APPROACH – ANSWER: G. S. MAINS MOCK TEST - 2350 (2024)

1. **Discuss the role that the Integrated Nutrition Support Programme can play in addressing the challenges of malnutrition in India. (Answer in 150 words)** **10**

Approach:

- In the introduction, give a brief account of the Integrated Nutrition Support Programme.
- Highlight the nutritional status in India using the NFHS-5 data.
- State the challenges in addressing malnutrition in India.
- Discuss how the Integrated Nutrition Support Programme can address the challenges.
- Conclude with way forward.

Answer:

The **Integrated Nutrition Support Programme** (**comprising Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**) has been implemented by the Government of India during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26. It aims to address malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery. It also aims to create a convergent ecosystem and promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 (2019-21) data of children under 5 years, 35.5% are stunted, 19.3% are wasted, 32.1% are underweight and 67.1% of children between 6-59 months of age are anemic. Thus, there is an urgent need to tackle malnutrition in India.

However, there are several challenges, which exist in this regard. These include:

- **Funding:** Funds allocated have not been utilised to further the nutritional level of children and pregnant and lactating women. As per the 2020 CAG report, out of the 4300 crore rupees released under Poshan Abhiyaan (from March 2018 to December 2019), only 1570 crores had been spent.
- **Monitoring:** Lack of data and real-time monitoring compromise the ability of the administration to track and address malnourishment. For example, the Common Application Software (CAS) conceptualised in 2017 for real-time monitoring of the nutrition of pregnant / lactating women and children has been defunct since September 2020.
- **Poverty and Inadequate diet:** Poverty acts as a primary catalyst for malnutrition of children and pregnant and lactating women in India. Moreover, it restricts access to crucial resources like healthcare, clean water, and proper sanitation, further exacerbating the prevalence of malnutrition.
- **Poor feeding practices:** Malnutrition among children can be attributed to poor feeding practices encompassing premature weaning, insufficient exclusive breastfeeding, and inadequate complementary feeding.
- **Lack of healthcare facilities:** It hinders timely diagnosis, intervention, and appropriate management of malnutrition and perpetuates malnutrition, thereby compromising the well-being of children.

In this regard, the Integrated Nutrition Support Programme can play a crucial role in the following ways:

- **Identification:** IT systems have been leveraged to strengthen and bring transparency in nutrition delivery support systems. For example, 'Poshan Tracker' application is being leveraged for identification of stunting, wasting, and under-weight prevalence among children.

- **Social audit:** Social audit shall be undertaken by stakeholders, such as Poshan Panchayats, mothers' groups, etc,. to bring in transparency and address leakages, corrupt practices and inefficient utilisation of funds.
- **Funding:** It is a centrally-sponsored programme based on a cost-sharing ratio between the Central and state governments to ease the fiscal burden on the states.
- **Role of anganwadis:** The programme outlines the roles and responsibilities of the anganwadis to further improve data collection and monitoring and generate awareness through counselling.
- **Community mobilization:** The programme focuses on improving nutrition outcomes through Jan Andolan by involving Panchayati Raj Institutions/village organizations/SHGs/volunteers etc,. and ensuring wide public participation. Further, the month of September is celebrated as Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) across the country.

To achieve the desired outcomes, the government needs to strengthen inter-departmental coordination, improve the infrastructure and reach of the anganwadi centres, develop community-based solutions, and revamp the defunct real-time data monitoring system.

2.   *Do you agree that the 'Charter Mark' can overcome the limitations faced in the implementation of Citizen's Charter in India? Justify your answer. (Answer in 150 words)*   *10*

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction about Citizen Charter.
- Discuss the major difficulties faced in implementation of Citizen's Charter in India.
- Briefly explain Charter Mark and discuss how their adoption can help in better implementation of Citizen Charters.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Adopted in 1997, Citizen's Charters (CC) aim to solve the problems, which citizens encounter while dealing with the organizations providing public services in India. Various Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations have brought out their Citizens' Charters.

However, **major difficulties are faced in the implementation of Citizen's Charter in India:**

- **Top down approach**: Most of the charters have been framed by a small group of individuals at the top of the organization without involving other staff. The consultation process remains minimal or largely absent.
- **Lack of training**: The staff responsible for its implementation are not adequately trained and sensitized towards the spirit and content of the Charter.
- **Lack of awareness:** Awareness campaigns to educate citizens/clients about the Charter are not conducted systematically.
- **Out-dated Charters:** Most charters have not been reviewed since their formulation due to which the charters do not reflect the latest developments and initiatives taken by the organization.
- **Unrealistic targets:** In some cases, the standards/time norms of services mentioned in Citizens' Charter are either too lax or too tight. This creates an unfavourable impression on the clients.
- **Frequent transfers:** Transfers and reshuffles of concerned officers at the crucial stages of formulation/implementation severely undermine progress of the initiative.

Charter Mark was introduced by the United Kingdom government in 1992, as a scheme for recognizing and encouraging excellence in public service. The organization has to demonstrate excellence against the Charter Mark criteria, which correspond to the principles of public service delivery such as performance standards, openness, user satisfaction, etc. It can overcome the limitations faced in the implementation of Citizen's Charter in India in the following manner:

- **Performance standards:** Standard of service to users set by the Charter Mark can act as a national standard for customer service excellence. Hence, the Charter Mark can be used as a tool for setting realistic targets and improve responsiveness to service users.

- **Healthy competition and awareness generation:** It would not only give a sense of achievement to the organization awarded the Charter Mark but also promote competitiveness amongst various organizations that have issued Citizens' Charter and generate awareness among citizens.
- **Continuous improvement:** The 'Charter Mark' is awarded after assessment by an independent panel of judges. This assessment can act as a valuable tool to help organizations improve on continuous basis.
- **Active engagement:** It would motivate and foster a customer-focused culture in the organization and will cultivate commitment throughout an organization, from the top leadership to the frontline staff.

The implementation of Citizen's Charter is an on-going exercise as it has to reflect the extensive and continual changes taking place in the domain of public services. The Charter Mark can be an excellent tool for improving user responsiveness and raising the quality of public services.

3. *Social accountability mechanisms have the potential to improve the governance landscape in India, but they face limitations in doing so. Comment. (Answer in 150 words)* **10**

Approach:

- Introduce by writing about 'social accountability' and related mechanisms.
- Explain how social accountability mechanisms can improve governance in India.
- Discuss the issues regarding the working of social accountability mechanisms in India.
- Conclude appropriately.

Answer:

Social accountability refers to a broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, independent media and civil society organizations (CSO) use to hold public officials accountable. It has led to generation of social accountability mechanisms such as Social Audits, Citizen Report Cards, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys that can improve the governance landscape in the following manner:

- **Participatory public policy-making**: Social accountability mechanisms involve direct citizen/CSO participation in proposing projects and formulating budgets thus empowering traditionally excluded groups from the policy formulation processes. For example, **participatory budgeting** was initiated in 2006 at the **municipal level in Pune**.
- **Improved transparency:** Social accountability tools help bring important information into public domain for scrutiny thus enhancing transparency. For example, **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)** employed 'social audits' and obtained access to the hitherto privileged state documents such as muster rolls.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**: Social accountability involves citizen groups or communities in monitoring the performance of public services and evaluating their impact. For example, the **'citizen report card'** surveys pioneered by the **Public Affairs Center in Bengaluru**, sought to assess the quality and effectiveness of public services in the city.
- **Strengthen conventional tools of accountability:** Social accountability mechanisms can enhance the effectiveness of conventional/internal accountability mechanisms. For example, citizen involvement in public commissions and oversight committees.

Social accountability mechanisms enhance the ability of citizens to move beyond mere protest toward engaging with government in a more informed, organized, constructive and systematic manner. Thus, increasing the chances of effecting positive change. But there remain certain challenges:

- **Lack of access to information:** Availability and reliability of information is a critical precondition for any social accountability initiative to be successful. Resistance to disclose or disclosure of insufficient information by officials seriously hamper these initiatives.
- **Risk of collusion and co-option:** Sometimes, powerful members of the community are co-opted into the system by those from whom accountability is demanded. This kind of complicity can reduce social accountability mechanisms to a fraudulent or ghost exercise.

- **Powerful vested interests**: Citizens engaged in social accountability initiatives risk being threatened and coerced, especially by the local power blocks with vested interests. This can result in communities becoming hesitant to participate in such initiatives.
- **Delays in grievance redressal:** Lack of timely and effective follow-up action on social accountability findings through effective grievance redressal mechanisms demoralizes the citizens and weaken such initiatives.

The government can take certain steps to overcome the challenges and vulnerabilities associated with social accountability, which includes, making social accountability mandatory in policy design, clear and precise norms and guidelines on social accountability, capacity building and awareness generation among the community-based organizations.

4. *What is impact investment? Discuss its role in a developing country like India. (Answer in 150 words)*   *10*

Approach:
- Introduce by defining impact investment.
- Discuss its role in a developing country, like India.
- Briefly mention some concerns associated with impact investing.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Impact investing is an investment strategy that aims to generate specific beneficial social or environmental effects in addition to financial gains. Considering that developing markets are home to 9 out of the 10 cities with the highest climate change vulnerability and 86% of the world's population, Impact Investment can play a significant role in a developing country like India:

- **Catalysing innovation:** Impact investors play a pivotal role in funding and supporting start-ups and social enterprises that address pressing challenges like climate change, etc. This support fosters the adoption of sustainable business models and technology-driven solutions, driving positive impact across various sectors.
- **Promoting inclusive development:** Impact investing supports **innovative, low-cost offerings** for critical social issues and aims to target India's poor and underprivileged, known as the **"next half billion."** Issues such as archaic labour rules, gender inequality, etc. are being addressed by conscious companies while yet generating surpluses for their shareholders.
- **Providing capital for scaling:** Vital for early-stage ventures and social enterprises, impact investment provides much-needed **funding** and resources to scale their **solutions.** By expanding their reach, these enterprises can make a **meaningful** difference in society, especially in areas lacking access to conventional funding sources.
  - Also, impact investment can help to bridge the funding gaps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in India.
- **Advancing sustainable development**: With appropriate scale, scope and focus, impact investing can go a long way in complementing the public sector in bringing about equitable, sustainable and efficient development, especially in the resource-starved healthcare, education and agriculture sectors in India.
- **Aligning impact with robust returns:** According to research from the Impact Investors Council (IIC), equity impact investments in India with an average holding term of around 5.2 years have produced an overall internal rate of return of about 30% over the past ten years. This impact investment has an influence on more than 500 million lives nationwide.

However, there are challenges and risks associated with impact investing, such as difficulty in measuring the social and/or environmental impact of an investment. This lack of data and standardization around impact reporting makes it difficult to compare different investments and assess risk. Also, impact investments are often made in emerging markets or sectors, which can be more risky and volatile than traditional investments.

Despite these challenges, impact investment in India holds **immense potential** to drive positive social and environmental change while delivering attractive financial returns. Several policy initiatives by the Indian government are further facilitating a **growth-stage** impact investing landscape in India like **Atal innovation mission**, **Social stock exchange** and the **Samridhi Fund**. This maturing impact investing ecosystem creates a fertile ground for transformative and sustainable solutions to address the country's pressing challenges.

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5. ***Do you agree with the view that emulating the meritocratic approach of the private sector in the public sector is the best way forward for civil services reforms in India? Justify your answer. (Answer in 150 words)*** *10*

Approach:

- Explain what you understand by the meritocratic approach, which is adopted by the private sector.
- Discuss the benefits of the meritocratic approach in the civil services.
- Highlight the challenges in emulating the meritocratic approach from the private sector to the public sector.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

A meritocratic approach is a system or philosophy that advocates the **selection, promotion, and reward** of individuals in an organization purely on the basis of their **merit, competence, and performance,** so as to enhance efficiency in operations and ensure better service delivery.

The following are the advantages of emulating a meritocracy approach from the private sector in the civil services:

- **Professionalism and expertise:** Talented individuals with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and innovative ideas will be attracted to the public sector, potentially enhancing the **quality of decision-making**. For example, **lateral entry** in senior positions in the Ministries and Departments.
- **Performance-oriented culture:** It will ensure that the professional advancement of the civil servants is linked to their performance based on objective targets, making them **more accountable**. At present, civil servants are promoted based on their tenure/seniority irrespective of their performance.
- **Improved service delivery:** Civil servants will be motivated to achieve tangible results, which can lead to effective policy implementation and service delivery.

However, it is essential to consider some **basic differences between the public and the private sectors** and the complexities in which the civil servants work, particularly in India. **The following are some challenges in emulating the meritocratic approach from the private sector to the public sector:**

- **Equity and social inclusion:** To ensure inclusivity and diversity in the civil services, the public sector (including civil services) has to provide for reservation in recruitment and promotion. Merit-based systems without reservation will limit the opportunities for marginalized groups leading to perpetuation of social inequalities.
- **Public interest vs profit motive:** The meritocratic approach works in private sector entities, as the entities prioritize profitability. However, public sector organizations are primarily responsible for serving the public interest. Every decision and policy implemented by the public authorities must be weighed on the platform of equity and must pass the test of universality and non-discrimination.
- **Work environment:** Public sector work environment includes lack of fixed tenure, frequent transfers and pressure from political heads. This hampers decision-making by the bureaucrats and development of domain expertise. Hence, objective evaluation of performance and merit based promotion is difficult in the public sector.
- **Transparency and accountability:** In the public sector, great stress is laid on the purity of process followed by governmental organisations. Further, the decisions of public authorities can

be accessed by citizens under the Right to Information Act, 2005, and they are subject to challenge in the courts of law. Hence, all decisions must be made with due caution. This is not the case in the private sector.

Meritocratic approach of the private sector has its benefits but **simply emulating the same in public sector is neither feasible nor advisable**. However, civil services in India need some urgent reforms, which should be implemented keeping in mind various aspects, such as social justice, contextual differences, etc. In this regard, **Mission Karmayogi** launched by government is a step in the right direction.

6. *A community-driven approach is key to the success of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). Discuss. (Answer in 150 words)* 10

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction about the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).
- Discuss the significance of community-driven approach in success of JJM.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was launched in 2019 with the objective to provide **Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC)** to every rural household by **2024**. The mission aims to provide drinking water of prescribed quality in adequate quantity on a regular and long-term basis at affordable service delivery charges. It is a demand-driven, decentralized, community-managed programme aimed at achieving greater ease of living.

It is envisaged under JJM that the **community** will play a lead role in the **planning, implementation, management, operation and maintenance** of in-village water supply infrastructure. This makes a **community-driven approach key to the success of the JJM due to the following reasons**:

- **Ownership and sustainability:** Involving local communities in the planning and implementation of water supply schemes **helps build pride and ownership**, leading to better outcomes and sustainability in the long run. This is especially important in the JJM program, where community involvement ensures that the water supply system is **maintained and operated for the long term.**
- **Local knowledge and expertise:** Local communities are the main beneficiaries of the program, and involving them in the planning and implementation stages is crucial to **addressing their concerns and meeting their specific needs**.
  - Communities have valuable **knowledge of the local geography, hydrology, and water sources**, which can be used to design effective water supply schemes. Their understanding of water resources and challenges ensures that the **program is tailored to their specific needs**, making it more effective.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Community participation in a program ensures transparency and accountability in its implementation, allowing communities to **monitor its progress** and ensure effective implementation. It creates a system of checks and balances, ensuring **fairness and efficiency**. This participation also builds trust between the government and the people, demonstrating a commitment to **collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life** for rural citizens.
- **Awareness and Social Mobilization:** The mission aims to raise awareness among communities about the **significance of safe drinking water and sanitation**. Community participation in social mobilisation creates awareness of the importance of safe drinking water and sanitation and helps **mobilise resources and support** from different stakeholders.
- **Equity:** Community participation in the JJM ensures that the water supply schemes are designed and implemented with the **needs and priorities of the local community in mind**. This helps to ensure that the water supply schemes are **culturally appropriate** and take into account the **local social, economic, and environmental factors**. This promotes equity and **reduces the risk of exclusion**.

Under JJM, the piped water supply schemes, once completed, shall be handed over to the panchayats. It is the panchayats, along with Village Water and Sanitation Committees (Paani Samitis) and women SHGs, which will operate and maintain the rural water supply schemes. It is, therefore, imperative that a community-driven approach be adopted for mission sustainability.

7. *Do you think philanthropy can be a viable source of funding in the higher education system of India? Discuss with examples. (Answer in 150 words)* *10*

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by defining philanthropy in education.
- Mention the role of philanthropy in funding higher education institutes in India.
- List out the challenges for philanthropy in education.
- Conclude appropriately.

Answer:

The NEP 2020 encourages educational institutions in India to take initiatives along the lines of **Harvard, Yale and Oxford** Universities towards raising private philanthropic funds and including community participation to enhance educational experiences.

Philanthropy can play a significant role in funding higher education institutes in India:

- **State-of-the-art infrastructure**: Philanthropic contributions, in the form of donations, can be utilized for developing new infrastructure in the universities. For example**,** IIT Bombay received 315 crores from Nandan Nilekani, its alumni to foster world-class infrastructure, stimulate research in emerging areas of engineering and nurture a deep-tech startup ecosystem.
- **Enhancing employability**: Philanthropy can help in instilling employable skills among the young population of India. For example, Frank Islam, an Indian-American entrepreneur, pledged $2 million to his alma mater, Aligarh Muslim University, to build the Frank and Debbie Islam School of Management with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.
- **Scholarships programs**: Foundations like the **Tata Trust, Shiv Nadar Foundation, Godrej groups** have taken many philanthropic initiatives such as scholarships and building schools for students across India.
- **Setting up Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)**: Many non-profit private educational institutions have been established in the past by individuals to provide quality education in various disciplines. Some of the prominent ones are **Aziz Premji University, OP Jindal Global University etc.**

Challenges associated with Philanthropy in the Education sector

- **Lack of autonomy:** Donors hesitate to commit resources unless they also have a say in its use and there is an institutionalized mechanism to have their voices heard. The governance structures of most institutions, however, are so poor that such mechanisms are non-existent and government interference is rampant**.**
- **Taxation issue:** Elite institutes like Harvard and MIT hold stakes in large multinational corporations directly and indirectly through their endowments and they have a lot of flexibility in how they raise, invest and save these funds. In India, educational trusts **risk losing their tax-exempt status** if they have such holdings.
- **Counter-productive measures by UGC:** UGC's practice of deducting philanthropic contributions from universities' grant-in-aid leaves little incentive for universities to conduct aggressive fundraising campaigns.
- **Inconsistent and unreliable**: The funding from philanthropy is not reliable and consistent; therefore, full-fledged dependence can lead to a crisis in the form of failure to meet the routine day-to-day expenses and other liabilities.

Universities and the government must get together to solve the problem of funding. The training by **the Association for Indian Universities (AIU)** to institutes on how to approach foundations for philanthropic funding and whom to approach is a step in the right direction. At the same time, the government must stay committed to achieving the target of **6% of budgetary allocation to the education sector**.

8. ***What are the concerns related to the census-based delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies? (Answer in 150 words)*** **10**

Approach:

- Briefly introduce by writing about the delimitation in India.
- Mention the concerns related to census-based delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies.
- Give suggestions to address the challenges.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Delimitation is the process of **redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and State Assemblies based on a recent Census to ensure that each state has an almost equal number of voters**. While the current boundaries were drawn based on the 2001 Census, the number of Lok Sabha seats and State Assembly seats remained frozen based on the 1971 Census.

The 84th Amendment to the Constitution in 2002 had put a freeze on the delimitation of Lok Sabha and State Assembly constituencies till the first Census after 2026.

Concerns related to census-based delimitation:

- **Disincentivizing population control**: Projections show that northern States like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttara Pradesh, and Bihar have a decennial growth range between 12% and 15%, where in southern States, the decennial growth rate ranges between 6% and 10%. This makes the distribution of seats skewed in favor of high-population states.
- **Imbalance in representation**: According to a paper published ahead of the last general election in 2019, if India's Lok Sabha seats are redistributed across states after the delimitation exercise scheduled to be conducted after 2026, then states in North India may gain more than 32 seats, at the expense of southern states, which may end up with approximately 24 fewer seats. This may lead to an imbalance in regional representation.
- **Erosion of regional parties' importance**: Considering that states in the south stand to lose out in terms of the number of seats, the scheduled delimitation and reallocation of seats may also end up giving more power to parties that have their strongholds in north India.
- **Impact on the marginal sections**: The exercise will also affect the division of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) in each state.

Suggestions to address the challenges:

- **Fixed proportionality**: With the risk of widening the divergence between the northern and southern states in terms of representation, it is necessary to prepare fixed proportionality before any deviation.
- **Deviation with special circumstances**: The Parliament should evolve **a certain normative proportionality** based on special groups of the population like those living in hilly areas to ensure their due representation in legislatures.
- **Increasing total number of seats**: Along with alternating the existing distribution among states, increasing **the total number of seats at the Lok Sabha** ensures that no state loses the seats it already has.

Thus, given India's diversity and the unusual concentrations of certain groups in the population, it is important to take note that delimitation should not merely be per capita representation, but should also involve greater accommodation of Indian democracy.

9. ***Combating fake news in India is proving to be a formidable challenge for the government agencies. Discuss. (Answer in 150 words)*** **10**

Approach:

- Give a brief meaning of fake news in the introduction.
- Discuss the challenges associated with countering fake news.
- Suggest some measures that can be taken in this context.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Fake news is information that is clearly and demonstrably fabricated and that has been packaged and distributed to appear as legitimate news. As per NCRB report, India witnessed a total of 1527 cases of fake news in 2020, which was a 214% surge as compared to previous year.

Fake news can disturb the social fabric of the country as well as can be used by militants and anti-social organizations for spreading propaganda, radicalization etc. It can also affect free and fair elections in India.

Challenges in countering fake news:

- **Information overload:** Large volumes and high speed of information available online make it difficult for regulators to verify accuracy of every piece of information.
- **Lack of media literacy:** Large proportion of citizens lack skills to clearly differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources.
- **Maintaining a balance with freedom of speech:** Countering fake news in certain instances involves controlling the information flow, which can hamper freedom of speech and expression.
- **Limited resources:** Regulators and law enforcement agencies in India lack necessary resources, technology or expertise to effectively track and combat the spread of fake news.
- **Technological advancement**: Examples such as deep fakes and other forms of synthetic media, make it difficult to distinguish between real and fake news.
- **Regulatory issues**: Internet users frequently communicate across international borders, thus regulating it is difficult as laws vary across nations. It has been reported that the fake news propaganda is also being spread from hostile countries like Pakistan, China etc. who remain in a denial mode.

Measures that needs to be taken in this context:

- **Coordination between various stakeholders:** Governments, the private sector, and civil society are needed to harness new and emerging technologies for global good.
- **Enacting a specific law:** It will address the harms caused by misinformation. Also, social media platforms should be made accountable for the spread of fake news from their platform.
- **Changing behavior of citizens:** It is necessary to generate media literacy with regard to authenticity of sources and information.
- **Balancing fake news and freedom of speech:** It includes creating a transparent criteria for identifying and addressing fake news followed by measures that are necessary and proportionate to the extent of the problem.
- **International practices**: India can collaborate and adopt some standard practices like **Code of Practice on Disinformation** implemented by the EU or Online Safety Bill of the UK etc.

India has taken steps like setting up **PIB's fact checking unit, IPC 505** providing a broad provision relating to statements creating public mischief, **Delhi Declaration of UNSC Counter Terrorism Committee** flagging increased use of cyberspace and notification of Information Technology Rules, 2021 under the IT Act 2000, which requires the intermediaries to follow certain due diligence.

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10. *The effective implementation of e-Kranti can transform the landscape of service delivery in India. Discuss with examples. (Answer in 150 words)*   *10*

Approach:

- Briefly write about the e-Kranti Mission.
- Discuss how its implementation can change the landscape of service delivery in India.
- Conclude appropriately.

Answer:

e-Kranti: National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) 2.0 was launched in 2015 under the **Digital India programme** with an aim to '**transform e-Governance for transforming Governance'** and keeping in view the need to utilize emerging technologies such as Cloud and Mobile Platform.

The **principles of e-Kranti** include the emphasis on transformation instead of translation, integrated services instead of individual services, government process reengineering, ICT infrastructure on demand, cloud by default, mobile-first approach, and fast-tracking approvals, among others.

The successful implementation of e-Kranti can transform the landscape of service delivery in India in the following manner:

- **Technology for Financial Inclusion**: Mobile banking, Micro-ATM program, and CSCs/ Post Offices can provide banking services to remote areas and reduce the need for physical branch visits, making banking services more efficient, accessible, and affordable for citizens.
- **Education:** Free Wi-Fi in schools and Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) can help provide access to quality education to a wider audience, regardless of geographical location or socio-economic background.
- **Healthcare:** Online medical consultations and facilitating pan-India exchange for patient information can improve the access and affordability of health services, and can also reduce medical errors and improve health outcomes.
- **Technology for Farmers:** Real-time price information and online ordering of inputs can help achieve efficiency in the agricultural sector by reducing the reliance on middlemen and enabling farmers to make informed decisions.
- **Technology for Security**: Mobile-based emergency services and disaster-related services can improve the reliability of emergency response services by providing real-time information and enabling citizens to take precautionary measures in a timely manner.
- **Technology for Justice**: The interoperable Criminal Justice System can help achieve transparency in the justice system by enabling stakeholders to access relevant information and streamline processes. For example, e-Courts can provide online access to court records and improve the efficiency of the court system.
- **Technology for Planning**: The National GIS Mission Mode Project can improve the reliability of project planning and decision-making by providing accurate and up-to-date geographical information.
- **Technology for Cyber Security**: The National Cyber Security Coordination Centre can improve the reliability of cyber-security measures by providing centralized monitoring and response capabilities. This can help detect and respond to cyber threats more efficiently and effectively, reducing the risk of cyber-attacks on government systems and services.

However, significant challenges in terms of manpower, digital literacy, lack of interoperability and integration of systems and information, data security and privacy, etc. need to be resolved expeditiously to realize the full potential of the e-Kranti Mission and transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

11. *Discuss the various challenges in scaling SHGs as large enterprises to serve the consumer market. What remedial measures can be taken in this context? (Answer in 250 words)* **15**

Approach:

- Giving a brief introduction about Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- Discuss various challenges in scaling up of SHGs as large enterprises.
- Bring out the remedial measures that can be taken.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

As per NABARD, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are small informal groups that are homogenous with respect to social and economic background. An SHG is formed voluntarily to promote the habit of saving among members, and for a common cause, to raise and manage resources for the benefit of group members. It has helped the vulnerable sections in rural areas to overcome social and economic challenges, especially women.

Although, SHGs have expanded their entrepreneurial activity but very few of them have transformed into productive and viable business entities. Many of them continue to operate at the subsistence level and have failed to scale up their economic activities due to the following reasons:

- **Access to finance:** Lack of suitable financial products for their growth and challenges in accessing loans or investment capital on favorable terms hinders the progress of these groups.
- **Skill deficit:** Most of the SHGs members are illiterate and they lack the managerial skills like money, material, man and machinery management. Hence, their productivity is quite low and work efficiency is very poor.
- **Leadership challenge:** Due to lack of education and confidence levels, members are very reluctant to take leadership roles and this leads to the group lacking the commitment to ensure its success.
- **Inadequate support:** Lack of access to product market, latest technology, mentoring and handholding further hinders growth of SHGs into bigger businesses.
- **Lack of relevant and sufficient training:** The SHG members are provided very limited training. They lack training and expertise to survive and excel in intense market competition, which requires them to adapt to ever changing market dynamics and stay relevant.

Remedial measures that can be taken in this regard are as follows:

- **Use of institutional support:** SHGs should utilize the wide network of formal institutions operating at various levels. There are multiple central government ministries, state departments, specialized agencies like Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and District Industries Centre (DICs) that can support SHGs towards inclusive and sustainable enterprise development.
- **Digital empowerment**: Adequate funding along with training and capacity development of rural entrepreneurs to navigate smoothly to a digital ecosystem is required. It will help them in accessing a bouquet of services on online platforms including registration, regulatory compliances, connecting with banks and benefiting from government schemes.
- **Mentoring and handholding**: Regular and continuous mentoring and handholding are important ingredients of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Mentoring and hand holding services may include availing of government loans, subsidies or other benefits, ensuring compliance with local, regional, and national regulation, etc.
- **Partnerships and Networking**: Partnerships between SHGs and other organizations, such as NGOs, industry associations, to leverage their expertise, market connections, and resources need to be encouraged. For example, the Gujarat government. has signed an MoU with Amazon to help 10,000 tribal entrepreneurs.
- **Capacitating Community Resource Persons (CRPs):** The CRPs are chosen from within the community and trained in leadership, business development, risk management, market analysis, marketing, financial linkages, etc. These CRPs can impart training and play a facilitation role in creating backward and forward linkages for these small businesses in the value chain.

The SHGs are slowly and steadily becoming the pillars for rural growth and social and economic empowerment. The aforementioned measures can go a long way in ensuring their growth to large-scale enterprises and transforming the rural economy.

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12. *How far can the recently adopted National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) and Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) lead to the modernization of land records in India? (Answer in 250 words)* **15**

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) and Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN).
- Discuss how they can help in transforming the land records modernization in India.
- Bring out the gaps that still exist in India's land modernization drive.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

National Generic Document Registration system (NGDRS) is a common, generic, and configurable application developed for document registration departments to have uniform process across the country. **Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) or Bhu-Aadhaar** is a 14-digit

identification number accorded to a land parcel. Both the initiatives are part of Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).

Till now, 28 UTs/ states have adopted NDGRS for land records and 26 states/ UTs have adopted the ULPIN or Bhu-Aadhar. Both these have potential to transform modernization of land records efforts in India.

NGDRS will help in the following way:

- NGDRS will be a **generic platform** for registration of properties and document across the country. It will facilitate state to create state specific instances and **configure the software as per their requirements**.
- It will empower citizen by providing a **complete user interface for property and document registrations in online mode** such as entry of deed, payment, appointment, document search and certified copy generation.
- It will provide rule based **transparent online valuation** with accurate calculation of property cost.
- It will provide for a single platform for all stakeholders in the registration process enabling the idea of **One Nation One software**.
- It will support local language and will provide for **e-KYC based authentication**.

Similarly, ULPIN will help in the following manner:

- Different states are using different methods for assigning unique IDs to the land parcel. ULPIN will act as **single, authoritative source of truth** for information on any parcel of land or property to provide integrated land services to the citizens as well as all stakeholders.
- **Sharing of land records data** across departments, financial institutions and all stakeholders will become easier. Also, **cross validation of land records data** across departments through Application Programming Interface (APIs) will become seamless.
- It will provide for **Single Window services** to citizens and will be important in having a **transparent land records** and transactions.
- It will help enforce **uniqueness of all transactions**, maintain up-to-date land records, and **auto-update** on Registration/mutation.
- It will help maintain **consistency of core data** across all departments and agencies of the government.

However, NGDRS and ULPIN face the following gaps and challenges:

- In India, most property documents must compulsorily be registered under the **Registration Act, 1908,** failing which they cannot be admitted in court (in case of a dispute) as evidence. The **registration process in most states** still requires parties to a transaction to appear physically at the sub-registrar's office, which is a **time-consuming process**.
- Since vast amounts of land records are outdated, disputed or unaccounted, ULPIN will hardly be a game changer, **unless the pending rights are settled** and **land records are updated post re-surveys**.
- For the poor rural households lacking **access to good Internet connectivity or computer literacy**, the online facilities by virtue of NGDRS and ULPIN will be of little use. In fact, this may end up increasing their **reliance on 'internet middlemen'** and increase their out of pocket expenses.

Digitization of land records and its unique identification can certainly lead to efficient management in land administration in India. But, at the same time, there is also a need to create an enabling environment along with addressing legacy issues to reap the full potential of these new initiatives.

13. **To what extent, in your opinion, has the Representation of the People Act, 1951 been effective in strengthening the electoral system of India, in light of the ongoing corrupt practices in elections? (Answer in 250 words)** **15**

Approach:

- Give a brief overview of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA, 1951).
- Outline the role of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 in strengthening the electoral system of India.
- Discuss the continued existence of corrupt practices in Indian elections and the limitations of the RPA, 1951.
- Conclude by providing strategies to strengthen the legislation.

Answer:

The Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA, 1951), is the cornerstone of India's electoral system. It includes key provisions to ensure a fair election process, with a particular emphasis on countering corrupt practices under Section 123 of the Act to safeguard the integrity and transparency of India's democracy.

Role of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 in strengthening the electoral system of India and combating corrupt election practices:

- **Bribery:** The RPA, 1951 curbs offering of gifts or promises to influence a candidate's standing or an elector's voting choice.
- **Undue influence:** It prevents direct or indirect interference with free electoral rights, including threats or inducing beliefs of divine displeasure.
- **Appeal based on religion, race, caste, community, or language:** It prohibits biased appeal for votes based on the grounds of religion, race, caste, community, language, etc. For example, in the case of *Abhiram Singh v. C.D. Commachen, 2017*, the Supreme Court held that appealing to the ascriptive identities of any candidate and that of the voters constitutes a 'corrupt practice' under Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- **False statements and non-disclosure:** It prevents spreading of false information about a candidate's personal character or conduct. In *Lok Prahari v. Union of India & Ors, 2018*, the Supreme Court held that non-disclosure of information relating to sources of income and assets by candidates and their associates, is a corrupt practice under the RPA, 1951.

Despite its role in strengthening the electoral system, the RPA, 1951 has been ineffective in curbing several ongoing corrupt practices. **These include:**

- **Vote buying**: Vote buying continues to be pervasive in virtually all Indian elections. As per the Election Commission of India, the seizures of illicit goods intended to entice voters amounted to Rs 3,456.22 crore during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
- **Political violence and intimidation:** This encompasses threats or violent actions aimed at voters or political opponents to influence the election outcomes. For instance, over 7 persons were killed in political violence during the 2021 Bengal election.
- **Opaque political financing:** Political financing in India grapples with issues like unaccounted funds, anonymous donations, etc., thereby leading to political corruption and policy capture. According to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms, more than 36% of political parties' funding comes from 'unknown' sources.
- **Misuse of the government machinery:** There have been instances wherein the ruling parties have been accused of using the government resources for campaign purposes, gaining an unfair advantage over other parties.
- **Hate speech:** Increasing instances of hate speech add another dimension to electoral corruption. There have been reported incidents of at least 89 of hate crimes and hate speech during the four months leading up to the 2022 assembly elections across six North Indian states.
- **Fake news threat:** The rapid spread of unregulated fake news via social media endangers credible elections, leveraging technology to fuel anti-democratic agendas.

- **Misuse of electoral bonds:** Electoral bonds, despite their intention to streamline political financing, have raised concerns over their potential misuse, adding opacity to the process and increasing the risk of anonymous and unaccounted funding.
- **Micro-targeting:** The RPA, 1951 lacks provisions to counter modern tools like micro-targeting, where advanced data analytics and AI target specific voter groups with potentially misleading, tailor-made messages during elections.

To address the evolving electoral malpractices, the RPA, 1951 needs to be revamped with robust mechanisms considering the nuances of the digital age. This involves implementing stricter regulations for political financing, strengthening legal measures to tackle hate speech and fake news, and developing techniques to monitor and regulate the use of social media for elections. There is an urgent need to fortify our democratic space and foster more transparent and fair elections for ensuring a vibrant democracy.

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14. *Analyse the recent judgment of the Supreme Court on the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) of India, with reference to the principles of separation of powers and judicial review. (Answer in 250 words)* **15**

Approach:

- Give details of the recent judgement of the Supreme Court of India.
- Bring out the arguments in favour of judgement i.e. supporting judicial review.
- Highlight the arguments against this judgment i.e. supporting principles of separation of powers.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Recently in the case titled **Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India,** the Supreme Court has ruled that, until the Parliament enacts a law in this regard, the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Election Commissioners (ECs) shall be made by the **President** on the advice of a **Committee, comprising of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.** In case no leader of Opposition is available, the Leader of the largest Opposition Party in the Lok Sabha in terms of numerical strength shall be part of the Committee.

Currently, appointing Election Commission of India members is the Central government's prerogative. The judgment gives preference to the principle of judicial review over separation of powers, both of which are an important part of the basic structure of the Constitution of India.

Arguments in favour of the judgment: Judicial Review

- It is argued that the **Constituent Assembly delegated the task of formulating a procedure for appointment of the CEC and ECs to the legislature** and since the latter has failed to perform it, there is a vacuum needing to be filled.
- Elections are a very important part of democracy and the independence of a body like the Election Commission of India is extremely significant to ensure the rule of law. The **current process** where the President of India is assisted by the executive alone leaves room for the **executive to dictate the entire process.** Hence, the **judgment is in line with the citizens' right to free and fair elections**.
- The doctrine of **separation of powers is not strictly adhered to in India** and there is room for judicial activism. In fact, in the present case, the **court is checking the powers of the executive**, and therefore, the directions laid down by it do not violate the doctrine of separation of powers.

Arguments against the judgment: Separation of Powers

- According to **Article 324(2), read with Article 74**, the CEC and ECs are to be appointed by the **President on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**.
  - Hence, any judicial intervention in the constitutional scheme of appointment of the CEC will result in the **judiciary encroaching upon the functions of the executive** and thus violating the doctrine of separation of powers.

- If there is a **complete legislative vacuum** then the Court's intervention to issue guidelines is justified, **for example, the Vishakha guidelines**. But in the present case, there exists a constitutional scheme, as well as a norm of appointment by the President.
  - Hence, it is argued that the **mere possibility of better mechanisms for such appointment cannot be a ground** to impinge on the constitutional scheme.
- **Separation of power and judicial independence was given primacy** when the **National Judicial Appointments Commission** sought to introduce a system that would enable a healthy system of checks and balances in the appointment of judges to address the issues of nepotism and partiality.

It is of the utmost importance that the CEC and the ECs are non-partisan. It is also essential for continued faith in our democracy that the citizenry sees the Election Commission as a politically neutral body. The Parliament needs to debate this issue and make an appropriate law soon to crystalize a proper mechanism.

15. *The current model of sports governance in India suffers from various ills, which lead to wide-scale mismanagement and corruption. Discuss. What measures can be taken to address the issues? (Answer in 250 words)* 15

Approach:
- Introduce by highlighting the current model of sports governance in India.
- Enumerate the challenges faced by sports administration in India.
- Briefly mention the measures that can be taken in this regard.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

The current model of Sports Governance in India has two wings, one in which the **government bodies** like the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and other institutions are controlled by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** (MYAS). The other wing has the **Sports Organisations under Olympic Charter** like Indian Olympic Association (IOA), etc. While the MYAS provides infrastructural and financial support to sports federations and indirectly controls them through political representations, the IOA conducts various sporting events in the country.

This model of Sports Governance in India has fallen short of public expectations and faces the following challenges:

- **Unclear roles and responsibilities**: Presence of multiple organisations at various levels and duplication of services has led to confusion among organisations and athletes resulting in inefficiency and gaps in the sports development system.
- **Inadequate professionalization:** There is a lack of professionalism in sports organisations because of stronghold of the politicians, retired bureaucrats and businessmen over these organisations.
- **Issues with functioning:** Most organisations face this problem due to lack of staff and resources as well as institutionalised views of the role of the executive committee and limited differentiation between management (i.e., the 'doing') and governance (i.e., the direction-setting and oversight).
- **Poor accountability and transparency:** Unlimited discretionary powers, non-transparent decision making, irregularities in revenue management etc. have been the major causes for poor accountability and transparency.
- **Failure to conduct elections**: There have been instances where sports organisations fail to conduct timely elections. For example, in 2022, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) threatened to suspend India after the country's Olympic Association failed to hold its elections.

It is because of these ills, the current model of sport governance in India faces issues like wide scale mismanagement and corruption. The following measures can be taken to address these issues:

- **Sports legislation:** Framing well-defined sports legislation helps to separate governance and management with proper checks and balances with optimized role of every stakeholder in sports governance.

- **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** It is important to introduce and enforce accountability and transparency requirements such as mandatory Public Disclosures for administrative decisions, regular issuing of statements etc.
- **Adoption of global best practices**: Given the diverse cultural heritage of India, it cannot adopt the Chinese model, which involves a lot of indirect state activity, neither can it the US model, which is completely open.
    - However, India can take a lot of cues from the Australian model where operating under the Prime Minister of India, MYAS should constitute an independent sport regulator called **Sports Regulatory Authority of India (SRAI)**.
- **Removing political interference**: It is necessary that sporting organisations resist any kind of political pressures and adopt impartial and transparent selection procedures based on merit rather than political connections.
- **Conducting timely elections**: There is need to conduct timely, free, fair and transparent elections of these sports organisations. It will ensure the true democratization of these organisations instead of the prevalent nepotism and favouritism.

Further, it is important to **improve the quality of infrastructure, change the attitude towards sports administration** with a strong **dose of professionalism** and revamp the present education system to **give sports an equal importance**.

16. *Considering the significance of microfinance institutions in fostering development in India, it is essential to address the challenges that hinder their adoption. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)*
15

Approach:

- Write about microfinance institutions (MFIs) in introduction.
- Write about the significance of MFIs in fostering development in India.
- Discuss the challenges that hinder their adoption.
- Suggest measures that can be taken in this context.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Microfinance is a financial service provided to low-income individuals or groups who otherwise would have no other access to financial services. The various microfinance industry players are broadly categorized into five types: Banks, NBFC-MFIs, Small Finance Banks, NBFCs and Non-profit MFIs.

These MFIs have a significant role in fostering development in India in the following manner:

- **Financing the unfinanced**: MFIs aim to alleviate poverty and promote financial inclusion by providing access to financial services like credit, insurance and pension to low-income households. MF loan portfolio increased by 22% to Rs. 3.48 lakh crore during 2022-23
- **Contribution to GDP and jobs:** An NCAER study estimated contributions of the microfinance sector to the macro economy in 2018-19 to be 2.03% of the GVA while generating nearly 1.3 Cr jobs. It is projected to reach 3.52 per cent of the GVA in 2025-26.
- **Women empowerment:** Over 60 million women are at present being reached through these small, easily serviceable, collateral-free loans, impacting as many as 300 million families.
    - This has a significant impact on physical and social capital, such as health and education. According to an estimate, giving mothers a 1 per cent credit, raised their chance of enrolling in school by 1.9 per cent for girls and 2.4 per cent for boys.

Though the MFIs play a key role in fostering development, it is necessary to address the following challenges that hinder their adoption:

- **Lack of awareness of financial services**: India's financial literacy is just 24%, according to Global Financial Literacy Excellence Centre. MFIs struggle to make their business more financially viable due to this lack of awareness.

- **The expense of outreach**: MFI outreach in India is extremely low, at only 8 per cent, compared to 65 per cent in Bangladesh. This is mainly due to logistical and field force costs associated with the outreach.
- **Higher rates of Interest**: MFIs charge a very high rate of interest **(12-30%)** as compared to commercial banks **(8-12%).** This limits the financial success of MFIs when compared to commercial banks in India.
- **Overdependence on the Banking System**: Around 80% of the Microfinance Institution's funds came from commercial banks. These are generally private banks that charge a higher rate of interest for a shorter period, making the MFIs incompetent.
- **Lack of Innovative and Diversified Products**: Most of India's MFIs offer credit services mainly whereas Microfinance involves a wide range of products, including working capital loans, insurance, money transfers, and saving loans, among others. This limited operation also hinders adoption.

In light of the above challenges, there is a need for **enhanced transparency in lending interest rates**, **diversification of products** to attract a wide consumer base and ensuring the smooth functioning of MFI through **setting up a separate regulatory body**. Also, there is a need for **digitization efforts** to reduce the operating cost of MFIs. Efficient lending to the poor population can be a miracle for the development of the country and the alleviation of poverty.

17. *With substantial power to use force, the police is often criticised for violating human rights. Discuss the challenges in ensuring police accountability in India. What measures can be further taken to hold the police accountable for its actions? (Answer in 250 words)* **15**

Approach:

- Briefly mention about police accountability in India.
- Write about challenges in ensuring police accountability in India.
- Write suggestions to hold the police accountable for its actions.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Currently the **police forces** in India are held accountable through legislation like The Police Act, 1861, and through institutional mechanism like Judiciary, Executive and various other independent bodies like NHRC/SHRCs.

Despite the existing mechanisms, use of force by the police raises substantial issues with rising incidences of abuse of power, pre-trial detention; custodial deaths etc. According to **National Campaign Against Torture report,** the National Human Rights Commission of India recorded **1681 cases of custodial deaths** in the year 2020**.**

Challenges in ensuring police accountability in India:

- **Recommendatory nature of independent bodies:** Despite functionally independent, bodies like National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) remain "toothless tigers" due to their recommendatory nature and hence, fail to hold the police accountable for human rights violations.
- **Non-implementation of judicial guidelines:** There is an absence of any mechanism to constantly monitor the implementation of Supreme Court judgments prescribing safeguards or guidelines to regulate police conduct.
  o For example**,** even 17 years since the Prakash Singh judgment, 2006, the directives given in the judgment have not been completely implemented.
- **Process oriented complexities:** Under The Police Act, 1861, officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP) and above has power to hold subordinate officers accountable. But due to time constraints and hierarchical complexities, these laws are regarded as futile.
- **Political interference:** The authority of police leadership in India has been eroded over time by political interference, leading to loss of discipline in the force and the promotion of a tendency at different levels within the police to seek outside patronage for rewards and to be shielded against punishment. It leads to ineffectiveness of mechanisms to ensure police accountability.

- **Lack of citizen involvement:** Despite provisions of holding the police accountable through writ petitions and public interest litigations at higher courts, ignorance among citizens and huge time and cost involvement act as deterrence in ensuring police accountability.

Measures to hold the police accountable for its actions:

- **Restructuring of laws:** The Indian Penal Code **(IPC),** the Criminal Procedure Code **(CrPC), and The Police Act, 1861,** need legal restructuring in the context of a postcolonial and democratic India.
- **Harnessing technology**: As highlighted by the Supreme Court in **Paramvir Singh Saini v Baljit Singh case, 2020**, CCTV cameras need to be installed in police stations across the country to monitor human rights abuses, thereby ensuring their accountability.
- **Implementation of Prakash Singh Guidelines**: Centre and states together need to implement SC guidelines in Prakash Singh case especially with respect to establishment of State Security Commission, Police Establishment Board, and Police Complaints Authority etc.
- **Reducing concentration of power**: As highlighted by **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** in its report on 'Public Order' (2007), police functions and organisation should be divided into three separate areas, namely, investigation, law and order, and local police.
- **Revamped Police training**: A revamped training among police is necessary in view of police brutality in handling social conflicts. Training patterns, manuals, and officers at Police academies need careful examination from the point of view of social justice and human rights.

Thus, the need of the hour is not only to bring effective accountability mechanism among the police in India, but also to uphold the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** under Articles 3, 5 and 9, which impose restrictions on torture, arbitrary arrest or detention and call for protection to every citizen.

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18. *Social entrepreneurship entails leveraging innovation and business acumen to address social concerns and facilitate positive changes in society. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)* **15**

Approach:

- Explain what you understand by social entrepreneurship and give a brief background of the concept.
- Discuss how it integrates innovation and business acumen to address social concerns and facilitate positive changes in society and substantiate with examples.
- Mention the key challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in this regard.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Social entrepreneurship refers to **creating businesses that aim to generate positive societal and environmental impacts**, as well as financial returns. It **gained prominence in the late 20th century as a response to the limitations of traditional philanthropy and government-led initiatives**. While traditional entrepreneurship has profit as the primary motive, social entrepreneurship is driven by a strong commitment to addressing the social and environmental challenges.

Social entrepreneurship utilizes innovation and business acumen to address social concerns and facilitate positive changes in society in the following ways:

- **Positive changes through innovation:** Social entrepreneurs are driven by a mission to create and sustain social values. They continuously seek out new opportunities, engage in innovation, and adapt to challenges in pursuit of their social objectives. For instance, **Selco**, a social energy enterprise works towards providing **sustainable solar energy solutions** in rural India.
- **Focus on social problems:** Social entrepreneurs utilize the available resources to provide solutions and build social arrangements that respond effectively to societal challenges. For example, the **'Cloth for Work'** initiative of **Goonj** encourages community development by exchanging clothes for essential items, fostering self-reliance and dignity among the recipients.
- **Agents of change in the social sector:** Social entrepreneurs act as change-makers, inspiring others to contribute to the betterment of society. For example, **Grameen Bank** of **Muhammad**

Yunus, introduced **microfinance to empower impoverished individuals**, especially women, by providing them with small loans.

- **Increased accountability:** Social entrepreneurs promote accountable actions and decisions for public welfare. For example, **Trilochan Sastry's Association for Democratic Reforms** (ADR) promotes transparency, accountability, and citizen-participation, thereby strengthening democracy.
- **Prioritise improving people's lives:** Social entrepreneurs create products and services that have significant positive impacts on society. For example, **Aravind Eye Care's cross subsidization model** reduces preventable blindness and enhances the quality of life of millions.
- **Contribute to creating an inclusive society:** The initiatives of social entrepreneurs help in bridging social gaps and empowering the marginalized sections of society. For example, the **Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF)**, which is dedicated to educating girls in rural India, has impacted the lives of millions of students by promoting gender equality and empowerment.

However, social entrepreneurship faces the following challenges:

- **Funding and investment constraints:** Social entrepreneurs face difficulties in attracting investment due to untested business models and technologies.
- **Navigating the regulatory landscape:** They often face challenges related to legal, regulatory and cultural barriers that can limit their business opportunities.
- **Issues in measuring the impact created:** Unlike traditional businesses, social enterprises have to account for multiple and often intangible outcomes that are difficult to quantify. Moreover, they may face challenges in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data.
- **Skill shortage:** There is an increased demand for specialized knowledge, like engineering and technical expertise, to scale operations of social entrepreneurs effectively, however, there is a shortage of skilled workers.

As per the **Impact Investors Council (IIC),** approximately **600 impact enterprises** in India are positively **influencing 500 million lives** and have **attracted over USD 9 billion in capital**.

By providing grants, loans, creating dedicated funds like the **National Social Entrepreneurship Fund (NSEF),** and through initiatives like the **Startup India initiative**, the government can help social entrepreneurs kickstart and scale their initiatives. Additionally, **removing unnecessary regulations and bureaucratic hurdles** can create a conducive environment for social entrepreneurs to operate and innovate.

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19. *The measures for improving the performance of e-governance projects need to be adopted from the perspectives of the planners, implementers and beneficiaries. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)*
15

Approach:

- Briefly define e-governance.
- Briefly mention the key factors, which have been identified as major impediments in success of e-governance.
- Mention the recommendations given by 2nd ARC to improve performance of e-governance projects from the perspectives of the planners, implementers and beneficiaries.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

E-governance can be defined as the application of information and communication technology (ICT) for providing government services, exchange of information, transactions, integration of previously existing services and information portals. Though, e-governance is a well-intentioned step adopted globally to achieve maximum governance, there are certain issues inhibiting their successes including:

- **Technical issues** such as interoperability among ministries and departments, security of online transaction, privacy and authentication of data.

- **Economic issues** including cost of implementing and maintaining e-governance projects, reusability of models, maintainability and portability of various services/applications.
- **Social issues** such as the project's accessibility, usability, use of local languages and awareness about e-governance measures and services.

It shows that a holistic approach has to be adopted in order to understand the needs of the citizens, the capabilities of government organizations, and their processes and structures. In this context, the **2nd ARC recommends following measures that need to be adopted:**

1. From the perspective of planners:

- **Identification of e-governance initiatives:** Initiatives should be prioritized on the basis of citizens' needs, their impacts, as well as ease of implementation.
- **Systematic approach to planning:** The Governments should first provide a clear mandate for governance reforms that must precede the e-Governance initiatives. This would involve changing the procedures, structures, as well as statutes. Therefore, as a first step, these issues need to be analyzed, decision points identified and political approval taken. Such an approach would help in avoidance of deadlock like situations during implementation.
- **Designing Flexible Planning Processes:** The project plans have to be flexible enough and adaptable to changing situations and generate better value for the end users.
- **Forming Strategic Alliances**: To avoid redundant efforts and wastage of scarce resources, e-governance projects should include strategic alliances with trustworthy companies, NGOs, Self Help Groups, Co-operatives, etc.

2. From the perspective of implementers:

- **Practicing contact leadership:** Innovative means need to be adopted including social media, frequent field offices visits and personal interaction with beneficiaries to remain updated with the ground realities and understand the implementation-related issues.
- **Rejuvenating IT Units of Government Departments and Accelerating Organizational Learning:** Professionals with required techno-managerial skills should be recruited. Further a sound in-house mechanism for regularly obtaining feedback from internal actors, related external organizations, related projects and beneficiaries etc. are required.
- **Creating a learning loop:** All organizations should carry out a periodic independent evaluation of the information available on their websites from the citizens' perspective and then redesign their websites on the basis of the feedback obtained.

3. From the perspective of beneficiaries:

- **Enabling Participatory Governance and Demand-Driven Services:** To ensure that the services are demand driven, the capability building programmes need to focus on improving beneficiaries' ability to make use of the service features.
- **Shared Ownership:** The implementers need to be adequately sensitized about their changed role as service providers and should be incentivized to involve the beneficiaries.
- **Involving local bodies:** Gram Panchayats should be involved in monitoring the operation of the Common Services Centres receiving revenue support from the government. They should proactively engage in making citizens aware of the e-services and encourage them to make use of them.

Building a congenial environment is a sine-qua-non for successful implementation of e-Governance initiatives. This can only be achieved by creating and displaying a will to change within the government, providing political support at the highest level and creating awareness in the public with a view to generating a demand for change.

20. *Explain the concept of participatory governance and its role in promoting transparency and accountability. What are the challenges in implementing it in India? (Answer in 250 words) 15*

Approach:

- Define participatory governance in the introduction.
- Explain its role in promoting transparency and accountability, along with examples.
- Elaborate on the challenges in implementing participatory governance in India.
- Conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Participatory governance is a management approach in which decision-makers, whether primary or delegated, are committed to satisfactorily **involving concerned stakeholders in governance.** It is based upon **citizens owning a voice in policy formulation and implementation that impact or influence them**. For example, initiatives like the Citizen's Charters, Mygov.in, etc. increase public participation in governance.

Role of participatory governance in promoting transparency:

- **Two-way communication**: Participatory platforms like MyGov.in facilitate two-way communication between the government and citizens, which **allows for suggestions from the citizens,** thereby creating feedback loops for policy initiatives.
- **Effective information dissemination**: Participatory governance involves sharing information with the public, which ensures that the beneficiaries are aware of the various policies and their implementation.
  o For example, the **Covid-HelpDesk** has assisted millions of citizens in acquiring correct information, updating with the latest news and downloading vaccine certificates.
- **Facilitating collaboration**: Participatory governance platforms increase transparency by promoting collaborations between the citizens and between the government and citizens. Like-minded citizens can work on ideas together through platforms like civil society organizations and the government also actively runs campaigns for citizen's participation. For example, logo design, theme design, and other creative spaces**.**

Role of participatory governance in promoting accountability:

- **Access to information**: By making accessible public information through instruments like the Right to Information Act, 2005, public participation helps in ensuring accountability of the government.
- **Auditing public finances:** Participatory governance through tools like participative budgeting, social audit, etc. help in establishing direct financial accountability of the government to its citizens.
- **Preventing misuse of power**: By encouraging public participation, participatory governance prevents the misuse of power by dominant players. It aids in ensuring that all voices are heard, not just those with commercial or business interests. For example, draft Bills are placed in the public domain inviting comments from the general public.

Challenges in implementing participatory governance in India:

- **Digital divide**: Despite advancements in technology, a significant portion of India's population still lacks access to digital platforms. This poses a significant challenge for participatory governance, as many citizens are left out of the digital loop.
- **Low awareness and engagement**: Many citizens in India may not be aware of their rights and responsibilities, limiting their effective participation. Moreover, **marginalized and under-represented groups may struggle to have their voices heard**, thereby compromising the principle of inclusive participation.
- **Centralized decision-making**: There is often a perception among citizens that decision-making is centralized and conducted behind closed doors, which can discourage citizens from participating actively in governance.
- **Misconception of public participation**: Both policymakers and the public often misconceive the objectives of public participation. While authorities may view it as a mere obligation, the public

may only voice concerns when directly impacted. This dilutes the purpose of participatory governance.

- **Commercialization of civil society participation**: Some NGOs are driven more by commercial interests than by genuine concern for public welfare, thus affecting the authenticity and effectiveness of public participation.
- **Lack of political will**: The political will to translate commitments into substantive political reform is often lacking. For example, Citizen's Charters are rarely updated by the Ministries.

Participatory governance is a **key tool for enhancing transparency and accountability in democratic processes**. Despite the challenges, efforts must be made to foster greater citizen participation in governance to truly celebrate the spirit of democracy.