).**

Additional Context for Enrichment (Mains/ Interview use)

- This hierarchical setup is unique to India's Secretariat system, designed to separate **policy formulation** (upper levels) from **file processing and execution** (lower levels).
- It also ensures a **smooth chain of accountability**:
 - Secretary (Department head) → Additional Secretary (Wing) → Joint/ Deputy Secretary (Division) → Under Secretary (Branch) → Section Officer (Section).
- **Scholarly View:** Administrative theorists like Awasthi & Maheshwari highlight that

this pyramid prevents over-concentration of work at the top and ensures systematic distribution.

- **Practical Example:** In the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Department of Internal Security has Wings for Police, Divisions for specific states, Branches for law-and-order issues, and Sections handling clerical correspondence.
- **Reform Note:** The 2nd ARC emphasized rationalization of Secretariat structures to improve efficiency, suggesting digitization to reduce excessive file movement across these levels.

Correct Answer: (c) 1-3-2-4-5

30. Correct Option: (b) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the World Bank's definition of Good Governance

- The World Bank introduced the concept of Good Governance in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the context of development assistance.
 - Its definition emphasizes **the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.**
 - It links governance to efficiency in resource use, institutional capacity, and the rule of law.
- Verdict on Statement 1: **Correct**

Step 2 – Recall UNDP's framework on Good Governance

- UNDP (1997) listed **eight major characteristics of Good Governance:**
 - Participation
 - Rule of Law
 - Transparency
 - Responsiveness
 - Equity and Inclusiveness
 - Effectiveness and Efficiency
 - Accountability
 - Strategic Vision
- These remain the standard reference framework used globally.
- Verdict on Statement 2: **Correct**

Step 3 – Good Governance in the Indian constitutional context

- The Indian Constitution, though it does not use the term "Good Governance," reflects its spirit through:

- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV):** Social justice, welfare, equity, decentralization.
- **Fundamental Rights (Part III):** Ensure transparency, accountability, and justice.
- **Fundamental Duties (Part IVA):** Stress citizen participation and responsibility.
- Hence, it is accurate to say Good Governance in India draws normative guidance from DPSPs.
- Verdict on Statement 3: **Correct**

Step 4 – Position of 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)

- The 2nd ARC did not equate Good Governance with e-Governance.
- Instead, it argued: **e-Governance is a critical tool for achieving Good Governance, but not a substitute for it.**
- Good Governance requires transparency, accountability, citizen participation, efficiency — technology alone cannot ensure it.
- Verdict on Statement 4: **Incorrect**

Step 5 – Role of non-state actors in Good Governance

- Good Governance goes beyond state-centric functioning.
- It emphasizes **collaboration between government, civil society, private sector, and citizens** in decision-making and service delivery.
- Example: PPP models in infrastructure, NGO involvement in education/health, citizen charters.
- Verdict on Statement 5: **Correct**

Step 6 – Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Correct
- Statement 2 → Correct
- Statement 3 → Correct
- Statement 4 → Incorrect
- Statement 5 → Correct

Correct grouping: **1, 2, 3 and 5 only**

Correct Option: (b) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- Anchor on institutions:
 - *World Bank* → power exercised in managing resources.
 - *UNDP* → eight characteristics (participation, accountability, etc.).

- *India* → DPSPs as guiding principles.
- *2nd ARC* → trap; it did not equate Good Governance with e-Governance.
- *Non-state actors* → involvement of civil society & private sector.

- Use elimination: Once you spot that Statement 4 is misleading, only (b) fits.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Matches World Bank → Correct
 - Stmt 2: Matches UNDP → Correct
 - Stmt 3: DPSPs link to governance → Correct
 - Stmt 4: ARC never equated Good Governance with e-Governance → Incorrect
 - Stmt 5: Governance involves state + non-state → Correct
- Correct option = (b).

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Good Governance = Process + Values + Outcomes.**
- **Indian initiatives promoting Good Governance:** RTI Act (2005), e-Governance Mission Mode Projects, Citizen's Charter, Sevottam Model, Social Audits, 73rd & 74th Amendments.
- **Reports:** 2nd ARC described Good Governance as "*ethics in action*", stressing transparency, accountability, equity, and citizen focus.
- **Contemporary examples:** Digital India, JAM trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile), and Aspirational Districts Programme showcase attempts to operationalize Good Governance.

Final Answer: (b) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

31. Correct Option: (b) 1, 2 and 4 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the weaknesses highlighted in studies/commissions

- Several committees (e.g., 2nd ARC, Paul Appleby reports, Sarkaria Commission) have pointed out structural weaknesses of the Indian government machinery.
- These weaknesses are generally around **proliferation, duplication, vertical hierarchy, excessive controls, and decision-making inertia.**

Step 2 – Evaluate Statement 1

"Proliferation of Ministries/Departments with weak integration and coordination."

- True. India has more than 50 ministries and multiple departments.
- Often overlaps occur (e.g., Environment vs. Forests vs. Water Resources; Commerce vs. Industry).
- Leads to weak inter-ministerial coordination.
- Verdict: Correct**

Step 3 – Evaluate Statement 2

"An extended vertical structure with too many levels."

- Correct. Indian bureaucracy is criticized for having too many layers — Secretary → Additional Secretary → Joint Secretary → Director → Deputy Secretary → Under Secretary → Section Officer.
- This delays decision-making and creates red-tapism.
- Verdict: Correct**

Step 4 – Evaluate Statement 3

"A national outlook amongst the public functionaries."

- A **national outlook** is actually a **strength**, not a weakness.
- One of the valued features of All India Services is that they promote national integration and a pan-Indian perspective.
- Verdict: Incorrect**

Step 5 – Evaluate Statement 4

"Reverse delegation and risk-avoidance in decision making."

- Correct. In India, higher authorities often re-centralize powers that should have been delegated downward → called "reverse delegation."
- Risk-averse culture in bureaucracy leads to delays, status-quoism, and lack of innovation.
- Verdict: Correct**

Step 6 – Final Tally

Correct grouping: **1, 2 and 4 only**

Correct Option: (b) 1, 2 and 4 only

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- Think of known weaknesses: Red-tapism, proliferation, delays, overlapping ministries, risk aversion.
- Statement 3 is a distractor → "national outlook" is a **positive feature** of IAS/IPS, not a weakness.
- By elimination, option (b) is the only fit.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Too many ministries, poor integration → Correct
 - Stmt 2: Too many levels, red tape → Correct
 - Stmt 3: National outlook = strength, not weakness → Incorrect
 - Stmt 4: Reverse delegation + risk avoidance = classic weakness → Correct
- Correct = (b) 1, 2 and 4 only.

Additional Context for Enrichment (Mains/ Interview)

- 2nd ARC** emphasized that proliferation of ministries leads to duplication, requiring rationalization.
- Hota Committee** also stressed flattening the vertical structure to reduce delays.
- Paul Appleby (1953 & 1956)** described Indian administration as over-structured and under-coordinated.
- Risk-aversion** arises partly due to CVC, CAG, and vigilance scrutiny, which discourages bold decision-making.
- Contemporary reforms:** Mission Karmayogi (2020) aims to transform bureaucratic culture; e-Office and digital file movement aim to reduce layers.

Correct Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 4 only

32. Correct Option: (b) 2 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall what e-GramSwaraj is and its launch details

- e-GramSwaraj is a **user-friendly web-based portal and mobile application** launched on **24 April 2020** by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, Government of India.
- It was part of a set of initiatives launched on *National Panchayati Raj Day* to promote **digital empowerment of Panchayats**.
- It aims to bring the **functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** onto a single digital platform.
- Statement 1 is incorrect because the nodal ministry is *Panchayati Raj* and not the *Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation*.

Step 2 – Purpose and Objectives of e-GramSwaraj

- e-GramSwaraj was designed to enhance **transparency, efficiency, and accountability** in the working of Gram Panchayats.

- The portal integrates various functions of PRIs such as:
 - Planning:** Preparation of *Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs)*.
 - Budgeting:** Resource mapping, allocation, and fund flow monitoring.
 - Implementation:** Real-time monitoring of works and schemes.
 - Accounting:** Double-entry bookkeeping and fund utilization tracking.
- By digitizing these processes, e-GramSwaraj ensures greater visibility for citizens and stakeholders.
- Statement 2 is correct, as the scheme directly focuses on improving *transparency, planning, progress reporting, and accounting*.

Step 3 – Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Incorrect.
- Statement 2 → Correct.

Correct Option: (b) 2 only

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- Always link keywords:
 - “Gram” + “Panchayat” = *Ministry of Panchayati Raj*, not Statistics.
 - “Transparency, progress reporting, accounting” = hallmark objectives of e-GramSwaraj.
- When confused, recall that the Ministry of Statistics deals with data, surveys, and monitoring, while *Panchayati Raj Ministry* handles rural governance digital tools.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Ministry of Statistics? Seems wrong; Panchayati Raj is more logical. → Incorrect
- Stmt 2: Yes, improving transparency, planning, and accounting = exact purpose. → Correct

→ Answer = (b) 2 only.

Additional Context for Enrichment (Mains/ Interview)

- Integration with SVAMITVA Scheme**
 - e-GramSwaraj works alongside the **SVAMITVA Scheme** (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas).
 - While SVAMITVA provides digital property records through drone-based mapping, e-GramSwaraj ensures integration of these records with Panchayat-level planning and accounting.

- Together, they strengthen *financial inclusion, dispute resolution, and rural planning*.

Features of e-GramSwaraj

- Planning Module:** Preparation and uploading of GPDPs.
- Progress Reporting:** Track status of works (sanctioned, completed, ongoing).
- Accounting Module:** Standardized digital accounting at Panchayat level.
- Citizen Access:** Villagers can view developmental works, budgets, and progress.

Benefits of e-GramSwaraj

- Transparency:** Public disclosure of Panchayat activities reduces corruption.
- Accountability:** Panchayat officials are directly accountable through real-time data.
- Efficiency:** Cuts down paperwork and delays by digitizing records.
- Financial Inclusion:** Property records (via SVAMITVA integration) can be used for bank loans.
- Citizen-Centric Governance:** Villagers can track their Panchayat's budget and projects.

2nd ARC and Good Governance Link

- The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)** emphasized the need for ICT-based tools in governance.
- e-GramSwaraj represents *e-Governance in rural India*, aligning with the principles of Good Governance: transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness.

Current Progress

- By 2024–25, e-GramSwaraj has been adopted across **2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats**.
- Over **25 lakh development works** have been monitored and crores of rupees in Panchayat accounts digitized.
- More than **80 lakh property cards** distributed through SVAMITVA are linked with the portal.

Correct Answer: (b) 2 only

Key Takeaway for Aspirants

e-GramSwaraj is not just a portal but a **paradigm shift in rural governance**—bringing together planning, financial management, property records, and accountability under one digital platform. It illustrates India's broader push for

Digital Governance and Atmanirbhar Gram Panchayats.

33. Correct Option: (c) Global Social Mobility Index ... created by World Bank & FAO

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall what Social Mobility means

- Social mobility broadly refers to the **ability of individuals or groups to move within the socio-economic hierarchy** of a society. This can mean movement from one occupational class to another, from one income bracket to another, or even across educational attainment levels.
- It reflects whether opportunities in society are distributed fairly, allowing children to do better (or worse) than their parents.
- A simple way of understanding: if someone's parents were agricultural laborers but the individual becomes a doctor, that is upward mobility. Conversely, if the child has fewer opportunities and falls below the parents' status, that is downward mobility. Thus, Statement (a) — "Social mobility is the ability of a child to experience a better life than their parents" — is **correct**, because it captures the essence of **intergenerational absolute mobility**.

Step 2 – Understand Relative vs. Absolute Mobility

- **Absolute mobility** is about whether people are better off than their parents (standards of living, income, life expectancy, etc.).
- **Relative mobility**, in contrast, is about whether **background determines outcomes**. In other words, even if overall living standards improve, relative mobility will be low if a person's socio-economic background strongly dictates where they end up in life.
- Example: If children of rich parents always do better, while children of poor parents stay poor, relative mobility is low.
- Statement (b) — "Relative social mobility is an assessment of the impact of socio-economic background on an individual's outcomes in life" — correctly reflects this distinction.
- Verdict: **Correct**

Step 3 – Who created the Global Social Mobility Index?

- This is where confusion is often tested in UPSC. The **Global Social Mobility Index**

(GSMI) was not created by the World Bank or FAO.

- It was developed by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** in **2020** as part of its effort to highlight inequalities and their impact on long-term economic growth.
- The GSMI measures 82 countries, focusing on their ability to foster mobility across generations.
- Therefore, Statement (c) — "GSMI ... created together by the World Bank and UN FAO" — is **incorrect**.

Step 4 – What does the Global Social Mobility Index measure?

- The GSMI looks at **drivers** of mobility rather than just end outcomes like income or wealth.
- It identifies **five key dimensions**, broken down into 10 pillars:
 - **Health:** ensuring basic health access.
 - **Education:** access, quality, equity, lifelong learning.
 - **Technology:** digital access, affordability.
 - **Work:** wages, working conditions, job opportunities.
 - **Institutions & Social Protection:** inclusive governance, social protection, fair taxation.

- This framework emphasizes that improving social mobility requires **systemic policy reforms** in institutions, practices, and policies — not just economic growth.
- Statement (d) — "GSMI focuses on drivers of relative social mobility instead of outcomes" — is **correct**.

Step 5 – Final Tally

- Statement (a) → **Correct**
- Statement (b) → **Correct**
- Statement (c) → **Incorrect**
- Statement (d) → **Correct**

Correct Option: (c) Global Social Mobility Index ... created by World Bank & FAO

How to Approach the Question in the Exam

- **Anchor keywords:**
 - "Better life than parents" → absolute mobility.
 - "Socio-economic background impact" → relative mobility.
 - "Global Social Mobility Index" → Always remember it's **WEF, 2020**, not World Bank/FAO.

- “Drivers not outcomes” → hallmark of GSMA methodology.
- Once you catch the trap in Statement 3, elimination becomes easy.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Child better off than parents → Yes
- Stmt 2: Socio-economic background impacts outcomes → Matches relative mobility
- Stmt 3: GSMA by World Bank & FAO? → Wrong, it's WEF
- Stmt 4: Focuses on drivers (policies/institutions), not just outcomes

→ Correct Answer = (c)

Additional Enrichment (for Mains/Interview)

- India's Rank in GSMA 2020:**

- India ranked **76th out of 82 countries**, highlighting weak social protection, unequal access to education, and limited formal sector jobs.
- Global Patterns:**
 - Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden) rank highest because of strong welfare states, universal education, and health access.
- Linkages with Good Governance:**
 - Social mobility is not just an economic outcome — it depends on governance quality, institutional fairness, and inclusive policies.
- Indian Context:**
 - Policies like NEP 2020 (education), Ayushman Bharat (health), Digital India (technology), and social security codes are crucial for improving India's score.

Final Answer: (c) is incorrect

34. Correct Option: (c) 1 and 3 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the key provisions of the Women's Reservation Act (2023)

- The **Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023** is popularly known as the **Women's Reservation Act**.
- It provides for **33% reservation for women** in the **Lok Sabha**, the **State Legislative Assemblies**, and the **Delhi Assembly**.
- However, it **does not apply to the Rajya Sabha or State Legislative Councils**, as these are not directly elected bodies. So, Statement 1 — “The bill reserves 1/3rd seats for women in both houses of

Parliament and state legislative assemblies” — is **incorrect**, because it does not apply to the Rajya Sabha.

Step 2 – Rotation of reserved seats

- The Act mandates that reserved seats for women will be **rotated after each delimitation exercise**, which is to be carried out **after every decennial census is published**.
- This is similar to the principle used for SC/ST reservation of seats.
- So, Statement 2 is **correct**.

Step 3 – Applicability on SC/ST reserved seats

- The Act clearly states that the **one-third reservation for women also applies within the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)**.
- This ensures inclusivity and avoids exclusion of women from disadvantaged groups. So, Statement 3 — “It will not be applicable on the seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes” — is **incorrect**.

Step 4 – Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Incorrect
- Statement 2 → Correct
- Statement 3 → Incorrect

The question asks: **Which of the statements are incorrect?**

→ Statements 1 and 3 only are incorrect.

Correct Option: (c) 1 and 3 only

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor on scope: Women's Reservation Act = **Lok Sabha + State Assemblies + Delhi Assembly only** → not both Houses of Parliament.
- Anchor on rotation: Always linked to **decennial census-based delimitation**.
- Anchor on inclusivity: Applies even to SC/ST reserved seats → Statement 3 is a trap.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Both Houses? No, not Rajya Sabha
- Stmt 2: Linked to census-based delimitation
- Stmt 3: Not applicable to STs? False — it does apply

→ Incorrect = 1 and 3 → (c).

Additional Enrichment (for Mains/Interview)

- The Act is a landmark step toward **gender equality in political representation**.

- Its implementation is contingent upon **delimitation after the 2026 census**, meaning the actual reservation may only come into effect in the **2029 General Elections or later**.
- Historical context: Women's Reservation Bill was first introduced in **1996** and went through decades of debate before being passed in 2023.
- Critics argue delay in implementation may dilute its immediate impact, but supporters hail it as a transformative measure for women's political empowerment.

Final Answer: (c) 1 and 3 only

35. Correct Option: (b) 2 and 3 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Origin of the Citizen's Charter

- The **Citizen's Charter** was first launched in the **United Kingdom** in **1991** by Prime Minister John Major. It sought to reform public service delivery through transparency, accountability, and setting service standards.
- In **India**, the concept was adopted in **1997**, not on the recommendation of the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)**, but following a **Conference of Chief Ministers on Effective and Responsive Government** held in May 1997.
- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) was made the nodal agency to coordinate formulation and implementation.
- The 2nd ARC (2005–2009) later reviewed and criticized the charters, recommending reforms, but it was not responsible for their introduction.
- Hence, **Statement 1 is incorrect**.

Step 2 – Aims of Citizen's Charter in India

- The Citizen's Charter aims to redefine the relationship between citizens and administration by focusing on **rights of service recipients** rather than discretionary benevolence of officials.
- Its objectives include:
 - Accountability:** Clear allocation of responsibility to service providers.
 - Transparency:** Publishing rules, procedures, and timelines for service delivery.
 - Citizen-Friendliness:** Simplifying processes and empowering citizens to demand their rights.

- **Time-bound service delivery:** Fixing deadlines for services such as issuing certificates, licenses, or approvals.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Step 3 – DARPG guidelines

- The DARPG provided a **Model Guidelines Framework** for Citizen's Charters.
- According to it, each Charter must contain:
 - **Commitments to Service Standards:** Specific services to be provided, with clear timelines.
 - **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** Clear avenues for citizens to complain in case of service failure.
 - **Expectations from Citizens:** Information or documents they must provide for efficient service.
- This three-fold structure ensures a contract-like relationship between state and citizen.
- **Statement 3 is correct.**

Step 4 – Status of Implementation in India

- Though over **1,500 charters** have been introduced by Union and State Government organizations, implementation has been largely **ineffective**.
 - Problems identified:
 - Lack of awareness among citizens (charters not publicized).
 - Unrealistic commitments made without proper groundwork.
 - Grievance mechanisms absent or ineffective.
 - No legal enforceability, making charters aspirational rather than binding.
 - Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms missing.
- The **2nd ARC (10th Report, "Refurbishing of Personnel Administration")** observed that Citizen's Charters had become *ritualistic documents* rather than instruments of accountability.
- **Statement 4 is incorrect** because implementation has been far from "fully effective."

Step 5 – Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Incorrect (introduced in India in 1997, not by 2nd ARC).
- Statement 2 → Correct (accountability, transparency, time-bound services).
- Statement 3 → Correct (DARPG mandates commitments, grievance redressal, expectations).

- Statement 4 → Incorrect (weak and ineffective implementation).

Correct Option: (b) 2 and 3 only

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

• Evolution in India

- 1997 → Adoption of Citizen's Charters (initial focus on central departments like Railways, Telecom, Income Tax).
- 2006 → DARPG introduced the **Sevottam Model**, a framework for excellence in public service delivery, linking Citizen's Charters to performance evaluation.
- State-level experiments like **Madhya Pradesh's Lok Sewa Guarantee Act (2010)** institutionalized legally enforceable service delivery timelines.

• Key Weaknesses

- Absence of bottom-up consultation with citizens while drafting charters.
- Poor capacity of organizations to meet service standards.
- Weak grievance redressal — complaints often go unanswered.
- Lack of punishment for non-compliance.

• ARC Recommendations

- Charters should be **legally enforceable**, with penalties for non-performance.
- They should be drafted with **citizen consultation** rather than by bureaucrats alone.
- Need for **independent audit and evaluation** of service standards.
- Integration with **Right to Information Act (2005)** to ensure real-time disclosure.

• Link to Good Governance

- Citizen's Charters directly reflect principles of **Good Governance**: transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, efficiency.
- They complement RTI, e-Governance initiatives, and grievance redressal frameworks.

Final Answer

Correct Option: (b) 2 and 3 only

The Citizen's Charter in India, while conceptually strong and rooted in democratic accountability, has been weakened by poor implementation. It represents a **transition from colonial-style administration to citizen-centric governance**, but requires enforceability, awareness, and robust grievance mechanisms to achieve its full potential.

36. Correct Option: (a) 61st CAA

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Original Constitutional Provision on Voting Age

- The framers of the Constitution provided for **universal adult suffrage** under **Article 326**.
- It mandated that elections to the **Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies** would be based on adult suffrage, meaning every citizen of India above the age of **21 years** would have the right to vote, provided they were not disqualified by law on grounds such as non-residence, unsoundness of mind, crime, or corrupt practices.
- At the time (1950), setting the minimum voting age at **21 years** was seen as reasonable, considering literacy levels, political awareness, and the maturity required for electoral participation.

Step 2 – Global Trends and Indian Debates

- By the 1970s and 1980s, many democracies, including the United States and the United Kingdom, had reduced the voting age to **18 years**, on the rationale that individuals at 18 were mature enough to participate in political decision-making.
- In India too, youth participation in mass movements and their growing demographic share made it necessary to reconsider the existing voting age.
- The argument was that if a person can marry, serve in the armed forces, and take up employment at 18, they are also capable of exercising the right to vote.

Step 3 – The 61st Constitutional Amendment Act (1988)

- The decisive change came with the **Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Act, 1988**.
- It amended **Article 326** to substitute the words "twenty-one years" with "eighteen years."
- This effectively lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 for elections to the **House of the People (Lok Sabha)** and the **Legislative Assemblies of the States and Union Territories**.
- The amendment came into force in **1989**, just in time for the **9th General Elections (1989)**, where 18–21-year-olds voted for the first time.

Therefore, **Statement (a) 61st CAA is correct.**

Step 4 – Rule Out the Distractors

- **67th Amendment (1990):** Dealt with the extension of President's Rule in Punjab beyond one year, due to the disturbed situation.
- **69th Amendment (1991):** Granted special status to Delhi, designating it as the National Capital Territory with a Legislative Assembly.
- **89th Amendment (2003):** Bifurcated the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into separate bodies — the **National Commission for SCs** and the **National Commission for STs**.

None of these have anything to do with the voting age.

Step 5 – Final Tally

- 61st CAA → Lowered voting age to 18 years.
- 67th CAA → Punjab President's Rule.
- 69th CAA → Delhi NCT status.
- 89th CAA → Separate commissions for SC & ST.

Correct Option: (a) 61st CAA

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Rationale Behind Lowering the Age**
 - The amendment recognized the **energy, aspirations, and political maturity of Indian youth**.
 - It expanded the electorate significantly, empowering a younger demographic to influence policies.
 - It aligned India with **global democratic norms** where 18 was the standard voting age.
- **Impact of the Amendment**
 - **1989 General Elections:** Marked the first time 18–21-year-olds cast their votes. This expanded the electorate by almost **35 million voters**.
 - It strengthened **youth representation** and encouraged political parties to prioritize issues such as education, employment, and youth welfare.
 - The amendment is often linked to the deepening of democracy and making it more **inclusive and representative**.
- **Scholarly Views and Reports**
 - Scholars like **Subhash Kashyap** observed that lowering the voting age was a step towards “enhancing democratic legitimacy and trust in institutions.”

- It also helped to reduce the political alienation of youth by bringing them into the mainstream political process earlier.

• ARC and Governance Link

- Later reform reports (like 2nd ARC) emphasized that effective governance must harness the potential of youth as stakeholders in democracy. The 61st Amendment is often cited as a precedent for youth empowerment in governance.

• Contemporary Relevance

- India today has one of the largest **youth electorates in the world**, with more than **65% of its population below 35 years**.
- The decision of 1988 remains crucial in shaping electoral outcomes, as young voters often decide the balance in competitive elections.
- Youth-centric campaigns — such as those focusing on jobs, digital empowerment, and education — are direct consequences of this expansion.

Final Answer

Correct Option: (a) 61st Constitutional Amendment Act (1988)

The 61st Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 years, expanding the Indian electorate by millions and empowering youth participation in politics. It aligned India with global democratic practices and remains a landmark in strengthening the **representative character of Indian democracy**.

37. Correct Option: (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the baseline on India's TFR

- India's **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has now fallen to around **2.0 children per woman**, as shown by the latest rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) and the Sample Registration System (SRS 2021).
- The replacement-level fertility rate is **2.1**, meaning that once a country's TFR reaches this level or below, it gradually transitions towards **population stabilisation** (though overall numbers may keep rising for some years due to “population momentum”).

- Thus, Statement-I – “*The decline in TFR in India is transitioning towards a population stabilisation phase*” – is **Correct**.

Step 2 – Relationship between TFR and women’s education/family planning

- Research and surveys clearly show that fertility levels fall as women’s **education levels improve**. Women with higher educational attainment tend to marry later, delay their first child, and choose fewer children overall.
- Access to **family planning services**, including contraception, spacing methods, and counselling, has also been strongly correlated with a decline in fertility.
- In India, the decline in TFR has been sharpest in states where female literacy has risen and where family-planning outreach has been more effective.
- Therefore, Statement-II – “*A lower TFR correlates with improvements in women’s education and access to family planning services*” – is also **Correct**.

Step 3 – Do the two statements have an explanatory relationship?

- Why is India’s TFR falling, pushing the country towards population stabilisation? The reasons include:
 - Expansion of **female education**, leading to delayed marriage and fewer children.
 - Improved **availability of contraceptives** and acceptance of small family norms.
 - Rising **urbanisation** and changing aspirations.
- These are exactly the elements highlighted in Statement-II. Hence, Statement-II is not only correct but also explains Statement-I.
- Both statements are correct, and Statement-II provides the explanation for Statement-I.

Final Tally

- Statement-I → Correct
- Statement-II → Correct
- Statement-II explains Statement-I → Correct

Correct Option: (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor the numbers:** Remember India’s TFR ~2.0, replacement = 2.1. Below this, we move toward stabilisation (though momentum keeps numbers rising for a few decades).

- Anchor the drivers:** The two most commonly cited reasons for fertility decline are **education of women** and **access to family planning services**. Both are supported by NFHS data and international demographic theory.
- Logic check:** Falling TFR → stabilisation. Why falling? Because of women’s education and family planning. Hence, option (a).

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement-I: India’s TFR = 2.0, below replacement → stabilisation phase
- Statement-II: Women’s education and family planning reduce TFR → textbook demographic driver
- Causal link: Yes, II explains I. → Mark (a).

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- Population Momentum**
 - Even when TFR falls below replacement, population may continue to grow for several decades because of a **large young base** entering reproductive ages. This explains why India’s population will stabilise only around mid-century despite sub-replacement fertility in many states today.
- Regional Patterns**
 - Southern states (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka) and many western/eastern states already have **sub-replacement fertility**.
 - High TFR persists in some northern and central states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh), though even here the trend is downward.
- Broader Drivers Beyond Education & Family Planning**
 - Urbanisation:** Smaller families are more compatible with urban living.
 - Improved child survival:** Parents no longer need to have many children to “ensure” survival.
 - Economic aspirations:** Rising cost of raising and educating children encourages smaller families.
- Policy Implications**
 - India is entering the stage of **ageing population** more quickly than before, meaning a need for health, pension, and care systems.
 - Focus should shift from “population control” to **rights-based family planning, women’s empowerment**,

and demographic dividend utilisation.

Final Answer

Correct Option: (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

- 38. Correct Option: (b) It merged the identities of husband and wife, leading to the non-criminalization of marital rape.**

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Understand the Doctrine of Coverture

- The *Doctrine of Coverture* was a principle of **English common law** that deeply influenced colonial-era laws, including those applied in India during British rule.
- Under this doctrine, once a woman married, her **legal identity was merged into that of her husband**. The wife and husband were treated as **one person in law**, and that person was the husband.
- This meant a married woman could not:
 - Own property independently,
 - Enter into contracts in her own name,
 - Sue or be sued independently, or
 - Exercise full control over her legal or bodily autonomy.
- The wife was legally “covered” by her husband, hence the term *coverture*.

Step 2 – How this influenced marital relations

- Marriage was seen as a **civil contract** where the wife's consent to sexual relations was considered **irrevocably given at the time of marriage**.
- The idea was that because the wife had no separate legal identity, she could not withdraw consent after marriage.
- This doctrine created the legal basis for **denying the existence of marital rape** as a crime. If husband and wife were one legal entity, and the husband's authority prevailed, then the law could not recognize forced sexual intercourse within marriage as an offense.

Step 3 – Specific impact on the criminalization of marital rape

- Under *coverture*, a wife was presumed to always be available to her husband, and any sexual intercourse, even if forced, was

legally immune from being considered rape.

- The legal system at the time placed emphasis on preserving the institution of marriage over protecting the rights of women.
- Thus, marital rape was **not recognized as a crime** — instead, it was normalized under the doctrine that marriage implied perpetual consent.

Step 4 – Rule out incorrect options

- **Option (a):** Incorrect because *coverture* did not criminalize marital rape; it effectively legalized it.
- **Option (c):** Incorrect because *coverture* removed independent legal status from women, not granted it.
- **Option (d):** Incorrect because reforms like the Married Women's Property Acts later allowed women to own property, but that was separate from marital rape debates.
- **Option (b):** Correct — the doctrine merged the identities of husband and wife, leading directly to **non-criminalization of marital rape**.

Final Answer

(b) It merged the identities of husband and wife, leading to the non-criminalization of marital rape.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Broader implications of Coverture**
 - Women lost autonomy over their bodies, property, and choices.
 - The legal subordination of wives reinforced patriarchal control in both family and society.
 - Even when reforms like the Married Women's Property Acts (late 19th century) restored some rights, the **presumption of perpetual sexual consent** continued well into the 20th century.
- **Legacy in India**
 - British colonial law in India carried forward this doctrine.
 - Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (1860) defined rape but included **Exception 2**, which exempted marital rape from the definition when the wife was above a certain age.
 - The exception stemmed from the same **colonial patriarchal mindset** where the wife's consent was legally irrelevant after marriage.

- **Contemporary debates**
 - Today, marital rape is criminalized in most countries, but India still retains the exception in law.
 - Courts are grappling with constitutional challenges arguing that the doctrine violates **Article 14 (equality), Article 19 (freedom), and Article 21 (right to dignity and bodily autonomy)**.
 - The doctrine of coverture is frequently cited in debates to show how colonial legacies continue to restrict women's rights in India.
- **Scholarly views**
 - Feminist scholars argue that the doctrine reduced women to **legal dependents of men**.
 - Modern constitutional democracies reject the doctrine entirely, recognizing women as **independent legal citizens**.
 - The persistence of marital rape immunity in India is often described as a “continuing shadow of coverture.”

The Doctrine of Coverture symbolized the **legal erasure of women's independent identity** in marriage. By merging a wife's legal personality into that of her husband, it ensured that marital rape could not be criminalized, as the law viewed marriage itself as perpetual consent. The correct answer is, therefore:

(b) It merged the identities of husband and wife, leading to the non-criminalization of marital rape.

39. Correct Option: (c) National Credit Framework (NCrF)

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the context of the question

- The question asks which NEP 2020 framework facilitates **credit transfer and academic flexibility** in higher education.
- NEP 2020 introduced several reforms – from digital infrastructure to teacher training to credit banks – but only one framework directly addresses **credit mobility**.
- Thus, we must carefully distinguish between frameworks that deal with technology, teacher development, and assessment, versus those that address **credit recognition**.

Step 2 – Match each option with its purpose

(a) **NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture):** Focuses on digital public

infrastructure for education, enabling interoperability of online learning platforms. Not designed for credit transfer.

(b) **NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement):** A capacity-building program for teachers and school heads. Improves pedagogy but unrelated to higher education credit frameworks.

(c) **NCrF (National Credit Framework):** Provides a unified system of credit accumulation, transfer, and integration across school, vocational, and higher education. Enables multiple entry/exit, lifelong learning, and academic mobility. This directly matches the requirement of the question.

(d) **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development):** A national assessment regulator under NEP 2020 to set standards for school examinations. Not connected with credit flexibility.

Therefore, the framework meant to facilitate credit transfer and academic flexibility is **NCrF**.

Step 3 – Do the other frameworks have any overlap?

- While NDEAR, NISHTHA, and PARAKH all support NEP 2020 goals, they do not deal with **credit banks, transfers, or recognition of prior learning**.
- NCrF alone was crafted for this specific purpose, integrating with the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** for implementation.
- Hence, option (c) is correct.

Correct Option: (c) National Credit Framework (NCrF)

How to Approach in the Exam

- **Anchor keywords:** The moment you see “credit transfer” or “academic flexibility,” recall **NCrF + Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**.
- **Eliminate distractors:** NDEAR → tech backbone, NISHTHA → teacher training, PARAKH → assessment body. None of them fit.
- **Logic check:** Credit accumulation/transfer is central to NCrF, so pick (c).

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Option (a): NDEAR → tech infra, not credit.
- Option (b): NISHTHA → teacher training, irrelevant.
- Option (c): NCrF → explicitly about credit mobility.
- Option (d): PARAKH → assessments only. → Mark (c).

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- Core of NCrF:** It integrates academic learning with vocational education, skill development, and experiential learning.
- Multiple Entry/Exit:** Students can exit with certificates, diplomas, or degrees, reducing the cost of dropouts.
- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** A digital repository for storing and transferring earned credits across institutions.
- National Impact:** Helps build a flexible education ecosystem, promoting lifelong learning and employability.
- Challenges:** Requires standardisation across universities, strong digital infrastructure, and widespread awareness among students and faculty.

Final Answer

Correct Option: (c) National Credit Framework (NCrF)

40. Correct Option: (b) 2 and 3 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the objective of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme

- The **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme** was launched in **2015** by the Government of India.
- Its primary aim is to tackle the **declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR)**, which had fallen to an alarming **918 girls per 1000 boys (Census 2011)**.
- The broader goals are to improve the **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)**, ensure **education of girls**, and promote a **change in societal mindset** towards the girl child.
- A key measurable target was set: improving the SRB by **2 points per year**. However, some misinterpretations suggest “**3 points per year**.”
- Hence, **Statement 1 is incorrect**, as the official goal was **2 points**, not 3.

Step 2 – Examine the focus on financial utilisation

- In the **early implementation years (2015–2019)**, reviews revealed that a disproportionate share of funds was spent on **media and publicity campaigns**. In fact, reports showed over **50% of funds** went into advertisements and IEC (Information, Education, Communication) activities.

- This sparked criticism because the scheme was not delivering enough **ground-level impact** in terms of improving girls' education, nutrition, or health.
- To address this, a restructuring was announced (2022 onwards), where the government mandated “**zero-budget advertising and publicity**.”
- Instead, the emphasis shifted to:
 - Local interventions in health and education.
 - Strengthening **anganwadis, schools, and healthcare facilities**.
 - Community awareness campaigns at **district and block levels**.
- Therefore, **Statement 2 is correct** — the scheme now emphasises tangible results on the ground rather than spending on publicity.

Step 3 – Check the inter-ministerial collaboration

- The BBBP scheme is **not run by a single ministry**. Instead, it is a **collaborative effort** involving three key ministries:
 - Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD):** Nodal ministry providing coordination and policy direction.
 - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW):** Ensures health services, maternal and child healthcare, institutional deliveries, and access to reproductive healthcare.
 - Ministry of Education (MoE, formerly HRD):** Focuses on girls' school enrolment, retention, and quality education.
- Together, they work through **convergent action plans** at the district level, especially in high-focus districts with poor CSR/SRB.
- Thus, **Statement 3 is correct**.

Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Incorrect (target = 2 points, not 3).
- Statement 2 → Correct.
- Statement 3 → Correct.

Correct Option: (b) 2 and 3 only

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor number:** Remember the SRB goal = **2 points annually** (trap question).
- Recall unique feature:** “Zero-budget publicity” → core shift in BBBP after review.

- **Tri-ministerial approach:** MWCD + MoHFW+MoE → hallmark of scheme design.
→ Eliminate 1, retain 2 and 3 → Answer = (b).

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: “3 points annually?” → Wait, official = 2 → Incorrect.
- Stmt 2: “Zero-budget advertising, more ground-level activity?” Yes, recent reform → Correct.
- Stmt 3: “MWCD, MoHFW, MoE working together?” Yes, tri-ministerial → Correct.
→ Mark (b) 2 and 3 only.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

• Achievements of BBBP

- Improvement in **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)**: NFHS-5 (2019–21) shows SRB improving to **929 girls per 1000 boys**.
- Increased enrolment of girls in schools, especially secondary education.
- Greater visibility and awareness of gender issues at grassroots levels.

• Criticisms and Challenges

- Overemphasis on **media campaigns** in initial years, with little tangible impact.
- Persisting regional disparities: States like **Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan** still face challenges due to entrenched son preference.
- Limited integration with broader **women empowerment policies** such as skilling, economic participation, and safety.

• Policy Shifts and Reforms

- “Zero-budget advertising” approach ensures money is **better utilised** in schools, anganwadis, and healthcare.
- Enhanced monitoring at the **district level**, with focus on measurable outcomes (e.g., enrolment, institutional deliveries, child immunisation).
- Aligns with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)** and **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**.

• Future Directions

- Greater use of **digital platforms** for tracking SRB and education indicators.
- Deepening **community participation** to tackle social norms around son preference.
- Linking BBBP with schemes like **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Ladli schemes, and Poshan Abhiyaan** for holistic empowerment.

Final Answer

Correct Option: (b) 2 and 3 only

The **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme**, though initially criticised for excessive spending on publicity, has been reoriented to focus on **grassroots impact** while retaining its collaborative tri-ministerial approach. Its success lies not only in improving the **sex ratio at birth** but also in catalysing societal change towards **valuing the girl child**.

41. Correct Option: (a) Only One

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the objective of EMRS

- The **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** were introduced in 1997-98 to provide **quality residential education for Scheduled Tribe (ST) children**.
- They aim to bridge the **gap in education outcomes** between tribal and non-tribal populations by offering schooling facilities at par with **Navodaya Vidyalayas**.
- The schools are established in areas with **significant tribal populations**—specifically in blocks where Scheduled Tribes form **50% or more of the population** or where there are at least **20,000 tribal persons**.
- Thus, **Statement 1 is incorrect** because the scheme is **only for ST students**, not for Scheduled Castes (SCs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

Step 2 – Identify the nodal ministry

- The EMRS scheme is fully funded and implemented by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA)**.
- The Ministry of Education is not the nodal authority here, though the **school curriculum** is coordinated with state boards.
- MoTA sets the policies, guidelines, and provides funding for infrastructure, operations, and management.
- Hence, **Statement 2 is incorrect**.

Step 3 – Curriculum and language of instruction

- EMRS follow the **state education board's curriculum**, ensuring alignment with regional standards.
- In terms of medium of instruction, EMRS emphasise **regional/local languages at the early stages** to ensure comfort for tribal children, before transitioning to other languages such as Hindi or English as they progress.

- This approach helps tribal children adapt while retaining their **linguistic and cultural identity**.
- Therefore, **Statement 3 is correct.**

Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Incorrect
- Statement 2 → Incorrect
- Statement 3 → Correct

Correct Answer: (a) Only One

How to Approach in the Exam

- **Anchor word – Eklavya:** The name itself signals a focus on tribal empowerment. This helps eliminate the confusion with SCs/ OBCs.
- **Check ministry trap:** Unlike most school education programs handled by the Ministry of Education, EMRS is under **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
- **Curriculum/Language:** Always linked to state boards with local language priority.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: “SCs, STs, OBCs?” Wait, Eklavya = only for STs → Incorrect.
- Stmt 2: “Ministry of Education nodal?” No, it’s Ministry of Tribal Affairs → Incorrect.
- Stmt 3: “State curriculum + regional language?” Correct.

→ Answer = **(a) Only One.**

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Key Features of EMRS**
 - **Target Group:** Exclusively for ST students.
 - **Quality Education:** Comparable to **Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas**, with modern facilities.
 - **Infrastructure:** Residential setup, classrooms, hostels, teachers’ quarters, playfields, and libraries.
 - **Capacity:** Each EMRS is designed to accommodate around **480–600 students**.
- **Expansion under NEP 2020**
 - NEP 2020 called for a **major expansion of EMRS** across India.
 - The government announced that by **2025**, every block with a significant tribal population would have an EMRS.
 - Currently, over **700 EMRS have been sanctioned**, and construction/ operations are ongoing.

• Achievements

- Improved access to secondary and senior secondary education for ST students in remote areas.
- Enhanced participation of tribal students in **competitive exams** and professional education.
- Contributed to **reducing dropout rates** among ST children after primary education.

• Challenges

- **Infrastructure delays:** Many sanctioned schools remain under construction.
- **Teacher shortages:** Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in remote tribal areas remain a major bottleneck.
- **Cultural inclusion:** While the schools teach regional languages, there are concerns about adequately integrating **tribal culture and knowledge systems** into the curriculum.
- **Equity:** Some tribal-dominated areas still lack functioning EMRS despite being eligible.

• Policy Significance

- EMRS align with the **constitutional mandate under Article 46**, which directs the State to promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections, especially Scheduled Tribes.
- They also contribute to achieving **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**.

Final Answer

Correct Option: (a) Only One

The **Eklavya Model Residential Schools** are a landmark initiative exclusively for **Scheduled Tribe students**, overseen by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, and aligned with state boards while promoting regional languages. Out of the three statements, **only Statement 3 is correct.**

42. Correct Option: (b) 2 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall what ONDC is

- The **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** was launched in **2021** by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

- It is **not an e-commerce platform** (like Amazon, Flipkart, or Zomato), but rather a **network protocol**, similar to how **UPI (Unified Payments Interface)** enables interoperability in digital payments.
- The core aim of ONDC is to **democratize digital commerce** by providing a **shared digital infrastructure** that connects buyers, sellers, logistics providers, and payment systems across multiple platforms.
- Thus, the ONDC is best described as a **government-led initiative to create a common digital infrastructure for e-commerce players in India**.

Step 2 – Evaluate the given statements

- ONDC is a digital platform that enables online transactions between buyers and sellers in India.**
 - Incorrect. ONDC is not a **platform**; it is a **network**. Unlike Amazon, which is a centralized marketplace, ONDC works as a decentralized digital protocol where any buyer application can discover any seller application.
- ONDC is a government-led initiative that seeks to create a common digital infrastructure for e-commerce players in India.**
 - Correct. This captures ONDC's real purpose — a government-driven initiative to level the playing field and prevent monopolization of e-commerce by a few dominant players.
- ONDC is a private consortium of e-commerce companies in India that aims to streamline their operations and increase efficiency.**
 - Incorrect. It is **not a private consortium**; it is spearheaded by the **Government of India**. While private companies participate, the leadership and framework come from DPIIT.
- ONDC is a certification program for Indian e-commerce websites to ensure that they meet certain standards of quality and security.**
 - Incorrect. ONDC is not a certification program; rather, it is a **set of open protocols** for e-commerce interoperability.

Correct Answer: (b) 2 only

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor word – ONDC:** Think “UPI for e-commerce”.

- Eliminate distractors: Not a platform (kills 1), not private (kills 3), not certification (kills 4).
- Only option left: Government-led digital infrastructure (2).

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Stmt 1: Sounds like Amazon-type platform → No, ONDC = network → Incorrect
- Stmt 2: Government-led, common infra → Correct
- Stmt 3: Private consortium? No, public-led → Incorrect
- Stmt 4: Certification program? No, not the purpose → Incorrect

→ Answer = **(b) 2 only**.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- Objectives of ONDC**
 - Create an **inclusive e-commerce ecosystem** where small retailers, kirana shops, and startups can compete with large players.
 - Ensure **interoperability** across different buyer and seller apps.
 - Increase **consumer choice** and break monopolistic practices.
 - Bring **transparency** and promote innovation in the digital commerce space.
- How ONDC works (Simplified)**
 - Buyer apps (like Paytm, PhonePe, etc.) integrate with ONDC.
 - Seller apps (like small grocery stores or platforms) also integrate.
 - ONDC protocols ensure that a consumer on one app can discover and purchase from a seller on another app seamlessly.
 - Logistics and payments are also integrated into this network.
- Benefits of ONDC**
 - For small sellers:** Access to a wider market without being tied to one platform.
 - For consumers:** Greater choice and potentially lower prices due to competition.
 - For the economy:** Digital inclusion, especially for MSMEs, kirana stores, and rural entrepreneurs.
 - For government:** Helps curb the dominance of a few global giants in e-commerce.

- **Challenges and Concerns**
 - **Adoption barriers:** Sellers and buyers need digital literacy and infrastructure.
 - **Trust and awareness:** Consumers are used to established marketplaces like Amazon; shifting behavior takes time.
 - **Logistics & quality control:** Ensuring timely delivery and standardization across a decentralized network is difficult.
 - **Data security:** Interoperability raises concerns about data sharing and privacy.
- **Analogy with UPI**
 - UPI revolutionized digital payments by creating an **open protocol** used by banks and fintech apps.
 - ONDC aims to do the same for **digital commerce**, enabling a small shop in a rural area to sell products online without depending on a single large platform.

The **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** represents a paradigm shift in India's e-commerce ecosystem. Unlike centralized marketplaces, ONDC aims to build an **open, government-backed digital infrastructure** that levels the playing field for small sellers and increases consumer choice. By drawing lessons from UPI, ONDC has the potential to transform digital commerce in India, though its success will depend on **widespread adoption, robust logistics, and user trust**.

Final Answer: (b) 2 only

43. Correct Option: (a) Only one

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the administrative hierarchy in a Ministry/Department

The Government of India follows a well-defined **secretariat hierarchy**, ensuring smooth functioning and accountability in policy-making and implementation. The structure generally looks like this (from top to bottom):

- **Department** – Headed by a **Secretary** (or equivalent rank officer).
- **Wing** – Headed by an **Additional Secretary**.
- **Division** – Headed by a **Deputy Secretary or Director**.
- **Branch** – Headed by an **Under Secretary**.
- **Section** – Headed by a **Section Officer**.

This hierarchy ensures that work is divided into manageable units, with increasing levels of specialization and decreasing scope as one moves downward.

Step 2 – Evaluate each given pair in the question

- **Wing: Joint Secretary**
 - A *Wing* is typically one of the largest subdivisions within a Department.
 - It is generally headed by an **Additional Secretary**, not by a Joint Secretary.
- Therefore, this pair is **incorrect**.
- **Division: Director**
 - A *Division* falls under a Wing, and it is generally headed by a **Deputy Secretary or a Director**.
 - The choice depends on workload and staff strength.
- Hence, this pair is **correct**.
- **Section: Under Secretary**
 - A *Section* is the lowest functional unit in the hierarchy.
 - It is headed by a **Section Officer**, who supervises Assistants and Clerks.
 - An **Under Secretary** does not head a Section; instead, they head a **Branch**.
- Therefore, this pair is **incorrect**.

Step 3 – Final Tally

- Pair 1 → Incorrect
- Pair 2 → Correct
- Pair 3 → Incorrect

Only one pair is correctly matched.

Correct Option: (a) Only one

How to Approach in the Exam

- **Anchor memory:** The structure is like a pyramid – broad at the top (Departments) narrowing down to Sections.
- **Trick for prelims:** Always remember –
 - **Sections = Section Officer** (both words start with "S").
 - **Branches = Under Secretary** (U comes before S, so Under Secretary is one step above Section Officer).
 - **Divisions = Director/Deputy Secretary** (D for Division, D for Director/Deputy).
 - **Wings = Additional Secretary** (Wings are "big," hence high-level Additional Secretary).
- Use elimination: If you spot "Under Secretary" paired with Section, mark it wrong immediately.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- Why this hierarchy matters
 - The Secretariat is primarily responsible for **policy formulation**, not direct execution (which is done by subordinate/ attached offices).
 - A structured hierarchy ensures **accountability, smooth file movement, and decision-making**.
- Distinction between Secretariat and Executive Organisations
 - **Secretariat (Ministries/ Departments)**: Formulate policy, advise ministers, ensure coordination, and provide administrative support.
 - **Executive Organisations (Attached/ Subordinate Offices, Field Establishments, Public Sector Undertakings)**: Implement policies and carry out operations.
- Weaknesses in the Secretariat Structure
 - **Too many layers**: Leads to delays in decision-making.
 - **Proliferation of departments**: Causes poor coordination.
 - **Risk-avoidance**: Officials prefer to escalate decisions upwards.
 - **Reverse delegation**: Higher officials handle matters that could be resolved at lower levels, slowing efficiency.
- Reforms Suggested
 - **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)**: Recommended reducing the number of levels to make government leaner and more efficient.
 - **e-Office initiative**: Introduced to reduce physical file movement and ensure faster processing.
 - **Specialisation**: Encourage experts in divisions to avoid over-reliance on generalist officers.

The question tests awareness of **administrative hierarchy** in Indian ministries, a frequent UPSC favorite. The correct structure is:

Department → Wing → Division → Branch → Section with their respective heads being:

- Department: **Secretary**
- Wing: **Additional Secretary**
- Division: **Director/Deputy Secretary**
- Branch: **Under Secretary**
- Section: **Section Officer**

Out of the three pairs given, **only Pair 2 (Division: Director)** is correct.

Final Answer: (a) Only one

44. Correct Option: (d) 2-1-5-4-3

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Look East Policy (1991)

- In the aftermath of the **Cold War** and India's 1991 economic crisis, Prime Minister **P. V. Narasimha Rao** launched the **Look East Policy**.
- Objective: Strengthen economic, strategic, and cultural ties with **ASEAN and East Asia**.
- It sought to diversify India's global partnerships beyond the Soviet Union and West, and to leverage the **emerging Asian Tigers**.
- This is the **first in the timeline**.

Step 2 – Recall the Gujral Doctrine (1996–1997)

- Propounded by Prime Minister **I. K. Gujral** during his tenure (1996–1997).
- Core principle: **Non-reciprocity with neighbors**—India would not expect reciprocity from smaller neighbors like Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, and Bangladesh, while maintaining mutual respect and sovereignty.
- Significance: It improved **India's image in South Asia** and marked a diplomatic reset with neighboring countries.
- This is the **second in the timeline**.

Step 3 – India's Nuclear Doctrine (1998–2003)

- After the **Pokhran-II nuclear tests (1998)**, India formulated a **Nuclear Doctrine**.
- Draft released in **1999**, finalized in **2003**.
- Key features:
 - **No First Use (NFU)** policy.
 - Credible minimum deterrence.
 - Civilian control of nuclear weapons under the Nuclear Command Authority.
- Importance: Projected India as a responsible nuclear power and addressed security threats from Pakistan and China.

This comes **third**.

Step 4 – Connect Central Asia Policy (2012)

- Announced in **2012** under PM **Manmohan Singh**.
- Context: Central Asia's importance for **energy security (oil, natural gas,**

- uranium) and India's strategic interest in countering China's growing influence.
- Objectives: Political dialogue, economic linkages, defense cooperation, and cultural ties with countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.
- This is the fourth in the timeline.

Step 5 – Act East Policy (2014)

- Introduced by PM Narendra Modi in 2014, as an upgrade to Look East Policy.
- It went beyond economic ties to include **strategic, security, and connectivity dimensions** with ASEAN, East Asia, and the wider Indo-Pacific.
- India now emphasized maritime cooperation, counter-balancing China, and regional connectivity through projects like **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**.
- This is the last in the sequence.

Final Tally

- 1991 – Look East Policy (2)**
- 1996–97 – Gujral Doctrine (1)**
- 1998–2003 – Nuclear Doctrine (5)**
- 2012 – Connect Central Asia Policy (4)**
- 2014 – Act East Policy (3)**

Correct chronological order: 2 – 1 – 5 – 4 – 3

Correct Option: (d) 2-1-5-4-3

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor Look East → Gujral → Nuke → Central Asia → Act East.
- Remember: Economic (1991) → Neighborhood diplomacy (1996) → Security (1998) → Energy/Central Asia (2012) → Indo-Pacific strategy (2014).
- Use elimination: If "Nuclear Doctrine" appears before 1996 in an option, it's automatically wrong.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/Interview

- Strategic Evolution of Indian Foreign Policy**
 - 1990s:** Post-Cold War and economic liberalization → focus on economic integration (Look East).
 - Mid-1990s:** Emphasis on neighborhood peace (Gujral Doctrine).
 - Late 1990s:** Hard security through nuclear deterrence.
 - 2010s:** Energy diversification and regional outreach (Connect Central Asia).

- 2014 onwards: Indo-Pacific and strategic balancing of China (Act East).
- Significance of These Doctrines/ Policies**
 - Collectively reflect India's shift from an inward-looking state to an outward-engaging global player.
 - Show balance between **neighborhood diplomacy, regional connectivity, and hard security considerations**.
 - Illustrate how India blends **soft power, economic diplomacy, and security doctrines** in foreign policy.
- Criticisms/Challenges**
 - Gujral Doctrine:** Limited success with Pakistan due to terrorism issues.
 - Nuclear Doctrine:** Debate on credibility of No First Use (NFU).
 - Connect Central Asia:** Implementation lagged due to connectivity issues (Pakistan factor, lack of direct routes).
 - Act East:** Slow execution of infrastructure projects, though intent is strong.

The chronological order of India's doctrines/policies reflects the **progressive evolution of India's foreign policy priorities**:

- 1991 (Look East):** Economic partnerships.
- 1996 (Gujral Doctrine):** Neighborhood diplomacy.
- 1998 (Nuclear Doctrine):** Security and deterrence.
- 2012 (Connect Central Asia):** Energy and regional outreach.
- 2014 (Act East):** Strategic Indo-Pacific engagement.

Final Answer: (d) 2-1-5-4-3

45. Correct Option: (b) Subordinate Offices

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the Secretariat vs. Executive distinction

- In the Government of India, **Ministries/ Departments** at the secretariat level are mainly concerned with **policy formulation, coordination, and overall supervision**.
- However, the **actual implementation of policies** requires specialized bodies with technical, professional, and field-level expertise.
- Hence, the **Attached Offices** and **Subordinate Offices** play critical roles as executive arms of the Ministry.

Step 2 – Role of Attached Offices

- **Attached Offices** are generally responsible for **advisory and technical support**.
- They function as extensions of the Ministry in a specialized field and provide expertise for execution of decisions but are **not the primary implementers**.
- Examples:
 - Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
 - Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) under the Ministry of Finance.
- Thus, they **assist in execution** but do not directly take executive direction in the field.

Step 3 – Role of Subordinate Offices

- **Subordinate Offices** are primarily **field establishments** or agencies that are **directly responsible for the execution of policies and programs** laid down by the Ministry.
- They handle **day-to-day operations, monitoring, inspections, and implementation**.
- They ensure that the policy directions given at the top level are **translated into action at the grassroots**.
- Examples:
 - Central Public Works Department (CPWD) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
 - Geological Survey of India under the Ministry of Mines.
 - Central Water Commission under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Therefore, it is **Subordinate Offices** that are responsible for providing the **executive direction required for implementation of policies**.

Step 4 – Role of Sections within a Department

- A **Section** is the **lowest unit of a Department in the Secretariat**.
- It is headed by a **Section Officer** and deals with **noting, drafting, file management, and clerical functions**.
- Its role is purely administrative/secretariat in nature, not executive.
- Hence, Sections do not implement policies.

Final Tally

- Attached Offices → Advisory/Technical role.
- Subordinate Offices → Executive direction & implementation.
- Section → Clerical/administrative, not executive.

Correct Answer: **(b) Subordinate Offices**

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor keywords: “Executive direction in implementation” = Subordinate Offices.
- Eliminate: Sections (clerical), Attached Offices (advisory).
- Remember the triad: **Secretariat = Policy | Attached = Advice | Subordinate = Execution**.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Option (a) Attached Offices? → No, they give technical input, not direct execution.
- Option (b) Subordinate Offices? → Yes, they handle executive direction & field implementation.
- Option (c) Section? → Too low-level, clerical.
- Option (d) None? → Wrong, because Subordinate Offices do exist.

→ Answer = **(b)**.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Structural Hierarchy in a Ministry**
 - **Ministry/Department (Secretariat):** Policy formulation.
 - **Attached Offices:** Technical/advisory role.
 - **Subordinate Offices:** Implementation and field direction.
 - **Public Sector Undertakings/Autonomous Bodies:** Commercial, developmental, or research-oriented roles.
- **Weaknesses in Current System**
 - **Too many layers** create bottlenecks in decision-making.
 - Overlap of responsibilities between attached and subordinate offices.
 - Issues of **coordination and accountability** between policy makers and implementers.
- **Reforms Suggested (ARC, Administrative Reform Reports)**
 - Streamlining ministries and reducing proliferation of offices.

- Greater use of **e-governance** to reduce dependency on field establishments.
- Clearer division of responsibilities between **Attached vs. Subordinate Offices**.
- **Practical Importance**
 - Understanding the distinction helps explain why some policies are **well-designed but poorly implemented**— because of weak coordination between Secretariat and field offices.
 - In governance studies, Subordinate Offices highlight the “**last-mile problem**” of execution.

In India's administrative framework:

- The **Secretariat** makes policies.
- The **Attached Offices** provide specialized technical advice.
- The **Subordinate Offices** give the **executive direction required for policy implementation**.

Thus, the correct answer is: **(b) Subordinate Offices**

46. Correct Option: (c) Doctrine of Escheat or Bona vacantia

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the key doctrines in constitutional/administrative law

- **Doctrine of Incidental or Ancillary Powers**
 - This allows the legislature to make laws on subjects not expressly mentioned, but which are **necessary to carry out its enumerated powers**.
 - Example: Parliament making laws incidental to Union List subjects.
- Not about property ownership.
- **Doctrine of Territorial Nexus**
 - This permits a state legislature to make laws with **extraterritorial operation**, provided there is a **sufficient nexus** with the state.
 - Example: A tax imposed by a state on a company located outside, but having business nexus within the state.
- Not about property.
- **Doctrine of Escheat or Bona Vacantia**
 - This doctrine holds that if a property has **no legal heir or rightful owner**, it reverts to the **state/government**.

- “Escheat” applies to land/property without heirs.
- “Bona vacantia” means “ownerless goods” like unclaimed property, waqf, or dissolved companies’ assets going to the state.
- This is exactly what the question is asking.
- **Doctrine of Laches**
 - This is an **equitable doctrine** where courts may deny relief if a petitioner delays unreasonably in filing a claim.
 - It is about delay in seeking justice, not property.
- Not relevant here.

Step 2 – Final Tally

- (a) Doctrine of Incidental or Ancillary Powers → Incorrect
- (b) Doctrine of Territorial Nexus → Incorrect
- (c) Doctrine of Escheat or Bona vacantia → Correct
- (d) Doctrine of Laches → Incorrect

Correct Answer: (c) Doctrine of Escheat or Bona vacantia

How to Approach in the Exam

- **Anchor keyword:** “No ownership” = Property without heirs → State takes it.
- Eliminate distractors:
 - Incidental powers = legislative scope.
 - Territorial nexus = extraterritorial laws.
 - Laches = delay in justice.
- Only **Escheat/Bona vacantia** fits → (c).

Enrichment for Mains/Interview

- **Constitutional Basis:** Article 296 of the Indian Constitution provides that property in India which has no rightful owner shall vest in the Union or the State, depending on jurisdiction.
- **Examples:**
 - If an individual dies intestate (without a will) and without legal heirs, the property escheats to the government.
 - Assets of dissolved companies go to the government as bona vacantia.
- **Significance:** Prevents property from remaining unclaimed, ensures state ownership, and avoids disputes.

Final Answer: (c) Doctrine of Escheat or Bona vacantia

47. Correct Option: (a) Only one

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the concept of “Public Utility Service” (PUS)

- Certain sectors are considered so critical to the community (like transport, communications, power, water, banking, etc.) that disruption through strikes or lockouts could severely affect the public at large.
- Hence, under **labour laws**, the government has powers to classify some services as **Public Utility Services (PUS)**, which then attract special restrictions on strikes/lockouts and require compulsory conciliation.

Step 2 – Examine each Act in the list

- **Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 (IDA)**
 - Yes – Section 2(n) of the IDA defines *Public Utility Service*.
 - Examples include: railways, postal/telegraph/telephone services, airlines, major ports, power supply, sanitation, water supply, banking, insurance, etc.
 - Government may notify additional services as PUS.
- **Trade Unions Act, 1926**
 - No – This Act deals with **registration, rights, and immunities of trade unions**, but does not classify or regulate Public Utility Services.
- **Minimum Wages Act, 1948**
 - No – This Act is about fixing and revising minimum wages in scheduled employments. It does not deal with categorization of public utility services.
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**
 - No – This Act empowers government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities (like food grains, drugs, petroleum products), but does not deal with “public utility services.”

Step 3 – Final Tally

- Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 → Correct
- Trade Unions Act, 1926 → Incorrect
- Minimum Wages Act, 1948 → Incorrect
- Essential Commodities Act, 1955 → Incorrect

Only **one Act** provides for categorization of some services as *Public Utility Services*.

Correct Answer: (a) Only one

How to Approach in the Exam

- **Anchor word = “Public Utility Service”**
→ Think **Industrial Disputes Act**.
- Eliminate quickly: Trade Union (union rights), Minimum Wages (wage fixation), Essential Commodities (commodities supply).
- Left with only **Industrial Disputes Act, 1947**.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

Why “Public Utility Services” matter?

- Strikes and lockouts in such services require **longer notice periods** and cannot be sudden.
- Compulsory **conciliation** is mandated before disputes escalate.
- Ensures that essential services for the community (like water, electricity, health, transport) are **not disrupted abruptly**.

Examples under IDA as PUS

- Railways
- Postal, telegraph, and telephone services
- Airlines
- Major ports and docks
- Defence establishments
- Banking and insurance
- Power, sanitation, and water supply

Constitutional Connection

- Right to strike is not a fundamental right.
- The balance is between **workers' rights** and **public interest** in uninterrupted essential services.

Final Answer: (a) Only one

48. Correct Option: (d) All five

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the structure of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is one of the most crucial ministries in the Government of India. It is responsible for **internal security, center–state relations, citizenship, border management, and promotion of official language**.
- To carry out its wide-ranging functions, the MHA is divided into **five key departments**, each handling a specialized domain.

Step 2 – Examine each department listed in the question

- **Department of States**
 - Handles Centre-State relations including Article 356 (President's Rule), Governor's role, and Union Territories (except Delhi & Puducherry).
 - Coordinates with Inter-State Council and looks after issues like reorganization of states, boundary disputes, and special provisions for North Eastern states.
- Belongs to MHA.
- **Department of Internal Security**
 - Deals with police affairs, law & order, counter-terrorism, paramilitary forces, internal intelligence coordination, security clearances, and protection of vulnerable sections.
 - Oversees National Investigation Agency (NIA), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).
- Belongs to MHA.
- **Department of Official Language**
 - Responsible for implementation of the **Official Languages Act, 1963**.
 - Promotes the progressive use of **Hindi as the official language** along with safeguarding linguistic diversity.
 - Supervises translation of official documents, parliamentary proceedings, and language training for government officials.
- Belongs to MHA.
- **Department of Home**
 - Deals with **citizenship, freedom of movement, human rights issues, President's orders on fundamental rights, and management of political rights under Article 19**.
 - Handles **communal harmony** and administration of Union territories when emergencies are imposed.
- Belongs to MHA.
- **Department of Border Management**
 - Handles **international border security, border infrastructure, fencing, floodlighting, and management of border outposts**.
 - Works closely with **Border Security Force (BSF)**, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Assam Rifles.
 - Plays a crucial role in cross-border coordination with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan.
- Belongs to MHA.

Step 3 – Final Tally

- Department of States → MHA
- Department of Internal Security → MHA
- Department of Official Language → MHA
- Department of Home → MHA
- Department of Border Management → MHA

All five belong to the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Correct Answer: (d) All five

How to Approach in the Exam

- **Anchor memory:** MHA = Security + States + Borders + Home + Language.
- Use elimination: Any option less than "All five" is wrong because all listed are **internal affairs subjects**.
- If confused, recall: Defence handles external threats, but **internal borders, police, language, and center-state relations = MHA**.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Dept of States? → Federal relations → MHA
- Dept of Internal Security? → Policing/terrorism → MHA
- Dept of Official Language? → Language policy under Official Language Act → MHA
- Dept of Home? → Citizenship & freedoms → MHA
- Dept of Border Management? → Borders inside Indian territory (not Army, but BSF/ITBP) → MHA

→ Answer = All five.

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Strategic Role of MHA**
 - Ensures **internal security** through CAPFs and police reforms.
 - Acts as the **federal balancing arm** between Centre and States.
 - Promotes **linguistic integration** while safeguarding diversity.
 - Manages **borders and migration flows** – critical for national security.
- **Key Challenges**
 - Internal insurgencies (Left Wing Extremism, North East insurgency, J&K militancy).
 - Federal disputes over Article 356 and Governor's powers.
 - Border management against cross-border infiltration and smuggling.

- Language controversies around Hindi vs. regional languages.
- **Reforms Suggested**
 - Police modernization and accountability frameworks.
 - Integrated Border Management Systems (IBMS) using technology.
 - Better Centre-State coordination through Inter-State Council.
 - Promoting inclusive language policy to reduce linguistic tensions.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is central to India's governance framework. Its five departments—**States, Internal Security, Official Language, Home, and Border Management**—cover a wide range of critical functions, from law and order to federal relations, from language policy to border security.

Thus, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, **all five departments listed in the question are included.**

49. Correct Option: (a) 1, 3 and 4 only

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the basic provisions of MGNREGA (2005)

- MGNREGA is a landmark social security legislation enacted in **2005**.
- It provides a **legal guarantee of at least 100 days of wage employment per financial year** to rural households whose adult members are willing to perform **unskilled manual work**.
- It aims to enhance livelihood security, reduce rural-urban migration, and create durable community assets.
- Therefore, **Statement 1 is correct.**

Step 2 – Wage linkage under MGNREGA

- Wages under MGNREGA are **not linked to CPI-IW (Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers)**.
- Instead, they are linked to the **Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL)**, since the Act primarily targets rural households engaged in agriculture-related work.
- Therefore, **Statement 2 is incorrect.**

Step 3 – Role of Gram Sabha

- The **Gram Sabha** is central to MGNREGA's participatory planning process.
- It recommends and prioritizes works to be undertaken under the scheme (such as

water conservation, afforestation, rural connectivity).

- It also conducts **social audits**, ensuring **transparency and accountability** in implementation.

- Hence, **Statement 3 is correct.**

Step 4 – Cost-sharing arrangement

- **Wages** are paid **entirely by the Union Government**.
- **Material costs** (like raw materials, equipment, etc.) are shared between the **Union and State Governments in a 75:25 ratio**.
- Additionally, administrative expenses are also shared.
- Therefore, **Statement 4 is correct.**

Final Tally

- Statement 1 → Correct
- Statement 2 → Incorrect
- Statement 3 → Correct
- Statement 4 → Correct

Correct Option = **(a) 1, 3 and 4 only**

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor on **100 days legal guarantee** → always correct.
- Recall **wage indexation** → linked to CPI-AL, not CPI-IW (easy trick: MGNREGA = rural scheme, so use agricultural labourers' index).
- Remember **Gram Sabha's power** → both planning and auditing.
- **Union bears wage, Centre+State share material** → formula for cost-sharing.
- Eliminate options logically → Option (a) remains.

Example of Thought Process in the Exam

- Statement 1: Yes, legal guarantee of 100 days → Correct
- Statement 2: CPI-IW? No, it's CPI-AL → Incorrect
- Statement 3: Gram Sabha does both planning and audits → Correct
- Statement 4: Wages = Centre, Materials = Centre+State → Correct

→ Correct = 1, 3, 4 only → **(a).**

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Significance of MGNREGA**
 - Provides **social safety net** for the rural poor.
 - Empowers women (about **50% of workers** are women).

- Reduces seasonal migration by providing rural employment.
- Builds community assets (ponds, roads, plantations).
- Issues and Criticisms
 - Delay in wage payments despite legal provisions.
 - Insufficient fund allocation in certain years.
 - Underutilisation of potential in drought-prone areas.
 - Lack of convergence with other rural development schemes.
- Reforms Suggested
 - Digitization of payments through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**.
 - Better integration with schemes like **Jal Shakti Abhiyan** and **PM Gram Sadak Yojana**.
 - More durable asset creation instead of temporary works.
 - Improved social audit mechanisms.

MGNREGA remains a **landmark rights-based legislation** in India, empowering rural households through guaranteed employment and strengthening participatory democracy via Gram Sabhas. However, effective implementation and timely wage disbursal remain challenges.

Final Answer: (a) 1, 3 and 4 only

50. Correct Option: (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Step-by-Step Methodology to Arrive at the Answer

Step 1 – Recall the structure of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is responsible for **national defence policy, defence services, research, production, veterans' welfare, and defence diplomacy**.

Over the years, MoD has evolved into a large ministry with **multiple departments** to handle its diverse functions.

Currently, the MoD has the following **five departments**:

- **Department of Defence (DoD)**
- **Department of Defence Production (DDP)**
- **Department of Defence Research & Development (DRDO/DR&D)**
- **Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW)**
- **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)**

Let's check each in detail.

Step 2 – Department of Defence (DoD)

- This is the **oldest and core department** of MoD.
- Handles **defence policy, inter-services organisations, defence cooperation, Parliament-related matters, and budget allocations**.
- Works as the main secretariat for the **Defence Secretary**.
- Definitely under MoD.

Step 3 – Department of Defence Production (DDP)

- Established in **1962** after the India-China war to focus on indigenous arms production.
- Responsible for **indigenisation, defence manufacturing, ordnance factories (now corporatised), defence PSUs, and "Make in India in Defence" initiatives**.
- Key driver behind **Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence**.
- Definitely under MoD.

Step 4 – Department of Defence Research & Development (DR&D)

- Functions through the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- Handles development of advanced defence technologies, missiles, electronic warfare, naval systems, and aerospace.
- The **Secretary, R&D** also serves as the head of **DRDO**.
- Definitely under MoD.

Step 5 – Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW)

- Created in **2004** to specifically deal with issues of ex-servicemen, war widows, and dependents.
- Handles policies relating to **pensions, resettlement, healthcare (ECHS), and rehabilitation schemes**.
- Works through directorates like the **Directorate General of Resettlement (DGR)** and the **Kendriya Sainik Board (KSB)**.
- Definitely under MoD.

Step 6 – Department of Military Affairs (DMA)

- Created in **December 2019**, following the appointment of India's first **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**, Gen. Bipin Rawat.

- Deals with **tri-service matters, jointness in operations, procurement exclusive to the armed forces, and promotion of joint theatre commands.**
- Marked a structural reform to improve **civil-military integration.**
- Definitely under MoD.

Final Tally

All five are part of the Ministry of Defence.

Correct Answer: (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

How to Approach in the Exam

- Anchor memory: **5 Departments of MoD = DoD + DDP + DR&D + DESW + DMA.**
- Easy elimination: Since the question lists exactly these five, and all are correct, answer is “All five.”
- Trick to remember = “**3Ds + 2 Specials**” → **Defence, Defence Production, Defence R&D, Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Military Affairs.**

Additional Enrichment for Mains/ Interview

- **Why 5 Departments?**
 - The expansion reflects the **increasing complexity of defence administration**



in India—covering technology, veterans' welfare, production, and joint command.

- **Recent Reforms**
 - **Corporatisation of Ordnance Factories** under DDP.
 - **Theatre Command reforms** under DMA.
 - **Defence indigenisation drive (Make in India, iDEX).**
 - **ECHS expansion** under DESW.
- **Criticism**
 - Still a **civil-military gap** in decision-making despite DMA.
 - Indigenisation drive struggles due to bureaucratic delays.
 - Overlap between DoD and DMA creates coordination challenges.

The Ministry of Defence today has **five departments** under it—covering everything from **policy-making, production, R&D, veterans' welfare, to tri-service coordination.** This reflects India's effort to modernize its defence structure and ensure both **national security and welfare of its armed forces.**

Final Answer: (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5