Table of Contents

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 1 .................................................................................................................................................. 6

TOPIC: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times. .......................................................................................................................................................................................................................... 6
TOPIC: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present - significant events, personalities, issues ................................................................. 11

TOPIC: The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country ............................................................. 18

TOPIC: Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India .............................................................................................................................. 20

Topic – urbanization, their problems and their remedies ......................................................................................................................... 27

Topic - Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location - changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes ...................................................... 29

Topic – part of static series under the heading “Gandhian principles in DPSP” ................................................................................................. 31

Topic – Part of static series under the heading – “Powers of president” ........................................................................................................ 33

Topic – Part of static series under the heading “Ordinance making power” ........................................................................................................... 34

Topic – Part of static series under the heading “Clemency powers” .................................................................................................................... 36

Topic – Part of static series under the heading “Discretionary powers” ................................................................................................................. 38

Topic– Part of static series under the heading – “Nature of Indian Federalism” .................................................................................................. 40

Topic– Part of static series under the heading – “Recommendations of Punchhi Commission”  .............................................................................. 42

Topic– Part of static series under the heading – “Electoral reforms since independence” ...................................................................................... 44

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 2 .................................................................................................................................................................................. 46

TOPIC: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure ......................................................................................... 46

TOPIC: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein .................................................................................................................. 52

TOPIC: Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions ........................................................................... 53

Topic: Functioning of judiciary ............................................................................................................................................................................ 55

TOPIC: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies .............................................................................................................................................. 60

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation ........................................................................................................... 65

TOPIC: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections .................................................................................................................. 77

TOPIC: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources .................................................................................................................. 93

Topic – Issues relating to poverty and hunger ..................................................................................................................................................... 107

TOPIC: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures .................................................................................................................. 110

TOPIC: India and its neighborhood- relations ....................................................................................................................................................... 119
TOPIC: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests ................................................................. 122

TOPIC: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora. ......................................................................................................................... 126

TOPIC: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate. ................................................................. 131

Topic – Part of static series under the head “Fundamental duties” ......................................................................................................................... 134

Topic: Part of static series under the heading “Veto Power”, Also falls under the heading “Comparison of constitutional schemes of various countries” ........................................................................................................ 135

Topic: Part of static series under the heading – “Comparison of the powers of president with the respective powers of the Governor” ........................................................................................................ 136

Topic: Part of static series under the heading – “Comparison of powers of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha” .......... 137

Topic: Part of static series under the heading – “Various instruments to exercise parliamentary control over executive” ........................................................................................................ 141

Topic: Part of static series under the heading – “Parliamentary privileges and issues involved in them” .......... 143

Topic- Part of static series under the heading – “Jurisdiction of SC” ......................................................................................................................... 145

Topic – Part of static series under the heading – “Separation of power and Indian political system” .......... 146

Topic – Part of static series under the heading – “Centre State Legislative Relations” ........................................................................................................ 147

Topic – Part of static series under the heading – “centre state executive relations” ......................................................... 149

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 3 .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 152

TOPIC: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment ......................................................................................................................... 152

TOPIC: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it ......................................................................................................................... 183

Topic- Major crops cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; .......... 185

TOPIC: Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints. .......... 188

TOPIC: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices. .......... 194

TOPIC: Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.................................................................................................................................................. 201

TOPIC: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life. .......... 204

TOPIC: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment......................................................................................................................... 217

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 4 .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 229

Topic: Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; ...... 229

TOPIC: Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; .. 236

Topic : Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world. ................................................................. 238

TOPIC: Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance. ......................................................................................................................... 241
TOPIC: Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Topic - Case studies on ethics.
Q) Sant Kabir’s teachings are inspired by several religion reflecting the overall philosophy of Bhakti Movement. Examine. (250 words)

Why this question
The article rues the lack of commemoration of 500th death anniversary of Sant Kabir and examines the impact he has had on Indian society through Bhakti movement. Hence it is important for mains.

Key demand of the question
The question asks us to discuss the influences on Sant Kabir, how it reflected in his teachings. We also need to explain how Kabir’s teachings and the influences on him is in sync with the overall philosophy of Bhakti Movement.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Give a brief biography of Sant Kabir that Kabir was the most celebrated of Ramananda’s disciples and the most liberal among medieval Indian reformers.

Body – Discuss the influences on his teachings as discussed in the article. Discuss how these influences reflected in his teachings such as the fact that he considered all religions as one and same and aimed at bringing about harmony among all communities etc. Discuss how it was in sync with the philosophy of Bhakti movement as Bhakti followers did not owe allegiance to any specific religion, did not adhere to rituals, customs, Sastric dictates and strongly opposed caste division and idol worship.

Conclusion – Mention that Kabir influenced Indian society back then and his teachings are mug required in the current climate.

Background:-
- Kabir is one of the India’s most revered 15th century mystic poets, His sayings not only influenced people’s way of life but also contributed largely towards “Bhakti movement”.
- As a poet, Kabir transcended many of the divisions that existed in India. Although he was drawn deeply into spiritual life, he openly criticized all sects and gave a new direction to the Indian philosophy, with his straightforward approach on various aspects of human existence. It is for this reason that Kabir is held in high esteem all over the world.

Sant Kabir’s teachings are inspired by several religions:-
- His teachings were distinguished theologically by inward loving devotion to a divine principle, and socially by an egalitarianism opposed to the qualitative distinctions of the Hindu caste hierarchy and to the religious differences between Hindu and Muslim.
- Kabir was influenced by prevailing religious mood such as old Brahmanic Hinduism, Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, teachings of Nath yogis and the personal devotionalism from South India mixed with imageless God of Islam. The influence of these various doctrines is clearly evident in Kabir’s verses.
- It is Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles. The social and practical manifestation of Kabir’s philosophy has rung through the ages. It represented a synthesis of Hindu, and Muslim concepts.
  - From Hinduism he accepts the concept of reincarnation and the law of Karma. From Islam he takes the outer practices of Indian Sufi ascetics and Sufi mysticism.
- Bhakti movement influence:-
Bhakti movement poets played an important role in laying the foundation for a reconfiguration of society on more equitable lines. Kabir upturned the religious notions and social conventions of his time.

His teachings were in sync with the principles of bhakti movement where more focus was on equality of castes, preached the path of devotion and discarded all rituals, chose the path of love and devotion etc.

Kabir preached a monotheism that appealed directly to the poor and assured them of their access to god without an intermediary. He rejected both Hinduism and Islam, as well as empty religious rituals, and denounced hypocrisy.

The Bhakti movement promoted the growth of vernacular language and literature in different parts of the country. Kabir Nanak and Chaitanya preached in their respective vernacular tongues like Kabir in Hindi, Nanak in Gurumuki and chaitanya in Bengali. So subsequent Bhakti literatures were compiled in these languages.

Christianity:-
- Nineteenth century missionaries noted the similarity of his thoughts to Christianity, speculating that he must have composed his poems under Christian influence.

Other religions:-
- His indebtedness to Buddhist Siddhas has been a subject of scholarship in the last century.
- Jain poets emulated his style, so much so that the 17th century Anandghan was dubbed as the "Jain Kabir".
- As far as Parsis are concerned, one of the earliest non-Hindi mentions of Kabir comes from the Dabistan-i Mazahib composed by a neo-Zoroastrian (around 1653).
- His verses are found in Sikhism's scripture Guru Granth Sahib

Conclusion:-
- Not only has Kabir influenced Muslims and Hindus but he is one of the major inspirations behind Sikhism as well.
- He can be celebrated as Dalit hero or as a Brahmin. Kabir and the Kabir Panth are accepted as a part of Hinduism. He is one of the Bhagats of the Sikhs and a large corpus of his poems is included in the Guru Granth Sahib. His presence in Indian Islamic thought, Qawwali singing and architecture has also been well documented. His rauza in Maghar (Uttar Pradesh) is a part of the architectural heritage of the country.

Q)The distinctive features of its culture and its uniqueness are the precious possession of the Indian society. Discuss. (250 words)

Why this question
India is a unique country with a rich ancient history and with one of the oldest yet dynamic culture. It has a distinct identity and although diverse in all respects, there is an underlying unity in Indian culture.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to write in detail about the uniqueness of Indian culture and its salient characteristics. Here we have to be as exhaustive as possible while confining ourselves to the given word limit.

Directive word
Discuss- this is an all-encompassing directive which mandates to write at length about the key demand of the question- salient characteristics and uniqueness of Indian culture.

Structure of the answer
Introduction– write a few lines about the prehistoric origin of Indian civilization and the diversity of our culture in all forms ranging from dance to literature, architecture to philosophy etc.

Body– Mention that in spite of all these differences and diversity, Indian culture as a whole has some unique and salient characteristics. Discuss in points, about the uniqueness and salient features of our culture. E.g
  - Continuity and Change
  - Variety and unity
  - Secularism
  - Universalism
  - Materialistic as well as spiritualistic etc.
Discuss each point in detail and discuss how each aspect is highlighted in our culture. Take the help of the article attached to the question to frame your answer.

Background:-

- India is a vast country with a lot of diversity in her physical and social environment. The composite and dynamic character of Indian culture is a result of the rich contributions of all these diverse cultural groups over a long period of time. The distinctive features of Indian culture and its uniqueness are the precious possession of all Indians.

Distinctive features:-

- **Continuity and change :-**
  - Indian culture has had an enduring character. Despite major changes and upheavals significant threads of continuity can be traced throughout the course of Indian history right upto the present day.

- **Variety and unity:-**
  - Indian culture, over the last three mellenia, has successfully, but quietly, observed the best assimilable parts from other religions and cultures, from time to time and integrated them into itself.
  - A large number of languages and dialects are spoken in our country which has led to the growth of a great variety of literature. People belonging to eight great religions of the world co-exist here in a harmonious manner.
  - The second important reason for the variety in our culture is the intermingling among various ethnic groups. Since time immemorial, people from far and near have been coming and settling here.
  - The people belonging to other cultures brought their cultural habits, thoughts and ideas, which got amalgamated into the existing culture.
  - Cultural exchange between different regions of India has also continued.

- **Secular outlook:-**
  - The secular character of Indian culture is a result of the intermingling of people belonging to diverse cultural groups over a long period of time. Right to freedom of religion ensures secular nature of our polity.
  - In the Western context development of secularism meant complete separation of the church and the state. In India secularism is taken as a more positive concept to cope with the complex social structure in the country with a view to protecting the interests of all, particularly the minorities.

- **Universalism:-**
  - The concept of coexistence has not been confined to the geographical and political boundaries of the country only. India has a universal outlook and it has been promoting the message of peace and harmony to the entire world.
  - India has been raising a strong voice against racialism and colonialism. It has protested against the formation of power blocks in the world. In fact India became one of the founder members of the non-aligned movement.

- **Materialistic and spiritualistic:-**
  - India is popularly known to be a land of spirituality particularly to the West. However, Indian history from ancient times to present day shows that the developments of materialistic and non-materialistic culture have been going on alongside.

Q) **Pottery is one of the most tangible and iconic elements of Indian art. Discuss the evolution of pottery making in India. (250 words)**

Why this question

Indian pottery has its roots in the Harappan Civilization and has evolved through ages into marvellous art forms as well as the objects of daily use. It is important to know the evolution of Indian pottery.

Key demand of the question.

The question wants us to write in detail about the history of pottery making in India, its role in Indian history and how it evolved over the centuries.
Directive word
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question. We also have to discuss about the related and important aspects of the question in order to bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

Structure of the answer
Introduction– Write a few lines about the role pottery making. E.g The history of pottery tells of the daily life of human beings, their death and burial, of human migration, trade and conquest, cultural practices and influences.

Body–
1. Discuss how pottery making started and evolved in technique. E.g coiling technique > Wheel made pottery > Hand moddelling > Terracotta > Giant figures.
2. Discuss in parts, how Indian pottery evolved over time. E.g
3. Harappan civilization
4. Maurya and Sunga periods
5. Kushan period
6. Gupta period
7. Post-Gupta period

Discuss the salient aspects of pottery of each time period and mention the names of the masterpieces of art made of pottery.

Conclusion– sum up your discussion in a few lines and form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue.

Background:-
- Evidence of pottery has been found in the early settlements of Mehrgarh from the Indus Valley Civilization. Today, it is a cultural art that is still practiced extensively in India. Pottery plays an important role in studying culture and reconstructing the past.
- Historically with distinct culture, the style of pottery changed. It reflects the social, economic and environmental conditions a culture thrived in, which helps the archaeologists and historians in understanding our past. It holds significant value in understanding cultures where script was either absent or remains undeciphered.

Evolution of pottery making in India:-
- Neolithic Age:-
  - First reference of pottery in this age. Naturally it is hand-made pottery but during the later period foot wheel is also used.
- Chalcolithic Age:-
  - Chalcolithic Era, the first metal age, is marked by the occurrence of distinct cultures in various parts of our country namely – Ahar culture in South Eastern Rajasthan, Malwa culture in Western MP, Jorwe culture in Western Maharashtra, etc.
  - People of this age used different kinds of pottery.
- Black-and-red-ware Pottery
  - Black and red ware seems to have been widely used. Cultures like Ahar-Banas showed the presence of Black and Red ware pottery with white linear designs.
- Black-on-red ware
  - Jorweware is painted black-on-red and has a matt surface treated with a wash.
- Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP)
  - OCP people are regarded as the junior contemporaries of Harappa.
  - This pottery is identified with the Copper Hoard Culture that was found in upper Ganga Valley and Ganga Yamuna doab area.
- Harappan civilization:-
  - Polished Ware Pottery with rough surface
    - Both polished and unpolished type of pottery existed
    - Pottery generally has a red surface and is wheel thrown although handmade ones too exist
    - Polished wares were well fired.
• Most of the pottery is polychrome meaning more than two colours are used to colour the pottery.
• Most of the pottery is Such potteries usually have flat bases
• Geometrical design along with paintings depicting flora and fauna are observe
• Perforated pottery was also found may be used for straining liquor.
• Pottery throughout the civilization was uniform (mass thrown) revealing some form of control and leaving less space of individual creativity
• Presence of luxurious pottery obtained from certain sites reveals economic stratification in the society

Burial Pottery of Harappa 
• Burial pottery was specially and distinctly made
• Reveals the Harappan belief in life after death
• Presence or absence of this pottery in the grave goods reflected social stratification

Late Harappa:-
• Ochre Colored Pottery (OCP) :- The late Harappan cultures (1900BC – 1200BC) were primarily chalcolithic. Some specific chalcolithic sites show the elements of late Harappan (like use of burnt bricks, etc.). These sites have OCP.
• Black-grey burnished ware produced on slow wheel – Found in Swat Valley. This resembles the pottery from north Iranian plateau.
• Black-on-red painted and wheel turned pottery – Also found in Swat Valley. This shows a connection that Swat Valley was associated with Harappa.
• Grey-ware and Painted Grey Ware, generally associated with Vedic people have been found in conjunction with some late Harappan pottery. It has less intricate designs as compared to the early and mature periods suggesting a dilution of the rich culture.

Vedic Era – PGW:-
• The Vedic Era saw the emergence of Painted Grey Ware (PGW) Culture.
• The Rig Vedic sites have PGW but iron objects and cereals are absent. Hence it is considered a pre-iron phase of PGW. On the other hand, the Later Vedic sites are considered iron-phase of PGW.

Later Vedic Era – NBPW:-
• The later Vedic people were acquainted with 4 types of pottery – Black-and-red ware, black-slipped ware, painted grey ware and red ware.

End of Later Vedic Era – NBPW:-
• Towards the very end of Later Vedic Age around 6th century BC, we see the emergence of 2nd phase of urbanization (1st being Indus Valley Civilization). This era marked the beginning of the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW).
• Glossy, shining type pottery.
• Made of fine fabric and served as tableware for richer class. Considered deluxe pottery only found with the elites revealing societal stratification which was a result of Brahmanical hegemony.
• This pottery continued to exist during the Mahajanapada era.
• Found in Ahichatra, Hastinapur (both in UP), Navdatoli (Madhya Pradesh).
• Classified into two groups – bichrome and monochrome.
• Monochrome pottery has a fine and thin fabric. Potted on fast wheel and have astrikingly lustrous surface. 90% of this type is jet black, brownish black and bluish black and 10% have colours like pink, golden, brown among others.
• Bichrome pottery is found less. It shows all the features of monochrome except that it shows combination of two colours.

Megalithic Pottery found in Kerala
• Well baked and durable.
• Bulk of these are plain.
• It has been excavated throughout India but majorly from the South. Mostly in
• They were used as grave goods revealing belief in life after death.
- **Mauryan period:-**
  - Use of the potters wheel became universal. The pottery associated with the Mauryan period consists of many types of ware. But the most highly developed technique is seen in a special type of pottery known as the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBP), which was the hallmark of the preceding and early Mauryan periods.
  - The NBP ware is made of finely levigated alluvial clay, which when seen in section is usually of a grey and sometimes of a red hue.

- **Sunga period:-**
  - Pottery flourished as the Sunga rulers like the Mauryans were royal patrons of varied forms of art.

- **Gupta period:-**
  - Clay figurines were used both for religious and secular purposes. There are figurines of Vishnu, Kartikeya, Surya, Durga, Kubera, Nagas and other gods and goddesses. Gupta pottery remains found at Ahichchatra, Rajgarh, Hastinapur and Bashar afford an outstanding proof of the excellence of pottery. The most distinctive class of pottery of this period is the red ware.
  - Terracottas form another important branch of the Gupta art. In this modest medium, gifted clay-modellers created things of real beauty and achieved a wide popular basis for their art. Clay figurines served as poor man's sculpture and contributed largely to popularise art and culture.
  - The terracotta figures may be classified under two heads, (a) gods and goddesses, (b) male and female figures.

- **Kushan period:-**
  - The Kushan cultural phase in Bengal and North Indian sites brought a new horizon in ceramic craft. The characteristic pottery of this phase is marked by a unique red polished ware with stamped design along with a large number of dull or sturdy red ware. The diagnostic red ware is treated with a bright red slip.

- **Mughals:-**
  - The art of glassware got great impetus during the medieval period. Mughal rulers provided patronage to the craft of glass making. The credit of introducing the art of glass engraving in India goes to the Mughals.

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

**Q)** “Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.” Comment (250 words)

*Why this question*
Swadeshi movement and thought forms an integral and a pivotal component of India’s struggle for independence against the British. The term swadeshi has two components- self discovery, self sufficiency and resistance to foreign domination. It is important to discuss both these aspects.

*Key demand of the question.*
The question wants us to bring out the meaning of the term swadeshi as understood and explained by Gandhi Ji. The question basically wants us to bring out the essence of swadeshi not only as a tool of non-cooperation but also as a tool to self discovery and development based on indigenous values.

*Directive word*
Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon. We have to support our opinion with substantial, valid and proper arguments.

*Structure of the answer*
**Introduction** – Write a few lines about the significance of swadeshi movement in India’s struggle for independence. **Body**-
- Discuss the meaning of Swadeshi as understood and explained by Gandhi Ji. E.g for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, one must restrict myself to his ancestral religion. That is the use of his immediate religious surrounding. If he finds it defective, he should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of
politics he should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics he should use only things that are produced by his immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting.

- Discuss the other aspect of swadeshi movement as a tool to challenge British supremacy in India. Discuss about the salient aspects of swadeshi and boycott movement which testify the same. E.g picketing of shops; establishment of national institutions to counter British policies and designs etc.

Conclusion– based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

Background:-
- While many Indian freedom fighters furthered the cause of Swadeshi, Mahatma Gandhi used it as a key component of the swaraj movement. The main focus area of the swadeshi movement was the boycott of Western, especially British, goods. There was picketing outside shops selling imported commodities, and people were encouraged to buy locally manufactured or produced goods instead. The movement had two-fold goals: to cripple the British economic system by boycotting British goods, and to revive indigenous industry in India.

Swadeshi as understood by Gandhi:-
- Thus as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, one must restrict myself to ancestral religion. That is the use of immediate religious surrounding.
- In the domain of politics one should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects.
- In that of economics one should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting.
- According to Gandhi, By reason of the Swadeshi spirit, a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms.
- If people follow the Swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages where they are not locally producible.

Swadeshi against British:-
- Swadeshi movement which is part of the Indian independence movement and the developing Indian nationalism, was an economic strategy aimed at removing the British Empire from power and improving economic conditions in India by following the principles of swadeshi and which had some success.
- Methods such as picketing of shops; establishment of national institutions to counter British policies and designs etc were used during swadeshi movement to meet the ends.

Q) Colonial exploitation and domination scarred Indian society in many ways. But paradoxically, colonialism also gave birth to its own enemy – nationalism. Comment.(250 words)

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to discuss how colonialism divided Indian society and also how it also gave birth to nationalism. As the answer is quite simple here, it is important to be specific and concise.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction- Write a few lines about the nature of Indian society before colonialism especially the caste distinctions, religious distinctions, other important socio-economic distinctions.

Body–
- Discuss the inequalities created or widened by colonialism- e.g The urban middle classes; widening of religious distinctions in the form of birth of various communal organizations like a, b, c; effect on caste distinctions.
- Discuss how each of them affected Indian nationalism. E.g urban middle class came to know about western ideas etc., felt confident about their past and ability to govern themselves; strategically used press, assembly to portray
Indian cause etc. discuss the role of communal organizations and similarly caste organizations in India’s freedom struggle.

Conclusion – Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

Background:-
- Colonial rule unified all of India for the first time and brought in the forces of modernisation and capitalist economic change. By and large, the changes brought about were irreversible. The economic, political and administrative unification of India under colonial rule was achieved at great expense.
- Colonial exploitation and domination scarred Indian society in many ways. But paradoxically, colonialism also gave birth to its own enemy – nationalism.

How colonial exploitation and domination scarred Indian society :-
- **Agriculture:**
  - The significant consequence of colonial exploitation was that India remained primarily an agricultural country with a scope for commercialisation of agriculture so as to serve the interests of Great Britain.
- **Handicrafts:**
  - British policies led to destruction of Indian handicrafts and transformed the country into an importer of manufactured goods from Britain.
- **The British followed the policy of discriminating protection** and imperial preference so as to maintain complete control over the Indian market and also to provide secure avenues for British investors in India.
- **Land issues:**
  - The new land system in the form of Zamindari and Ryotwari system introduced by the British created a class of absentee landlords making way for exploitation of the peasants and concentration of economic power in the hands of the few. This had resulted total depression in agriculture and industry.
- **Divide and rule:**
  - Western invaders arrived with an express desire to colonise and exploit the indigenous people wherever they went, materially as well as spiritually. India was no exception. They had to find a way out to create further chasm in the local people to divide, rule and exploit policy.
  - Whenever the British felt threatened by Indian nationalism and saw it growing, they divided the Indian people along religious lines.
- **Famines:**
  - The last famine in India, in Bengal between 1943 and 1944, claimed over four million lives.
  - The social pyramid was truncated because the British lopped off most of the top three layers of the Moghul hierarchy, i.e. the Moghul court, the Moghul aristocracy and quasi-autonomous prices (a quarter of these survived), and the local chieftainry (zamindars who survived in about 40 per cent of India). In place of these people the British installed a modern bureaucracy which took a smaller share of national income.
- **At the bottom of society the position of sharecropping tenantry and landless labourers** remained wretched.
  - In urban areas a new Westernized ‘middle class’ of Indians emerged and became the major challenge to the British raj.
  - At the end of British rule there were 3 million factory workers making cheap textiles and jute sacking, whose Moghul predecessors had worked on muslins and silks, and a million railway workers who had no earlier counterpart.

How colonialism gave birth to nationalism:-
- Historically, an Indian nationalism took shape under British colonialism.
- **Unified the community:**
  - The shared experience of colonial domination helped unify and energise different sections of the community.
  - Colonialism created new classes and communities which came to play significant roles in subsequent history.
• Education:-
  ▪ The emerging middle classes began, with the aid of western style education, to challenge colonialism on its own ground.
  ▪ Theories of philosophers like John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith and Voltaire instilled in the Indian mind notions of freedom, liberty, equality and democracy. As a result of the exposure to such ideas, Indians began to recognise the need for change.

• Rediscovery of tradition:-
  ▪ India’s rich and glorious history, as revealed by Western scholars, helped Indians to regain their lost pride and confidence and contributed to the development of nationalism.

• Middle class:-
  ▪ The urban middle classes were the main carriers of nationalism and they led the campaign for freedom.

• Colonial interventions also crystallised religious and caste based communities. These too became major players.

• Language:-
  ▪ The imposition of English in the education system was a blessing in disguise. Indians from diverse regions speaking different languages could now communicate with each other through the medium of English.
  ▪ English thus united the educated Indians and brought about a feeling of oneness among them. A spirit of nationalism gradually emerged.

• Socio-religious reform:-
  ▪ When the British came to India, they brought new ideas such as liberty, equality, freedom and human rights from the Renaissance, the Reformation Movement and the various revolutions that took place in Europe. These ideas appealed to some sections of our society and led to several reform movements in different parts of the country.
  ▪ India’s contact with the West made educated Indians realise that socio-religious reform was a prerequisite for the all-round development of the country.
  ▪ These reform movements sought to remove social evils which divided the Indian society. This had the effect of bringing different sections of the society together. Since many reform movements drew their inspiration from India’s rich cultural heritage, these promoted pan-Indian feelings and spirit of nationalism.

• British rule itself:-
  ▪ Adverse impact of the British rule on the political, economic and social spheres resulted in sharp reaction of the Indian people against the foreigners. This led to a series of the anti-British movements throughout the country. Peasants and tribes rebelled against exploitative rulers.
  ▪ An important factor in the growth of national sentiments in India was the tone of racial superiority adopted by many Englishmen in their dealings with Indians. The reactionary policies of the British government were also responsible for the growth of political associations.

• Communal organisations though sometimes revolutionary in nature but helped in formulating the scripts of nationalism.

• Technology:-
  ▪ The introduction of the railways, telegraph and unified postal systems had brought the different parts of the country together and promoted mutual contact among the people, especially among the leaders.

• Role of Press and Literature:-
  ▪ With the emergence of the modern press, both English and Vernacular, the latter half of the 19th century saw an unprecedented growth of Indian-owned English and Vernacular newspapers. The Indian Press played a notable role in mobilizing public opinion, organizing political movements, fighting out public opinions and promoting nationalism.

Q) Discuss how gender inequality came to be recognised as inequality in the Indian context, and the kinds of responses that this recognition produced.(250 words)

Why this question
Gender inequality is an important issue and it is important to know how this issue came to be recognized in Indian society and what responses it generated from the society.
Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to write in detail about the issue of gender inequality in India and when and how it came to be recognized as inequality at the level of masses.

Key demand of the question
The question wants us to write in detail about the existence of gender inequality in India and write about when and how it came to be publicly recognized as an inequality. It also wants us to write in detail about the kind of response it generated then.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Write a few lines about the gender inequality historically prevalent in Indian subcontinent- like Sati system, Purdah system, illiteracy, lack of access to power and several religious aspects etc.

Body-
- Mention that the women’s question arose in modern India as part of the nineteenth century middle class social reform movements and discuss the salient characteristics of these movements- e.g dominated by middle-class, western educated indians; inspired by democratic and humanistic ideals of the west as well as pride in indigenous traditions and culture; etc. Mention the name of the pioneers who fought for women equality and briefly discuss their contributions. E.g Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Jyotiba Phule; M.G. Ranade etc.
- Discuss the kind of responses it generated. E.g various socio-religious reform movements; intellectual debate like M.G. Ranade’s writings entitled The Texts of the Hindu Law on the Lawfulness of the Remarriage of Widows and Vedic Authorities for Widow Marriage etc. mention the role of women like Tarabai Shinde, Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain etc.

Conclusion- sum up your discussion in a few lines and form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue.

Background :-
- Women historically have been having a respected position in India. However since the later Vedic period the status of women deteriorated as is visible with the sati system, purdah system, illiteracy, religious beliefs etc.
- The described position of women as per Manu as women being inferior to men is still the case in present modern day social structure. Barring few exceptions here and there, women have no power to take independent decisions either inside their homes or in outside world.

Gender inequality in Indian context and response :-
- Women’s question arose in modern India as part of the nineteenth century middle class social reform movements. They were often at once inspired by the democratic ideals of the modern west and by a deep pride in their own democratic traditions of the past. Many used both these resources to fight for women’s rights.
- The anti-sati campaign led by Raja Rammohun Roy in Bengal, the widow remarriage movement in the Bombay Presidency where Ranade was one of the leading reformers, from Jyotiba Phule’s simultaneous attack on caste and gender oppression, and from the social reform movement in Islam led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan are some of the examples.
- Raja Rammohun Roy’s :-
  - His attempts to reform society, religion and the status of women can be taken as the starting point of nineteenth century social reform in Bengal. Roy undertook the campaign against “sati” which was the first women’s issue to receive public attention. Rammohun thus attacked the practice of sati on the basis of both appeals to humanitarian and natural rights doctrines as well as Hindu shastras.
- Ranade:-
  - G. Ranade’s writings entitled the The Texts of the Hindu Law on the Lawfulness of the Remarriage of Widows and Vedic Authorities for Widow Marriage elaborated the shastric sanction for remarriage of widows.
- Syed Ahmed Khan:-
Like Dayanand Saraswati of the Arya Samaj, he stood for women’s education but sought for a curriculum that included instruction in religious principles, training in the arts of housekeeping and handicrafts and rearing of children.

- **Women reformers:**
  - Stree Purush Tulana (or Comparison of Men and Women) was written by Tarabai Shinde, as a protest against the double standards of a male dominated society.
  - Apart from the early feminist visions there were a large number of women’s organisations that arose both at the all India and local levels in the early twentieth century. And then began the participation of women in the national movement itself.
  - The deplorable and unjust treatment of the Hindu upper caste widows was a major issue taken up by the social reformers.
  - In the nineteenth century reform movements, the emphasis had been on the backward aspects of tradition like sati, child marriage, or the ill treatment of widows.

- **Post independence:**
  - In the 1970s, the emphasis was on ‘Modern’ issues the rape of women in police custody, dowry murders, the representation of women in popular media, and the gendered consequences of unequal development.
  - The law was a major site for reform in the 1980s and after, specially when it was discovered that many laws of concern to women had not been changed since the 19th century.

**Q) Discuss the key principles that grew out of Montagu Chelmsford Report and how those principles impacted our constitution?(250 words)**

**Why this question**  
As the article states, in July 2018 it has been 100 years since the Montagu Chelmsford Report came out. Considering UPSC’s fascination with such historical milestones, it becomes important to prepare the topic in detail. Hence this question.

**Key demand of the question**  
The question expects us to discuss the key principles that came out of the Report and explain how they are being continued in our present constitution.

**Directive word**
Discuss – Here your discussion has to remain focussed on underlining the key takeaways from the report that had an impact on the polity and explain whether or not and in what ways those provisions had an impact on our constitution.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Give a short brief on the Report explaining it’s origin, objectives etc.

**Body**
- Explain the key takeaways from the Report – responsible government, self-governance,federal structure etc
- Examine the impact these features had on Indian polity.
- Discuss how they were or were not continued in subsequent years. Discuss the provisions of local self government, the federal structure etc in our constitution, the foundations of which were laid down by such Acts

**Conclusion** – Give your view on the contribution of British in evolving a sound polity in India through these reports.

**Background:-**
- July 2018 marks the **100th year of the publication of the ‘Report on Indian constitutional reforms’**, commonly known as the **Montagu-Chelmsford Report (MCR)**.
- Edwin **Montagu**, then **Secretary of State for India**, had advocated for **increased participation of Indians** in the British Indian administration.

**Key principles out of Montague Chelmsford reforms:-**
- Elucidates the **principle of accountable governance** by directing that the Government of India must remain wholly responsible to Parliament.
- The Government of India act 1919 had a separate Preamble. This Preamble declared that Objective of the British Government is the **gradual introduction of responsible government in India**.

**Introduction of Diarchy:-**
- Preamble suggested for a decentralized unitary form of government.
- Diarchy means a dual set of governments one is accountable another is not accountable.
Subjects:-
- The provincial subjects were divided into two groups: One was reserved and another was transferred.
- The reserved subjects were kept with the Governor and transferred subjects were kept with the Indian Ministers. This division of subjects was basically what they meant by introducing the Diarchy.
- The reserved subjects were the essential areas of law enforcement such as justice, police, revenue. The transferred subjects were such as public health, public works, education etc.

The Indian executive comprised of the Governor General and his council:-
- No bill of the legislature could be deemed to have been passed unless assented to by the governor general. The later could however enact a Bill without the assent of the legislature.
- This act made the central legislature bicameral. The first house which was central legislature, with 145 members (out of which 104 elected and 41 nominated) was called central Legislative Assembly and second called with 60 members (out of which 33 elected and 27 nominated) was called Council of States. The term of the assembly was fixed 3 years and council 5 years.
- The central legislature can be called a primitive model of today’s Lok Sabha and council of states can be called a primitive model of Today’s Rajya Sabha.

The act provided for the establishment of a Public Service Commission in India for the first time.
- This act also made a provision in its part V, that a statutory commission would be set up at the end of 10 years after the act was passed which shall inquire into the working into the system of the government.

The communal representation was extended and Sikhs, Europeans and Anglo Indians were included.

Voting:-
- The Franchise (Right of voting) was granted to the limited number of only those who paid certain minimum “Tax” to the government.
- The seats were distributed among the provinces not upon the basis of the population but upon the basis of their importance in the eyes of the government, on the basis of communities, and property was one of the main basis to determine a franchisee.

Governor general powers:-
- The central legislature was empowered to consider, pass or reject legislation on any of the subjects enumerated in the Central list. But, the Governor-General had the last word on any Bill passed by the Legislature.
- He possessed the power to prevent the consideration of a Bill or any of its part, on the plea that it was injurious to the peace and tranquility of the country.
- He could disallow a question in the legislature.
- He had the power to withhold his assent to any Bill passed by the legislature without which it could not become an Act.
- He also had the power to disallow an adjournment motion or debate on any matter.
- He could enact a law, which he considered essential for the safety and tranquility of the empire even if the legislature had refused to pass it.

Financial powers of central legislature:-
- The financial powers of the central legislature were also very much limited. The budget was to be divided into two categories, votable and non-votable.
- The votable items covered only one third of the total expenditure.
- Even in this sphere the Governor-General was empowered to restore any grant refused or reduced by the legislature, if in his opinion the demand was essential for the discharge of his responsibilities.

How it impacted Indian constitution:-
- MCR would go on to become the basis for the Government of India Act, 1935, and, ultimately, the Constitution. The key principles of responsible government, self-governance and federal structure grew out of these reforms.

Administrative changes:-
MCR stands out for proposing some of the most radical administrative changes and for giving provincial legislatures the mantle of self-governance. To this extent, the report advocated the need to emancipate the local governments and legislatures from central control.

- The report also advocated in the direction of conferring responsible government on the provinces.
- Indian constitution adopted bicameralism as seen in form of Lok sabha and rajya sabha and states have also adopted.
- They further demanded that administration of the Presidency be eventually moved to the local legislature. To this extent, they suggested that departments in administration be placed under the control of legislatures.
- Similarly Indian constitution also provides each states and Union Territories autonomy in it areas.
- India also adopted concept of public service commission in the form of Union public service commission.
- Indian constitution adopted the concept of Direct election on the basis of universal adult franchise.
- 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment (devolution of power)
- Article 75 talks about responsible and accountable government.

**Drawbacks:**
- Franchise was very limited.
- At the centre, the legislature had no control over the governor-general and his executive council.
- Division of subjects was not satisfactory at the centre.
- Allocation of seats for Central Legislature to provinces was based on ‘importance’ of provinces for instance, Punjab’s military importance and Bombay’s commercial importance.
- At the level of provinces, division of subjects and parallel administration of two parts was irrational and hence unworkable.
- The provincial ministers had no control over finances and over the bureaucrats, leading to constant friction between the two. Ministers were often not consulted on important matters too; in fact, they could be overruled by the governor on any matter that the latter considered special.
- On the home government (in Britain) front, the Government of India Act, 1919 made an important change the secretary of state was henceforth to be paid out of the British exchequer.

**Conclusion:**
- The MCR on Indian constitutional reforms along with the Montagu Declaration are, thus, worthy claimants of the title of the Magna Carta of modern India.

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

Q) The energy and courage of youth played an important role in the India’s freedom struggle. Discuss, in light of the student movements in pre-independent India. (250 words)

**Why this question**
It is important to know the role played by different sections of the society in India’s freedom struggle. Student movements have contributed significantly to our freedom movement and there are many important personalities associated with the issue.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to write in detail about the role played by the student movements in the history of India’s freedom struggle. We have to be comprehensive in our approach covering all the contributions of these movements.

**Directive word**
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question and all important and relevant aspects, so as to bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction –** Mention that in 1848 Dadabhai Naoroji founded ‘The student’s scientific and historical society, as a forum for discussion. This can be considered to be beginning of student movements in India.

**Body**
Discuss the contribution of student movements in pre-independent India. E.g discuss their contribution in Swadeshi and Boycott movement, Non-cooperation movement; Civil disobedience movement; quit India movement etc. Discuss
the role of student organizations like All India Students Federation; All Bengal Students association; All India Muslim Students Federation; Hindu Students Federation etc. Mention the names of few important student leaders.

Conclusion- Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue.

Background:-

- In India students were initiators and agents in independence movements. Political and student movements are interlinked and have advanced more in India. Student movements have more than 150 years of history.
- In 1848 Dadabhai Naoroji founded 'The student's scientific and historic society, as a forum for discussion. This can be considered to be beginning of student movements in India.

Contribution of student movements:-

- As the part of the freedom struggle there were so many student movements emerged and engaged in it. Between 1906 and 1918, 184 persons are convicted in Bengal in connection with revolutionary activities out of which 68 were students.

  - **Swadesi Movement (1905)**
    - This gave students a revolutionary outlook which called them to boycott colleges as well as British Goods, Student clubs. It grew all over introducing students to active politics.
    - In 1905 students in Eden Hindu Hostel burned the effigy of Lord Curzon and British clothes. They resolved to boycott college examinations in order to remonstrate against the government's decision to partition their province.

  - **Local level organisations:-**
    - In the place of the mass student organizations, a number of local groups mostly of an adhoc nature have developed. Agitations have tended to be localized forced on university issues or local political conflicts, rather than on rational or broader ideological questions.
    - In Punjab a group known as Nai Hava (New air) was founded: students in Maharashtra and Punjab were deeply involved in politics.

- **All India college students conference:-**
  - In 1912, All India College students Conference of Ahmedabad nailed the student commitment to work for the freedom of the India and gives motto of 'Charka Swaraj first, and education after'.

  - **Student Christian Movement of India (SCM)**
    - It was started in 1912 against western colonialism with an aim to orient the students with Christian Faith through social realities.

  - **Non Cooperation Movement (1919)**
    - As the part of this movement The All India College Students Conference held at Nagpur in 1920, under the Presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai. He criticised the then denationalising system of education, stressed the need for the creation of a permanent organisation of college students to look after their interests and opined that students should participate in politics.
    - The resolution on non-co-operation and boycott of schools and colleges is passed with an overwhelming majority. Boycott of schools and colleges become an integral part of the non-cooperation movement.

  - They preached noncooperation, especially withdrawal of boys and girls from schools and colleges, and lawyers from the bar.

  - Revolutionary leaders like Bhagat Singh, Khudiram Bose influenced students for the greater cause and many students became part of HSRA.

  - **Civil disobedience movement:-**
    - This was another call to students. Students led processions, organized hartals and courted arrest in big numbers in Punjab, Bengal, UP and Bombay. This was the most active period of political agitation by Indian students.
    - In 1936 at the first All India Students Conference at Lucknow, 986 student delegates from 210 local and 11 provincial organizations from Punjab, UP, CP, Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa attended the Conference.

  - **All India Students Federation:-**
    - In 1936, under the presidency of Jinnah. It was in this conference that AISF came into existence and it was the first national organisation of students. The delegates to the conference were both political and apolitical.
- According to the directions of the AISF strikes were conducted in colleges and institutions when demands of students were not complied. This happened in Bengal, Madras, Aligarh, U.P., Bombay and Lahore. Further, conferences were held to bring all students under one banner.

- The Hindu Students Federation (HSF) was started in 1936 with the ideology of RSS. This wing of student directly appeals to the sentiments of Hindu youth from its inception. It did not participate with the Freedom struggle.

- The first All India Students Conference was held at Lucknow in 1936 in which 986 student delegates from 210 local and 11 provincial organizations from Punjab, UP, CP, Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa attended the Conference.

- All India Muslim Students Federation (AIMSF) founded by the Muslim League in 1937 to address the grievances of Muslim students and wanted a support for separate state for Muslims from the Muslim student wing. This wing of student did not participate in the Independence movement and was concerned only with defending Muslims whenever they were attacked.

- In 1937, “The Students’ Tribune”, a journal was started to popularise the national

- Rise of the State Students’ Organisations:-
  - The Deccan States Students Conference was held at Khudachi (District Belgaum) in 1937, under the presidency of Dr. G. S. Khair.
  - Some twenty resolutions were adopted. Mr. Prabodh, the editor of the students Tribune, inaugurated the All-Kashmir Students’ Federation and dissolved all other unions and leagues.
  - Later on, this Federation affiliated itself to the Punjab Students Federation. The Madras Students Federation started a journal, Student, to organise students of the South.
  - The youth of India was not confined to Indian boundaries but also supported freedom struggle from nation abroad eq. Bhikaji Kama, Lala Hardayal etc.

- Quit India Movement (1942):-
  - In the first time in the history of India there was such a large majority of students involved in a struggle. The students successfully manage to shut down most of the colleges and involved most of leadership responsibilities and provided the link between the underground leaders and the movement.

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

Q) Caste and communal consciousness carry the same essence in the Indian context. Comment in the light of recent mob lynching episodes in India. (250 words)

**Why this question**

Lynching is an abominable social act and, against the rule of the law. The recent episodes of lynching have highlighted some of the essential aspects of Indian society which need to be assessed and deliberated upon so that the efforts to control such behaviour are well-focussed and effectively targeted.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to express our knowledge and holistic understanding of the issue of mob-lynching in India. We have to bring out the effect of caste and social consciousness behind such episodes and bring out how they are related.

**Directive word**

Comment- here we have to express our broad knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an opinion thereupon. However, whatever our opinion, it is essential to support it with substantial and valid facts/arguments/explanations/examples.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – write a few lines about the mob-lynching episodes in India and their growing number of episodes across the India.

**Body**– Bring out the role of caste and communal consciousness behind the occurrence of such episodes.

E.g If the victim belongs to a minority community, it seems to invoke a complete contempt for the rule of law not only by the members of the dominant community, but, also by the defenders of the law; presence of strong prejudices and insecurity among the masses exacerbated by a tardy and biased judicial process; politicization and communalization.
of the issues in order to create social rifts and exploit them for nefarious political purposes; role of police in attending to, and investigating such cases and their inherent social and political biases which shape up their response; etc.

**Conclusion**- based on your own understanding and analytical skills and more importantly based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced opinion on the issue.

**Background:-**

- Mob lynching in India is moving towards becoming the new normal. It has failed to invoke unconditional condemnation from a large section of society.
- Impulse for lynching is driven by two factors. One is a cultivated prejudice, and the other is a collective sense of insecurity that results from the overall inefficiency of the police and the judiciary.

**Caste and communal consciousness:-**

- Caste and communal factors begin to intersect with the process of shaping the legal consciousness once the social background of the victim and the tormentor is made public.
  - Thus, if the tormentor belongs to a social background other than that of the victim, who might be from the Dalit or minority community, it is likely to invoke either complete indifference or rhetorical support to the rule of law. This was evident in the case of the 2006 Dalit massacre in Khairlanji in Maharashtra.
  - If the victim belongs to a minority community, it seems to invoke a complete contempt for the rule of law not only by the members of the dominant community, but, most shockingly, by the defenders of the law as well in a few cases.
- On the other side of the spectrum, if the victims happen to be from non-Dalit or non-minority social backgrounds, then the reaction of the non-Dalits and non-minority members of Indian society is to want instant corporal punishment involving flogging and lynching of the suspected culprit.
- The stronger the caste and communal consciousness, the weaker and more fragile is the influence of the legal consciousness and belief in the law. Conversely, the weaker the influence of caste consciousness, the stronger the legal consciousness is supposed to be among the citizens of India.
- Politicization and communalization of the issues in order to create social rifts and exploit them for nefarious political purposes.
- Role of police in attending to, and investigating such cases and their inherent social and political biases which shape up their response are often criticized.

**Conclusion:-**

- In both, the desire as well as the mass action leading to actual lynching seek to radically undermine the need to respect the rule of law and thereby result in jeopardising the very future of democracy.

**Q)Discuss how caste manifests itself in Indian diaspora. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

Caste in South Asia is a strong institution to reckon with. A host of caste related discriminations, disadvantages are still common and violence against lower classes still takes place in India, even though the severity of the problem in the society as a whole has significantly fallen down. It would be interesting to see what happens to Indians who move out of India for a long time/forever.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to dig deep into the relationship between Indian society and caste system. It wants us to extrapolate this relation to Indian diaspora, living under a different socio-economic context and a separate political and legal framework.

**Directive word**

Discuss- we have to write in detail about the key demand of the question and mention any relevant and essential aspect of the question, so as to give a complete picture of the issue.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – write a few lines about the number of Indian diaspora and the diverse number of countries in which they have settled and flourished.

**Body**-

Discuss in detail about how caste manifests itself for Indian diaspora and to what extent. What are the discriminations faced in private and public life. E.g inter-caste marriages; denying employment opportunities based upon caste
system; Dalit movements in foreign countries; caste consciousness as a tool to claim superiority etc. Mention the difference in severity of the problem in India and outside India- lack of violence and institutional bias in other countries; non-politicization of the issue; better chances of getting relief in case of any discrimination proved in a court of law; lack of social protection like ST atrocities act etc.

Also try to brainstorm and bring out the reasons as to why caste system in its milder form is still practised among Indian diaspora- e.g strong role of family and relatives in Indian society vis a vis other societies; sub-conscious acceptance of one’s superiority vis a vis lower castes; assertiveness of lower castes etc.

**Conclusion** – Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

**Background :-**
- The **Indian diaspora** today constitutes an important, and in some respects unique, force in world culture.
- Recently US based organization, Equality Labs released data from a community-driven survey that highlighted how caste based practices are prevalent in South Asian institutions and society in the USA.

**Reasons for caste discrimination in Indian diaspora :-**
- In fact it’s happening globally, because wherever the diaspora go, they take their caste with them, and so, therefore, that discrimination goes with them.
- **Dalit discrimination:**
  - British Dalits who have been demanding protection from caste discrimination for many years, face opposition from savarna South Asian communities.
- **Workplace discrimination:**
  - Caste discrimination exists in the workplace, educational institutions and everyday interactions. So-called upper castes have refused to employ or work under Dalits in senior positions. Dalits have suffered ridicule of their caste-based names in schools, places of worship, and neighbourhoods.
- **Marriages:**
  - Indian matrimonial centers and websites that cater specially for the Indian Diaspora have classified prospective brides and grooms on the basis of castes and sub-castes.
  - In North America, large meetings are held with the purpose of getting young people from the same caste to get to know each other. In Atlanta, the Patidar Samaj meeting drew 4,000 people and resulted in 100 marriages. Many people return to South Asia to marry someone from their own caste.
- **Lower castes imitating upper castes:**
  - Once they started getting wealthy, the Mochis in South Africa insisted that they were Kshatriyas and not low-caste cobblers. They adopted Rajput surnames like Chauhan, Chavda, Jagas and claimed Kshatriya status.
  - They also turned to vegetarianism, essentially a higher caste (Brahminical) tradition.
- **Isolation:**
  - Due to the stigma that comes along with being a lower caste person, many are afraid to speak out publicly. Instead, they choose to isolate themselves from the Indian community in the UK and live among non-Indians who have little understanding of caste dynamics.
- **Laws:**
  - Caste as a system of social organization has been exported from its regions of origin to Diaspora communities, yet despite the prohibition of caste-based discrimination in international human rights law caste is **not recognized as a ground of discrimination in English law.**
  - There is no strong law like SC/ST atrocities act like in India

**However the manifestation of caste system is different in India and abroad in the following ways:**
- Lack of violence and institutional bias in other countries unlike India
- This issue is not politicized in other countries like in India
- There are better chances of getting relief in case of any discrimination proved in a court of law

**Way forward:**
- United Nations has also lent a voice to the debate, urging the UK government to implement caste discrimination law.
- Being educated also does not solve this problem. So there is need for attitudinal changes in the mindset of the people.
Q) In recent years, Indian political narrative has witnessed a marked shift in its stance towards the values of secularism, regionalism and federalism. Comment.(250 words)

Why this question
Although the article is highly subjective (and you are completely free to take whatever stance you want to take), it offers crucial insights into the realpolitik of present India. It also helps us understand the nature of Indian society, and how it associates itself with secularism, regionalism and federalism.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and discuss how the Indian political narrative has developed in the recent years and whether there is a marked shift in its stance towards the values of secularism, regionalism and federalism. We have to bring out reasons/arguments/facts in support of our answer and according form our opinion.

Directive word
Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an opinion thereupon. However our opinion must be backed with valid and proper arguments/facts.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – write a few lines about the constitutional status of federalism and secularism, and their role along with regionalism in Indian politics (how significant they have been in shaping Indian political narrative).

Body –
Discuss how each of the three aspects- secularism, regionalism and federalism has shaped and in turn being shaped by the political narrative in India in recent years. E.g discuss the spurt in sporadic communal events and lack of political will to speak against/or politicize the issue; decline in the political value of communal strategies; disaffection of Right-wing parties with the incumbent government; rising disaffection of the regional parties with the present party in power leading to regionalism; decline in the political clout of the Congress; issues affecting federalism like the terms of reference of the 15th finance commission, water disputes; special status of AP etc.

Conclusion – based on your discussion form a fair and a balanced opinion on the issue.

Background :-
- India being a big nation with huge diversity, regionalism is inevitable. Regionalism in acceptable levels produce positive results like growth and development of the region.
- India is country of religions. There exist multifarious religious groups in the country but, in spite of this, the Constitution stands for a secular state of India. There is no official religion in India. ‘Secularism’ has been inserted in the Preamble after 42nd Amendment.
- The constitution has divided the legislative authority via 7th schedule {Union, State, and Concurrent Lists}. The residuary powers are vested in the Central government.

How is the shift happening :-
- Secularism:-
  - Muslims and other minorities are becoming increasingly imperiled and marginalized continued widespread communalism and communal violence in several parts of the country which lead to many deaths
  - Protests to ban cow slaughter leading to curtailment of freedom of persons to eat and restricting their freedom to carry on any profession and trade, etc.
  - Certain Political parties in India use religion and caste factors for the promotion of their political interest despite a ban on the communal electorates and use of religion for soliciting votes
- Regionalism:-
  - The recent trends of increasing regionalism is giving out negative results and has become a threat to the national unity. The following are the ways in which regionalism is posing the integrity of nation:
    - Emergence of regional political parties as a result of secessionist tendencies. This trend is polarising citizens of the country on regional lines.
    - Its effect on legislation and executive is also evident. To maintain majority in the house, the ruling party has to form coalition with regional parties. This is leading to a situation where regional demand is portrayed as national demand.
International diplomacy is also affected to a great level due to weak centre and coalition government. Previous governments were forced to abstain from attending commonwealth heads meeting in Sri Lanka due to the animosity between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.

**Mass mobilisation for regional causes is taking violent turn.** Non violent means to achieve the ends are transformed to violent means. The recent bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh saw violent agitations across the state which caused huge damage to public property.

**Regionalism reached that stage where it is equivalent to an internal security threat to the country. It is causing friction among states.**
- The hostility is being established on grounds of boundary disputes, irrigation issues, etc.
- The great dispute on sharing of Kaveri river water between states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka is never ending. Recent attacks on the Tamil people in Karnataka show how relations between states effect innocent civilians.

**Citizen’s fundamental rights are also affected by regionalism.** Migrants from one state to another state are attacked on the backdrop of regionalism. This violates the freedom to move and settle anywhere in the country.
- Examples are present everywhere in different scales, from civilian attacks on North East state natives in the country's capital to organised ULFA militants against Bihari and Bengali migrants.
- Recent demands like four fold-division of Uttar Pradesh and creation of Gorkhaland from West Bengal are instances of aggressive regionalism that pose a threat to federal structure of India.

**Federalism:-**
- Some of the chief ministers has also been vocal in criticising the Central government for taxing the southern States to spend on the northern States. Terms of reference of the 15th finance commission have been criticised.
  - The Centre’s direction to use the 2011 Census instead of the 1971 Census for population data has riled the south. As the population in these States has stabilised, the concern is that their share of tax allocation would reduce.
- While the flexible nature of federalism under the Constitution has served India well, the continued existence of provisions such as Article 356 (President’s rule) goes against the grain of federalism.
- States such as Karnataka have asserted their linguistic and cultural rights in the wake of the Centre’s interventions such as a promotion of Hindi.
- The subject classification in seventh schedule has not been fair, particularly with respect to 11th and 12th schedules (local governments). The third tier of governance is totally dependent on second tier which itself is totally dependent on first tier.

**Way forward:-**
- There is a need of proper fiscal federalism in real sense up to grass root level.
- Centre-state relations should be such that centre interferes in matters of states only in unavoidable national interests.
- There should be a system of national education that helps to overcome regional feelings and develop an attachment towards the nation. Obviously, each has its own issues and challenges.

**Conclusion :-**
- Finally, unless the concerns regarding fairness are addressed from constitutional, financial and cultural fronts, the fault lines developing in our federation could deepen further.

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**Q) Discuss the various forms of violence faced by Dalits in Indian society? Examine whether SC’s verdict in Kashinath Mahajan case marks a death knell for Prevention of Atrocities Act?(250 words)**

**Why this question**
The Article brings our attention back to this landmark SC judgment. Dalit protests has been in the news quite frequently. Also, there have been several incidents of lynching, in which Dalits have been at the receiving end, in recent times which is indicative of fault lines in our society. Hence this question.

**Key demand of the question**
The first part of the question is quite straightforward in its demand. The second part expects us to mention the judgment in Kashinath Mahajan case. The question is asking us to examine whether the judgment indicates a death
knell for PoA Act. You can either agree or disagree with this statement giving reasons and mention the impact of the judgment.

**Directive word**
Discuss – Mention the various forms of violence faced by Dalits in Indian society
Examine – Give reasons for why or why not the judgment marks a death knell for the SC/ST (PoA) Act. Also mention what the likely impact of the judgment is going to be.

**Structure of the answer**
Introduction – Discuss the judgment first and mention that it has led to widespread debate.

**Body**
- Explain the various forms of violence against Dalits including the more recent additions like cow vigilantism, honour killing, Khap panchayats etc. Also mention discrimination in universities, jobs etc which fall under mental violence.
- Give the constitutional provisions related to protection of Dalits which necessitated presence of an Act like PoA. Give your view on the debate of misuse of the Act vs need for a legislation to accord protection to Dalits. Examine the merits of SC making such a major change, which ideally should have been the role of Parliament etc.
- Discuss what the likely impact of the judgment will be

**Conclusion** – Mention your view along with reasons and discuss how can we resolve this.

**Various forms of violence faced by dalits in Indian society:**
- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), crime against Dalits – ranging from rape, murder, beatings, and violence related to land matters increased by 29 percent from 2012 to 2014.
- **Untouchability:**
  - While modern Indian law has officially abolished the caste hierarchy,untouchability is in many ways still a practice.
  - In most villages in Rajasthan Dalits are not allowed to take water from the public well or to enter the temple.
- **Schools and colleges:**
  - In public schools, Dalits are not allowed to serve meals to superior castes; they often have to sit outside the classroom; and are made to clean the toilets.
  - Even in universities most of the faculty vacancies reserved for them are lying vacant and students are often discriminated.
- **Land related:**
  - Half of all atrocities committed against Dalits are related to land disputes.
- **Dalit women:**
  - Girls face violence at a younger age and at a higher rate than women of other castes. According to the National Family Health Survey by the age of 15, 33.2% scheduled caste women experience physical violence. The figure is 19.7% for “other” category women.
  - The violence continues, largely due to a sense of impunity among dominant castes.
  - Dalit women and girls are often the targets of hate crimes. Access to justice has been abysmal, with conviction rates at a measly 16.8 percent. Crimes against Dalits usually see half the conviction rate of the overall rate of conviction of crimes. Experts and activists say that low conviction rates and lack of prosecution of such cases of atrocities are the reasons why crimes against Dalits continue to rise.
- **Political power does not help:**
  - Even when Dalit women acquire political power, as when they are elected as sarpanches, there is often no protection against the social power that sanctions violence and discrimination against them.
  - In a village with a Dalit woman sarpanch, a Dalit woman was burned, but no action was taken.
- **Workplace violence:**
  - The risky workplaces compounded with a lack of labour rights protection measures render migrants dalit women more vulnerable to occupational injury.
  - Further, the emerging problem of sub-contracting short-termed labour makes it more difficult for them to claim compensation when they are injured at work places.
- Dalit women are most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by employers, migration agents, corrupt bureaucrats and criminal gangs.
- The enslavement trafficking also contributes to migration of large proportion of dalit women.

**SC's verdict in Kashinath Mahajan case :-**
- Judgment is concerned with a limited aspect of the Act protecting innocent officers and employees in government and private sectors from the misuse of the Act.
- SC stated that "liberty of the innocents cannot be allowed to be taken away. If no forum is there, then some forum in court has to be there to protect the interest of innocent citizens."

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

**Death Knell for prevention of atrocities act:-**
- Judgment has ended up conveying a false and dangerous message that the Atrocities Act is a charter for exploitation or oppression.
- Police apathy, the social and the economic might of the accused and the dependence of SC/STs on those accused would have resulted in acquittals. Similarly, there is no precise data on the scale and extent to which the Act has been misused by SC/ST employees.
- There are questions about how did the court find that the provisions in the Indian Penal Code (Sections 191 to 195), which prescribe punishment for falsifying evidence, to be inadequate in atrocities cases.
- Data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows that the proportion of false cases registered under the act has actually fallen. Moreover, the method of using conviction rates to evaluate whether a law is sound is fraught with danger.
- Given the upper-caste control of the law and order machinery, conviction rates in caste-related crimes will be low.
- Dilution of the act will result in increasing of atrocities against Dalits and also create a rift in the society.
- Many incidents happen that don't get reported under the Act because people who aren't educated don't even know it exists.
- Most Dalits do not register cases for fear of retaliation by higher castes.
- Experts say that the judgment effectively neutralises the Act which provided some sense of protection to hapless people against oppressive societal prejudices.
- There are studies, such as one by the Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad, which have exposed how cases of atrocities result in acquittal due to the anti-Dalit attitude of the law enforcement.

**Measures to improve :-**
- Sensible labour laws reforms to give exit options to Dalits trapped in a system.
- Integrating social and cultural transformation with an economic alternative is critical.
- Huge investments will be needed in upskilling and educating dalits and government needs to create an abundance of new jobs within the formal sector and lowering barriers to job creation.
- Increased availability of stable-wage jobs for women is critical to preventing their socio-economic exploitation.
- With bridging the deep-rooted biases through sustained reconditioning:-
  - It is only possible by promoting the idea of gender equality and uprooting social ideology of male child preferability.
They should be given decision-making powers and due position in governance. Thus, the Women Reservation Bill should be passed as soon as possible to increase the effective participation of women in the politics of India.

Bridging implementation gaps:
- Government or community-based bodies must be set up to monitor the programs devised for the welfare of the society.
- Dalit women need group and gender specific policies and programmes to address the issue of multiple deprivations.
- Dalit women require comprehensive policies on health, especially on the maternal and child health.
- Make credit available by pooling the women to form self help groups. The example of Kudumbashree model of Kerala can be emulated.

**Topic:** urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

**Q) Disorganised urbanization in one of the biggest reasons for problems associated with urbanization. Examine the issue and discuss the steps taken by government to address the challenges arising out of urbanization? (250 words)**

### Why this question
There are several challenges arising out of urbanization with basic necessities like water etc coming at a premium. The problems associated with urbanization and associated solutions are very important discussions to be mulled over from mains point of view.

### Key demand of the question
The question expects us to examine whether one of the main reasons why challenges due to urbanization are arising, is due to the disorganised nature of urbanization. We need to discuss the challenges as well and examine the steps taken by government in this regard.

### Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

### Structure of the answer
**Introduction** – Explain the status of urbanization in India

**Body**
- Discuss some of the key challenges arising out of urbanization – water shortage, environmental pollution, lack of infrastructure etc
- Examine the causes behind it, with special emphasis on whether they arise out of disorganised nature of urbanization in India. Explain how towns and cities are classified, the governance structure etc
- Discuss some of the steps taken by government in this regard and the pros and cons of such steps

**Conclusion** – explain that urbanization is a big challenge for Indian state with linkages to economy, society etc and needs to be addressed. Give a way forward.

### Background :-
- Over 34% of India’s current population lives in urban areas, rising by 3% since 2011. By some estimates, India’s urban population could increase to 814 million by 2050.

### Disorganised urbanization :-
- Cities look and feel downtrodden, riven with poverty and poor infrastructure, with little semblance of urban planning.
- With an increase in urban population will come rising demands for basic services such as clean water, public transportation, sewage treatment and housing.

### Groundwater exploitation :-
- Ground water exploitation for commercial and domestic use in most cities is leading to reduction in ground water level.
**Distribution and water loss issues:**
- Distribution challenges, such as water loss due to theft, pilferage, leaky pipes and faulty meter readings, result in unequal and unregulated distribution of water.
- About 40% to 50% of water is reportedly lost in distribution system.

**Water supply issues in urban areas:**
- Only 62 per cent of urban households have access to treated tap water and only a little over 50 per cent are directly connected to a piped network.
- The average connected household receives water for approximately two hours per day.

**Drainage issues:**
- According to the National Sample Survey, only 47% of urban households have individual water connections.
- As per the 2011 census, only 32.7% of urban Indian households are connected to a piped sewerage system.

**Steps taken by government to address the challenges arising out of urbanization:**
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), launched in 2005, was one of the first urban development schemes implemented by the central government. Under JnNURM, the central government specified certain mandatory and optional reforms for cities, and provided assistance to the state governments and cities that were linked to the implementation of these reforms.
- The new urban schemes move beyond the mandate that was set by JnNURM. While AMRUT captures most of the objectives under JnNURM, the other schemes seek to address issues around sanitation (through Swachh Bharat), affordable housing (through PMAY-U), and technology innovation (through Smart Cities).

**Value Capture Financing (VCF):**
- The VCF policy framework was introduced by the Ministry of Urban Development in February 2017. VCF is a principle that states that people benefiting from public investments in infrastructure should pay for it.

**Municipal bonds:**
- Municipal bonds are bonds issued by urban local bodies (municipal corporations or entities owned by municipal bodies) to raise money for financing specific projects such as infrastructure projects.

**Issues with these:**
- **Smart cities:**
  - On the Smart City front, while over 90 ‘Smart Cities’ have identified 2,864 projects, India lags on implementation, with about 148 projects completed and over 70% still at various stages of preparation.
- **Housing:**
  - Finally, there is still an outstanding shortage of over 10 million affordable houses (despite the government taking encouraging steps to incentivise their construction).
  - The annually recurring instances of floods in Mumbai, dengue in Delhi and lakes on fire in Bengaluru paint a grim picture.

**One primary problem is that of the definition of what’s urban:**
- Urban development comes under State governments, with the Governor notifying an area as urban based on parameters such as population, density, revenue generated for the local administration and percentage employed in non-agricultural activities.
- This notification leads to the creation of an urban local government or municipality, classifying the area as a “statutory town”. **With such a vague definition, discretionary decisions yield a wide variance in what is considered a town.**
- Central government considers a settlement as urban if it has a urban local government, a minimum population of 5,000; over 75% of its (male) population working in non-agricultural activities; and a population density of at least 400 per sq. km. **However, many States consider such “census towns” as rural, and establish governance through a rural local government or panchayat.**

**Another issue is the low level of urban infrastructure investment and capacity building:**
- India spends about $17 per capita annually on urban infrastructure projects, against a global benchmark of $100 and China’s $116.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission and other urbanization schemes like Rurban implementation has been mostly inadequate, with exploration of financing options limited as well.
For example, Jaipur and Bengaluru collect only 5-20% of their potential property tax. With this meagre amount how can urban local bodies be sustainable

- Meanwhile, urban institutions also suffer from a shortage of skilled people.

**Reforms needed are:-**

- **Revisit the classification method to cover all eligible settlements** to function as urban area having urban planning and governance for their jurisdiction
- **Take up infrastructure development along with capacity building of urban local bodies:-**
  - Municipal capacities to mobilise own sources need to be strengthened with a robust financial management, asset mobilisation and tax administration along with project preparation and borrowing abilities to seek investible funds
- **Include green-house gases emission** particulate matter 2.5 in the city planning in the light of their footprint in the municipal functions. It requires special efforts to organise waste management covering reduce, reuse and recycle principles
- Spatial dispersal of economic activities towards low urbanised States in the central and eastern India (infrastructure, skill education and finance for manufacturing)
- Development of compact cities particularly in the new town developments to have optimum economy in the cost on agglomeration, citizen and economy
- Link urbanisation with the inter-State potential on productivity, investment and employment creation including intensive efforts to attract FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).
- **Migrants:-**
  - It would be better to have policies and programmes in place to facilitate the integration of migrants into the local urban fabric, and building city plans with a regular migration forecast assumed. Lowering the cost of migration, along with eliminating discrimination against migrants, while protecting their rights will help raise development across the board.
- The solution to the affordable housing crisis would be focused efforts on land and housing policy reforms, delegation of power to urban local bodies, fostering innovative housing finance, and the reduction in project costs and schedule overruns.
- **An National urban policy should offer a clear directive to urban policymakers** at all levels of government to bring in a more cohesive approach to urban planning and urban infrastructure investments. This policy should help India achieve the following
  - Identify urban development priorities so that they fit in with national- and state-level goals.
  - Provide guidance on reforming urban planning, urban legislation, and urban governance systems.
  - Provide a cohesive understanding and coordination between national, state, and local urban policymakers.
  - Provide guidance to generate a local urban policy and project action in terms of making private and public investments in urban infrastructure

**Topic-Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.**

**Q)Although cyclones bring sheer devastation, they also bring several benefits with them. Comment, in the context of India. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

India is highly vulnerable to several kinds of natural disasters and cyclone is one of them. It is essential to know about the vulnerability of India to cyclones, their negative effects as well as positive effects, if any.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to express our knowledge and understanding of the vulnerability of India to cyclones, and the positive as well as negative effects of cyclones.

**Directive word**

Comment- here we have to form an opinion on the issue – impact of cyclones in India and whether cyclones have any positive effects along with the apparent negative effects it brings.
Structure of the answer

Introduction – Define what is a cyclone and their types- tropical vs temperate cyclones.

**Body**—
1. Mention that India is highly vulnerable to tropical cyclones, present the picture of Indian coastline and vulnerable areas [3 coastal states/UTs encompassing 84 coastal districts] in the country; months of the year when cyclones usually hit the Indian coast etc.
2. Discuss the negative effects of cyclones. E.g strong winds and associated loss of life and property; torrential rainfall and flooding; storm surge and its effects on the low-lying coastal areas etc.
3. Discuss the positive effects of cyclones. E.g relief in drought conditions; Carry heat and energy away from the tropics and transport it towards temperate latitudes, thus helps to maintain equilibrium in the Earth’s troposphere; maintaining a relatively stable and warm temperature worldwide etc.

**Conclusion**— discuss in 2-3 lines about India’s efforts in dealing with the cyclones- National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP).

**Background:**-
- Cyclones are among the most dangerous and most destructive natural disasters that can occur. They have been responsible for about 1.9 million deaths worldwide over the last two centuries, and it is estimated that 10,000 people are killed each year by these storms. Cyclones tend to do the most damage in coastal areas, where they have been known to alter the landscape and remove forest canopy.
- 13 coastal states and Union Territories in the country are affected by Tropical Cyclones (TCs).

**Cyclones bring devastation:**-
- **Property:**-
  - The strong winds of cyclones can cause damage over an area of 25 km in smaller systems and up to 500 km in larger systems. Winds have been known to destroy smaller buildings and knock out power for thousands of people.
- **Storm surge:**-
  - Potentially disastrous surges occur in coastal areas with low-lying terrain that enables inundation. The storm surge is typically the most damaging effect of cyclones, historically resulting in 90 percent of tropical cyclone deaths.
  - When combined with strong winds, storm surges can produce massive waves that can cause inland flooding and destruction.
- **Life:**-
  - Cyclones often cause loss of life, heavy damages in built environments, and have negative effects on shipping.
- **Fisheries, and tourism:**-
  - Statistics show that the global average annual losses from cyclones and storm surges are estimated at US$ 80 billion.
- **Temperature:**-
  - Tropical cyclones can quickly change the environment of the affected areas. They can bring warmer air into hot places. This makes the atmosphere feel very sticky and muggy and rises the temperature dramatically. This can cause heat strokes and other heat related illness to children and the elderly after the storm which is not good.

**Benefits:**-
- **Clearing pollution:**-
  - Rain can also help clear some pollutants from air.
- **Heat Balance** :-
  - Tropical cyclones help maintain the global heat balance by moving warm tropical air away from the equator, towards the poles.
  - Also, tropical cyclones prevents heat energy to building up in the tropics and stops from more storms from forming for a short period of time.
- **Replenish islands:**-
- Cyclones have the power to pick up substantial amounts of sand, nutrients and sediment on the ocean’s bottom and bring it toward those barrier islands. Storm surge, wind and waves will often move these islands closer to the mainland as sand is pushed or pulled in that direction.
- Without tropical cyclones or artificial restoration, barrier islands would eventually shrink and sink into the ocean.
- **Small reef islands** are built up by the deposit of new sediments through wind and waves.

- **Wind energy**:-
  - High winds associated with cyclones could enhance the production of wind energy especially the wind farms in coastal areas.

- **Dry areas**:-
  - They also provide beneficial rains to many areas that would otherwise be too dry.

- **Sea life benefit** greatly by cyclones, mainly through the flushing out of estuaries and river channels. It provides **food and breeding grounds** through this process.

- **Nutrients**:-
  - Tropical cyclones bring supplemental nutrients from the ocean to the land upon landfall. These nutrients help plants grow strong, and keep the land healthy.
  - Tropical Cyclones can greatly benefit farmers who thrive for the best fruits and vegetables since the nutrients would aid in the plants being tastier and healthier.

- **Tropical cyclones can bring warmer area into cool places**. They can help warm up the environment surrounding the affected area. In effect, they bring more appropriate temperatures for .

- While cyclone ‘Vardah’ caused distress to several people in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, it brought cheer to farmers in Andhra Pradesh, as the rainfall is just sufficient for tilling and sowing. The availability of water is also likely to bring down the investment cost for them.

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**Topic** – *part of static series under the heading “Gandhian principles in DPSP”*

**Q) Examine the relevance of Gandhian principles in DPSP at a time when his other teachings hardly figure in national consciousness? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to bring out the Gandhian principles enshrined in DPSP and examine their relevance in the present context, also whether they are in tune with the overall nature of DPSPs and the objectives enshrined therein. Explain the reasons why Gandhian principles are relevant/irrelevant in present context and the impact that it’s implementation would have.

**Directive word**

Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

**Structure of the answer**

- **Introduction** – Explain the overall objective of DPSP (creation of welfare state) and the nature of DPSP (directives for good governance). Highlight that DPSP contain a motley of ideology including Gandhian principles.
- **Body** - Highlight which are the Gandhian principles in DPSP. Examine the causes why they are relevant (or not). For instance, talk about the necessity of democratic decentralization as envisaged by Gandhi through Local Governments for true empowerment of people. Similarly, talk about the importance of promoting cottage industries for self reliance in rural areas, link it to the functioning of SHGs. You can question the relevance of including certain provisions in DPSP such as preventing cow slaughter, abstinence etc.
- **Conclusion** – Give your view on the relevance of Gandhian principles in DPSP and the impact they would have upon implementation in true sense.

**Background**:-
The Constitution of India aims to establish not only political democracy but also socio-economic justice to the people to establish a welfare state. With this purpose in mind, our Constitution lays down desirable principles and guidelines in Part IV known as the Directive Principle of State Policy.

The Constitution does not contain any classification of the Directive Principles. However, on the basis of their content and direction, they can be classified broadly into socialist, Gandhian and liberal-intellectual.

**Gandhian principles in DPSP:-**

- Based on Gandhian ideology, these include
  - **To organize village Panchayats and endow them with necessary powers and authority to enable them to function as units of self government. (Art 40)**
    - **Relevance:-**
      - Gandhi knew that India lived in her villages and one of the key ideas that he advocated was to place the maximum emphasis on developing villages as self-sufficient republics.
      - He believed that unless villages are developed and made self sufficient, it will lead to mass migration, overcrowded cities and the vicious circle of poverty and under-development cannot be extinguished.
      - However in the present context with 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments governments have realized the importance of local governance.
      - With increase in urbanization and pollution becoming a hazard in cities slowly people are moving to villages.
  - **To promote cottage industries on an individual or co-operation basis in rural areas. (Art 43)**
    - **Relevance:-**
      - Full employment cannot be attained through the development of large scale industries. Most of the unemployed people live in rural areas. The cause of rural underemployment is the seasonal nature of agriculture.
      - The problem of unemployment can be tackled only by developing village and cottage industries.
  - **To promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control, and professional management of co-operative societies. (Art 43B)**
    - **Relevance:-**
      - Cooperatives not only provide economic benefits but also empowers large number of women through SHGs
      - Help in social and economic upliftment.
      - They have the ability to solve current issues of farmer suicide by providing subsidiary incomes
  - **To promote the educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and other weaker sections of the society and to protect them from social injustice and exploitation. (Art 46)**
    - **Relevance:-**
      - Scheduled castes and tribes are still one of the discriminated sections in the society. Even though social status of these sections has increased but many still face social stigma.
      - Many measures have been taken by the government to empower them.
  - **To prohibit the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health. (Art 47)**
    - **Relevance:-**
      - Recently many states have enacted laws on prohibition. Alcohol consumption has adverse effects on families leading to domestic violence.
      - Also drug menace is rampant in many parts of India. So active measures to curb them are necessary.
  - **To prohibit slaughter of cows, calves and other milch and drought cattle and to improve their breeds. (Art 48)**
    - **Relevance:-**
Even though this aspect has helped in providing additional incomes to the farmers by raising cattle, there have been many disturbances with respect to this aspect leading to opposition of Gandhian principle of non violence.

**Topic – Part of static series under the heading – “Powers of president”**

Q) Discuss the control that president can exercise on the executive by virtue of his/her discretionary powers?(250 words)

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to describe the discretionary powers of the president and how through these powers the president becomes more than just a nominal head.

**Directive word**
DISCUSS – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments. Here we have to debate the discretionary powers of the president as to whether or not they are required in a West Ministerial system.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – You can start by mentioning some of the terms used to describe the president – nominal head, titular head, ceremonial post etc.

**Body** – Examine the powers of the president. Discuss his discretionary powers and how through his discretionary powers he does indeed hold a position more than being just a ceremonial head. You can mention the relevant constitutional provisions as well. Thereafter debate whether it is desirable in a prime ministerial form of government for the president to have a say. Mention both sides of the debate.

**Conclusion** – Mention that despite BR Ambedkar opining that president is merely a ceremonial head, he can through his discretionary powers wield at least moral authority over the government.

**Background :-**
- Being a republic there is no hereditary monarch but the President in India as the head of the State. The President is not directly elected but indirectly. As President is the head of the State, not of the Government, India does not have Presidential form of Government, President works on the advice of the Ministry etc many experts consider President as a mere figure head, titular head.

**How can president exercise control on the executive by discretionary powers :-**
- **Indian President is not a ceremonial head, unlike many other countries:** All important decisions regarding the country are taken in the name of Indian President, though most of these will be based on the binding advice given by Council of Ministers (CoM), as per Article 74 of Indian Constitution. But there are certain exceptions, where he can use his discretionary powers.

- **The cases of discretionary powers are as below :**
  - **Suspensive Veto:**
    - The President has discretionary power when he exercises suspensive veto i.e. when he returns a bill (not money bill) for reconsideration of the parliament.
    - However if the bill is passed again by the Parliament with or without amendments and presented again to the President, it is obligatory for him to give his assent to the bill.
  - **Pocket Veto:**
    - This is not a provision mentioned in the Indian constitution, but this is a possible situation when the President of India can use his discretionary power. In this case, the President neither ratifies nor reject nor return the bill, but simply keeps the bill pending for an indefinite period.
    - As the time limit within which the President has to take the decision with respect to a bill presented to him for assent, has not been mentioned in the constitution, in effect the inaction of the President stops the bill from becoming an act.
  - **President can seek information from Prime Minister:**
    - Under article 78 the President enjoys the right to seek information from the PM regarding the administration of the affairs of the union.
Under the established convention, the President has the right to warn or encourage the Council of Minister (CoM) in the exercise of its power.

**Case of no sitting of both houses:**
- Under Article 85, the President can summon each House of Parliament to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit, to ensure that six months shall not intervene between its last sitting in one session and the date appointed for its sitting in the next session.

**Case of no majority:**
- When no political party or coalition of parties enjoy the majority in Lok Sabha, then the President has discretion in inviting the leader of that party or coalition of parties who in his opinion is able to form a stable government.

**Case of no-confidence with CoM- dissolving Loksabha:**
- It is for the president to decide if he should dissolve Loksabha or not when CoM loses the majority in Lok Sabha.
- The President can dissolve Lok Sabha only on the advice of CoM but the advice is binding only if the government is a majority government.

**Case of no-confidence with CoM- dissolving CoM:**
- It is for the president to decide if he should dissolve CoM or not when CoM loses the majority in Lok Sabha.

**Case of caretaker government**
- A caretaker government does not enjoy the confidence of Lok Sabha and hence it is not expected to take major decisions but only to make the day-to-day administrative decisions. It is for the President to decide the day-to-day decisions.

**India needs a president because:**
- The Indian Constitution has given many a provisions, which clearly state that the President of India is not merely a figure head.
- The status of the position of the Indian President is somewhere in between the British Crown and that of the American President.
- The principal role of the President is to prevent a parliamentary government from becoming a parliamentary anarchy and it is the Presidential authority that keeps the country and the people bond together.

**However President’s role has been questioned because:**
- In Shamsher Singh State of Punjab, the Supreme Court held that, the Governor and President are only the formal heads of the state, and when they require satisfaction as required by the Constitution, it is not their personal satisfaction but the satisfaction of the Council of Ministers on whose aid and advice they exercise powers and functions
- Apart from political cronyism, the appointment of Presidents has often smacked of tokenism.

**Conclusion:-**
- Despite considered as a ceremonial head the role played by Presidents over the years has been enormous and for the benefit of the country to uphold public interest.

**Topic – Part of static series under the heading “Ordinance making power”**

**Q) Ordinance making power is to be used as a last resort, however in reality it is not so. Discuss the safeguards that are designed to prevent misuse of ordinance making power?(250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
*The question expects us to highlight the reason why our constitution makers granted ordinance making power and how are they being misused. Thereafter, we need to discuss the constitutional and judicial safeguards related to exercise of ordinance making power.*

**Directive word**
*Discuss – Here the discussion relating to safeguards also need to mention how effective they have been.*

**Structure of the answer**
*Introduction – Explain ordinance making power and highlight some recent ordinances issued which caused controversy – Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill etc.*
Body – Discuss the reason why constitution makers granted this power, and how it has been misused. Discuss the constitutional safeguards like – ordinance to be tabled before parliament etc. Discuss the legal safeguards as given in DC Wadhwa case etc. Examine how successful these safeguards have been.

Conclusion – Mention the need for careful utilisation of ordinance making power.

Background:-
- The power to make laws in most modern societies lies in democratic institutions.
- Under the Constitution of India as well, this power is entrusted with the legislature. However, Article 123 of the Constitution allows the head of executive to promulgate ordinances to deal with situations which require immediate attention.

Ordinance making power:-
- The President has the power to issue ordinances under Article 123 of the Constitution.
- Ordinances are temporary laws which can be issued by the President when Parliament is not in session. Ordinances are issued by the President based on the advice of the Union Cabinet. The purpose of Ordinances is to allow governments to take immediate legislative action if circumstances make it necessary to do so at a time when Parliament is not in session.
- The idea intended by the Constituent Assembly when the provision for ordinances was included in the Constitution was that this power is necessary when immediate action was needed. Also it meant that the powers are extraordinary so they are not to be employed in normal times.
- The Governor of a state can issue Ordinances under Article 213, when the state legislative assembly or either of the two Houses in states with bicameral legislatures is not in session.
- Governments also take the Ordinance route to address matters of public concern as was the case with the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013, which was issued in response to the protests surrounding the Delhi gang rape incident.

Misuse of ordinance making in India:-
- Ordinances appear to be a loophole that the ruling Governments have found to push laws without bringing much attention or spending time in Parliament.
- In reality, many times ordinances are issued by the government for lack of consensus in Parliament. If there is a possibility of a bill not being passed in the current session of Parliament, government can take the ordinance route pending its approval by the Parliament during a later session.
  - For instance, the recently enacted ordinance on altering the Land Reforms Act to make it easier to acquire land by the government for public purposes was promulgated fearing uncertainty over passage of the bill in Rajya Sabha where the present government is not in a majority,
  - The governments are using its ordinance-making power as virtually an alternative tool of legislation.
- Ordinances are used by governments to pass legislation which is currently pending in Parliament, as was the case with the Food Security Ordinance.

Repromulgation:-
- The Securities Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2014 was recently repromulgated for the third time during the term of the 15th Lok Sabha.
- Repromulgation of Ordinances raises questions about the legislative authority of the Parliament as the highest law making body.
- Exercise of repeated re-promulgation of ordinances by Article 123 is a subversion and perversion of Article 123 itself.

Safeguards designed to prevent misuse of ordinance making power:-
- Parliament:-
  - Ordinances must be approved by Parliament within six weeks of reassembling or they shall cease to operate. They also cease to operate in case resolutions disapproving the Ordinance are passed by both Houses.
- Governor:-
  - However, the Governor cannot issue an Ordinance without instructions from the President in three cases where the assent of the President would have been required to pass a similar Bill.
- An ordinance would be made open to challenge on the following grounds:-
- It constitutes colorable legislation or
- It contravenes any of the Fundamental Rights as mentioned in our Constitution or
- It is violative of substantive provisions of Constitution such as an Article 301 or
- Its retrospectively is unconstitutional.

**Repromulation and SC:**
- There is no limit on how many times an ordinance can be re-issued but as per ruling of the Supreme Court, it cannot be re-promulgated endlessly without getting it to vote in the Parliament or Legislature.
- The Supreme Court addressed it in *C. Wadhwa v. State of Bihar* (1986), when it held that it is unconstitutional to repromulgate ordinances, unless in exceptional circumstances.

**Judicial review:**
- The power of judicial review of ordinances was discussed in year 1998 in the case of *Krishna Kumar Singh v State of Bihar*
- In this case the Supreme Court struck down many number of ordinances stating that no particular basis for the exercise of the Ordinance making power of the President had been shown.
- It also stated: “There was also no explanation offered for promulgating one ordinance upon another”.

**Constraints with safeguards:**

**Judiciary:**
- While the ordinance is amenable to judicial scrutiny, the court would not look into the preconditions of necessity. **Moreover, even the concept of mala fide would not apply as legislative intentions are out of judicial reach.** Further, it is for the petitioner to prove that necessary circumstances could not have existed.

**Ordinances can go without adequate legislative review for more than half a year at a time:**
- And even if the ordinance lapses or is repealed by the Legislative Assembly, the ordinance would not be void ab initio. Any legal effect caused by the ordinance in that period would continue to exist. **Thus, even if the democratic institutions are to approve or disapprove of the acts later, the fact is that the undemocratic laws can affect the nature of the Indian State quite drastically.**

**Reforms needed:**
- The **time period for which the ordinance is to be in force needs to be reduced drastically, to a few weeks at most.** This is because if there is a situation which requires immediate attention, then the legislature needs to be summoned as soon as possible to deal with it.

**Ordinances should only be used as a temporary measure till the legislature assembles for the emergency meeting.**
- Further, provisions must be included to the effect that **necessity of action or urgency to promulgate action needs to be proved by the executive.** Ordinances should only be used for situations of utmost emergency, and having a provision which requires material to be shown to ensure that necessary conditions exist is necessary to balance the provision with at least some responsibility added to the executive.
- Another provision that could be included to ensure that ordinances are promulgated only in situations of urgency is to include a restriction which says **that ordinances can only be issued when emergency has been proclaimed by the President.** This would again make sure that ordinances are not issued unnecessarily when a democratic procedure could be followed.

**Conclusion:**
- Ultimately, the aim should be to reduce the undemocratic elements to a minimum (or, if possible, completely eliminate it), and where the Constitution it still remains, high requirements be imposed for its usage.

**Topic – Part of static series under the heading “Clemency powers”**

**Q**Explain the clemency powers of the president under article 72? Discuss the clarifications given by Supreme Court regarding the clemency powers of the president?(250 words)

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to first explain the content of Article 72. Thereafter we have to detail the various judgments of SC which have given several clarifications, guidelines and check on the power of president under Article 72.
Directive word

Explain – Clemency power of the president under art 72 has to be explained.
Discuss – Here the discussion should revolve around the rulings of SC related to clemency powers.

Structure of the answer

Introduction – Mention the constitution under article 73 provides clemency powers.

Body

- Explain what clemency powers under article 72 entail
- Reprieve
- Respite
- Commute
- Remission
- Pardon
- Discuss the main points of the SC judgment in cases like Kehar Singh, Mani Ram cases where the SC has mentioned that this power is liable to be judicially reviewed if exercised in an unfair, whimsical, arbitrary manner. The court has also given several guidelines on what should the scope of president’s power be.
- Discuss certain cases such as Shatrughan Chauhan, 2014 where the SC has commented upon the pardoning power of the president in case of death penalty

Conclusion – Mention why such a power has been given and the need to exercise it judiciously and neutrally.

Clemency powers of the President under article 72 :-

- Indian President is empowered with the power to pardon under Article 72 of the Indian Constitution.
- Article 72 says that the President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence.
  - Pardon – A pardon completely absolves the offender from all sentences and punishment and disqualifications and places him in the same position as if he had never committed the offence.
  - Commutation - Commutation means exchange of one thing for another. In simple words to replace the punishment with less severe punishment. For example for Rigorous imprisonment-simple imprisonment.
  - Reprieve – Reprieve means temporary suspension of death sentence. For example- pending a proceeding for pardon or commutation.
  - Respite – Respite means awarding a lesser punishment on some special grounds. For example- the Pregnancy of women offender.
  - Remissions – Remission means the reduction of the amount of sentence without changing its character, for example, a sentence of 1 year may be remitted to 6 months. In other words, it reduces the period of sentence, but the character of punishment remains same.
- The President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remission of punishment or to suspend remit or commute the sentence of any persons convicted of any offence:-
  - (a) in all cases where the punishment or sentence is by a court martial;
  - (b) in all cases where the punishment or sentence is for an offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the Union extends;
  - (c) in all cases where the sentence is a sentence of death.
- The pardoning power of President is wider than the governor and it differs in the following two ways:-
  - The power of the President to grant pardon extends in cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial but Article 161 does not provide any such power to the Governor.
  - The President can grant pardon in all cases where the sentence given is sentence of death but pardoning power of Governor does not extend to death sentence cases.

Clarifications given by Supreme court regarding the clemency powers of the President :-

- Supreme Court in a catena of cases has laid down the law relating to judicial review of pardoning power.
- In Maru Ram v Union of India, the Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court held that the power under Article 72 is to be exercised on the advice of the Central Government and not by the President on his own, and that the advice of the Government binds the head of the Republic.
- In Dhananjoy Chatterjee alias Dhana v State of West Bengal, the Supreme Court reiterated its earlier stand in Maru Ram’s case and said that the power under Articles 72 and 161 of the Constitution can be exercised by
the Central and State Governments, not by the President or Governor on their own. The advice of the appropriate Government binds the Head of the state.

- The Supreme Court in **Ranga Billa case** was once again called upon to decide the nature and ambit of the pardoning power of the President of India under Article 72 of the Constitution. The term “pardon” itself signifies that it is entirely a discretionary remedy and grant or rejection of it need not be reasoned.

- Supreme Court once again in **Kehar Singh v Union of India** reiterated its earlier stand and held that the grant of pardon by the President is an act of grace and, therefore, cannot be claimed as a matter of right. The power exercisable by the President being exclusively of administrative nature, is not justiciable.

- In a landmark judgment in **Epuru Sudhakar case** it was held by the Supreme Court that it is a well-set principle that a limited judicial review of exercise of clemency powers is available to the Supreme Court and High Courts. Granting of clemency by the President or Governor can be challenged on the following grounds:
  - The order has been passed without application of mind.
  - The order is mala fide.
  - The order has been passed on extraneous or wholly irrelevant considerations.
  - Relevant material has been kept out of consideration.
  - The order suffers from arbitrariness.

- In the Landmark judgment in **Shatrughan Chauhan case** Supreme Court said that: -
  - Delay by the government in taking a decision about the mercy petition of the death row convicts was in fact a valid ground for commutation of their sentence.
  - This judgment came as a relief to as many as fifteen death row convicts, whose sentence was thus commuted to life term. This judgment also included the factor that schizophrenia and mental illness is also a defence against death penalty and such a person cannot be hanged.
  - In this case, the **Supreme Court overruled its own verdict in Devinderpal Singh Bhullar’s case in which it had held that delay in deciding mercy plea cannot be a ground for commutation of death sentence.**

- **The supreme court laid down the following principles:**-
  - The petitioner for mercy has no right to an oral hearing by the President.
  - The president can examine the evidence afresh and take a view different from the view taken by the court.
  - The power is to be exercised by the president on the advice of the union cabinet
  - The president is not bound to give reasons for his/her order.
  - The president can afford relief not only from a sentence that he regards as unduly harsh but also from an evident mistake.
  - The exercise of power by the president is not subject to judicial review except where the presidential decision is arbitrary, irrational, mala fide or discriminatory.
  - Where the earlier petition for mercy has been rejected by the President stay cannot be obtained by filing another petition.

**Conclusion:**
- The pardoning power of Executive is very significant as it corrects the errors of judiciary. It eliminates the effect of conviction without addressing the defendant’s guilt or innocence.

**Topic – Part of static series under the heading “Discretionary powers”**

**Q) Discuss whether the governor enjoys more discretionary powers than the president? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to highlight the Discretionary powers of the president and the governor and examine the extent of both, whether they can be compared and whether one enjoys more discretion than the other.

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

**Structure of the answer**
Introduction – Mention the role that constitution expects the governor and president to play – that of figureheads as highlighted by Dr BR Ambedkar.

Body – Mention the discretionary powers of the president and governor and highlight that while the president enjoys situational discretionary power, the discretionary power of the governor is mentioned in the constitution itself under article 163(2). Discuss whether governors Discretionary powers are at the discretion of the governor or the central government. Discuss SC judgment that governor is not an agent of the centre. In the final part of your answer, mention that several constitutional experts as well as court ruling have emphasized on the fact that discretionary powers should not be exercised in an arbitrary and whimsical manner, on which count governor is more guilty.

Conclusion – Highlight the role that governor and president are expected to play.

Background:-
- The office of Governor is a British Indian transplant with a federalistic flavour. The role of office of Governor was confined to normal routine ceremonial functions earlier but now enjoys more powers.

Discretionary powers of Governor more than president:-
- Duality of the powers:-
  - Governors enjoy more discretion than President because of duality of functions they have to perform. He is given higher discretionary powers, for proper functioning of the Constitution.
  - He has prima facie discretion in deciding whether a proposed law by a State is violative of the Constitution. He also has greater discretion with regard to dissolution of Legislative Assembly when it does not function according to the Constitution.
- Constitution provision itself:-
  - Discretionary powers of Governor in state are much more extensive in comparison to the President in centre in India. For example, Article 163 of the constitution says that there shall be a Council of Ministers in the states with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in exercising his functions, except those which are required to be done by the Governor on his/her discretion.
  - The constitution further mentions that if any question arises whether a matter falls within the Governor’s discretion or not, decision of the Governor shall be final, and the validity of anything done by the Governor shall not be called in question on the ground that he ought or ought not to have acted in his discretion. Moreover, what advice was tendered by the Governor to the Ministry cannot be inquired into a court.
  - Some discretionary powers are as follows:-
    - Governor can dissolve the legislative assembly if the chief minister advises him to do following a vote of no confidence. Now, it is up to the Governor what he/she would like to do.
    - Governor, on his/her discretion can recommend the president about the failure of the constitutional machinery in the state.
    - On his/her discretion, the Governor can reserve a bill passed by the state legislature for president’s assent.
    - If there is no political party with a clear cut majority in the assembly, Governor on his/her discretion can appoint anybody as chief minister.
    - Governor determines the amount payable by the Government of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram to an autonomous Tribal District Council as royalty accruing from licenses for mineral exploration.
    - Governor can seek information from the chief minister with regard to the administrative and legislative matters of the state.
    - Governor has discretion to refuse to sign to an ordinary bill passed by the state legislature.
    - Thus, though the Governor is made the constitutional head of a state like president of India, yet there is a thin line as the Constitution empowers the Governor to act without the advice of the Chief Minister and his council and can use discretion on certain matters.

Discretionary powers of governor and President which are similar:-
- It is also observed that in cases where discretion is given to the post of Head of the State, both the President and the Governor exercise similar discretion. Instances can be found in exercise of clemency powers and dissolution of ministry by both the functionaries.
- Also, since **both are under an oath to protect the Constitution**, discretionary power to reject advice of Council of Ministers which is violative of the Constitution rests with both.

- **Supreme court judgment:**
  - For the Supreme Court, an appeal to the scheme of the Constitution and the basic structure doctrine was sufficient to deny the Governor such discretion. The Supreme Court implicitly relied on it and struck down the unilateral actions of the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in summoning an Assembly session and sending messages to the Assembly as unconstitutional.
  - SC judgment is that that governor is not an agent of the centre. The court ruling have emphasized on the fact that discretionary powers should not be exercised in an arbitrary and whimsical manner, on which count governor is more guilty.

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**Q) Cooperative Federalism is more suited to Indian Conditions than Competitive Federalism. Analyse (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us compare and contrast cooperative and competitive federalism, discuss their comparative advantages and disadvantages and conclude on the nature of federalism best suited to serve India's needs.

**Directive word**
Analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Discuss the emphasis placed on cooperative and competitive federalism in recent times for securing developmental objectives.

**Body**
- **Explain the two terms and how they differ**
- **Discuss how the spirit of competitive federalism is seen in the various inter state ranking metric derived such as for ease of business, environmental pollution etc**
- **Discuss how the spirit of cooperation is being enhanced by sharing experiential learnings etc**
- **Discuss the pros and cons of one over the other – competitive federalism requires States to reform their programmes and provide goods and services that they can self-fund, disciplines the states, accelerates growth. Discuss the advantages that cooperative federalism offers.**

**Conclusion** – Mention in the end that a balance of the two is required.

**Competitive federalism**:
- Competitive federalism is a concept where centre competes with states and vice-versa, and states compete with each other in their joint efforts to develop India and over a broad range issues to provide citizens various services in a hassle-free manner.
- **How is it suitable to India:**
  - The policy of one-size-fit-all is replaced with different policies of various states based on the own priorities with in the state. Each state will design their own policies for development of the state with self-fund. The concept also promotes discipline among the states.
  - Competitive federalism is a federalism when units of federation pursue a healthy competition for economic interests. It is the vertical relationship between centre and state which competes with each other which leads to the overall growth of the states.
  - Competitive federalism is already at work in economic policies since liberalisation. States vie with one another to hold investors’ meet; Chief Ministers go abroad to promote trade relations; State governments enter into agreements with foreign countries for social-economic projects.
  - Regional meetings are also held to promote common economic interests. In these endeavours, some are going fast and some lag behind – a situation that ranking may help to change.
  - The union government has replaced the sixty-four year old Planning Commission by establishing NITI Aayog.
    - The NITI Aayog is formed to empower and strength the state governments. The one way flow of policy is replaced with participation of the states in policy formulation.
- The state governments will not have to look towards centre for policy guidance and fiscal resources because now the share of fiscal resources for each state will be transferred to be spent by the state governments autonomously based on their own priorities and the priorities will also be decided by the state on their own.
- The NITI Aayog will also provide for the appointment of Regional Councils with specific mandates for specific time periods. These councils could help to create cooperation among two or more states facing a common set of problems or amicably settle disputes. These councils could catalyse joint projects involving travel, transportation and tourism across member states.
- In February 2015, the union government in pursuit of competitive federalism has tabled in parliament the recommendation of the Fourteenth Finance Commission of India.
  - The centre has increased the share of states in central tax revenue from the earlier 32% to 42%. The government also declared that the states will have freedom to plan their expenditure based on their own priorities and the states are free to change centrally sponsored schemes. This is a long-time demand from the states.
  - But along with autonomy states should observe fiscal prudence and discipline. Competitive federalism follows the concept bottom-up approach as it will bring the change from the states.
  - The concept of competitive federalism is driving the Indian states to rush in for reforms to make processes easy for doing business in their state and expediting the pending project clearances. States are also encouraged to streamline the procedures to attract more investment and establishment of single window registration for obtaining licences.

Cooperative federalism :-
- Cooperative federalism is the concept which reflects the relationship between centre and state where they both come together and resolve the common problems with each other’s’ cooperation. With the collaborative efforts and cooperation, different level of governments in a amicable manner, contributes towards the growth of the country.
- It shows the horizontal relationship between union and states and shows neither is above the other. To ensure this relationship between centre and state, Indian constitution has incorporated certain instruments like inter-state council, Zonal council, 7th schedule etc.

Obstacles in the process of competitive federalism:-
- As a concept, it is more suitable to the countries like US, where it is in-built in their constitution.
- Only few states actively participate:-
  - While the competition between states, reflected in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, has generated a lot of enthusiasm, this must be a continuing exercise. **There are only few well-off states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu which are competing.** The present inter-state competition in attracting investment is too early to determine whether it will really encourage competitive patterns of investment on a continuous basis.
- Regional differences:-
  - There are varied economic patterns in different states. There are deficit states or the backward regions or the states under debt. Those states should not be treated on par with the well-off states.
  - The states like West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and Assam have protested against the uniform approach in funding because of their special situations in which the central government has to provide special funds to these states. **Without special funding these states cannot imagine their participation in competitive federalism.**
- Though the states are provided with financial independence, it is a fallacy to assume that all the states would perform uniformly in the process of development because while some states have favourable factors like skilled labour, capital and infrastructure, innovative service industries other states lagging behind. For that states with unfavourable climate still need the help from Centre.
- The proposed GST law may help some of the less productive States to raise the revenue as the tax will be a destination-based levy. But the opposition of few well-off states with respect to revenue loss in implementation of GST system points that **there is lack of will in participating in the process of competitive federalism.**
However in India these problems need to be rectified to make cooperative and competitive federalism successful:

- **The Inter-State Council as mentioned in Article 263** is supposed to be a body for intergovernmental consultation and co-operation. But it has not been given the powers to inquire and advise on disputes between States. It can only discuss subjects of common interest and make recommendations. It meets rarely and has not been able to work to its full potential.

- **The most important thing is International treaties which are greatly overlooked the involvement of the states.** It should be strengthened as while negotiating the international treaties involvement of states should be there with greater extent as its implementing will surely going to impact on the states.

- **Article 262 that provides for the resolution of inter-state water disputes which also failed to contain many disputes which reached it despite repeated hearings and decisions.** Failure of this can be because of both structural and procedural inadequacies.
  - Structural inadequacies like Non-binding nature of advices of River boards, Lack of enforceability of tribunal decisions, Ad hoc instead of permanent Tribunals has given scope for politicisation and ultimately leads to judicial overview in the matter.
  - **Procedural inadequacies like absence of SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), no provision for penalty for deliberate delay by parties**, non-cooperation by states, leaves enough scope for ambiguities and discretions leading to inordinate delays.

- **Governor Issue is also the concern which weaken the centre-state relationship.** This has been the evident since long that as the political party gets changed in the centre the governors appointed by the earlier party were asked to resign. Governor's appointment should not be politically motivated.

- **The 7th Schedule needs to be reformed** to ensure greater empowerment of States in accordance with increased financial transfers characteristic of cooperative federalism.

- **Equal representation of states in Rajya Sabha** is another blow to the cooperative federalism. There should be equal representation as there is in United States of America.

- **State bills which are reserved for President assent should be disposed of as early as possible.** This creates impediment in the growth of the country and ultimately it hits the cooperation between centre and state.

- Presently, the union government is taking unilateral decisions on issues like international treaties, WTO obligations, environmental issues, and decisions on FDI liberalisation in various sectors of economy etc. To protect the interest of affected states, an institutional mechanism must be evolved where important decisions are appropriately discussed with states.

**Conclusion:**

- Cooperative federalism and competitive federalism are not mutually exclusive instead they both are two sides of the same coin. None of them can have more weightage than other as it will lead to an over centralization or decentralization state. Both should be equally present for the development of a nation as a whole.

- The competition alone cannot give the best results it is **competition with cooperation that will drive the real change.**

- To bring competition, the centre should cooperate with the states by providing necessary autonomy in their policy making and allocating them the required funds to spend based on their own priorities. The cooperation forms the ground base on which competition can begin. **There has to be a balance between cooperative and competitive federalism.**

**Topic– Part of static series under the heading – “Recommendations of Punchhi Commission”**

**Q) Recently, in the process of formation of government in Goa and Karnataka, a lot of political drama ensued. Discuss how the recommendations of Punchhi Commission, if implemented, would have ensured smoother processes? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to highlight the issue faced in government formation in those states. Thereafter, it expects us to quote the relevant recommendations of Punchhi Commission and how those recommendations would help.

**Directive word**

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

Introduction – Highlight the recent uncertainty and confusion in government formation in case of hung assembly in Goa and Karnataka.

Body –

- Discuss the two major recommendations of Punchhi Commission regarding – clear guidelines on the chief ministers’ appointment so that the discretionary powers of the governor are limited in this regard, and reforms in the office of governor.
- Discuss these reforms in great detail along with its impact.

Conclusion – Give your view on what the way forward should be.

Background:

- In the recently concluded elections in Goa and Karnataka there was no party which won with an absolute majority so there was confusion with respect to which party has the right to form the government.

What did Punchhi Commission say?

- Forming the government:
  - Among the significant suggestions made by the Commission is, laying down of clear guidelines for the appointment of chief ministers. Upholding the view that a pre-poll alliance should be treated as one political party, it lays down the order of precedence that ought to be followed by the governor in case of a hung house:
    - Call the group with the largest prepoll alliance commanding the largest number;
    - The single largest party with support of others;
    - The post-electoral coalition with all parties joining the government;
    - The post-electoral alliance with some parties joining the government and remaining including Independents supporting from outside.
  - Governor:
    - As for qualifications for a governor, the Punchhi commission suggests that the nominee not have participated in active politics at even local level for at least a couple of years before his appointment.
    - It also agrees with the Sarkaria recommendation that a governor be an eminent person and not belongs to the state where he is to be posted.
    - The commission also criticizes arbitrary dismissal of governors.
    - It has also recommended that the state chief minister have a say in the appointment of governor.
    - Underlining that removal of a governor be for a reason related to his discharge of functions, it has proposed provisions for impeachment by the state legislature along the same lines as that of President by Parliament. This, significantly, goes against the doctrine of pleasure upheld by Supreme Court judgment.
    - Endorsing an NCRWC recommendation, it says appointment of governor should be entrusted to a committee comprising the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and chief minister of the concerned state. The Vice-President can also be involved in the process.
    - Unlike the Sarkaria report, the Punchhi report is categorical that a governor be given fixed five-year tenure.
    - The Punchhi Commission report also recommends that a constitutional amendment be brought about to limit the scope of discretionary powers of the governor under Article 163 (2). Governors should not sit on decisions and must decide matters within a four-month period.

Yes it would have solved the issue:

- In the case of Goa, the debacle exposes the fact that there are no specific guidelines in the Constitution on who the Governor should invite to form a government in a State where rival parties with narrow majorities engage in a face-off.
- The clear-cut structure laid down by the commission of how a governor should approach when hung house takes place gives clarity to parties as well as governor and no confusion will be present.
- Governor following the guidelines of the commission ensures that there is stability of the government and the spirit of democracy is upheld.
The constitutional convention of inviting the single largest party in the case of a fractured mandate has been outlined by the Sarkaria Commission recommendations, which were affirmed by a Constitution Bench of the SC in Rameshwor Prasad v Union of India in 2005 can also be considered.

**Topic– Part of static series under the heading – “Electoral reforms since independence”**

**Q) State Funding of Election was recommended by Indrajit Gupta Committee. Discuss whether SFoE will help resolve corruption in elections?(250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to discuss the recommendation of Indrajit Gupta Committee regarding SFoE, analyze its pros and cons and give our view on the prudence of this suggestion.

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

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Mention that SFoE has often been suggested to check corruption in elections, but there are several layers to the problem.

**Body**
- Discuss the recommendation of the committee along with the checks suggested by the committee.
- Examine the advantages as envisaged by the committee as well as the support provided by LCI – Total state funding of elections is “desirable” so long as political parties are prohibited from taking funds from other sources.
- The Commission concurred with the Indrajit Gupta Committee stand on partial funding with the rider that appropriate regulatory framework be put in place with regard to political parties.
- Examine the problem with SFoE such as those highlighted by EC, 2nd ARC, lack of focus accorded by 2015 LCI Report (supported the current system of indirect in kind subsidies). Highlight the problems highlighted by these committees in implementation of SFoE.

**Conclusion** – give your view on desirability of SFoE to check corruption in Indian elections.

**Background:-**
- State funding of elections has been suggested in the past in response to the high cost of elections and as a measure against corruption in the electoral process. Many of the government panels on electoral reforms have expressed their ideas on the issue.
- The Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections had endorsed partial state funding of recognised political parties and their candidates in elections way back in 1998.
  - This committee endorsed Partial state funding of elections with some limitations given below.
  - State funds should be given only to national and state parties allotted a symbol and not to independent candidates.
  - In the short-term state funding should only be given in kind, in the form of certain facilities to the recognised political parties and their candidates.
  - The state funding depends upon the economic condition of the country. At the time of report (1998) the economic situation of the country only suited partial and not full state funding of elections.
  - Thus, as per this committee, only partial state funding was possible given the economic conditions of the country at that time.

**Meaning of State funding of elections :-**
- This means that government gives funds to political parties or candidates for contesting elections. Its main purpose is to make it unnecessary for contestants to take money from powerful moneyed interests so that they can remain clean. In some countries, state funding is extended to meeting some specific forms of spending by political parties, not confined to electioneering alone.

**State funding of elections is necessary:--**
- Domination of corporate donations:-
  - Corporate donations constitute the main source of election funding in India which is mostly awash with black money, with business and corporate donations to political parties commonly taking this form. The public disclosure system that exists is limited.
- State funding is followed in multiple countries:-
• India’s privately funded election campaign stands in contrast to the trend in most countries, which have partial or full public funding or transparent regulation and financial accountability of political finance as in the U.S.

• **Corruption exists in the present funding system:**
  • Corruption in election finance and the flawed party funding system drive political parties to misuse government’s discretionary powers to raise funds for election campaigns.
  • Public funding can limit the influence of interested money and thereby help curb corruption.

• **Electoral bonds also failed:**
  • All donations given to a party will be accounted for in the balance sheets but without exposing the donor details to the public.
  • Electoral bonds cannot address the problems that arise from the corporate control over politics and corporate capture of government policies and decisions.

• Political parties and candidates need money for their electoral campaigns, to keep contacts with their constituencies, to prepare policy decisions and to pay professional staff. Therefore, **public funding is a natural and necessary cost of democracy.**

• **Increases transparency:**
  • Public funding can increase transparency in party and candidate finance and thereby help curb corruption.

• If parties and candidates are financed with only private funds, **economical inequalities in the society might translate into political inequalities in government.**

• **Resourceful:**
  • In societies where many citizens are under or just above the poverty line, they cannot be expected to donate large amounts of money to political parties or candidates.
  • If parties and candidates receive at least a basic amount of money from the State the country could have a functioning multi-party system without people having to give up their scarce resources.

**Issues with state funding of elections:**

• **Experience from different countries:**
  • The experience over a period of time in some of the countries like Italy, Finland, Spain, Austria and Israel did not show that the public funding had reduced the election expenditure of political parties.
  • The principal point against the State subvention to political parties was that a political party was a free association of citizens for political purposes and it should be able to demonstrate its independent viability including its financial viability.

• **Complete State Funding is not feasible**
  • State funding of elections depends on economic condition of the country. Currently, India’s economy does not suit to state complete funding.

• **State funding may succeed only when it is total and not partial,** because there is no guarantee that even after it was introduced, rich parties and candidates would not pump black money into campaigns to boost their chances of victory. Partial funding leaves scope for the party to use its funds for campaigns of individual candidates would fail to prevent the use of black money.

• **State funding would also result in increased capacity of the political parties to spend on election campaigns making the elections even more costly.** It would even encourage the mushrooming growth of parties as such grants would be a great incentive for even non-serious and frivolous organizations to call themselves as political outfits.

• **From various experiences, it is clear that the State funding has neither cleaned the corruption, nor freed the political parties of their financial burden.** With mounting expenditure on the Central and State Governments, State funding would be an additional financial burden on them.

**Way forward:**

• **Recommendations of Tarkunde committee :-**
  • Certain facilities be made available to every constituency at government expense like giving printed cards with the registered number of voters and the polling booths where they may cast their vote, making available school rooms and halls for meetings, sending one communication to each voter free of postage and so on.
- **A strong Lokpal** has to be in place to ensure that corruption is reported and redressed. This will instil fear among prospective candidates who will no longer see their election as a money-making opportunity.

- Without favourable economy and without **key reforms in other areas** such as decriminalization of politics, introduction of inner party democracy, electoral finance reform, transparency and audit mechanisms and stricter implementation of anti-corruption laws, there is no point moving towards state funding of elections.

- Government should consider state funding of political parties contesting elections. But **such funding should be limited to parties recognised as ‘national’ or ‘State’ by the Election Commission of India, and to candidates directly fielded by such recognised parties.**

- **Separate Election Fund** with an annual contribution of some Rs 600 crore by the Centre and a matching amount by all States put together should be created. Only those parties which have submitted their income tax returns up to the previous financial year could avail of state funding.

- **Every candidate of the party eligible for state funding should be given a specified quantity of fuel for vehicles** during an election campaign and a specified quantity of paper to prepare electoral literature.

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**GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 2**

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

**Q) Discuss how Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) impinges on the personal liberty of citizens of India. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

Personal liberty is an essential fundamental right and any incursion on this inalienable right is a important issue, especially as far as UPSC mains exam is concerned. The issue is related to GS- 2 syllabus under the following heading – Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

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

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to bring out the salient provisions and procedures of the UAPA act and write in detail about how they affect the personal liberty of the citizens.

**Directive word**

Discuss- here we have to dig deep into the question and write in detail about all the vital and related aspects of the question- need and evolution of the act, its implications on personal liberty

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- mention that pursuant to the acceptance of recommendations of the Committee on National Integration and Regionalisation, the Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963 was enacted to impose, by law, reasonable restrictions in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India. In order to implement the provisions of 1963 Act, the Unlawful Activities act was passed.

**Body**- Discuss how the act impinges on personal liberty of the citizens.

- The definition of “unlawful activities” includes “disclaiming” or “questioning” the territorial integrity of India, and causing “disaffection” against India. These words are staggeringly vague and broad, and come close to establishing a regime of thought-crimes.

- “Membership” of unlawful and terrorist organisations is a criminal offence, and in the latter case, it can be punished with life imprisonment. But the Act fails entirely to define what “membership” entails.

- Section 43D(5) of the Act prohibits courts from granting bail to a person if “on a perusal of the case diary or the [police] report etc.
Conclusion – Discuss the important cases related to UAPA and mention the imperative to eliminate excessive discretion and denial of judicial review under the act in order to realize the personal liberty of all the citizens of the modern India etc. You can also form your own conclusion.

Background :-

- Recently five individuals were arrested ostensibly for instigating the riots at Bhima-Koregaon in early 2018. They have been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- The UAPA authorises the government to ban unlawful organisations and terrorist organisations (subject to judicial review), and penalises membership of such organisations.

How Unlawful activities prevention act impinges on personal liberty :-

- The problems begin with the definitional clause itself:-
  - The definition of unlawful activities includes disclaiming or questioning the territorial integrity of India, and causing disaffection against India. These words are staggeringly vague and broad.
- Membership of unlawful and terrorist organisations is a criminal offence, and in the latter case, it can be punished with life imprisonment. But the Act fails entirely to define what membership entails. Chargesheets under the UAPA often cite the seizure of books or magazines, and presence at meetings, as clinching evidence of membership.
- Supreme Court attempted to narrow the scope of these provisions, holding that membership was limited to cases where an individual engaged in active incitement to violence. Anything broader than that would violate the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and of association. The application of this ruling however has been patchy and arbitrary.
  - Under the UAPA, as long as the state’s version appears to make out an offence, a court cannot under law grant bail. Section 43D(5) of the UAPA is effectively a warrant for perpetual imprisonment without trial. For instance on more than one occasion in recent years, terror accused have been acquitted after spending more than a decade in jail.
- The wide and vague provisions of the UAPA allow governments great and virtually unbridled power to arrest people.
- UAPA subordinates every other constitutional value like freedom of speech, personal liberty, the right to a fair trial etc to the overarching concern of order. But what the UAPA does is to normalise this “state of exception”, and make it a permanent feature of the legal landscape.
- No sunset clause:-
  - Unlike its predecessors, Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 and Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002, both of which had provisions for mandatory periodic review, or a sunset clause, the UAPA has no such provision.
  - In addition, the Act authorises the creation of special courts, with wide discretion to hold in-camera proceedings (closed-door hearings) and use secret witnesses but contains no sunset clause and provisions for mandatory periodic review.
- The 2008 amendments to the UAPA give Indian authorities heightened powers to detain persons without charge, which places them at greater risk of mistreatment and violates basic due process rights.
- Provisions similar to POTA and TADA:-
  - More provisions similar to POTA and TADA regarding maximum period in police custody, incarceration without a chargesheet and restrictions on bail were incorporated into the UAPA.
    - Furthermore, it allows detention without a chargesheet for up to 180 days and police custody can be up to 30 days.
    - It also creates a strong presumption against bail and anticipatory bail is out of the question.
    - It creates a presumption of guilt for terrorism offences merely based on the evidence allegedly seized.
  - The 2012 amendments to the UAPA further expanded the already vague definition of “terrorist act” to include offences that threaten the country’s economic security.
  - Like the TADA and POTA, UAPA also criminalises ideology and association. By virtue of declaring an organisation ‘unlawful’ or ‘terrorist’ and banning it, these Acts have de facto criminalised their
ideologies. Hence mere possession of any literature of such an organisation or even upholding an ideology common to that organisation in the absence of any violent act is construed as an offence.

- On the other hand, mere membership or association with such an organisation too becomes an offence.
- Very often, organisations advocating the rights of a certain minority community or that of oppressed sections are easily labelled as fronts of a proscribed organisation under the schedule of the Act. Their activists or members get arrested and remain in prison for years, and are denied bail.

- The Act introduces a vague definition of terrorism to encompass a wide range of non-violent political activity, including political protest. It empowers the government to declare an organisation as ‘terrorist’ and ban it.
- Since 2014, various civil liberty and democratic rights organisations throughout the country have initiated campaigns and movements for the repeal of the UAPA.

**Conclusion:**

- Therefore it is imperative to eliminate excessive discretion and there is a need for judicial review under the act in order to realize the personal liberty of all the citizens of the modern India etc.

**Q) The curative petition being heard in SC in Naz Foundation 2013 case should be concerned not only with the legality of section 377 of IPC but also with rights of LGBTQ community. Analyze. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

Section 377 is again in the news courtesy the curative petition in SC, and the opinion of the govt that it would not challenge SC verdict in this regard. Hence this question

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to trace a brief evolution of the court’s position on section 377 critical analysis of the judgment and future course of action that must be taken.

**Directive word**

Analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Trace a brief evolution of the court’s position on section 377 and discuss why this topic is in news.

**Body**

- Highlight SC judgment in Naz foundation case which overturned Delhi HC’s progressive verdict
- Examine why this judgment is a blot on the progressive trend being followed by SC
- Examine why it is not necessary to just declare Section 377 ultra vires but also focus on the associated rights of LGBTQ community in accordance with judgement in NALSA vs UoI and Puttaswamy vs UoI
- Discuss what rights are needed by this community

**Conclusion** – Mention what should be the way forward in this matter.

**Background:-**

- Recently SC decided to reconsider the constitutional validity of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code which has been used to de-criminalise homosexuality.

**What was SC position earlier and why was it discriminatory:-**

- Section 377 of the IPC refers to ‘unnatural offences’ and says whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to pay a fine.
- In 2009, the Delhi High Court, passed a judgement that Section 377 indeed was violative of Articles 21, 14 and 15 of the Constitution as it criminalised the consensual sexual acts of adults in private.
- The latest petition requires the Supreme Court to reconsider its 2013 judgment in Suresh Kumar Kaushal versus Naz Foundation which upheld the legalities of Section 377. The judgment had struck down the Delhi High Court judgment decriminalising homosexuality.
- The people who filed curative petition have argued that they are affected by the judgment and since the Supreme Court has itself declared the Right to Privacy a Fundamental Right, they cannot be denied their right to sexual privacy.
They said that they live in fear of the police because of their natural sexual preferences. The petitioners also argued that most nations have decriminalised homosexuality and India should not lag behind on the issue.

**The case needs to deal with section 377 and rights of LGBT community:**

- NALSA (National Legal Services Authority) judgment recognized transgender as a gender identity and ruled that the community deserved immediate remedial action because of the innumerable contraventions to their right to life, liberty and equality.
- Instead of focusing on the question of validity alone, the Court also needs to concern itself with how current laws impact the lives of the LGBTQ community.
- The Supreme Court set a precedent with a remarkable and comprehensive 2014 judgment granting India’s transgender community the right to be recognised as a third gender category with accompanying legal rights. This judgment stands as a reminder that rights that ensure inclusiveness, equality, and freedom are the fundamental values of this republic.
- SC judgment in Puttaswamy case:
  - It terms the rights of India’s sexual minorities as those founded on sound constitutional doctrine effectively making Section 377 unsustainable. In principle, it maintains that sexual orientation must be protected and lies at the heart of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution under Articles 14, 15 and 21.
  - Instead of merely considering the petition as a narrow legal matter, the court should examine the issue from the perspective of an institution that is committed towards ensuring equality for all.
  - Without these rights, sexual minorities will continue to face unequal treatment, abuse, discrimination in workplaces and housing, violence, and denial of recognition.
- The Court should also consider closely the fact that individual dignity and freedom cannot be achieved without equal rights. Failure to use a rights-based approach also has serious social repercussions.
- There is sufficient evidence to show that suicide rates are higher among sexual minorities. Moreover, this lack of rights and protections feeds a homophobic culture that over emphasises and empowers patriarchy and masculinity.
- Health:
  - Public health evidence also indicates a clear relationship of a lack of social acceptance and legal rights with substance abuse, violence, isolation, and mental illness. Finally, a rights-based framework is intricately tied up with India’s quest for social and economic development.

**Conclusion:**

India’s sexual minorities need not only decriminalisation but rights and protections that help them build productive lives and relationships irrespective of gender identity or sexual orientation. They need an anti-discrimination law that empowers them and places the onus on the state and society to change.

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<th>Q) Discuss what do you mean by “constitutional renaissance” and how is it relevant in the present political discourse? (250 words)</th>
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| **Why this question**  
In recent several debates have raged over several provisions of the constitution such as Article 370, article 44 etc. Understanding constitutional renaissance is important to resolve such debated happening due to fractious polity. |
| **Key demand of the question**  
The question expects us to explain what constitutional renaissance, explain why it is necessary to be understood due to several debates that have been taking place over the interpretation of the constitution, and how exactly can this doctrine be applied by policy makers to frame more effective laws, policies, regulations etc which are in tune with the directive of the constitution. |
| **Directive word**  
Discuss – Here in your discussion you need to explain the court’s position on words like constitutional renaissance, associated terms like constitutional morality, purposive interpretation etc and how they are relevant in the present climate. |
| **Structure of the answer**  
**Introduction** – Examine some of the recent conflicts in interpretation of the constitution such as Article 370, Article 239 AA etc |
Body

- Discuss what is meant by constitutional renaissance – constant awakening as regards the text, context, perspective, purpose, and the rule of law, an awakening that makes space for a “resurgent constitutionalism” and “allows no room for absolutism” nor any “space for anarchy”
- Examine its implication for the polity – fidelity to the vision, spirit and letter of the Constitution is the supreme obligation of all constitutional beings.
- Highlight why and how this norm is being flouted in the current discourse and how such debates can be resolved if we stay true to the ideals explicit and implicit in our constitution

Conclusion – Mention why in a constitutional democracy, constitution reigns supreme and how we need to change current practices to ensure better functioning.

Background :-
- Recently there have been conflicts regarding the constitutional provisions like article 370, article 44, article 239 AA etc.

Constitutional renaissance :-
- A constant awakening as regards the text, context, perspective, purpose, and the rule of law, an awakening that makes space for a resurgent constitutionalism and allows no room for absolutism nor any space for anarchy.
- Reverence for the Constitution is the essential first step towards constitutional renaissance.
- This awakening is a constant process. Renaissance has a beginning but knows no end because everyday fidelity to the vision, spirit and letter of the Constitution is the supreme obligation of all constitutional beings.

Relevance:-
- Constitutional renaissance is necessary especially in the recent times there have been statements by representatives of the people about subverting the constitution.
- There have been many instances for subverting the provisions of the constitution but the solutions lie in these provisions itself as Indian constitution is one of the finest in the world.
- Also legislature can take measures to uphold the implicit constitutional provisions like ensuring safety to women, ensuring tolerance in society etc.
- Similarly executive need to play its role by implementing the laws in public interest. For instance right to life with dignity implicitly provides for availability of food to the poor.
- Judiciary through the interpretation of constitutional laws can ensure renaissance of the constitution for instance judgments like Vishaka, Puttuswamy judgment, NALSA etc the constitutional intent is revived.
- The paradox lies in the fact that discourse of constitutional renaissance co-exists with that of subversion of the Constitution. The recent developments in India suggest that constitutional renaissance in the true sense of the term can be the call of popular movements for justice.

Q) Religious freedom clauses in the Indian Constitution are possessed of a special complexity. Comment, in the context of the controversy surrounding access of women into the Sabarimala temple.(250 words)

Why this question
Women empowerment and ending social and religious discrimination faced by them is one of the cherished goals of any modern constitutional democracy, including India. It is important to know the constitutional provisions and the legal interpretations and judgements related to these issues.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to dig deep into the issue and discuss the constitutional provisions related to religious freedom and access of women to religious places. It wants us to express our opinion as to what are the complexities involved in the issue and how they manifest themselves in the present discourse on entry of women into the Sabarimala temple.

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

Structure of the answer
Write a few lines about the issue of entry of women to religious places in India. E.g recent incidents- Haji Ali Dargah, Shani Shingnapur temple, Trimbakeshwar Shiva temple etc. Mention that Sabarimala temple issue is being currently under the adjudication of the Supreme Court-Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala.

Body-

- Highlight and discuss the related provisions in the constitution of India. the right to freedom of religion of both individuals and groups; Articles 25 and 26; subject to common community exceptions and also, crucially, to the guarantee of other fundamental rights; Article 25(2)(b) which creates a further exception to the right; Article 26, on the other hand, which is also subject to limitations imposed on community grounds, accords to every religious denomination the right, among other things, to establish and maintain institutions for religious purposes and to manage their own affairs in matters of religion etc.

- Discuss the core issue surrounding the Sabarimala temple controversy. E.g clash between a series of apparently conflicting claims: among others involving the temple’s right to decide for itself how its religious affairs ought to be managed; a rights of the women to unreservedly enter and pray at the shrine etc.

Conclusion- Based on your discussion form an overall opinion on the issue.

Background:-

- In a landmark decision by the Bombay High Court, women will now be allowed inside the inner sanctum of Mumbai's Haji Ali Dargah. The Shani Shingnapur temple, that had barred women from entering its core area for over 400 years, allowed women activists to pray inside the temple after much resistance, same goes with Trinimbakeshwar Shiva temple etc.

- While the country might be witnessing a wave of changes in this sphere, temples like Sabarimala are fighting head-on to uphold the atavistic traditions in the name of religion.

Religious freedom clauses in Indian constitution and how these clauses are complex:-

- The right to freedom of religion of both individuals and groups is recognised as an intrinsic facet of a liberal democracy. The Constitution memorialises these guarantees in Articles 25 and 26.

- Article 25:-
  - It recognises a right to freedom of conscience and a right to freely profess, practise, and propagate religion, subject to common community exceptions of public order, morality, and health, and also, crucially, to the guarantee of other fundamental rights.
  - Article 25(2)(b) creates a further exception to the right. It accords to the state a power to make legislation, in the interests of social welfare and reform, throwing open Hindu religious institutions of public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

- Article 26, on the other hand, which is also subject to limitations imposed on grounds of public order, morality, and health, accords to every religious denomination the right, among other things, to establish and maintain institutions for religious purposes and to manage their own affairs in matters of religion.

- Until now, most cases involving a bar of entry into temples have involved a testing of laws made in furtherance of Article 25(2)(b). For example, in Sri Venkataramana Devaru v. State of Mysore (1958), the Supreme Court examined the validity of the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act of 1947, which was introduced with a view to removing the disabilities imposed by custom or usage on certain classes of Hindus against entry into a Hindu temple. The court upheld the law on the ground that statutes made under clause 2(b) to Article 25 served as broad exceptions to the freedom of religion guaranteed by both Articles 25 and 26.

- But in Indian Young Lawyers Association, the attack is to the converse
  - It is to Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965, which states, Women who are not by custom and usage allowed to enter a place of public worship shall not be entitled to enter or offer worship in any place of public worship.
  - It is by placing reliance on these rules that the Sabarimala temple prohibits women aged between 10 and 50 years from entering the shrine.

Sabarimala controversy:-
The Supreme Court is currently hearing oral arguments in Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala, in which rules that bar the entry of women aged between 10 and 50 years into the Sabarimala temple in Kerala have been called into question.

- **Women's rights:**
  - To prohibit women from entering a public space, from worshipping in a shrine of their choice, one would think, ought to be anathema to the tenets of a constitutional democracy.
  - The petitioners have argued that the ban enforced on menstruating women from entering the Sabarimala shrine does not constitute a core foundation of the assumed religious denomination.

- **Customs:**
  - The Devaswom Board contends that established customs deserve respect, that this particular Lord Ayyappa in Sabarimala is a celibate, and that women of menstruating age are, therefore, forbidden from entering the temple.
  - The temple says that it is its right to decide for itself how its religious affairs ought to be managed.

- **Law favouring the autonomy of the group over the autonomy of the individual tends to have the harmful effect of favouring** the view of the association proffered by the powerful over the views proffered by less powerful members of the group that is, traditionally subordinate members such as women, children, and sexual minorities.

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

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**Q) Discuss the impact of the recent SC ruling, on the Delhi-Centre relationship. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

After a protracted and ugly tussle between the centre and the NCT of India, the SC has finally given its decision regarding the distribution of powers between the centre and Delhi.

The issue is related to GS-2 syllabus under the following heading

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

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to write in detail about the legal provisions governing the Delhi-Centre relationship, how they have been interpreted by the SC in its recent judgement and its effect on the hitherto relation between the two.

**Directive word**

Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which directs us to write in detail about the key demand of the question-how the SC judgement affects the Delhi-Centre relationship.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- Write in 2-3 lines about the legal and constitutional provisions governing the Delhi-centre relationship- article 239, 239AA; 69th amendment etc.

**Body**-

- Discuss the SC judgement in detail. E.g LG has no independent decision-making power, LG and the CM are constitutional functionaries and must work harmoniously; law and order, land and not under the domain of NCT; LG must be informed but cannot stall all the decisions of council of ministers etc.

- Discuss the implications of the decision on the relationship. E.g no more conflict; clear demarcation of powers of the LG etc.

**Conclusion**- Form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue based on your discussion.

**Background**:--
- The 69th constitutional amendment designated Delhi as National Capital Territory of Delhi and provided Legislative Assembly. However, it was not conferred with full statehood and is administered by union government through Lieutenant Governor.
- 69th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1991 provided special status for Delhi by incorporating article 239 AA and 239 AB by providing for legislative assembly and Council of Ministers.

**SC ruling:**
- According to recent supreme court judgment Delhi government has power in all areas except land, police and public order and the LG is bound by the aid and advice of the government in areas other than those exempted.
- **Supreme court laid down the principles:-**
  - The Legislative Assembly of NCT Delhi is competent to enact laws on all subjects in the State and Concurrent Lists, except public order, police, and land, as per Article 239AA(3)(a)
  - The Government of NCT Delhi (GNCTD) enjoys executive powers over all matters over which the Delhi Legislative Assembly can legislate
  - The Lieutenant Governor (L-G) is bound by the aid and advice of GNCTD as per Article 239AA(4)
  - The LG may only in exceptional cases refer a matter over which he/she and the GNCTD have a “difference of opinion”, to the President, for a binding decision.
  - Both LG and CM are constitutional functionaries and must work harmoniously with mutual respect.
  - All decisions by Delhi’s council of ministers, who are elected representatives, must be communicated to the L-G but that does not mean his concurrence is required.

**Impact of Delhi centre relationship:-**
- This path-breaking judgment will have major implications for the government-L-G ties in all Union Territories. The impasse in Puducherry can also be tackled with this judgment.
- **The undergoing crisis gets clarity:-**
  - Current crisis is rooted in the understanding (or misunderstanding) of the constitutional limits of the powers of the elected government in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
  - The tussle between the Delhi Chief Minister and Lieutenant Governor raises several constitutional and legal issues on the scope and extent of their powers in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.
  - Future conflicts can be avoided due to this decision.
  - This brings the end to the tussle between centre and Delhi when different parties are ruling parties as clear rules are demarcated.

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

**Q) Sharia courts as an alternative dispute redressal mechanism, respond to the decline of the civil justice system, and address the needs of the poor. Critically analyze. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
AIMPLB has recently received applications to open several Darul Qazas (Sharia courts) across India. Some of these applications have been approved. The SC has also given a ruling on these courts. This makes it an important issue to delve upon.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to dig deep into the issue of shariah courts and bring out whether they are a legal and an effective alternative dispute redressal mechanism which respond to the decline of the civil justice system, and address the needs of the poor. We have to see both the advantages/ strength as well as limitations of these courts. Thereafter it wants us to form a personal opinion on the issue.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze- We have to dig deep into the issue and bring out the positive points/ advantages/ strengths as well as negative points/ disadvantages/ limitations. Based on our discussion we have to form a personal opinion on the issue.

**Structure of the answer**
Introduction – mention the historical existence and form of the sharia courts and then mention the British response of incorporating these courts followed by developments in 1817. Also mention the SC ruling on these courts and its verdict.

Body:-

- Discuss the positive aspects of the sharia courts. E.g an effective and cheap alternative dispute resolution mechanism; high compliance rates of decisions made by sharia courts; more accessible to women; speedy process etc.

- Discuss the limitations/ negative points. E.g low representation of women; unnecessary projection of decrees as having as divine sanction; politicization of the issue.

Conclusion - form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the overall issue of sharia courts and write a few lines as to what should be done further in this regard.

Background:-

- India’s 150 million Muslims follow their own laws governing family life and other personal issues such as marriage and divorce, with Sharia courts used to rule on such matters and mediate in disagreements.

- The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has announced that it will establish Sharia courts in all districts of the country recently.

- Roughly, the Shariat can be explained as the provisions in the Quran as well as the teachings and practices of Prophet Mohammad.

- Even the Supreme court in its landmark judgment in the Vishnu Lohan Madan case (2014) clearly stated that sharia courts are not courts because the Indian legal system does not recognise a parallel judicial system. But the court also refused to deem them unconstitutional.

Why are Sharia courts necessary:-

- Historical reasons:-
  - Judges during the colonial times were assisted by quazis in the discharge of judicial functions. When the Quazis Act of 1880 deprived the quazis of their judicial powers, there were demands to establish sharia courts.

- They are type of Alternative dispute redressal mechanism:-
  - Sharia courts are not courts in the strictest sense of the term but counselling or arbitration centres. They are accessible, useful, informal and voluntary institutions that provide speedy and inexpensive justice to the poor.

- International experiences:-
  - In 2008, the UK set up five sharia courts whose rulings are enforceable with the full power of the English judicial system. Israel too enforces the orders of sharia courts as decrees of the state’s civil courts. ADR is privatisation of justice because parties not only nominate their judges but make their own laws or adopt laws of other countries.

- Indian experiences:-
  - The sharia courts of Bihar are widely respected for putting in place elaborate procedures for the determination of issues, systematic recording of testimonies and speaking orders.

  - Some of these orders have been quoted with approval by the formal courts.

  - In Bihar, more than 60,000 cases have been amicably resolved by these courts. The cases were disposed of in less than a year’s time. There has been a steady increase over the decades in the number of cases filed with these sharia courts.

  - Very rarely is a sharia court’s decision challenged in a civil court. Such courts were subsequently established in West Bengal and Orissa.

  - Sharia courts of Lucknow and Kanpur and found that 95 per cent Muslim women used it out of their free will.

- Women trust them:-
  - About 100 such courts have been functional for decades. These courts provide speedy and inexpensive justice to poor women. No one can be forced to go to such courts.

  - Their orders are not binding and lack legal sanctity. However, it’s perfectly legal if all the parties concerned want to comply with their orders.
Unlike the khap panchayats, these courts do not deal with criminal cases and cannot forcibly enforce their orders.

Even the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Aandolan, which is leading the current movement for reforms in Muslim law, runs its own Sharia courts.

**Issues with traditional courts:-**

- In reality, traditional courts have many problems. They are often slow at their best and conduits for gross injustice at their worst. At a more fundamental level, no evidence shows that the adversarial system which judiciary follows is the best way to solve disputes.
- **Whenever parties choose arbitration rather than government courts, it demonstrates that arbitration is making both parties better off.**

**Criticism:-**

- It’s a de-facto way of dividing the country and creating secession. There’s only one court and one law. **Constitution is guiding force and anything outside it cannot be acceptable**
- The **special provision of a particular religion is always taken care by the Supreme Court and High Court and hence any other court is not needed.**
- Supreme Court had in 2014 declared that Shariat courts and fatwas issued by them have no legal sanctity.
- **Attempt to establish Sharia courts in India is an attempt to establish a private parallel judicial system which cannot be permitted by law.**
- **There are many questions unanswered like:-**
  - How AIMPLB is going to establish Sharia courts in the country
  - Under what authority will it appoint judges (qazis) and what will be their eligibility in accordance with the law that governs India
  - Under what authority will the courts summon the opposite parties and witnesses. If the other party or witnesses don’t come how will they force them to come before the Sharia court.
- **Establishment of Sharia courts is a blow to secularism which is the basic principle of our Constitution.**
- When the legally-constituted courts in India are addressing the issues of Muslim women and giving them justice through Right to Equality (Article 14), Right to Liberty (Article 19) and Right to Life (Article 21) as available to women of other religions, this attempt to set up Sharia courts is a move to hamper the process.
- **There is no rule book (codified law), according to which complaints will be registered, evidence will be taken, cross-examination will be done,** judgments will be cited, final arguments will be heard and justice will be delivered.
- Without any proper codification of rules, the qazis will interpret the disputes in accordance to their own social, religious and cultural backgrounds, and will pronounce judgments according to their own whims and fancies.

**Way forward:-**

- Each sharia court should ideally have at least one woman. Alternatively, India may have all-woman sharia courts.

**Q) Better listing of cases can improve the quality and efficiency of the functioning of the courts in India. Critically analyze. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

Indian judiciary forms a vital, dynamic institution in Indian society. However, despite its successes (particularly the role of SC in upholding democracy and constitutional values), Indian courts have a staggeringly high case pendency ratios. This is turn is a result of many ills affecting Indian judiciary. The issue is related to GS-2 syllabus under the following heading

**Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.**

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to dig deep into the process of listing of cases, how they affect justice delivery; and bring out the amendments that can be made therein in order to improve the quality and efficiency of functioning of the courts.
Directive word
Critically analyze- we have to dig deep into the issue and discuss all the relevant and important aspects of the question in terms of the key demand of the question. We have to connect those aspects and at the end come with a personal opinion on the issue.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention that for decades, the primary measure of court efficiency has been case disposal rates. Mention the number of pending cases in SC, HC, Lower courts.

Body-
- Bring out how case listing impacts justice delivery. E.g erratic pattern, cases at the day end left, disinterest in older cases, etc.
- Discuss how case listing can be improved. E.g more systematic, distributed according to case type and stage, priority to older cases etc.

Conclusion– form a fair and balanced conclusion in 2-3 lines. Mention other factors affecting justice delivery- appointments, vacancy, corruption etc.

Background:-
- For decades, the primary measure of court efficiency has been case disposal rates. Public perception of court performance and individual judges now hinges on the number of cases pending before them.
- As of September 30, 2016, the Supreme Court has nearly 61,000 pending cases, official figures say. The high courts have a backlog of more than 40 lakh cases, and all subordinate courts together are yet to get disposed.

Present issues and why better listing of cases is necessary:-
- Present constraints:-
  - Focusing on pendency of cases alone puts pressure on judges to dispose of as many cases as possible, a problematic situation as it does not consider the quality of adjudication Neither does it shed light on the exact nature of cases that have remained pending the longest, or the stage at which pendency recurs the most.
  - Listing patterns were generally erratic, with the number of matters listed for the same courtroom ranging from 1 to 126 a month. In some courtrooms, it was 80-120 cases for a month.
  - A large number of cases listed in a day meant that inevitably, matters listed towards the end of the day remained left over. Thus, cases in the final stages of hearing most often clogged the case pipeline.
  - Old pending matters barely made it to court. Case data over three years showed that 91% of them remained unheard despite being allotted a separate day and specific judges. Some experts point out that these cases were listed for the second half of the day but would eventually never come up for hearing because of the large number of other urgent and routine matters listed.

- Uncertainty:-
  - The uncertainty around which cases will come up for hearing means neither judges nor lawyers can plan their preparation.
  - This situation compels lawyers to waste time waiting in court and enables them to cite the simultaneous listing of multiple cases as an excuse for adjournments.
  - Registry staff must manage the massive task of re-listing leftover matters in an already bulging docket, instead of streamlining case flow.

- Benefits of better case listing:-
  - Scientific listing has clear benefits. It will introduce standardisation across courts and help disincentivise judges from using discretionary practices in the number and nature of cases listed before them.
  - It will promote fairness as a reasonable number of cases would be listed every day, and distributed across the day based on stage and case type.
  - Another benefit would be better quality of adjudication. With an ever-increasing caseload, it is only fair to question the quality of decision-making.

Way forward:-
- One way to accelerate case movement is by making case listing more systematic. Here, courts must assess their performance based on the actual number of cases being heard.
- List preparation can be made more scientific if supported by a consistent study of the variance in the number of cases listed across courts, identifying the exact stages at which cases are clogging the pipeline for the longest duration, and the nature of cases left over. This will also ensure that only as many cases as can be reasonably heard will be listed on a daily basis.
- Disposing of old and pending matters must be prioritised.
- Specification of time limits has emerged as a distinctive feature of process reforms across jurisdictions that have been able to quantifiably minimise judicial delay, such as the UK and Singapore.

Conclusion:-
- It is time that the judiciary as an institution opens itself to the services of competent external agencies that can help them record, manage and analyse their data better, to build and sustain a healthy institution.

Q) If India is to achieve its status as a great power, it is absolutely essential that police is restructured and modernised. In this context, discuss the status of police reforms in the country? (250 words)

Why this question
The article rues the lack of police reforms undertaken despite several directions and guidelines by SC, including the most recent guideline regarding appointment of DGP. The article brings the focus on police reforms, the need of it, the direction it should take and how to go about it.

Key demand of the question
The question demand us to explain the need for police reforms in India as the statement in the first line points to that. Thereafter, we need to bring out the steps that have been proposed by several committees and courts regarding police reforms. We need to finally give a way forward.

Directive word
Discuss – The discussion here has to focus on the reports of committees and supreme court guidelines and judgments regarding police reforms and assess why they have not been implemented either in spirit or form.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Begin with mentioning that police in India is still governed by archaic laws formulated pre independence and that police reforms have not been taken up so far.

Body – Explain why police reforms are necessary for India. Thereafter, bring out the contents of the report of Niti Ayog, Justice Verma committee, Justice Thomas committee, SC ruling in Prakash Singh case 2006 etc which have mentioned the need for police reforms and have also laid down the structure that such a reform must take. Examine the current guidelines of SC regarding appointment of DGP and how they seek to correct a systemic malaise in police structure and functioning. Examine the nature and feature of police reforms that the country requires.

Conclusion – Mention that India should consider reviewing the structure and functioning of police in line with the recommendations discussed above.

Background:-
- The primary role of police forces is to uphold and enforce laws, investigate crimes and ensure security for people in the country.
- Under the Constitution, police is a subject governed by states.
- There has been almost 30 years of debate on policing and reform in India.

Why police needed to be restructured and modernized :-
- An overburdened police force :-
  - Police force is over burdened especially at lower levels where constabulary is forced to work continuously 14-16 hrs and also for 7 days a week. It adversely impacts their performance.
  - While the sanctioned police strength was 181 police per lakh persons in 2016 when the United Nations recommended standard is 222 police per lakh persons.
86% of the state police comprises of constabulary. Constables are typically promoted once during their service. This could weaken their incentive to perform well.

**Improving police infrastructure**

- Failure of police infrastructure like vehicles, weaponry. Also audits have found that the POLNET network is non-functional in various states.
- For example, an audit of the Gujarat police force reported that the network had not been operationalised till October 2015 due to non-installation of essential infrastructure, such as remote subscriber units and generator sets.
- Funds dedicated for modernisation of infrastructure are typically not utilised fully. For example, in 2015-16, only 14% of such funds were used by the states.

**Police accountability :-**

- Police forces have the authority to exercise force to enforce laws and maintain law and order in a state. **However, this power may be misused in several ways. For example, in India, various kinds of complaints are made against the police including complaints of unwarranted arrests, unlawful searches, torture and custodial rapes.**

**Poor quality of investigation:-**

- Crime per lakh population has increased by 28% over the last decade (2005-2015). However, convictions have been low. So it shows the poor quality of investigation.
- The Law Commission and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have noted that state police officers often neglect investigation because they are understaffed and overburdened with various kinds of tasks.
- Further, they lack the training and the expertise required to conduct professional investigations.
- They also have insufficient legal knowledge and the forensic and cyber infrastructure available to them is both inadequate and outdated. In light of this, police forces may use force and torture to secure evidence. Crime investigations may be influenced by political or other extraneous considerations

**Forensic labs:-**

- Expert bodies have however said that these laboratories are short of funds and qualified staff. Further, there is indiscriminate referencing of cases to these labs resulting in high pendency.

**Lack of co-ordination** between centre and states is matter related to maintenance of law & order results in ineffective functioning of police force.

**Police force is not in the position to tackle present problems** of cyber crime, global terrorism, naxalism because of structural weaknesses.

**Prevalence of Rank system within the police force results in abuse of power** by top level executive over lower level personnel.

According to a recent estimate, **crime, terrorism and external threats take a huge toll on economic growth and that these cost India 9 per cent of its GDP**, which is a very high figure (China lost only 4 per cent, Japan 3 per cent).

- Without the police ensuring good law and order in the country, the other services would find it difficult to operate.
- To transform the colonial police structure of the country into a progressive, modern force sensitive to the democratic aspirations of the people.
- To eliminate the undue political interference. The police of today are victims of politicization as well as criminalization.
- To instil the confidence of the people in the institution of police by making police more people friendly.
- The security of the society and the welfare of the people is dependent on the efficiency of the police.

**Status of police reforms:-**

- The Supreme Court gave a slew of directions to ensure that there are no distortions in the appointment of Director General of Police (DGP) of the state.
  - It laid down that the states shall send their proposals three months prior to the retirement of the incumbent DGP
  - That the UPSC shall prepare a panel of three officers suitable for elevation to the post of DGP; that the state shall appoint one of the persons from the panel only
  - That there would be no appointments of Acting DGP
- That a person appointed as DGP should continue to hold the post for a reasonable period “beyond the date of superannuation”
- That the UPSC should as far as practicable empanel officers who have got clear two years of service, giving due weightage to merit and seniority
- That “any legislation/rule framed by any of the states or the Central Government running counter to the direction shall remain in abeyance”

**Justice Thomas Committee (2010) expressed** its dismay over the total indifference to the issue of reforms in the functioning of police being exhibited by the states.

- Government of India (GoI) came up with the concept of SMART police in 2014 i.e., police that would be strict and sensitive, modern and mobile, alert and accountable, reliable and responsible, tech-savvy and trained. **There was, however, no effort to make the concept a reality.**
- States have constituted **security commissions**, as directed by the Supreme Court, but their composition has been diluted and their charter curtailed.

**Reforms needed:**

- **Directions of the Supreme Court in Prakash Singh vs Union of India :-**
  - The Supreme Court ordered the centre and states to set up authorities to lay down guidelines for police functioning, evaluate police performance, decide postings and transfers, and receive complaints of police misconduct.
  - The court also required that minimum tenure of service be guaranteed to key police officers to protect them from arbitrary transfers and postings.

- **Investigation :-**
  - Experts have recommended that states must have their own specialized investigation units within the police force that are responsible for crime investigation.

- **Independent Complaints Authority :-**
  - The Second Administrative Reforms Commission and the Supreme Court have observed that **there is a need to have an independent complaints authority to inquire into cases of police misconduct.**
  - Example is that of the New York City Police which has a Civilian Complaint Review Board comprising of civilians appointed by local government bodies and the police commissioner to investigate into cases of police misconduct.
  - The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended that **one way to reduce the burden of the police forces could be to outsource or redistribute some non-core police functions** (such as traffic management, disaster rescue and relief, and issuing of court summons) to government departments or private agencies.

- **Padmanabhaiah commission :-**
  - It has also been recommended that constables, and the police force in general, should receive greater training in soft skills given they need to deal with the public regularly.

- **Housing:**
  - Importance of providing housing to the constabulary (and generally to the police force) to improve their efficiency and incentive to accept remote postings has also been emphasised by expert bodies, such as the National Police Commission.

- **Community policing:**
  - **Janamaithri Suraksha in Kerala**
    - This project is an initiative of the Kerala Police to facilitate greater accessibility, close interaction and better understanding between the police and local communities. For example, Beat Constables are required to know at least one family member of every family living in his beat area.

- **Courts:-**
  - The Madras High Court has said that the state government should contemplate giving policemen a day off in a week like other government officials in order to spend time with their families. The court suggested to introduce an 8-hour, three-shift system for police personnel. It will help them rejuvenate themselves and relieve them from stress.

- **Evidence based policing** is gaining credibility day by day – Indian police force must be exposed to it.
- **Second ARC** recommended that the government should declare certain crimes as “federal” and entrust their investigation to a Central agency.
Police need to have the operational freedom to carry out their responsibilities professionally, and satisfactory working conditions, while being held accountable for poor performance or misuse of power.

**TOPIC: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies**

**Q) TRAI has played a stellar role in coming out with progressive net neutrality regulation. Discuss the background, mission, and achievements of TRAI?(250 words)**

**Why this question**
TRAi has been in news very often courtesy the net neutrality guidelines. The question is about TRAI as an organization.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to list out the background, mission, vision, function and achievements of TRAI.

**Directive word**
Discuss – Here in your discussion you have to highlight both the achievements and some of the shortcomings of TRAI.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Mention that The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is the independent regulator of the telecommunications business in India. It was established by an act of Parliament, called the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act 1997, to regulate telecom services,

**Body**
- Discuss the mission of TRAI – TRAI’s mission is to create and nurture conditions for growth of telecommunications in the country in a manner and at a pace which will enable India to play a leading role in emerging global information society. One of the main objectives of TRAI is to provide a fair and transparent policy environment which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.
- Discuss the vision of TRAI – sure the services and protecting interests of all telecommunication consumers, provide improved telecommunication, broadband, broadcasting and cable TV services to all consumers in Indian society.
- Discuss the working of TRAI- details of TRAI establishment Act
- Discuss the role TRAI has played in penetration of telecom services, fair pricing an. Net neutrality guidelines.

**Conclusion** – Emphasize on the importance of TRAI.

**Background of TRAI:-**
- The regulation of telecom services in India has its genesis in the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, which grants the Central Government exclusive privilege to establish telegraph services. The Government also has the power to grant licenses to other operators to carry on those services.
- Until the mid-nineties, the Government exercised a monopoly over this sector, with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) being responsible for administering telecom services throughout the country.
- The National Telecom Policy, announced by the Government in 1994 (NTP, 1994), sought to change this position by allowing for the participation of private entities. This led to the opening up of basic telecom services in addition to Value Added Services (VAS) such as cellular services and radio paging that had already been thrown open to private participation in 1992.
- The NTP, 1994 brought with it the inevitable need for an independent regulatory framework that would separate the Government’s regulatory functions from its service-providing functions, in line with global best practices. This led to the creation of the TRAI in 1997, pursuant to the provisions of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (TRAI Act).
- TRAI was given the responsibility of regulating telecom services, including fixation and revision of tariffs, determining QoS standards and fixing the terms and conditions for interconnectivity between providers.

**Mission:-**
- TRAI’s mission is to create and nurture conditions for growth of telecommunications in the country in a manner and at a pace which will enable India to play a leading role in emerging global information society.
One of the main objectives of TRAI is to provide a fair and transparent policy environment which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.

Functions of TRAI:

Achievements:
- In the last twenty years, TRAI has played a critical and formative role in shaping the regulatory and policy framework governing the telecom sector in India.
TRAI has contributed significantly in the growth of telecom services, resulting in increase in consumer base and deployment of vast network of the telecom services by the service providers across the length and breadth of the country.

These measures have resulted in overall benefits to the consumer in terms of choice of services, affordable tariff of telecom services, and better quality of services etc. The exponential growth in subscriber numbers and its reach establishes the effective functioning of the Organisation.

TRAI has been monitoring quality of service provided by Service Providers against the benchmarks laid down by TRAI for the various quality of service parameters through Quality of Service Regulations issued from time to time, through quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports (PMRs) submitted by service providers.

- TRAI also undertakes objective assessment of the Quality of Service of Basic, Cellular and Broadband Services through independent agencies.

To further strengthen the quality of standards TRAI had issued “The Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (Wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Services (Second Amendment) Regulation, 2012” for financial disincentives on those service providers who fail to meet the prescribed Quality of Service (QoS) benchmarks.

To protect the interest of consumers relating to metering and billing, TRAI had issued the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations, 2006, which mandates yearly audit of the metering and billing system of the service providers through qualified empanelled auditors.

TRAI regularly issues orders and directions on various subjects such as tariffs, interconnections, quality of service, Direct To Home (DTH) services and mobile number portability.
In 2016, TRAI introduced an important change in telecommunication that would benefit all consumers. Effective from 1 January 2016, consumers will be compensated for call drops.

TRAI launched three new apps and a web portal to ensure that the Indian users are fully aware of the telecom services that are being offered to them.

- Mycall app, MySpeed app and ‘Do not disturb (DND 2.0)’ apps are now going to educate and ensure that there is transparency - between what consumers are actually paying for and what telecom operators are promising to provide at a certain rate.

TRAI and net neutrality:-

- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has come out in favour of net neutrality in its recommendation paper.
- The regulator has mandated that ISPs (Internet Service Providers) should not deploy any discriminatory practices such as blocking, degrading or slowing down of certain web traffic while giving preferential treatment to any specific content at the same time.
- TRAI has also brought in Internet of Things (IoT) enabled services also under the ambit of these restrictions, with a caveat that critical IoT services, identified by Department of Telecom (DoT) and coming under specialised services, will be automatically exempt.
- If a telecom operator is implementing any traffic management practice, TRAI has recommended these instances to be openly declared and even intimated to users directly getting impacted by such restrictions, whatever their cause.

Blockchain:-

- Telecom regulator TRAI has issued new draft norms to curb pesky calls and SMSes by using blockchain technology. When implemented, TRAI will become first organisation to implement this kind of regulation.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) released their Recommendations on Privacy, Security and Ownership of Data (the Recommendations) in context of the telecommunication domain.

- The Recommendations, besides elaborating on the need and importance of data privacy in telecommunications, have also analysed the telecommunication environment to assess whether the existing data protection framework is sufficient or not.
- The present Recommendations specifically are aimed at privacy, security and ownership of data of telecommunication users, while at the same time attempt to strike a balance with respect to use of data for data-based businesses.

Q) Discuss the functioning and the role of NCLT in resolving corporate disputes.(250 words)

Why this question
The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is an important quasi-judicial body, that adjudicates issues relating to the Companies in India. It is important to know its role and functioning.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to write in detail about how the NCLAT functions; and what functions it performs vis a vis resolution of corporate disputes in India.

Directive word
Discuss- This s an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question. We also have to discuss about the related and important aspects of the question in order to bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

Structure of the answer
Write a few introductory lines about the nature, history and the purpose of NCLT. e.g it is a quasi-judicial body; constituted under companies act, 2013; on the recommendation of committee; replaced Company law board, BIFR etc.

Body-

- Discuss the functioning of NCLT. E.g NCLT works on the lines of a normal Civil Court and is obliged to act fairly and without any bias; determine the facts of each case and decide with matters in accordance with principles of natural justice and in the continuance of such decisions, offer conclusions from decisions in the form of orders; It helps in resolving a situation, rectifying a wrong done by any corporate or levying penalties and costs and might alter the rights, obligations, duties or privileges of the concerned parties. The Tribunal isn’t required to adhere to the severe rules with respect to appreciation of any evidence or procedural law.
Discuss the role of NCLT. e.g NCLT has been empowered in taking several steps, from cancelling the registration of a company to dissolving any company in cases of non-adherence to procedures or fraudulent registration; empowered to hear grievances of rejection of companies in transferring shares and securities; provide necessary solutions for companies facing issues related to winding up, mismanagement, and insolvency of businesses. Being the only tribunals for arbitrating company disputes, it eliminates the overlap of or occurrence of conflicting rulings and minimize the delays in the resolution of disputes etc

**Conclusion**- mention the NCLAT and the role of courts in resolving corporate disputes and form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the issue.

**Background:-**

- Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) amended the Companies Act of 2013, introducing the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) by replacing the Company Law Board (CLB)
- The NCLT will be a single judicial forum to judge all disputes concerning the affairs of Indian companies.

**Functioning:-**

- It is a quasi-judicial authority incorporated for dealing with corporate disputes that are of civil nature arising under the Companies Act.
- **Issues relating to the investigation of a company's accounts**, freezing of assets, class action suits, and conversion of a public company to a private one will be decided by the NCLT.
- **Aim is to gradually allow other issues** including reduction of share capital, merger, de-mergers, and settlement to be transferred to the NCLT.
- **NCLT works on the lines of a normal Court of law** in the country and is obliged to fairly and without any biases determine the facts of each case and decide with matters in accordance with principles of natural justice and in the continuance of such decisions, offer conclusions from decisions in the form of orders.
  - The orders so formed by NCLT could assist in resolving a situation, rectifying a wrong done by any corporate or levying penalties and costs and might alter the rights, obligations, duties or privileges of the concerned parties. **The Tribunal isn’t required to adhere to the severe rules with respect to appreciation of any evidence or procedural law.**
  - It has the power of High Court in the matters of mergers, demergers, amalgamations, winding up, etc.
- **Registration of companies:-**
  - NCLT has been empowered in taking several steps, from cancelling the registration of a company to dissolving any company.
  - The Tribunal could even render the liability or charge of members to unlimited.
  - With this approach, NCLT can de-register any company in specific situations when the registration certificate has been obtained by wrongful manner or illegal means under section 7(7) of the Companies Act, 2013.
- **Transfer of shares:-**
  - NCLT is also empowered to hear grievances of rejection of companies in transferring shares and securities and under section 58- 59 of the Act which were at the outset were under the purview of the Company Law Board.
- **Freezing assets of a company**
  - The NCLT isn’t just empowered to freezing the assets of a company for using them at a later stage when such company comes under investigation or scrutiny, such investigation could also be ordered on the request of others in specific conditions.
- **Power to investigate and wind up companies:-**
  - An investigation which is ordered by the NCLT could be conducted within India or anywhere in the world. The provisions are drafted for offering and seeking help from the courts and investigation agencies and of foreign countries.
- **Power to order repayment of deposits** accepted by Non-Banking Financial Companies as provided in section 45QA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- Power to Review its own orders.

**How does NCLT resolve corporate disputes:-**
- It should **enable faster implementation of the bankruptcy code**
- Also **reduce the burden** of hundreds of cases pending in the
- Once stipulations under the Companies Act and Bankruptcy Code are effective, **the tribunals will provide necessary solutions for companies facing issues related to winding up, mismanagement, and insolvency of businesses.**
- Being the only tribunals for arbitrating company disputes, it will eliminate the overlap of occurrence of conflicting rulings and will minimize the delays in the resolution of disputes, which is a big relief for litigants.
- **The following roadblocks will be cleared:**
  - Resolution of disputes relating to companies affairs has been one the major roadblocks in improving ease of doing business in India.
  - Thousands of cases remain long pending in the courts despite having legal timeline of resolution.
  - Such scenario hinders the new investments not only from outside even domestic companies are preferring to shift their Headquarters outside the countries and choosing more business amicable locations like Singapore to operate.
  - Delay in dispute resolution not only stagnate the new investments it also lead to devaluation of asset and increases inefficiencies of businesses and market.
  - **Multiplicity of bodies will no longer exist:**
    - Till 2016 several bodies like the Company Law Board, Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction, the Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction and High Courts were responsible for the judging the disputes concerning companies affairs, this multiplicity of adjudicating and governing bodies was also delaying the dispute resolution process.
  - **Efficient resolution:**
    - The formation of the NCLT and the NCLAT is also a significant step towards attaining fast and efficient resolution of disputes relating to affairs of the Indian corporates.
  - **No more overlapping:**
    - Being the sole forum dealing with company related disputes, these tribunals would also eliminate any scope for overlapping or conflicting rulings and minimise delays in resolution of disputes, thus, proving to be a boon for litigants.
  - **Removes ambiguity:**
    - Instead of getting different decisions on the same matter by different High Courts, **consolidation of jurisdiction will help the Tribunal Members and Judges in delivering uniform decisions and thereby removing any ambiguity and friction.**
  - **To ensure fair play and avoidance of judicial error,** the procedural laws provide for appeals, revisions and reviews, and allow parties to file innumerable applications and raise vexatious objections as a result verdict get delayed.
  - **Appeals against the order of the NCLT will go to NCLAT, exclusively dedicated for this purpose.** Further appeal to the Supreme Court will only be on any question of law, thereby reducing the delay in appeals as earlier, the decisions of the Company Law Board were challenged before the High Court and then in the Supreme Court.
  - Consolidation of Corporate jurisdiction will lead to **convergence rather than divergence and will maintain uniformity in the system.**

**Concerns:**
- While the new tribunals can deal with all company disputes, excluding criminal prosecution as under the Companies Act, their powers are currently limited.
- There was little clarity on the transfer of cases from the CLB to the NCLT.

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

**Q)** Although HECl will bring substantial reforms in education sector, it fails to address several problems affecting higher education in India. Critically analyze. *(250 words)*

**Why this question**
HECI has been recently proposed by the central government as a body which will replace UGC. It will have significant impact on higher education in India. But there are several issues in the body itself as well as unrelated to it, which need attention. The issue is related to GS-2 syllabus under the following heading – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to bring out how HECI will bring reform in education sector, what are the issues that are still left or arising out of HECI itself. Finally, we have to express our personal opinion on the issue.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze- Here we have to dig deep into the issue and address the key demands of the question individually, while maintaining a synergy between them. Based on our discussion, we have to form a personal opinion on the issue.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – write a few lines about HECI replacing UGC.

**Body**-
- Discuss how HECI will reform higher education. E.g segregation of regulatory functions and power of grants, expanded powers in terms of closing down institutes, transparent public disclosures, merit-based decision making on matters regarding standards and quality in higher education, mentoring etc.
- Discuss the issues arising out of HECI. E.g While the proposed Bill seeks to empower the HECI with all academic functions, its role vis-à-vis professional bodies is unclear; whether depriving the HECI completely of funding functions will affect its efficacy and stature in discharging its onerous responsibility remains a major question; HECI as an overarching regulator vs its aim to develop mechanisms so that more institutions are encouraged to move out of its regulatory ambit; multiplicity of roles of the chairperson etc.

**Conclusion**- mention the other challenges in the path of reforming higher education like allocation of resources etc. Form a fair and balanced opinion on the issue.

**Background:-**
- **Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act) Bill 2018** which seeks to repeal UGC Act and provides for setting up of **Higher Education Commission of India** has been prepared by the Ministry of HRD and placed in public domain for comments and suggestions recently.
- Government recently announced a complete overhaul of the apex higher education regulator- **University Grants Commission**, repeal of the **UGC Act, 1951** and a fresh legislation to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

**Higher education commission of India:-**
- Focus of Higher Education Commission of India will be on improving academic standards and the quality of Higher Education.

**Why it is a welcome move in reforming higher education:-**
- **Better administration:-**
  - Centre has embarked on a process of reform of the regulatory agencies for better administration of the higher education sector. In fulfilment of the above, draft Act is in accordance with the commitment of Government for reforming the regulatory systems that provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth of the education system which provides greater opportunities to the Indian students at more affordable cost.
- **Less Government and more Governance:**
  - Downsizing the scope of the Regulator. No more interference in the management issues of the educational institutions.
  - **Key thrust areas of the HECI will be downsizing over governance of institutions, bring in disclosure based regulatory regime and powers of enforcement of regulations.**
- **Separation of grant functions:**
  - The grant functions would be carried out by the HRD Ministry, and the HECI would focus only on academic matters.
- **End of Inspection Raj:**
- Regulation is done through transparent public disclosures, merit-based decision making on matters regarding standards and quality in higher education

- **Focus on academic quality:**
  - HECl is tasked with the mandate of improving academic standards with specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers, promote use of educational technology etc.
  - It will develop norms for setting standards for opening and closure of institutions, provide for greater flexibility and autonomy to institutions, lay standards for appointments to critical leadership positions at the institutional level irrespective of University started under any Law (including State Law)
  - The Commission shall have the power to grant authorization for starting of academic operations on the basis of their compliance with norms of academic quality.

- **Takes away funding powers from the proposed regulator and gives it powers to ensure academic quality and even close down bogus institutions.**

- **Powers to enforce:**
  - The Regulator will have powers to enforce compliance to the academic quality standards and will have the power to order closure of sub-standard and bogus institutions. Non-compliance could result in fines or jail sentence.
  - **The HECl will also be backed with penal powers to order closure of institutes that violate set norms,** imposition of fines where necessary and provisions for imprisonment up to three years where necessary.
  - The Bill also provides for the penal provisions, which albeit graded in nature, will cover withdrawal of power to grant degrees/diplomas or direction to cease academic operations and in cases of wilful non-compliance, may result in prosecution sanction as per the Criminal Procedure Code with a punishment of imprisonment for a term which may extend up to 3 years.

- HECI is tasked with the mandate of improving academic standards with specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers, promote use of educational technology etc.

- HECI will also set standards for opening and closure of institutes, **provide greater flexibility and autonomy to institutes** and lays standards for appointments to critical leadership positions at institutions across spectrums and even for those falling under state laws.

- The UGC and its regulatory regime have been criticised by a number of committees and their reports for its restrictive and suffocating processes. **Several committees including the Prof Yash Pal committee and the National Knowledge Commission have recommended a single education regulator to rid higher education of red tape and lethargy.**

- **Other provisions in the bill are:-**
  - It will also have the powers to revoke authorization granting to a higher education institution where there is a case of wilful or continuous default in compliance with the norms / regulations.
  - It will also have the power to recommend closure of institutions which fail to adhere to minimum standards without affecting students interest.
  - The Commission will encourage higher education institutions to formulate a Code of Good Practices covering promotion of research, teaching and learning.
  - The Commission will also specify norms and processes for fixing of fee chargeable by higher education institutions and advice the Central Government or the State Governments, as the case may be, regarding steps to be taken for making education affordable to all
  - The Commission will monitor, through a national data base, all matters covering the development of emerging fields of knowledge and balanced growth of higher education institutions in all spheres and specially in promotion of academic quality in higher education.

**Criticism:-**

- The HECl will be bestowed with **comprehensive and overriding powers,** including ordering the closure of institutions, in all academic and related matters while the power lies with the MHRD.
- While the proposed Bill seeks to empower the HECl with all academic functions, **its role vis-à-vis professional bodies is unclear.**
• Whether depriving the HECI completely of funding functions will affect its efficacy and stature in discharging its onerous responsibility remains a major question.
• There are questions about how effective the role of the HECI would be to regulate state institutions with less than inadequate central funding merits serious attention.
• No clarity about members role:-
  ▪ The secretary of the HECI will be an officer of the rank of joint secretary and above or a reputed academic and will serve as its member-secretary. Whether they have voting rights or not is not clear.
  ▪ The secretary, higher education is envisaged to play many roles, serving as a member of the search-cum- selection committee of the chairperson and vice-chairperson, then processing their appointment as a key functionary of the government, and finally acting as a member of the HECI. Such multiplicity of roles may create difficulties and conflict of interest.
  ▪ Also, the power of the government to remove the chairperson and members is rather overwhelming and should be constrained.
• By withdrawing financial powers from the regulator and handing them over to the central government, and by giving the HECI unilateral and absolute powers to authorize, monitor, shut down, and recommend disinvestment from Higher Educational Institutions, the Draft Bill will expose higher education in the country to ideological manipulation, loss of much needed diversity as well as academic standards, fee hikes, and profiteering.
• Similar to UGC:-
  ▪ The new Act proposes that the chairperson of the HECI can be selected from among functionaries of Central and state governments. However, previously the chairman of the UGC was chosen from among persons who are not officers of the government or any state government in order to keep its independence. The new legislation even allows the chairperson to be an overseas citizen of India.
  ▪ The UGC was empowered to set minimum standards whereas the HECI has been empowered to lay down standards. The critique says that this too hits at the idea of institutional autonomy as “the substantive struggle of universities with the UGC has been in the last few years, to ensure that its minimum regulations do not achieve the status of maximality.
• Teachers are being pushed out of the new HECI. The representation of teachers has been ominously reduced to just two.
• Critics:-
  ▪ They are also concerned with Section 15.3(d) which could make funding for research, beholden to political priorities of parties in power, and subject to ideological manipulation.
  ▪ Section 15.3(g) and 15.4(f) grants the HECI the power to order closure of institutions which fail to adhere to minimum standards without affecting the student’s interest or fail to get accreditation within the specified period.
    ▪ The critique cautions against this power, as there are only a limited number of higher education institutions in India and arbitrary closure or threats can deprive students of the limited education that they can access
    ▪ They are of the opinion that setting up of the new regulator is of no use as it will increase the interference of government in academic matters.
• Way forward:-
  ▪ Despite some apparent infirmities, the proposed Bill shows the resolve of the government to move forward in reforming the sector.
  ▪ Major issues like making the universities the hub of scientific and technological research, restoring the value of education in social sciences and the humanities, ensuring that poor and meritorious students can afford to be educated in subjects of their choice, improving the quality of instruction to enhance the employability of the students, addressing the concerns of faculty shortage, etc. require a quantum jump in allocation of public resources to this sector.
  ▪ There is a need for rapidly expanding public expenditure.

Q) Critically examine whether gambling in sports should be allowed?(250 words)

Why this question
The recommendations of Law Commission have set the way for several pathbreaking legislations and this might be another one of such cases and thus needs to be analyzed.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to critically examine the recommendations of Law commission on legalizing gambling in sports. We need to discuss the pros and cons of such a move and provide a fair and balanced view on it.

**Directive word**
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Highlight the status quo with respect to gambling in India, particularly in sports.

**Body** – Discuss the recommendations of Law Commission and highlight the reasons provided behind its recommendations. Discuss the ill effects of such a move, that legalizing it would only provide more opportunity to such people to indulge in newer channels of gambling, lead to risk of fixing, would impact the gullible etc.

**Conclusion** – mention your fair and balanced opinion and the way forward in your opinion.

**Background:**-
- The Law Commission of India submitted a report to the government, saying that since it is impossible to stop illegal gambling and the only viable option left is to “regulate” gambling in sports.
- Law commission recommended “cashless” gambling in sports as a means to increase revenue and deal a blow to unlawful gambling.

**Gambling needs to be legalised:**-
- Gambling has been prevalent in society since ancient times and has been accepted as a form of recreation on various social occasions.
- **Gambling is already happening in a massive way and is largely controlled by underworld syndicates**
  - Legalising the activity will not only help curtail an important source of black money that is used by criminal syndicates, but also bring massive revenue to the state exchequer, which can be used for various constructive social schemes.
- **Revenue to the government:**-
  - Government could earn tens of thousands of crores as tax revenue by legalising sports betting. Additionally, if online gambling and casinos are also permitted, the estimated tax revenue would be much higher.
- **International examples:**-
  - In addition to revenue generation, a legal and regulated gambling sector will also help in creating large-scale employment opportunities.
  - Globally, wherever gambling is regulated, it has created a massive avenue for employment generation.
  - For instance, the regulated gambling industry in the U.S. employs over 2.5 lakh people, while over 1 lakh individuals are employed in this sector in the U.K.
- **Cricket:**-
  - The United Kingdom and South Africa, both full members of the ICC, amended their legislation to regulate gambling following significant match-fixing scandals in cricket. Since they amended their legislation, neither country has been involved in any significant match-fixing scandals
  - It will ensure that people do not fall prey to the excesses of gambling as awareness campaigns will be educated about the perils of excessive gambling.
- **Money generated can be used for public welfare activities.** For that the revenue from gambling should be taxable under laws like Income Tax Act, the Goods and Services Tax Act

**No:**-
- However some experts argue that gambling is not morally correct in the Indian context. It is responsible for addiction, loss of livelihoods and bankruptcy.
- India should not allow legalised gambling on its soil as such a move would leave the poor poorer and only vested interests want legalisation of gambling.

**Way forward:**-
- Law commission recommendations:-
Transactions between gamblers and operators should be linked to their Aadhaar and PAN cards so that the government could keep an eye on them.

The commission recommended a classification of ‘proper gambling’ and ‘small gambling.’ Proper gambling would be for the rich who play for high stakes, while small gambling would be for the low-income groups.

Foreign Exchange Management and Foreign Direct Investment laws and policies should be amended to encourage investment in the casino/online gaming industry. This would propel tourism and employment.

**India can allow responsible gambling,** where the government should provide “proper controls and protections” for those who may be damaged by gambling.

**Minors, habitual gamblers and vulnerable sections should be excluded from having access to gaming facilities**

**Limits must be imposed on the amounts that can be wagered,** based on a person’s financial capabilities.

With respect to cricket after legalizing gambling, **India should also become a member of the International Association of Gambling Regulators** ("IAGR"), in which numerous ICC members participate.

**India would have the opportunity to discuss gambling regulations and policy issues with other ICC members, cooperate with them on rules and regulations about sports betting, and gain a central point of contact with other countries.**

**Conclusion:-**

- Gambling is not an activity which needs to be looked down upon by the people. The people involved can easily contribute to the economy without harming their own self and their families if they understand their limits.

Our road safety laws are inadequate to deal with the problem of potholes. Discuss and suggest way forward. (250 words)

**Why this question**

Now with the monsoon session set to begin soon, the pending legislations become important news items. The Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill is one such legislation. The amendment related to pothole is quite important, particularly at this time of the year when monsoon aggravates the problem.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to explain why existing laws are insufficient to tackle with the problem of potholes. We also need to point out that merely changing law would not be sufficient and would require alacrity and transparency on the part of the municipal authorities. We need to end with way forward.

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

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Explain why the problem of potholes is important – discuss statistics related to accidents in India in general and potholes in particular.

**Body**
- Discuss the problem in greater detail
- Highlight the gaps in the legal architecture. Mention other reasons why potholes abound. Mention about the standards of Indian road Congress related to standardization of road construction and how they are not being implemented.
- Discuss about the proposed amendments and how they can help address the issue
- Discuss the focus required on transparency, accountability etc to deal with the challenge

**Conclusion** – Discuss what should be the way forward as per you.

**Background:-**
- In 2016, potholes claimed six lives every day in India. According to official statistics, potholes claimed 11,836 lives and left 36,421 persons injured in India from 2013 to 2016.
- Recently Supreme Court also expressed concern over road deaths due to potholes, saying that such fatalities were more than the number of people killed in terror attacks in the country. The situation assumes significance as India is a signatory to the United Nations convention on reducing road fatality by 50 per cent.

**Why are potholes present on Indian roads:-**
- The main reason for the potholes is that the roads are dug up by the utilities.
- After trenching, the road should be reinstated properly, else the road is damaged. Also, for a while the right variety of sand was not available.
- Recent survey by the SPA found that overloaded trucks entering Delhi caused maximum damage to footpaths and weakened the city roads. And civic and transport agencies do not have a process in place to check overloaded trucks.
- Transport and traffic experts blamed it on faulty road designs and poor maintenance of roads.
- Road engineers said the ill-conceived drainage system in cities were also responsible for potholes.
- The situation worsens in Monsoon when the existing drainage system fails due to excess water flow and thus water stagnates on the roads resulting into potholes.
Road safety laws in India:-
- The existing legislation for road safety, the Motor Vehicles Act, has no provisions to ensure accountability of road authorities for defects in the engineering, design and maintenance of roads.
- The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017 has attempted to address the issue of liability for road defects. For any road crash injury or death caused by defective road design and engineering, the designated authority responsible to construct and maintain the road is to be penalised with a sum. The Bill directs that safety standards be prescribed by the Central government.
  - The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017 aims to rectify several systemic issues by providing a uniform driver licensing system, protecting children and vulnerable road users, rationalising penalties and creating a system of accountability in the construction of roads.

Road safety laws are inadequate to deal with the problem of potholes:-
- Negligence on the part of road owners or maintenance authorities is rarely brought to book.
- Indian Road Congress has prescribed over 100 sets of guidelines to ensure standardised road construction, maintenance and management, including guidelines for repairing potholes. The challenge lies in ensuring that these guidelines are implemented.
  - The absence of a unified statute or law on road construction, engineering and maintenance makes it nearly impossible to ensure that these guidelines are implemented.
- Constraints with the new bill:-
- Even in the new bill road contractors and engineers will still not be held criminally liable for causing deaths and injuries.

- **Unprecedented motorisation** in the absence of scientific and well defined road safety policies and programmes is contributing to the increase in road deaths and injuries.

- Despite the high death toll and resulting loss of productivity, **road accidents hardly figure on the country’s public health agenda**. Road safety is dealt with by police and enforcement agencies, largely in an inefficient and unscientific manner.

- Poorly designed and maintained roads are often blamed for India’s accident rate, along with **subpar driving skills and deficient vehicle maintenance**.

**Way forward:-**

- **Better quality material use:-**
  - Several studies conducted in cities such as Chandigarh and Mumbai point to the lack of a proper drainage system and weak proportioning of aggregates for road construction as major reasons for pothole formation. Therefore, **it becomes necessary to ensure the use of standardised methodology and good quality material when constructing roads**.

- There also **needs to be regular maintenance** and an effective system to ensure accountability.

- **Better design:-**
  - There is a need to incorporate the Safe System Approach in all aspects of road design, engineering and construction. This approach takes into account the possibility of human error and ensures that the surrounding environment and infrastructure are designed to save lives.

- **Policy level:-**
  - At a policy level, the first step is to create an enabling framework that weaves in different progressive aspects across stakeholder sectors under one legislation.

- **The latest National Transportation Development Committee report** includes special chapters on safety and human resource development.
  - These suggest that unless new institutions are set up, institutional mechanisms for encouraging development of technical expertise, new research departments in national institutions and a National Transport Safety Board, safety on roads will remain a distant dream.

- **WHO:-**
  - For effective road safety management, it is imperative to have an institutionalised and sustainable data system
  - This includes information pertaining to drivers, such as types of licenses held and a record of violation of traffic laws

**Conclusion:-**

- As a signatory to the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety, India has committed to reducing (by 2020), the number of road crash fatalities and serious injuries by 50%. This will be impossible to achieve if the sole statute governing road safety in India, the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, is not overhauled. The new Bill is not a panacea for all problems, but it is the first step towards ensuring that no deaths are caused by road crashes.

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**Q) The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill-2018 raises several important concerns and would a regressive step rather than a welcome effort. Examine.(250 words)**

**Why this question**

The ToP bill touches upon several important issues surrounding human trafficking, sex workers, transgenders, HIV patients. It has been severely criticized on various fronts by several activists, journalists and politicians.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us *dig deep into the ToP bill and bring out the limitations/ cons of the various provisions of the bill.*

**Directive word**

Examine- Here we have to delve into the provisions of the ToP bill and bring out, what could be their negative implications.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- mention that the ToP bill seeks to address the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation.
Body–
1. Mention the positive points of the bill. E.g defines aggravated forms of trafficking. Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking, confidentiality of victims, time bound trial and repatriation of the victims etc.
2. Discuss in points the problems/ limitations/ cons of the bill. E.g if a sex worker is violated, she won’t be able to go to court because she will be immediately understood as exploited, trafficked and sent to rehabilitation. The law will lead to increase in violence against sex workers and silence them; it will lead to criminalisation of trans-identities; creates more confusion among law enforcement agencies by adding to the existing range of laws- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (ITPA), and Juvenile Justice Act 2015 etc.

Conclusion- Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

Background :-
- Trafficking in human beings is the third largest organized crime violating basic human rights. There is nospecific law so far to deal with this crime. Accordingly, the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 has been prepared.
- The Bill addresses one of the most pervasive yet invisible crimes affecting the most vulnerable persons especially women and children. The new law will make India a leader among South Asian countries to combat trafficking.

Features of the bill:
- Addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation.
- Aggravated forms of trafficking, which includes trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical substance or hormones on a person for the purpose of early sexual maturity, trafficking of a woman or child for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage or after marriage etc.
- Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking of person:-
  - Which includes producing, printing, issuing or distributing unissued, tampered or fake certificates, registration or stickers as proof of compliance with Government requirements; or commits fraud for procuring or facilitating the acquisition of clearances and necessary documents from Government agencies.
  - The new law also seeks to make way for punishment of three years for a person found to be promoting or facilitating trafficking.
  - Punishment ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh in cases of “aggravated” crimes
  - In order to break the organized nexus, both at the national and international level, the Bill provides for the attachment & forfeiture of property and also the proceeds for crime.
- The confidentiality of victims/ witnesses and complainants by not disclosing their identity. Further the confidentiality of the victims is maintained by recording their statement through video conferencing (this also helps in trans-border and inter-State crimes).
- Time bound trial and repatriation of the victims– within a period of one year from taking into cognizance.
- Rehabilitation:-
  - Immediate protection of rescued victims and their rehabilitation. The Victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical, mental trauma etc. and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of charge sheet.
  - Rehabilitation of the victim which is not contingent upon criminal proceedings being initiated against the accused or the outcome thereof.
  - Rehabilitation Fund created for the first time. To be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the victim including education, skill development, health care/psychological support, legal aid, safe accommodation, etc.
  - As per the Bill, the rescued adults would be given an opportunity before the Magistrate if they want to stay in protection homes or go to their native places.
- Institutional mechanism:-
  - Designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of the cases.
The Bill creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at District, State and Central Level. These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. National Investigation Agency (NIA) will perform the tasks of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level present under the MHA.

The Bill comprehensively addresses the transnational nature of the crime. The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau under national investigation agency will perform the functions of international coordination with authorities in foreign countries and international organizations.

**Significance:-**

- The Bill addresses one of the most pervasive yet invisible crimes affecting the most vulnerable persons especially women and children. The new law will make India a leader among South Asian countries to combat trafficking.
- The bill addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation (first to address the issue of victim rehabilitation).
  - Setting up of one or more special homes in each district for the purpose of providing long-term institutional support for the rehabilitation of victims is another feature of the Bill.
  - Unlike the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code, the new Bill takes a holistic view and aims to prevent trafficking for forced labour, begging and organ transplant, among many others.
  - The Bill also provides for designated courts in each district for time-bound trial and repatriation of victims within a period of one year from taking into cognizance. This is welcome move.
  - The Bill also provides for seizing of property located in foreign lands which is a good effort to deal with such crimes.
  - It is gender-neutral and covers transgender persons.
  - It doesn't criminalise the victims, but instead provides them with shelter, compensation, and counselling.
  - The Bill also relies on Article 21 of the Constitution, guaranteeing that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.
  - The Bill takes note of the fact that India has ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its three Optional Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

**Concerns:-**

- National investigation agency is an understaffed organisation, that is already tackling the gigantic footprint of terrorism across the subcontinent and there are doubts whether it might be in a position to take on and investigate cases of human trafficking.
- According to experts most of the trafficking is taking place in small towns so focus should be on policing and not NIA
- Assertion that the bill covers ‘new’ forms of trafficking that are not addressed under existing laws is not completely true.
  - For instance while the new law focuses on removing and evicting sex workers from their occupation, the Bonded Labour Act protects the worker who was held in bondage from being evicted from the place where the individual has been working.
- It does not harmonise different approaches and integrate existing laws into one.
- The Anti-Trafficking Bill has not been preceded by any substantial research or analysis.

**Measures needed :-**

- The trafficking bill 2018 need to be passed as it would plug the loopholes in earlier anti-trafficking laws and help tackle the menace of human trafficking as also the festering issue of illegal brothels by equipping the law enforcement agencies with more ammunition.
- Instead for a multi-faceted legal and economic strategy
  - Robust implementation of labour laws
  - A universal social protection floor
  - Self-organisation of workers
  - Improved labour inspection, including in the informal economy
  - Corporate accountability for decent work conditions are needed.
- Need for systemic reforms
To counter distress migration
End caste-based discrimination
Enforce the rural employment guarantee legislation
Avoid the indiscriminate rescue of voluntary sex workers
Protect migrants mobility and rights.

**Victims of trafficking, especially children, need safe social and economic rehabilitation.**
- Higher budgetary allocations are needed for their immediate help and counselling, besides making arrangements for their vocational training, housing and repatriation.
- The reintroduction to education is also a must. **Also, changes in the education system to include rights-based information, if given to each child, can lay the foundations of an aware and secure generation.**
- Schools and parents must make children aware of the dangers of trafficking and prepare them to recognise and tackle it.

**Conclusion:**
- Trafficking bill is the first step in the measures which are bold and holistic response to a socioeconomic problem of labour exploitation and this can help India realise SDG 8.7.

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**Q)** What do you understand by Local Health Traditions (LHTs). An analysis of India’s public policy demonstrates ambiguity and inconsistency around the ultimate rationale for LHTs. Comment. (250 words)

**epw**

**Why this question**
LHTs form a huge, but largely informal sources of healthcare in the country. Rise of modern healthcare practices has essentially undermined their role as well as importance. However, given the imperative to improve India’s healthcare delivery, LHTs need to be refined and further developed.

**Key demand of the question**
The question wants us to simply bring out the meaning and scope of LHTs. It then wants us to express our opinion on whether Indian policies have been suffering from ambiguity and inconsistency around the ultimate rationale for LHTs.

**Directive word**
Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon. Our opinion has to be supported by valid and a proper discussion around the issue.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Give a simple and a comprehensive definition of LHTs.

**Body.**
- Discuss the strengths and limitations of LHTs. E.g rich in knowledge vs lack of systemic knowledge; local knowledge complementary to local resources vs lack of data on effectiveness and safety; use of traditional and organic materials for treatment vs lack of quality guidelines, standards etc; less skills required so easier to train people vs low policy priority attached etc.
- Discuss the evolution of policy responses of India towards LHTs. E.g discuss the importance of LHTs before independence; how they were treated during subsequent periods and the discuss the recent initiatives by the government in this regard. Take the help of the article attached to the question to frame your answer.
- Discuss the need to systematize, organize and refine and further develop LHTs as an alternative and low cost treatment and health management solutions. Discuss how they can complement the present healthcare system mired in human resource deficit, high cost treatment and elaborate medications further motivated by private profits amid growing corporatization etc.

**Conclusion**– bring out a fair and a balanced conclusion on the issue and suggest a way forward.

**Background :-**
- It has been estimated that over 80% of the world’s population depends on traditional healing systems as their primary source of care.

**Local health traditions :-**
- Traditional medicine consists of codified and non-codified streams of knowledge. In India, the codified stream comprises of the official AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Swa-Rigpa and Homeopathy) systems while
the non-codified stream comprises of the collective knowledge, practices and beliefs of communities in relation to health that are culture and region specific and has been sustained through oral transmission across generations. **This is referred to as Local Health Traditions (LHT).**

- Revitalization of LHTs and mainstreaming of AYUSH’ has been outlined as one of the goals of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) without any corollary significant policy action towards actual translation on the ground.
- Many LHT are experience based, where training is based on practice and observation rather than textbook or school learning.
- LHTS are locally relevant and appropriate in a resource-strained system providing remedies within the vicinity.
- Less skill is required so it is easier to train people.
- Local knowledge is complementary to the local resources obtained.

**Issues :-**

- While there has been a resurgence of policy interest in traditional health knowledge, particularly indigenous forms of knowledge as LHTs, **there does not seem to be a coherent vision of such resurgence.**
- Haad vaids like pachamaramundhu and parramparika Siddha vaidyars are primary healthcare providers. They have been part of the public health system across the country, **yet they operate on the margins as a subaltern practice because of regulations by the Indian medical boards.** This is primarily due to state neglect of LHT and increased investments in western biomedicine.
- LHT is **outside the strict legitimacy boundary for the state.**
- The compulsory state professionalisation of medicine has pushed LHTs on the margins. Those belonging to this marginal space practise esoterically. **There is an urgent need to formalise LHTS within the health system.**
- **There is no concrete data on their effectiveness and safety.**

**Way forward:-**

- The current slogan of policy documents on revitalisation of LHTS need to take these traditions vibrant nature into account and not literal impositions of standards and practices alien to such traditions.

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

**Q) Critically analyze the performance of National Leprosy Eradication Programme of India.(250 words)**

**Why this question**

India accounts for around 60% of leprosy patients in the world NLEP has played a significant role in decreasing the prevalence of the disease in India but it has also underperformed on various fronts for different reasons. The issue is related to GS- 2 syllabus under the following heading – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

**Key demand of the question**

The question wants us to dig deep into the issue of leprosy in India and write a detailed analysis of the NLEP- its achievements and failures and an overall review of the programme.

**Directive word**

Critically analyze- the question demands an exhaustive and in depth study of the NLED and bring out its achievements and failures. Then we have to form a personal opinion on the issue.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – mention that India is home to around 60 percent of leprosy patients (don’t use the humiliative word leper). Also write about leprosy disease, its causative agent and main effects.

**Body**-

1. Discuss the achievements of the programme and the salient aspects of the strategy it adopted. E.g decrease in prevalence from more than 5/10000 to 0.66/10000; elimination of the disease from 34 out of 36 states/UTs etc.
also mention the strategy adopted by NLEP- post exposure prophylaxis and the revision in vaccine type; nikusth-web based reporting system for leprosy etc.

2. Discuss the problems faced and inadequacies of the programme. E.g focus on eliminating leprosy as a public health problem rather than complete elimination; change of leprosy workers as multipurpose workers with the additional responsibility for HIV; inadequate monitoring and reporting system etc.

Conclusion - give your opinion on the issue and suggest the way forward- sustained and more vigorous efforts, multistakeholder approach, upgrading infrastructure, political and social priority etc.

National leprosy eradication programme:-

- In India, the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) is the centrally sponsored health scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- While the NLEP strategies and plans are formulated centrally, the programme is implemented by states and union territories (UTs).
- The programme is also supported by WHO, ILEP, and few other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Performance:-

- India has succeeded in bringing the national prevalence down to elimination as a public health problem of less than 1/10,000 in December 2005 and even further down to 0.66/10,000 in 2016.
- In addition to achieving the national elimination target by the end of 2005, India by the end of March 2011–2012 succeeded in achieving elimination at the state level in 34 states/UTs out of the total of 36 states/UTs.
- By the end of March 2016, 551 districts out of the total 669 in districts, in India had a prevalence of <1/10,000 population which is the target of elimination as a public health problem.
- To address the challenges NLEP advocated a three-pronged approach of
  - Leprosy case detection campaign (LCDC) in highly endemic districts
  - Focused leprosy awareness campaign using ASHA and multipurpose health workers in Hot Spots where new cases with Grade 2 Disability (G2D) are detected
  - Area-specific plans for case detection in hard to reach areas.
  - By the end of year 2016 a total of 163 highly endemic districts, which reported a prevalence rate >1/10,000 population in any of the last 3 years across 20 states/UTs, were identified for conducting case detection campaigns by NLEP.

- The special emphasis on women, children, and those with disabilities is expected to flush out more hidden cases. In addition to continuing to administer MDT to patients, new preventive approaches are being considered to break the chain of transmission and reach zero disease status.

- NLEP has introduced the Mycobacterium Indicus Prani(MiP) vaccine in a project mode in India from the year 2016. MIP vaccine has been shown to have both immunotherapeutic and immune-prophylactic effects in multibacillary leprosy patients and their contacts in both hospital and population-based trials.

- Nikusth, a web-based reporting system for leprosy
  - For the ease of reporting and data management of registered leprosy cases, NLEP has launched Nikusth, a web-based reporting system in India.
  - In addition, Nikushth will be helpful in keeping track of all the activities being implemented under the NLEP. NLEP is also planning to develop online training software for leprosy workers.

Criticism:-

- The fact remains that India continues to account for 60% of new cases reported globally each year and is among the 22 global priority countries that contribute 95% of world numbers of leprosy warranting a sustained effort to bring the numbers down.

- NLEP annual reports of the last 4 years have consistently observed that the four states/UTs (Orissa, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Lakshadweep) which achieved elimination earlier in 2011–2012, have shown a prevalence of >1 per 10,000 population, which is a matter of concern for the programme.

- In addition, although the average national child leprosy rate is approximately 9%, the proportion of child cases was more than 10% of new cases detected in eleven states/UTs of India, with 6 of them (Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Dadra & Nagar haveli, Bihar, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh) showing very high rates ranging from 14% to 23%.

- Lack of efficient reporting:-
- Major cause of hidden cases is low voluntary reporting in the community due to a lack of awareness as well as the continuing fear, stigma, and discrimination against leprosy.
- **No focus on elimination:**
  - Leprosy eradication from community appears to have been equated with the reaching of the WHO-defined target of elimination as a public health problem (prevalence of <1 per 10,000 population), which India reached by the end of 2005.
  - **In addition, the use of term “elimination” also leads to confusion among general public and to many even in the medical profession.**
- **Misplacement of priorities:**
  - To assist public health initiatives for HIV/AIDS in 1990’s leprosy health workers were made multipurpose workers with additional responsibilities of HIV and tuberculosis control.
- **Lack of funding:**
  - Over the next decade, there was reallocation of resources and a gradual decline in funding for leprosy-related programmes.
- **Lack of monitoring:**
  - A study done in Odisha on the effects of integration of leprosy in to primary health care, highlighted the need for effective monitoring and evaluation of the integration process.
  - It concluded that inadequate monitoring could lead to a reduction in early diagnosis, a delay in initiation of MDT, and an increase in disability rates, which in turn could reverse some of the programme’s achievements.
- **Unfortunately, the WHO elimination target has no epidemiological or scientific basis** or even significance to support the gradual decline or disappearance of the remaining cases of leprosy once it was achieved.
  - Doing away with skin smear services, rapid merging of leprosy services into the general medical health services, efforts towards further reducing the duration of therapy, and reduced attention to research and funding of leprosy programme in general, are some of the direct results of such false interpretation.

**Way forward:**
- **Basic investigations such as skin smear services need to be reintroduced in the leprosy programme of India,** as this bacteriological test is often found as useful as advanced PCR techniques.
  - It may be learnt that re-introduction of bacteriological diagnosis indeed has changed the diagnostic landscape of tuberculosis, facilitating better case detection and control.
- There is need for wider awareness about the signs and symptoms of leprosy and reactions among general health care staff as well as in the community to promote self-reporting, as well as early diagnosis and proper management of the disease and its complications in an integrated setting.
- **There is a need to expand the repertoire of drugs to treat** Clinical and laboratory studies suggest the emergence of secondary drug resistance in treated/relapsed patients to dapsone, and rifampicin.
- **It is also important to recognize that leprosy can be associated with other comorbidities** such as tuberculosis, HIV, and diabetes which could affect clinical manifestations and complications hence, **therapeutic management strategies need to be tailored to such situations.**
- **Overall lack of a comprehensive approach towards battling the disease, which requires collaboration between different ministries and sometimes between countries.**

**Conclusion:**
- As suggested in the WHO strategy document for year 2016–2020, it is only by including and assigning an active role to this vast pool of dermatologists in the leprosy programme, who are well equipped to manage leprosy, that India can truly aspire to eradicate leprosy.

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**Q)Only if women feel protected and secure, can they effectively participate in public life and contribute to the economic growth of the country. Discuss the initiatives taken by the government in this direction. (250 words)**

*Why this question*
Women empowerment as well as protection is an extremely important issue for India. It is essential to make half the potential workforce of the country feel secure and protected, so that they can participate in public life and economic growth of the country.

Key demand of the question
The question wants us to highlight the importance of women safety and the imperative to provide a secure and protected atmosphere to them, so that they can effectively participate in public life and economic growth of the country.

Directive word
Discuss – this is an all encompassing directive which mandates us to write at length about the key demand of the question.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – write a few lines about the positive effects of increasing women participation in the economy e.g A McKinsey Global study in 2015 found that India could increase its GDP by 16-60% by 2025 by simply enabling women to participate in the economy at par with men.

Body–
- Discuss the reasons for low participation of women in public life and the economy in general. E.g role of entrenched gender norms in our society, the rising incomes of men (which raises family income and makes it easier for women to quit working), and the lack of quality jobs for women; lack of a safe and secure external and internal environment in India’s employment sector etc.
- Discuss the recent initiatives taken by the government to tackle the issue of lack of security and protection, which hinders women participation. E.g Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme; Gender champions; setting up One Stop Centres under the Nirbhaya fund- offering a single window assistance to women facing violence; women helpline numbers providing emergency and non emergency assistance to women in distress; Trafficking of persons bills, 2018, which seeks to provide a strong legal framework and dedicated institutions at various levels; new taxi policy guidelines like mandatory GPS; panic buttons; etc.

Conclusion– based on your discussion form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue.

Background:-
- Female labour force participation is a driver of growth and therefore, participation rates indicate the potential for a country to grow more rapidly. Having equal gender representation is a financial positive to businesses today besides being a social responsibility.
- India has one of the largest opportunities in the world to boost GDP by increasing women’s participation in the labour participation. The country could add up to $770 billion which is more than 18% to its GDP by 2025, simply by giving equal opportunities to women, according to an April 23 report by the McKinsey Global Institute.

Government initiatives for ensuring women empowerment:-
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojna:
  - It was launched to generate awareness and also improve the efficiency of welfare services meant for girl child. This scheme is to prevent gender-biased sex-selective elimination and ensure the education, survival, and protection of the girl child. It also aims to celebrate the girl child.
- Mahila E-Haat:
  - To support women and also ‘Make in India’ through online marketing platform this bilingual online portal is a blessing.
  - The Mahila E-Haat is an initiative for meeting needs of women entrepreneurs. It provides a unique and direct marketing platform and also leverages technology for supporting women entrepreneurs, SHGs, and NGOs.
- One Stop Centre Scheme :
  - The aim of launching this scheme is to provide support and assistance to women who are affected by violence in public and private spaces. Through this scheme, the women who are facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, irrespective of age, class, caste, education status, marital status, race, and culture will be supported.
The safety measures, recommended by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, concerning safety of women commuters availing of cab services have been included in the new Taxi Policy Guidelines.

- The taxis should be mandatorily fitted with GPS panic devices.
- For the safety of women and child passengers, the central locking system in the taxis should not be allowed.

**National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyan)**

- National Nutrition Mission was launched as an expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme
- The main objectives of this scheme are to attain proper nutritional status among children from 0-6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in a timely manner; reduce stunting, under-nutrition, and anaemia among young children, women, and adolescent girls; and lowering low birth weight by at least 2% per annum.

**Trafficking of persons bill, 2018** seeks to provide a strong legal framework and dedicated institutions at various levels

- Women helpline numbers providing emergency and non emergency assistance to women in distress

*Despite the initiatives there is low participation of women in public life and the the economy in general because of the following reasons:-*

**Economic:-**

- Because of the current structure of labour laws, dis-incentivizing formal labour markets and hiring, India has an extremely asymmetric and disproportionally informal labour market. So women are also more likely to be trapped at the lowest levels in the informal labour market.

- Lacking the social networks that enable upward mobility in the labour market, they are often relegated to the lowest paying, hard physical labour under exploitative conditions by middlemen.

- The informal sector leaves women in a poor position to access the economic growth resulting from market liberalization.

- Dalit women record higher work Participation Rate than that of their non-Dalit counterparts but high wage gap between SC and non-SC/ST women, concentration of Dalit women workers in agricultural sector and elementary occupations show that most of the Dalit women are deprived of high-salaried positions. So they stay poor.

- Women earn for their families, but they have no control over their earnings.

- The rising incomes of men (which raises family income and makes it easier for women to quit working), and the lack of quality jobs for women

- Lack of a safe and secure external and internal environment in India’s employment sector etc.

**Social stresses:-**

**Role of entrenched gender norms in our society:-**

- The discrimination against the girl child begins from the birth itself. Boys are preferred over girls; hence, female infanticide is a common practice in India.

**Caste discrimination:-**

- Dalit women and their children are routinely denied medical care as upper castes refuse to treat them.

**Violence:-**

- Women are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence at home, in their immediate neighbourhoods, and at the workplace.

**Health issues:-**

- Low age at marriage and high fertility has a direct impact on the health outcomes. Women record low Body Mass Index (BMI), higher prevalence of anaemia and low access to maternal health care facilities.

- Mainly husbands and in-laws take decisions regarding their health.

**Solutions needed are:-**

- Integrating social and cultural transformation with an economic alternative is critical.

- **Huge investments will be needed in upskilling and educating women** and government needs to create an abundance of new jobs within the formal sector and lowering barriers to job creation

- Increased availability of stable-wage jobs for women is critical to preventing their socio-economic exploitation
With bridging the deep-rooted biases through sustained reconditioning:
- It is only possible by promoting the idea of gender equality and uprooting social ideology of male child preferability.
- They should be given decision-making powers and due position in governance. Thus, the Women Reservation Bill should be passed as soon as possible to increase the effective participation of women in the politics of India.
- Bridging implementation gaps:
  - Government or community-based bodies must be set up to monitor the programs devised for the welfare of the society.
  - Women need group and gender specific policies and programmes to address the issue of multiple deprivations.
  - Women require comprehensive policies on health, especially on the maternal and child health
  - Make credit available by pooling the women to form self help groups. The example of Kudumbashree model of Kerala can be emulated.
- Women safety:
  - Police vigils should be made mandatory at places. The presence of police should be increased at places like schools, colleges, malls and other places were crowd gathers
  - Authorities should ensure that all the public places are lit properly
  - The authorities should ensure that women travel safely whether it’s the trains, buses or the metro rails.
  - The authorities should ensure the cameras are installed at all key places which will help the manual management of law and order a great deal.
  - The autos which still are a good and cheap source to commute don’t have GPS system installed. Authorities should ensure this.
  - A victim should be able to File FIR online, but despite recommendations, FIRs are still filed in conventional ways where the victim is made to wait for hours

Q) Despite the protection granted by RpWD Act, the status of the differently abled with respect to reservation remains dicey. Examine. (250 words)

Why this question
The article talks about the status of reservation for disabled persons and how the mandate of RPwD Act is being flouted. The question is important as RPwD Act was a key legislation expected to drastically improve the rights enjoyed by the differently abled.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to discuss the provisions of RPwD Act with respect to reservations. Thereafter we have to examine the status two years hence. We also need to write corrective actions.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Highlight the recent findings wrt reservation for the disabled which raised issues over the performance of RpWD Act.

Body – Mention the aims and objectives of RpWD Act. Discuss the key provisions which secure rights of persons with disabilities. Discuss why is it, that despite such an act the status of reservation for differently abled remains dicey.

Examine what precautions and steps should be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities get what is rightfully theirs by virtue of RpWD Act.

Conclusion – Mention that disabled form a very vulnerable section of the society, the government is giving extra attention to their empowerment which makes it necessary to ensure that RPwD Act functions effectively.

Background:
- In India, the population with disabilities is around 26.8 million, constituting 2.21% of India’s total population, if one goes by the 2011 population census data.
Recent reports suggest that Jawaharlal Nehru University may have been in violation of disability reservation provisions in student selection and faculty recruitment.

Protection granted by RpWD act:-
- The Act has a great significance to it as it included the Private employers within its jurisdiction which was subject to interpretation in the previous act.
- The Act brought in provisions by which no person can be discriminated against on the grounds of their disability thereby providing an equal opportunity. No employee can be discriminated against in cases of career growth, promotions, transfers, etc.
- The PwD persons cannot be discriminated against in assigning client facing roles. Rather, responsibilities are to be assigned based on the merit.
- The act suggests that if there are 20 or more PwD employed in the firm, it should set out a policy with job roles identified as suitable for them and should provide the required amenities for PwD, training, special leave, etc.
- A liaison officer is to be appointed to monitor various stages which include recruitment of PwD, work environment which is conducive to PwD, etc.
- It obligates the company to maintain a clear record with the details of the employees and the facilities provided to them.
- Compliance of Accessibility is the key provision of the act. It states that no company will be provided a certificate of completion unless it provides ramps, elevators, transport, communication, adheres to minimum width of walkways, etc. Thus making the company an inclusive environment.
- It has increased the quota of reservation for persons with benchmark disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and from 3% to 5% in higher educational institutions. Since the Act came into force, there have been multiple instances of persons with disabilities having to fight their cases in courts to ensure that government and educational institutions comply with the disability reservation provisions.

Despite such an act the status of reservation for differently abled remains dicey:-
- In government jobs and higher educational institutions, where the total seats offered are fewer, disability reservation takes a back seat. The argument often given by authorities is that due to the paucity of seats, the disability reservation cannot even be calculated.
- Many premier educational institutions and various State governments have been in violation of the prior Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 and of the RPwd Act, The system is designed such that disability is seen as the inability of a person and therefore many differently abled candidates are not recruited, additionally contributing to the mounting huge backlog of vacancies.
- Although there are persons with disabilities (PwD) employed in the private giants, they are majorly restricted to the urban India and most of the private companies still stay reluctant to employ people with disabilities.
- Many think that persons selected under reserved categories, especially under the differently abled category, are not meritorious candidates and their selection brings down the quality of institutions in which they are selected.
- Main problem lies in the psyche of a significant mass which considers persons with disabilities a liability, and this leads to discrimination and harassment against them and their isolation from the mainstream.
- Legislation alone is not enough; implementation remains abysmal.
- Data from the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People show that 84% of seats for persons with disabilities lie vacant in top universities.

Precautions that need to be taken:-
- The national action plan for skill development of persons with disabilities was announced in March last to impart skill training and improve their chances of employment in public and private sector.
- There needs to be a shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based approach.
- Care must be taken to ensure disability-inclusive development. India has to create sensitive and harmonious society, where every person feels empowered and a society of empathy, where one person feels the pain of another.
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have the potential in enhancing their social, cultural, political and economic participation.
Incorporation of accessibility principles across all new developments will also complement the Accessible India Campaign.

- Representation of persons with disabilities in all ministries, commissions and committees to advise and ensure inclusion in all policies, programmes and developments.
- Adherence to the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines should be made mandatory while developing websites and mobile applications.

**Conclusion**:
Real change occurs only on effective implementation and on tackling the attitudinal barriers of society. The eloquently articulated observations of the Supreme Court are likely to pave the way for the creation of a more egalitarian social order, not just in law, but also in reality.

**Q) DPCO 2013 is an indispensable tool to correct the price deformities in pharma market, that impacts access to medicines. Discuss. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
The article discusses the impact that DPCO 2013 has had and whether there is a need to bring about a shift in how we ensure accessibility to medicines. The topic is in news recently with NPPA fixing price of 22 drug formulations and certain shortages that have come to light. Hence this question.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to discuss the pros and cons of the current price control architecture of DPCO 2013. How effective it has been in attaining it’s objectives is the focus of the question.

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

**Structure of the answer**

- **Introduction** – Explain DPCO 2013 and its purpose.
- **Body** – Examine some of the recent moves of DPCO that has brought the focus on this topic such as the move to control price of stents, coming out with price control measures of 22 essential drug formulations. Discuss what objective is served through these steps. Examine whether benefits are being accrued by the beneficial. Discuss the cons such as the impact it is having on research, availability etc.
- **Conclusion** – Mention your view and the way forward.

**Background**:
- India’s domestic pharma market sales is about Rs 1.3 lakh crore per year. Less than 11 per cent is under price control. Health sector saw major initiatives to bring down and cap prices of essential medicines through price control, coupled with moves to expand a network of cheaper drug dispensaries in the recent years.

**Price deformities in pharma markets**:
- Several distortions have crept in because of the failure of pharma markets. The same medicine is sold at prices ranging from Re 1 to Rs 10 in some cases Rs 100.
- Arguments about the cost of R&D to explain the high prices hold no water because at least 95 per cent of the medicines sold by Indian companies are out of patent

**DPCO 2013**:
- To ensure that vital drugs are available at affordable prices, the Government exercises control over the prices of certain drugs it defines as ‘essential’. The Drug Pricing Policy 2013 provides the framework through which ceiling prices for these essential drugs are worked out. These price limits are given effect by passing the order referred to as the DPCO.
- Under the provisions of DPCO 2013, only the prices of drugs that figure in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) are monitored and controlled by the regulator, the National Pharma Pricing Authority. Under the earlier avatar of the DPCO (1995), 74 drugs were subject to price control. In the 2013 version, the number of drugs under the price control was expanded.
- The DPCO 2013 covers only 376 essential medicines in specific presentations and strengths.
- Came out with the price control measures of 22 essential drug formulations.
Benefits:-

- Price control played a major role in enhancing savings on medicines, which constitute at least 40% of an household’s expenditure on health.
- Apart from price capping, the government also worked on opening AMRIT and Jan Aushadhi stores to make generic drugs available at a discounted price.
- Government has also brought stents under price control, providing a major relief to patients suffering from heart disorders.

Issues with imposing price control:-

- Unviable for pharma companies:-
  - Consumers may be happy at a cut in medicine bills but the government’s price control measures have forced many brands out of the “unviable” pharmaceutical market, resulting in a drastic slowdown in new launches.
- Rural India:-
  - With lower margins in price-controlled medicines, there is also less incentive to reach out to rural markets.
  - While the objective behind price control of medicines was primarily to increase affordability and accessibility, the industry argues that the move has failed to achieve these objectives.
- Market concentration:-
  - The DPCO 2013 has resulted in an increase in market concentration (fewer brands are now listed) and a decrease in competitive intensity (the average number of new brands have gone down since 2013)
- Criticism to government’s stand on pricing of stents and other medical implants:-
  - Stent price capping has resulted in eliminating the choice of stents. Furthermore, there have been multiple reports that hospitals have cited no significant increase in the number of angioplasty procedures performed, after the move on stent price control.
  - According to DoP, only about 850 drugs are under price control as against the more than 6,000 medicines available in the market of various strengths and dosages.
- Lack of innovation and research:-
  - Decreasing profit margin will discourage the pharmacy industries for innovative technological development.

Way forward:-

- Drug firms must be incentivised to innovate and invest in research and development. India needs to increase GDP being spent by the government on healthcare.
- Centralised drug procurement has been effectively used in states like Tamil Nadu to bring down costs. Rest of the states can emulate that.
- A well-functioning generics market is required to give the poor access to inexpensive drugs.
- Only way to decrease out-of-pocket expenses on health by the average Indian is to hold true to the promise of universal, affordable, and accessible healthcare in a welfare state.

Q) In light of the recent report of Standing Committee on Rural Development, critically analyze the performance of Swachh Bharat Mission?(250 words)

Why this question
The article highlights the findings of the report of Standing committee which discusses some key issues with SBM. This is in contrast to the picture painted by Economic Survey this year. The Report is important for updating your notes on SBM.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to discuss various aspects of SBM and highlight the pros and cons in terms of achievement. Our view on whether SBM has achieved its objectives needs to be provided at the end.

Directive word
Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. You need to conclude with a fair judgement, after analyzing the nature of each component part and interrelationship between them.
Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention details about SBM.

Body
- Discuss the mission, vision and strategy to achieve vision of SBM
- Discuss how SBM has indeed managed to make a dent. Highlight the findings of the Economic Survey 2017-18 – Open Defecation In Rural Areas Down 45%, established link between sanitation and economic performance, 296 districts and 3,07,349 villages across India have been declared as Open Defecation Free etc
- Thereafter, discuss the findings of the Report. Analyse the issues related to investment in behavioural change, quality of new toilets constructed, availability of water etc

Conclusion – Give a fair and balanced view on the status of achievement of SBM and discuss the way forward.

Background:-
- Swachh Bharat Mission is a campaign which was launched on 2 October 2014, and aims to eradicate open defecation by 2019, and is a national campaign, covering 4,041 statutory cities and towns. Its predecessors were the “Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan” and before that the “Total Sanitation Campaign”.
- Recent Parliamentary Committee report clearly says this programme is unlikely to make India open-defecation free. The rationale of the 51st Standing Committee on Rural Development report is that even a village with 100 per cent household toilets cannot be declared open defecation-free till all the inhabitants start using them.

Success of the scheme:-
- A sense of responsibility has been evoked among the people through the Clean India Movement. With citizens now becoming active participants in cleanliness activities across the nation, the dream of a ‘Clean India’ once seen by Mahatma Gandhi has begun to get a shape.

Facts:-
- In the short span of three years, about 50 million toilets have been constructed in rural India, increasing the coverage from 39% to 69% now; another 3.8 million have sprung up in cities and towns and another 1.4 million are presently under construction
- So far, 248,000 villages have been revived from the disgrace of open defecation; 203 districts, over one-third of the total, have banished open defecation.

States:-
- Five States have declared themselves Open Defecation Free (ODF) in rural areas: Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Haryana.

SBM is not a campaign to just clean India, but has a much deeper significance:-
- If successful, this campaign can transform the lives of Indian women, bringing in its scope issues of women’s safety, their access to higher education and will even challenge the caste system.

Criticism:-

Funds unspent:-
- Centre has literally forgotten to spend the money earmarked to promote the use of toilets, a concern raised in the State of India’s Environment in Figure: 2018.
- Centre has also failed to exhaust its budget for Swachh Bharat Mission-gramin. This, despite the fact, that the budget for the scheme has seen a dip over the past year.

Implementation issues:-
- Sanitation coverage figures seemed to be more on paper but the actual progress at the ground level is very lethargic. Behavioural change is still a distant reality.

Quality:-
- Standing committee has also raised questions over the construction quality of toilets and said that the government is counting non-functional toilets, leading to inflated data.

Unable to reach target:-
- Access to free toilets has not helped resolve open defecation in India. The programme is unlikely to succeed in its primary task of eliminating open defecation by October 2019.
- The rate of open defecation is not decreasing much:-
- India has far higher levels of open defecation than other countries of the same GDP per capita. For example, India has a higher GDP per capita than Bangladesh, but in Bangladesh only 8.4% households defecate in the open, compared to 55% in India.

- **Purity and pollution:**
  - The **key reason for this is that basic latrines that need to be emptied out manually or pumped by simple machines are unacceptable to higher caste Hindus.**
  - It is considered polluting to the individual and the home, and historically associated with untouchability. So people rather defecate in open than having a toilet at home.
  - It is not just a matter of access but a problem of perceptions of pollution, ritual purity, and caste.
  - Even if the government builds free toilets without any leakage or corruption, India will at best have 80 million new toilets that a large proportion of Indians do not want to use.

**Suggestions:**
- Parliamentary Committee recommends the government to review its data time to time and delete the number of defunct toilets from the list to have a real picture of constructed and functional toilets in the country.
- **Concentrating on developing sewage system makes Swachh Bharat a success:**
  - Deeply entrenched cultural contexts must be taken into account for successful policy outcomes. India needs to change perceptions of ritual purity through education and awareness in rural areas. This can be done by investing in sewage systems.
  - **Enabling local governments to construct sewage systems will solve the purity issue:**
    - A toilet that flushes away human waste into the sewage and waste management system solves the problem. If there is a functional sewage system, it is relatively low cost for households to build a toilet in every home that is connected to the sewage system.
    - Developing proper sewage system in village would also have wider impact with water not stagnating any more, lesser vector borne diseases etc so the wider objective of sanitation will be achieved.
    - Modernising the sewer lines and septic tanks and investing money and energy on smart techniques of sanitation
  - Also **it would not put stress on manual scavenging** and this occupation can slowly fade away giving sense of dignity and equality to the most vulnerable sections.
- **Mohalla toilets:**
  - Villages have very small houses and much clustered places where there is no place to construct toilets. The ideal solution is to have **mohalla toilets designated to each house** where people will keep their toilet clean by seeing others. **One advantage is that when the toilets are outside the home, there will be a peer pressure to keep it clean.**
  - There **should be a proper database** about what are the requirements in a particular area because we cannot force a toilet in a house where there is no place.
  - **For India constructing toilets is like a social work and not a development work.** Once it is seen as a development work with country’s image, then the thrust will come and the people will realise how important it is and we should not lag behind other countries.
  - **In schools it is the responsibility of the teachers and they have to be oriented to ensure that the child knows about hygiene** which also includes knowing how to use a toilet.

**Conclusion:**
- Pursuit of Swachh Bharat also requires strengthening public health services. Services such as good drainage systems, absence of swamps and ponds that are home to stagnant water, and the supply of safe drinking water all of which reduce exposure to and spread of diseases are classic examples of public goods and require effective government intervention.

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**Q) Discuss the provisions of Trafficking of persons Bill 2018. Critically Examine whether it would help in solving the problems faced by those being trafficked? (250 words)**

**Why this question**
The article is quite useful in preparing critical analysis of trafficking of persons Bill which has been introduced in the ongoing session of Parliament. The problem is often in news and poses a significant challenge for government around the world. Hence this question is important.

**Key demand of the question**
The first part of the question is straightforward in its demand. In the second part, we have to mention the pros and cons of the along with our view from the point of view of those being trafficked.

**Directive word**
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – discuss data related to trafficking to emphasize the magnitude and the impact of the problem.

**Body** – Discuss the provisions of the Bill. Examine the provisions of the bill that seeks to improve the condition of the victim such as keeping identity anonymous, rehabilitation etc. Emphasize on the merit of these provisions. Thereafter, discuss the problems with focus on prosecution driven, raid rescue rehabilitation model.

**Conclusion** – give a fair and balanced view and changes required to enhance effectiveness.

**Background:**
- Anti-human trafficking Bill aims to solve the massive problem of trafficking, and the move was long overdue in India. According to the Global Slavery Index 2016 published by an Australian rights group, more than 18 million people in India are living in conditions of modern slavery.
- According to data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), more than 8,000 cases of human trafficking were reported in 2016. More than half the victims i.e., 54 percent were trafficked for the purpose of forced labour and sexual exploitation.

**Features of the Bill:**
- **Multiple dimensions of trafficking included:**
  - Aggravated forms of trafficking, which includes trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical and substance on a person for early sexual maturity. The Bill also includes trafficking for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage.
- **Victim protection:**
  - The anti-trafficking Bill aims at maintaining the confidentiality of the victim/witness and the complainant. **This helps in trans-border and inter-state rescue operations.**
  - The Bill proposes to provide time-bound trial and repatriation of victims. It seeks to provide help within a period of one year.
  - Immediate protection of rescued victims and their rehabilitation. The victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical, mental trauma and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of chargesheet.
- **Rehabilitation fund:**
  - A rehabilitation fund would be created for the first time. Rehabilitation would not be based on criminal proceedings initiated against the criminal.
- **Institutional mechanisms:**
  - The Bill aims to have designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of cases.
  - The anti-trafficking Bill creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at the district, state and central levels. These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau will perform the task of international coordination.
  - The National Investigation Agency (NIA) will also perform the task of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking of person:**
  - Which includes producing, printing, issuing or distributing unissued, tampered or fake certificates, registration or stickers as proof of compliance with Government requirements; or commits fraud for procuring or facilitating the acquisition of clearances and necessary documents from Government agencies.
  - The new law also seeks to make way for punishment of three years for a person found to be promoting or facilitating trafficking.
  - **Punishment** ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh in cases of “aggravated” crimes
In order to break the organized nexus, both at the national and international level, the Bill provides for the attachment & forfeiture of property and also the proceeds for crime.

**How this bill will solve the issue of trafficking:-**

- **Trafficking of Persons** Bill aims to look at making India a leader among South Asian nations in combatting human trafficking. It addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of prevention, protection and rehabilitation.
- More importantly, it creates a distinction between the trafficker and the trafficked, ensuring victims are not wrongfully detained.
- The Bill addresses one of the most pervasive yet invisible crimes affecting the most vulnerable persons especially women and children. The new law will make India a leader among South Asian countries to combat trafficking.
- The bill addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation (first to address the issue of victim rehabilitation).
  - Setting up of one or more special homes in each district for the purpose of providing long-term institutional support for the rehabilitation of victims is another feature of the Bill.
- Unlike the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), 1956, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code, the new Bill takes a holistic view and aims to prevent trafficking for forced labour, begging and organ transplant, among many others.
- The Bill also provides for designated courts in each district for time-bound trial and repatriation of victims within a period of one year from taking into cognizance. This is welcome move.
- The Bill also provides for seizing of property located in foreign lands which is a good effort to deal with such crimes.
- It is gender-neutral and covers transgender persons.
- It doesn't criminalise the victims, but instead provides them with shelter, compensation, and counselling.
- The Bill also relies on Article 21 of the Constitution, guaranteeing that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.
- The Bill takes note of the fact that India has ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its three Optional Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

**Criticism:-**

- Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation is left out:-
  - Sex trafficking is one such issue. Even as the number of victims of sex trafficking was as high as 16 million, the Bill does not mention the word 'sexual exploitation' or 'prostitution' anywhere.
  - Bill neither has any punishment for customers or clients nor does it have a provision to prevent the trafficking of marginalised girls and women.
- Budget constraints:-
  - The Bill argues to prevent trafficking from the point of prevention, protection and rehabilitation. But it has has no earmarked budget to provide shelter, food, clothing and legal protection to girls and youth of backward classes who are most vulnerable to trafficking.
- Vulnerability is a big concern:-
  - It has failed to remove Section 8 of the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA) under which women are punished for soliciting in a public place for no fault of their own. The reality is that they are vulnerable because they are hungry, homeless, and unskilled.
- Legal Vacuum
  - The Bill also proposes to set up special courts for prosecution of offenders. But a similar plan was proposed after the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape case, and the courts have not been functioning as effectively as they were deemed to. Further, the Nirbhaya Fund has also been fairly under-utilised.
- Missing children not mentioned:-
  - The anti-trafficking Bill does not mention missing children anywhere. However, the NCRB data on missing children is startling. In the year 2016, around 2.90 lakh children were reportedly missing, of whom more than 50 percent are girls. A large number of them are drawn into trafficking.
- Will be a setback for already marginalised groups, including bonded labourers, child labourers, migrant workers, sex workers etc.
The Bill also speaks of repatriation but fails to mention the psycho-socio and economic rehabilitation of the victim.

National investigation agency is an understaffed organisation, that is already tackling the gigantic footprint of terrorism across the subcontinent and there are doubts whether it might be in a position to take on and investigate cases of human trafficking.

According to experts most of the trafficking is taking place in small towns so focus should be on policing and not NIA.

Suggested amendments that are needed:

- Improving Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code’s definition of trafficking of persons. The definition should be based on the UN Protocol that addresses the issue of vulnerability.
- Prohibiting the purchase of sex and servitude. If the buyers of sex are not punished then the supply will never stop. This industry is a highly demand-driven industry; thus, to solve the problem, even buyers of sex workers should be punished.
- Section 8 of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 criminalises women who are made to stand in public spaces by the traffickers. These women should be treated as victims and not offenders
- The government must refer the Bill to a standing committee for comprehensive consultations with Indian trade unions and workers groups.

Q) The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2018 renders India a timid follower of a failed carceral approach to trafficking, based on a prosecution-driven raid–rescue–rehabilitation model. Critically examine. (250 words)

Why this question
The article provides a very organised critical analysis in great depth on one of the important Bills introduced in Parliament – Trafficking of persons Bill. Hence this question is important.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to analyze the provisions of the aforementioned Bill and discuss whether it would help in eliminating the growing problem of human trafficking, or whether it marks a business as usual approach that would have limited effectiveness in dealing with this menace.

Directive word
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Give status quo of the problem of human trafficking by giving data on human trafficking.

Body
- Give features of the Bill such as National Anti Trafficking bureau, its function of surveillance, coordination etc; focus on protection and rehabilitation, search and rescue etc
- Discuss the positives of the Bill – how it aims to check the increasing incidence of human trafficking. It basically strengthens the surveillance mechanism, enhances penalty, focusses on earlier stick approach utilized in combating trafficking
- Discuss the shortcomings of the Bill – ignores socio economic realities of trafficked persons, not in tune with the international shift in strategy, scant attention to bonded labourers etc

Conclusion – Give a fair and balanced view and discuss way forward. Mention that trafficking is a structural problem, with extensive implications on the social, economic, and organisational fabric of our societies. A variety of reasons such as deepening poverty, deteriorating living conditions, persistent unemployment, human deprivation, and hopelessness promote human trafficking, and till the time we aim to combat these basic social problems, the structural cycle promoting human trafficking will continue to exist.

Background:
- Anti-human trafficking Bill aims to solve the massive problem of trafficking, and the move was long overdue in India. According to the Global Slavery Index 2016 published by an Australian rights group, more than 18 million people in India are living in conditions of modern slavery.
According to data of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), more than 8,000 cases of human trafficking were reported in 2016. More than half the victims i.e., 54 percent were trafficked for the purpose of forced labour and sexual exploitation.

**Features of the Bill:-**

- **Multiple dimensions of trafficking included:-**
  - Aggravated forms of trafficking, which includes trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical and substance on a person for early sexual maturity. The Bill also includes trafficking for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage.

- **Victim protection:-**
  - The anti-trafficking Bill aims at maintaining the confidentiality of the victim/witness and the complainant. **This helps in trans-border and inter-state rescue operations.**
  - The Bill proposes to provide time-bound trial and repatriation of victims. It seeks to provide help within a period of one year.
  - Immediate protection of rescued victims and their rehabilitation. The victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical, mental trauma and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of chargesheet.

- **Rehabilitation fund:-**
  - A rehabilitation fund would be created for the first time. Rehabilitation would not be based on criminal proceedings initiated against the criminal.

- **Institutional mechanisms:-**
  - The Bill aims to have designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of cases.
  - The anti-trafficking Bill creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at the district, state and central levels. These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau will perform the task of international coordination.
  - The National Investigation Agency (NIA) will also perform the task of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- **Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking of person:-**
  - Which includes producing, printing, issuing or distributing unissued, tampered or fake certificates, registration or stickers as proof of compliance with Government requirements; or commits fraud for procuring or facilitating the acquisition of clearances and necessary documents from Government agencies.
  - The new law also seeks to make way for punishment of three years for a person found to be promoting or facilitating trafficking.
  - **Punishment** ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh in cases of "aggravated" crimes
  - In order to break the organized nexus, both at the national and international level, the Bill provides for the attachment & forfeiture of property and also the proceeds for crime.

**How this bill will solve the issue of trafficking:-**

- Trafficking of Persons Bill aims to look at making India a leader among South Asian nations in combatting human trafficking. It addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of prevention, protection and rehabilitation.
- More importantly, it creates a distinction between the trafficker and the trafficked, ensuring victims are not wrongfully detained.
- The Bill addresses one of the most pervasive yet invisible crimes affecting the most vulnerable persons especially women and children. The new law will make India a leader among South Asian countries to combat trafficking.
- The bill addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation (first to address the issue of victim rehabilitation).
  - Setting up of one or more special homes in each district for the purpose of providing long-term institutional support for the rehabilitation of victims is another feature of the Bill.
- Unlike the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code, the new Bill takes a holistic view and aims to prevent trafficking for forced labour, begging and organ transplant, among many others.
- The **Bill also provides for designated courts in each district** for time-bound trial and repatriation of victims within a period of one year from taking into cognizance. This is welcome move.
- The Bill **also provides for seizing of property located in foreign lands** which is a good effort to deal with such crimes.
- **It is gender-neutral and covers transgender persons.**
- **It doesn't criminalise the victims**, but instead provides them with shelter, compensation, and counselling.
- The Bill **also relies on Article 21 of the Constitution**, guaranteeing that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.
- The Bill **takes note of the fact that India has ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime** and its three Optional Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

**Criticism:-**

- **Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation is left out:-**
  - Sex trafficking is one such issue. Even as the number of victims of sex trafficking was as high as 16 million, the Bill does not mention the word 'sexual exploitation' or 'prostitution' anywhere.
  - Bill neither has any punishment for customers or clients **nor does it have a provision to prevent the trafficking of marginalised girls and women.**

- **Budget constraints:-**
  - The Bill argues to prevent trafficking from the point of prevention, protection and rehabilitation. But it has has no earmarked budget to provide shelter, food, clothing and legal protection to girls and youth of backward classes who are most vulnerable to trafficking.

- **Vulnerability is a big concern:-**
  - It has failed to remove Section 8 of the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA) under which women are punished for soliciting in a public place for no fault of their own. The reality is that they are vulnerable because they are hungry, homeless, and unskilled.

- **Legal Vacuum**
  - The Bill also proposes to set up special courts for prosecution of offenders. But a similar plan was proposed after the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape case, and the courts have not been functioning as effectively as they were deemed to. Further, the Nirbhaya Fund has also been fairly under-utilised.

- **Missing children not mentioned:-**
  - The anti-trafficking Bill does not mention missing children anywhere. However, the NCRB data on missing children is startling. In the year 2016, around 2.90 lakh children were reportedly missing, of whom more than 50 percent are girls. A large number of them are drawn into trafficking.

- **Will be a setback for already marginalised groups**, including bonded labourers, child labourers, migrant workers, sex workers etc.
  - The Bill also speaks of repatriation but **fails to mention the psycho-socio and economic rehabilitation of the victim.**

- **National investigation agency is an understaffed organisation**, that is already tackling the gigantic footprint of terrorism across the subcontinent and there are doubts whether it might be in a position to take on and investigate cases of human trafficking.
  - According to experts most of the trafficking is taking place in small towns so focus should be on policing and not NIA.

**Suggested amendments that are needed:-**

- **Improving Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code's definition of trafficking of persons.** The definition should be based on the UN Protocol that addresses the issue of vulnerability.

- **Prohibiting the purchase of sex and servitude.** If the buyers of sex are not punished then the supply will never stop. This industry is a highly demand-driven industry; thus, to solve the problem, even buyers of sex workers should be punished.

- **Section 8 of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 criminalises women who are made to stand in public spaces by the traffickers. These women should be treated as victims and not offenders**

- The government **must refer the Bill to a standing committee** for comprehensive consultations with Indian trade unions and workers groups.
TOPIC: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Q) Discuss the effectiveness of price capping methods for pharmaceutical products as a tool to ensure affordable healthcare? Suggest alternatives as well. (250 words)

Financial express

Why this question
The article talks about the effectiveness of price capping methods, used often by NPPA of late in ensuring that cost of drugs and medical devices go down. The article gives points against their effectiveness and hence this topic needs to be discussed.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to discuss pros and cons using price capping methods. We can also provide an alternative.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Highlight some of the recent incidents where price capping has been used – stents. Explain how this works.

Body – Thereafter assess the merits and demerits of price capping methods towards ensuring affordable healthcare. Highlight the practice of huge profit margins charged especially in the case of medical devices, the onus on the government to ensure access for the vulnerable section etc. In cons, talk about its impact on research and innovation, less than optimum results because of other cost components which have not been brought under control. Discuss the alternative of promoting generic medicines and domestic devices, the concept of Trade margin Rationalization etc and why or why not they would be achievement over status quo.

Conclusion – Summarize your answer and give a way forward.

Background:-

- Lancet in its latest study emphasizes that India ranks 145th among 195 countries in terms of quality and accessibility of healthcare, behind its neighbours China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.
- In the year 2014-15, the Out of Pocket Expenditure on health by households was Rs 3,02,425 crores. Out of this, a whopping 37.9 percent of Current Health Expenditure was the Total Pharmaceutical Expenditure and included prescribed medicines, over the counter drugs and those provided during an inpatient, outpatient or emergency care.

How they help in affordable health care :-

- Price control played a major role in enhancing savings on medicines, which constitute at least 40% of an household’s expenditure on health. Apart from price capping, the government also worked on opening AMRIT and Jan Aushadhi stores to make generic drugs available at a discounted price.
- Government has also brought stents under price control, providing a major relief to patients suffering from heart disorders.

Criticism:-

- The recent price controls on coronary stents and knee implants have created a challenging environment for the medical devices industry. This move has not benefited the patents in any manner. In my opinion, the measure to price capping will result in making latest global innovation a distant dream for the larger community.
- Due to information asymmetry and multiple mark-ups, price ceilings do not tackle the real reasons that contribute to high prices for medical treatment faced by consumers.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Health Action International have shown that more than 50% of the end price of medicines is contributed by components other than the manufacturer’s selling price.
According to Advamed study, price caps on stents have neither led to better accessibility of angioplasty procedures, nor affordability for patients incurring out-of-pocket expenses.

- The study, instead, shows a decrease in the number of angioplasties performed in a month, and increase in out-of-pocket expenses made by patients undergoing angioplasty.
- There are five key factors that determine the cost of a medical procedure out of which only cost is included other factors like doctor fees, room rents, drug charges, hospital charges are largely ignored.
- High trade margins enjoyed by distributors, hospitals or retailers are the main reason for cost escalation of drugs and devices
- If capping of prices is done through government-ordered arbitrary price fixing, it could only result in drug firms pulling out products and, thereby, stocks will run dry.

**Way forward:**
- Successful licensing mechanisms, including medicine patent pool or tiered pricing models, which maximise public health benefits are reliable alternatives.
- **Trade margin rationalisation (TMR):**
  - It is imperative to focus on TMR as it imposes a cap on the margins across the value chain, rather than capping price of devices.
  - Imposing TMR involves imposing a cap on upstream margins across the entire value chain, rather than imposing caps on prices of products downstream. This would certainly be a game-changer if implemented in the right way, and at the right time.
- For the long term, the government can look at a strategy of building competency in health technology assessment (HTA), where a robust medical technology assessment programme is developed after taking into consideration evidence of safety, efficacy, patient-reported outcomes and cost-effectiveness.
- **Centralised drug procurement** has been effectively used in states like Tamil Nadu to bring down costs. Rest of the states can emulate that.
- A well-functioning generics market is required to give the poor access to inexpensive drugs.
- **Primary health centres must be well-staffed**, public health improved and supply chains should be made functional.
- The state must first realise that primary healthcare and public health are the government’s responsibility and must be guaranteed to all. The private sector can, at best, supplement this effort.
- **Drug firms must be incentivised to innovate** and invest in research and development. India needs to increase GDP being spent by the government on healthcare.
- Only way to decrease out-of-pocket expenses on health by the average Indian is to hold true to the promise of universal, affordable, and accessible healthcare in a welfare state.

**Q) Examine the role blockchain can play in improving the effectiveness of Skill India Mission? (250 words)**

**Why this question**
The article talks about the current shortcoming in the multifarious skill development programmes being run by various agencies. The application of blockchain in this regard is a novel perspective and merits analysis.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to bring out the issue plaguing skill development mission of the government and how blockchain can be utilised for addressing the issue.

**Directive word**

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Highlight that skill development is top priority and the structure of Skill India Mission where multiple programmes are being run by several ministries.

**Body** – Highlight the issue being faced – standardisation and duplicity in certification. Mention that Sharda Prasad Committee also recommended steps towards standardization. Examine how blockchain can help in aforementioned issue by creating an online secure repository of database which can help in ease of access verification etc. Discuss the challenges such as lack of digital literacy, cyber security threats etc.

**Conclusion** – Express your opinion on how effective such usage of blockchain will be.
Background:-
- Skills are needed to those currently in colleges for them to be better employed. The main goal of skill India mission is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the Indian youth and to develop more of those sectors which have already been put under skill development for the last so many years and also to identify new sectors for skill development.
- Blockchain essentially is a database of record stored, linked and secured by cryptography. While it can be distributed (accessed by many), it cannot be copied or duplicated. It has timestamps that allows each user to understand edits in the various versions of the document.

Issues with skill India mission are:-
- One of the major challenges which it still needs to overcome is standardisation and duplicacy in certification.
- There is no system of authenticating the certificate of a candidate.
- The targets allocated to them were very high and without regard to any sectoral requirement. Everybody was chasing numbers without providing employment to the youth or meeting sectoral industry needs.
- NSDC has not been able to discharge its responsibilities for setting up sector skill councils (SSCs) owing to lots of instances of serious conflict of interest and unethical practices.

How blockchain can improve the effectiveness of Skill India Mission:-
- Manage database of certification:-
  - It will be an interesting proposition to consider blockchain technology to manage the database of certification of students under various schemes and programmes under skill development.
  - Better coordination amongst different departments as there is a single online database.
  - Can be effective in curbing duplication of certificates as well by creating an online secure repository of database which can help in ease of access verification.
  - Certificates can be uploaded for public viewing and can even be verified by the employer.
- Speedy verification:-
  - This technology would reduce the employer cost of third party verification of the certificates.
  - Better verification leads to tackling the fake certificate issue as certificates are uploaded in an online database and so only deserving candidates get certified and fraud candidates can be identified.
  - As systems are totally digitized need for carrying paper certificates is not necessary.

Issues:-
- A higher education institute uploading certificates on the blockchain server will do no good, unless other private training partners do the same too, so that an employer can effectively utilise the system to hire workforce.
- Lack of digital literacy.
- Cyber security threats are still rampant and India is one of the most vulnerable destinations for these attacks.

Way forward:-
- There is need to implement Sharada Prasad Committee recommendations who emphasized on formation of an independent National Board for Assessment and Certification to standardise this process.
- Although it is important to focus on the targets set and achieved by various schemes and programmes under Skill India mission, it is also essential for the government to decentralise and standardise recognition of such skills by all stakeholders to ensure success of the existing system.
- It is high time government invites competent software developers and technology startups to attempt developing a robust system for database management and certification in skills.

Q) The move to close down the present higher education regulator, the University Grants Commission (UGC), and usher in the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is a progressive move but fraught with challenges. Analyze. (250 words)

Why this question
The article is very good for understanding the reasons why HECI Bill has been brought in and the challenges therein. Hence this question.
Key demand of the question
The question expects us to highlight the shortcomings of UGC which has led to several commentators welcoming HECI. Thereafter we need to highlight the challenges that are likely to be faced in the coming years as a result of the Bill and the way forward.

**Directive word**

Analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – First highlight that why HECI Bill is in the news.

**Body**

- Elaborate the main features of HECI Bill.
- Examine why it was requires. Here you can mention reports such as Hari Gautam Committee etc to explain why reforming UGC was necessary. These committees had also suggested the creation of HECI
- Explain what the function of HECI is going to be and how is it different from UGC.
- Highlight the main challenges in future as pointed out in both articles

**Conclusion** – Mention that reforms in higher education sector is the need of the hour and discuss the way forward for smooth implementation and effective outcome.

**Background:**

- Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act) Bill 2018 which seeks to repeal UGC Act and provides for setting up of Higher Education Commission of India has been prepared by the Ministry of HRD and placed in public domain for comments and suggestions recently.
- Government recently announced a complete overhaul of the apex higher education regulator- University Grants Commission, repeal of the UGC Act, 1951 and a fresh legislation to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

**High education commission of India:**

- Focus of Higher Education Commission of India will be on improving academic standards and the quality of Higher Education.
- The Bill
  - Empowers the HECI to specify minimum eligibility conditions for appointments to administrative and leadership positions in HEIs
  - Gives direct voice to the representatives of the states through the Advisory Council.

**Why it is a welcome move in reforming higher education:**

- Better administration:
  - Centre has embarked on a process of reform of the regulatory agencies for better administration of the higher education sector. In fulfilment of the above, draft Act is in accordance with the commitment of Government for reforming the regulatory systems that provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth of the education system which provides greater opportunities to the Indian students at more affordable cost.
  - The UGC regime, ironically, was marked by both over-regulation that curbed the autonomy of top-notch institutions and under-regulation of academic quality that led to a mushrooming of sub-standard institutions, as also the gross abuse of its funding powers.
  - Vests the power to create new universities in the HECI via a set of transparent criteria and, thus, eliminates the need for legislation for this purpose.
  - Empowers the HECI to bestow affiliating power on both public and private universities provided they meet the specified norms

- Less Government and more Governance:
  - Downsizing the scope of the Regulator. No more interference in the management issues of the educational institutions.
  - Key thrust areas of the HECI will be downsizing over governance of institutions, bring in disclosure based regulatory regime and powers of enforcement of regulations.

- Separation of grant functions:
The grant functions would be carried out by the HRD Ministry, and the HECI would focus only on academic matters.

**End of Inspection Raj:**
- Regulation is done through transparent public disclosures, merit-based decision making on matters regarding standards and quality in higher education

**Focus on academic quality:**
- HECI is tasked with the mandate of improving academic standards with specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers, promote use of educational technology etc.
- It will develop norms for setting standards for opening and closure of institutions, provide for greater flexibility and autonomy to institutions, lay standards for appointments to critical leadership positions at the institutional level irrespective of University started under any Law (including State Law)
- The Commission shall have the power to grant authorization for starting of academic operations on the basis of their compliance with norms of academic quality.
- Empowers the HECI to confer degree giving power on both universities and colleges based on specified norms thereby paving the way for the emergence of high quality degree granting colleges.
- Provides for a credit based system for the award of degrees thereby ending the current tyranny of forcing a student to repeat the entire year if she fails in even one subject

**Takes away funding powers from the proposed regulator and gives it powers to ensure academic quality and even close down bogus institutions.**

**Powers to enforce :**
- The Regulator will have powers to enforce compliance to the academic quality standards and will have the power to order closure of sub-standard and bogus institutions. Non-compliance could result in fines or jail sentence.
- The HECI will also be backed with penal powers to order closure of institutes that violate set norms, imposition of fines where necessary and provisions for imprisonment up to three years where necessary.
- The Bill also provides for the penal provisions, which albeit graded in nature, will cover withdrawal of power to grant degrees/ diplomas or direction to cease academic operations and in cases of wilful non-compliance, may result in prosecution sanction as per the Criminal Procedure Code with a punishment of imprisonment for a term which may extend up to 3 years.
- HECI is tasked with the mandate of improving academic standards with specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers, promote use of educational technology etc.
- HECI will also set standards for opening and closure of institutes, provide greater flexibility and autonomy to institutes and lays standards for appointments to critical leadership positions at institutions across spectrums and even for those falling under state laws.
- The UGC and its regulatory regime have been criticised by a number of committees and their reports for its restrictive and suffocating processes. Several committees including the Prof Yash Pal committee and the National Knowledge Commission have recommended a single education regulator to rid higher education of red tape and lethargy.

**Other provisions in the bill are:-**
- It will also have the powers to revoke authorization granting to a higher education institution where there is a case of wilful or continuous default in compliance with the norms / regulations.
- It will also have the power to recommend closure of institutions which fail to adhere to minimum standards without affecting students interest.
- The Commission will encourage higher education institutions to formulate a Code of Good Practices covering promotion of research, teaching and learning.
- The Commission will also specify norms and processes for fixing of fee chargeable by higher education institutions and advice the Central Government or the State Governments, as the case may be, regarding steps to be taken for making education affordable to all
The Commission will monitor, through a national data base, all matters covering the development of emerging fields of knowledge and balanced growth of higher education institutions in all spheres and specially in promotion of academic quality in higher education.

Criticism:-

- The HECI will be bestowed with **comprehensive and overriding powers**, including ordering the closure of institutions, in all academic and related matters while the power lies with the MHRD.
- While the proposed Bill seeks to empower the HECI with all academic functions, **its role vis-à-vis professional bodies is unclear**.
- Whether **depriving the HECI completely of funding functions** will affect its efficacy and stature in discharging its onerous responsibility remains a major question.
- There are questions about **how effective the role of the HECI would be to regulate state institutions with less than inadequate central funding merits serious attention**.

No clarity about members role:-

- The secretary of the HECI will be an officer of the rank of joint secretary and above or a reputed academic and will serve as its member-secretary. Whether they have voting rights or not is not clear.
- The secretary, higher education is envisaged to play many roles, serving as a member of the search-cum-selection committee of the chairperson and vice-chairperson, then processing their appointment as a key functionary of the government, and finally acting as a member of the HECI. **Such multiplicity of roles may create difficulties and conflict of interest**.
- Also, the power of the government to remove the chairperson and members is rather overwhelming and should be constrained.

By withdrawing financial powers from the regulator and handing them over to the central government, and by giving the HECI unilateral and absolute powers to authorize, monitor, shut down, and recommend disinvestment from Higher Educational Institutions, the **Draft Bill will expose higher education in the country to ideological manipulation, loss of much needed diversity as well as academic standards, fee hikes, and profiteering**.

Similar to UGC:-

- The new Act proposes that the chairperson of the HECI can be selected from among functionaries of Central and state governments. However, previously the chairman of the UGC was chosen from among persons who are not officers of the government or any state government in order to keep its independence. The new legislation even allows the chairperson to be an overseas citizen of India.
- The UGC was empowered to set minimum standards whereas the HECI has been empowered to lay down standards. **The critique says that this too hits at the idea of institutional autonomy as “the substantive struggle of universities** with the UGC has been in the last few years, to ensure that its minimum regulations do not achieve the status of maximality.

Teachers are being pushed out of the new HECI. The representation of teachers has been ominously reduced to just two.

Critics:-

- They are also concerned with Section 15.3(d) which could make funding for research, beholden to political priorities of parties in power, and subject to ideological manipulation.
- Section 15.3(g) and 15.4(f) grants the HECI the power to order closure of institutions which fail to adhere to minimum standards without affecting the student’s interest or fail to get accreditation within the specified period.
- The critique cautions against this power, as there are only a limited number of higher education institutions in India and arbitrary closure or threats can deprive students of the limited education that they can access.

Increase the interference of government in academic matters:-

- There is also the government shadow on HECI independence, in the form of an advisory council that will be chaired by the Union HRD minister and that will have the chiefs of the state higher education councils as members, as well as the top two HECI officials.
- Lack of clarity on who gets the UGC’s grant-giving powers.

Way forward:-
Despite some apparent infirmities, the proposed Bill shows the resolve of the government to move forward in reforming the sector.

Major issues like making the universities the hub of scientific and technological research, restoring the value of education in social sciences and the humanities, ensuring that poor and meritorious students can afford to be educated in subjects of their choice, improving the quality of instruction to enhance the employability of the students, addressing the concerns of faculty shortage, etc. require a quantum jump in allocation of public resources to this sector.

There is a need for rapidly expanding public expenditure.

The HECI system must make sure that existing non-autonomous institutions, too, are allowed to set their curriculum as they advance towards autonomy.

Though the Bill seems to implicitly open the door to foreign degree-granting institutions as long as they meet the specified norms, it will be best to make it explicit. This will eliminate the threat of legal challenges should a foreign institution wish to enter India.

The Bill must explicitly state that HECI will not write the curriculums of HEIs. Since it empowers the autonomous HEIs to write their own curriculums, other HEIs may be allowed to follow the curriculums of one or more of the latter.

The Bill must make explicit that the flexibility inherent in the credit system would allow institutions to align their systems to a three year bachelor’s degree as in the UK or a four year bachelor’s degree as in the US.

There is need for a clear statement in the Bill that once an HEI has been cleared for operation, quality standards will be enforced through accreditation rather than micro-management. The Bill also needs to spell out some details of the accreditation process.

The HRD ministry will also need to follow up with two complementary reforms.

A separate body is required to assume the function of providing education grants to HEIs. The decision to deny the grant giving power to the HECI is a good one but transparency requires that the function be vested in another independent body and not in the HRD ministry, which is principally a policy making body.

The HRD ministry must also create a national research foundation. This foundation must be adequately funded and charged with the responsibility to make research a central feature of leading universities.

Q) It is said that National Health Policy takes a road less travelled and envisions a huge strategic role for the private sector. Examine how and discuss its merits?(250 words)

Why this question
The article gives an in-depth analysis of the role of private sector envisioned in NHP 2017 alongwith debating its merit, highlights challenges therein and discusses a future strategy. NHP is quite important from mains point of view and to prepare health related topics of GS2 and GS3. This article gives a good overview of NHP.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to highlight the role of private sector in healthcare envisioned by NHP, why such a shift in provisioning of healthcare is sought to be undertaken (will form part of the merits). Thereafter we need to focus on what challenges are there. Towards the end our answer should focus on discussing how synergies of private and public healthcare be tapped so as to deliver optimum results.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention that despite sustained focus of successive governments in improving health outcomes, the results have not forthcoming which led to a paradigm shift in NHP 2017, with greater role expected of private sector.

Body

- Discuss what role is envisaged of the private sector as per NHP. Discuss the concept of strategic purchasing.
- Discuss in detail why such a shift took place. You will find the reasons mentioned in the shared link under the heading “political economy of the NHP”. The reasons being increased demand of secondary and tertiary healthcare, lack of capacity of public sector to fulfill such demands in light of fiscal constraints etc
- Highlight the advantages of such a strategy if it works well
Discuss the challenges therein – information asymmetry, lack of penetration of private healthcare in vulnerable areas etc.

Conclusion – Highlight how the synergy of the two can be leveraged to achieve better health outcomes.

Background:-

- The National Health Policy, 2017 seeks to reach everyone in a comprehensive integrated way to move towards wellness. It aims at achieving universal health coverage and delivering quality health care services to all at affordable cost.
- NHP reckons four major contextual changes that perhaps motivated the overall policy approach:-
  - (i) increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and certain infectious diseases
  - (ii) robust growth of healthcare industry
  - (iii) high incidence of catastrophic healthcare spending by households
  - (iv) an enhanced growth-enabled fiscal capacity of India.

Strategic role of private sector :-

- NHP, 2017 advocates a positive and proactive engagement with the private sector for critical gap filling towards achieving national goals. It envisages private sector collaboration for strategic purchasing, capacity building, skill development programmes, awareness generation, developing sustainable networks for community to strengthen mental health services, and disaster management.
- The policy also advocates financial and non-incentives for encouraging the private sector participation.
- Strategic purchasing:
  - The NHP embraces the internationally recommended tool of strategic purchasing to promote cooperation between the public and private sectors for healthcare development in India.
  - NHP, 2017 is singularly optimistic about the engagement of the private sector on a commercial basis (contracting, strategic purchasing) as well as on non-profit or pro bono basis.
  - NHP identifies clinical establishments, professional and technical education, food safety, medical technologies, medical products, clinical trials, research and implementation of health legislations as important areas for regulation.

Merits:-

- Private sector hospitals are now preferred:-
  - With changing quality benchmarks, and for other obvious reasons, private sector hospitals are now increasingly preferred by individuals for healthcare services. The NHP, therefore, approaches healthcare from an industry perspective and aims to accommodate concerns of health sector investments, efficiency and growth.
  - Contracting of health services from the private sector may be inevitable in the short term, given that about 70% of all outpatient care and 60% of inpatient treatments are provided by it.
  - Revenue- and resource-sharing models between district hospitals and private sector can be a reasonable alternative but will necessitate management reforms in the public sector. Given the successful implementation of the NRHM, the central government can be optimistic about the implementation of such reforms for public sector strengthening across states.
  - People have preferred private clinics because of better service delivery, accessibility and sanitation. People themselves are opting for private healthcare.
  - There is also increased demand for secondary and tertiary healthcare which can be fulfilled by private sector alone.
  - Lack of capacity of public sector to fulfill such demands in light of fiscal constraints etc.

Issues:-

- The core idea of strategic purchasing from the private sector is relevant, but can be incompatible with the existence of a robust public sector, particularly when reforms for enhancing the competitiveness of the public sector are undermined.
- Past failures of the private sector to align with national objectives remain a prominent concern and it seems unlikely that the private sector can overcome the persistent public sector problems of human resource shortages in underserved areas.
The private sector may also undermine the components of disease prevention and health promotion. Equity gains with greater private sector engagement are now highly dependent on access to pro-poor health financing mechanisms. This is a major weakness of the Indian health system and the NHP could have provided effective guidance and a road map for increasing public expenditure to 2.5% of GDP and its utilisation. There is lack of penetration of private healthcare in vulnerable areas. Out pocket expenditure would only increase if focus is on private healthcare.

Way forward:-
- NHP essentially needs to invoke the axiom of efficiency to promote genuine competition between public and private sectors.
- Both private and public sectors should be allowed to compete for human resources as well as capital investments.
- Competition may also be facilitated to allow inter-sectoral cooperation, such that services presently unavailable in one sector can be accessed via others. This is also a form of strategic purchasing, but more bidirectional in nature.
- Strategic purchasing can be of greater relevance if it is accompanied by technical and policy deliberations to promote competition and a bidirectional relationship.

Q) Critically examine the potential of HECI Bill in improving the status of higher education in India?(250 words)

Why this question
The article talks about how the changes brought about by HECI Bill hardly resolves the issues faced by the higher education institutes in the country. Critical analysis of the bill this becomes necessary.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to first elaborate on the provisions of the bill likely to have an impact on the status of higher education institutes in the country. Thereafter we have to assess the pros and cons of the changes and present our view.

Directive word
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Give details of the bill along with its aim.
Body
- Discuss the provisions of the bill in detail that would impact the higher education institutes – impact on autonomy, finance, regulatory architecture etc
- Discuss the positives that the proposed move will have – failure of UGC, poor status of Indian universities, lack of uniform standards, infrastructure etc. Discuss how the Bill hopes to improve situation – “less government and more government”; “separation of grant function”; “End of inspection Raj”; “Focus of academic quality”; and “Powers to Enforce”
- Discuss the cons of such a move as highlighted in the article
Conclusion – Based on arguments made above, give a fair and balanced conclusion and the way forward.

Background:-
- Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act) Bill 2018 which seeks to repeal UGC Act and provides for setting up of Higher Education Commission of India has been prepared by the Ministry of HRD and placed in public domain for comments and suggestions recently.
- Government recently announced a complete overhaul of the apex higher education regulator- University Grants Commission, repeal of the UGC Act, 1951 and a fresh legislation to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

Higher education commission of India:-
Focus of Higher Education Commission of India will be on improving academic standards and the quality of Higher Education.

**Why it is a welcome move in reforming higher education:**

- **Better administration:**
  - Centre has embarked on a process of reform of the regulatory agencies for better administration of the higher education sector. In fulfilment of the above, draft Act is in accordance with the commitment of Government for reforming the regulatory systems that provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth of the education system which provides greater opportunities to the Indian students at more affordable cost.

- **Less Government and more Governance:**
  - Downsizing the scope of the Regulator. No more interference in the management issues of the educational institutions.
  - *Key thrust areas of the HECI will be downsizing over governance of institutions, bring in disclosure based regulatory regime and powers of enforcement of regulations.*

- **Separation of grant functions:**
  - The grant functions would be carried out by the HRD Ministry, and the HECI would focus only on academic matters.

- **End of Inspection Raj:**
  - Regulation is done through transparent public disclosures, merit-based decision making on matters regarding standards and quality in higher education

- **Focus on academic quality:**
  - HECI is tasked with the mandate of improving academic standards with specific focus on learning outcomes, evaluation of academic performance by institutions, mentoring of institutions, training of teachers, promote use of educational technology etc.
  - It will develop norms for setting standards for opening and closure of institutions, provide for greater flexibility and autonomy to institutions, lay standards for appointments to critical leadership positions at the institutional level irrespective of University started under any Law (including State Law)
  - The Commission shall have the power to grant authorization for starting of academic operations on the basis of their compliance with norms of academic quality.

- **Takes away funding powers from the proposed regulator and gives it powers to ensure academic quality and even close down bogus institutions.**

- **Powers to enforce:**
  - The Regulator will have powers to enforce compliance to the academic quality standards and will have the power to order closure of sub-standard and bogus institutions. Non-compliance could result in fines or jail sentence.
  - The HECI will also be backed with penal powers to order closure of institutes that violate set norms, imposition of fines where necessary and provisions for imprisonment up to three years where necessary.
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- HECI will also set standards for opening and closure of institutes, **provide greater flexibility and autonomy to institutes** and lays standards for appointments to critical leadership positions at institutions across spectrums and even for those falling under state laws.

- The UGC and its regulatory regime have been criticised by a number of committees and their reports for its restrictive and suffocating processes. **Several committees including the Prof Yash Pal committee and the National Knowledge Commission have recommended a single education regulator to rid higher education of red tape and lethargy.**
Other provisions in the bill are:-

- It will also have the powers to revoke authorization granting to a higher education institution where there is a case of wilful or continuous default in compliance with the norms / regulations.
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- The Commission will encourage higher education institutions to formulate a Code of Good Practices covering promotion of research, teaching and learning.
- The Commission will also specify norms and processes for fixing of fee chargeable by higher education institutions and advice the Central Government or the State Governments, as the case may be, regarding steps to be taken for making education affordable to all.
- The Commission will monitor, through a national data base, all matters covering the development of emerging fields of knowledge and balanced growth of higher education institutions in all spheres and specially in promotion of academic quality in higher education.

- The HECl will be bestowed with comprehensive and overriding powers, including ordering the closure of institutions, in all academic and related matters while the power lies with the MHRD.
- While the proposed Bill seeks to empower the HECl with all academic functions, its role vis-à-vis professional bodies is unclear.
- Whether depriving the HECl completely of funding functions will affect its efficacy and stature in discharging its onerous responsibility remains a major question.
- There are questions about how effective the role of the HECl would be to regulate state institutions with less than inadequate central funding merits serious attention.

No clarity about members role:-

- The secretary of the HECl will be an officer of the rank of joint secretary and above or a reputed academic and will serve as its member-secretary. Whether they have voting rights or not is not clear.
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- Also, the power of the government to remove the chairperson and members is rather overwhelming and should be constrained.

- By withdrawing financial powers from the regulator and handing them over to the central government, and by giving the HECl unilateral and absolute powers to authorize, monitor, shut down, and recommend disinvestment from Higher Educational Institutions, the Draft Bill will expose higher education in the country to ideological manipulation, loss of much needed diversity as well as academic standards, fee hikes, and profiteering.

Similar to UGC:-

- The new Act proposes that the chairperson of the HECl can be selected from among functionaries of Central and state governments. However, previously the chairman of the UGC was chosen from among persons who are not officers of the government or any state government in order to keep its independence. The new legislation even allows the chairperson to be an overseas citizen of India.

- The UGC was empowered to set minimum standards whereas the HECl has been empowered to lay down standards. The critique says that this too hits at the idea of institutional autonomy as “the substantive struggle of universities” with the UGC has been in the last few years, to ensure that its minimum regulations do not achieve the status of maximality.

- Teachers are being pushed out of the new HECl. The representation of teachers has been ominously reduced to just two.

Critics:-

- They are also concerned with Section 15.3(d) which could make funding for research, beholden to political priorities of parties in power, and subject to ideological manipulation.
- Section 15.3(g) and 15.4(f) grants the HECl the power to order closure of institutions which fail to adhere to minimum standards without affecting the student’s interest or fail to get accreditation within the specified period.
The critique cautions against this power, as there are only a limited number of higher education institutions in India and arbitrary closure or threats can deprive students of the limited education that they can access.

- They are of the opinion that setting up of the new regulator is of no use as it will increase the interference of government in academic matters.

Way forward:
- Despite some apparent infirmities, the proposed Bill shows the resolve of the government to move forward in reforming the sector.
- Major issues like making the universities the hub of scientific and technological research, restoring the value of education in social sciences and the humanities, ensuring that poor and meritorious students can afford to be educated in subjects of their choice, improving the quality of instruction to enhance the employability of the students, addressing the concerns of faculty shortage, etc. require a quantum jump in allocation of public resources to this sector.
- There is a need for rapidly expanding public expenditure.

Conclusion:
- India's higher education needed reforms immediately and higher education commission is the step in the right direction.

Q) That Leprosy is still a major public health problem draws into question the ethical priorities of our national and state health policies and their implementation. Critically analyze our fight against leprosy. (250 words)

Why this question
The article highlights the shortcomings in our fight against leprosy, which we often assume is a challenge that has been dealt with. The article deals with a major health crisis that impacts the most vulnerable section of our society and hence is important.

Key demand of the question
The question makes a sad comment on status quo that its shameful that we have not been able to deal with the leprosy challenge. We need to mention what the status quo is which reflects the poor state of affairs, the steps taken so far in dealing with leprosy, how they have managed to improve the situation somewhat, the new challenges that have arisen, and our view on tackling the leprosy problem.

Directive word
Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When critically is suffixed, you have to point out the pros and cons along with a fair and balanced opinion.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Discuss the status quo with respect to leprosy challenge and highlight the observation mentioned in the article regarding the growing incident of leprosy cases amongst the socially marginalized.

Body
- Discuss the steps taken by the government such as the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, National Health Policy, multi drug therapy treatments etc
- Discuss the results of such intervention. Highlight that incidents did go down.
- Highlight that despite government’s focus, problems are many. Highlight the problems faced by leprosy patients, along with the deficiencies in government’s strategy.
- Discuss what steps should be taken – special campaigns in disease prone areas and communities, counselling centres, increased focus etc

Conclusion – Mention a fair and balanced view on India’s strategy so far and emphasize that leprosy’s persistence reflects poorly on a country aspiring to become a world power.

Background:
- Leprosy is one of the world's oldest diseases with India accounting for over 60% of the annual new cases of leprosy.
- Official data says that the number of new Leprosy cases detected during 2016-17 is around 140000 and the prevalence rate per 10000 population as on March 2017 for India is 0.66, it is established that the number underestimates the real Leprosy burden.
- In 2017, India along with Brazil and Indonesia are the only countries where more than 10000 new cases are reported per year.

**National and state health policies:**
- India is also known to have had several discriminatory laws against persons affected by Leprosy. One of the oldest laws *The Lepers Act of 1898*, which sanctioned the arrest and segregation of persons affected by leprosy into ‘leper asylums’ was repealed only as late as in May 2016
  - Before the national level repealment, even though 12 states and five union territories of India had abandoned its application within their respective jurisdictions, it continued to be in force in the remaining states and union territories.
- The National Health Policy 2017 (NHP) has elimination of Leprosy as a national level target.
- Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) is being implemented by the Union Health Ministry.
- SPARSH Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC) was launched in January 2017 to promote awareness and address the issues of stigma and discrimination.

**National leprosy eradication programme:**
- In India, the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) is the centrally sponsored health scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- While the NLEP strategies and plans are formulated centrally, the programme is implemented by states and union territories (UTs).
- The programme is also supported by WHO, ILEP, and few other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

**Performance:**
- India has succeeded in bringing the national prevalence down to elimination as a public health problem of less than 1/10,000 in December 2005 and even further down to 0.66/10,000 in 2016.
- In addition to achieving the national elimination target by the end of 2005, **India by the end of March 2011–2012 succeeded in achieving elimination at the state level in 34 states/UTs** out of the total of 36 states/UTs.
- By the end of March 2016, 551 districts out of the total 669 in districts, in India had a prevalence of <1/10,000 population which is the target of elimination as a public health problem.
- To address the challenges NLEP advocated a three-pronged approach of
  - Leprosy case detection campaign (LCDC) in highly endemic districts
  - Focused leprosy awareness campaign using ASHA and multipurpose health workers in Hot Spots where new cases with Grade 2 Disability (G2D) are detected
  - Area-specific plans for case detection in hard to reach areas.
- By the end of year 2016 a total of 163 highly endemic districts, which reported a prevalence rate >1/10,000 population in any of the last 3 years across 20 states/UTs, were identified for conducting case detection campaigns by NLEP.
- The special emphasis on women, children, and those with disabilities is expected to flush out more hidden cases. In addition to continuing to administer MDT to patients, new preventive approaches are being considered to break the chain of transmission and reach zero disease status.

**NLEP has introduced the Mycobacterium Indicus Prani(MiP) vaccine in a project mode in India from the year 2016.** MIP vaccine has been shown to have both immunotherapeutic and immunoprophylactic effects in multibacillary leprosy patients and their contacts in both hospital and population-based trials.

**Nikusht, a web-based reporting system for leprosy**
- For the ease of reporting and data management of registered leprosy cases, NLEP has launched Nikusht, a web-based reporting system in India
- In addition, Nikushth will be helpful in keeping track of all the activities being implemented under the NLEP. NLEP is also planning to develop online training software for leprosy workers.

**Implementation issues:**
The fact remains that India continues to account for 60% of new cases reported globally each year and is among the 22 global priority countries that contribute 95% of world numbers of leprosy warranting a sustained effort to bring the numbers down.

NLEP annual reports of the last 4 years have consistently observed that the four states/UTs (Orissa, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Lakshadweep) which achieved elimination earlier in 2011–2012, have shown a prevalence of >1 per 10,000 population, which is a matter of concern for the programme.

In addition, although the average national child leprosy rate is approximately 9%, the proportion of child cases was more than 10% of new cases detected in eleven states/UTs of India, with 6 of them (Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Dadra & Nagar haveli, Bihar, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh) showing very high rates ranging from 14% to 23%.

Lack of efficient reporting:-
- Major cause of hidden cases is low voluntary reporting in the community due to a lack of awareness as well as the continuing fear, stigma, and discrimination against leprosy.

No focus on elimination:-
- Leprosy eradication from community appears to have been equated with the reaching of the WHO-defined target of elimination as a public health problem (prevalence of <1 per 10,000 population), which India reached by the end of 2005.
- In addition, the use of term “elimination” also leads to confusion among general public and to many even in the medical profession.

Misplacement of priorities :-
- To assist public health initiatives for HIV/AIDS in 1990’s leprosy health workers were made multipurpose workers with additional responsibilities of HIV and tuberculosis control.

Lack of funding :-
- Over the next decade, there was reallocation of resources and a gradual decline in funding for leprosy-related programmes.

Lack of monitoring:-
- A study done in Odisha on the effects of integration of leprosy in to primary health care, highlighted the need for effective monitoring and evaluation of the integration process.
- It concluded that inadequate monitoring could lead to a reduction in early diagnosis, a delay in initiation of MDT, and an increase in disability rates, which in turn could reverse some of the programme's achievements.

Unfortunately, the WHO elimination target has no epidemiological or scientific basis or even significance to support the gradual decline or disappearance of the remaining cases of leprosy once it was achieved.
- Doing away with skin smear services, rapid merging of leprosy services into the general medical health services, efforts towards further reducing the duration of therapy, and reduced attention to research and funding of leprosy programme in general, are some of the direct results of such false interpretation.

Not eliminated yet:-
- India officially eliminated Leprosy in 2005 by bringing the Prevalence Rate below 1/10000 at the national level. However, the National Health Policy 2017 (NHP), which will guide the health policy direction of the country over the next decade or so, still has elimination of Leprosy as a national level target.

Adivasi population:-
- The percentage of new Leprosy patients in India belonging to the Adivasi community is 18.8% much more than their proportion in the Indian population- and that proportion is fast increasing.

Lack of awareness, myths, socio-cultural beliefs, and the stigma attached to leprosy are the most pressing problems before public health activists today.

Discrimination:-
- Persons affected by leprosy continue to face discrimination not only from the larger society but also the disability sector itself.
- Leprosy causes a negative impact on children’s life, study and work.
- Many States in India prohibit leprosy patients from running in local elections and deny them employment privileges and benefits.
• Rampant stigma against the disease prevents patients from seeking medical treatment.

**Fundamental rights violated:**

• There are currently 119 provisions across various Acts passed by the Central and State governments that discriminate against people affected by leprosy (PAL). These 119 provisions not only violate the Rights of Person with Disabilities Act 2016, but also Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

**Way forward:**

• Basic investigations such as skin smear services need to be reintroduced in the leprosy programme of India, as this bacteriological test is often found as useful as advanced PCR techniques.
  - It may be learnt that re-introduction of bacteriological diagnosis indeed has changed the diagnostic landscape of tuberculosis, facilitating better case detection and control.

• There is need for wider awareness about the signs and symptoms of leprosy and reactions among general health care staff as well as in the community to promote self-reporting, as well as early diagnosis and proper management of the disease and its complications in an integrated setting.

• There is a need to expand the repertoire of drugs to treat Clinical and laboratory studies suggest the emergence of secondary drug resistance in treated/relapsed patients to dapsone, and rifampicin.

• It is also important to recognize that leprosy can be associated with other comorbidities such as tuberculosis, HIV, and diabetes which could affect clinical manifestations and complications hence, therapeutic management strategies need to be tailored to such situations.

• Overall lack of a comprehensive approach towards battling the disease, which requires collaboration between different ministries and sometimes between countries.

• The Supreme Court asked the Centre, states and Union Territories to undertake a campaign to spread awareness about the curability of leprosy so that those suffering from it are not discriminated.
  - It recommended for repealing archaic provisions from 119 statutes that stigmatise leprosy patients.
  - No government hospital shall decline treatment to leprosy patients.

• To reduce the burden, it is important to develop a multi-pronged approach that includes public education campaign, sustainable livelihood programmes, skill training workshops and generate employment, identify interventions to dispel stigma and mainstream the affected people.

• Continued training of medical officers, nurses, physiotherapists, and paramedical workers about quality diagnosis and treatment of leprosy must also be given prime focus.

• Public education on the fact that leprosy can be cured and is not to be feared is imperative.

**Conclusion:**

• As suggested in the WHO strategy document for year 2016–2020, it is only by including and assigning an active role to this vast pool of dermatologists in the leprosy programme, who are well equipped to manage leprosy, that India can truly aspire to eradicate leprosy.

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**Topic – Issues relating to poverty and hunger.**

**Q)** A recent Brookings study claims that India no longer houses the largest number of poor. The credit goes to the efforts of successive governments in rolling out poverty alleviation schemes. Discuss the evolution of poverty alleviation schemes in India?(250 words)

**Why this question**

The findings of the Brookings report is a good opportunity to discuss how the poverty alleviation programmes have evolved in their design and implementation over time. The article discusses the evolution of schemes and highlights that over time incremental improvements have indeed been made. Poverty is an important topic from mains perspective and hence this topic is important.

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to chart a journey of how the poverty alleviation programmes have evolved over time in their design, focus, implementation etc.

**Directive word**

Discuss – Here your answer should explain what steps were taken in distinct phases, their rationale and discuss the impact.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Give details of the Brookings report and the status of poverty in India.
Body

- Explain that since independence there has been sustained focus on eliminating poverty. In recent years, India is a party to SDG under which one of the target is ending poverty and hence several steps are being taken
- Explain the various phases
  - Phase 1: agriculture as the prime moving force in 1st and 2nd plan and agricultural revolution thereafter
  - Phase 2: 3rd FYP onwards, explicit commitment to ending poverty. Food for work, Rural Landless employment guarantee programme
  - Phase 3 – NREGA, National Food Security Act,
  - Others including those affecting food and nutrition, infrastructure creation, pensions etc
  - Examine the impact of these schemes too
- Mention that most poverty alleviation programmes implemented are based on the perspective of the Five Year Plans were based on expanding self employment programmes and wage employment programmes. Mention that attempts have also been made to target farm sector specifically by providing them with infrastructure, insurance etc to improve their financial conditions

Conclusion – Highlight the common threat that binds them and the way forward to put ourselves in “No Extreme poverty” grouping.

Background:-

- The complex nature of poverty in India may be related with the vulnerability, natural adversities, shocks and uncertainties coupled with inequality and unemployment. It is resulting in uninsured risks of its citizen.
- Relevant policies and programmes for poverty eradication are the ways to tackle the problem of poverty. The equity through redistribution, development and support has been the thrust areas in making policies and programmes.
- Rural poverty and backwardness of Indian villages has been the two connotations of the same reality. Thus, bulk of the efforts made by the Indian government through rural development directly or indirectly come under poverty eradication interventions.
- Poverty eradication strategies thus comprise of a wide range of programmes of rural development, poverty alleviation and income and employment generation.
- The efforts made by the government has led to India not being at the top with the largest poor population.

Evolution of poverty alleviation programmes:-

- Economic growth with a focus on employment generating sectors has been a key element of the strategy for poverty reduction along with emphasis laid on provision of basic minimum services like health, education, water supply, sanitation, etc. This strategy has been combined with a third element of directly targeting the poor through anti poverty programmes
- Rural development has traditionally been associated with agriculture, thus employment generation coupled with development of agriculture was focused in the 1960s.
  - The Community development Programme (CDP) was introduced in 1952 with securing total development of the material resources of the rural areas, to raise the level of the rural poor through number of associated programmes and to develop local leadership and self-governing institutions as its objective.
  - PMKVY has been launched to irrigate cultivated land for better production.
  - Soil Health Card, use of latest technology, accurate prediction of monsoon all are directly or indirectly link to increase agricultural productivity.
- During the Fourth Five Year Plan period (1969-74), approach to planning was modified and special attention was paid to alleviation of poverty, especially rural poverty and to strengthen rural infrastructure.
  - Broad objectives of the programmes targeting such sections of population and backward/undeveloped areas aimed at creation of infrastructure, productive assets and development of skills.
  - Thus, the weaker section oriented, area specific and agro-based programmes like Intensive Agricultural Areas Development Programme (IAADP) 1969-70, Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) 1971-72, Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) 1973-74, Command Area Development Programme (CADP) 1974-75, Tribal Area Development Programme (TADP) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) 1976-77 were introduced.
The IRDP, which aimed at a set of allied schemes, at assisting households below the poverty line with loans and subsidies for asset creation, training and infusion of technology. The IRDP was extended on a nationwide scale in 1980.

**Wage employment programmes were given importance in the late 1970s, 1980s and in the 1990s.**

- Wage Employment Programmes (WEPs) were introduced to generate employment quickly and directly on one hand, and on the other, to create productive assets to pace the process of development and also to reduce poverty.

**Self employment-**

- Central government led wage employment scheme e.g. SGRY- did incorporate the idea of democratic decentralization and participation of the village poor in planning
- The main early antecedents of SGRY were: the Food for Work (FFW) programme, begun in 1977; the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), initiated in 1980; and the Rural Landless Guarantee Scheme (RLGS), started in 1983.
  - Food for Work Programme (renamed the National Rural Employment Programme) of 1977 attempted creating additional employment in rural areas using surplus food grains available as buffer stock as wages. That failed because of inadequate stocks, delayed payments and overcrowding at fair price shops.
  - The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEG) followed in 1983, to improve the scheme through guaranteed employment to at least one member of every landless household for up to 100 days a year.
- The Million Wells Scheme of 1988–89 attempted to provide open irrigation wells free of cost to poor, small and marginal farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and freed bonded labour.
- In April 1989, NREP and RLGS were amalgamated into the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), and even the nominal work guarantee attached to the RLEG was omitted. The emphasis was on creating community assets, notably roads and buildings.
- In April 1999, the JRY was modified as the Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (JGSY). The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), launched in 1993, was targeted on ‘backward’ blocks located in drought-prone, desert, tribal and hill areas.
- Existing schemes like MGNREGA became more efficient using technology (access to data), identity (Aadhaar) and financial inclusion (Jan Dhan Scheme).

**Food security programmes that intend to meet the very basic need of access to food like PDS.**

- Government has launched Mid Day Meal scheme to feed children.
- Annapurna scheme provides food to helpless senior citizens.
- National food security act 2013 aims to provide food grains at subsidized rate.

**Social security programmes** (like National Social Assistance Programme or National Family Benefit Scheme) that are meant to provide security and support for those who are at the bottom of the BPL facing destitution and desertion.

Thus, above programmes by successive governments helped to reduce poverty in India

**Challenges:-**

- India is still far from achieving SDG 1.
- Despite rapid growth and development, an unacceptably high proportion of our population continues to suffer from severe and multidimensional deprivation.
- While a large number of poverty alleviation programmes have been initiated, they function in silos. There is **no systematic attempt to identify people who are in poverty**, determine their needs, address them and enable them to move above the poverty line.
- The **resources allocated to anti-poverty programmes are inadequate** and there is a tacit understanding that targets will be curtailed according to fund availability. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (mgnrega) does not provide the guaranteed 100 days of work in many states.
- There is **no method to ensure that programmes reach everybody they are meant for**.
- **Lack of proper implementation and right targeting**
- There has been a **lot of overlapping of schemes**.
- Every year a huge number is added to the population pool of the country. **This renders the scheme ineffective.**
Way forward:-

- To address poverty effectively, people who formulate alleviation programmes need to understand and address chronic poverty and the dynamics of poverty.
- Casual agricultural labour is the largest group that is stuck in poverty, as per data from the socioeconomic caste census. **These are the “working poor”, for whom the State has not been able to secure the right to an adequate means of livelihood. This must be addressed.**
- There is a geographical dimension to poverty i.e., concentration of poverty in certain parts of the country. **So there should be renewed focus on the poorest districts: to universalise access in these areas and applying indicators that assess performance-based improvement of the most vulnerable.**
- Poverty has persisted among certain marginalised groups, especially among the Scheduled Tribes. Hence, **the inclusion of tribal girls or women in programmes in the poorest blocks and villages should be used as an indicator of performance.**

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

**Q) Technology is reshaping the way government is designing and implementing programmes in India. Discuss. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
Use and adoption of technology has been consistently growing at a very fast pace across all sectors including governance and administration. There have been various initiatives on part of the government to harness technology, in designing and implementing various development programmes, whose success is vital for India to achieve SDGs and become a developed nation.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to write in detail about all such initiatives of the GoI (and also of state govts. If there are any worth mentioning), which are harnessing technology as a tool to improved governance. We have to specifically discuss those programmes which are aiding the government in designing and implementing of various development programmes.

**Directive word**
Discuss- this is an all encompassing directive which mandates us to write at length about the key demand of the question.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – write a few lines about why use of technology in the arena of governance and service delivery is important, what benefits it brings etc.

**Body**– Discuss in points about the initiatives of the government, based on technology, in designing and implementing of various developmental programmes in India.
E.g DBT; JAM; PFMS; Government e-marketplace; UPI and BBPS; GST etc.
Here the names of the schemes is not as important as the facts depicting achievements; positive effects on economy, society and their further potential. So try to get as much factual facts from the article and incorporate them in your answer.

**Conclusion**- Based on your discussion form a fair and a balanced opinion on the issue write in a few lines about the need to expand and adopt technologies like AI, blockchain technology etc.

**Introduction**
- The world is getting digitised at a rapid pace in all aspects. This digitisation at unprecedented levels is now being termed as the 4th Industrial Revolution.

**Technology is reshaping the way government is designing and implementing programmes:-**
- The use of technology has brought in **better systems, greater efficiency** and is beginning to have a profound impact on governance.
  - The government launched several e-governance and digitisation programmes which were all later brought into the fold of “Digital India” programme.
India has combined the use of biometric identifiers and financial inclusion for effectiveness in social benefits and to reduce the vast number of illegitimate beneficiaries under welfare programmes.

- **Leading the Way in Financial Inclusion**
  - The JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity has been the single largest factor for expansion of financial inclusion.
  - According to the Global Findex Report 2017 released by World Bank, 55% of all bank accounts created during 2014-17 were opened in India.
  - Through the Jan Dhan Yojana, which has led to opening of more than 31 crore new bank accounts since 2014, the proportion of Indian adults with bank accounts has increased from 53% in 2014 to 80% in 2017.

- **Public Finance and Public Procurement going Digital**
  - The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) has led to the creation of a financial management platform for all plan schemes, a database of all recipient agencies, integration with core banking solution of banks, integration of state treasurers and tracking of fund flow to the lowest tier of implementation of plan schemes on real time basis.
  - PFMS has also led to just-in-time release of funds and efficient management in the use of funds.
  - In 2016, Government e-Marketplace (GeM) was launched for single window online procurement that enables direct purchase, e-bidding, reverse e-auctions, online registrations facilities for government users, product sellers and service providers and provides a market place for government purchase.

- **Pioneers in Innovate Consumer Payments**
  - Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) have triggered a plethora of private sector-innovated apps, which have significantly eased citizens’ bill payments towards services provided by the government.
  - Digital payment transactions have now become extremely simple due to Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) UPI.
  - In 2017-18, India has seen over a billion digital payment transactions in volume and over a trillion rupees in value.

- **Digital Transaction**
  - Digitalisation of collection of direct taxes has led to huge benefits. The income tax received in FY 17-18 saw a growth of 26%.
  - The rollout of GST has resulted in a 50% increase in unique indirect tax payers leading to a radical formalisation of the economy.

- **Digital Monitoring**
  - In the Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) programme, PM has used technology to cut across departmental silos and geographical boundaries to ensure speedy project implementation.
  - The Ayushman Bharat Scheme will digitally link primary and community health centres with district hospitals. It will ensure healthcare through a paperless, cashless, portable scheme.

- **Impact of Frontier Technologies**
  - Analysis by Accenture reveals that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to add 15% of current GVA to India’s economy in 2035. India offers unique challenges that can be solved by application of AI.
  - NITI Ayog is mandated with the task of developing the National Programme on Artificial Intelligence. This is a qualitative effort to understand the technologies, their utility for the economy and governance, risks they pose and their future development trajectory.
  - The rapid adoption of digital technology across sectors is making things easy and eliminating all forms of human intervention. This has a major impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of governance.

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**Q) Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018 has been designed not to punish corrupt officials but to let them get away. Critically comment.(250 words)**

**Why this question**

Corruption in India is a fact of life. We witness it in our everyday lives and there is a dire need to reduce corruption in Indian society. Therefore it is important to discuss the desirability and effectiveness of any such attempt made in this direction.
**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to dig deep into the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill and bring out whether it will instead of punishing corrupt officials let them get away with corruption.

**Directive word**
Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon. Our opinion is to be based on a discussion which elucidates our arguments/facts/examples in its support.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- Write a few lines about the gravity and pervasiveness of corruption in Indian society- present a few statistics like our ranking in transparency international index etc.

**Body**-
- Discuss the salient provisions of the given bill and how they will affect the level of corruption. E.g bribe giver to be similarly placed and penalized as a bribe receiver- which will decrease reporting of corruption related cases and unnecessarily punish the victims of coercive corruption; extending the immunity of arrest to officers below that of Joint Secretary- which will extend the blanket immunity to bureaucrats; etc.
- Discuss how the bill is insufficient in dealing with corruption. E.g no special courts allocated; corruption and lack of transparency in election funding not addressed; no difference between collusive and coercive corruption etc.

**Conclusion**- Express your opinion as to what should be done in this regard- e.g bring out the role of technology and need to adopt best practices from other countries, empowering people and local government etc.

**Background:-**
- Parliament recently passed a bill to amend the 1988 anti-graft law by seeking to punish bribe- givers for the first time along with the bribe takers.

**Prevention of corruption bill 2018:-**
- Its aim was to enhance transparency and accountability of the government and also to make the provisions under the law stringent.
- **Provisions of the bill:-**
  - **Bribe giving:-**
    - Giving bribe is a specific and a direct offence.
    - It makes a provision for providing protection to ‘coerced’ (forced to pay a bribe) bribe-givers if the matter is reported to the concerned law enforcement agencies within a week.
    - The Bill has removed the provision which protected a bribe-giver from prosecution for statements made by him/her during corruption trials.
    - The Bill covers bribe-giving commercial organisations to be liable for punishment or prosecution. However, charitable institutions have been left out of its ambit.
  - **Imprisonment:-**
    - Those convicted of taking bribes can be imprisoned for three to seven years besides being fined under the provisions of the Bill.
    - Bribe-givers have also been included in the legislation for the first time and they can be punished with imprisonment for up to seven years, a fine or both.
    - The Bill also redefines criminal misconduct and will now only cover misappropriation of property and possession of disproportionate assets.
    - Under the amendment to the act, criminal misconduct will now include only two offences (already mentioned above):
      - Misappropriating of property entrusted to the banker
      - Amassing assets disproportionate to known sources of income
  - **The Bill proposes a ‘shield’ for government servants**, including those retired, from prosecution by making it mandatory for investigating agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation to take prior approval from a competent authority before conducting an enquiry against them.
    - However, it states that such permissions shall not be necessary for cases involving the arrest of a person on the spot on the charge of accepting or attempting to accept any undue advantage for himself or for any other person.
    - Another relief that the Bill provides to a public servant is that in any corruption case against him or her, the factor of “undue advantage” will have to be established.
• According to PRS Legislative Research, the Bill provides powers and procedures for the attachment and forfeiture of a corruption-accused public servant’s property.

• **Trial:**
  • According to the Bill, the trial in cases pertaining to the exchange of bribe and corruption should be completed within two years. Further, even after reasoned delays, the trial cannot exceed four years.

• **Forfeiture of property**
  • This section was introduced for the Special Court to attach and confiscate property, which was earlier done under a 1944 ordinance through civil courts.

• **Sanction for prosecution**
  • A sanction is needed for prosecuting former officials for offences done while in office. The decision on sanction request is to be made under three months which may be extended by a month. Centre may notify about the guidelines.

**Significance:**

• **Safeguards incorporated for Honest Officers**
  • Bill had many provisions to ensure speedy trial of corruption cases, besides providing protection to bureaucrats, even after their retirement, from malicious complaints.
  • Brought amendments so that honest performing officer does not get intimidated or his initiatives get killed.

• **Banking industry:**
  • Prevention of corruption bill (amendment) 2013 is a relief for bankers. Under it, bankers cannot be pulled under the corruption law unless they have accumulated assets more than what they could have obtained with their steady income, or have misappropriated assets entrusted to them.
  • The amendment comes at a time when the bankers are facing intense scrutiny for their lending decisions which have resulted in NPAs. Bankers have argued for a long time that they should not be prosecuted for lending decisions they made honestly.
  • The amendment to the anti-corruption law aims at helping the bankers take business decisions without fear.
  • The amendment also intends to empower the public to refuse to give a bribe with provisions of punishment for those who willingly offer bribe to the government officials.

• **Forfeiture of property is believed to help avoid a fresh procedure to confiscate property obtained through corruption** and to enable court conducting trial to do so itself.

• **Experts are also concerned about the pre-investigation approval rule.** Also, there was no similar provision in the Act, but a rule similar to it was struck down by Supreme Court.

• In a departure from the earlier anti-corruption law, the current law makes a distinction between collusive bribe givers and those who are forced to give.
Criticism:

- **Definition narrowed:**
  - The older law had a broad definition of a corrupt public official, defining it simply as any person who, while holding office as a public servant, obtains for any person any valuable thing or pecuniary advantage without any public interest.
  - The amendments narrow this definition significantly, by adding the test of intention, meaning prosecuting agencies will have to prove a conspiracy to carry out corrupt acts, rather than simply pointing to disproportionate assets or questionable actions.

- **The amendments seek to define criminal misconduct more narrowly, by including just two clauses:** if the public servant dishonestly or fraudulently misappropriates or otherwise converts for his own use any property entrusted to him or any property under his control as a public servant or allows any other person so to do or if he intentionally enriches himself illicitly during the period of his office.
  - This means that if a public servant cannot account for assets or property disproportionate to their known sources of income, then they are presumed to have intentionally enriched themselves illicitly. The changed clauses however, do not account for assets that have been illicitly procured for other people.

- **The amendment Bill has not mentioned who the concerned authority is for providing sanctions for investigating a public official.**

- **Some existing important provisions in the old law are being dropped.** These new terms will take decades for getting their interpretations from the Supreme Court.
  - **Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the existing Act have been deleted and replaced by completely new provisions,** with completely new definitions and words. It may now take decades before the new provisions are properly interpreted and settled by judiciary.

- **The provision under Section 13(1)(d) has been deleted.** This is the provision which is used for involving senior bureaucrats and ministers in corruption cases, since direct acceptance of bribe by them was generally not possible.
  - Further, the maximum punishment for this would now be only 7 years imprisonment as against the existing punishment for 10 years.

- **Prior permission of the Government or the competent authority will now be required for registering certain corruption offences.** Previously, the provision for taking such permission was quashed and set aside by the Supreme Court in 2014 in a writ petition.
  - This permission will give immunity to corrupt Government officers.
• Even sanction for prosecution of corrupt public servants would now be needed even after their retirement, giving them one more level of immunity or protection.
• The offence of disproportionate assets under Section 13(1)(e) has been made much more difficult to prove and has been diluted

Q) Discuss the debates surrounding section 13(1)(d)(iii) of PoCA, 1988? Examine the amendment to PoCA and discuss the impact that it will have on fight against corruption?(250 words)

Why this question
Section 13(1)(d)(iii) of PoCA has been a matter of debate since a long time with several committees such as 2nd ARC expressing its opinion. The spectre of 3C is closely related to this provision of the PoCA. The amendment is thus important and its impact on the fight against corruption needs to be analyzed.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to explain Section 13(1)(d)(iii) of the Constitution and discuss the debate surrounding mens rea as a result of this section. Explain why there have been calls for amendment and the arguments against it. Discuss the amendments that have taken place and the likely impact.

Directive word
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Explain that amendments have been made to one one the key provisions of PoCA. Explain what PoCA is

Body
• Discuss what is entailed in Section 13(1)(d)(iii). Examine the view of 2nd ARC that a distinction between collusive and coercive bribing. Give the potential harms such as risk of policy paralysis, unable to respond in a dynamic manner etc. Also bring out the other aspect that is how diluting the provision could have a detrimental effect in the fight against corruption. Highlight views of TSR Subramanian who has repeatedly said that the existing law offers adequate protection to honest officers.
• Discuss the amendments made to aforementioned section and insertion of Section 17A to say that even an inquiry/investigation cannot be carried out without the approval of the government. Discuss the impact it is likely to have on fight against corruption.

Conclusion – Give your view on the amendment and its impact on corruption.

Background:
• Parliament recently passed a bill to amend the 1988 anti-graft law by seeking to punish bribe-givers for the first time along with the bribe takers.

Debates surrounding section 13(1)(d)(iii) of PoCA:
• Section 13 (1) (d) (iii) of PCA 1988 held that if a person while holding office as a public servant, obtains for any person any valuable thing or pecuniary advantage without any public interest, then such an act amounts to criminal misconduct.
• The original Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) was drafted in such a manner that, often enough, the courts had no option but to hold officials guilty as in the case of former coal secretary in the coal scam case if it was found that the decision taken benefitted someone.
• This section of the PCA has been amended by saying that the public servant will be guilty of criminal misconduct if he intentionally enriches himself illicitly during the period of his office apart from proof of a direct bribe related to a clearance/permission, the fact that the official has assets disproportionate to his/her sources of income can be used to prove culpability.
• The present Bill removes this section and replaces it with a truncated definition of criminal misconduct by a public servant: fraudulent misappropriation of property under one’s control, and intentional, illicit enrichment and possession of disproportionate assets.
• Under this new definition, any benefit that is not economic, that is indirect or that cannot be proven to be intentional fraud will not be punished as corruption.
The Law Commission studied this proposed amendment carefully and disagreed with the narrow definition. Instead it proposed an even wider definition. The Law Commission suggested that any “undue advantage that results from “improper performance of public function or activity” of a public servant should be punishable.

The Existing Section 13(1)(d) is the only provision in the PCA which deals with corruption in high places where, typically, no under-the-table transactions take place.

The corrupt public servant usually receives illegal gratification in an extremely clandestine manner such as off-shore transactions or non-monetary considerations such as a better posting, post retirement benefits, etc.

All major scams, right from Bofors to the 2G scam, the Commonwealth Games scam, the coal scam, etc. became criminal offences by virtue of this section.

This is precisely why a section of bureaucrats has been demanding a deletion of this provision on the ground that it inhibits fearless decision-making that may involve exercise of discretion and bona fide errors.

S.R. Subramanian has repeatedly said that the existing law offers adequate protection to honest officers. It does not punish any bona fide difference or even mistake unless it is a clear abuse of power leading to financial or other gains.

The report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended a distinction between “coercive” and “collusive” bribing.

Amendments to POCA:-

Its aim was to enhance transparency and accountability of the government and also to make the provisions under the law stringent.

Provisions of the bill:-

Bribe giving:-

- Giving bribe is a specific and a direct offence.
- It makes a provision for providing protection to ‘coerced’ (forced to pay a bribe) bribe-givers if the matter is reported to the concerned law enforcement agencies within a week.
- The Bill has removed the provision which protected a bribe-giver from prosecution for statements made by him/her during corruption trials.
- The Bill covers bribe-giving commercial organisations to be liable for punishment or prosecution. However, charitable institutions have been left out of its ambit.

Imprisonment:-

- Those convicted of taking bribes can be imprisoned for three to seven years besides being fined under the provisions of the Bill.
- Bribe-givers have also been included in the legislation for the first time and they can be punished with imprisonment for up to seven years, a fine or both.

The Bill also redefines criminal misconduct and will now only cover misappropriation of property and possession of disproportionate assets.

- Under the amendment to the act, criminal misconduct will now include only two offences (already mentioned above):
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The Bill proposes a ‘shield’ for government servants, including those retired, from prosecution by making it mandatory for investigating agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation to take prior approval from a competent authority before conducting an enquiry against them.

- However, it states that such permissions shall not be necessary for cases involving the arrest of a person on the spot on the charge of accepting or attempting to accept any undue advantage for himself or for any other person.
- Another relief that the Bill provides to a public servant is that in any corruption case against him or her, the factor of “undue advantage” will have to be established.
- According to PRS Legislative Research, the Bill provides powers and procedures for the attachment and forfeiture of a corruption-accused public servant’s property.

Trial:-
According to the Bill, **the trial in cases pertaining to the exchange of bribe and corruption should be completed within two years.** Further, even after reasoned delays, the trial cannot exceed four years.

**Forfeiture of property**
- This section was introduced for the Special Court to attach and confiscate property, which was earlier done under a 1944 ordinance through civil courts.

**Sanction for prosecution**
- A sanction is needed for prosecuting former officials for offences done while in office. The decision on sanction request is to be made under three months which may be extended by a month. Centre may notify about the guidelines.

### Positive Impact:

**Safeguards incorporated for Honest Officers**
- Bill had many provisions to ensure speedy trial of corruption cases, besides providing protection to bureaucrats, even after their retirement, from malicious complaints.
- Brought amendments so that honest performing officer does not get intimidated or his initiatives get killed.

**Banking industry:-**
- Prevention of corruption bill (amendment) 2013 is a relief for bankers. Under it, bankers cannot be pulled under the corruption law unless they have accumulated assets more than what they could have obtained with their steady income, or have misappropriated assets entrusted to them.
- The amendment comes at a time when the bankers are facing intense scrutiny for their lending decisions which have resulted in NPAs. Bankers have argued for a long time that they should not be prosecuted for lending decisions they made honestly.
- The amendment to the anti-corruption law aims at helping the bankers take business decisions without fear.

- The amendment also intends to **empower the public** to refuse to give a bribe with provisions of punishment for those who willingly offer bribe to the government officials.

**Forfeiture of property is believed to help avoid a fresh procedure to confiscate property obtained through corruption** and to enable court conducting trial to do so itself.

**Experts are also concerned about the pre-investigation approval rule.** Also, there was no similar provision in the Act, but a rule similar to it was struck down by Supreme Court.

- In a departure from the earlier anti-corruption law, the current law makes a distinction between collusive bribe givers and those who are forced to give.
INSULATING PUBLIC SERVANTS: Lowdown on the significant changes in the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, adopted by both Houses of Parliament

**Bribery**
- **What is new**
  - Giving a bribe is now an offence, punishable by a 7-year prison term
  - Except when one is forced to give a bribe. But it should be reported to the police within 7 days
- **What it was**
  - Bribe is termed ‘undue advantage’, defined as ‘gratification other than pecuniary remuneration’
- **Protection**
  - Formerly available to officials of rank of joint secretary and above (before SC struck it down) is extended to all public servants

**Pre-investigation approval**
- **What is new**
  - Police officer cannot begin probe without prior approval of relevant authority or court (except when caught red-handed)
- **What it was**
  - No such provision in the Act, but a rule similar to it was struck down by Supreme Court

**Sanction for prosecution**
- **What is new**
  - Sanction needed for prosecuting former officials for offences done while in office
  - Centre may notify guidelines for sanction
- **What it was**
  - Decision on request for sanction within 3 months, which may be extended by a month

**Criminal misconduct**
- **What is new**
  - Only two forms of criminal misconduct
  - Misappropriation of property entrusted to public servant
- **What it was**
  - There is no limit to the amount

**Forfeiture of property**
- **What is new**
  - Section introduced for Special Court under this Act to attach and confiscate property
- **What it was**
  - This was not done under the Prevention of Corruption Act, but under a 1944 ordinance through civil courts

Compiled by K. Venkataramanan

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**Negative impact:**

- **The Bill serves to dilute and defeat the whole point of anti-corruption legislation in more ways than one.**
  - It narrows down the existing definition of corruption, increasing the burden of proof necessary for punishing the corrupt, making things more difficult for the whistle-blower, and strengthens the shield available to officials accused of corruption. And it slips in a diabolic clause that would protect the babu-neta nexus from ever facing any serious anti-corruption probe.
  - The older law had a broad definition of a corrupt public official, defining it simply as any person who, while holding office as a public servant, obtains for any person any valuable thing or pecuniary advantage without any public interest.
  - The amendments narrow this definition significantly, by adding the test of intention, meaning prosecuting agencies will have to prove a conspiracy to carry out corrupt acts, rather than simply pointing to disproportionate assets or questionable actions.
- **The Bill makes it more difficult to hold someone guilty of disproportionate assets as it raises the threshold of proof.**
  - Under the old law, the possession of monetary resources or property disproportionate to the public servant’s known sources of income is enough to prove corruption. Now the prosecutor will also have to prove that this disproportionate asset was acquired with the intention of the public servant to enrich himself illicitly.
  - The offence of disproportionate assets under Section 13(1)(e) has been made much more difficult to prove and has been diluted.
- **The proposed amendment makes it more risky for a bribe-giver to give evidence against a bribe-taker.**
  - Under the old law, if a person makes a statement during a corruption trial that he gave a bribe, it would not be used to prosecute him for the offence of abetment of corruption. The current Bill omits this provision and proposes that bribe-taking and bribe-giving will be equally punishable. **This would obviously deter bribe-givers from appearing as witnesses in cases against public officials.**
- **The bill reduces the chances of prosecution of the corrupt:-**
  - The existing PCA requires the government’s or higher officials sanction before any serving public servants can be prosecuted under the Act. The proposed amendment extends this protection to retired public servants, if the case pertains to the period when they were in office.
This provision adds another unnecessary and pointless condition. If a private person approaches the government for sanction to prosecute a public servant for corruption, he would now need a court order to this effect. This additional layer of protection for the accused would discourage victims of corruption and anti-corruption activists from prosecuting corrupt public servants.

Section 17 A:-

The bill proposes to insert a new Section 17A that would bar investigating agencies from even beginning an inquiry or investigating the offences under this Act without prior approval. Section 19 of the Act already protects officials from mala fide litigation. If someone wishes to harass an innocent officer without any credible evidence of corruption, the government can refuse to give sanction for prosecution.

The amendments seek to define criminal misconduct more narrowly, by including just two clauses: if the public servant dishonestly or fraudulently misappropriates or otherwise converts for his own use any property entrusted to him or any property under his control as a public servant or allows any other person so to do or if he intentionally enriches himself illicitly during the period of his office.

This means that if a public servant cannot account for assets or property disproportionate to their known sources of income, then they are presumed to have intentionally enriched themselves illicitly. The changed clauses however, do not account for assets that have been illicitly procured for other people.

The amendment Bill has not mentioned who the concerned authority is for providing sanctions for investigating a public official.

Some existing important provisions in the old law are being dropped. These new terms will take decades for getting their interpretations from the Supreme Court.

Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the existing Act have been deleted and replaced by completely new provisions, with completely new definitions and words. It may now take decades before the new provisions are properly interpreted and settled by judiciary.

The provision under Section 13(1)(d) has been deleted. This is the provision which is used for involving senior bureaucrats and ministers in corruption cases, since direct acceptance of bribe by them was generally not possible.

Further, the maximum punishment for this would now be only 7 years imprisonment as against the existing punishment for 10 years.

Prior permission of the Government or the competent authority will now be required for registering certain corruption offences. Previously, the provision for taking such permission was quashed and set aside by the Supreme Court in 2014 in a writ petition.

This permission will give immunity to corrupt Government officers.

Even no sanction for prosecution of corrupt public servants would now be needed even after their retirement, giving them one more level of immunity or protection.

Q) In the past few years, a combination of factors has led to an infusion of energy in the otherwise jaded relationship between India and African countries. Critically analyze. (250 words)

Why this question

Africa houses six of the world’s fastest growing economies and is increasingly becoming an important global player. India has historic economic, political and cultural linkages with Africa but the continent remained largely ignored for a long time. There has however been a much required shift in India’s policy towards Africa, as witnessed in recent years. Recently India signed several agreements with Rwanda and PM Modi became the first PM to visit the country.

Key demand of the question.

The question wants us to dig deep into the issue discuss why Africa is important for India. We have to bring out the factors behind the infusion of energy in India-Africa relationship. Then we have to form a personal opinion on the issue.

Directive word

Critically analyze: Here we have to dig deep into the issue, identify and discuss upon all the relevant aspects and form a personal opinion on the issue, based on our discussion.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – write a few lines about the historic political, economic and cultural linkage between India and Africa. E.g trade relations between the Kingdom of Aksum and Ancient India around the first millennium; non-aligned movement; India-Africa Forum Summit etc.

Body-:
• Discuss the nature of relationship between India and Africa until recently- e.g passive and a reactive attitude on part of India; no summits; lack of attention and visits to African countries; investments made by private sector etc.
• Discuss how the nature of relationship has changed. E.g mention the recent visits of PM and President to several African countries; plan to construct convention centers across 21 African countries; constructing the Parliament building in Swaziland; Sub-Saharan African countries have also reached out to India to undertake rural electrification – from financing and technology transfer, to detailed project reports and execution; India-Rwanda agreements, India-Seychelles cooperation etc.
• Discuss why the nature of relationship has changed and the importance of cooperation with Africa. E.g Africa houses six of the world’s fastest growing economies; several African countries have been providing incentives to attract foreign investors and partners in growth while the government in New Delhi has been actively lobbying for support for its bid for a seat at the UNSC; China’s hyperactive engagement with Africa; prospects of an African trade agreement etc.

Conclusion- Based on your discussion form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue and suggest a way-forward.

Background:-
• India-Africa relations are enjoying an unprecedented renaissance, founded on shared economic interests and longstanding historical ties.

Jaded relationship:-
• India’s Africa policy over the past few decades has oscillated between passive and reluctantly reactive at best. Strategic apathy toward the continent was obvious on many fronts.
• Most of the countries in Africa did not feature in India’s larger foreign policy matrix, but until recently there wasn’t any significant attention paid to the continent.
• Indian leaders seldom travelled to African nations.
• The narrative of India’s contemporary relationship with Africa is dominated by the historicity of their interactions, the century old trade partnerships, socio-cultural linkages built by a thriving diaspora, nationalist movements during the Nehruvian era that supported anti-imperial struggles, and shifting geopolitical tides with the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).
• Beyond this rhetoric, what kept driving this relationship forward was the acquisition of critical assets by State Owned Enterprises (SOE) looking to diversify the energy basket away from West Asian nations and other commercial ventures by Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Multi-National Companies (MNC).

What led to the change in relationship:-
• Most important was the economic growth of the continent that is estimated to be 3.2 per cent in 2018.
• It also houses six of the world’s fastest growing economies
• Several African countries have been providing incentives to attract foreign investors and partners in growth while the government in New Delhi has been actively lobbying for support for its bid for a seat at the UNSC.
• Additionally, the increasing influence of other powers in the continent, especially China’s hyperactive engagement, has nudged India toward a rethink.

How has the relationship changed:-
• Third India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015:-
  • The tempo set with the summit has been carried forward and sustained to a large degree.
• Currently, India’s forte in the continent has been developmental initiatives such as Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Team 9, and Pan Africa e-network among others are aimed at building institutional and human capacity as well as enabling skills and knowledge transfer.
• Conscious attempt at evoking morality to reflect an “alternate model of development” by using terms such as “win-win cooperation” to describe New Delhi’s approach to Africa.
One of the new trends in this relationship has also been the role played by sub-national organizations and state governments that have been crafting independent relationships with African counterparts.

- For example, Kerala is planning on importing Cashew from African countries for its processing plants that are running low on raw material.
- Similarly, Ethiopia and South Africa are working with Kudumbashree, a self-help group created by the Government of Kerala aimed at eradicating poverty and empowering women, to find ways to localize and adapt the model in their respective countries.

A unique factor that sets Indian interactions apart is that there is palpable goodwill for people of Indian origin, a sense of familiarity and cultural connection, with Bollywood movies and songs often acting as a bridge.

**Role of Indian businesses:-**

- Indian businesses are active across geographic spaces and sectors in Africa. Agri-business, engineering, construction, film distribution, cement, plastics, and ceramics manufacturing, advertising, marketing, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunication are only some of the sectors that have Indian players.
- Indian investment in Africa is also being ramped up, with over 140 Indian enterprises (from Wipro to Mahindra and Mahindra) investing over $4 billion in South Africa alone. Sub-Saharan African countries have also reached out to India to undertake rural electrification from financing and technology transfer, to detailed project reports and execution.

**Years of diplomatic neglect of the continent is being addressed with the top echelons of Indian leadership regularly visiting the continent.**

- Most notably, Indian president’s first overseas visit since taking office was to Djibouti and Ethiopia in October 2017.
- Similarly, when Indian PM stopped by Mozambique during his four-nation tour of Africa making him the first Indian PM in 34 years to visit the country.

**Outcomes:-**

- The outcomes of visits included a $100 million line of credit for defense procurement by Mauritius and greater cooperation in the marine resource management and marine connectivity in Madagascar.
- In Equatorial Guinea India announced its decision to open an independent diplomatic mission in the capital of Malabo.
- India will be constructing convention centers across 21 African countries, beginning with Niger in Western Africa.
- **Convention centers will also be set up on priority basis in eight other African nations Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Togo, Gabon, and Liberia and on a more phased basis in the remaining 12 countries. This is the first time that India has expanded cooperation with Africa in the realms of this kind of infrastructure.**
- India has extended 152 lines of credit to the tune of almost $8 billion to 44 African countries, for developing agriculture, infrastructure, clean energy, and manufacturing.

**Rwanda visit:-**

- India will soon open a High Commission in Rwanda which will not only establish communication between the governments of the two countries but also enable facilities for consular, passport and visa.
- India and Uganda signed four MoUs in the areas of defence cooperation, visa exemption for official and diplomatic passport holders, cultural exchange programme and material testing laboratory

**China role:-**

- Whereas India’s policy has focused on job creation in the countries it has invested in, China has tended to bring in its own labour causing resentment among the locals.
- The Chinese model has often been criticised for creating huge debts for the nation in which it sets up projects, the Nairobi-Mombasa rail link being one example of this.
- The $4 billion project has left Kenya with enormous debts and the Chinese military base in Djibouti has raised fears that Beijing is abandoning its non-interference policy in the region.

**Challenges to India:-(Extra points)**

- **China:-**
  - **Economic:-**
India’s lack of a consistent proactive policy towards Africa led to the Chinese stealing a march over it in terms of investment and trade. China has aggressively pushed its investments up to $3.5 trillion in 2015. In contrast, India will cross the $500 billion mark in 2020.

China has offered $100 million in grant aid to establish an African Rapid Response Force to cope with regional crises. Besides the traditional areas of military security, Beijing has taken big steps towards cooperation with the African governments on internal security, including in the areas of countering terrorism and money laundering.

**Military:**
- China promised “comprehensive support” for the modernisation of the armed forces of African nations.
  - This support includes the supply of new technologies as well as lending personnel and strategic advice.
  - According to the Stockholm Institute of Peace Research, China’s arms exports to Africa have increased 55 per cent during the period 2013-17 in comparison to the preceding five years.
  - India does not have much of a defence industrial base to enter the African arms bazaar.

**Technology:**
- Beijing collaboration with Africa on AI is mutually beneficial: It will promote social and political stability in Africa while improving the performance of China’s algorithms.

**Lack of trust:**
- The most recent and high-profile example of the Gupta brothers charged with allegations of “state capture” stemming from their closeness to ex-president Zuma in South Africa. Also an Indian floriculture company accused of land grabs in Ethiopia or attacks against African students in India has resulted in instances of dissent toward Indians or people of Indian origin.
- There is very little coordination between Indian State and its businesses in Africa and the role of India Inc. is limited while drafting policies.
- India has no coordinated Africa policy nor does there seem to be an avenue where the strengths of both actors can be leveraged.

**Way forward:**
- New Delhi did the right thing in extending a $10 billion line of credit from 2015 to 2020 but it must now push to see that it is used appropriately.
- **India must play to its natural strengths and move swiftly into the education and infrastructure fields as well as IT in Africa.**
- **The various government initiatives aimed at training and equipping Africa’s young demography provides a model that can be replicated by Indian companies whose ease of technology and human capital transfer are already one of its strengths.**
  - Similarly, in the Gambella region of Ethiopia, for instance, Indian farmers have been able to lease land at extremely low rates, but end up spending substantially on infrastructure development and connectivity.
  - This is an opportunity for Indian developmental institutions to step in and provide funding for fledgling agricultural ventures with considerable promise in eastern Africa.

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

**Q) Examine the opportunities and threats in India’s maritime partnership with ASEAN?(250 words)**

**Why this question**
China’s enhancement of its naval power, and its growing strategic presence in Indian ocean has led India to out special emphasis on maritime partnership with littoral countries of Indian ocean. ASEAN plays a key role in that partnership and this question wishes to explore this aspect.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to examine the overall nature of India’s maritime cooperation with ASEAN with special emphasis on the opportunities in this area which can enhance the nature of this relationship. Also, we need to discuss the threats and ways to counter that threat.

**Directive word**
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Discuss the emphasis India has put on maritime cooperation with nations both at a bilateral level and through forums like IORA etc.

**Body**
- Give an overall picture of India’s strategic partnership with ASEAN, Act East Policy and what exactly is the nature of this partnership. Also discuss how this is a focus area for India in light of SAGAR.
- Discuss the opportunities like common objectives of support for free, open and rules based Indo Pacific, threat of a hegemon, good economic relations, institutional mechanism – ADMM+, IORA, naval exercises etc.
- Discuss the threats like rise of China, lack of consensus amongst ASEAN etc.
- Discuss how such challenges can be countered

**Conclusion** – Discuss the importance of growing this partnership and the way forward.

**Background:-**
- The maritime component of India-ASEAN goes back to the early 1990s when a series of Track 1.5 deliberations were held under the CSCAP (Council for Security and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific) and many security issues were deliberated upon.
- The December 2004 tsunami that led to considerable destruction and loss of life in parts of ASEAN saw the Indian Navy emerging as the first responder and this altered the perception of India in the extended region.
- Enhanced maritime connectivity would therefore provide lower logistic costs, and motivate increased trade in goods and services.
- The piracy challenge in the 2008-09 period and the Indian response as part of a global effort, once again burnished Delhi’s maritime security provider potential.

**Opportunities :-**
- Recently the ‘Look East’ policy has been given greater traction as ‘Act East’ and there is a visible maritime emphasis that is subsumed under the acronym SAGAR: security and growth for all in the Indo-Pacific region.
- In the last decade, India has been able to make small but valuable contributions to the bilateral maritime engagement with individual ASEAN nations. These range from providing training to pooling resources, to dealing with lower order security challenges such as piracy, gun-running and criminality at sea.
- Naval exercises:-
  - Bilateral naval and coast guard patrols and exercises are progressing and the India-ASEAN maritime comfort level is becoming more robust as evidenced during the Delhi Dialogue deliberations.
- ADMM+:-
  - It has conducted a total of 12 exercises in the seven designated areas of cooperation: counterterrorism, cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, humanitarian mine action, maritime security, military medicine, and peacekeeping.
  - ADMM+ countries could consider leveraging their mutual goodwill to conduct joint maritime naval exercises in the South China Sea. ADMM+ still has the potential to stand out from the disappointments of past ASEAN initiatives and contribute substantively to regional defence.
- Blue economy:-
  - It is an important aspect, INDIA-ASEAN maritime relations would help India to combat ecological maritime degradation by curbing plastic pollution, illegal and unregulated fishing and illicit trafficking of marine animals.
  - Forums like Indian ocean Rim association can be focused upon for improving maritime cooperation.
  - Maritime cooperation can span the bandwidth from robust engagement on apolitical issues such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

**Challenges:-**
• Chinese role:-
  • Rise of China and its assertiveness in the South China Sea (SCS) has led to considerable unease in the entire region and the rejection of the international tribunal award in relation to artificial installations has caused uneasiness in ASEAN nations.
  • The growing footprint in the Indian Ocean now extends from certain Indian Ocean islands to Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.
  • China is a major trading partner for ASEAN (over US $500 billion in 2017) and many ASEAN nations obtain substantive military inventory items from Beijing. Thus it is a complex and contradictory relationship that ASEAN has with China.
• Delay of projects:-
  • India’s navy is still having limited reach and the speed of project implementation is slow.

Way forward:-
• It could reiterate India’s commitment to a common, rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region at the Delhi Dialogue and emphasise the inclusive approach.
• India and ASEAN can evolve a consensual way ahead in the maritime domain where the least politically discordant areas for cooperation can be advanced, thereby punctuating the Indo-Pacific in a manner that prioritises the collective ‘good order at sea’ over the individual interest.
• Full utilisation of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area and the swift conclusion of a modern, comprehensive and high quality Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are the next steps.

Q) Africa is at a critical juncture and India could play many roles in its growth story. Examine the above statement and discuss the challenges for India vis a vis China?(250 words)

Why this question
With PM Modi’s 3 nation Africa tour on the anvil, India Africa relations is going to dominate news. this makes it important for us to delve deeper into the relationship, understand challenges and discuss way forward.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to mention what is it about Africa that is attracting several countries who are competing for enhancing their presence in Africa. Thereafter analyze India’s economic, cultural etc relations with Africa and analyze why China among other countries is a major competitor for India in deepening ties with Africa.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention about a brief history of the upswing in relations between India and Africa with growth of India Africa Forum Summit etc.

Body
• Discuss why Africa is at a critical juncture – economic growth, resources, several African countries have been providing incentives to attract foreign investors and partners in growth etc
• Discuss how India’s relations with Africa are – the nature and extent of partnerships along with areas where India can leverage it’s commonalities to create a symbiotic relationship.
• Examine the reasons why China is posing a challenge to India and how could India counter this challenge

Conclusion – emphasize on the importance of this partnership and the way forward for India.

Background:-
India-Africa relations are enjoying an unprecedented renaissance, founded on shared economic interests and longstanding historical ties.

Africa is at a critical juncture:-
• Economic growth of the continent is estimated to be 3.2 percent in 2018.
It also houses six of the world’s fastest growing economies - the World Bank estimates Ethiopia will grow at 8.2 percent.

Several African countries have been providing incentives to attract foreign investors and partners in growth

**Nature of the relationship so far:-**

- India’s Africa policy over the past few decades has oscillated between passive and reluctantly reactive at best. **Strategic apathy toward the continent was obvious on many fronts.**
- Most of the countries in Africa did not feature in India’s larger foreign policy matrix, but until recently there wasn’t any significant attention paid to the continent.
- Indian leaders seldom travelled to African nations.
- The narrative of India’s contemporary relationship with Africa is dominated by the **historicity of their interactions**...the century old trade partnerships, socio-cultural linkages built by a thriving diaspora, nationalist movements during the Nehruvian era that supported anti-imperial struggles, and shifting geopolitical tides with the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).
- Beyond this rhetoric, what kept driving this relationship forward was the acquisition of critical assets by State Owned Enterprises (SOE) looking to diversify the energy basket away from West Asian nations and other commercial ventures by Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Multi-National Companies (MNC).

**The relationship changed and there are areas where both India and Africa can work together:-**

- Currently, India’s forte in the continent has been **developmental initiatives** such as Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Team 9, and Pan Africa e-network among others are aimed at building institutional and human capacity as well as enabling skills and knowledge transfer.
- **Conscious attempt at evoking morality** to reflect an “alternate model of development” by using terms such as “win-win cooperation” to describe New Delhi’s approach to Africa.
- One of the new trends in this relationship has also been the **role played by sub-national organizations and state governments that have been crafting independent relationships with African counterparts.**
  - For example, Kerala is planning on importing Cashew from African countries for its processing plants that are running low on raw material.
  - Similarly, Ethiopia and South Africa are working with *Kudumbashree*, a self-help group created by the Government of Kerala aimed at eradicating poverty and empowering women, to find ways to localize and adapt the model in their respective countries.
- A unique factor that sets Indian interactions apart is that there is **palpable goodwill for people of Indian origin**, a sense of familiarity and cultural connection, with Bollywood movies and songs often acting as a bridge.

**China role:-**

- Whereas India’s policy has focused on job creation in the countries it has invested in, China has tended to bring in its own labour causing resentment among the locals.
- The Chinese model has often been criticised for creating huge debts for the nation in which it sets up projects, the Nairobi-Mombasa rail link being one example of this.
- The $4 billion project has left Kenya with enormous debts and the Chinese military base in Djibouti has raised fears that Beijing is abandoning its non-interference policy in the region

**Role of Indian businesses:-**

- Indian businesses are active across geographic spaces and sectors in Africa. Agri-business, engineering, construction, film distribution, cement, plastics, and ceramics manufacturing, advertising, marketing, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunication are only some of the sectors that have Indian players.

**Challenges to India :-**

**China:-**

**Economic:-**

- India’s lack of a consistent proactive policy towards Africa led to the Chinese stealing a march over it in terms of investment and trade. China has aggressively pushed its investments up to $3.5 trillion in 2015. In contrast, India will cross the $500 billion mark in 2020.
- China has offered $100 million in grant aid to establish an African Rapid Response Force to cope with regional crises
• Besides the traditional areas of military security, Beijing has taken big steps towards cooperation with the African governments on internal security, including in the areas of countering terrorism and money laundering
• **Military:**
  • China promised "comprehensive support" for the modernisation of the armed forces of African nations
  • This support includes the supply of new technologies as well as lending personnel and strategic advice
  • According to the Stockholm Institute of Peace Research, China's arms exports to Africa have increased 55 per cent during the period 2013-17 in comparison to the preceding five years
  • India does not have much of a defence industrial base to enter the African arms bazaar.
• **Technology:**
  • Beijing collaboration with Africa on AI is mutually beneficial: It will promote social and political stability in Africa while improving the performance of China's algorithms
• **Lack of trust:**
  • The most recent and high-profile example of the Gupta brothers charged with allegations of "state capture" stemming from their closeness to ex-President Zuma in South Africa.
  • Also an Indian floriculture company accused of land grabs in Ethiopia or attacks against African students in India has resulted in instances of dissent toward Indians or people of Indian origin.
  • There is very little coordination between Indian State and its businesses in Africa and the role of India Inc. is limited while drafting policies.
  • India has no coordinated Africa policy nor does there seem to be an avenue where the strengths of both actors can be leveraged.

**Way forward:**
• New Delhi did the right thing in extending a $ 10 billion line of credit from 2015 to 2020 but it must now push to see that it is used appropriately.
• **India must play to its natural strengths and move swiftly into the education and infrastructure fields as well as IT in Africa.**
• The various government initiatives aimed at training and equipping Africa’s young demography provides a model that can be replicated by Indian companies whose ease of technology and human capital transfer are already one of its strengths.
  • Similarly, in the Gambella region of Ethiopia, for instance, Indian farmers have been able to lease land at extremely low rates, but end up spending substantially on infrastructure development and connectivity.
  • This is an opportunity for Indian developmental institutions to step in and provide funding for fledgling agricultural ventures with considerable promise in eastern Africa.

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

**Q) Critically analyze the implications of space weaponization programme of US, especially in the context of India. (250 words)**

**WHY THIS QUESTION**
The US has recently expressed its desire to build space weapons. This is an important issue given the shared space resource and implications for security of space infrastructure and capability to initiate a space weaponization race among countries. The issue is related to GS-2 syllabus under the following heading:
Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to analyze the issue of space weaponization thoroughly. We have to discuss the implications of such a decision globally and on India. Based on our discussion, we have to come with an opinion on the issue.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze- here we have to dig deep into the issue, bring out all the related and important aspects and come up with a personal opinion on the issue.
**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Mention that the space is a region with increasing commercial, civil, international and military interests and investments. Also mention the recent decision by US to to establish a Space Force as the sixth branch of the armed forces.

**Body**–

- Discuss the implications of such an act. E.g initiating a space weaponization race (Russia, China); space wars; vulnerability of critical space infrastructure, it will undermine international and national security, and disrupt existing arms control instruments, in particular those related to nuclear weapons and missiles etc.
- Discuss the implications for India. E.g lack of capabilities in the present time, apprehensions from China, lack of an official policy even though India is a party to PAROS

**Conclusion**– mention the need for commitment to peaceful use of space but when other powers are exploring the options of space weaponization, India should engage with multiple stakeholders directly about the role space weapons will play in India’s grand strategy etc.

**Background:**-

- Technological developments in space have opened opportunities for many benefits to humanity including global communication systems and geological and meteorological information. The global reach of space lends itself to the development of international systems thus increasing global cooperation and decreasing nation-state based systems and nationalism.
- 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which is a framework for space activities, specifically allows for space weaponization. It prohibits weapons of mass destruction in orbit, but it allows for any other type of weapon anywhere except for the surface of planets, moons and asteroids.
- Recently US made an announcement about the creation of a “space force” or a sixth branch of the American armed forces.

**Implications:**-

**Positive:**-

- Dominance of the space domain is essential for the US’ role as the sole global superpower and for exercising influence over other nations.
- Space weapons would provide more effective defensive and offensive capabilities. They would also contribute towards a comprehensive BMD architecture.
- Other nations would vie for, and surely fill, any void that is left by the US and this would be detrimental to its own survival. The present superiority that the US enjoys in space should be maintained and exploited to entrench itself before the other nations narrow this gap. **Such capabilities would help undermine opponent attempts to militarise space, thus, helping achieve total military dominance**

**Negative:**-

- **The war in space would destroy the intrinsic trust and cooperation necessary** to maintain the systems deployed in space for peaceful purposes.
- The ensuing arms race for weaponisation of outer space **would create an environment of uncertainty, suspicion, miscalculations, competition and aggressive deployment between nations, which may lead to war.**
- It would put at risk the entire range of commercial satellites as well as those involved in scientific explorations.
- The problem of space debris, radio frequencies and orbital slots are some of the other alarming issues that would get further muddled should space weaponisation be resorted to in the real sense.
- Attacking satellites is easy as they travel in predictable targets that can be accurately tracked and, at present, they do not employ counter-measures.
- The effect of this approach will likely be an arms race in outer space as other countries move to protect their interests against possible attack from the US.

**Issues to US:**-

- Adding another military arm would only compound the organisational challenges facing the U.S. armed services.
- It could undercut ongoing missions.
- It could very well increase budgetary allocations in the future.
Space corps could undermine American efforts in the domain of joint warfare. It potentially increases greater organisational uncertainty within the U.S. military.

The fundamental difficulty of a space corps is that the physical environment of space is not conducive to the conduct of military operations without incurring serious losses in the form of spacecraft and debris. And despite efforts to make spacecraft more fuel efficient, the energy requirements are enormous.

**Implications for India:-**

- While India is officially committed to PAROS, or the prevention of an arms race in outer space, it is yet to formulate a credible official response.
- **China:-**
  - In response to US action chinese reaction could be much stronger than its seemingly muted official response and it does possess a formidable space military programme that far exceeds current Indian capabilities.

**Way forward:-**

- It becomes imperative that countries like the US which have been abstaining from UN sponsored efforts to prevent an arms race in space are coerced by the international community to fall in line and abide by all the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty to ensure that weaponisation of space does not take place.
- There is a need for commitment to peaceful use of space
- When other powers are exploring the options of space weaponization, India should engage with multiple stakeholders directly about the role space weapons will play in India’s grand strategy.

**Q) Analyze how Trump’s foreign policy and systematic dismantling of established norms in foreign policy is impacting India? (250 words)**

**Why this question**

India in recent years had banked on USA as a key ally in its foreign policy. However, the recent position of US on several issues have been having an impact on our bilateral relationship as well as other areas of our foreign policy. The article talks about this issue which is relevant while preparing IR section for Paper 2.

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to draw a linkage of the ways in which USA’s foreign policy under Trump has an impact on India, analyze what the impact is, and how can India respond to such emerging challenges.

**Directive word**

Analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Give example of the recent events such as trade wars, US opinion on EU, its flip flop on the Iran Nuclear deal etc which creates challenges for its allies including India.

**Body**

- Give a brief history of India US relations in the past few years. Emphasize on the fact that post Cold War, India has gone the path of liberalization, globalization etc, the consensus over which is being challenged by US.
- Discuss the various challenges under heads like economy, bilateral relations, multilateral relations, trade relations etc. Also discuss the values which are under threat. Under the head of economy, can discuss factors like the cost of rejecting Iranian oil under pressure of US sanctions. Under bilateral relations, we can discuss the impact USA’s policies are having on India US bilateral relations etc
- Thereafter, discuss how is India responding to the emerging challenges – in certain areas like trade we are standing by our ethos of rules based trading order and in other cases such as Iran oil, we are toeing the line

**Conclusion** – Discuss what should the future policy be – we can mention consensus building on platforms like BRICS, IBSA etc

**Background:-**

- With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, world embarked on the post-Cold War interlude.
- American primacy was unprecedented and uncontested. Russia declined as it struggled to overcome the legacy of over seven decades of Communist misrule. Europe consolidated and NATO expanded.
For a time, it seemed that American primacy was enough. The most important traditional security concern of the past the prevention of a major power war dissipated.

- S. policy seemed to be guiding important regional disputes, such as those in the Middle East and on the Korean Peninsula, toward settlement.
- There has been significant progress on the international economic front with the launch of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization (WHO), only to confront the expiration of Fast Track authority, financial meltdown in many parts of the world, and the debacle of the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle. Democracy spread as never before, yet in many places its roots remained shallow and vulnerable to disappointment and backlash.

**Trump's foreign policy is dismantling these norms:**

- As US is running trade deficit with China, most of the US top companies outsource their work to low wage countries adversely impacting American employment opportunities (America first policy). His **America first policy** focusses on **opposition to globalization** with focus on protectionism, opposition to open borders, tariff wars

**European Union:**

- Continues to challenge almost all the traditional assumptions about America’s international relations. Consider, for example, **his most recent remarks that the European Union might be America’s most important adversary.**
- Trump put the European Union whose members are some of America’s oldest allies and friends at the top of the list of America’s foes.
- He is sustaining the pressure on EU and China to change the terms of economic engagement with the United States.

**Trade:**

- Trump had issues with America’s leading economic partners in the G-7 summit on issues relating to trade. At the summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Trump accused Germany as well.

**NATO allies:**

- Trump warned the NATO allies that if they did not contribute more to the collective defence burden, America would go its own way.
- He is threatening to dismantle NATO, the world’s most powerful military alliance.

**Special relationship between America and Britain:**

- For nearly a century, the Anglo-American partnership has been the strongest bilateral relationship in the world. But now its fading away.

**Russia:**

- Despite the huge resistance at home and in Europe, Trump seems determined to enhance the engagement with Putin’s Russia.

**Trump’s opposition to globalisation, open borders and foreign military interventions is evident.** Trump has emerged as the political instrument to channel these sentiments into direct confrontation with the old order.

- The consensus on economic globalisation and a relative harmony among the major powers which defined the post Cold War era is now breaking down.
- Trump is doing precisely that in questioning the utility of the collective Western institutions built after the Second World War and demanding a re-arrangement of burdens and benefits between the US and its partners.
- During his trip to Israel, he did not once mention the word Palestine, a veiled message that Washington is no longer interested in a two-state solution.

**US-India relations:**

- After the cold war India has carried out Substantial economic reforms & has become an important member of the Washington Consensus bodies like the IMF, WB & WTO. Also India has reoriented its Strategic relations towards the west and has become part of the Global Rule based Liberal order

**Impact on Trump’s approach to India:**

- **Economic:**
  - As a late convert to economic globalisation, India will have much to lose, if the current trading order breaks down.
- India could also face a confrontation with the U.S. if Trump seeks to reduce temporary work visas. Trump criticized the U.S. H-1B non-immigrant specialty worker visa program as that decimates American jobs.
- In 2015, India had a positive goods trade balance of $23 billion with the United States. That number will diminish if the U.S. erects trade walls.
- Just as India is set to benefit from greater integration with the global economy, Trump’s actions could depress already sluggish global trade and growth.

**Geopolitical:**
- Indian worries centred on the US president’s erratic Twitter-diplomacy, his attempts to reduce the US’s global footprint, his business-oriented engagement of China, his inability to re-engage Russia and his general disinterest in India.
- **US pulled out of Iran nuclear deal:**
  - Even though India was not party to the deal, India supported it. India had watched the growing tensions between Iran and the United States before the deal was reached with some trepidation because a war could have had multiple negative consequences for India, including threats to the very large Indian expatriate population, disruption of oil supplies, and being forced to pick sides between Iran and the United States, to name just a few.
  - **Oil prices:**
    - The impact on world oil prices will be the immediately visible impact of the U.S. decision. Iran is presently India’s third biggest supplier (after Iraq and Saudi Arabia), and any increase in prices will hit both inflation levels as well as the Indian rupee, which breached Rs.67 to the U.S. dollar this week.
  - **Non-oil trade with Iran**, which stood at about $2.69 billion of the total trade figures of $12.89 billion in 2016-17 may not be impacted as much, as New Delhi and Tehran have instituted several measures in the past few months, including allowing Indian investment in rupees, and initiating new banking channels, between them.
  - **Chabahar:**
    - India’s moves over the last few years to develop berths at the Shahid Beheshti port in Chabahar was a key part of its plans to circumvent Pakistan’s blocks on trade with Afghanistan, and the new U.S. sanctions could slow or even bring those plans to a halt depending on how strictly they are implemented.
    - sanctions could affect this timeline and delay the handing over of the project further.

**A broader concern is about the general stability of the region.**
- If the increasing tension in the region should ignite into a full-scale war, India faces a number of challenges. Millions of Indian expatriates live in the Arab states of the Gulf, and they would be in the direct line of fire.
  - Politically, it will become very difficult for India to continue playing the balancing game between Iran on one side and Israel, the Arab states and the United States on the other.
- **Finally, India will also have to balance its other interests with the developments in the Gulf** as this could impact India in a range of areas, including overseas projects, exports, payments for oil, and even international relations.
  - New U.S. sanctions will affect INSTC plans immediately, especially if any of the countries along the route or banking and insurance companies dealing with the INSTC plan also decide to adhere to U.S. restrictions on trade with Iran.

**Rules-based order:**
- India has long been a proponent of a rules-based order that depends on multilateral consensus and an adherence to commitments made by countries on the international stage.
  - By walking out of the JCPOA the U.S. government has overturned the precept that such international agreements are made by States not just with prevailing governments or regimes. This could also impact all agreements India is negotiating both bilaterally and multilaterally with the U.S.

**Tariff wars:**
- Tariff war which started between US-China and slowly India has also been dragged into it would affect Indian economy adversely. India is the latest to join the the risk of tit-for-tat battle by slapping tariffs as high as 50% on a list of 30 goods imported from the U.S.
Protectionist measures are likely to **move the globe further away from an open, fair and rules-based trade system**, with adverse effects for both the U.S. economy and for trading partners.

- IMF said the tariffs imposed or proposed by the Trump administration also risk catalyzing a cycle of retaliatory responses from others, creating **important uncertainties that are likely to discourage investment at home and abroad.**
- Threatens WTO
- As America is looking to pursue a mercantilist trade policy in defiance of the global trading system, **other countries are bound to follow.** That might not lead to an immediate collapse of the WTO, but it would gradually erode one of the foundations of the globalised economy.
- In the long term, a full-fledged trade war is not good for India. It **invariably leads to a higher inflationary and low growth scenario.**
- Increase in interest rates in the US has implications for emerging economies such as India, both for the equity and debt markets.
  - Higher interest rates do make the option of investors borrowing cheap money in the US and investing in Indian equities significantly less attractive.
  - India cannot grow on a sustained basis until it exports and free trade is in existence. With the trade war, free trade might affect global economy and in turn India’s as well.
- US has left the Paris agreement which addresses problems of Climate change faced by developing countries like India & has not agreed to concepts like historical responsibilities & Compensations.

**Positives:**

- **Quad:**
  - Both Quad and Look East Policy of India serves as a counter measure to the String of Pearls theory mooted by China.
  - The Objective of “Act East Policy” and “Quad” policy are on similar lines. To promote economic co-operation in Indo Pacific
  - Increase in stature of India as an Economic Power, Global standard over South east Regional political power play.
  - An alliance of 4 Quad countries will mean a greater influx of trade and commerce for India which can be used to fund projects in “Act East” policy.
  - India became important for US policy in the Indo pacific region.
- Defence partnership with signing of agreements like LEMOA and India close to signing COMCASA.
- COMCASA creates the conditions for the Indian military to receive modern secure and net-enabled weapons systems such as precision armament, air-to-air missiles, space systems and navigation systems that are critical components in platforms like fighter aircraft and unmanned aerial systems. **Hitherto India has had to purchase more expensive commercial communications equipment, raising the overall acquisition price of a platform,**

**How is India tackling these challenges:**

- India needs to focus on strengthening the organisations it is part of like BRICS,IBSA,SCO and maintain good relations with both China, EU and Russia.
- In certain areas like trade India needs to stand by its ethos of rules based trading order
- India needs to maintain its strategic autonomy and its multi-alignment with the nations important for it and not yield to unreasonable US demands. At the same time India needs to maintain a balance than conflict.
- Delhi needs a flexible negotiating strategy founded in a more ambitious internal reform agenda.

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**TOPIC: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.**

**Q) Discuss the structure, functioning, and the role played by the World Customs Organization in international trade. (250 words)**

*Why this question*
India recently became the vice-chair of Asia Pacific region for the sake of WCO. WCO is an important intergovernmental organization involved in promotion of international trade. It is important to know its structure, functioning as well as its role.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to simply write in detail about the structure of WCO, how it functions and what role does it play in international trade.

**Directive word**
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write at length about the key demand of the question so as to bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – mention that WCO is an intergovernmental organization comprising of 182 customs administrations. Mention that India joined WCO in 1971 and recently assumed the vice chair of Asia Pacific Region for World Customs Organisation (WCO).

**Body-**
- Discuss the structure of the organization and its functioning. E.g Secretary General; E.g It is headed by a Secretary General, who is elected by the WCO membership to a five-year term; annual council meetings; Mention various committees which assist WCO in its work such as the Harmonized System Committee, the Permanent Technical Committee, Policy Commission; Finance Committee etc.
- Discuss briefly the objectives of WCO e.g to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of member customs administrations and assisting them in revenue collection, national security, trade facilitation, community protection, and collection of trade statistics.
- Discuss in points the role played by WCO in the arena of international trade. E.g it is the global centre of customs expertise and plays a leading role in the discussion, development, promotion and implementation of modern customs systems and procedures. It is responsive to the needs of its members and its strategic environment, and its instruments and best-practice approaches are recognized as the basis for sound customs administration throughout the world; mention its few instruments.

**Conclusion**- Sum up your discussion in a few lines.

**World customs organization:-**
- The World Customs Organization (WCO), established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations and assisting them in revenue collection, national security, trade facilitation, community protection, and collection of trade statistics.
- Recently India has assumed the Vice Chair of the Asia Pacific Region for the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and will be heading the Region for a period of 2 years from 2018 to 2020.

**Structure:**
- It is headed by a Secretary General, who is elected by the WCO membership to a five-year term
- It is governed by a Council representing all Members, which meets once a year.
- The Council is supported by a Policy Commission, a Finance Committee, Harmonized System Committee, the Permanent Technical Committee and Audit Committee.
- The Secretariat comprises over 100 international officials, technical experts and support staff of some nationalities.
- Throughout the year, the WCO’s many committees and working groups meet to develop global standards, exchange best practices, and seek solutions to Customs-related problems. Global and regional forums covering various topical issues are also held when necessary.

**Function:-**
- The WCO offers its Members a range of Conventions and other international instruments, as well as technical assistance and training services provided either directly by the Secretariat, or with its participation. The Secretariat also actively supports its Members in their endeavours to modernize and build capacity within their national Customs administrations.
- The functions of the Council, as stipulated in Article III of the Convention establishing a Customs Cooperation Council, are to:-
(a) **Study all questions relating to cooperation in customs matters**, which the Contracting Parties agree to promote in conformity with the general purposes of the present Convention.

(b) **Examine the technical aspects**, as well as the economic factors related thereto, of customs systems with a view to proposing to its members practical means of attaining the highest possible degree of harmony and uniformity.

(c) **Prepare draft Conventions and amendments** to Conventions and recommend their adoption by interested governments.

(d) Make **recommendations to ensure the uniform interpretation and application of the Conventions** concluded as a result of its work and, to this end, to perform such functions as may be expressly assigned to it in those Conventions in accordance with the provisions thereof.

(e) **Make recommendations, in a conciliatory capacity, for the settlement of disputes** concerning the interpretation or application of those Conventions.

(f) **Ensure the circulation of information regarding Customs regulations and procedures.**

(g) **On its own initiative or on request, to furnish to interested governments information or advice on customs matters and make recommendations thereon.**

(h) **Cooperate with other intergovernmental organizations** as regards matters within its competence

**Role in international trade:**

- Today, the WCO represents 182 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade.

- Besides the vital role played by the WCO in **stimulating the growth of legitimate international trade, its efforts to combat fraudulent activities are also recognized internationally.**

- The partnership approach championed by the WCO is one of the keys to building bridges between Customs administrations and their partners. By promoting the emergence of an honest, transparent and predictable Customs environment, the **WCO directly contributes to the economic and social well-being of its Members.**

- Finally, in an international environment characterized by instability and the ever-present threat of terrorist activity, the **WCO’s mission to enhance the protection of society and the national territory, and to secure and facilitate international trade, takes on its full meaning.**

- **Strategic Goal 1 – Promote the security and facilitation of international trade, including simplification and harmonization of Customs procedures = Economic Competitiveness Package**
  - The WCO is working with its Members to ensure growth by securing and promoting economic competitiveness. The WCO provides a forum for the development of instruments and tools to simplify and harmonize Customs procedures.

- **Strategic Goal 2 – Promote fair, efficient, and effective Revenue collection = Revenue Package**

- **Strategic Goal 3 – Protect society, public health and safety = Compliance and Enforcement Package**
  - The WCO will continue to develop and maintain standards and guidelines with respect to the goal of protecting society. The exchange of Customs enforcement information and Intelligence is crucial to the WCO’s Enforcement Strategy. **To this end, the WCO will coordinate and implement Customs law enforcement initiatives and operational activities with assistance from key stakeholders.**

- **Strategic Goal 4 – Strengthen Capacity Building = Organizational Development Package**
  - The WCO, as the global centre of Customs excellence, plays a central role in development, promotion and support for the implementation of modern Customs standards, procedures and systems and has positioned itself as a global leader in Capacity Building delivery.

- **Strategic Goal 5 – Promote information exchange between all stakeholders**
  - The WCO provides a forum for international cooperation to promote greater connectivity and more harmonious interaction, including the exchange of information and experience and the identification of best practices, between Member administrations, other government agencies, international organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

- **Strategic Goal 6 – Raise the performance and profile of Customs**
  - The WCO and the international Customs community promote their strategic priorities, roles and contributions through cooperation, communication and partnership with governments, other international and regional organizations, donors and the private sector.

- **Strategic Goal 7 – Conduct Research and Analysis**
The WCO conducts research and analysis on a wide range of Customs and international trade topics using various methods in order to promote a professional, knowledge-based service culture, and to benefit the WCO membership and external stakeholders.

**Topic – Part of static series under the head “Fundamental duties”**

Q) “The moral value of fundamental duties would be not to smother rights but to establish a democratic balance by making the people conscious of their duties equally as they are conscious of their rights”. Discuss (250 words)

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to discuss the relevance of fundamental duties in a democracy, its comparison with fundamental duties and how the two can be reconciled. We also need to discuss the shortcomings of fundamental duties in terms of making people conscious.

**Directive word**
Discuss – Here the points mentioned above are to be discussed in detail.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Mention the history of fundamental duties and the constitutional provisions related to the same.

**Body**
- Discuss the purpose of fundamental duties – rights are to be accompanied with duties and the citizens need to follow certain guiding principles to ensure that society and nation progresses
- Examine why this is critical for democracy.
- Compare fundamental rights and duties and highlight how duties are not infringements on the rights of a person but aim to make the environment more conducive for the enjoyment of such rights.
- Highlight the shortcoming as well – vague nature, low awareness etc

**Conclusion** – Discuss any reform which you feel should be incorporated in duties to make it more reflective of the current environment.

**Background:-**
- Initially, founding fathers of the constitution did not seem it necessary to include fundamental duties of citizens in the constitution itself. But at time of emergency (1976), Indira Gandhi set up Swaran Singh Committee to make recommendation about fundamental duties to abide by citizens.
- The 42nd amendment Act 1976 added a new part in the constitution part IVA. It incorporated the fundamental duties by inserting a new article 51A below article 51

**Importance of fundamental duties:-**
- They support fundamental rights:-
  - As the directive principles are addressed to the state, the fundamental duties are addressed to the Citizens. The citizens enjoying the fundamental rights must respect the ideals of the constitution, to promote harmony and spirit of the brotherhood.
  - They serve as a reminder to the citizens that while enjoying their rights they should also be conscious of duties they owe to their country, their society and to their fellow citizens.
- They serve as a source of inspiration for the citizens and promote a sense of discipline and commitment among them. They create a feeling that the citizens are no mere spectators but active participants in the realization of national goals.
- They help the courts in examining and determining the constitutional validity of a law.
- They are enforceable by law. Hence the parliament can provide for the imposition of appropriate penalty or punishment for failure to fulfil any of them. The importance of fundamental duties is that they define the moral obligations of all citizens to help in the promotion of the spirit of patriotism and to uphold the unity of India.
- Important for democracy:-
- In a vast country like India, made of the people of different races, castes, religious, languages, communities, etc. the need for maintaining national unity and integrity is of primary importance. It in this context that the
Fundamental Duties of the citizens and, particularly, the duty to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of our country [Article 51A (c)] assumes paramount importance. It reminds the citizens that the rights cannot exist without duties.

- They serve as a warning against anti national and anti social activities like burning the national flag, destroying public property and so on.

**Criticism:**
- As fundamental duties are not included in PART III (fundamental rights) of constitution, no constitutional legal remedies for enforcement of duties but parliament free to provide by suitable legislation
- As critics pointed out that this list of fundamental duties miss some important duties such as cast vote, pay taxes, family planning
- Some complicated terms such as ‘composite culture’ or ‘noble ideas’ are difficult to understand by common man and lead to violation of any of fundamental duties. The SC ruled that as people of this country are different in number of ways so our common heritage is heritage of Sanskrit.

**Conclusion:-**
- Therefore the objective of incorporating the fundamental duties is to place before the country a code of conduct, which the citizens are expected to follow.

**Q) Compare and contrast the veto power of US President vis a vis Indian President? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to examine the similarities and differences between the veto powers of Indian and US president, we may also bring out the macro reasons for the differences.

**Directive word**
Compare and contrast – Discuss similarities and differences between the Indian and US president.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Mention that while India is a Parliamentary democracy, US is a presidential form of democracy, this it is natural that differences may arise.

**Body** – First, explain the point of similarities between the two offices. Discuss the relevant constitutional provisions both for Indian and US presidents. Thereafter highlight the point of differences between the two such as difference with respect to exercise of veto power, use of pocket veto, power with respect to state bille etc. Explain that this is so because the model of federalism, role of president etc varies.

**Conclusion** – Summarize your answer by mentioning that the similarities, little that they are, are primarily in form not in spirit.

**Background:-**
- The object of arming the Executive with this power is to prevent hasty and ill-considered action by the Legislature.

**US president veto:-**
- Section 1 begins with a vesting clause that confers federal executive power upon the President. Similar clauses are found in Article I and Article III.
- In the United States, the President’s power of veto has been supported on various grounds, such as
  - To enable the President to protect his own office from aggressive legislation
  - To prevent a particular legislation from being placed on the statue book which the President considers to be unconstitutional
  - To check legislation which he deems to be practically inexpedient or, which he thinks does not represent the will of the American people.

**Indian president veto power:-**
- Article11 of the Indian constitution stipulates that the President shall give assent to a bill passed by both houses of the parliament or return the bill as soon as possible for reconsideration with his recommendation.
Veto power of Indian president vs US President:-

- Bills:-
  - Indian President has comparatively lesser veto power than the President of US. The President of US can **veto a bill passed by the Congress**. He needs to sign the bill if it is once again passed by two-thirds majority of both the houses.
  - The Indian President on the other hand can send the bill for reconsideration only once. If the bill is passed again even by a simple majority in the Parliament he is obliged to sign the bill.

- Advice of ministers:-
  - In the US, the members of the cabinet are not members of the Congress and are not responsible to it. The cabinet members are appointed by the President and they are liable to be dismissed by the President. The American President has the power to determine the policy of his government independently without any external interference.
  - Indian president need to act only on advice of council of ministers.

- Pocket veto
  - US President can exercise his pocket veto power by not signing the bill for 10 days if he knows the session of the congress will end within 10 days. In such cases the bill dies.
  - Indian President can keep the bill for **indefinite periods** there is no constitutionally prescribed time limit to give his assent. The President can use his pocket veto if the fall of the government appears imminent. However, he has to act as per the advice of the new government and cannot take his own decision if the current government falls.

- State bills
  - Certain state bills need the previous consent of the president and he possess absolute veto power with respect to some types of state bills. The US President does not have such powers.

- Qualified veto:-
  - Indian President is vested with three veto powers namely absolute veto, suspensive veto and pocket veto. There is no qualified veto in the case of Indian President. It is possessed by American president.

There are some similarities as well:-

- Both the American and Indian Presidents can only be removed from the office through impeachment proceedings against the president and with the concurrence of the other house can impeach the President. In US the power to impeach solely lies with the **Senate** (upper house).

**Topic: Part of static series under the heading – “Comparison of the powers of president with the respective powers of the Governor”**

**Q)** Both President and the Governor are the nominal heads in centre and state respectively, yet, their powers differ a lot. Discuss. (250 words)

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to discuss that despite the fact that the constitution has cast both the president and the governor in the role of nominal head of the centre and state executive respectively, their powers differ significantly from each other. We have to bring out how their powers differ as well as how they are similar.

**Directive word**
**Discuss** – Here you have to compare and contrast the powers of the governor and president in your discussion.

**Structure of the answer**
- Discuss the role that constitution envisages the governor and president to play.
- Discuss their powers and how their are similar to each other – veto power, clemency power, ordinance power, discretionary power etc
- Discuss how their powers differ from each other in above respect

**Conclusion** – Mention the overall sense of the role that these two constitutional authorities have to play and whether president exercises control over the governor.
Background:
- As envisaged in the Indian constitution in a federal constitutional division of power between centre and real power vests in council of ministers president and governor are only ceremonial heads of state. Real power lies with elected government headed by PM and CM.

Differences:
- The discretionary powers of Governor are with wider scope in the state than the President in the Union.
- Governor cannot grant pardon to somebody convicted and sentenced to death, although he can commute such sentence. Only president has power to pardon someone sentenced to death. Only President can pardon a person punished under Martial law.
- President can nominate two members of Anglo-Indian Community in Lok Sabha, Governor can nominate one member of Anglo-Indian Community in State Legislature.
- President nominates 12 members in Rajya Sabha. Governor nominates 1/6th members of State Legislative Council wherever bicameral legislatures exist in states.
- Only President can declare war or peace.
- The President of India has the power to declare three types of emergency. They are National Emergency, State Emergency and Financial Emergency.
- Once the governor reserves a bill for the President’s consideration, the subsequent enactment of the bill is in the hands of the president and the governor shall have no further part in its career.

Similarities:
- Both the President and Governor have the status of Constitutional Heads.
- All executive decisions are taken in their name but actual power is exercised by Council of Ministers.
- All ordinary / money bills passed must get their assent before they become an act.
- Both of them have powers to promulgate ordinances.
- All Money bills can be introduced with prior recommendation of President in the Lok Sabha and Governor in the state legislature.
- Both have clemency powers.

Topic: Part of static series under the heading – “Comparison of powers of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha”

Q) In recent years, role of Rajya Sabha has come under the scanner as an obstructionist house. Examine how the constitution makers had envisaged the role of Rajya Sabha vis a vis Lok Sabha. (250 words)

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to explain how the role of Rajya Sabha is much more than obstruction. It expects us to compare the powers of Rajya Sabha vis a vis Lok Sabha and discuss the role that it is expected to play.

Directive word
Examine – Here we have to compare the powers of Rajya Sabha vis a vis Lok Sabha, analyze the role that the upper house is supposed to play.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Discuss the first statement, why rajya sabha is seen as obstructionist in recent times.
Body – Compare the powers of Rajya Sabha vs Lok Sabha. Examine where the upper house acts as a check, how it has been cast into the role of a revisory house. Also bring out how in certain matters lok sabha does hold precedence like in the case of money bills. Examine the role that constitution makers had expected the upper house to play and an evaluation of its performance.
Conclusion – mention the importance of the upper house in our democracy and discuss some reforms through which it’s performance can be improved further.

Background:
- Ever since its inception, the role played by the Rajya Sabha for strengthening parliamentary democracy amply proves the wisdom of the founding fathers of Indian Republic.
Success of bicameralism in India owes a lot to the way the Rajya Sabha has redeemed itself as a democratic institution with proven record of its relevance not only for the body polity but also for our society and people.

Its performance in the legislative field and in the formulation and influencing the Government policies has been quite significant.

**Constitution makers view on Rajya Sabha :-**

- The justifications for the Second Chamber are as under:
  - **Second look at legislations:**
    - A Second Chamber facilitates a second look at legislations that may sometimes be the result of purely political compulsions of the ruling majority in the popular House.
  - **Wider scrutiny of legislative proposals:**
    - Also, a two-house legislative body allows scope for more talent and expertise and, therefore, wider scrutiny of legislative proposals. In other words, the Second Chamber acts as a check on hasty and ill-conceived legislations.
  - **Sharing the burden of the lower chambers:**
    - Legislatures, the world over, are grappling with increasing demand to legislate on newer areas. The Second Chambers have, therefore, become much more useful in sharing the burden of the Lower Chambers.
  - **Greater accountability:**
    - A Second Chamber provides more opportunities for scrutiny and creates an enabling atmosphere for securing greater executive accountability.
  - **Debates on public issues:**
    - A Second Chamber can hold debates on matters of wide ranging public issues which otherwise may not be held in a single chamber.
    - It also has the advantage of having some people who have excelled in different areas of life and who may not like to face the rough and tumble of the electoral politics. Such Members participate in the debates with an amount of authority and learning.
  - **Guardian of federal polity:**
    - In a federation, a Second Chamber can give representation to the component units. It can legitimately hold itself as the guardians of the state-interests in a federal polity.
  - **The makers of Indian Constitution envisaged the role of the Rajya Sabha along three axes:**
    - As a legislative chamber of elders discussing, revising or delaying legislation as per need
    - As an institution where interests of the states of the Indian Union could be projected and safeguarded and
    - As a deliberative chamber where greater and diverse experience is brought to bear on questions of significance. The essence of democracy is participatory governance. Experience the world over has shown that this ensures responsiveness and transparency.

**Why Rajya Sabha is considered as a obstructionist house :-**

- During the last two decades, India is witnessing intellectuals and academics being replaced by politicians with dubious motives. It is for this reason the quality of debates has degenerated over time and bears little resemblance to the debates that took place
- Parliament is seeing seeing shouting and slanging matches between political parties.
- The frequent stalling of proceedings in the Upper House, where the ruling party does not have a majority, has already cost the exchequer several crores this year.
- With political battle lines drawn between major political parties, the Upper House has become a hindrance to the speedy legislative process that the country urgently requires for economic growth and progress.
- Over the past 10 years it has become an avenue for political parties to accommodate their defeated politicians in the parliamentary system. The quality of debate in both houses has degenerated vastly as a result.
- Many of the Upper House members don’t take up issues pertaining to the states they represent.

**The necessity of Rajya Sabha :-**

- Apart from the coordinate powers it enjoys with the Lok Sabha, the Constitution vests some special powers in the Rajya Sabha to exercise its federal mandate as it represents States and Union territories in Parliament. Such special powers lend credence to its status as an Upper House vis-à-vis the Lok Sabha.
- **Legislation on State matters :-**
As a federal chamber, it can initiate Central intervention in the State Legislative field. Article 249 of the Constitution provides that the Rajya Sabha may pass resolution, by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the Members present and voting, to the effect that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest that Parliament should make laws with respect to any matter enumerated in the State List.

**Creation of All India Services:**
- Another exclusive power of the Rajya Sabha is contained in Article 312 of the Constitution wherein if the Rajya Sabha passes a resolution by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting declaring that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest to create one or more All India Services common to the Union and the States, Parliament will have the power to create by law such services.
- Equal right with the Lok Sabha in the election and impeachment of the President (Articles 54 and 61)
- Equal right with the Lok Sabha in the election of the Vice-President (Article 66)
- Equal right with the Lok Sabha to make law defining parliamentary privileges and also to punish for contempt (Article 105)
- Equal right with the Lok Sabha to approve the Proclamation of Emergency (issued under Article 352), Proclamations regarding failure of the Constitutional machinery in States (issued under Article 356) and even a sole right in certain circumstances
- Equal right with the Lok Sabha to receive reports and papers from various statutory authorities, namely:
  - (a) Annual Financial Statement [Article 112(1)]
  - (b) Audit Reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General of India [Article 151(1)]
  - (c) Reports of the Union Public Service Commission. [Article 323(1)]
  - (d) Reports of the Special Officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes [Article 338(2)]
  - (e) Report of the Commission to investigate the conditions of the Backward Classes [Article 340(3)]
  - (f) Report of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities [Article 350 B(2)].

**Way forward:**
- Panel consisting of the Chief Justice of India, Speaker, members of major political parties, should be vested with powers to select eminent persons to the Upper House.
- Joint sitting should be held, without waiting for six months to elapse, to overcome deadlock between the two houses.
  - The President should call a joint session whenever he finds that a deliberate attempt is being made by vested interests to stall Parliament.
  - The Constitution needs to be amended to consider even constitutional amendments in the joint session (under Article 118 of the Constitution, a joint session can be called only in matters that do not relate to the amendment of the Constitution).
- **Lessons from other nations:**
  - In this regard, India has much to learn from the functioning of parliaments in Europe and Australia, where if the bill is rejected twice in the Upper House (House of Lords/Senate), a joint sitting of both the houses is held, where the bills are passed by an absolute majority.

**Topic Part of static series under the heading – “Resolutions and motions-comparison”**

**Q) Parliament discusses matters of public importance by passing motions and resolutions inside the House. How are they different from each other? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question is pretty straightforward in its demand. The focus is on understanding the difference between motions and resolutions along with examples (for extra marks)

**Structure of the answer**
- **Introduction** – Explain that parliamentary proceedings make use of several devices to discuss matters of public importance such as motions and resolutions.
Body – explain what motions are, highlight that it is mentioned in Rule 184 of Lok Sabha. Mention that there are various types of motions and resolutions form part of substantive motions. Explain what resolutions are. Explain the difference between the two – all resolutions can be voted upon. Give examples.

Conclusion – Emphasize on the importance of the two devices.

Background:-
- Motions and resolutions are procedural devices to raise a discussion in the House on a matter of general public interest. With few exceptions, the process of debate in the House is initiated by a member or Minister by making a motion.

Motions:-
- In its widest sense, the term ‘motion’ means any proposal submitted to the House for eliciting its decision.
- It is a formal proposal made to the House by a member requesting the House to do something, order something to be done or express an opinion with regard to some matter.
- Any matter to be decided by the House must be brought in front of the House in the form of a motion and once the motion is adopted by the House, it becomes the decision or opinion of the House as a whole.
- Motions therefore are the basis of parliamentary proceedings.
- A motion can be moved only with the approval of the presiding officer – Speaker in Lok Sabha, Chairman in Rajya Sabha.
- Motions and resolutions can be moved by private members as well as Ministers. When they are moved by the former, they are called private members’ motions or resolutions.
- **There are 3 kinds of motions – substantive, substitute and subsidiary motions:**
  - Substantive motion is a self contained independent proposal submitted for the approval of the House and drafted in such a way as to be capable of expressing a decision of the House. Other examples of substantive motions are motion of no confidence, motions for election or removal of Speaker, Deputy Speaker etc.
  - **Substitute motions** are motions moved in substitution of the original motion and proposing an alternative to it. This motion can be moved by another member before the commencement of discussion on the original motion. While the subject of both the motions is same, they differ on the matter of decision.
  - **Subsidiary motions** are motions which depends upon or relates to another motion or follows upon some proceedings in the House. By itself it has no meaning and is not capable of stating the decision of the House without reference to the original motion or proceedings of the House.

Resolutions:-
- Resolution are used to express opinion of the house or Resolutions come under ‘substantive motions’ The resolution passed by parliament come under ‘government resolutions’.
- It is a self-contained independent proposal submitted for the approval of the House and drafted in such away as to be capable of expressing a decision of the House. A resolution may be in the form
  - of declaration of opinion or
  - of a recommendation or
  - so as to record either approval or disapproval by the House of an act or policy of Government or
  - convey a message or
  - commend, urge or request an action or
  - call attention to a matter or situation for consideration by government or
  - in such other form as the Speaker may consider appropriate.
- For instance in case of a natural disaster like the floods that occurred in different states of India, the house can pass a resolution recommending the immediate measures to be taken by the Government for relief and rehabilitation of the victims.

Differences:-
- **By a motion, the House discusses a matter**, by a resolution the House declares its own opinion.
- All resolutions should be voted upon. This factor differentiates them from motions which are otherwise similar to resolutions. All resolutions should be voted upon where as not all motions are voted.
The difference between a motion and resolution is more of procedure than content, i.e., the content of a resolution and a motion can be the same but the manner in which it is adopted and the decision on the content will differ.

All resolutions come under the category of substantive motions but all motions are not resolutions.

**Topic:** part of static series under the heading – “Various instruments to exercise parliamentary control over executive”

**Q) Examine the various ways in which parliament exercises control over the executive? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to describe the various areas in which parliament exercises control, and the mechanism of such control.

**Directive word**
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – mention that parliament is the apex body in a democracy, represents will of the people and exercises control over executive.

**Body**

- Discuss the areas in which parliament exercises control over executive – administrative, legislative, financial, representative, collective and individual responsibility
- Examine the various tools at parliament’s disposal to exercise such control – question hour, motions and resolutions etc
- Discuss the impact of such tools

**Conclusion** – explain the relationship between parliament and executive and why is it necessary for parliament to exercise control over executive.

**Background:-**

- Through its oversight function, Parliament holds the government accountable and ensures that policies are efficient and in keeping with the needs of citizens. In addition, parliamentary oversight is essential to prevent arbitrary and unconstitutional action by the government.

**The way parliament exercises control over executive are :-**

- **Accountability on the floor of the House**
  - **Question Hour**
    - Question Hour allows Members of Parliament (MPs) to pose questions to ministers relating to government policies, and hold the government accountable for its actions. Question Hour functioned for an average of 42% of its scheduled time, largely as a result of disruptions.
    - When Question Hour is disrupted, it is not made up by extending the scheduled time for the sitting or through meeting on additional days. Recently, in order to reduce disruptions, Rajya Sabha moved Question Hour from the first hour of sitting to the second hour of sitting.
  - **Debates and motions**
    - Debates and motions play a central role in parliament’s oversight function by allowing MPs to initiate discussions and seek clarifications on government policies.
    - In the past, MPs have raised issues such as price rise, improvement of infrastructure in backward areas, to the provision of welfare schemes for vulnerable communities through debates.
    - Motions: motions allow for voting at the end of the discussion. There are three types of motions which assist in the oversight function of the Parliament: No Confidence Motions, Adjournment Motions, and Rule 184 in the Lok Sabha (corresponding to Rule 167 in the Rajya Sabha). The first two can only be moved in the Lok Sabha.
  - **Zero Hour**
    - The hour following Question Hour is popularly called Zero Hour and is used by MPs to raise urgent matters.
Typically, MPs use this time to make statements on urgent issues using Rule 377/Special Mention. This time is also used for laying papers such as annual reports of government institutions, CAG reports, etc.

Recently, Rajya Sabha has decided to start the day with Zero Hour, followed by Question Hour.

**Parliamentary committees which scrutinize government policies :-**
- Given the large number of issues which Parliament must address, parliamentary committees, comprising MPs, examine Bills, budgets of ministries, and policies of the government. Committees allow for more informed debate in Parliament, and they also provide an avenue for citizens to engage with Parliament. Committees can either be permanent or appointed temporarily.
- Ordinances, proclamation of emergency etc can be done only when parliament ratifies showing the parliamentary oversight on the executive.

**Administrative Control:**
- Generally, Parliament does not interfere in administrative matters but if any policy is formed in wrong way, Parliament may ask for explanations.

**Legislative Control:**
- While enacting any law in Parliament, the Government needs to explain its all provisions and answer questions asked by the MPs. Thus, it does not allow the executive to enact any arbitrary acts.

**Financial Control:**
- The Government is required to pass budget and financial bill in both the Houses. Parliament does not allow the Government to expense unnecessarily. The Government cannot withdraw any amount of money from the consolidates fund without Parliamentary authority.

**Representative Control:**
- MPs represents different sections of people. They ask questions to the executives as representatives and thus they save the interest of their people through representation.

**Collective and Individual Responsibility:**
- The whole council of ministers in answerable to Lok Sabha for any step taken by any of the minister. Even the minister is answerable individually to the Lok Sabha for steps taken by his ministry. If Lok Sabha does not approve the act of the minister. The whole cabinet has to resign, because of collective responsibility.

**Concerns:**
- Ordinances have become the preferred means of introducing legislative enactments that successive governments from every shade of political opinion have made liberal use of this mechanism. So this needs to be under check unless absolutely necessary
- The passing of bill as a money bill is the one of the executive’s action to bypass Rajya sabha effectively making the bicameral legislature as unicameral. The recent case of introduction of bill related to Aadhar Card is a proof of it. Appointing parliamentary secretaries to assist council of ministers is another case. Thus, the parliamentary secretaries being legislators may not finely balance the role of a legislator and assisting the executive. These need to be avoided.
- Limits on the number of parliamentary sittings has allowed the executive to avoid demonetisation-related queries, undermining the legislature’s power. Last year’s winter session is for 22 days

**How to strengthen the oversight?**
- **Allowing Parliament to convene itself**
  - Currently, Parliament does not have the power to convene itself. The Constitution mandates that Parliament be convened by the President at least once every six months. In this context, granting Parliament the power to convene at the request of a required number of MPs may allow Parliament to address issues more promptly, even during inter session period. However, this requires a constitutional amendment.

- **Strengthening the role of the opposition**
  - Within the institution of Parliament, the opposition can play a central role in monitoring the government and holding it accountable. Opposition parties could play a greater role in deciding the daily agenda of Parliament, or alternatively, time could be set aside each week for opposition parties to set the agenda.
• Internationally, the UK allows the opposition party to determine the agenda for 20 days of each session of Parliament, and Canada for 22 days. This practice could strengthen the ability of the opposition to hold the government accountable, through **allowing for greater specialisation in tracking the government.**

• **Revising certain rules of procedure of Parliament related to debates**
  
  • **Increasing accountability in Question Hour:**
    - At present, the Prime Minister is only required to answer questions that pertain to ministries allocated to him. The UK has a Prime Minister’s Question Time during which the Prime Minister answers question on the government’s policies, across sectors. India can look into this suggestion.
  
  • **Strengthening discussions:**
    - Currently, the Speaker/Chairman can determine whether to admit a discussion as a debate or a motion. In practice, there is often disagreement between the government and the opposition on the rule under which a discussion is conducted, as motions are put to vote. An **alternative practice could be to allow a sufficiently large group of MPs to decide whether an issue should be introduced as a voting motion, or alternatively a debate.**

• **Examination of reports**
  - Given that a range of parliamentary committee reports are presented in Parliament, **institutional mechanisms may be developed to highlight issues raised in these reports.**

**Conclusion:**

- Parliament should be a space for policy and not for politics. India needs to undertake reforms to ensure that it is recast as such by ensuring a more robust public representatives.

**Topic:** Part of static series under the heading – “Parliamentary privileges and issues involved in them”

**Q)** Examine whether parliamentary privileges in a constitutional democracy like India is an antithesis to “equality before law”? (250 words)

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to explain what parliamentary privileges and equality before law mean, how it might appear that they are antithesis to each other. Examine why Parliamentary privilege are important. Discuss what happens if the privileges are codified.

**Directive word**

Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

**Structure of the answer**

- Explain what Parliamentary privileges and what forms do they take
- Examine what equality before law entails – absence of privileges, no person above law and equal subjection of law to each and every person.
- Mention in brief why they might appear contradictory
- Highlight why Parliamentary privileges were conceived – efficiency, deal with unseen situation etc
- Examine the issues that are being faced on account of parliamentary privileges

**Conclusion** – Summarize why the two are not at loggerheads.

**Parliamentary privileges:**

- Parliamentary privileges are defined in Article 105 of the Indian Constitution and those of State legislatures in Article 194.
- The members of Parliament are exempted from any civil or criminal liability for any statement made or act done in the course of their duties. The privileges are claimed only when the person is a member of the house. As soon as he ends to be a member, the privileges are said to be called off.
- The privileges given to the members are necessary for exercising constitutional functions. These privileges are essential so that the proceedings and functions can be made in a disciplined and undisturbed manner.
- The Constitution confers certain privileges on legislative institutions with the idea of protecting freedom of speech and expression in the House and ensuring that undue influence, pressure or coercion is not brought on the legislature in the course of its functioning.
Privileges of Parliamentarians

- **Freedom of Speech:**
  - According to the Indian Constitution, the members of Parliament enjoy freedom of speech and expression.
  - No member can be taken to task anywhere outside the four walls of the House (e.g. court of law) or cannot be discriminated against for expressing his/her views in the House and its Committees.

- **Freedom from Arrest:**
  - It is understood that no member shall be arrested in a civil case 40 days before and after the adjournment of the House (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha) and also when the House is in session. It also means that no member can be arrested within the precincts of the Parliament without the permission of the House to which he/she belongs.

- **Exemption from attendance as witnesses:**
  - The members of Parliament also enjoy freedom from attendance as witnesses.

Privileges of Parliament

- **Right to publish debates and proceedings:**
  - Though by convention, the Parliament does not prohibit the press to publish its proceedings, yet technically the House has every such right to forbid such publication.
  - Again, while a member has the privilege of freedom of speech in Parliament, he has no right to publish it outside Parliament.
  - Anyone violating this rule can be held responsible for any libelous matter it may contain under the common law rules.

- **Right to exclude strangers:**
  - Each house of Parliament enjoys the right to exclude strangers (no-members or visitors) from the galleries at any time and to resolve to debate with closed doors.

- **Right to punish members and outsiders for breach of its privileges:**
  - In India, the Parliament has been given punitive powers to punish those who are adjudged guilty of contempt of the House. Such contempt can be committed by the members of any House or any outsider. When a member of the House is involved for parliamentary misbehavior or commits contempt he can be expelled from the House.

- **Right to regulate the internal affairs of the House:**
  - The House has the right to regulate its internal affairs. A member of the House is free to say whatever he likes subject only to the internal discipline of the House or the Committee concerned.

Equality before law:

- It entails absence of privileges, no person above law and equal subjection of law to each and every person.

How are parliamentary privileges antithesis to equality before law:

- Unfortunately, breach of privilege is invoked for the ostensible reason of protecting the image of the House on the whole or its individual members; too often, it is a thinly disguised mechanism to insulate elected representatives from criticism.

- Without a law codifying the legislative privileges, there is little merit in subjecting anyone, leave alone a journalist, to penal action for allegedly breaching a legislator’s privilege, unless there is a move or attempt to obstruct the functioning of either the House or its members.

- The problem also stems from the Constitution’s provisions on privileges and powers of the legislature.
  - These provisions are loosely worded: Article 194 (3) states that the powers, privileges and immunities of a House of the Legislature of a State until defined shall be those of that House and of its members and committees.

- It is sometimes used to counter media criticism of legislators and as a substitute for legal proceedings. All persons have a right to trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

- Breach of privilege laws allow politicians to become judges in their own cause, raising concerns of conflict of interest and violating basic fair trial guarantees.

- There is also misuse of the privileges given to them because they do not have many restriction on the rights. They have the power to be the judge of their own proceedings, regulate their proceedings, what constitutes the breach and what punishment should be given for the breach, are solely decided by them.
The power vested in them is too wide as compared to the fundamental rights vested in the citizens. With no codification of the privileges, they have gained an undefined power because there is no expressed provision to state the limitations on their powers.

**Way forward:-**

- **Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah** heading the Constitution Review Commission also recommended to define and delimit the privileges for the free and independent functioning of the legislature. This is based on the apprehension that codification will involve interference of the court as the matters would be presented in the court of law.
- **Supreme Court** in Keshav Singh's case observed that the privileges conferred on the members are subject to the fundamental rights. The Supreme Court has also held that any conflict arising between the privileges and the fundamental rights would be resolved by adopting harmonious construction.
- If the privileges are not in accordance with the fundamental rights then the very essence of democracy for the protection of the rights of the citizen will be lost.
  - **It is the duty of the parliament not to violate any other rights which are guaranteed by the constitution.**
  - The members should also use their privileges wisely and not misuse them. They should always keep in mind that the powers do not make them corrupt.
  - The parliament cannot adopt every privilege that is present in the house of commons but should adopt only those privileges which accordingly suits our Indian democracy.

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**Q) Discuss about the various kinds of jurisdiction that SC enjoys?(250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to explain the various jurisdiction of the SC, how they differ from each other.

**Directive word**
Discuss – Your discussion should concern itself with explaining the various Jurisdiction of SC, the relevant constitutional provisions and how they differ from each other

**Structure of the answer**
In your answer, discuss about the various forms of Jurisdiction of SC – original, appellate, writ, revisory and advisory jurisdiction. Mention the relevant constitutional provisions, examples and how they differ from each other.

**Various kinds of jurisdiction :-**

**Supreme Court has original, appellate and advisory jurisdiction.**

**Original jurisdiction:-**
- As per article 32, Supreme Court is the guardian or protector of fundamental rights and any person whose fundamental rights are violated can directly approach the Supreme Court for remedy.
  - Supreme Court has from time to time interpreted the fundamental rights and has protected the Citizens of India from any unconstitutional legislation which breach their fundamental rights.
  - Any matter regarding the enforcement of Fundamental Rights comes under the Original Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
- Apart from this, Supreme Court is the Highest Interpreter of the Constitutionand tribunal for final settlements of the disputes between Center and States as well as States and States. Supreme Court has original Jurisdiction in matters related any dispute between:-
  - Government of India and one or more states
  - Government of India and State(s) on one side and State(s) in other side State(s) and State(s)
  - The dispute should involve a question whether of law or fact on which depends existence of a legal right which the court is called upon to determine.

**Writ Jurisdiction:-**
- SC is empowered to issue directions, orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari to enforce them.
**Appellate Jurisdiction**
- Supreme Court is the Highest Court of appeal and the writs and decrees of Supreme Court run throughout the country. The cases come to the Supreme Court in the form of appeals against the judgments of the lower courts and this is called appellate jurisdiction. Appellate jurisdiction involves the Constitution, Civil and criminal matters.
- An appeal can be made in the Supreme Court against any judgment, decree or final order of the High Court in the territory of India, whether in a civil criminal or other proceedings, if the High Court Certified that the case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution. Even of the High Court refuses to give such certificate, the Supreme Court can grant special leave to appeal if the court is satisfied that the case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution.
- In every matter that involves the interpretation of the constitution whether, civil, criminal or any other proceeding, the Supreme Court has been made the final authority to elaborate the meaning and intent of the Constitution.
- As far as criminal cases are concerned there are 3 situations in which criminal appeals in Supreme Court are permitted: (Article 134)
  - The High Court has on appeal reverse the order of acquittal of accused person and sentenced him to death.
  - The High Court has withdrawn for trial before itself any case from any subordinate court and such trial convicted the accused person and sentenced him to death.
  - High Court certifies that the case is worth appeal to the Supreme Court.
- The Supreme Court has also a very wide appellate jurisdiction over all Courts and Tribunals in India in as much as it may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal under Article 136 of the Constitution from any judgment, decree, determination, sentence or order in any cause or matter passed or made by any Court or Tribunal in the territory of India.

**Advisory Jurisdiction**
- Article 143 (Power of President to consult Supreme Court) discusses the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
  - If the president feels that a question of law or fact has arisen or is likely to arise and the question is of such a nature and of such public importance that it is expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court upon it, he can refer the same to Supreme Court for its advisory Opinion.
  - Such an opinion is not binding on the president.

**Revisory Jurisdiction**
- Provision for revisory jurisdiction of Supreme Court of India is given in Article 137 of Constitution of India.
- Article 137 states that subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament or any rules made under article 145, the Supreme Court shall have power to review any judgment pronounced or order made by

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**Q) Discuss whether separation of power in India, as provided by Indian constitution, is rigorous and whether it is more separation of functions rather than separation of power? (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question**
By rigorous separation of power, we mean that whether each wing of government is executive, legislature, and judiciary function in silos or whether there are linkages between their functioning. By separation of function rather than of power, we mean the linkage between the executive and legislative where the minister derive their legitimacy from legislature. The question expects us to discuss these issues.

**Directive word**
Discuss – Here in your discussion, you need to explain what it meant by rigorous separation of power and separation of function rather than power. Keeping the constitution and political system of India in mind we need to provide answers to the nature of SoP in India in theory and in practice.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Explain what is the meaning of separation of power, rigorous SoP and separation of function.
Body – Discuss the nature of SoP in India. In the first part, discuss the checks and balances in practice and in theory which ensure that the three wings do not work in silos. Thus the nature of SoP in India is not rigorous. In the second part, discuss the judgment of SC in Ram Jawaya Case and mention that the executive derives its legitimacy from Parliament and are a part of Parliament. This it is more like separation of function.

Conclusion – Summarize your answer based on arguments provided above.

Background:-
- Constitution of India embraces the idea of separation of powers in an implied manner. Despite there being no express provision recognizing the doctrine of separation of powers in its absolute form, the Constitution does make the provisions for a reasonable separation of functions and powers between the three organs of Government.

Separation of powers :-
- Constitution of India lays down a functional separation of the organs of the State in the following manner:-
  - **Article 50**: State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive. This is for the purpose of ensuring the independence of judiciary.
  - **Article 122 and 212**: validity of proceedings in Parliament and the Legislatures cannot be called into question in any Court. This ensures the separation and immunity of the legislatures from judicial intervention on the allegation of procedural irregularity.
  - Judicial conduct of a judge of the Supreme Court and the High Courts cannot be discussed in the Parliament and the State Legislature, according to Article **121 and 211 of the Constitution**.
  - **Articles 53 and 154** respectively, provide that the executive power of the Union and the State shall be vested with the President and the Governor and they enjoy immunity from civil and criminal liability.
  - **Article 361**: the President or the Governor shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office.

- In India, there are three distinct activities in the Government through which the will of the people are expressed. The legislative organ of the state makes laws, the executive forces them and the judiciary applies them to the specific cases arising out of the breach of law.
- Each organ while performing its activities tends to interfere in the sphere of working of another functionary because a strict demarcation of functions is not possible in their dealings with the general public. Thus, even when acting in ambit of their own power, overlapping functions tend to appear amongst these organs.

Separation of functions :-
- In India, strict separation of powers is not followed as it is followed in the U.S. But a system of checks and balance has been embedded so much so that the courts are competent to strike down the unconstitutional amendments made by the legislature.
- **In India, separation of functions is followed and not of powers and hence, the principle is not abided in its rigidity.** Besides the functional overlapping, the Indian system also lacks the separation of personnel amongst the three departments.
- **Judgment of SC in Ram Jawaya Case:-**
  - Supreme Court of India (SC) had to deal with the question of extent of executive power and executive function in a situation where the executive was alleged to have violated the fundamental rights of the citizen vested in them by the Constitution of India without a legislative sanction. This landmark judgment delivered by our apex court in the wake of our independence is now acting as a touchstone for understanding the federal feature of the Indian Constitution through separation of powers.
  - Even years after this judgment, it becomes an important case not only in understanding separation of powers in Indian context but also worldwide as it discusses the basis for the new understanding of the doctrine of separation of powers in present times.
  - Also the executive derives its legitimacy from Parliament and are a part of Parliament. So this is more like separation of function.
Q) Examine whether Article 246 is the cornerstone of centre state legislative relations? Discuss whether Concurrent list created confusion with respect to extent of legislative power of centre and states?(250 words)

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to explain what Article 246 of Constitution entails, examine whether it is the defining feature of the legislative relations between centre and state. In the next part, we need to analyze whether the provision of CL creates ease of legislation or leaves room for confusion.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.
Discuss – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Explain Article 246 of Indian constitution.

Body
- Examine how the division of subjects into Union List, state list and concurrent list helped immensely in ironing our potential disputes in centre state legislative relations
- Examine whether creation of concurrent list creates confusion or it helps in knowing what subjects to legislate on. Discuss the suggestion given by various committees on centre state relations like Punchhi, 2nd ARC etc

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

Background :-
- Article 246 deals with the distribution of the subjects of legislation between the Centre and the States. The Constitution under this article provides for a threefold distribution in the form of the following three lists:-
  - Union List or List I consists of 97 subjects on which the Parliament alone can legislate. All subjects of national interest such as foreign affairs, defence and so on are included in this list and the subjects are exclusive to the centre. Under any given circumstances states cannot legislate on the subjects in this list.
  - State List of List II consists of 66 subjects on which the states can legislate. All subjects of local interest such as law and order are placed in this list.
  - Concurrent List of List III consists of 47 subjects on which both the states and the centre can legislate.

Concurrent list created confusion :-
- It is used without consultation, that it is not exercised to deepen inter-dependence and co-operation but to stress dominance of the Union point of view.
- There is, however, no formal institutional structure that requires mandatory consultation between the Union and the States in the area of legislation under the Concurrent List which covers several items of crucial importance to national economy and security.
- The autonomy of states is affected as states and centre can both legislate in such matters and ultimately centre’s law prevails.

Concurrent list did not create confusion and shows how article 246 as the cornerstone of legislative relations between centre and states :-
- Concurrent List provides a fine balance between the need for uniformity in the national laws and creating a simultaneous jurisdiction for the States to accommodate the diversities and peculiarities of different regions.
- This also provides a distinguishing feature in the federal scheme envisaged by the framers of the Constitution.
- This is further reinforced by placing a mode of altering the provisions in lists I,II and III in the 7th schedule among other matters of provisions substantive in nature and basic to the structure of the Constitution that fall within the purview of the proviso to clause (2) of Article 368.

Clear provisions set:-
- Bill for amending the list in the 7th schedule has to be passed by Parliament by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than 2/3rd of the members of the House present and voting – and followed by ratification of legislatures of not less than ½ of the States.
This mechanism provides a statutory tilt in favour of consultation and cooperation with the States in matters pertaining to the Legislative sphere and inherent balance between flexibility and rigidity.

In particular, the Concurrent List, List III in the Seventh Schedule under article 246 (2), has to be regarded as a valuable instrument for consolidating and furthering the principle of cooperative and creative federalism that has made a major contribution to nation building.

Sarkaria Commission observed that there has been a pervasive trend towards greater centralization of powers over the years and narrow personal interests have been given priority over larger national interest. It did not favour limiting of the powers of the union or transfer of various subjects to state or concurrent lists. However, it recommended a process of consultation by the centre on all concurrent subjects, which is not being done at present.

Punchi commission further clarified that there should be a mechanism whereby the centre consults states before introducing a bill on concurrent list items. This consultation mechanism should be through inter-state council. Centre should occupy only that much of subjects in concurrent list or any other overlapping jurisdiction which is absolutely needed to achieve uniformity of policy in national interest.

Suggestions:-
- Individual and collective consultation with the States should be undertaken through the Inter-State Council established under article 263 of the Constitution. Further, the Inter-State Council Order, 1990, issued by the President may clearly specify in 4(b) of the order the subjects that should form part of consultation in the Inter-State Council.
- Suggestion for a new entry in the Concurrent List – Management of Disasters and Emergencies, Natural or Man-made are made.

Topic- Part of static series under the heading – “centre state executive relations”

Q) Discuss the role that Finance Commission and Inter state commission play in improving centre state administrative relations?(250 words)

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to mention in brief about FC and iSC, the nature of centre state executive relations and how SC and ISC prove helpful in this regard.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention that India is a federal country and several scholars add a unitary bias to the description. Managing centre state administrative relations has been a source of contention, and ISC and FC play a key role in this regard

Body
- Explain briefly about the constitutional provisions related to centre state administrative relations, ISC and FC.
- Discuss the pros and cons of how FC has impacted CS administrative relations and similarly for ISC as well.
- Highlight the recommendations and observations of several committees formed in this regard, and how the focus on ISC as a forum to iron out issues and discuss opportunities has been regularly suggested.

Conclusion – Summarize arguments made above and give way forward.

Background:-
- The centre collects majority of the tax revenue as it enjoys scale economies in the collection of certain taxes. States have the responsibility of delivering public goods in their areas due to their proximity to local issues and needs. Sometimes, this leads to states incurring expenditures higher than the revenue generated by them. Further, due to vast regional disparities some states are unable to raise adequate resources as compared to others. To address these imbalances, the Finance Commission recommends the extent of central funds to be shared with states.
- It is important to note that the very first reason the Constitution gives for setting up the institution is that it will be useful when it comes to “inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between
states”. The other two are to discuss subjects for which the components of the Indian union have common interests, and to figure out how to coordinate policy.

**Finance commission:-**

- **The Finance Commission is a constitutional body formed every five years to give suggestions on centre-state financial relations.**
  - Each Finance Commission is required to make recommendations on: (i) sharing of central taxes with states, (ii) distribution of central grants to states, (iii) measures to improve the finances of states to supplement the resources of panchayats and municipalities, and (iv) any other matter referred to it.
  - **Composition of transfers:-**
    - The central taxes devolved to states are untied funds, and states can spend them according to their discretion. Over the years, tax devolved to states has constituted over 80% of the total central transfers to states.
    - The centre also provides grants to states and local bodies which must be used for specified purposes. These grants have ranged between 12% to 19% of the total transfers.
  - Over the years the core mandate of the Commission has remained unchanged, though it has been given the additional responsibility of examining various issues. For instance, the 12th Finance Commission evaluated the fiscal position of states and offered relief to those that enacted their Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management laws. The 13th and the 14th Finance Commission assessed the impact of GST on the economy. The 13th Finance Commission also incentivised states to increase forest cover by providing additional grants.
  - Several other federal countries, such as Pakistan, Malaysia, and Australia have similar bodies which recommend the manner in which central funds will be shared with states.
  - **The 14th Finance Commission's recommendations ushered in a new era of fiscal federalism in India.** Devolution to the states significantly went up from 32 per cent to 42 per cent. While most countries have found it difficult to finance federal transfers of about 30 per cent to the provinces, India has taken it to 42 per cent.
  - The composition of money share has changed. Now states have the autonomy to manage a significant share of the central tax pool and they will now have greater autonomy both on the revenue and expenditure fronts.
    - **Will move the country toward greater fiscal federalism,** conferring more fiscal autonomy on the states.
    - **States will now spend more on capacity building and concentrate on sectors that are lacking.**
    - States like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, which spend a lot on infrastructure, will continue with the trend. Also Bihar, which has in the recent past increased its spending on infrastructure, will have more funds because of the devolution.
    - Based on analysing recent state finances, additional transfers toward the states as a result of the FFC will improve the overall fiscal deficit of the combined central and state government.
    - Moving from CAS to FFC transfers will increase the overall progressivity of resource transfers to the states.
    - However recently finance commission has been criticized for the:-
      - **There is an upward trend in the fiscal deficits of states.**
      - The inter-governmental transfer system has become overly complex with different sharing arrangements for different taxes
      - The spending autonomy of the states, combined with their ability to borrow, has obstructed efforts at consolidating public finances
      - There is little incentive for states to improve revenue performances and revenue-sharing arrangements have led to pro-cyclical policies at the state level.
      - **Terms of 15 th finance commission undermine federalism:-**
The ToR want to curtail borrowing by States from the present 3% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to 1.7% if the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Review Committee has its way with its recommendation.

- India has just started exercising borrowing rights as recommended by the 14th Finance Commission. If this is reversed, this will severely curtail capital expenditure of States
- The foremost objective of the Finance Commission is an equitable distribution of financial resources between the two units of the Union. The States in India today neither have the resources to fulfill their tasks as laid down in the Constitution, nor do they have the right to raise such resources due to the government policy and GST reduced states independence even further

**Inter state commission:**
- Inter State council is a constitutional body set up on the basis of provisions in Article 263 of the Constitution of India by a Presidential Order in 1990 on recommendation of Sarkaria Commission. Article 263 of the Constitution envisages establishment of an institutional mechanism to facilitate coordination of policies and their implementation between the Union and the State Governments.
- Inter-State Council is a recommendatory body and it investigates and discusses such subjects, in which some or all of the States or the Union and one or more of the States have a common interest, for better coordination of policy and action with respect to that subject. It also deliberates upon such other matters of general interests to the States as may be referred by the Chairman to the Council. Its duties include:
  - Inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between/among States
  - Investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all of the States, or the Union and one or more of the States have a common interest
  - Making recommendations upon any such subject for the better coordination of policy and action with respect to that subject
- It is also different from the Finance Commission, whose members are technocrats tasked with providing a framework for the distribution of taxes.

**Necessity of inter state council:**
- Regional divergence could lead to further inter-state tensions and matters could get worse once the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies is unfrozen in 2026. A rejuvenated Inter-State Council will thus have an important role to play in the coming years, especially since its members are the political leaders of their respective states.
- It can reach a consensus on role of Governor.
- It can decide upon the use of article 356 and other such constitutional matters
- Other grievances of states like shifting of items from state to concurrent list can be addressed.
- Bridge trust deficit between center and states.
- Increased accountability and enthusiasm, making executives proactive.
- Inter state council has constitutional backing unlike NITI Aayog and other bodies.

**Issues:**
- Instead governments are keen on utilising platforms provided by non constituional bodies like NITI Aayog.
- Till 1967, most states in India were under rule of a common party and it was easier to resolve inter-state disputes.
- After 1967, other parties or coalitions than the one running at centre or neighbouring states started ruling. These governments with different opinions and political visions were unable to solve the disputes in inter-state problems.
- Even though by November 2017 the ISC was reconstituted with the Prime Minister as its Chairman, and with membership comprising six Union ministers and all Chief Ministers, no effort has been made to widen its functions.

**Way forward:**
- Setting up of this council was based on Sarkaria Commission recommendations. It was set up in 1990 but not a single meeting was held for long time. However, even today, the Inter-state Council has been largely under-utilized and ignored.
Q) Examine why disinvestment is necessary? Analyze whether there is a need to relook at the policy of disinvestment? (250 words)

Why this question
Disinvestment, especially after the attempt at strategic sale of Air Asia, is in news often and quite important for mains.

Key demand of the question
The question is basically a static question, where the points mentioned in the article can be incorporated to embellish your answer. We need to examine the need of disinvestment, discuss the macro features of the policy of disinvestment and analyze in light of examples highlighted in the article, whether there is a need to have a relook at it.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Highlight that the recent attempt at air India sale, and the hesitant approach in case of IDBI etc shows the reticence of government towards disinvestment.

Body –
- Mention the benefits of disinvestment
- role of the government versus the market was sought to be redefined
- loss-making public enterprises were sought to be revived
- Inability of the government to be present in all function and no necessity of it as well etc
- discuss the policy of disinvestment
- Public Sector Undertakings are the wealth of the Nation and to ensure this wealth rests in the hands of the people, promote public ownership of CPSE
- While pursuing disinvestment through minority stake sale in listed CPSEs, the Government will retain majority shareholding, i.e. at least 51 per cent of the shareholding and management control of the Public Sector Undertakings
- Strategic disinvestment by way of sale of substantial portion of Government shareholding in identified CPSEs upto 50 per cent or more, alongwith transfer of management control
- Examine whether this has yielded results. Highlight that public sector is wary of government partnership, objectives of LPG to be met etc. Also discuss why there is a need to remain cautious with respect to disinvestment.

Conclusion – Discuss what should be the way forward.

Background :-
- Recently there have been issues with the disinvestment of IDBI bank and Air India airline showing the issues associated with disinvestment in India.

Disinvestment:-
- Disinvestment, or divestment, refers to the act of a business or government selling or liquidating an asset or subsidiary or the process of dilution of a government’s stake in a PSU (Public Sector Undertaking).

Why disinvestment is necessary?
- **Disinvestment** allows the transferring of the Indian government’s enormous public debt of its PSU’s to the Indian private sector. By transferring the debt the Indian government’s overall debt becomes greatly reduced.

- **Disinvestment also eliminates the taxpayer’s exposure to the monetary risk of PSU’s** by transferring the exposure to the private sector where private stakeholders are willing step in and assume the monetary risk.

- Disinvesting in PSU’s also enables the **Indian government to raise funds** for so that the government can invest in improving its current physical and social infrastructure.

- Disinvestment **allows the reallocation of PSU resources such as manpower, real estate, technological, and operational infrastructure to critical governmental sectors** that require urgent assistance.

- **Sick PSU’s :-**
  - Disinvestment forces financially sick PSU companies, through privatization, to either become healthy (profitable) enterprises or close down as a unhealthy business due to pressure from competing companies in the private sector.
  
  - Disinvestment of PSU’s in India, i.e. the hotel industry, would bring **more competition into various private sectors** thus dramatically improving the quality of service for the customer through the PSU having to compete in a competitive private market.

- **Disinvestment helps to promote broader share ownership for the citizens of India** and also helps in the development of the capital market in India.

- Disinvestment allows government assets allocated for profit-making ventures to instead be reallocated for use in non profit activities or **social causes** thus helping to strengthen both the non profit activities and social causes.

- Reduces financial burden on the Government.
- Improves public finances.
- Introduces competition and market discipline.
- Funds growth.
- Encourages wider share of ownership.
- Depoliticizes non-essential services.

**Disinvestment policy:-**

- The salient features of the Policy are:
  - Public Sector Undertakings are the wealth of the Nation and to ensure this wealth rests in the hands of the people, promote public ownership of CPSEs
  
  - While pursuing disinvestment through minority stake sale in listed CPSEs, the Government will retain majority shareholding, i.e. at least 51 per cent of the shareholding and management control of the Public Sector Undertakings
  
  - Strategic disinvestment by way of sale of substantial portion of Government shareholding in identified CPSEs upto 50 per cent or more, alongwith transfer of management control.

**There is a need to relook at the policy of disinvestment :-**

- Government has mostly used disinvestment for fiscal reasons rather than growth objectives.
- Process of disinvestment is not favoured socially as it is against the interests of socially disadvantaged people.
- Loss making units don’t attract investment so easily.
- Over the years the policy of divestment has increasingly become a tool to raise resources to cover the fiscal deficit with little focus on market discipline or strategic objective.
- Sometimes with the emergence of private monopolies consumer welfare will be reduced.
- Mere change of ownership from public to private does not ensure higher efficiency and productivity.
- It may lead to retrenchment of workers who will be deprived of the means of their livelihood.
- Private sector governed as they are by profit motive has a tendency to use capital intensive techniques which will worsen unemployment problem in India.

**Way forward :-**

- **Define the priority sectors** for the government based on its strategic interests.
- **Investment in PSU’s has to be in terms of generation of adequate social and strategic returns.**
- Financial return cannot be the sole reason for investment in PSUs. They have to **serve social/strategic purposes**. The key role of a PSU is to maintain competition in the sector and limit excessive monopoly.
Government ownership is required for sectors with strategic relevance such as defence, natural resources, etc. The government should, therefore, exit non-strategic sectors such as hotels, soaps, airlines, travel agencies and the manufacture and sale of alcohol.

The outlook towards strategic divestment should move from the current policy of emphasizing on public ownership and retaining majority shareholding to looking at the strategic interest.

It is important to realize that ownership is not a substitute for regulation. Therefore, instead of creating PSUs in non-priority sectors, the government should look into strengthening the regulatory framework that ensures efficient market conditions. The regulations should also ensure that the basic necessities of the consumers are met.

**Conclusion :-**

- It is time that divestment is not seen as an option to cover for short-term fiscal gains; instead, it should be part of a strategic plan to improve the production of goods and services in India.

**Q) Discuss how MEIS aims to incentivize exports from India, and increase the employment opportunities. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

MEIS and SEIS are one of the key schemes under Foreign Trade Policy (2015-20) of India. Under MEIS various benefits are provided to merchandise exports from India. The issue is related to GS-3 syllabus under the following heading: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment. Government Budgeting.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to write in detail about the MEIS, its salient features and how it will help in creating employment opportunities in India.

**Directive word**

Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which directs us to write in detail about the key demand of the question.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- write a few lines about the FTP of India and mention MEIS along with SEIS and other export promotion schemes.

**Body**–

- Discuss the salient features/provisions of MEIS. e.g notified products to notified countries; brand specific rate vs industry based rate; 2-5% of value of exports; freely transferable duty free scrips etc.
- Discuss how it will help in generating employment. E.g special provision for sending items less than 25000 Rs value through courier, which will help small businesses, role of e-commerce in the MEIS, more foreign exchange, benefit to manpower intensive industries etc.

**Conclusion**- Form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the overall issue.

**Background :-**

- Garment exports received 4% MEIS benefit from November 1 last year and it was then said that the scheme would be valid till June 2018.
- The Director General of Foreign Trade has said that the rates enhanced under the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), a scheme to promote exports.

**MEIS and benefits :-**

- MEIS was launched under Foreign Trade Policy of India (FTP) 2015-20. It is one of the two schemes introduced in FP 2015-20, as part of Exports from India Scheme.
- Objective of MEIS is to offset infrastructural inefficiencies and associated costs involved in export of goods and products, which are produced and manufactured in India.
- It also seeks to enhance India’s export competitiveness of these goods and products having high export intensity, employment potential.
- Under this scheme, Ministry of Commerce gives duty benefits to several products.
- All the 5 different schemes of earlier FTP for rewarding merchandise exports which had varying conditions attached to their use:-
They have been merged into a single scheme, namely Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS) and there would be no conditionality attached to the scrips issued under the scheme. Notified goods exported to notified markets would be rewarded on realised FOB value of exports.

- **MEIS incentive Rates:**
  - Rewards under MEIS are payable as a percentage (2, 3 or 5%) of realized FOB value of covered exports, by way of the MEIS duty credit scrip.
  - It provides duty benefits at 2%, 3% and 5% depending upon the product and the country.
  - The scrip can be transferred or used for payment of a number of duties/taxes including the customs / excise duty / service tax.
  - Scrips and inputs imported under the scrips are fully transferable. This has provided much flexibility to exporters. Earlier schemes had many conditions attached with the scrips about their usage and importability of item.

- **Special treatment to reduce transaction costs:**
  - Status holders, those who have contributed to trade, will get special treatment to reduce their transaction costs.

- **Boost to Make in India**
  - Higher level of rewards under MEIS export with high domestic content and value addition.
    - It is proposed to give higher level of rewards to products with high domestic content and value addition, as compared to products with high import content and less value addition.
  - **Export of defence goods:**
    - Measures to facilitate & encourage export of defence good
  - **E-Commerce Exports:**
    - Benefits of foreign trade policy to export of items up to Rs 25,000 per consignment
    - Benefit available to handloom products, books / periodicals, leather footwear, toys and customized fashion garments
  - **New initiatives for EOUs, EHTPs and STPs**
    - They can share infrastructure & inter-unit transfer of goods allowed
  - **SEZ units will be entitled to the benefits of MEIS**
  - **Helps in** more foreign exchange and brings benefit to manpower intensive industries.

- **Export incentives:**
  - Under Merchandise Exports from India (MEIS) have been increased by 2 percent across the board for labour intensive MSME sectors leading to additional annual incentive of Rs. 4,567 crore.
  - This is in addition to the already announced increase in MEIS incentives from 2 percent to 4 percent for Ready-made Garments and Made Ups in the labour intensive Textiles Sector with an additional annual incentive of Rs. 2,743 crore
  - Continuing the scheme would give confidence to garment exporters to book orders.
  - The incentives available under this scheme will incentivise the exports of labour intensive sectors of readymade garments and made ups and contribute to employment generation.

- **International markets:**
  - The reward/incentives provided by the Government makes the exporters competitive in the international market including Europe, The United States of America and Africa. These three markets are covered under the scheme for all notified 5012 tariff lines.

- **Sectors benefitted:**
  - The increase in the MEIS rates for labour-intensive sectors, such as leather, handicraft, carpets, tools, marine, medical and scientific products and services, such as accountancy, architecture, legal, education, hotel and restaurant, will provide much-needed respite to these sectors, which are facing huge competitiveness from other countries.

- **Improve the ease of doing business in India**

- **Women centric products are also supported under this scheme:**
  - Sectors that have a significant proportion of female employment (more than 25%) like Agricultural and animal husbandry etc.

**Issues:**
- Biggest challenge, however, is to address constraints within the country, such as infrastructure bottlenecks, high transaction costs, complex procedures, constraints in manufacturing and inadequate diversification in our services.
- Reduction in duty drawback is making it difficult to make apparel exports competitive, and there is always a fear of losing business to countries like Vietnam or Pakistan.

**Way forward:-**
- A strong case for the government to invest in trade-related infrastructure and trade facilitation measures, which can deliver tangible results on the export front.
- Larger issues like infrastructure inadequacy, logistics, and skilling need to be addressed.

**Q) The latest employment estimates of CSO are not credible enough given the paradoxes it creates. Examine.(250 words)**

**Why this question**
Employment is a critical issue in Indian economy. The recent CSO estimates suggesting a huge growth in employment has been criticized for its inconsistent methods and paradoxical association with other indicators in the economy. The issue is related to GS-3 syllabus under the following heading – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to dig deep into the current macroeconomic scenario of the country and bring out how the CSO estimates are not credible and what paradoxes they create.

**Directive word**
Examine- here we have to dig deep into the issue and find out the causes of the situation- lack of credibility on part of CSO estimates and paradoxes created by it.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction –** mention the recent CSO report titled “Payroll Reporting in India: An Employment Perspective and its employment generation findings.

**Body-**
- Discuss the reasons as to why the credibility of the report stands questioned. E.g only formal sector is covered, it defines jobs as ones that provide at least one government financed (or mandated) social security benefit such as Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF), National Pension Scheme, or Employees’ State Insurance Scheme; the records used for estimation are such that their completeness, consistency and accuracy are unknown; doubling of participation not considered etc.
- Discuss the other paradoxes it creates. Household surveys carried by Labour Bureau show a decline in worker-population ratio between 2013-14 and 2015-16, suggesting a deteriorating employment situation; growth rates reported by index of Industrial Production (IIP), and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) are consistently lower than those reported by GDP in manufacturing, suggesting an overestimation of manufacturing value added in the NAS. Demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) seem to have dented informal sector production and employment, which official data sources seem in no position to capture etc.

**Conclusion –** discuss in 2-3 lines the need for consistent, transparent, inclusive and objective analysis of the macroeconomic parameters affecting employment in order to arrive at a correct estimate of employment generation in India.

**Background:-**
- Between September 2017 and April 2018, says a CSO media release last week titled “Payroll Reporting in India: An Employment Perspective – April 2018”, the economy added 4.1 million new jobs in the formal sector.

**Latest employment estimates of CSO:-**
- They are not credible because:-
  - The CSO release defines jobs as ones that provide at least one government financed (or mandated) social security benefit such as Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF), National Pension Scheme, or Employees’ State Insurance Scheme.
  - Confined to the economy’s organised or formal sector, accounting at best for 15% of the workforce. The official estimates are completely silent about the majority of the workforce engaged in the informal sector.
The estimates are based on administrative records of implementing the social security schemes, whose completeness, consistency and accuracy are unknown. Since a formal sector worker, in principle, can legitimately access more than one social security scheme, double counting is a distinct possibility. The release does not explain how the problem is addressed in the database.

They create paradoxes:-
- The official data suffer from a conceptual problem:-
  - The social security databases, by design, are lists of workers enrolled in the schemes, as an entitlement or as voluntary subscribers not employment registers.
  - These schemes are applicable to establishments above a certain size (of employment), and to certain kinds of enterprises.
- In its efforts to formalise employment government has incentivised employers to enrol workers under EPF by offering to make employers contribution to the social security scheme for three years, thus boosting enrolment but that cannot be counted as new jobs created.
- Household surveys carried by Labour Bureau show a decline in worker-population ratio between 2013-14 and 2015-16, suggesting a deteriorating employment situation.
- Growth rates reported by Index of Industrial Production (IIP), and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) are consistently lower than those reported by GDP in manufacturing, suggesting an overestimation of manufacturing value added in the National accounts statistics.
- Demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) seem to have dented informal sector production and employment, which official data sources seem in no position to capture etc.
- Consistency and accuracy of the administrative datasets have not been publicly established. Conceptually, the data are about enrolment in the social schemes, not about new jobs generated.

Conclusion:

- There is a need for consistent, transparent, inclusive and objective analysis of the macroeconomic parameters affecting employment in order to arrive at a correct estimate of employment generation in India.

Q) There are gainers and losers from the growing formalisation of retail sector in India. Critically examine the statement in the light of the recent Flipkart-Walmart deal. (250 words)

Why this question
The recent acquisition of 77% stake in Flipkart, by the US retail giant Walmart has been often in news lately. There are however some inapparent but interrelated issues highlighted by the deal. These issues have a bearing on India’s rural as well as urban sectors as can be gauged from the fact that Indian retail sector is the second largest employment provider in India.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to dig deep into the question and bring out the causes of growing formalization of Indian retail market and the implications of the same. Our answer should have a special, but not an absolute focus on the Flipkart-Walmart deal, which is just a small albeit important part of the growing formalization process.

Directive word
Critically examine- Here we have to dig deep into the given deal and growing formalization of retail sector in India and bring out the causes of the same as well as its implications for Indian economy and society at large.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – write a few lines about the recent Flipkart-Walmart deal and the growing formalization of the retail sector in India, which is the second largest employment provider in India after agriculture.

Body -
- Discuss the causes of the growing formalization of retail sector in India. E.g urbanization and sustained economic growth; GST and the inherent structure thereunder which favours formalization of the economy; entry of big national and multinational players in the retail sector e.g reliance, tata; entrance of FDI in retail sector etc.
- Discuss the implications of increasing formalization of retail sector in India. Discuss the positive as well as negative effects.

Negative effects- effect on employment and economic equity; entry of multinational players will benefit the urban consumers with cheaper products but the agriculture sector could see a sharp increase in prices which will hurt badly the majority of the rural and urban poor etc.

Positive effects- bringing in state of the art technology and increased warehouse and cold storage facilities; reduction of waste and economics of scale; wider choice of products and lesser prices; infusing innovation and competition in the economy etc.

Conclusion- Based on your discussion and understanding, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue. Also write a few lines about the wayforward- e.g provide training and skills to small retailers so that they can be gainfully employed in the emerging big retail outlets; any tendency of rising food prices, especially in the rural areas, due to procurement by giant retailers has to be handled either by subsidising the poor or by making them a part of the supply chain, which delivers the procured food items.

Background:-
- The Indian retail industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and fast-paced industries due to the entry of several new players. It accounts for over 10 per cent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and around 8 per cent of the employment. India is the world’s fifth-largest global destination in the retail space.
- Indian Retail Industry has immense potential as India has the second largest population with affluent middle class, rapid urbanisation and solid growth of internet.

Formalisation of retail sector:-
- Formalisation of retail, like formalisation of any other sector of the economy, is an essential part of development and should not be resisted.
- GST and the inherent structure thereunder which favours formalization of the economy
- With the rising need for consumer goods in different sectors including consumer electronics and home appliances, many companies have invested in the Indian retail
- Government of India has allowed 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in online retail of goods and services through the automatic route, thereby providing clarity on the existing businesses of e-commerce companies operating in India.

Positives:-
- Walmart, the United States (US) retail titan, has picked up a 77% stake in Flipkart, the largest online retailer in India. Recent acquisition of Flipkart by giant retailer Walmart is an important event for the Indian economic scenario for at least two reasons.
  - It suggests a possible change in the structure of retail business in India, which, according to a Parliamentary Committee Report of 2009, constitutes 10% of the Indian national income.
  - Entry of Walmart to e-commerce is likely to have an effect on retail trade through the net, a practice becoming increasingly popular among Indian consumers.
- There are several advantages of Walmart entering the Indian online retail market.
  - It will provide state-of-the art storage technology and the capital to build big warehouses.
  - Armed with this infrastructure, it can procure fruits, vegetables and foodgrains from village markets, which will reduce waste and provide good prices to the sellers.
- Producers:-
  - Large producers and traders are more likely beneficiaries but medium farmers can also take advantage of the new opportunities by forming guilds and associations to become a part of the supply chain.
  - Again for other consumer goods, especially low-cost apparels, toys and footwear, there are numerous small producers all over the country. Entry of a giant retailer like Walmart will open up the world market to these small entities.
- Consumers:-
  - On the demand side, consumers of online retail will benefit from a wider menu and lower prices.
  - Some of the users live in remote areas that lie outside the outreach of the delivery chain of online retail. But, a significant proportion lies inside and all of them are potential consumers of e-commerce.
• Wider choice of products and lesser prices
• Infuses innovation and competition in the economy etc

Concerns:-
• The main concern is for small domestic retailers.
  • It is feared that these small agents are defenceless against competition from big retail outlets and are likely to lose their livelihood if giant multinationals enter the market.
• Organised retail is slowly crowding out small and informal kirana shops, street-side vendors, pushcart vegetable sellers, makeshift bazaars and the like. The fear of losing employment seems to be real. More so, after the Flipkart–Walmart tie-up.
• Rise in prices:-
  • When a big retailer enters this market to procure, the price goes up and this can become extremely distressing for the rural poor. There will be adverse effect of FDI in multi-brand retail on income distribution and poverty.
  • Basically benefits urban consumers who are relatively affluent. In other words, natural comparative advantage will prompt the giant retailer to sell manufactured goods in India, and buy fruits, vegetables, and cereals from India.
  • This has the effect of a redistribution in favour of the already affluent urban consumers and against poor rural consumers. The redistribution could become particularly painful for the poor who are helpless against the increases in food prices.

Way forward:-
• The government should come up with specific rehabilitation strategies for job losers. The aim should be to provide training and skills to small retailers or their next generation so that they can be gainfully employed in the emerging big retail outlets as well as elsewhere.
• Similarly, any tendency of rising food prices, especially in the rural areas, due to procurement by giant retailers has to be handled either by subsidising the poor or by making them a part of the supply chain, which delivers the procured food items.

Q) India is faced with a deluge of macroeconomic threats. Examine why and give suggestions to improve it(250 words)

Why this question
The article talks about the several macroeconomic challenges that India is faced with, which is necessary to understand from main perspective.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to bring out the macroeconomic challenges facing India, reasons behind the same and policy steps needed to address such challenges.

Directive word
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Explain that India was passing through the Goldilocks zone, a situation in sharp contrast from now.
Body – Mention the macroeconomic challenges such as high CAD, lower inflation, high oil prices etc. Mention other problems like private investment not picking up etc. Explain the broad reasons for these issues and discuss the impact on growth of Indian economy going forward. Suggest steps through which the situation can be improved (take ideas from the article and also elsewhere).
Conclusion – Emphasize on the need to tackle this to ensure stability of Indian economy.

Background:-
• Even after registering a growth rate of over 6.7 per cent last year and being pegged as the fastest-growing economy by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Indian capital markets are still facing turbulence.

Macroeconomic threats:-
• The Rupee depreciated to one of its lowest values at about 67 rupees to a dollar.
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had to run down its forex reserves by $11 billion last month to stem the rupee volatility.

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) withdrew about Rs 48,000 crore in the first six months of 2018 – the highest in a decade.

The Sensex, Nifty and other stock markets have seen their bullish runs coming to an end.

The money sunk into ailing banks, a slowdown in public investment, rising petroleum prices, slowdown in remittances from Indian workers abroad, and the sharp rise in stock prices and the fear of their equally rapid fall with foreign investors pulling out

Private investment continuous decrease in a decade(36% to 26%).

Why is this happening?

External factors:

1. Rising crude oil prices is putting pressure on Current Account Deficit (CAD), forcing the economy to borrow more to bridge the rising CAD. It affects major economic indicators like exchange rate, fiscal deficit etc.

Sanctions:

- India used to get oil from Iran at relatively cheaper rates, while a large part of defence imports come from Russia. **But the US sanctions on these two countries are likely to make it difficult for India to continue with the same volume of trade with them**

US economy:

- The relatively stable and safe US economy is showing robust growth while the Fed is likely to raise interest rates further. These two factors incentivise investors to park their funds in the US.

S.’s initiatives in terms of protectionism:

- The U.S. has lowered the corporate tax rate sharply so that capital inflows will slow down.

Tariff wars between India and US can have adverse impacts.

The underlying reason for higher oil prices and US bond yields is that the global economy is in the midst of its best synchronized expansion since 2011. **WTO is riddled with domination of western powers and lacks collective consensus.**

Domestic factors:

1. Rising inflation and government bond yields are two domestic factors that are also making an impact.

On the agricultural front, while the increasing input costs have to be borne by the farmers, when it comes to reaping the benefits of market prices for agricultural produce or rise in minimum support prices (MSP), they are deprived as they do not have direct access to the market.

Unemployment

- The unorganised sector employs 94% of the Indian workforce. A decline in this component impacts employment. The rise in demand under the MGNREGS is an indication of unemployment.

- Despite rapid economic growth, unemployment is still an issue in both rural and urban areas.

Poor tax collection rates.

- According to the Economist, India has one of the poorest tax to GDP rates in the whole world. India’s tax revenue as a % of GDP is just 12%. Compared to an EU average of 45%. **This poor tax collection rate reflects widespread corruption, tax avoidance and complicated tax rates.**

Bank credit growth hit a 20 year low in 2016-17 with Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) at 9.9%. India has been ranked fifth on the list of countries with highest NPAs.

The infrastructure deficit is a major concern and infrastructure investment needs to be stepped up as currently it is not in par with the needs of the economy.

Other challenges for the economy include addressing infrastructural bottlenecks in the agricultural sector, investment in human resources to leverage the demographic dividend, increasing expenditure on education and healthcare sectors, and social security provision for the unorganized sector.

Shift from industry to services but lack of skills suitable for new services.

Suggestions to improve:

- The government needs to continue on its path of fiscal consolidation, both in terms of quantity and quality.
Government expenditure should be focused on areas where the returns are the highest – like health, education, increasing export competitiveness, logistics efficiency and infrastructure creation.

**India needs to diversify its oil import basket.**
- Many countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE are willing to step in if Iranian imports stop. India needs to negotiate this further and also deal with the US on the issue of sanctions waiver.

**Rising inflationary expectations need to be kept under control.**
- Long-term systemic reform of agriculture needs to continue by making procurement system stronger.
- **Strengthening WTO and adhering to rules based trading order is the necessity.**
- **Strengthening Banking sector:**
  - There is a need to creation of bad bank, asset management company, asset reconstruction company to take care of huge NPA

**Q) Discuss the reasons behind the recently witnessed sharp surge in illegal gold imports in India. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
Gold is a highly valued and sought out commodity which also acts as a easy to manage and highly liquid reserve of wealth. Indian is the second largest consumer of Gold and gold smuggling has been a perennial problem in India.
However, recently there has been a sharp spurt in the cases of illegal smuggling as well as some decrease in gold imports.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to discuss in detail about the recently witnessed increased incidences of gold smuggling and bring out the reasons as to why this is happening and what are the reasons behind this phenomena.

**Structure of the answer**
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write at length about the key demand of the question and bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Write a few lines about India’s gold consumption, imports and the recently witnessed sharp spurt in cases of illegal import of gold along with decreased imports (legal) and consequent revenue losses.

**Body**-
Bring out the role of introduction of GST as a different regime on gold imports- both legal and illegal. Discuss how introduction is responsible for the observed phenomena. E.g GST exemption on purchase of old gold jewellery from an unregistered individual under which the gold jeweller can import gold through illicit channels and show that in his books as purchase of old gold and evade tax; complicated structure and many compliance requirements which forces migration to alternate (including illegal) routes; a strong American economy and a hike in interest rates by the US Federal Reserve made the US dollar stronger etc.

**Conclusion**- Form a fair, concise and a balanced conclusion on the above issue in the form of a way-forward- like a comprehensive and effective tracking system, popularizing other instruments of wealth, curbing illegal imports through stronger and better intelligence gathering etc.

**Background:**
- Gold imports have fallen suggests demand for the yellow metal is being met elsewhere. Smuggled gold accounts for over a third of the demand in India, the world’s second largest gold importing nation after China. This potentially causes a revenue loss of $1.3 billion to the central government.
- Increased seizures by tax officials, especially at major airports clearly indicate that illegal trade of gold has been on an upswing not only in South India but in other parts of the country as well.
- Illegal business in gold has become widespread ever since GST has kicked in

**Reasons behind illegal gold imports:**

**Import duty and GST:**
- Gold smuggling has been rife ever since import duty of 10 per cent was imposed by the Centre in 2013. Now, 10 per cent customs duty, three per cent GST, and three per cent on making charges makes a total tax load of 16 per cent.

**India is second largest consumer:**
- Given that India is the second largest consumer of gold and gold imports have remained muted in recent months, it indicates that gold transactions are taking place through unorganized channels.
- Old jewellery:-  
  - Traders are taking advantage of a loophole in the rules for buying old gold jewellery. Since there is a GST exemption on purchase of old gold jewellery from an unregistered individual, the gold jeweller can import gold through illicit channels and show that in his books as purchase of old gold and evade tax.
- External factors:-  
  - A strong American economy and a hike in interest rates by the US Federal Reserve made the US dollar stronger etc

Way forward:-
- Proper tracking system needs to be set in place to find out the movement of gold from the suppliers through jewellery makers to customers end.
- Proper tracking system also detects the source of transactions and makers of the product, and ensures tax compliance, BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) hallmarking, etc.

Q) What is reverse charge mechanism in GST? Why was it brought into effect and discuss its impact?(250 words)

Financial express

Why this question
GST has recently celebrated its anniversary. As the tax regime gets implemented, certain key provisions of GST regime and their impact are being discussed. One of the key provision is reverse charge mechanism. The article discusses this topic.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to explain what reverse charge mechanism is, the rationale behind this and assessment of the impact that it is having.

Directive word
Discuss – Here in your discussion, you have to debate the pros and cons of Reverse Charge mechanism.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Explain what GST is and the revolution it has brought in indirect tax regime of India.

Body –
- Explain what Reverse charge is – section 9(3) and 9(4) of CGST Act and section 5(3) and 5(4) of IGST Act specifies certain categories of supply and unregistered taxpayers respectively in whose case the burden of taxation falls on supplier of goods/service in place of recipient.
- Explain why it was brought into force – ease of administration, protecting revenue, facilitating small businesses.
- Examine its impact as discussed in the article and from other sources – the pros and cons

Conclusion – Mention how it can be improved to further benefit small businesses.

Reverse charge mechanism in GST:-
- Reverse charge is a mechanism where the recipient of the goods and/or services is liable to pay GST instead of the supplier.
- Section 9(3) and 9(4) of CGST Act and section 5(3) and 5(4) of IGST Act specifies certain categories of supply and unregistered taxpayers respectively in whose case the burden of taxation falls on supplier of goods/service in place of recipient.
- The concept of reverse charge is not new. It has been in practice from the time service tax was introduced and was first applied to the insurance sector.
- It was followed by covering mutual funds under its purview and gradually extending to goods transporters, works contracts, sponsors and brand ambassadors.
- In the first two cases, the purpose of tax collection was met to a certain extent because the nature of the industry is such where receipts are few and there are many providers. For the rest, it was implemented because these industries were highly unorganized.
The levy of reverse charge got extended from a few services to all unregistered goods suppliers and services providers falling under the GST ambit.

When is Reverse Charge Applicable?
- **Supply from an Unregistered dealer to a Registered dealer**
  - If a vendor who is not registered under GST, supplies goods to a person who is registered under GST, then Reverse Charge would apply. This means that the GST will have to be paid directly by the receiver to the Government instead of the supplier.
- **Services through an e-commerce operator**
  - If an e-commerce operator supplies services then reverse charge will be applicable to the e-commerce operator. He will be liable to pay GST.
- **Supply of certain goods and services specified by CBEC**
  - CBEC has issued a list of goods and a list of services on which reverse charge is applicable.

Why was it brought into effect:-
- The government suspects large tax evasion, especially by small and medium enterprises, and feels this would help check it.
- For plugging revenue leakage the reverse charge mechanism is necessary.
- Ease of administration, protecting revenue, facilitating small businesses.

Impact:-
- **Negatives:-**
  - It failed to widen the tax base and added to the compliance burden of companies already struggling to adjust to the new tax regime. So, it had to be temporarily shelved.
  - Despite GST now being implemented for more than six months, businesses continue to grapple with a slew of challenges, raising doubts about the success of the reverse charge implementation at this time.
  - While the number of registrations might rise once reverse charge is implemented, it would not generate additional revenue for the government because tax paid by the recipient company on behalf of an unregistered supplier will be given as input credit to the former.
  - Tools like e-way bills and reverse charge will tighten the government’s ability to track transactions, making survival for some small businesses difficult, while increasing the cost of doing business for others.
  - Those against it argue that the amount of tax collected through this route is negligible and hence it can be done away with to help smaller players.
- **Positives:-**
  - The reintroduction of reverse charge on transactions with unregistered dealers would result in businesses having to make process and compliance changes. Many businesses which are below the threshold may end up taking registration in order to ensure business continuity.
  - Reverse charge on other categories like import of services is fine because it is a global concept to pay tax on imports under reverse charge.
  - The intention of RCM was to check tax evasion and expand tax the base through self-policing by taxpayers.
  - The first few months of GST rollout witnessed sharp expansion in indirect taxpayer base mainly due to the presence of the reverse charge feature. Scrapping this feature will lead to the tax base shrinking again.
Retaining RCM will not only help expand the tax base but also improve transparency by making available data on the unorganised segment to the Centre. This data can be used to formulate policies for this segment.

- **Expanding tax base**
  - This effect of the RCM provision was visible on two fronts during the GST rollout.
  - One, all the larger companies ensured their suppliers registered on the GSTN.
  - Buying from unregistered buyers would mean that the buying entity would be liable to pay the tax.
  - The other impact of RCM was that smaller vendors who wished to supply to larger clients, voluntarily registered on the GSTN. They were afraid that if unregistered, larger clients might spurn them.
  - By asking taxpayers to check if their vendors are registered and paying tax on time, the workload on the tax department reduces significantly.

**Way forward:-**
- The Centre can consider implementing RCM in a staggered manner, over 2-3 years. Since smaller companies have been complaining about lack of resources and funds for complying with RCM, it might be a good idea to apply reverse charge on larger companies, with turnover above 100 crores, initially.
- Very small enterprises with turnover of less than 10 crore can be left out of this clause.

**Q** There is a need to employ a multi pronged approach in order to decrease the rural-urban divide in India. Discuss the steps taken by the GoI in this regard. (250 words)

**Why this question**
Rising inequality is a critical issue in India and there has been a significant increase in the rural-urban divide. Inequality has many implications for a society and it is essential to know about all the initiatives taken by the govt. to tackle the issue.

**Key demand of the question**
The question wants us to dig deep into the question and write at length about all the initiatives of the government directed at decreasing the rural-urban divide.

**Directive word**
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question so as to give a complete picture of the issue in hand.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction**– write a few lines about the increasing rural-urban divide in India.

**Body**-
1. Discuss the negative effects of the growing urban-rural divide. E.g income and regional inequality; emigration from rural areas; immigration to urban areas resulting in increased stress on urban infrastructure, increased homelessness, increased feminization of agriculture etc. Discuss why there is a need for a multi-pronged approach in dealing with the problem.
2. Discuss in points the initiatives taken by GoI to tackle the issue of increasing rural-urban divide in the country. E.g NFNSM, RKVY, PMFBY, NAM, PMKSY, PMJDA, DAY-NRLM, MGNREGS, RGSA, Antyodya mission etc.

**Conclusion**– Sum up your discussion in a few lines to form a fair and a balanced conclusion. Suggest some more reforms that need to be taken in this direction.

**Rural urban divide in India :-**

- **Causes:-**
  - Dependence of Rural population on Agriculture
  - Lack of Rural Livelihood and Employment opportunities
  - Differential Impact of India's Growth and Development.
  - Urban Bias in Social Sectors such as Health and Education
  - Poor Rural Infrastructure
  - Emphasis on Smart Cities and neglect of Rural areas
  - Dominance of Social Institutions in Rural areas
Improper Implementation of Rural Development schemes, Leakages and Corruption have drifted rural and urban areas apart.

**Consequences of Rural-Urban Divide**

- **India vs Bharat**
  - The rural-urban divide has *led to the generation of two polar opposites*— India and Bharat. Many economists and intellectuals argue that while India is urban and progressive; Bharat is rural, underdeveloped and backward.

- **Rural to Urban Migration**
  - The rural areas characterised by lower wages, a small size of landholdings, lack of opportunities, and amenities have been a push factor of migration from rural areas to urban areas.
  - Although, migration is helpful in raising incomes and equalizing social status. But, uncontrolled migration of rural population to urban areas has led to rising of slums, congestion in cities, the problem of traffic and increase in crime rates.

- **Poverty and Hunger Reduction is slower in Rural areas**
  - With the achievement of self-sufficiency in food grains and implementation of Food Security Act, Right to Education Act, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and other significant poverty alleviation schemes, poverty is reducing.
  - But, the rate of poverty reduction in urban areas is higher than rural areas. Also, today, nearly 26% of rural India is poor, compared to a meagre 13% in urban areas. (Tendulkar Report on Poverty Estimates)

- **Rural Distress, Alienation and Protests**
  - The growing inequalities between the rural and urban areas, rural poverty and exploitation have led to peasant struggles throughout India latest being Madhya Pradesh farmers’ protest in 2017.
  - Left-wing extremism particularly the Maoist insurgency is also a manifestation of a huge rural-urban divide as the Maoists see urban people as invaders mining their resources.
  - Increased feminization of agriculture etc.

**Steps taken:**

- **PURA:-**
  - In 2003, the government started a scheme to check rural-urban migration by providing jobs and urban amenities in rural areas.
  - The Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) is aimed at economic connectivity through integrating physical connectivity, electronic connectivity, and knowledge connectivity. **However, out of 13 projects, 9 couldn’t even take off. Making it a voluntary private sector programme was probably one reason**

- **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission:-**
  - To strengthen infrastructure in rural areas. This is a Public Private Partnership model while also using funds from various schemes. The aim was to focus on 300 rural clusters, so that their development would trigger overall development in the region.
  - The ground reality is far from satisfactory. The target for setting up 300 rurban clusters in five years is overambitious.
  - Funding for Rurban might face problems as it converges various ongoing schemes when there is already a competing demand for rural development programmes.
  - For Rurban, the Centre provides just the Critical Gap Funding.
  - The mission is yet to take off in the way it was imagined. **Thus, there is an urgent need to ensure implementation.**

- **Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana scheme:-**
  - It is being implemented from 2015 where a Member of Parliament has to choose villages in his constituency to be transformed as ‘model villages’ with all social, welfare and infrastructure facilities.

- **National Nutrition Mission:**
  - Aim is to try to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition problem, anaemia problem and low birth weight problem in these groups. This has to be reduced by at least 2-3% per annum.

- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY):**
- Seeks to provide the States and Territories of India with the autonomy to draw up plans for increased public investment in Agriculture by incorporating information on local requirements, geographical/climatic conditions, available natural resources/technology and cropping patterns in their districts
- This will significantly increase the productivity of Agriculture and its allied sectors and eventually maximize the returns of farmers in agriculture and its allied sectors

**Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**
- Aims at supporting sustainable production in agriculture sector by following ways:
- Providing financial support to farmers suffering crop loss/damage arising out of unforeseen events
- Stabilizing the income of farmers to ensure their continuance in farming
- Encouraging farmers to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices
- Ensuring flow of credit to the agriculture sector which contributes to food security, crop diversification and enhancing growth and competitiveness of agriculture sector besides protecting farmers from production risks

**e-NAM**
- An online trading platform for agricultural commodities in India
- The market facilitate farmers, traders and buyers with online trading in commodities
- Will help in better price discovery and provide facilities for smooth marketing of their produce.

**PMKSY**
- To achieve convergence of investments in irrigation at the field level.
- Expand cultivable area under assured irrigation
- Improve on-farm water use efficiency to reduce wastage of water
- Enhance the adoption of precision-irrigation and other water saving technologies (More crop per drop)
- Enhance recharge of aquifers and introduce sustainable water conservation practices by exploring the feasibility of reusing treated municipal waste water for peri-urban agriculture
- Attract greater private investment in precision irrigation system

**Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)**
- Promotion of commercial organic production through certified organic farming.
- The produce will be pesticide residue free and will contribute to improve the health of consumer.
- It will raise farmer's income and create potential market for traders.
- It will motivate the farmers for natural resource mobilization for input production.

**Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**
- To strengthen the Panchayati Raj system across the country and address critical gaps that constrains its success
- Enhance capacities and effectiveness of Panchayats and the Gram Sabhas
- Enable democratic decision-making and accountability in Panchayats and promote people's participation
- Strengthen the institutional structure for knowledge creation and capacity building of Panchayats
- Promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats according to the spirit of the Constitution and PESA Act
- Strengthen Gram Sabhas to function effectively as the basic forum of peoples participation, transparency and accountability within the Panchayat system
- Create and strengthen democratic local self-government in areas where Panchayats do not exist
- Strengthen the constitutionally mandated framework on which Panchayats are founded

**Mission Antyodaya**
- Seeks to converge government interventions with Gram Panchayats as the basic unit for planning by following a saturation approach by pooling resources – human and financial – to ensure sustainable livelihoods
- It is a State-led initiative for rural transformation to make a real difference based on measurable outcomes to the lives of 1,00,00,000 households in 5,000 rural clusters or 50,000 Gram Panchayats in 1,000 days.

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS)**
  - Provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage
  - Improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living below poverty line in rural India

- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan**
  - Aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India’s cities, smaller towns, and rural areas
  - Eliminate open defecation Establish an accountable mechanism of monitoring toilet use
  - The mission will also contribute to India reaching Sustainable Development Goal Number 6 (SDG 6)

- **Jan Dhan Yojana**
  - A bank account in every household (normal savings bank account)
  - Access to banking & credit facilities (basic banking)
  - Manage to stay away from moneylenders & financial crisis caused by emergent needs

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Housing for All 2022 Scheme)**
  - Aims at providing affordable housing to the urban poor
  - The mission of this initiative is to provide housing for all by the year 2022.
  - Under this scheme, affordable houses will be built in selected cities and towns using eco-friendly construction methods for the benefit of the urban poor population in India.

- **Green Revolution – Krishionnati Yojana**
  - The Umbrella scheme comprises of 11 Schemes/Missions. These schemes look to develop the agriculture and allied sector in a holistic and scientific manner to increase the income of farmers by enhancing production, productivity and better returns on produce.

**Way forward:-**
- **Focus on smart villages:-**
  - The top priority should be the creation of opportunities for youths in villages, thereby discouraging migration to cities. There is a need to create an eco-system that makes youth interested in working from their villages. BPOs/KPOs can operate from villages and young people can be encouraged to take up IT jobs there. Many jobs require computer skills instead of degrees. The digitisation of post offices, rural banks, and IT-enabled services provide excellent opportunities.

- **Farming should be made a remunerative occupation**, with guidance and mentoring to small farmers on how to get the best yield and market at remunerative prices. It’s important to train them to develop a secondary source of income.

- **The benefits of schemes such as crop insurance, soil health card, and neem pesticides must reach the grassroots**. Proper implementation is key. A helpdesk set up in every village and manned by trained individuals to handle farmers’ queries and provide solutions would be most useful.

- **Projects supported by Digital India and Skill India should be integrated through a unified agency to reach villages**. For instance, Skill India can empower youths to start their own small businesses after training as masons, mechanics, electricians, and drivers or to run repair shops, poultry and dairy farms, kirana stores, tea-shops, dhabas and so on.

- **India’s crafts thrive in villages, especially as cooperative ventures. Pottery, metal craft, weaving, jewellery making, wood craft, shell craft, cane craft, embroidery, ivory craft, glass craft and paper craft could be sources of income.** The arts and crafts ecosystem of villages is impossible to recreate in cities. A great deal of export potential is hidden here. Senior/elderly artisans can be employed as ‘trainers’.

- **Villages traditionally preserve large number of water bodies like ponds, wells, bawadis, canals etc. Training villagers in water harvesting methods, rejuvenating ponds/wells to improve water storage and sharing these good practices systematically with others, would help mitigate hardships.**
Q) Tax reforms are essential for improving the ease of doing business, and attracting foreign investment. Discuss the steps taken by India in this regard. (250 words)

Why this question
India has made significant strides in improving the ease of doing business index. There have been various tax reforms with the introduction of GST being the most important among them. It is essential to discuss all those tax reforms comprehensively in order to get a better picture of India’s economy.

Key demand of the question
The question wants us to write in detail about all the tax reforms introduced in India recently, which have in turn improved our ease of doing business and led to more foreign investment. The key here is to discuss all the tax reforms in this direction.

Directive word-
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question so as to give a complete picture of the issue in hand.

Structure of the answer
Introduction- Write a few lines along with some statistic, which show improved ease of doing business and increased foreign investment in India.

Body-
Discuss in points about all those tax reforms introduced recently by the government.

e.g Direct taxes- TIN, OLTAS, e-TCS, e-TDS; e-sahyog, Sevottam etc. Discuss each tax reform briefly.
Indirect taxes- GST; reduction in customs duties etc. Discuss each tax reform briefly.

Conclusion – Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

Background:-
- Any evolving economy needs massive investments from both within the country and overseas. But such investments will not come that easily unless it has a taxation system that is just, fair, transparent and non-discriminatory and motivating to enthuse investors to put their monies into productive purposes.
- This has been realised world over and most developed economies took to a very progressive taxation system, particularly the US and Australia.

Steps taken by India:-
- Indian tax system has come a long way from the narrow based, complicated and confiscatory system to the one that is far more efficient.
- Direct Tax Reforms
  - Tax Information Network (TIN):
    - On behalf of the income tax department, the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) established Tax Information Network
    - This is the source of the countrywide tax related data. The basic idea was to modernise collection, processing, monitoring and accounting of direct taxes using information technology.
  - TIN has three subsystems:
    - Electronic Return Acceptance and Consolidation System (ERACS).
    - Online Tax Accounting System (OLTAS).
    - e-TDS (Tax deduction at source) and e-TCS (tax collected at source).
  - eSahyog: Paperless Assessments:
    - To simplify the tax payment, the CBDT came up with a proposal for paperless income tax assessment over emails
    - This would save the taxpayer to pay a visit to IT office particularly in case of small amounts.
    - Pilot projects in this direction have been launched in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad.
  - Sevottam: Efficient Grievance Redressal
    - To bring new life to the grievance redressal system, the sevottam platform connects all income tax offices in the country.
    - The idea is to address the queries and grievances in real time.
  - PAN camps:
    - To increase coverage of the PAN, the government has been conducting PAN camps across India.
Indirect Tax Reforms

- **Goods and Services Tax:**
  - Most taxation experts opine that the [GST and Direct Taxes Code (DTC)](https://www.insightsonindia.com) is the biggest tax reforms the government has ever undertaken and it promises to make the taxation system easier to comply with, for both domestic and overseas investors.
  - Tax experts claim that DTC and GST will go a long way to make the taxation system simpler, increase tax payer base and increase the tax buoyancy which will have a long term effect in reducing the fiscal deficit of the country.
  - For foreign investors simpler tax laws with easy arbitration would make it an attractive destination to put their monies in India.
  - The ultimate benefit is for India in terms of higher GDP growth and higher disposable incomes among the population.
  - It added more indirect taxpayers, made tax evasion difficult, brought tax transparency to consumers and reduced the tax rates on many mass-use goods and services. However, it unexpectedly led to a disruption in economic activity in the months before the rollout as businesses cut down production as they adjusted to the new system.
  - Businesses also found it hard to file GST returns on time as the technology platform of GST Network, or GSTN, could not cope with the last minute surge in filings, forcing several deadline extensions.
  - **Reduction in customs duties**

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**Q) In order to create meaningful employment for its youth, India needs to integrate its youth skilling programs with the needs of the industry 4.0. Comment.(250 words)**

**Why this question**
India has a huge demographic dividend and it is essential to skill those youth for gainful employment and contribute to India’s success story to development. However, skilling is not an easy issue and skilling for gainful employment has its own challenges. So it is important to discuss all those avenues which could lead to gainful employment for India's skilled youth.

**Key demand of the question**
The question wants us to dig deep into the youth skilling programs and schemes of India and come out with reasons as to why/why not these programs need to be linked with the needs of fourth industrial revolution.

**Directive word**
Comment- Here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and present our opinion. Our opinion has to be based on a proper discussion of why/why not India needs to integrate its youth skilling programs with the needs of the industry 4.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**– write a few lines about India’s demographic dividend, what it means, for how long the demographic dividend will be there and why it needs to be capitalized.

**Body**-
1. Discuss the present skilling programmes in India (e.g. PMKVY; DAY-NULM; DGI-MES; NSDC etc.). Discuss the limitations of the current skilling programs vis a vis employability of the youth skilled under the present programmes. E.g low level of skills training; lack of high end skilling programmes; lack of future oriented jobs; more stress on certification rather than employability etc.
2. Discuss why there is a need for India to integrate these skilling programmes with the needs of industry 4.0. E.g growth of digitization, AI, Machine learning, IoT, business analytics; industry 4 will be more efficient, more preferable and likely to displace the current industrial processes and technologies; Industry 4 is more compatible with the demands of the society and the needs of the governance; task based employment will be in more demand than job based employment etc.

**Conclusion**– discuss briefly the initiatives of the govt. in this regard and what more needs to be done.

**Background**-
- Skilling youth in new tasks and jobs is an emerging strategy for realising the full potential of India’s young workforce.
- India has significant disparity in demographic profile of youth population. There is a higher median age in the range of 29-31 years in southern states. States like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar have a low median age of 20-22 years amounting to a rising working age population. Thus, the paradigms of skilling youth require different approaches for access and relevance.
- Industry 4.0 is characterised by increasing digitisation, connected machines, amalgamation of emerging technologies, business analytics and cyber-physical systems. This leads to productive enhancement and resource optimisation. In this regime, low-skilled jobs will be eliminated, but an increase in capacity will create new jobs requiring higher levels of skills.

Some of the notable schemes for skill development and entrepreneurship of Government of India are:
1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
2. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)
3. Director General of Training – Modular Employable Skills (DGT-MES)
4. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
5. National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)
6. National Skill Development Agency
7. Aajeevika – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)
8. Atal Innovation Mission
9. Startup India

Issues with skill development programmes in India:
- Lack of coordination:
  - Government was preoccupied with financing and implementation lost track. The Employment Exchanges, NCVT SCVT etc. were not utilized properly for training and information dissemination.
  - Involvement of Industry and employers in the skill training structures (such as ITIs) is almost nothing. They could not be brought forward to proactively participate in the skill development. They were not brought forward because this would entail larger autonomy to institutions.
- India has a fragmented vocational education system, managed by multiplicity of bodies under the NCVT, DGET and the SCVTs. Lack of coordination among them has resulted in ineffectiveness of any top down approach to skill development. The quality of vocational institutes is also low.
  - Funding of vocational education in India is restricted largely to government, where little attention was paid to quality. Once an institution begins to receive funding, subsequent funds are assured regardless of the institution’s performance.
  - A large number of students with vocational education need to look for placement in private organizations or for self employment. The condition of private industrial employments and self employment are inferior in India in comparison to other countries. Subsequently, only a smaller fraction of students (≈5%) opt for vocational education.
- Problem in Mobilization
  - Student mobilization to get trained has been a major concern due to the traditional mindset, low willingness to migrate, low salaries at entry level.
- Issues in Employers Buy-In
  - The employer does not distinguish whether an employee has picked up skills on the job or he has acquired them through formal training,
- Problems in Scalability
  - Scaling up current jobs as well as getting the right kind of training partners and effective stakeholder management are important.
- Mismatch between youth aspirations and jobs
  - Finding students to fill the classrooms and getting people to accept new kind of jobs have been difficult.
- Ensuring Minimum Wages
  - At present, wages are linked with categorization of 'skilled', 'semi-ski lied' or 'unskilled', but these have to be aligned with skill levels defined as per National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) and recognition of higher level of skills in terms of minimum wages is noted.
  - There is more stress on certification rather than employability.
Why there is a need for India to integrate these skilling programmes with the needs of industry 4.0:-

- With fast emerging Fourth Industrial Revolution in India, emerging skills in domains like, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Robotics, Big Data Analytics and 3D Printing will be in much demand.
- The future jobs will be 'task based'. These tasks will focus on acquiring new skills on critical thinking, design thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and cognitive learning.
- New employment opportunities, also known as gig economy will emerge like online developers, coders, multimedia professionals, online sales and marketing professionals, systems thinking, and multilingual and multi-modal capabilities.
- Integration of Industry 4.0 with Initiatives like ‘Make in India’, ‘Skill India’, ‘Startup India’, ‘Standup India’ and ‘Digital India’ are mechanisms that will create new opportunities.
- Government of India is supporting programmes such as Digital India’s budget doubled to Rs 3,073 crores in 2018-19 and there are plans to set up Centers of Excellence for research, training and skilling in robotics, artificial intelligence, digital manufacturing, big data analytics and IOT.
- Government of India has come out with a new draft for telecom policy – National Digital Communications Policy 2018 with the aim to create a roadmap for emerging technologies. It has also laid out plans to attract $100 billion investment and create four million jobs by 2022. The policy aims at increasing India’s contributions to global value chains by creation of innovation-led startups in the digital communications sector. The policy also features training one million for building new age skills, expand IOT ecosystem to five billion connected devices and accelerate shift to Industry 4.0.

What more needs to be done?

- Nurturing Innovation Climate:-
  - Strategic linkages between Academia-Industry-Government can boost innovations and R&D in institution.
  - There is optimism for the prospect of skills and job creation and combination of apt policies, choice of right skills, development of human capital and academia-industry linkages can translate the potential of youth into real outcomes.
  - In line with futuristic skill demands and industry 4.0, the skills agenda has to be revisited as global manufacturing will see structural shifts.
  - The government has to inculcate STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in the course curricula, at least basics through the school systems with emphasis on creativity plus critical and systems thinking.
  - With just about 2% of the country’s labour force having formal skill certification, government and industry must create pull factors to attract workers to get vocational training. For this, there is a need to create the macro and micro policies to encourage workers.
  - The government should include a minimum percentage of certified skilled work forces in the tendering process of every manpower intensive project and increase the minimum percentage every year.
  - At a local level, the industry can enforce it by ensuring that ancillary service providers like drivers, housekeeping and security staff have skill certification.
  - Minimum wages need to be re-looked and aligned to the levels defined in the National Skills Qualification Framework.

Q) In order to double the farmers income, India should encourage smallholding farmers to boost investment in their farms. Discuss.(250 words)

Why this question
Doubling the farmers’ income in India by 2022 is one of the top priorities of the present government. However, it is not an easy task, given the plethora of challenges faced by agriculture sector. One of the challenges faced by Indian agriculture today is the lack of investment. It is essential to study why and how smallholding farming families be encouraged to invest in their farms.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to write in detail about how and why India should encourage farming families to boost investment in their farms. We have to bring out the reasons as to why such a response is required and how to do the same.

**Directive word**
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which directs us to dig deep into the issue and write at length about key demand of the question in detail along with all relevant and important aspects, in order to bring a complete picture of the issue.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**– write a few lines about India’s objective to double farmers’ income and the imperative to invest in agricultural production, transport, marketing, warehouses and food processing etc. Mention that the ministry of agriculture estimates that to double farmer incomes by 2022-23, private investment in agriculture must jump two times to almost Rs 1,40,000 crore.

**Body** –

- Discuss why smallholding farmers need to be encouraged invest in their farms. E.g Smallholders (with up to 2 hectares of land) run 85% of the total farms in India and own more than 50% of the livestock; due to the low productivity, low production and lack of market incentives, families receive no commensurate return. So, smallholders have, on an average, less than 10% share of the total private investment in farming.; Assured buying, and export demand in some years, stimulated investment in some crops; eagerness to invest in technology based solutions etc.
- Discuss the strategy as to how farming families can be encouraged to invest in their farms. E.g by encouraging the entrepreneurial energies/ efforts of small farm holders, which form the vast majority of farmers in India; States must similarly develop and defend agricultural markets that work for smallholders by reducing transaction costs and counterparty risks, and raising price discovery, price transparency and bargaining power.; Strong public extension services; enhanced credit disbursement complemented with proper guidance and policies, etc.

**Conclusion**– Sum up your discussion in a few lines to form a fair and a balanced conclusion.

**Background:-**

- Agriculture, which contributes 17 percent to the $2.3-trillion economy, has remained relatively untouched by reforms with growth rates averaging below three percent over as many decades.
- Lack of technology, inefficient markets and small landholdings have worsened challenges.
- The ministry of agriculture estimates that to double farmer incomes by 2022-23, private investment in agriculture must jump two times to almost Rs 1,40,000 crore.
- Private investments refer to investments made by farmers themselves, inclusive of their own savings and borrowings from institutional and non-institutional sources.

**Advantages of encouraging small holding farmers to boost investment in their farms:**

- This unleashes the entrepreneurial energies of the smallholder farmer, especially those already thinking commercially and sell at least a third of their crop. Such smallholders collectively possess the highest latent energy for moving the needle on agricultural growth.
  - High growth in agriculture springs ultimately from the convergence of profits, knowledge and power in the hands of smallholder commercial farmers.
  - Despite poverty and neglect, they see themselves as entrepreneurs, willing to try new crops, cultivars, livestock and alternative technologies to increase productivity, diversify production, reduce risk and increase profits.
  - It is time to tap into this entrepreneurial energy by creating, and enabling, opportunities for them to invest in a bright future.
- **Smallholders (with up to 2 hectares of land) run 85% of the total farms in India and own more than 50% of the livestock.**
- They are highly cognisant of the need to invest. In Odisha, where 92% are smallholders, each farming family spent on average Rs 1,142 a month on crop production,
- Due to the low productivity, low production and lack of market incentives, families receive no commensurate return. So, smallholders have, on an average, less than 10% share of the total private investment in farming.
- Profitability:-
Assured buying, and export demand in some years, stimulated investment in wheat, rice, cotton, mentha, guar, a few pulses and sugarcane.

Since smallholders till mainly leased land with uncertain and informal tenure, they have little incentive to take long-term capital loans for investments, such as micro-irrigation, which mitigate risk.

Smallholders have always been excited about technology. The adoption of hybrid maize by Bihar’s smallholders, hybrid vegetables in Maharashtra, solarpower pumps in Gujarat, for instance, demonstrate their eagerness to optimise profitability and de-risk income when terms of trade turn positive.

Strong public extension services can raise returns on this investment. Next comes capital. Nearly 86% of farm investment depends on loans.

Smallholders borrow nearly half of their loans from moneylenders, traders and input dealers. Repaying debt is a far more compelling consideration than buying machinery. Deliberate efforts towards financial inclusion, and emphasis on long-term capital, could kick-start the virtuous cycle. Above all, smallholder farming is directly energised by public investment.

Fair Trade Alliance Kerala (FTAK) is a collective of 4,500 farmers. They have shown that their farming is Small scale, innovative, market-embracing and sustainable. FTAK has ensured that local market prices never fall below a certain benchmark.

Way forward:-

India should relax rules for companies investing in contract farming, transport, marketing, warehouses and food processing.

India’s farms should become outsourcing hubs for global supermarket chains.

For any improvement in farmers’ income, private corporate investments in farming should at least double from the current 2 percent of total annual investments in agriculture.

- Once the ecosystem for enabling agriculture growth strengthens, the corporate sector, with a 2% current share in the overall investment, will venture closer to the bottom of the pyramid, offering smallholders linkages to technology, services and competitive markets.

Markets require the ‘visible hand’ to protect small participants so that they have agency. States must similarly develop and defend agricultural markets that work for smallholders by reducing transaction costs and counterparty risks, and raising price discovery, price transparency and bargaining power.

Suitably modified land-leasing laws can encourage investments in land improvement. Likewise, investment in dairy and poultry will increase by the incentives from integration into tight value chains.

States must similarly develop and defend agricultural markets that work for smallholders by reducing transaction costs and counterparty risks, and raising price discovery, price transparency and bargaining power, strong public extension services, enhanced credit disbursal complemented with proper guidance and policies, etc.

The government on its part needs to aggressively pursue innovative agriculture development programs by liberalizing markets, inviting private capital, reinventing agricultural extension, improving roads and other infrastructure.

- Institutional innovations in input services, land water management and output marketing for marginal and small farmers need to brought into practice.
- The government also needs to improve and take actions that support agricultural transformation, education, infrastructure, macro policies, doing business, equitable asset distribution and, rural non-farm sector development.
- Rural infrastructure will also enable small and marginal farmers to compete with other farmers in India as well as in other countries.

While each state-level partnership follows a unique model, they share similar guiding principles, which have been developed and validated by countries around the world. These are:

- Locally owned and aligned with the state’s goals and priorities for the sector.
- Market-driven with projects led by the private sector and rooted in viable business models.
- Multistakeholder in their approach, with open and inclusive engagement that includes all relevant stakeholders.
- Holistic, integrating full value chains that benefit all actors in the food system.
- Supported by an international network that offers solidarity, connection and resources.

Conclusion:-
The future of sustainable agriculture growth and food security of the nation depends on the performance of these small and marginal farmers.

**Q) Both investment and its productivity should pick up, in order to boost India’s economic growth. Critically analyze. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
Economic growth is one of the most essential determinants of socio-economic development. It is important to know how to boost it and discuss it in the context of present situation. Here you can show your economic SKILLS to get extra marks.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to discuss why investments and their productivity should increase in order to boost India’s economic growth. We have to examine why one or both of them has decreased and also express our opinion on how should we proceed further.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze- Here we have to dig deep into the issue and identify and discuss about all the related and important aspects and correlate them to satisfy the key demand of the question. We have to form an opinion based on our analysis and discussion.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**– Write a few lines about India’s present investment scenario- e.g India’s gross domestic product (GDP), which is also called the investment rate, averaged 31% in fiscals 2015-2018, compared with 33.6% in fiscals 2010-2014.

**Body**–
- Discuss why the investments have been low- e.g decreased capacity utilization; Focus on capital restructuring by private entities; GST implementation; demonetization shock; Upcoming elections etc.
- Discuss ICOR and then how investments and their productivity can be increased. E.g bring out the importance of public investment here.

**Conclusion**– Based on your discussion form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the issue.

**Background :-**
- India’s present investment scenario for instance India’s gross domestic product (GDP), which is also called the investment rate, averaged 31% in fiscals 2015-2018, compared with 33.6% in fiscals 2010-2014

**Current state of investment and productivity :-**
- Fixed investment growth in all the three quarters of last fiscal was revised downwards. As a result, growth in fixed investments last fiscal year was 7.6% compared with 10.1% in fiscal 2017

**Why boost in these areas is needed for better economic growth :-**
- **Reason for the decline in investments are:-**
  - The sticky share of private corporate sector investments in GDP
  - A secular decline in household investments.
  - CSO data shows private non-financial corporate investments have remained subdued, barring some improvement in fiscal 2017.
- **Broad-based pick-up in private corporate investments was elusive for three reasons:-**
  - **Capacity overhang:-**
    - Data from the RBI suggests overall capacity utilization declined to 74% at the end of December 2017 from 81% at the end of March 2011.
    - Capacity utilization in some large industrial sectors, such as thermal power, two-wheelers, tractors, cars, cement and steel, remains below the peak, though we expect improvement in fiscal 2019.
  - High leverage has also been concerning the corporate sector and has been a deterrent for fresh investments in the economy.
  - The transitory shocks from demonetization and implementation glitches in the roll out of the goods and services tax (GST) added to the uncertainty, which further delayed investment decisions.
  - **Pre-election year uncertainty, too, discourages private sector investments.** The election season is generally marked by uncertainties over regime-change and policy.
Household sector was the biggest contributor to investments in fiscal 2012 (share of about 45%), but its share has declined consistently since then and was about 31% in fiscal 2017.

Purchase of houses is generally the largest part (more than three-fourths) of household investments, but construction of dwellings/houses has slowed in three of the past four fiscals.

Government investments improved from 3.7% of the GDP in fiscal 2015 to 4.2% as of fiscal 2017. But the government does not have the fiscal muscle to offset the sluggishness in household and private corporate investments, which pulled down the overall investment ratio.

Productivity :-

- Productivity of investments, as measured by incremental capital output ratio (ICOR), has shown some improvement in the last four years.
- Government has initiated a number of steps to ease the business environment: big moves such as the GST and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and others, such as introducing online single-window model for providing clearances and filing compliances, fast-tracking foreign investments, surpassing the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, have helped.
- So, both investment and its productivity should pick up as the deleveraging phase gets over, crowding-in benefits of public investment kick in and efficiency-enhancing reforms start taking action. That will lead to faster economic growth.

Q) Society 5.0 aims to tackle several challenges by going far beyond just the digitalization of the economy. Critically comment in the context of India.(250 words)

Why this question
Japan has recently unveiled its plans to leverage industry 4.0 to achieve society 5.0. This is an important and an interesting concept in itself. It is pertinent to have knowledge and understanding of the issue.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to bring out the meaning and significance of society 5.0 and write in detail about its relevance for India.

Directive word
Critically comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an opinion thereupon. However our opinion should be backed with substantial and relevant facts/ examples/ arguments etc.

Structure of the answer
Introduction- write a few lines about the japanese plan to exploit the fourth industrial revolution in order to resolve its various technological, social problems and develop a society 5.0, which follows the hunting society (Society 1.0), agricultural society (Society 2.0), industrial society (Society 3.0), and information society (Society 4.0).

Body-
- Briefly discuss the meaning of society 5.0. E.g It is envisaged as a human-centered society that balances economic advancement with the resolution of social problems by a system that highly integrates cyberspace and physical space; new technologies such as IoT, robotics, AI, and big data, all of which can affect the course of a society, are continuing to progress and Society 5.0 can be a reality as a new society that incorporates these new technologies in all industries and social activities and achieves both economic development and solutions to social problems in parallel etc.
- Discuss the relevance of society 5.0 for India. E.g India needs to put serious efforts towards reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increased production and reduced loss of foodstuffs, mitigation of costs associated with the aging society, support of sustainable industrialization, redistribution of wealth, and correction of regional inequality. But achieving both economic development and solutions to social problems at the same time has proven to be difficult in the present social system and industry 4.0 and associated technologies can be deployed to solve many of those problems etc.

Conclusion– Mention the need for gradual adoption and learn from best practices across the countries along with the need to provide social security cover to the threatened jobbers etc.

Background:-
- Society 5.0 was proposed in the 5th Science and Technology Basic Plan as a future society that Japan should aspire to. It follows the hunting society (Society 1.0), agricultural society (Society 2.0), industrial society (Society 3.0), and information society (Society 4.0).
Japan aims to become the first country in the world to achieve a human-centered society (Society 5.0) in which anyone can enjoy a high quality of life full of vigor.

**Society 5.0:**
- It is a human-centered society that balances economic advancement with the resolution of social problems by a system that highly integrates cyberspace and physical space.
- Social reform (innovation) in Society 5.0 will achieve a forward-looking society that breaks down the existing sense of stagnation, a society whose members have mutual respect for each other, transcending the generations, and a society in which each and every person can lead an active and enjoyable life.

**Goes beyond digitization of economy:**
- Society 5.0 achieves a high degree of convergence between cyberspace (virtual space) and physical space (real space). In the past information society (Society 4.0), people would access a cloud service (databases) in cyberspace via the Internet and search for, retrieve, and analyze information or data.
- In Society 5.0, a huge amount of information from sensors in physical space is accumulated in cyberspace. In cyberspace, this big data is analyzed by artificial intelligence (AI), and the analysis results are fed back to humans in physical space in various forms.
- In Society 5.0, however, people, things, and systems are all connected in cyberspace and optimal results obtained by AI exceeding the capabilities of humans are fed back to physical space. This process brings new value to industry and society in ways not previously possible.
- Society 5.0, new value created through innovation will eliminate regional, age, gender, and language gaps and enable the provision of products and services finely tailored to diverse individual needs and latent needs. In this way, it will be possible to achieve a society that can both promote economic development and find solutions to social problems.

**Indian scenario:**
- Variety of measures have become necessary such as the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increased production and reduced loss of foodstuffs, mitigation of costs associated with the aging society, support of sustainable industrialization, redistribution of wealth, and correction of regional inequality, but achieving both economic development and solutions to social problems at the same time has proven to be difficult in the present social system.
- In the face of such major changes in the world, new technologies such as IoT, robotics, AI, and big data, all of which can affect the course of a society, are continuing to progress. Japan seeks to make Society 5.0 a reality as a new society that incorporates these new technologies in all industries and social activities and achieves both economic development and solutions to social problems in parallel. India can emulate this too.
Society 5.0 achieves advanced convergence between cyberspace and physical space, enabling AI-based on big data and robots to perform or support as an agent the work and adjustments that humans have done up to now.

- This frees humans from everyday cumbersome work and tasks that they are not particularly good at, and through the creation of new value, it enables the provision of only those products and services that are needed to the people that need them at the time they are needed, thereby optimizing the entire social and organizational system.
- This is a society centered on each and every person and not a future controlled and monitored by AI and robots.

Q) Discuss the features and advantages of Sashakt Scheme vis a vis Insolvency and Bankruptcy code?(250 words)

Why this question
NPA has been a huge challenge for banks and RBI has come up with several measures to deal with this challenge. IBC has been quite successful in handling cases of bad debts, thus, understanding why Sashakt scheme had been introduced and its comparison with IBC is important.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to explain the features of Sashakt Scheme, explain why it has been introduced, its comparison with IBC, the comparative advantages offered, the shortcomings etc.

Directive word
Discuss – The overall explanation of the scheme, comparison, discussion about advantages and disadvantages of the scheme, way forward all has to form part of the discussion.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Highlight the status quo of bad loans, and mention that RBI has been taking several measures in this regard such as IBC. Sashakt is in the same line of measures, but not by RBI.

Body
- Explain Sashakt Scheme
- Compare and contrast it with IBC Scheme
- Explain why Sashakt when IBC is already there
- Discuss the advantages, disadvantages, challenges, way forward

Conclusion – Mention that the impact of the problem of NPA has started reflecting in our economy and mandates quick action and thus the need for multiple steps.

Background:-
- With the banking sector’s bad loans problem spiralling to epic proportions, public and private sector bank officials yesterday hatched out a new framework to deal with the crisis.
- Committee of representatives from several banks announced an alternative mechanism for resolving bad loans, called Project Sashakt.
- Both Insolvency and Bandruptcy (IBC) and Sashakt are created to deal with the mounting Non Performing Assets problem.

Sashakt scheme:-
- It aims at resolving the problem of non-performing assets through a market-led approach.
- Under the scheme, bankers are not seeking any dispensation or forbearance from the Reserve Bank of India.

The plan includes three crucial aspects:-
- 1) Signing of intercreditor agreements.
- 2) Setting up of an asset management company, which then raises an alternative investment fund.
- 3) Getting asset reconstruction companies and stressed asset funds to bid for these assets and put a restructuring plan in place.

Features:-
- Resolution of loans up to 50 crore by lenders within a period of 90 days. For loans under Rs 50 crore, a resolution plan will be arrived at within 90 days of detection of stress by individual banks.
- Resolution of loans between 50 crore and 500 crore within 180 days, with the lead lender taking charge.
- For assets up to 500 crore, an independent asset management company (AMC) would be created that will be funded by alternative investment funds (AIF).
- Multiple AMCs are likely to be created.
- AMC to be formed with equity infusion from banks, foreign funds, infrastructure investment funds.
- Alternative investment funds will be created by institutional investors.
- Banks may also invest in AIFs to tap into upside on the asset later.
- AMCs will appoint industry experts and turn around specialists to help resolve the stressed asset.
  - AMCs will repay security receipts in full within 60 days
  - ARCs will also be allowed to bid for assets through a transparent auction process.
  - ARCs could also tie up with AMCs to operate and turn around the asset.
- Banks may also push for creation of a platform for trading assets.

**Advantages of Sashakt:**

- New ‘Sashakt’ scheme to tackle non-performing loans (NPL) through a market-led approach could stabilise balance sheets in the medium term.
- It will aid assets with a turnaround potential and is also beneficial for segments like small and medium enterprises, which contribute immensely to employment generation and economic growth.
- The framework will not be useful just for public-sector banks but also for their private-sector counterparts.

**Limitations:**

- Experts criticize that Sashakt plan is nothing new from what is already happening now. Even now, banks deal with smaller loans that have turned bad while very high-value loans are pushed to the NCLT. In this context, Sashakt looks like a case of old wine in a new bottle.
- The Asset Management Company (AMC) Sashakt is proposing is might not work because it is difficult for such a structure to either raise sufficient finances or manage stressed resources.
  - As banks had found out under the old SDR scheme, it was relatively easy to take over a defaulting borrower but much more difficult to run it on a day to day basis or nurse it back to health.
  - The AMC route, which is ostensibly to sort out the problem being faced by small and medium sized companies that have defaulted, **only gives additional time before pushing for their bankruptcy. In essence, it increases the time limit of resolution further.**
- Not much interest is shown by private investors to participate in stressed assets whether they will invest in Alternate Investment Fund (AIF’s) is a doubt.

**Comparison with IBC:**

- **Quicker resolution:**
  - Sashakt scheme has provision for time bound resolution of loans along with the amount specified whereas, IBC requires 180 days to draft the insolvency resolution plan.
  - IBC cases relating to corporates went directly to the NCLT whereas in Sashakt project only cases above 500 crore resolution cases to the NCLT
  - Sashakt plan envisages to create Asset Management Companies (AMC’s) with wider participation from Banks that will provide equity investments to the new AMC’s. IBC has provision to liquidate the creditors of the company rejects the plan of resolution.
  - Lenders get the option of price discovery through a market driven process where other AMCs or AIF’s can bid for the assets. This is unlike the IBC.

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**Q) A number of factors have been contributing towards the growth of the Electronics Sector in India. Discuss. Also highlight the efforts of the government to make India a global hub for electronics manufacturing. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

The Indian electronics industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world. Electronics manufacturing is a potential area where India can absorb its vast human resources. Coupled with a burgeoning domestic market and a plethora of pressing social needs, the opportunity can be utilized to make India a global hub of manufacturing, create employment and boost social and economic growth.
Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to write in detail about the factors behind the growth of the electronics sector in India. It also wants us to discuss about the efforts of the government towards making India a global hub for electronics manufacturing.

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

Structure of the answer
Write a few lines about the growth of electronics industry in India- growth rate in recent years, projected growth rate vs global projected growth rate etc.

Body
- Mention that, in 2015, the industry in India was valued at USD 75 Billion, despite a weak global economy. Discuss the factors behind the growth of the electronics industry in India- Increasing domestic demand, upswings in disposable incomes, the endeavour to build a Digital India through wider broadband connectivity and e-governance programs, rising manufacturing costs in other manufacturing economies and burgeoning consumption in the Middle East, Latin America and North Africa fueling global demand.
- Discuss the efforts of the government to make India a global hub for electronics manufacturing. E.g Digital India; a budgetary provision of USD 114 Million has been made in towards incentive schemes like Modified Incentive Special Package Scheme (M-SIPS) and Electronics Development Fund (EDF) in FY 2017-18. The increase in allocation has been made to keep pace with the increase in the number of investment proposals received within the sector. This is likely to reduce the dependence on imports; The Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme; etc.

Conclusion- sum up your discussion in a few lines and form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue.

Background:-
- The Indian electronics industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world. This sector comprises electronic products as well as components to manufacture these products. In 2015, the industry in India was valued at USD 75 Billion,

Factors contributing towards the growth of electronics sector in India:-
- Demand:-
  - With a spike in demand for electronic products, the ESDM sector in India is predicted to reach USD 228 Billion by 2020, growing at 16-23% annually.
  - Increasing domestic demand
- Upswings in disposable incomes
- A growing middle class
- Rising manufacturing costs in other manufacturing economies and burgeoning consumption in the Middle East, Latin America and North Africa fueling global demand have been contributing towards the growth of the Electronics Sector in India.
  - Due to rising labour costs, an increasing number of companies are now relocating their units from China to India to serve domestic demand.
  - There is also a significant demand for high-end consumer electronics.
- Apart from these factors, India boasts of a vast talent pool which has strong capabilities in design and R&D. The work force is not just skilled, but cost-effective as well.
- Initiatives:-
  - The endeavour to build a Digital India through wider broadband connectivity and e-governance programs
  - Further boost is being provided in this area through a host of Skill Development initiatives. This has resulted in a large number of global enterprises setting up their manufacturing units in India.
- Declining prices of electronics also has led to a fast-growing market for electronics and hardware products.

Efforts made by government to make India a global hub for electronics manufacturing:-
- The **Government has envisioned a policy to substitute the import of electronic products by 2020.** Electronic manufacturing companies are now increasingly looking at setting up their units in India, especially in the mobile phone segment, to serve the Indian domestic market.
- Industrial electronics contributed 15% to the revenue share, largely driven by Government infrastructure projects such as **smart cities, modernisation of railways and increasing automation in industries.**
- Government initiatives like **Digital India** are providing an impetus to the electronics manufacturing sector.
  - Digital India aims to ensure all Government services are accessible to citizens electronically. With a rise in income driving demand for electronics and the Government's focus on e-governance initiatives, Digital India is likely to spur growth in the ESDM sector.
- To make India a global hub for electronics manufacturing, a budgetary provision of USD 114 Million has been made in towards incentive schemes like **Modified Incentive Special Package Scheme (M-SIPS) and Electronics Development Fund (EDF) in FY 2017-18.**
  - The increase in allocation has been made to keep pace with the increase in the number of investment proposals received within the sector. This is likely to reduce the dependence on imports.
  - About 15 product categories fall under the M-SIPS Scheme now – smart cards, consumer appliances, Internet of Things products, to name a few.
- The **Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme** intends to promote the establishment of Greenfield and Brownfield Electronic Manufacturing Clusters to promote innovation and steer growth in the ESDM sector.
  - In the case of Greenfield EMCs, assistance will be provided with a restriction of 50% of the cost of the project, subject to a ceiling of USD 7.6 Million for every 100 acres of land.
  - For Brownfield projects, assistance will be provided with a restriction of 75% of the project with a ceiling of USD 7.6 Million.
- **Electronic Development Fund** has been one of the other major schemes rolled out by the government towards domestic manufacturing in the electronics sector.
- In the last few years, the Government has initiated positive steps to create a favourable ecosystem for investors, under the umbrella of the **Make in India initiative.**
- **New electronics policy** will focus on opening up Indian market for exports. The plan is to attract sub-assembly manufacturers in India.
- There are various government schemes to encourage domestic manufacturing which provide tax and tariff concessions, investment subsidies, preferential market access in government procurement and export subsidy.
- Recently the government increased the import duty on various electronic items like smartphones, LED bulbs and microwave ovens for most products, the rate increased from 10% to either 15% or 20%.
- Introduction of the landmark goods and services tax (GST) has increased the distance that trucks are travelling by about 30%. GST has also reduced the confusion associated with various state and local taxes.

**Concerns:-**
- **Trade deficit:-**
  - However, India's weak manufacturing base has not been able to respond to this increasing demand, leading to a growing trade deficit. Of the country's total demand for electronics, between 50-60% of the products and 70-80% of the components are imported.
  - The trade gap for electronics products has doubled in the last five years. The deficit stood at $38.94 billion for 2017-18.
  - Focus of the government on mobile phone manufacturing can be gauged from the fact that phone-making units in the country have increased to around 120 in 2018 from less than 10 in 2014. However, a majority of these are doing assembling only with imported components.
  - One of the reasons for increase in the bill is low-value addition in the country, and most of the value addition is happening at assembly level.
- **Many companies have opted out of their planned investments** due to the slow pace of approvals for disbursement of incentives.
- **Investments committed under the Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme (M-SIPS) have reduced** to around Rs 914 billion as on April 2018 as against the earlier proposals of Rs 1.57 trillion.
- **Lack of Semiconductor Wafer Fabrication Manufacturing Facilities (FAB) in the country is often regarded as a major stumbling block to the growth of electronics industry in the country.**
A FAB can lead to the development of an entire ecosystem for electronics manufacturing, but till now investors have not shown interest in setting up a FAB in India because, such units can cost up to $5 billion and the technology involved is also very advanced. Very few companies in the world have the expertise to set up a FAB.

The inverted tax structure for electronic goods:-
- Due to a limited base of local component suppliers, manufacturers are dependent on importing parts. Under the World Trade Organisation’s information technology agreement of 1995 (ITA-1), tariffs on 217 IT products were set at zero.
- However, the positive custom duties on the components (or parts) used in electronic products make it expensive for domestic manufacturers to compete with foreign competitors who can access the components at lower prices.

Solution:-
- The solution is to bring the duties on components down to the level of the product. Some parts might be used for multiple products that may have different duties, but it’s important to rule in favour of simple rules and apply the rate-cut regardless of use.
- Foreign direct investment (FDI) in electronics is less than 1% of the total FDI inflow because of onerous labour laws, delays in land-acquisition and the uncertain tax regime have kept investors at bay.
- The procedures for cross-border trade work against the competitiveness of Indian producers due to the high costs of compliance. The numerous forms, fees, inspections and the associated time discourage domestic producers from exporting and keep them out of the international supply chain.

Way forward:-
- In order to inspire confidence, laws need to be liberal and predictable. In the case of taxation, it is important to clearly establish the tax liabilities under different circumstances in full detail. A possible experiment could be special economic zones like the Dubai International Financial Centre Dubai’s normal civil and commercial laws do not apply in this area and a British chief justice ensures the practice of British common law.
- For attracting investments from IT and electronics companies some of the critical factors like connectivity to good seaport, air and road connectivity; availability of talent; and adequate availability of power and water, is a must. So greater efforts have to be made on not only creating the infrastructure that can serve the needs of the investing companies but also on branding and promotion.
- The way forward is to increase the country’s general competitiveness in the export market instead of pursuing sectoral policies.

Q)External commercial borrowings have emerged in the past few years as one of the instruments preferred by Indian companies to raise debt, which comes with its own caveats. Critically analyze.(250 words)

Why this question
In India, foreign currency borrowing has grown sevenfold, from $20 billion in 2004 to $140 billion in 2014. This has generated concerns about several systemic risks, which need to be discussed in detail.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to Dig deep into the issue of ECB and discuss the need for ECBs, their advantages as well as disadvantages. We have to form an opinion on the overall issue after considering all its important and related aspects.

Directive word
Critically analyze- Here we have to dig deep into the issue and identify and discuss about all the related and important aspects and correlate them to satisfy the key demand of the question. Based on our discussion, we have to form a personal opinion on the issue.

Structure of the answer
Introduction- write a few lines about the meaning of ECB; its forms and present some statistics highlighting that ECBs have grown at a very fast rate in India.

Body-
- Discuss the advantages of ECB. E.g tax shield; The cost of funds is usually cheaper from external sources if borrowed from economies with a lower rate of interest; financial leverage; sparing of domestic credit facilities; does not dilute the value of shareholders’ equity by adding to the number of shares outstanding; it is a way of raising capital without giving away any control etc.
**issues:**
- **Discuss the disadvantages of ECB. E.g moral hazard- define and explain it; currency mismatch which can lead to financial crisis; bigger firms have higher chances of getting ECBs while smaller firms have less chances; spill-over effect on the economy especially the exports sector, due to sharp depreciation of INR etc.**

**Conclusion:** Based on your discussion, form a personal opinion on the issue and suggest a way-forward. E.g mention and reiterate the recommendations of Sahoo Committee, 2013; need for adequate hedging; Masala bonds etc.

**Background:-**
- An external commercial borrowing (ECB) is an instrument used in India to facilitate Indian companies to raise money outside the country in foreign currency.
- External commercial borrowings (ECBs) have emerged as one of the chief conduits for strengthening the Indian corporate debt market.
- Most of the Indian foreign debt is mainly owned by the private corporate sector, exposing the economy to a higher risk in case of a default. As of 2016, the top two components of external debt had been commercial borrowings (37.3%) and non-resident Indian (NRI) deposits (26.1%)

**External commercial borrowings:-**
- The chief purpose for accessing funds through ECBs has evolved over time, with refinancing being the primary reason in the recent past

**Benefits:**
- **The cost of funds is usually cheaper from external sources** if borrowed from economies with a lower rate of interest. Indian companies can usually borrow at lower rates from the U.S. and the Eurozone as interest rates are lower there compared to the home country, India.
- **Availability of larger market can help companies satisfy larger requirements from global players in a better manner** as compared to what can be achieved domestically.
- ECB is just a form of a loan and may not be of equity nature or convertible to equity. Hence, it **does not dilute stake in the company** and can be done without giving away control because debtors do not enjoy voting rights.
  - Another advantage of borrowing is that it is a **way of raising capital** without giving away any control, as debt holders don't have voting rights, etc. Debt may also be a more easily hedged form of raising capital, as swaps and futures can be used to manage interest rate risk.
  - The borrower can **diversify the investor base.**
  - **It provides access to international markets for the borrowers** and gives good exposure to opportunities globally.
  - The economy also enjoys benefits, as the **government can direct inflows into the sector, have potential to grow.** For example, the government may allow a higher percentage of ECB funding in case of infrastructure and SME sector. This helps in an overall development of the country.
  - Avenues of lower cost funds can **improve the profitability of the companies and can aid economic growth.**
  - Another advantage of ECBs is that it **does not dilute the value of shareholders equity by adding to the number of shares outstanding.**

**issues:-**
- **Increase in default risk, bankruptcy risk, and a plethora of interest rate and market risks related to having more debt on a company's balancesheet**
- RCom, a listed Indian telecom firm with an external debt worth ₹443 billion, defaulted on its interest payments on two outstanding domestic non-convertible debentures on 13 November 2017. It was regarded as case of a high-profile default on international debt.
- The growing importance of ECBs in the composition of external debt is a **cause of concern for the Indian economy as it exposes it to interest and currency fluctuations.**
- **Availability of funds at a cheaper rate may bring in lax attitude on the company’s side resulting in excessive borrowing.** This eventually results in higher (than requirement) debt on the balance sheet which may affect many financial ratios adversely.

**impact on rating:-**
Higher debt on the company’s balance sheet is usually viewed negatively by the rating agencies which may result in a possible downgrade by rating agencies which eventually might increase the cost of debt. This may also tarnish the company's image in the market and market value of the shares too in eventual times.

Exchange rate risk:
- Since the borrowing is foreign currency denominated, the repayment of the principal and the interest needs to be made in foreign currency and hence exposes the company to exchange rate risk. Companies may have to incur hedging costs or assume exchange rate risk which if goes against may end up negative for the borrowers resulting into heavy losses for them.

Conclusion:
- ECBs are one of the commonly availed sources of cheaper funds by eligible companies. However, the companies need to be cautious about the exchange rate risk and impact on balance sheet debt to use it effectively.

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

**Q) Technological solutions in the domain of government-to-citizen cash transfers are far from perfect.**
**Discuss, in the context of India. (250 words)**

Why this question
DBT has been proposed as a panacea for many of the problems of corruption and extensive delays in release of funds. Although the system has many benefits over the older system, it is still far from perfect and a host of issues are associated with it. This needs to be deliberated so that timely interventions can be made in order to improve the system.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to write in detail as to how technological solutions in the domain of government-to-citizen cash transfers are far from perfect. What are the issues involved.

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

Structure of the answer
**Introduction** – Write a few lines about the important government programmes currently using direct cash transfers to the citizens. E.g MGNREGA, scholarships; maternity benefits; pensions etc.

**Body**–
- Briefly highlight the benefits of such direct transfers. E.g eliminating corruption, fake beneficiaries; decreasing cost and time of fund transfer; bringing in transparency etc.
- Discuss in detail about the problems in the present direct cash transfer systems currently operational in India. E.g creation of new intermediaries like payment agencies in the digital payments framework, which are responsible for not only delayed payments but also in corruption, and employ a number of tricks in doing the same; lack of access to data owned by the private intermediaries; transparency only at aggregate levels etc.

**Conclusion**- based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced opinion on the issue. E.g targeted transparency and developing and enforcing standards of accounting and immediate transfer of these accounts to the public domain; create additional measures of protection for digitally and socioeconomically vulnerable sections; need to create paper trails of payments and transactions that are available to the workers etc.

**Background**–
- In India, payment programmes run by the government include pensions, scholarships, maternity benefits, and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- The transfer process is vulnerable to a host of problems like corruption and extensive delays being chief among them.
So in the last decade India has witnessed a fundamental shift marked by the introduction of technology-mediated transfers. Propelled by this, the Indian government has recently experimented with several digital methods to reduce the last-mile problem in the payment process.

**How are these technological solutions far from perfect:**

- **Rural India deficiencies:**
  - Very few villages in India have bank branches, there existed an additional layer of payment intermediaries.
  - Private contractors, known as payment agencies, were tasked with taking cash from the local banks to people in the villages. This led to delay in payments.
  - The payment process, from the nodal bank to the beneficiary, included at least three different agencies, some with their own sub-structures, thereby fundamentally contradicting the assumption that digital transfers are “direct.”
  - **Payments were far from instantaneous even in states with the best digital payments infrastructure in India.** In a study done in undivided AP, nearly 13% of payments were not disbursed at all, with an average delay of 43.6 days in NREGA.

- **Corruption:**
  - Many beneficiaries reported that payment agencies took bribes.
  - In addition, activists were concerned about the possibility of payments being deliberately delayed by agencies in order to earn interest on it.
  - The contractor developed a nexus with a local strongman who advised people that there would be a long delay in payment and offered to pay workers their wage immediately with a commission.
  - Delays were engineered so that the workers would opt for the discounted payment.

- **No accurate information:**
  - **In most reports, information on transfers was available only at aggregate levels.** While it was easy to find how much money was sent to a bank, there was no information on who was being paid, thus making the process entirely non-transparent from the point of view of the workers.
  - It was impossible to find beneficiary-level information on the payment process, even though the data was available at the backend.

- **Non transparency:**
  - Systematic form of non-transparency has arisen in digital transfers through the involvement of private contractors.
  - Payments that are processed by the bureaucracy are covered by India’s strong Right to Information (RTI) law. Private contractors, however, are not covered by the law, and thus the transfer of the payment process from the bureaucracy to private players has weakened transparency.
  - The introduction of technologies without creating sufficient organisational arrangements has created many new problems in the payment process that citizens did not face earlier.
  - Several problems were introduced because of technology use. These include delays due to data entry errors, errors in authentication in POS devices, and the sheer complexity of the new mechanism that very few people understood.

- **Underpayments:**
  - There are also many cases involving extralegal fees and underpayments since there is no protection for account holders. In Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, for example, there were cases of money being transferred from legitimate account holders to others without the consent or knowledge of the account holders.

- **No efficient legal discourse:**
  - In many states, there are no legal means to find out what happened to a payment once it is transferred by the government. This is deeply problematic in the context of corruption.

**Technological solutions have benefitted as well:**

- Proponents of digitisation argue that the key benefit of technology is that it enables governments to **transfer cash directly to citizens, eliminating intermediaries.**
- It would reduce corruption since intermediaries are often susceptible to bribery and fraud.
Digital transfers would be instantaneous, and would also eliminate delays in payments reaching beneficiaries. Use of technology would ensure that the process is fully transparent.

**Way forward:-**
- In addition, there is a need for regulations to prevent intermediaries from demanding extralegal fees and denying payments.
- Given the poor digital capabilities of most MGNREGA workers and welfare recipients, India also needs to create paper trails of payments and transactions that are available to the workers. In many states, MGNREGA workers do not receive bank passbooks and have no means of receiving updates on their own accounts. Remedying this is critical.

**Q)** Water crisis is an impending catastrophe, likely to hit India. Critically analyze, in the context of India’s present water crisis. (250 words)

**Why this question**
As the question itself says, India is under a threat of an impending water crisis across the country. There are certain main factors behind the present situation and only a few possible solutions available presently.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to dig deep into India’s present water crisis, identify and discuss the factors behind. It also wants us to express our opinion on the issue in the form of what should be done in this regard.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze- Here we have to dig deep into the issue and identify and discuss about all the related and important aspects and correlate them to satisfy the key demand of the question. We have to form an opinion based on our analysis and discussion.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Write a few lines about the state of India’s present water crisis- per capita availability trends, likely demand in future, etc.

**Body**-
- Discuss the factors behind the present situation- climate change, pollution and poor farming practices. Bring out the role of each factor.
- Discuss what should be done in this regard- e.g better water-management practices, technologies like precise irrigation; wastewater treatment; sustainable agriculture; redirecting subsidies; watershed management; use of technology and best practices across the world.

**Conclusion** – Mention India’s recent efforts in this direction like CWM-Index; stress upon the imperative to employ more resources, gather more public support; ground level monitoring etc.

**Background:**
- India has long undervalued one of its most precious resources, water. The country’s chronic mismanagement of water is staring at it now. Over 600 million Indians rely on the monsoon to replenish their water sources, and the unpredictable nature of rain leaves them vulnerable.
- The NITI Aayog report on Composite Water Management Index said that India is facing its ‘worst’ water crisis in history

**Water crisis in India:**
- Taps in Shimla went dry this summer, posing an unprecedented water crisis in the hill town.
  - Reasons for water crisis can be:-
A combination of population explosion, unplanned growth of the city and its expansion to some traditional catchment areas (a region from which rainfall flows into a river, lake, or reservoir) have led to a reduction in the natural flow of water, and large-scale deforestation.

Climate change, leading to much lower precipitation during the winter months. As a result, the natural flow and recharge of water in the region has fallen sharply

The water demand in Shimla during peak tourist season is very high

Failure of State governments to check unplanned development and exploitation of water resources. There is no attempt at the central or state levels to manage water quantity and quality

The vegetation pattern has changed, tree cover is shrinking and unscientific dumping of debris in water streams is rampant.

The debris blocks the natural course of water bodies.

Increasing number of tube wells resulting in depletion of groundwater.

Changes in farming patterns lead to consumption of more water for irrigation and also change the soil profile because of the use of fertilizers

The states ranked lowest like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Jharkhand – are home to almost half of India’s population along with the majority of its agricultural produce.

There is also a lack of interest in maintaining India’s traditional water harvesting structures.

Increase in population, reduced rainfall, encroachment of water bodies, poor handling of industrial waste water, exploitation of natural resources, change in food consumption pattern etc. have all come together to deplete the amount of water available

**Implications**

- India’s water crisis has implications for the health of the entire population.
- Farmers suffer crop losses.
- Decrease in tree cover, shrubs and grass in the catchment areas.
- Queues for government water tankers and public taps are already a common sight in Indian slums.
- Policies like giving free electricity to farmers or financial support for groundwater extraction results in uncontrolled exploitation and wastage of resource.

**Measures being taken**:-

- **Solid waste management rules 2016 for effective management of waste in urban areas.**
- **Mihir shah committee** was appointed and the following main recommendation was made.
  - In the new water resource governance scenario facing the country, there is a need to envisage a high-level central organisation like National water commission that is forward looking, strategic, agile and transdisciplinary in its skill set.
  - It can look in the multiple areas like River rejuvenation, Aquifer mapping and participatory groundwater management, Urban and industrial water management, knowledge management and capacity building etc.
- **Rain water harvesting was made mandatory in Tamilnadu** so the precedent can be followed in other states as well.
- **With Pradhan mantra krishi sinchayi yojana** government is focussing on irrigation reforms as well.
- The National Water Policy (2012), with an emphasis on the need for appropriate ground water planning, development and management was formulated. Additionally, a ‘Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water in India’ was introduced and circulated to State Governments in 2013, envisaging construction of artificial recharge and rainwater harvesting structures

**Concerns / Challenges**

- Primarily water is not valued in India
- There is great awareness now about air pollution; however, India’s water crisis does not get that kind of attention.
- Inter-State river disputes.
- Adverse climatic conditions are believed to be the main factor for reduced flow in streams.
- Drying up of the streams and increasing erratic pattern of rainfall.
- In cities and towns, lack of infrastructure to deliver piped water to homes.
- Poor data management and an abject failure to properly price water.
Where data is available, it is often unreliable due to the use of outdated collection techniques and methodologies.

**Way Forward:-**
- Deepen our understanding of our water resources and usage and put in place interventions that make our water use efficient and sustainable.
- Augmentation of watersheds that can store more good water, for use in agriculture and to serve habitations.
- Strict pollution control enforcement.
- Decentralisation of irrigation commands, offering higher financial flows to well-performing States through a National Irrigation Management Fund.
- Groundwater extraction patterns need to be better understood through robust data collection.
- Pollution can be curbed by levying suitable costs.
- Poor maintenance of pipelines, consistent leakage and illegal tapping of water are some of the issues that need to be addressed on a war-footing.
- Adopting rainwater harvesting techniques is the need of the hour.
- A legal mandate will work better than just competition and cooperation; it would make governments accountable.
- These forward-looking changes would need revamped national and State institutions, and updated laws.
- **Urban India needs to focus on recycling and harvesting water, having** better testing and purification facilities and increase public awareness on the need to conserve water.
- **Large catchment areas need to be developed around water bodies so that natural recharge of groundwater takes place.** A good example is the Seog catchment area which has been denoted as a wildlife sanctuary and where no construction is allowed.
- **Greywater recycling**, a method of recycling wastewater from kitchen sinks, showers and laundry fixtures.
  - Greywater recycling helps reduce household water usage by about 50%.
- This year’s World Water Development Report makes it clear that **nature-based solutions** which are also aligned with the principles and aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can offer answers to our most pressing water-related challenges.
- **International examples:-**
  - Israel has been a role model for the world in matters of water management with its innovation of drip irrigation. The country has also set the template for reusing wastewater in irrigation. It treats 80 percent of its domestic wastewater, which is recycled and constitutes nearly 50 percent of the total water used for agriculture. Israel now saves as candlelight for countries like India.
  - Israel’s drip and micro-irrigation solutions rapidly spread worldwide. Just one recent example of how this method has impacted food supply in foreign countries is Tipa, literally “Drop,” an Israeli-developed kit that has allowed 700 farming families in Senegal to reap crops three times a year instead of just once, even on infertile land.
- **Comprehensive water budgeting :-**
  - Water budgets at the watershed level will inform communities about how much water they have, so it can be equitably shared within communities. This needs a strong water governance system based on awareness building, science and a commitment to fairness and sustainability.

**Conclusion:-**
- Participatory approach to water management that has been successfully tried all over the world, as also in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, needs to be adopted.
- Groundwater and surface water must also be viewed in an integrated, holistic manner. An integrated approach and the awareness by the people that if water is saved today then there will be more available tomorrow is very necessary.
Q) A recent OECD and ICRIER research has highlighted that despite higher positive inputs in comparison to global averages, Indian farmers have negative PSE. Critically examine whether focussing on e-NAM would bring a change in PSE of Indian farmers?(250 words)

Why this question
The article talks about an important research report which highlights that despite higher than average government support, those inputs are not getting transformed into corresponding income gain for the farmers. This calls for a paradigm shift in the way agriculture support is thought of and implemented. This question is thus important.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to discuss the findings of the report, examine the causes behind the lack of translation of government support into positive PSE. Thereafter we need to discuss whether promotion of e-NAM would bring about the desired impact, or whether we need simultaneous focus on different aspects to improve farmers situation.

Directive word
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement. Here in the bad part, we have to write how focussing on e-NAM alone would not alleviate the issues, but an amalgamation of steps are required to bring about lasting change.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Highlight that a sizeable chunk of Indian LFPR finds employment in agriculture, which necessitates keen focus on how effective the government interventions have been.

Body
- Discuss the findings of the report that says that despite positive input support, farmers output price realisation lags behind peer economies.
- Examine what might be the reasons. Highlight the shortcomings of governmental intervention through MSP and how it is unable to improve farmers situation across a variety of regions and crops. Discuss other support like fertilizer subsidy, insurance support, export policy etc and why they are not translating into desired outcomes.
- Discuss whether the shortcomings of APMC is one of the key reasons why farmers are not enjoying positive PSE. Examine whether success of e-NAM would ensure that farmers start enjoying apt price for their produce.
- Discuss how focussing on e-NAM alone would not be sufficient and requires a comprehensive approach as suggested by Shanta Kumar Committee, Niti Ayog report on smart agriculture etc

Conclusion – Give a fair and balanced view on what should be the way forward.

Background:-
- The need to focus on farmers incomes instead of production or the growth rate in agriculture stems from the facts that there has been agrarian distress in the sector for the last two decades and a very large proportion of farming households in most of the central and eastern states live below the poverty line (BPL)
- 40% of Indian farmers disliked farming as a profession due to its low profits, high risk, and the lack of social status

Findings of the report:-
- OECD and ICRIER jointly undertook research over two years to map and measure the nature of agricultural policies in India and how they have impacted producers and consumers.
- The results of the PSE exercise reveal that India’s PSE, on average, during 2014-15 to 2016-17 was -6% of farm receipts. India is very much in the minority in this respect as most of the other countries studied by OECD have positive PSEs, with the OECD average at 18.2%.
- A positive PSE (%) means that policies have helped producers receive higher revenues than would have been the case otherwise, and a negative PSE (%) implies lower revenues for farmers (a sort of implicit tax) due to the set of policies adopted.
Overall, PSE (%) was negative to the tune of 14%, on average, over the entire period from 2000-01 to 2016-17, indicating that, despite positive input subsidies, farmers in India received 14% less revenue due to restrictive trade and marketing policies.

**Why farmers are unable to achieve greater incomes:**

- **Weak Producer – Consumer Linkages:**
  - There is a disconnect amongst what the Indian farmer produces and what the consumer demands. The farmer is not connected to aggregators, food processors and retail chains to help shape the nature of his produce. As a result, produce remains the same annually, largely dependent on farmers and is often driven by the government’s MSP program.

- **Weak Supplier Power:**
  - The farmer is barely empowered as a supplier. He continues to be small & marginal, inadequately resourced, ill-informed on markets and marketing, ill-equipped to manage risk, burdened with credit & debts and is dependent on traders to reach the buyers.

- **Overdependence on Agriculture:**
  - 60% of the Indian population depends on agriculture for livelihood while contribution to the national GDP through agriculture is only 14-15%.

- **Technology Starved:**
  - The farmer is not equipped with the latest technology nor trained to adopt it fast. Lack of new technology solutions keeps the farmer from gaining an equal footing globally.

- **Low investment in Research & Development:**
  - Less than 1% of the Agricultural GDP in India is spent on research. That is abysmal considering this sector is critical to food security of the country and provides livelihood to 60% of Indian population.

- **Lack of enabling infrastructure along the value chain:**
  - There is a staggering lack of infrastructure across the entire agricultural value chain.
  - Restrictive export policies for agri-products which have inflicted a large negative price support to farmers.
  - Higher input subsidies
  - Lesser coordination between the Centre and the states, and also across various ministries (for example, the agriculture, food, water resources, fertilizers, rural development and food processing).
  - There has been a **pro-consumer bias in India’s trade** and marketing policies, which actually hurts the farmers and lowers their revenues compared to what they would have received otherwise.

- **The challenges posed by present day APMCs:**
  - **Fragmentation of State** into multiple market areas, each administered by separate APMC
  - **Separate licenses** for each mandi are required for trading in different market areas within a state. This means that there is limited first point of sale for the farmer.
  - Licensing barriers leading to conditions of monopoly.
  - Opaque process for price discovery.
  - An overwhelming majority of farmers still rely on the same broken system of markets under APMC, which is monopolistic and rent-seeking, with high commissions, especially for perishables.

**Focussing on e-NAM would bring a change in PSE of Indian farmers:**

- For the farmers, **NAM promises more options for sale**. It would increase his access to markets through warehouse based sales and thus obviate the need to transport his produce to the mandi.
- For the local trader in the mandi / market, **NAM offers the opportunity to access a larger national market for secondary trading.**
- Bulk buyers, processors, exporters etc. benefit from being able to participate directly in trading at the local mandi / market level through the NAM platform, **thereby reducing their intermediation costs.**
- The gradual integration of all the major mandis in the States into NAM will ensure common procedures for issue of licences, levy of fee and movement of produce. In a period of 5-7 years Union Cabinet expects **significant benefits through higher returns to farmers, lower transaction costs to buyers and stable prices and availability to consumers.**
- The NAM will also **facilitate the emergence of value chains in major agricultural commodities across the country and help to promote scientific storage and movement of agri goods.**
Better storage and transportation facilities would allow buyers to participate in electronic purchases irrespective of their location. This would boost volumes, making the exchange a liquid one, and facilitate transparent price discovery.

- e-NAM automatically addresses the problem of asymmetry in information flows, which is a problem currently because there is no data on secondary transactions between traders. A well-functioning spot exchange will pave the way for a thriving derivatives platform, given the larger objective is to have a seamless and integrated market for agri-commodities.

- e-NAM was to help farmers find the best possible price for their produce by expanding the market nationally and eliminating middlemen.

- The highlight of the scheme is the single point levy of market fees, i.e. on the first wholesale purchase from the farmer.

- The provision lets farmers to showcase their produce in nearby markets and facilitate traders from anywhere to quote price.

- The portal enables harmonisation of quality standards of agricultural produces and provision for assaying (quality testing) infrastructure in every market that will pave way for informed bidding by buyers.

- There will be liberal licensing of traders or buyers and commission agents enabled by state authorities without any precondition of physical presence or possession of shop /premises in the market yard.

- It will address the following challenges:
  - Fragmentation of state into multiple market areas.
  - Poor quality of infrastructure and low use of technology.
  - In the traditional mandi system, farmers generally procured very less price for their crops as they had to pass through various intermediaries at the physical marketplace. This not only adds costs but also handling costs.

**Constraints:-**

- To implement it, each State has to first amend its APMC Act to make a provision for electronic auction as a mode of price discovery, allow a single licence across the State and have market fees levied at a single point. Currently, only 13 States have enacted the necessary amendments.

- There are no scientific sorting/grading facilities or quality testing machines. Testing labs are yet to be set up both in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

- Lack of internet connectivity is another issue impeding progress. In Maharashtra, the infrastructure is in the development stage, internet connectivity and computers are being provided.

- No grading/assaying infrastructure in most mandis.

- Market remains isolated, with traders from outside the APMC not being able to buy farmers produce from the mandi and buyers having to physically inspect quality of turmeric.

- State agricultural departments have been finding it difficult to convince all stakeholders farmers, traders and commission agents to move to the online platform. While traders fear the taxman, farmers fear lower prices if the produce is assayed.

- Lack of technical expertise at the State Agricultural Departments has also delayed the setting up of grading/assaying facilities, say officials from the mandis.
  - It requires someone with technical expertise to assess the kind of equipment needed for the crops in the mandi, but currently, not many understand.

- Currently, the platform suffers from basic flaws such as data being fed into the system post the auction.

- Fruits and vegetables, where there often are prices fluctuations, are yet to be included in the NAM platform.

**Way forward:-**

- Large Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)
  - While there are some successful FPOs currently running, sustainability of operations in FPOs is still a question. What can help is ensuring that FPOs are properly networked and federated, regionally as well as centrally.

- Encourage Land Bankswherever possible, especially hills and semi-arid areas where farming is difficult.
  - This may be more feasible in areas where fruits are grown.
  - Individual farmers can form large land banks by depositing their land into a large pool and then cultivate as one body in a professional manner on predetermined price and other terms.
A comprehensive vision document to promote and establish direct linkages between growers and consumers:
- A policy framework that promotes structured, direct linkages between professional aggregators, food chain collaborators, food processors with large FPOs/Land Banks will reduce uncertainties drastically. This will ensure a fair share of the value created at the terminal end insuring the farmer from concentrated risk.

Roadmap that establishes a distinctive and customized policy approach for different crop groups
- Measures such as establishing Agro Export Zones that have an independent APEDA equivalent as an enabler will be key. A customized approach and policy framework is needed for each crop segment such as food crops, commercial crops and vegetable growing regions.

Advance technology adoption throughout the agro-value chain.
- Keeping current realities in mind, a complete overhaul of education in Agri Universities and research in scientific institutions need to be considered. R&D investments and capabilities in the sector must be enhanced substantially while bringing in transparency and accountability.

State of the art infrastructure in areas like storage & transportation, knowledge & information, credit & insurance etc. needs to be established.
- Need for electronic payments across the mandis or APMCs so that payments are prompt.
- Even as the Centre works with States to persuade them, infrastructure such as reliable third-party certification for the produce in every mandi and robust computer systems, including uninterrupted web connectivity, need to be put in place.

Importantly, the hold of the middleman, who often is also the financier of the farmer against a pledge of the produce, needs to be broken. That can be done only by bringing the farmer into the formal financial system.
- Experts say that as long as fruits and vegetables are kept outside the purview of NAM, the volatility in prices would continue, thus depriving farmers from getting better prices.

Barriers hampering interstate transfer of agricultural commodities also have to be removed. High taxes and levies imposed by states such as Punjab, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh on agricultural commodities trade have to be brought down; this would boost interstate trade and farmers income.
- Expert panel:-
  - The expert panel had noted the need for a dispute resolution mechanism critical, if e-NAM is to work.
  - Believes farmers should not be restricted to selling their produce only at recognised APMCs, they should be allowed to sell even outside the APMC premises, such as an electronic platform or in regulated private markets, without a fee being charged.

Niti Ayog report on smart agriculture and implementation of Shanta Prasad committee recommendations are needed.

Conclusion:
- Eventually, the success of e-NAM will depend upon whether farmers get a higher price for their produce or not and whether this reduces price volatility.
- Since most state governments have a history of blocking supplies when local prices go up, it will be critical to ensure the states on the platform don’t resort to their old tricks in times of supply shortage.

Q) PDPS as a procurement tool, instead of MSP will be more effective in improving the status of farmers. Critically examine. (250 words)

Why this question
Since the time government has raised the MSP, the topic has come under intense discussion. While the move is being appreciated for it is in sync with several committee recommendations, the overall impact of MSP in alleviating farmers issues is being questioned. The article explores this issues and suggests alternatives.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to compare the effectiveness of MSP vis a vis PDPS. For this, we need to highlight the issues faced with MSP regime and the pros and cons of MSP and PDPS. We need to give a fair and balanced view in the end.

Directive word
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – You can provide the context to the whole debate by mentioning the step of the government to raise MSP, and the debate that it has led to.

**Body**

- Explain MSP and PDPS
- Highlight the issues with MSP as pointed out by several committees in the past such as Ramesh Chand committee, Shanta Kumar Committee etc
- Examine how PDPS can be an improvement over MSP regime. Discuss the experience of its implementation in MP
- Discuss the lacunae in PDPS

**Conclusion** – Give a fair and balanced view on the utility of MSP vis a vis PDPS and what according to you should be the way forward.

**Background**:-

- Recently NITI Aayog has suggested ‘Price Deficiency Payment’ system to address the gaps in Minimum Support Price (MSP) based procurement of crops.

**‘Price Deficiency Payment’ system :-**

- PDPS is a system in which the farmer is free to sell in the open market and, if the market price falls below the MSP, the government steps in and makes a deficiency payment which is equal to the difference between MSP and the market price.
- As this system does not involve public procurement, the costs on account of procurement, storage and distribution are avoided.
- Also, the system retains the incentive effects of MSP.

**Issues with MSP:-**

- Imposition of MSP beyond some point is market distorting as it severs the link between prices and demand-supply. This can also be inflationary and out of sync with the physical market dynamics:
  - Support price does not come with a commitment to buy whatever farmers offer. Actual procurement will be limited by the fiscal room available, especially at a time when a significantly higher fiscal deficit could lead to further pressure on the rupee.
  - RBI has highlighted the announcement of higher MSPs as being one of the major risk factors this year for inflation. This is significant as the government has spoken of providing a mark-up of 50% on cost for all products when deciding on the MSPs for FY19.
  - Farmers have got negative returns in several crops prompting many economists to question the usefulness of MSP’s.
- Input costs:-
  - The cost of cultivation varies across states while MSP's are based on a weighted all India average so farmers don’t get guaranteed profits.
  - MSP’s have failed to keep pace with input costs.
- Only a selected few states such as Punjab, MP, Haryana etc have well developed procurement infrastructure
  - Government procurement at MSP is benefiting the large traders than farmers.
  - More than three fourths of farming households don’t produce any marketable surplus and hence cannot really benefit from price support.
  - There is no provision in the budget to increase the ambit of farmers who are covered by MSP and that is a problem in addition to how the MSP is calculated
- Its reach is limited, in terms of both the crops and the geographical area it covers:-
  - Farmers also argue that MSP is only announced for 25 crops, while for other crops they have to deal with market volatility. There is no MSP for fruits and vegetables.
- Only a fraction of the farmers actually have access to MSP.
  - MSP often does not reach farmers as the government does not procure on time and the farmer has to make distress sales at rates lower than the MSP.
In the recent budget, government has decided to keep MSP for all the unannounced crops of kharif at least at one and half times of their production cost. There is no clarity on how the implementation takes place.

- There are concerns whether all states would agree with that cost
- Also as MSP and Inflation highly co-related and any increase in MSP will eventually resulted into price hike of many agricultural products.

**India’s price support programme is also promoting cultivation of water intensive crops** like paddy and sugarcane even in water deficit regions such as Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra

**Farmers keep producing the same varieties as cropping pattern is hardly changed in some regions.**

**Higher MSP’s over incentivize production** leading to supply glut.

Hikes in MSP’s also **adversely affect exports** by making Indian farm goods uncompetitive especially when international market prices are lower.

**Why is PDPS important?**

- The key benefit from the price deficiency payment is that it will reduce the need for the government to actually procure food crops, transport and store them and then dispose of them under PDS.
- The difference between the support and market prices can instead simply be paid in cash to the farmer.
- Price deficiency payment can also keep India’s bill on **food subsidies under check**

**More effective than MSP:-**

- PDP system may be more effective than MSPs at ensuring that cropping patterns in India respond to consumer needs. It may also ensure that more farmers actually benefit from price support.
- Monoculture also results in soil degradation and makes crops susceptible to pest and weed, leading to higher usage of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. **The price deficiency system may incentivise farmers to diversify beyond the conventional cereals.** The crops with effective MSPs such as rice, wheat and sugarcane, where support prices are effective now, are also water-intensive.

- It can also address to an extent the world nations concern on India’s procurement subsidies being **trade-distorting.**

**Constraints with PDPS:-**

- **Difficult to operationalise the system effectively:-**
  - For example, there needs to be a record of the quantity and price of each sale and since the farmer is free to sell anywhere it becomes practically impossible to collect and collate this data for millions of farmers.
  - Therefore, it becomes necessary to restrict sales in a designated location to, say, a mandi. Even then, the mandi price will keep fluctuating through the season, and even during a single day.

- Thus, the **deficiency payments will be different for different farmers larger for farmers who sell at lower prices** and vice-versa. **This has two adverse effects**
  - The farmer will have little incentive to look for the best possible price in the market since he will be compensated for the difference
  - The farmers may sell **inferior products under the PDPS,** which is likely to fetch a lower price or may even result in them remaining unsold in an open market

- A major limitation of PDPS is that it is a counter-cyclical payment (the farmer gets a higher payment when market price is low and vice-versa). **This insulates farmers from the market and may not help in market development or improving the market price for farmers.** This implies that government intervention in the market needs to be continuous.

- Since the demand side is completely ignored (because of the assured price), the farmer is unlikely to adjust supply in accordance with demand. This may result in frequent instances of supply outstripping demand, which can create problems for finding market outlets.

- Madhya Pradesh implemented a variant of PDPS on a pilot basis, called the **Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana,** during the kharif season of 2017-18. The evidence from this confirms many of the issues discussed above.

**Way forward:-**

- Government needs to allow agro trading companies to buy more in the Indian market, especially given the limitations of the Food Corporation of India.
- **Procurement system of the government needs to be streamlined.**
  - There need to be reforms in APMC acts to ensure farmer selling directly to farmers
Based on Telangana experience it is time to consider a transparent, crop neutral and easier to implement income support programme.

- The state government gives a payment of Rs.10000 per hectare of cultivable land to all farmers irrespective of the crops they raise.
- The ambitious projects like e-NAM, doubling farmer’s income by 2022, price stabilisation fund, implementation of Swaminathan and Shanta Kumar committee is required.

Conclusion:-

- Perhaps limited procurement will help in lifting the market price and may help limit the fiscal costs of PDPS. A carefully-designed PDPS, with partial procurement and a dovetail with e-NAM in mind, is probably the correct direction to proceed in.

### TOPIC: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices.

**Q) Critically examine the impact of recently announced MSP which is in line with the long standing Swaminathan Committee recommendations? (250 words)**

**Why this question**
The article discusses the impact of increased MSP on farmers welfare and inflation. This has been a longstanding recommendation and now we need to examine whether it would help our grief stricken farmers improve their situation.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to analyze whether increasing MSP would address farmers situation and the resultant impact it might have on inflation, when it is already under pressure due to rising crude prices.

**Directive word**
Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Highlight that there has always been a demand for even higher MSP, thinking it would obviate the farmers grievances, now that it has happened we need to analyze how effective it will be.

**Body**

- Mention the step taken by the government. Highlight that Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices estimated that costs (calculated on an A2 + FL basis) have risen in a range of 0 to 8%, with a mean increase of 5%, which means that there isn’t such a high corresponding increase in costs.
- Examine the impact that it will have on inflation
- Analyze whether increasing MSP would help alleviate farmers grievances. Mention the shortcomings of MSP such as poor penetration in several parts of the country, effective only for a specific set of crops etc. Also highlight that the farmers do indeed need price support as cost for their produce is getting affected both during surplus and deficit production.
- Discuss an alternative such as Price deficiency payment as suggested by NITI Ayog.

**Conclusion** – Mention your view on the step taken and the way forward.

**Background:-**

- The Union Cabinet cleared 2018-19 kharif Minimum Support Prices (MSP), with increases in line with the earlier Budget commitment to set MSPs at 1.5 times the cost of production. It decided to keep MSPs at least 50 per cent above the sum of cost of production (A2) and imputed wages for the time spent by the farmer and his/her family (FL) in crop production.
- The new MSPs announced by the government for kharif crops meet the spirit the Swaminathan Committee recommendation of 50 per cent net return over Cost C2.

**Impact of recently announced MSP:-**
• **Inflation**:  
  - Hike will prima facie likely have significant food inflation effects, reversing the trend of food inflation having fallen steadily from 11.8% in FY13 to 1.8% in FY18.  
  - Imposition of MSP beyond some point is **market distorting** as it severs the link between prices and demand-supply. This can also be inflationary and out of sync with the physical market dynamics.  
  - Support price does not come with a commitment to buy whatever farmers offer. Actual procurement will be limited by the fiscal room available, especially at a time when a significantly higher fiscal deficit could lead to further pressure on the rupee.  
  - RBI has highlighted the announcement of higher MSPs as being one of the major risk factors this year for inflation. This is significant as the government has spoken of providing a mark-up of 50% on cost for all products when deciding on the MSPs for FY19.  
  - **Farmers have got negative returns in several crops prompting many economists to question the usefulness of MSP’s.**  

• **Input costs**:  
  - The cost of cultivation varies across states while MSP's are based on a weighted all India average so farmers don’t get guaranteed profits.  
  - MSP’s have failed to keep pace with input costs.  

• **Only a selected few states such as Punjab, MP, Haryana etc have well developed procurement infrastructure**  
  - Government procurement at MSP is benefiting the **large traders than farmers.**  
  - More than three fourths of farming households don’t produce any marketable surplus and hence cannot really benefit from price support.  

• **There is no provision in the budget to increase the ambit of farmers** who are covered by MSP and that is a problem in addition to how the MSP is calculated  

• Farmers also argue that **MSP is only announced for 25 crops**, while for other crops they have to deal with market volatility. There is no MSP for fruits and vegetables.  

• **Only a fraction of the farmers actually have access to MSP.**  
  - MSP often does not reach farmers as the government does not procure on time and the farmer has to make distress sales at rates lower than the MSP.  

• In the recent budget, government has decided to keep MSP for all the unannounced crops of kharif at least at one and half times of their production cost. There is no clarity on how the implementation takes place.  
  - There are concerns whether all states would agree with that cost  
  - Also as MSP and Inflation highly co-related and any increase in MSP will eventually resulted into price hike of many agricultural products.  

• **India’s price support programme is also promoting cultivation of water intensive crops** like paddy and sugarcane even in water deficit regions such as Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra  

• Farmers keep producing the same varieties as cropping pattern is hardly changed in some regions.  

• Higher MSP’s over incentivize production leading to supply glut.  

• Hikes in MSP’s also adversely affect exports by making Indian farm goods uncompetitive especially when international market prices are lower.  

**Why MSP increase will help?**  
• This hike in MSPs was required, given the current adverse conditions of prices and operating conditions of the farm sector, and is a key component of the prime minister’s goal of doubling farm incomes by 2022  

• Incentivise production of a specific food crop which is in short supply.  

• Protects farmers from any sharp fall in the market price of a commodity.  
  - Ex: The government hiked the MSP of pulses to expand sowing of pulses.  

• Higher farm profits will encourage farmers to spend more on inputs, technology etc  

• Protect farmers from the unwarranted fluctuation in prices, provoked by the international level price variations.  

**Way forward:**  
• NITI Aayog has **recommended reforms in the APMC Act and tenancy laws and tweaks to the eNAM (electronic National Agriculture Market).**
- It has also suggested ‘Price Deficiency Payment’ system to address the gaps in Minimum Support Price (MSP) based procurement of crops. Under Price Deficiency Payment, farmers are proposed to be compensated for the difference between the government-announced MSPs for select crops and their actual market prices. For crops such as rice and wheat where it is effective now, MSP announcements will continue. For other targeted crops, price deficiency payments will be made.
- The key benefit from the price deficiency payment is that it will reduce the need for the government to actually procure food crops, transport and store them and then dispose of them under PDS.
- The difference between the support and market prices can instead simply be paid in cash to the farmer.
- Price deficiency payment can also keep India’s bill on food subsidies under check, believes Niti Aayog
- Government needs to allow agro trading companies to buy more in the Indian market, especially given the limitations of the Food Corporation of India.

**Procurement system of the government needs to be streamlined.**
- There need to be reforms in APMC acts to ensure farmer selling directly to farmers
- India should now **explore alternate models** to boost farmer’s income and stop relying on MSP’s alone.
- A **non inflationary way to resolve the agricultural crisis is to raise farm productivity** through increased investment in irrigation and post harvest infrastructure
- **Based on Telangana experience** it is time to consider a transparent, crop neutral and easier to implement income support programme.
  - The state government gives a payment of Rs.10000 per hectare of cultivable land to all farmers irrespective of the crops they raise.
- The monitoring at every phase for the efficiency of the process and accountability of the people involved in its implementation.
- The ambitious projects like e-NAM, doubling farmer’s income by 2022, price stabilisation fund, implementation of Swaminathan and Shanta Kumar committee is required.
- Best way to double the real incomes of Indian farmers would be to halve their numbers through job creation in other parts of the economy.

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**Q) The optimal policy response to a structural surplus cannot be higher procurement prices. Critically examine the statement in the light of the increasing MSPs for farm products. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
Agriculture remains a critical employment and livelihood source for around half of the Indian population. Getting a decent profit out of agricultural activities is essential to ensure sustainability of this critical sector. In this direction, the govt announces MSPs for several agricultural products. However, this does not simply translate into immediate or long term gains for the agricultural economy and has many negative ramifications as well.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to dig deep into issue underlying the question and discuss why there is a structural surplus in agricultural production and why higher MSPs will not help in solving the problem to the desired extent. Based on our discussion we have to form a personal opinion on the issue.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze- here we have to form an opinion on the issue after discussing the reasons behind the structural surplus in agriculture and the implications of providing higher MSPs for agricultural products.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – write a few lines about the state of Indian agriculture today where periods of abundance are followed by short periods of low production. Mention the emerging agricultural surplus state of our economy etc.

**Body**-
1. Discuss why there is agricultural surplus. E.g improved seed varieties, faster diffusion of technology, low per capita land availability, better roads, electricity, irrigation and communication infrastructure etc.
2. Discuss the implications of higher MSPs vis a vis its limitations and negative effects. E.g they provide incentive to grow more of a particular crop whereas in present times there is already agricultural surplus; limited procurement capacity of FCI; MSPs don’t guarantee procurement; spillover to generalized inflation which in turn will hurt the rural and agricultural economy etc.
Conclusion– Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced opinion on the issue in the form of a way forward. E.g allowing agro trading companies to buy more in the Indian market, fixing procurement caps above which no procurement will be guaranteed and up to which the whole produce will be procure; building the capacity of RBI monetary policy committee to target inflation etc.

Background:-
- Last year, around 184 farmer groups came together from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Telangana to take part in a ‘protest walk’, demanding higher prices for agricultural produce. The protest once again highlighted the plight of farmers and the extent of agrarian distress despite surplus production. No matter the price, the quantity harvested and sold remained virtually the same.

Structural surplus in India is due to the following reasons:-
- Better seeds and faster diffusion of technology have made a difference.
- With planting of hybrids paddy yields have gone up.
- Advances in plant breeding and genetics for improved supply response from farmers. The Operation Flood programme helped boost India’s milk production
- Investments in infrastructure especially rural roads and electricity which have enabled milk to be procured from the interiors and chilled at village collection centres.
- Farmers are also more aware about prices and the latest hybrids/varieties, crop protection chemicals, machinery and agronomic than earlier. As a result, they take far less time to respond to high prices.

However farmers suffer due to multiple reasons so MSP only does not help:-
- Good rains, excessive sowing and the bumper harvest last year produced gluts in the market that sent the prices of many crops, and therefore farm incomes, crashing.
- None of the economic tools available for protecting farm incomes the price support scheme, the price stabilisation fund and the market intervention scheme was employed to the best advantage.
- Although MSPs are announced for more than 20 crops, noteworthy procurement is conducted for three: paddy, wheat and sugarcane
- Procurement frequently takes places at prices below the MSP, as is happening this year, according to reports. Finally, small and vulnerable farmers usually do not get paid MSPs at all, as they sell their produce to aggregators, not directly in mandis.
- Gluts, depressed market prices and mounting farmer losses are a direct consequence of the malfunction in agri-pricing policies.
- Despite a bumper crop last year, farmers are not satisfied with the procurement price. They are, therefore, unable to repay loans they have taken, both from institutional sources and private moneylenders.
- The small and marginal land holdings (less than 2 hectares) account for 72% of land holdings, and this predominance of small operational holdings is a major limitation to reaping the benefits of economies of scale.
  - Since small and marginal farmers have little marketable surplus, they are left with low bargaining power and no say over prices.
- Risk because of pests, diseases, shortage of inputs like seeds and irrigation, which could result in low productivity and declining yield; the lower remunerative price; the absence of marketing infrastructure and profiteering by middlemen adds to the financial distress of farmers.
- Also, the predominance of informal sources of credit, mainly through moneylenders, and lack of capital for short term and long term loans have resulted in the absence of stable incomes and profits.
- Farmers face price uncertainties due to fluctuations in demand and supply owing to bumper or poor crop production and speculation and hoarding by traders.
- The costs of farm inputs have increased faster than farm produce prices
- The absence of a robust market for buying and selling forward-looking contracts
- Uncertain policies and regulations such as those of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee, besides low irrigation coverage, drought, flooding and unseasonal rains, are some other factors that hit farmers hard.

Increasing MSP gives short term results :-
- Incentivise production of a specific food crop which is in short supply.
- Protects farmers from any sharp fall in the market price of a commodity.
- Ensures that the country’s agricultural output responds to the changing needs of its consumers.
- Ex: The government hiked the MSP of pulses to expand sowing of pulses.
- Higher farm profits will encourage farmers to spend more on inputs, technology etc.
- Protect farmers from the unwarranted fluctuation in prices, provoked by the international level price variations.

**Increasing MSP is not the solution:**
- Imposition of MSP beyond some point is market distorting as it severs the link between prices and demand-supply. This can also be inflationary and out of sync with the physical market dynamics.
  - Support price does not come with a commitment to buy whatever farmers offer. Actual procurement will be limited by the fiscal room available, especially at a time when a significantly higher fiscal deficit could lead to further pressure on the rupee.
- RBI has highlighted the announcement of higher MSPs as being one of the major risk factors this year for inflation. This is significant as the government has spoken of providing a mark-up of 50% on cost for all products when deciding on the MSPs for FY19.
- Farmers have got negative returns in several crops prompting many economists to question the usefulness of MSP's.

**Input costs:-**
- The cost of cultivation varies across states while MSP's are based on a weighted all India average so farmers don't get guaranteed profits.
- MSP's have failed to keep pace with input costs.

**Only a selected few states such as Punjab, MP, Haryana etc have well developed procurement infrastructure**
- Government procurement at MSP is benefiting the large traders than farmers.
  - More than three fourths of farming households don't produce any marketable surplus and hence cannot really benefit from price support.
- There is no provision in the budget to increase the ambit of farmers who are covered by MSP and that is a problem in addition to how the MSP is calculated.
- Farmers also argue that MSP is only announced for 25 crops, while for other crops they have to deal with market volatility. There is no MSP for fruits and vegetables.

**Only a fraction of the farmers actually have access to MSP.**
- MSP often does not reach farmers as the government does not procure on time and the farmer has to make distress sales at rates lower than the MSP.
- In the recent budget, government has decided to keep MSP for all the unannounced crops of kharif at least at one and half times of their production cost. There is no clarity on how the implementation takes place.
  - There are concerns whether all states would agree with that cost
  - Also as MSP and Inflation highly co-related and any increase in MSP will eventually resulted into price hike of many agricultural products.

**India's price support programme is also promoting cultivation of water intensive crops** like paddy and sugarcane even in water deficit regions such as Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra
- Farmers keep producing the same varieties as cropping pattern is hardly changed in some regions.

**Higher MSP's over incentivize production** leading to supply glut.
- Hikes in MSP's also adversely affect exports by making Indian farm goods uncompetitive especially when international market prices are lower.

**Way forward:-**
- Government needs to allow agro trading companies to buy more in the Indian market, especially given the limitations of the Food Corporation of India.

**Procurement system of the government needs to be streamlined.**
- There need to be reforms in APMC acts to ensure farmer selling directly to farmers

**Government needs to analyse the recommendation of the M.S Swaminathan Report** which suggested MSP over C2.
- India should now explore alternate models to boost farmer's income and stop relying on MSP's alone.
- A non inflationary way to resolve the agricultural crisis is to raise farm productivity through increased investment in irrigation and post harvest infrastructure
Based on Telangana experience it is time to consider a transparent, crop neutral and easier to implement income support programme.

- The state government gives a payment of Rs. 10000 per hectare of cultivable land to all farmers irrespective of the crops they raise.

**Recommendations by NITI aayog:-**

- The awareness to farmers and timely dissemination of information till the lowest level so that it would increase the bargaining power of the farmers.
- Timely payment should be ensured.
- MSP should be announced well in advance of the sowing season so as to enable the farmers to plan their cropping.
- Improved facilities at procurement centres, such as drying yards, weighing bridges, toilets, etc.
- More godowns should be set up and maintained properly for better storage and reduction of wastage.
- The criteria for fixing MSP should be current year’s data and based on more meaningful criteria rather than the historical costs.
- The monitoring at every phase for the efficiency of the process and accountability of the people involved in its implementation.
- The ambitious projects like e-NAM, doubling farmer’s income by 2022, price stabilisation fund, implementation of Swaminathan and Shanta Kumar committee is required.
- Best way to double the real incomes of Indian farmers would be to halve their numbers through job creation in other parts of the economy.

**Q) India needs to recognise that addressing farmers’ woes by raising procurement prices is going to have limited effectiveness. Critically analyze. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

One of the key steps taken by the current government to improve the status of farmers is to increase procurement price. A recent OECD ICRIER report “Agricultural Policies in India” suggests a different way forward. Discussing the merits of the step taken by the government will help us in analyzing how the health of farm sector can be improved.

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to discuss the merits of increasing the procurement price from a short term and a long term perspective. It expects us to analyze whether this is the most optimum utilisation of resources to improve the already stressed agricultural sector. Alternatives should be suggested along with reasons why they are better.

**Directive word**

Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. You need to conclude with a fair judgement, after analyzing the nature of each component part and interrelationship between them.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Highlight the recent step taken by the government and how it has been a long standing suggestion starting from Swaminathan Committee recommendation.

**Body**

- Discuss the merits of enhancing procurement price from a short and long term perspective. Good in the short term, but underline the challenges even in the short term (mostly the same as challenges with MSP, highlighted by Shanta Kumar Committee)
- Discuss how the optimum step would be to focus on improving backward and forward linkages along with other suggestions as made in the ICRIER study.
- Discuss why this would would make more sense (can also disagree and give reasons accordingly)

**Conclusion** – Give a fair and balanced view along with way forward.

**Background:-**

- One of the key steps taken by the current government to improve the status of farmers is to increase procurement price.

**Higher procurement prices will benefit farmers in the short term:-**

- Incentivise production of a specific food crop which is in short supply.
- Protects farmers from any sharp fall in the market price of a commodity.
Ensures that the country’s agricultural output responds to the changing needs of its consumers.
- Ex: The government hiked the MSP of pulses to expand sowing of pulses.
- Higher farm profits will encourage farmers to spend more on inputs, technology etc
- Protect farmers from the unwarranted fluctuation in prices, provoked by the international level price variations.

Why raising procurement prices will have limited effectiveness:-
- The government has increased the MSPs of 14 kharif crops to at least 50 per cent above paid out costs of farmers, including the imputed cost of family labour (Cost A2+FL). There is no economic rationality in fixing MSPs at 50 per cent plus cost A2+FL.
- Many a times, the government of the day overrules the CACP’s recommendations and announces a “political price”. This is routinely done in the case of sugarcane, where the CACP recommends Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP), but states like Uttar Pradesh announce a much higher state-advised price. Such actions lead to mounting arrears for cane farmers and make the sugar industry vulnerable.
- Market prices of most kharif crops are well below the announced MSPs.
- There is an absence of a robust procurement mechanism to procure the crop, which will cause a financial burden for state government.
- Also as MSP and Inflation are highly co-related and any increase in MSP will eventually resulted into price hike of many agricultural products.
- Higher MSP’s over incentivize production leading to supply glut.
- Hikes in MSP’s also adversely affect exports by making Indian farm goods uncompetitive especially when international market prices are lower.
- Government procurement at MSP is benefiting the large traders than farmers.
  - More than three fourths of farming households don’t produce any marketable surplus and hence cannot really benefit from price support.

What is needed:-
- Coordination is needed amongst Union ministries that deal with agriculture, food, food processing, fertilisers, water, rural development and trade. This will enable a holistic approach to agriculture and farmers’ incomes. The process can start with the creation of an agri-council/cabinet.
- Focus on long overdue agri-marketing reforms and revisiting the Essential Commodity and APMC Acts to get the markets right.
- Government needs to allow agro trading companies to buy more in the Indian market, especially given the limitations of the Food Corporation of India.
- Procurement system of the government needs to be streamlined.
  - There need to be reforms in APMC acts to ensure farmer selling directly to farmers
  - Based on Telangana experience it is time to consider a transparent ,crop neutral and easier to implement income support programme.
    - The state government gives a payment of Rs.10000 per hectare of cultivable land to all farmers irrespective of the crops they raise.
  - The ambitious projects like e-NAM, doubling farmer’s income by 2022,PDPS, price stabilisation fund, implementation of Swaminathan and Shanta Kumar committee is required.
- Recommendations by NITI aayog:-
  - The awareness to farmers and timely dissemination of information till the lowest level so that it would increase the bargaining power of the farmers.
  - Timely payment should be ensured.
  - MSP should be announced well in advance of the sowing season so as to enable the farmers to plan their cropping.
  - Improved facilities at procurement centres, such as drying yards, weighing bridges, toilets, etc.
  - More godowns should be set up and maintained properly for better storage and reduction of wastage.
  - The criteria for fixing MSP should be current year’s data and based on more meaningful criteria rather than the historical costs
**TOPIC:** Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

**Q)** Rules based trading order is the best bet for India going forward, both domestically as well as from a foreign policy perspective. Critically analyze. (250 words)

Financial express
Reference

**Why this question**
The article talks about the involvement of India in the ongoing trade war which go against the grain of principles being espoused by WTO so far – free, fair and open trade and gradually bringing down protectionist measures. The article discusses the impact on India and thus is important.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us examine the importance of free, fair and open trade for India by highlighting its pros and cons in light of the ongoing trade war between major economies of the world. The essence of the question lies in eliciting your opinion on the current situation and India’s response.

**Directive word**
Critically analyze – When asked to analyze, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. You need to conclude with a fair judgement, after analyzing the nature of each component part and interrelationship between them.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Highlight the ongoing trade war and how India has responded.
**Body** – Discuss the pros and cons of India’s response. In pros, discuss points like the necessity of protecting India’s domestic industry such as the steel sector, controlling trade deficit, not being bullied by irreverent policies of USA and working on the idea of regional trading platforms like APEC, leveraging it’s huge market, focus on Make for India. In cons, highlight points like taking the high road and upholding the values of free trade which has benefitted India, the need for India to become more integrated in global supply chains for make in India to be a success, discuss the foreign policy implications of these measures etc.

**Conclusion** – Present a fair and balanced view and mention what in your opinion should be the next step for India.

**Background :-**
- Global trade war is becoming a reality as major economies continue to impose tariffs on each other. India is the latest to join the the risk of tit-for-tat battle by slapping tariffs as high as 50% on a list of 30 goods imported from the U.S. The volatility in the world economic system suggests investors may be beginning to take threats of a trade war more seriously.

**Rules based trading system :-**
- The rules-based multilateral trade and financial system created at Bretton Woods in 1944 has been crumbling over the past decade. The WTO trading system to reduce trade barriers on a reciprocal, most-favored-nation basis has been replaced by a spreading network of bilateral and regional preferential trade agreements.
- The rules-based multilateral trading system has fuelled seven decades of unprecedented job creation and poverty alleviation.

**Why rules based trading order is the best bet forward for India:-**
- This system has worked so well for so long because the WTO and its biggest champions, such as the U.S, India made three interrelated attributes integral to their trade policies. That is, its members:
  - Reduced uncertainty by creating predictable trade policies
  - Created an environment that facilitates decision-making particularly in the long term by consumers and producers
  - Placed credible and legal directives that are clearly understood by allies and by those who are not.
  - Theory of comparative advantage explains why free trade works better for everyone.
  - India needs to protect India’s domestic industry such as the steel sector
  - For working on the idea of regional trading platforms like APEC India needs this policy
- **Trade barriers hurt nations:-**
When a nation puts up trade barriers, it triggers retaliation from others. Then, every nation ends up poorer.

Earlier countries did exercise selective protectionism on select goods, especially where there were strong local interests that needed to be protected. However, there was a general consensus that protectionism was not a good thing and was an aberration in the general move towards open and free trade.

- **Impact on global trade will affect India as well:-**
  - The approach by US in triggering tariff war could trigger a reduction in global trade. If the trade war carries on and escalates, India could be pretty badly affected over time.
  - Trade makes an enormous contribution to India’s gross domestic product over 40% in 2016, according to the World Bank.

- **Constraints in India due to tariff war:-**
  - India has to import energy, including crude oil, gas and solar equipment.
  - India also has a negligible manufacturing base in electronic components, which means it has to import most of the parts that go into cellphones and computers even if they are assembled in Indian facilities.
  - India is focusing on Make in India. But for its success India needs robust export growth.
  - Indian exports of gems and jewellery to the US, estimated at $10 billion in 2017-18, too could face serious hurdles if the latter levies retaliatory tariffs. Export of road transport vehicles and organic chemicals are also at the risk of being hit with high tariffs.
  - Trade war could also weaken rupee further and even hit the Indian economy hard, which has finally started on the road to recovery after several shocks due to policy reforms.

- **Dependence on other countries:-**
  - India also exports a lot of things, including services. About 16% of Indian goods exports go to the US and 57% of information technology revenues come from the US.
  - India’s service exports are not just about IT workers and doctors, though. There are the nurses, truck drivers, restaurant workers and oilmen who send back massive remittances, amounting to $69 billion last year. If global trade reduces, there will be layoffs in those industries as well.
  - India’s highest imports from US are very critical in nature like nuclear reactors, boilers, mineral fuels, aircrafts, space crafts, medical equipments etc. Any higher duty on these products will impact India’s key sectors. While the US or its companies could absorb the impact, India and Indian companies don’t have the kind of strength, which a developed country has to absorb the higher costs.

**Conclusion:-**

- Countries need to recognise that the WTO can help keep markets open in the face of protectionist lobbying, at home and abroad. It is vital they make the intellectual case for rules-based trade.

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**Q For gaining real acquisition of technology, a purposive policy intervention is required through regulatory supervision of costs and conditions negotiated in technology collaboration agreements. Discuss. (250 words)**

**Why this question**

Technology transfer has been one of the top priorities for foreign collaboration and for attracting foreign investment in the country. However, it has not been realized to the desired levels on account of various reasons, which need to be studied and discussed upon.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to write in detail about the problems in technology transfer as faced by India under its industrial policies. It also wants us to bring out how regulatory supervision of costs and conditions negotiated in technology collaboration agreements can help India in enhancing technology transfer.

**Directive word**

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

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – mention the key aims of India’s industrial policy- attracting foreign investment; job creation; promotion of foreign technology transfer etc. Write in 1-2 lines that with regard to the technology transfer process via the FDI route, the benefits of retaining investments and accessing technology have not been harnessed to the extent possible.
Body-

- Discuss why true technology acquisition/transfer has not been realized up to the required extent. E.g., slow technology adoption capacities of the Indian economy and the absence of an appropriate model of technology transfer; the terms settled for technology imports are sometimes excessive or unfair and the pricing onerous due to unequal bargaining power existing between the two contracting parties—foreign vs. domestic player; the supplier ensures a continued control over technology by including restrictive conditions designed particularly to this effect in the contract; clauses related to “non-transferability,” “non-exclusivity,” “strict confidentiality,” and “stringent termination” requirements; excessively high cost of technology, old technology being transferred etc.

- Discuss why a purposive policy intervention is required through regulatory supervision of costs and conditions negotiated in technology collaboration agreements. E.g., need for a skilled negotiation policy before the entry of foreign investment. A structured policy for obtaining utmost gains from its ensuing operations in later years is required from the technology transfer perspective; Suggest some points on your own.

Conclusion—Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

Background:-

- Apart from some significant objectives such as adequate job creation, attracting $100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows annually in the next two decades, promotion of foreign technology transfer has been outlined as one of the foremost priorities of the proposed new industrial policy. Benefits of retaining investments and accessing technology have not been harnessed to the extent possible.

Why true technology acquisition/transfer has not been realized up to the required extent:-

- Despite foreign investments being received in the country over the last three decades, transfer of technology has largely remained at an assembly level.

- India has slow technology adoption capacities of the economy and the absence of an appropriate model of technology transfer.

- Current policy approach to this mode of transfer is not satisfactory and needs careful re-strategising.

- Several of the customary technology collaboration contracts clearly mention the terms “access” to technology for a “definite period” under the contract, instead of the term “acquisition” of technology.
  - The other terms depicting direct or indirect control on technology by the licensor can be noticed in clauses related to “non-transferability,” “non-exclusivity,” “strict confidentiality,” and “stringent termination” requirements.
  - These represent standard clauses used in any technology collaboration agreement in present times and the licensee (particularly from the developing world) usually has limited say in the drafting of the terms of the contract.

- The technology has to be completely returned on the expiry or termination of the contract. This mode represents a mere “transport” of technology, instead of the much-hyped “transfer” of technology. Substantial costs may be involved in such transactions as lump sum and royalty payments.

- Unfortunately, the technology transfer process in India has largely been functioning within this very set-up over the past decades, similar to various other developing countries.
  - Technology is presumed by the policymakers as an integral part of the FDI package that gets transferred eventually, and whether such a transfer actually takes place is hardly appraised or is often overlooked.

- Some common risks or abuses associated with this kind of technology purchase arrangements are the unreasonably high cost of technology being paid for several years by the licensee and continued technological dependence on the parent or network supplier coupled with limited or no absorption of the technology by the licensee.
  - As far as these payments happen on an intra-firm basis, the vulnerability of this transaction route to transfer mispricing for profit shifting purpose under base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) is an additional serious risk faced in recent times.

- Continued technological dependence can inhibit the development of indigenous innovation capabilities to a considerable extent.

Policy intervention is required because:

- A broader policy framework for regulation of technology transfer, and on aspects of cost and restrictive conditions of foreign technological collaborations are conspicuously lacking.
- The **drafting of the terms of technology collaboration contract should be thoroughly monitored by a developing economy like India**, and appropriate regulatory policy framework is needed to supervise the flow of resources in the name of technology transfer on the one hand, and to ensure genuine “absorption” or “adoption” of the technology purchased under mutually agreed and reasonable terms of collaboration contracts on the other. **Both of these crucial endeavours are missing currently in the Indian policy schema, and remain principally absent in the discourse on technology transfer in the discussion paper as well.**

- Surely, a **much drastic change in the basic policy approach to the FDI regime is required**, which calls for a skilled negotiation policy before the entry of foreign investment.

- A **structured policy for obtaining utmost gains** from its ensuing operations in later years is required from the technology transfer perspective.

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**TOPIC: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.**

**Q) ICT tools offer huge scope for rural development. Discuss. Also, discuss the recent related initiatives by GoI with regards to rural development. (250 words)**

_Yojana magazine (May Issue)_

**Why this question**

Use of ICT tools for development is increasingly being adopted and stressed upon, given the many benefits it provides and increasing penetration of these technologies in rural areas. The issue is related to gs-3 syllabus under the following heading

Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to discuss how ICT tools can help us in rural development. It also wants us to write in detail about the recent initiatives of GoI in this direction.

**Directive word**

Discuss- this is an all encompassing directive which mandates us to write at length about all the important and related aspects of the question.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Mention that ICT offers huge scope for rural development and increasing penetration of mobile phones and internet in rural areas makes it easier and more desirable etc.

**Body–**

- Discuss how ICT tools can help in rural development. E.g better service delivery, better information delivery, improving connectivity, education and health services, markets, governance etc.

- Discuss the recent initiatives of GoI in this direction. **SECURE (Software for Estimate Calculation Using Rural rates for Employment); Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) – E-Panchayat; Plan Plus; Action Soft; PRIA Soft; National Panchayat Portal (NPP) etc.**

**Conclusion**- Mention the impediment to use of ICT tools for rural development and need to overcome them. E.g Continuous Supply of Electricity, Low level of Digital Literacy, Shortage of ICTs Personnel, etc.

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**Background :**

- Information and Communication technologies (ICT) have a potential for economic growth and social empowerment. Direct or indirect application of ICT, in rural development sector has also been referred to as “Rural Informatics”. Rural economies can be benefited from ICT by focusing on social production, social consumption and social services in the rural areas.

**ICT offers huge scope for rural development :**

- Through ICT’s people in rural areas can connect with the local, regional and national economy and access markets, banking/financial services and employment opportunities.
• ICTs also serve as an **instrument of awareness creation** and feedback giving rural people a voice in the **nation's socio-political life.**
• ICT can act as a **channel of delivery of e-Government services** including health and education. Thus bridging the digital divide also bridges the overall infrastructural gap and addresses other constraints faced by rural areas.
• ICT has great potential to **bring in the desired social transformations** by enhancing access to people, services, information and other technologies.
• ICT applications can **enhance poor people's opportunities** by improving their access to markets, health, and education. Furthermore, ICT can empower the poor by expanding the use of government services, and reduce risks by widening access to micro finance.
• ICT initiatives in rural development **emphasise adoption of a more systematic approach for integrating Traditional Knowledge Systems** (TKS) and ICT inputs to ensure sustainability of rural e-governance.

**Recent related initiatives with regards to rural development:**

- **SECURE** (Software for Estimate Calculation Using Rural rates for Employment): ICT based solution for estimate preparation
- **Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) – E-Panchayat** To transform functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)
- **Plan Plus**: Helps in preparation of participatory Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)
- **Action Soft**: Provides interface for Financial & Physical progress reporting of all works carried out from approved plan
- **PRIA Soft**: Basically accounting software to capture receipts/exp. details thru voucher entries
- **National Panchayat Portal (NPP)**: Provides dynamic web site for each local body
- **Service Plus**: Portal to provide electronic delivery of basic services to citizens

**Challenges of ICTs in Rural Development**

- **Continuous Supply of Electricity**
- **Low level of Digital Literacy**:
  - Rural India faces a severe technology deficit. The role of technology in solving problems is barely acknowledged, and the actual availability of technology in rural areas is, at best, marginal.
- **Shortage of ICTs Personnel**
- **Lack of Access of Telecommunications & Internet Services**:
  - Many farmers remain unaware of these advances. Insufficient connectivity in rural areas along with a lack of basic computer knowledge and literacy hinder development.
- **Unavailability of Web Content in Local Language**
- **Unethical Use of ICTs**
- **Geographical application of new technologies is still limited in rural areas.**
- **Substantial investment is needed** in physical infrastructure, power, broadband, transportation and education, particularly in rural regions and among the poorest populations in order to truly reap the benefits of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

**Conclusion:**

- The earlier initiatives like e-NAM, digital India ,DBT etc have had significant impact in the rural areas. So investing further in ICT in rural areas is necessary for good governance.

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**Q) Examine the relevance of Suchitwa Sagaram, or ‘Clean Sea’ Campaign in tackling plastic wastes in India? (250 words)**

**Why this question**

The article talks about a novel approach to tackling plastic waste which will serve as a lucrative (from marks perspective) filler for questions related to plastic waste. Also the application discussed above can be implemented across India.

**Key demand of the question**

The question expects us to describe what the mentioned campaign is about and how the usage of plastic waste as road construction material has several advantages.
**Directive word**
Examining – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Mention the dream of making India plastic-free by 2022.

**Body** – Give details of the campaign as mentioned in the article. Discuss the advantages of using plastic waste as a construction material. Bring out the impact which implementation of such a measure will have on tackling the problem of plastic waste in the country. Here you can give figures on the quantity of waste generated and the absolutely lackadaisical approach towards waste management.

**Conclusion** – Mention how the implementation of this step will help deal with this issue in India.

**Background:**
- Indian government announced that it will eliminate all single-use plastic items like carry bags, straws and water bottles among others from the country by 2022.
- Recently Kerala came with the campaign of clean sea where the state is now using its fishermen to harvest plastic waste from the ocean that is used subsequently in laying roads.

**Clean sea campaign:**
- **Recycling as well:**
  - This campaign educates fishermen about a sustainable disposal mechanism for plastic waste. Once harvested from the sea, the plastic material is shredded by a plastic-shredding machine. The material is then used as an asphalt substitute/supplement in road surfacing.
  - The initiative currently engages five trawlers and 28 people from the local fishing community all but two of whom are women.
  - **So far, 10 tonnes of plastic bags and plastic bottles and 15 tonnes of discarded nets, plastic ropes and other items from the sea have been removed.**

**Relevance of this campaign:**
- Water pollution is as common as any other form of pollution and plastic is one of the most repugnant threats that have put our planet at risk.
  - **It creates not just soil pollution, but are equally harmful for marine and aquatic lives.**
- **Usage in India:**
  - India is one of the biggest consumers of plastic and subsequently the generator of a large chunk of plastic waste globally. The annual average per capita consumption of plastic in India is at 11 kg as against global average of 28 kg.
  - According to Plastic Infrastructure Report, 2017, **India consumes close to 12.8 million tonnes of plastic per annum, of which, close to 5 million tonnes is rendered as waste every year.**
- **Plastic in oceans and forests are choking flora and fauna. In fact, plastic trash is expected to exceed the fish population in 2050.**
- **Fish are known to ingest microscopic plastic waste, that in turn affect humans who consume those fish.**
- **Microplastics** has ability to enter food chain with the highest concentration of the pollutants
- **Failure of legal aspects:**
  - The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, mandate ULBs to set up facilities for processing sorted dry waste. **However, the implementation has been rather bleak, owing to available land/space concerns.**
  - The idea of extended producer responsibility (EPR), which was introduced in the rules of 2016, **still remains nowhere** close to being implemented even after two years.
- **Lack of adequate infrastructure for segregation and collection** is the key reason for inefficient plastic waste disposal.
- Large patches of plastic on the sea bed are also blocking some species’ access to their breeding grounds.

**Conclusion:**
- Indian program may have even wider potential, based on “the fact that it’s the fishermen taking the initiative. The fishermen are also in the best position to convince the rest of the community their families, their neighbors of the dangers of plastic.
Q) Critically analyze the issue of mandatory fortification of Mid day Meal programme of India.(250 words)

Why this question
MDM programme is one the most important programmes of India, directed towards reducing malnourishment among Indian children. The programme has received consideration and attention from the media as well as other stakeholders given its immense potential as well as the dire need to deliver.

Any initiative aimed at improving the effectiveness of the programme needs to be deliberated upon and hence is important for mains examination.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to dig deep into the issue of mandatory fortification of MDM programme and why there is such a need and implications of such an act.

Directive word
Critically analyze- here we have to identify all the important aspects of the question and bring out a detailed discussion on these key aspects and at the end we have to relate these aspects and present a personal opinion on the issue.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – mention the meaning of the term fortification and discuss the recently mooted decision of mandatory fortification of MDM.
Body
• Discuss why there is such a need at the first place. E.g discuss the status of malnourishment in India and present some relevant facts; discuss the low nutritive value of normal ration of a poor family as well as the MDM; low vegetables and fruits in the MDM- children don’t get holistic food; easy to fortify the MDM and negligible logistical constraints in the same etc.
• Discuss the benefits as well as the negative implications of the move. E.g Benefits- holistic growth and proper development of the child etc. Negative implications- no regard to food diversity; shortcut solution lacking natural components of food; issue of centralization of the process, entry of profit driven private sector; loss of local control and lack of local participation etc.

Conclusion – form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue and read the article carefully in order to bring out a way forward.

Background:-
• Food procurement under the Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDM), the world’s largest school food programme that provided cooked meals to over 97 million children in 2016-17, is gradually becoming centralised.
• Recently government had announced that MDM should use fortified varieties of salt, wheat flour, edible oil, delivered through the public distribution system.

Fortification:-
• As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), fortification refers to the practice of deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in a food irrespective of whether the nutrients were originally in the food before processing or not, so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and to provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health.

Why mandatory fortification is needed?
• One of the key strategies to address micronutrient malnutrition is food fortification a process of increasing the content of micronutrients in food so as to improve its nutritional quality.
• Deficiencies in India :-
  • According to the National Institute of Nutrition, almost 50-90 per cent of the Indian population, across all socio-economic groups, suffer from vitamins A and D deficiencies.
  • One of the key reasons for malnutrition is deficiency of micronutrients. According to government data, about 70% pre-school children suffer from iron deficiency anaemia and 57% pre-school children have sub-clinical Vitamin A deficiency.
  • Iodine deficiency is endemic in 85% of districts, besides Neutral Tube Defects which is the most common congenital malformation in India. It is estimated that 50-70% of these birth defects are preventable so mandatory food fortification is necessary.
In a country with adequate poor people the quality of the ration of a poor family is poor nutrition which is similar in the case of MDM.

Children don’t get necessary micronutrients through MDM alone ad fruits and vegetables distribution is low in the scheme.

Lessons from states:-
- A few states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka are already using some of the fortified products. According to FSSAI, 84 countries worldwide have been using fortified products to fight malnutrition.

Benefits of mandatory food fortification:-
- Fortification has a great potential of enriching the nutritional quality of food and in turn, enriching the life of millions of children by giving them a healthy start to life which they rightly deserve contributing to the holistic growth and proper development of the child etc.
- Earlier the Government has issued guidelines to ensure mandatory fortification of edible oil through the mid-day meal (MDM) scheme with immediate effect. Certain features make edible oil much easier and cost-effective to fortify than other food items and a suitable vehicle for vitamins A and D.
- Each state can make its own mash with local ingredients. These can be in powdered form and mixed with regular meals. This will be a good initiative.
- Energy dense foods are already commonly used in Africa where the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) supports community-based provision of RUTF.
  - A small scale study in Mumbai put RUTF’s efficacy at 65-70 per cent.
  - In 2013, a UNICEF report observed that if properly used, RUTF is safe, cost-effective, and has saved hundreds of thousands of children’s lives.

Concerns:-
- Mandatory fortification promotes centralised procurement reducing sensitivity towards local food culture, biodiversity and local livelihood.
- Fortified, ready-to-eat mixes or packaged foods take away from traditional, time tested meals.
- Fortification also opens up MDM to the private players who have been lobbying to enter the scheme.
  - Informal proposals of introducing pre-packaged foods or ready to eat foods in the name of fortification and addition of supplements are a huge concern.

Expensive:-
- Centralised procurement sets aside cheaper, more appropriate and locally produced foods, and imposes an expensive form of packaged nutrition on children.
- Adding micronutrients in food grains or other food items increases cost. FSSAI, however, has said the cost implication will not be high.

Problems with energy dense foods:-
- Use of RUTF (ready to use therapeutic food) may replace family foods that children should normally be eating.
- Enough evidence is not available for the use of RUTF vis-à-vis other interventions for the management of Severe acute malnutrition.
- Caretakers thought that their job was done by giving children RUTF, and hence children were not cared for properly.
- RUTF may not benefit the common household in developing appropriate food habits for children as against home augmented food.

Corruption:-
- Such centralised commercial production and distribution is prone to corruption and poor quality.

Local awareness :-
- It provides the opportunity to create employment for local women as well as demand for local product such as vegetables, eggs, etc. All of this is possible only when the food is produced and distributed in a decentralised manner which is not possible in this scenario.

Intervention to replace locally made food compromises decentralised autonomy and community control. They also detract from local livelihoods and take away the option of using local foods and recipes many of which have good nutritional value.

Way forward:-
- Centre should focus on **localised procurement of food items, which will strengthen decentralised decision-making.**
  - Local sourcing of vegetables and grains for schoolchildren will not only increase community participation and ownership and favourably influence the quality and safety of food served, but would also benefit movements of self-help groups and kitchen gardens. **Importantly, it would help livelihood and environment.**
- Experts say **going local will introduce coarse grains such as millets under the scheme.** While Mid Day Meal Rules, 2015 allows the use of coarse grains that have ecological and health benefits, only wheat and rice are currently being supplied.
- **Centre should also explore the possibility of introducing organic food under MDM.** This can be done by procuring foodgrains from local organic farmers certified under the Centre’s Param-paragat Krishi Vikas Yojana. The 0.25 million farmers already under the scheme are struggling to find assured markets, which MDM can provide.
- The civil society groups also called for a system that provides training and support to local groups to deliver nutritious and hygienic food.

Q) **Given the dynamic nature of the online sphere, privacy concerns and issues are rapidly changing.**

Analyze. (250 words)

**Why this question**
It would not be an exaggeration to say that internet and IT plays a central and a highly vital role in our lives today. This makes it vital know how privacy concerns are changing in the dynamic nature of the online sphere, which is increasing its presence and size at a remarkable pace.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to dig deep into the issues of privacy and online sphere and discuss the various aspects of the changing privacy concerns changing under the effect of a dynamic online sphere.

**Directive word**
Analyse- Here we have to dig deep into the issue and identify and discuss about all the related and important aspects and correlate them to satisfy the key demand of the question.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Mention that the way in which the internet allows data to be produced, collected, combined, shared, stored, and analyzed is constantly changing and re-defining personal data and what type of protections personal data deserves and can be given. Give the NEET example.

**Body**-
1. Briefly discuss the blurring distinction between public and private spheres.
2. Briefly discuss the borderless nature of information and associated problems of jurisdiction
3. Briefly discuss the Increasing online presence and scope as well as magnitude of activities.
4. Discuss IT act and IT rules of India and briefly discuss their limitations/ inadequacies.

Take the help of the article attached to the question to frame your answer.

**Conclusion**– Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

**Background**-
- The way in which the internet allows data to be produced, collected, combined, shared, stored, and analyzed is constantly changing and re-defining personal data and what type of protections personal data deserves and can be given
- A wave of privacy breaches and data leaks have hit India over the last three years, as India’s internet penetration has skyrocketed past shoddy standards of information and cyber security. In early 2017, The Wirereported that numerous government websites exposed the private details of millions of Indian citizens.
- Recently the phone numbers, email IDs and addresses of hundreds of thousands of applicants who took the National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET) in 2018 are available online, if one is willing to pay up to Rs 2 lakh.

**Privacy concerns**:-
- **Issues due to nature of data:-**
For example, seemingly harmless data such as IP address, keyword used in searches, websites visited, can now be combined and analysed to identify individuals and learn personal information about an individual.

From information shared on social media sites, to cookies collecting user browser history, to individuals transacting online, to mobile phones registering location data information about an individual is generated through each use of the internet.

In many cases, the individual is unaware of the information trail that they are leaving online, do not know who is accessing the information, and do not have control over how their information is being handled, and for what purposes it is being used.

For example, law enforcement routinely troll social media sites for information that might be useful in an investigation.

**Public vs private sphere:**

- The "sphere" of information on the internet is unclear i.e. is information posted on social media public information free for use by any individual or entity including law enforcement, employees, data mining companies etc. or is information posted on social media – private, and thus requires authorization for further use.

**Jurisdiction issues:**

- Major players in India’s digital economy are not only based abroad, but also export data to other jurisdictions.
- India’s inability to localise data centres means its digital economy is governed by hundreds of private data protection policies.
- The borderless nature of information flows over the Internet complicates online privacy, as individual’s data is subjected to different levels of protection depending on which jurisdiction it is residing in. Thus, for example an Indian using Gmail, will be subject to the laws of the United States.
- Access by law enforcement to data stored in a different jurisdiction, or data from one country accessible to law enforcement because it is being processed in their jurisdiction, are two other complications that arise. These complications cannot be emphasized more than with the case of the NSA Leaks.

**IT Act:**

- India’s most comprehensive legal provisions that speak to privacy on the internet can be found in the Information Technology Act (ITA) 2000. The ITA contains a number of provisions that can, in some cases, safeguard online privacy, or in other cases, dilute online privacy.
- While Sections 43A and Sections 72A of the IT Act cover some aspects of a data leak, they are hardly ever used.
- Additionally, legislative gaps in the ITA serve to weaken the privacy of online users. For example, the ITA does not address questions and circumstances like the evidentiary status of social media content in India, merging and sharing of data across databases, if individuals have the right to request service providers to take down and delete their personal content etc.

**Way Forward:**

- Data minimisation and accountability of those who process and control data.
- Personal data in the public interest should be protected and used only for the purposes it was collected.
- Understanding the imported technologies to protect data in India.
- Infrastructure for efficient data collection and management must be strengthened.
- Start-ups can develop technology that enables users to control who gets access to the data about their behaviour patterns in the digital world.
- Encouraging formation of native internet giants like how China has done.
- Current data protection rules under the Information Technology Act urgently need an update and should reflect modern trends.
- Safeguarding privacy rights also needs attention.
- Allow companies to pursue independent data protection policies, but monitor their enforcement through a national, multi-stakeholder agency.
- Any violation will create a “name and shame” environment and weed out poor practices followed by the companies.
Q) The internet and social media platforms pose an impossible challenge for government and civil society.
Critically analyze.(250 words)

Why this question
Internet and social media are playing an increasingly broader and important role in our lives. It is pertinent to understand whether they can be regulated in order to control their negative implications for the society.

Key demand of the question
The question wants us to dig deep into the issue and bring out the challenges posed by internet and social media and discuss why it is impossible to overcome them in the near future.
We have to form an opinion on the issue in consonance with our line of discussion after analyzing all the related aspects.

Directive word
Critically analyze- Here we have to dig deep into the issue and discuss all the relevant aspects- whether there is a need to regulate internet and social media under the present circumstances; why/ why not; if yes, then what are the difficulties involved therein

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention a few incidences which bring out the need to regulate/manage internet. E.g Facebook controversy, Google controversy, NEET data leaks etc.
Body-
- Discuss the challenges posed by internet and social media to the government and the society. E.g terrorism, fake news, rumours triggering lynchings and riots, data snooping etc.
- Discuss why it is difficult to overcome those challenges. E.g platform vs medium vs content; discuss why it is difficult to control any of them E.g huge and expanding no. of users; huge volume of traffic; needs of legitimate businesses and activities which disprove control of medium through frequent internet shutdowns, increased use of IT tools in all spheres of activity including governance; AI is still in nascent stages and it will take at least a decade to develop such AI which can automatically weed out harmful and unwanted content etc.
Conclusion– discuss what should the government do in such situation.

Background:-
- In order to spread or be disseminated, both information and opinion need mediums and platforms. The internet is the medium; Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp are the platforms

How internet and social media platforms pose challenge to government and civil society and why its difficult to control them :-
- Legitimate vs fake information:-
  - Challenge is how you permit what is considered legitimate content and information, and at the same time disallow the plethora of fake information as well as threats and abuse conveyed through these platforms.
  - There are questions raised whether to ban the medium or platform or content.
  - Rumours triggering lynchings and riots, data snooping etc.
- Implementation difficulties:-
  - Ban or censorship of content is easier to legislate but almost impossible to implement. In Russia during the Stalinist era, for instance, despite strict state control of information, poems and manuscripts by dissidents were copied by hand and circulated.
  - Unlike older media platforms, internet platforms are two way: every reader is also a reporter, an editor and an opinion maker.
  - Today, when access to these platforms is so easy and convenient and literacy increasingly widespread, it is almost an impossible task for governments to ban comment by individuals.
- Banning did not help :-
  - In the last few years, various state governments have stopped internet services and mobile phone services in an effort to control escalating situations. The immediate impact is on legitimate news and commercial transactions that use the same medium.
  - However, a government that is pushing “digital” onto its populace can scarcely afford to block access to the medium. Email, e-trading, e-commerce, Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface and Bhim all need robust and continuous internet service.
• Economic loss:-
  ▪ A report by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations says that between 2012 and 2017, India lost around Rs.20,000 crore due to internet shutdowns.

• Impacts democracy:-
  ▪ Social media companies exploit the social environment. This is particularly nefarious, because these companies influence how people think and behave without them even being aware of it. This interferes with the functioning of democracy and the integrity of elections.

• Civil society:-
  ▪ Exacerbating the polarization of civil society
  ▪ Rapidly spreading mis- and dis-information and amplifying the populist and illiberal wave across the globe
  ▪ Creating competing realities driven by their algorithms intertwining of popularity and legitimacy
  ▪ Being vulnerable to political capture and voter manipulation through enabling malevolent actors to spread dis-information and covertly influence public opinion
  ▪ Capturing unprecedented amounts of data that can be used to manipulate user behavior
  ▪ Facilitating hate speech, public humiliation, and the targeted marginalization of disadvantaged or minority voices

• Personal information collected:-
  ▪ Fundamental business model of social media companies like Facebook poses some serious concerns. Their goal is to collect as much personal information on individuals as possible and then use this information to sell highly targeted advertising to companies. Worldwide there is very little understanding of what exactly they collected, little regulation and little known about the consequences on democracy.
  ▪ This level of data collection represents the concentration of enormous power in the hands of a single corporation. The Cambridge Analytica scandal has highlighted how this power can be used by a small group of people with an agenda to foster polarisation, radicalisation and undermine democratic elections.

• Currently very difficult to control because:-
  ▪ The number of users using social media platforms and internet are ever increasing and volume of traffic is huge.
  ▪ AI is still in nascent stages and it will take at least a decade to develop such AI which can automatically weed out harmful and unwanted content etc.

• Individual users are increasingly viewed as legitimate targets for mining personal and metadata. Such data can provide an intimate psychological profile including ideological preferences that together help campaign managers target communications and forecast voter behaviour.

• Data theft and identity crisis:-
  ▪ Data of millions are taken and used when only 270,000 people knowingly or unknowingly gave consent.
  ▪ Individuals often share their data without being aware of it or understanding the implications of privacy terms and conditions.
  ▪ Individuals do not have much rights over the data they shared and personal data is considered as the new oil.

Way forward:-
• Companies claim that they are merely distributing information. But the fact that they are near-monopoly distributors makes them public utilities and should subject them to more stringent regulation, aimed at preserving competition, innovation, and fair and open access.
• Recent laws directed at social media have that changing in Germany, social networks could pay up to $60 million in fines if hate speech isn’t removed within 24 hours.
• Social networks need to enhance their own governance, continue to refine the algorithms, use more “friction” like warnings and notifications for suspicious content expand human oversight, adjust advertising, and continue to share knowledge with other networks to reach those goals.
• India needs to have a legal framework for data protection. It will create a vital and necessary framework against which rights and responsibilities can be articulated, and digressions thereof evaluated.
• A proper data protection law with an effective enforcement mechanism would ensure recognition for India as a trustworthy global destination for data-based businesses and privacy-conscious consumers while also protecting the Right to Privacy of the people in India.
• Cyber law provisions need to be revised as the current approach of the Indian law is very narrow.
• International agreements form an important node in a web of solutions needed to address security and the rule of law in cyberspace. Given India’s vision of a Digital India and considering the surge in cybercrime, it would be beneficial for India to join Budapest Convention.
• Experts have pointed to the importance of aspects such as following basic cyber hygiene and a periodic review of the security facets of one’s profile on various web platforms, especially on social media, where users tend to share personal information.
• When there are no legitimate security or public interest reasons, users should have the right to have their data destroyed.

Q) A recent WHO Report pointed out the problem of fake drugs in India. Discuss the problem and analyze how Blockchain can help in addressing this issue? (250 words)

Why this question
The article points out the problem of fake drugs in India and the way technology is being utilised for solving the issue. Blockchain has been in news because our PM himself has appreciated the merits of the technology and thus its application becomes useful from the point of view of mains.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to first explain the problem in depth. Thereafter, we need to explain how Blockchain can be utilised to solve this issue. The problem being talked about is the menace of spurious drugs.

Directive word
Discuss – The details of the problem have to be given such as the extent, impact, reasons etc.
Analyse – Your answer should focus on linking how the application of blockchain technology can help in dealing with the problem of fake drugs.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Highlight that India is largely known as the pharmacy of developing world and the problem of fake drugs has serious implications for India.

Body
• Discuss the extent of India’s pharma market and the significance of it.
• Discuss the findings of the who report that highlighted 20% of all drugs sold in India are fake, also stated that 35% of all the counterfeit drugs sold worldwide originate from India. The implications need to be discussed.
• Explain what Blockchain is. Highlight how blockchain can help in addressing this issue. Discuss its use in end to end supply chain managed.

Conclusion – Emphasize on the advantages of introducing such a measure along with way forward.

Background :-
• India is one of the leading global producers of low-cost generic medicines due to its high domestic demand and inexpensive manufacturing costs. The country’s pharmaceutical market is the world’s third largest in terms of volume, but the thirteenth largest in value.
• However, counterfeiting is pervasive, with an estimated 20 per cent ($4.3 billion in 2013-14) of India’s drug market comprised of counterfeit drugs.
• The NITI Aayog has planned to put the entire stock of medicines made in India on blockchain, in an effort to combat fake and spurious drugs. The government has hired US-based tech giant Oracle to implement the pilot project and work is expected to begin by November.
• Washington-based International Policy Network says over 7 lakh people die every year across the world due to the consumption of fake or spurious drugs.

Problem of fake drugs in India :-
• A recent report by the World Health Organization estimates that 20 per cent of all drugs sold in India are fake. It also states that 35 per cent of all the counterfeit drugs sold worldwide originate from India.
• India’s pharma market is the world’s third largest in terms of volume, and is valued at Rs 1,80,000 crore, of which counterfeit drugs account for over Rs 35,000 crore.
- Drugs prescribed for cold and cough or a headache are mostly either fake or of poor quality.
- The standards created by the Pharmacy Council of India for setting up of pharmacy shops are also being regularly violated. **One of the rules is that there should be a gap of at least 300 metres between two pharmacies.** However, it is a common sight in India to spot two or three pharmacies right next to each other.

**Blockchain:-**
Blockchain technology is a virtual register in which transactions between users are stored in a secure, permanent and verifiable way. The data relating to the exchanges are saved inside blocks. It creates an endless chain of data blocks that allow for all the transactions to be traced and verified.

One of the biggest advantages of blockchain is the extent of security. According to cyber security experts, once a transaction is certified and saved within one of the blocks, no one can tamper or edit the information saved. The information also gets time-stamped.

**How can Blockchain help in resolving this issue:-**

![Diagram](image-url)
Initially, the technology will track pharmaceutical firms, stockists, pharmacists, and consumers. In the second phase, the government plans to involve hospitals to record drug deliveries on a blockchain.

Unique identification codes or numbers may be allotted to every single medicine, which can then be tracked through the entire supply chain using blockchain. At each step of the distribution process, technology will affirm the provenance and authenticity of the batch of the drug.

To block the flow of such drugs, the government plans to track and authenticate them at each stage of their journey from pharmaceutical companies to the patient’s home.

**End-to-end implementation of this technology from the manufacturer to the consumer** which will make the leakage or infusion of spurious or fake drugs into the system impossible

**The patient will be able to trace the movement of the drug he is consuming. He can scan the barcode on the medicine** pack to see how many hands the drug has passed through before reaching his doorstep.

- Once the product is sold, the code gets irrevocably audited on the blockchain that this ID has been sold, and no longer exist
- Application of blockchain technology is the best option when it comes to supply chain management or fighting the challenge of fake drugs. The model will bust the racket of fake drugs entering the supply chain.
Challenges:-
- It will be a challenge for the government to connect over a lakh drug manufacturers, their warehouses, and chemists across the country.
- But there are apprehensions around cost. Even simple two-dimensional barcoding, which is not common in India for drugs, comes at a significant cost.
- There is one problem with putting the entire inventory on blockchain. Additional barcoding will result in a production loss of 25% in the short term at least. This is because of inadequate packaging capacity.

Q) What to you understand by CRISPR Cas9 editing technology? There is growing fear that the promising gene-editing system is being prematurely rushed for clinical use. Discuss. (250 words)

Why this question
The article discusses the issue with one of the most important scientific progress and currently under intense focus of the science community – gene editing using CRISPR Cas9 technology. Understanding the technology along with its potentials and pitfalls is important for mains.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to explain what this technology is and what it can do. Thereafter, it wants us to explain the potential applications of this technology which is causing the scientists to rush. Next we need to explain the potential issues that can crop up as a result of the application of this technology which suggests that we should proceed with caution. The way forward needs to be mentioned in the end.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Explain what CRISPR Cas9 technology is.

Body
- Explain the applications of gene editing in treating genetic diseases etc which makes the technology so lucrative to scientists. Give the advantages such as it has made gene editing simpler, faster and easily accessible to most laboratories.
- Highlight the issues as discussed in the article which should serve as a cautionary sign for us – CRISPR-Cas9 edited cells might trigger cancer, introduces unexpected off-target (outside of the intended editing sites) effects in mice, impact on P53 protein.
- Highlight how India is going ahead with research in this area

Conclusion – Discuss the way forward for this technology.

Crispr CAS 9:-
- The clustered, regularly interspaced, short palindromic repeats, or CRISPR/CRISPR-associated protein 9 (Cas9) (CRISPR-Cas9) system has revolutionised genetic manipulations and made gene editing simpler, faster and easily accessible to most laboratories.
- The technique has gained considerable traction recently to repair defective genes for potential therapeutic applications.
- Based on this promise, multiple clinical trials have been initiated in the U.S. and China (using the CRISPR-Cas9 system) to produce gene-edited cells for cancer and HIV-1 therapy.
- However, number of affected individuals is relatively small and the types of mutations are varies according to geographical conditions. Herefore, the cost of treatment and regulatory approval to develop safe gene-editing tools for each of these diseases may not be permissible.

Why is CRISPR/Cas9 applicable for genetic disorders?
- Targeted gene correction has the potential to treat many different diseases, including clotting disorders such as hemophilia A and B, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, Fabry disease, Hurler and Hunter syndromes and so on.
- It has made gene editing simpler, faster and easily accessible to most laboratories.
- Proponents argue that mice with genome-edited cells developing cancer have not been reported and the cells with adverse studies are not the ones currently in clinical trials.
**Issues:-**

- Study by Stanford University, U.S., found that the CRISPR-Cas9 system introduces unexpected off-target (outside of the intended editing sites) effects in mice. The fear that the CRISPR system is being prematurely rushed for clinical use lingers. Three recent reports have exacerbated this fear even further.
- Studies highlighted that CRISPR-Cas9-edited cells might trigger cancer.
- **P53 protein :-**
  - CRISPR-Cas9 system induced activation of a protein called P53. This P53 protein acts like a gatekeeper or guardian in the cells to keep them healthy and prevents them (the cells) from turning cancerous. In many cancers, cells lose their ability to repair deleterious genetic changes due to an impaired P53 function.
  - In cells where editing is adequate, the cell’s P53 protein may be dysfunctional. Therefore, a functional pP53 protein is good for the cells to be healthy but makes the Cas9-mediated editing process less effective.
- May increase the risk of mutations elsewhere in the genome in those cells.
- Both the mouse and the human gene edited cells suffered from large DNA deletions far from the intended editing sites.
- Although, CRISPR-Cas9 technology has been successfully used to cure several diseases however, it remains many things are not clear like how we should determine which disease or traits are appropriate for gene editing.
- Ethical concerns:-
  - In addition, there are concerns with manipulating human embryos for own interest.

**Way forward:-**

- India’s current regulatory architecture for approving novel treatments is ambiguous and assigns overlapping functions to different governmental bodies. This framework needs to be restructured to optimize trial approval time while addressing safety requirements.
- A two-step model wherein the government works with industry and research groups to accelerate clinical research is recommended. This model consists of a national apex committee working in collaboration with existing institutional ethics committees and independent accreditation agencies.

**TOPIC: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.**

**Q) Import of sand in India comes with its own benefits and limitations. Critically Comment.(250 words)**

*Reference*

*Why this question*

The issue is related to GS- 3 syllabus under the following heading
Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

*Key demand of the question.*

The question wants us to dig deep and express our knowledge and understanding of the issue in terms of need to import sand, issues involved therein. Based on our discussion we have to form an opinion on the overall issue of allowing/regulating sand imports in India.

*Directive word*

Critically Comment- The question wants us to express our opinion on the issue. However the opinion has to be expressed after giving a proper context and discussion, which will substantiate our opinion.

**Structure of the answer**

*Introduction –* Mention the sources of sand and their quality with respect to construction and mention the maiden year of riverbed sand imports in India- 2017 etc.

*Body-*

- Discuss the need for sand imports. E.g high demand from construction activities (present some statistics regarding production and anticipated demand here), which will increase in future, harmful effects of sand mining on ecology and economy as well as society (association with crime), etc. mention that the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 regulates the minor minerals, such as building stones, gravel, ordinary clay, ordinary sand and construction sand.
- Discuss the precautions that should be taken. E.g testing of quality before importing sand in India etc.
Conclusion—mention that India also needs to explore other alternatives like m-sand, Construction and Demolition waste (C&D waste), from the overburden of coal mines, which is the area above the coal seam that needs to be removed to carry out mining. Etc.

Background:-
- Sand, along with gravel, are already the most extracted minerals accounting for 69-85 per cent of the minerals mined every year, says the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Its international trade has also witnessed a six-fold increase in the past two decades, as per the UN Comtrade database.

Reasons why Import of sand in India is rampant:-
- **Legal :-**
  - MMDR Act makes states responsible to have their own legislation to govern and regulate sand mining. But there is a lot of going back and forth in deciding the rules. Some 11 of the 14 states which were studied changed their concession rules in last three to four years.
  - **The mining framework says there is an urgent need to implement the sustainable sand mining guidelines issued by MoEFCC in 2016.**
    - The guidelines emphasise the creation of District Survey Reports (DSR) to estimate sand availability in the mining districts.
    - While most states have formulated DSR, according to official data, no state has carried out a replenishment study, a crucial piece of information when it comes to sustainable mining.
  - **Only allow transportation through a system of e-permits to sand transporting vehicles along with installing GPS in them.**
    - But implementation has been poor across states. Only five of the 14 states namely, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have the provision of online transport permits in their states.
- **Different processes:-**
  - Moreover, each state has a different process of identifying sand mines, issuing environmental clearances, and operating and monitoring the mines.
  - In most states, barring Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, mining companies can apply for environmental clearance only after getting the mining lease. This increases the risk of non-compliance.
- **Pricing issues:-**
  - Pricing mechanisms also differ from state to state. While Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have notified their sand prices, it remains volatile in the remaining states where the demand-supply gap determine the market price.
  - The global construction aggregates which includes sand market is estimated to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 6.1 per cent between 2017 and 2025. It adds that within the aggregates market, sand will be most profitable due to the depletion of natural sources.

Limitations with imports and sand mining:-
- If the imported sand is not of good quality, the government will have to answer in case an infrastructure collapse. **Poor quality sand affects the quality of concrete and thereby the durability and load-carrying capacity of infrastructure.**
- **The volume (of sand) being extracted is having a major impact on rivers, deltas and coastal and marine ecosystems,** results in loss of land through river or coastal erosion, lowering of the water table and decreases in the amount of sediment supply.
  - The report adds that the global sand extraction in 2012 was higher than the yearly amount of sediments carried by all rivers in the world.
  - The ecological cost of this flourishing trade has triggered widespread protests, especially in the exporting countries.

Way forward:-
- Imports alone will not be enough. **India should also popularise alternatives such as C&D waste and m-sand to reduce the ecological cost of sand mining.**
- Going by the current trend, most countries will impose a ban on sand exports in the near future. This is the reason India should develop better regulations and find alternatives to sand.
- **India** already amended the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, and then released the Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines to restore and maintain ecology of river. This needs effective implementation.
- The report says districts should be made responsible for mapping sand mining potential, along with the implementing and monitoring of the guidelines. The district survey reports are yet to be finalised in most states and the country still does not have credible data on sand mining.
- Centre is also exploring the idea of extracting sand from the overburden of coal mines, which is the area above the coal seam that needs to be removed to carry out mining.

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**Q) Capturing methane by efficiency improvements in the working of both sewage treatment plants and sanitary landfills has co-benefits in terms of both public health as well as mitigating climate change. Discuss. (250 words)**

**Why this question**  
Both the issues of improving public health as well as mitigating climate change are important for any country especially India. The issue is related to gs- 3 syllabus under the following heading  
Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

**Key demand of the question.**  
The question wants us to write in detail about how improving the working of STPs and SLs will improve public health as well as help us in mitigating climate change.

**Directive word**  
Discuss- this is an all encompassing directive which mandates us to write at length about all the important and related aspects of the question.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- Mention the contribution of Methane to global warming and mention that 15% methane is generated, through sewage and solid waste disposal, which is also a public health concern.

**Body**- Discuss how improvements in the working of STPs and UL  
- Will positively impact public health. E.g less infectious diseases, better sanitation and health- better growth and development etc.
- Will help in mitigating climate change. E.g more capture of methane and hence less emissions, use of methane as a source of energy/or as an industrial input thus curbing use of fossil fuels etc.
- Discuss the challenges involved in the exercise. E.g need to upgrade current STPs, garbage hills deviously called landfills which restrict capture etc.

**Conclusion**- form a brief, fair and concise conclusion on the issue.

**Background:-**
- There is a high correlation between urbanisation and the emission of greenhouse gases. Landfills and sewers in cities generate 15% of methane emissions and also pose serious public health hazards.

**How improving efficiency of sewage treatment plants and sanitary landfills by capturing methane have benefits:-**
- Climate change:-
  - Methane is emitted during the handling and treatment of domestic and industrial waste water, through the anaerobic decomposition of organic matter. **Capturing this methane as an energy resource is imperative for mitigating climate change.**
  - After its capture, methane can be **used for cooking or for electricity generation**, as the raw biogas after purification can yield pipeline quality biomethane.
  - As a major component of compressed natural gas (CNG), it can also be used as an eco-friendly fuel in vehicles. This can benefit many Indian cities that largely run their public transport fleet on CNG.
  - Methane mitigation measures are not only cost-effective, they also contribute to improvements in air quality.
Using the methane from waste to meet the energy requirements of the Sewage treatment plants would ensure that STPs would run round the clock. This would not only result in a huge saving in energy costs, but would also generate environmental benefits due to the reduced consumption of fossil fuels.

A modest 20% reduction in the energy cost of running STPs and a 20% increased share of renewable green energy along with a reduction in GHG emissions can make cities drivers of climate change mitigation.

Health:-

- The efficient disposal of sewage and municipal solid waste could lay the foundations for achieving not only the MDGs for sanitation but also for other health-related MDGs such as child and maternal mortality, less infectious diseases, better sanitation and health leading better growth and development etc.

Issues:-

- Lack of sewerage pipelines to channelise the sewage or waste water to the STPs for treatment.
  - Where such sewer lines do exist, they are often clogged. The non-functioning network leads to the dual problems of sewage overflows and underutilised STPs.
  - Even in slum habitations where the residents have access to some on-site sanitation facilities, major issues of faecal sludge and septage management persist.
  - The inadequate number of STPs combined with poor connectivity and the poor operating conditions of existing plants and the inability to use an important resource like methane has an adverse impact both on the health of the local populace and the environment.

- Many STPs built in the last three decades were never built with the intention of utilising this resource. Methane as a by-product was just flared off.
- Some STPs continue to run not on biological processes, but on highly inefficient physio-chemical processes rendering the production of methane virtually impossible. Most sewers also contain a variety of toxic and non-biodegradable substances, making their treatment less effective and more costly.
- STPs in megacities often receive storm water as sewage since storm water drains are not segregated rendering anaerobic digestion ineffective. The solution here is segregating storm water drainage from the sewerage system, especially in coastal cities.
- Capturing landfill gas can significantly reduce methane emissions in large landfills, but not in smaller landfills as they are not regulated.
- Problem in South and South East Asia is that there are either open dump sites or basic landfills, sometimes called managed dump sites. Sanitary landfills rarely exist and “garbage hills” are euphemistically called landfills.

Way forward:-

- Redesigning and retrofitting of these STPs with bio-digesters can easily be done for methane recovery. Cost-effective technology for this is readily available even in low-income countries.
- The separation and treatment of bio-degradable municipal waste by promoting recycling and composting needs to be encouraged as a part of better waste management practices.
- Replacing open sewers with centralised sewers and treatment facilities not only increases the generation of methane, but also dramatically reduces the transmission of human disease. The investment in sewage infrastructure to improve the existing waste water treatment systems results in huge public health benefits.
- The inertia in generating methane from STPs could be overcome if the process is encouraged and mandated by law.
- Can be learnt to implement all over India:-
  - The bio-methanation programme in Tambaram followed the success of the municipality's Namma Toilet Project, and was meant to end open defecation by putting up toilets in public places.

Conclusion :-

- Upgrading the primary waste water and municipal waste treatment facilities will go a long way in not only slowing down the rate of climate change over the next several decades, but also in protecting the people and regions that are the most vulnerable to climate change.
Q) Discuss the findings of the recent World Bank report – “South Asia’s Hotspots: The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards”. Discuss adaptation strategy as well.(250 words)

Why this question
The report highlights the pressing challenge for Indian economy that is climate change. This article provides several filler points that can be used across GS papers. Hence this question.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to highlight the key findings of the report and its associated impact on India. Thereafter, we need to suggest measures on how can we adapt to this challenge to ensure that the damages are least.

Directive word
Discuss – Here the findings of the report, its impact on India and ways in which we can respond to mitigate losses is to be brought out.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Give details about the report and how climate change is a pressing challenge.
Body – Highlight the contents of the report. Bring out the impact on Indian economy, on living standards, the regional nature of the impact etc. Discuss ways in which we can deal with this challenge – focussing on mitigating agricultural risk by investing in infrastructure, innovation in agriculture etc.
Conclusion – Highlight why this issue deserves our utmost attention and the way forward.

Background :-

- The report, ‘South Asia’s Hotspots: The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards’, has been authored by World Bank.
- It looks at six countries in South Asia and how projected changes in temperature and precipitation will affect living standards in these countries.
- The report looks at two scenarios: climate-sensitive and carbon-intensive.

Findings of the report :-

- Hotspots:-
  - Using annual household consumption as a proxy for living standards, the report identifies “hotspots” which are districts where these changes will have a notable effect on living standards.
  - For the region, it has found that India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be adversely affected by these changes, while Afghanistan and Nepal will benefit as they are relatively cold.
  - Eight hundred million South Asians are at risk to see their standards of living and incomes decline as rising temperatures and more erratic rainfalls will cut down crop yields, make water more scare, and push more people away from their homes to seek safer places.

- Living standards:-
  - Almost half of South Asia’s population, including India, now lives in the vulnerable areas and will suffer from declining living standards that could be attributed to falling agricultural yields, lower labor productivity or related health impacts.
  - Some of these areas are already less developed, suffer from poor connectivity and are water stressed.

- India:-
  - Living conditions:-
    - According to the Bank’s analysis, the most at-risk areas within the country are the inland agriculture-heavy areas of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh which could see living standards drop by as much as 9%.
  - Temperature rise:-
    - India’s average annual temperatures are expected to rise by 1.00°C to 2°C by 2050 even if preventive measures are taken along the lines of those recommended by the Paris climate change agreement of 2015. If no measures are taken average temperatures in India are predicted to increase by 1.5°C to 3°C.
States in the central, northern and north-western parts of India emerge as most vulnerable to changes in average temperature and precipitation.

- **Hotspots:-**
  - In India today, approximately 600 million people live in locations that could either become moderate or severe hotspots by 2050 under a business-as-usual scenario, the report says.

- **Economic impact:-**
  - These weather changes will result in lower per capita consumption levels that could further increase poverty and inequality in one of the poorest regions of the world, South Asia.
  - Varying rainfall patterns and rising average temperature due to global warming could impact 2.8% off India’s GDP by 2050.
  - For a country where a large chunk of the population is still reliant on agriculture, global warming could mean untold disaster, through loss of livelihood, potentially depressed incomes, forced migration, rising morbidity, etc.

- **Enhancing educational attainment, reducing water stress, and improving job opportunities in the nonagricultural sectors is necessary:-**
  - The analysis predicts that a 30 percent improvement on these measures could halt the decline in living standards by almost 1 percent from -2.8 percent to -1.9 percent.

**Way forward :-**

- India should rally for greater accountability from, and more stringent GHG emission reduction by, other countries.
- India also must remove existing policies on water and bring new ones that are geared towards efficient and accountable water-usage. The government must stop incentivising farmers to grow water-intensive crops in water-stressed areas by weaning MSP-led public procurement away from these crops in such areas.

- **Recommendations of the report are:-**
  - The identification of hotspots from changes in average weather allows to design strategies to cope with climate impacts with a great level of spatial granularity.
  - The expected decline in living standards resulting from expected changes in temperature and rainfall provides an indication of how much it would be worth spending to mitigate the impacts.
  - The relationship between expected changes in living standards, and observed household and location characteristics—such as human capital and infrastructure—provides valuable hints on potential interventions for building resilience.
  - Policies and actions must be tailored to address the specific impacts and needs based on local conditions. No single set of interventions will work in all hotspots.

**Q) Critically analyze whether the practice of compensatory afforestation under CAMPA is ecologically sound?(250 words)**

**Why this question**

The article highlights a problem inherent in CAMPA where the value of natural forests is unrecognised and compensatory afforestation is deemed equivalent to recreating forest land. This article will help us in critical analysis of CAMPA.

**Key demand of the question**

The focus here is on understanding whether the provisions of CAMPA serves well the very purpose it is designed to achieve which is ecological conservation. We have to highlight the merits and demerits of the act and a fair and balanced view on it.

**Directive word**

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Highlight the growing threat of climate change and the risk India is under as pointed out by a recent WB report.

**Body** – Describe the main provisions of the Act like it ensures expeditious and transparent utilization of amounts realised in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose. Examine the main ecological issues that the design and implementation of the act creates. Examine the role of the implementation agency as highlighted in the article. Thereafter, mention the need of an Act like CAMPA because of the developmental imperative. Discuss how can we improve the situation.
Conclusion – Give a fair and balanced view on how far CAMPA helps in protecting the ecology. Mention that the challenge lies more in implementation than the design.

Compensatory afforestation programme :-

- Compensatory Afforestation (CA) refers to afforestation and regeneration activities carried out as a way of compensating for forest land diverted to non-forest purposes. Here “non-forest purpose” means the breaking up or clearing of any forest land or a portion thereof for:
  - The cultivation of tea, coffee, spices, rubber, palms, oil-bearing plants, horticultural crops or medicinal plants
  - Any purpose other than reafforestation

Merits:

- Since forests are being diverted routinely (at the rate of about 20,000-25,000 ha per year according to the Ministry of Environment and Forests) a large sum of money is accruing to the government. It is to manage this money, and to use it for the designated purposes, that CAMPA is proposed to be set up.
- The (CAF act) legislation will allow states to access nearly 42000 crore rupees that is lying idle and channel it into afforestation projects.
- Compensatory afforestation purports to be a ‘win-win’ solution: a win for the environment because lost forests are compensated for, and a win for business because these forests can be traded on international carbon markets for their value as carbon sinks.
- It has provisions or administration of funds and utilization of funds by the user agencies to undertake plantations, protection of forests and forest-related infrastructure development.
- The adverse impacts of diversion of forests will get mitigated.
- Will create the much-needed employment opportunities in tribal areas.
- It will result in increase of green cover and creation of productive assets.

Demerits:-

- Programme will affect rights granted under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 by decimating the rights of forest dwelling communities.
- There is difficulty in finding land, especially in smaller states, and in heavily forested ones like Chhattisgarh.
- It seeks to use the money for the Green India Programme, wildlife protection and for infra development, etc which were not the original purposes of creating the fund.
- Mis-utilisation of funds and lack of accountability
- No community participation
  - The affected forest communities have no say in the management of CAMPA funds.
  - There is no long-term involvement of locals/tribals with the plantations.
- It allows for an unconstitutional exercise of eminent domain the principle that the government ultimately has rights over all land in the country
- Arrangements for land acquisition under the CAF Act violate existing land acquisition procedures in India.
  - CAF Act includes no legal provisions that can penalise misuse of land acquired.
  - It also doesn’t provide for any accountability mechanisms that oversee plantations.
  - Studies already reveal a startling number of ‘ghost’ plantations – plantations listed on the government’s ‘e-Green Watch’ website that simply don’t exist.
- Compensatory afforestation renders the forest/non-forest distinction meaningless.
  - On the one hand, forest land is being clear-felled at lightning speed. while on the other, the forest department is acquiring more and more land under the ruse of compensatory afforestation.
  - It’s not just ‘non-forest land under the FCA that stands to become forest. Any and all other types of non-forest land qualify under the scheme.

Conclusion:-

- Restoring degraded forest land and wildlife corridors should be the top priority.
- The Act must be harmonised with the extant laws to minimise litigation.
- The top-down bureaucratic approach should be replaced with democratic decentralisation.
Q) The National Policy on Biofuels 2018 repeats the pattern of promising the moon and delivering little. Comment. (250 words)

Why this question
Use of fossil fuels not only imposes higher tax liabilities on the masses but is also responsible for the environmental pollution and GHG emissions. Given the imperative to decrease use of fossil fuels and protect the environment and public health, the government has formulated the Biofuel policy and has also taken various other initiatives to increase the use of biofuels. However the progress has not been satisfactory. The issue is related to GS-3 syllabus under the following heading - Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and present an opinion thereon. We have to back our opinion with relevant and forceful arguments/facts etc.

Directive word
Comment - we have to express our knowledge on the issue – initiatives of the government and objectives of the Biofuel policy, 2018 and how far has been the progress in this direction.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – mention the WHO report indicating the gravity of air pollution in Indian cities. Discuss in 1-2 lines the need for increased use of biofuels.

Body -
- Discuss the initiatives/policies/programmes of the government aimed at increasing the use of biofuels. E.g Ethanol Blending Programme and its revision of targets from 5-10%; National Biodiesel mission and its targets etc. Discuss in a few lines that these were never met and missed by huge margins.
- Discuss the strategy of National Biofuel Policy and how they are unrealistic. E.g stress on 2G biofuels with lack of requisite infrastructure, delay in setting up bio refineries: no plans for mandatory blending norma for all states etc

Conclusion – mention in 1-2 lines the advantages of biofuels – prevention of air pollution, less BTX release, saving of foreign exchange etc and suggest the way forward.

Background:-
- Biofuels in India are of strategic importance as it augers well with the ongoing initiatives of the Government such as Make in India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill Development and offers great opportunity to integrate with the ambitious targets of doubling of Farmers Income, Import Reduction, Employment Generation, Waste to Wealth Creation.
- Despite framing Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme (EBP) and national biodiesel mission earlier no concrete results came through. So recently The Union Cabinet has approved National Policy on Biofuels – 2018 in order to promote biofuels in the country.

National biofuel policy :-
- Categories of biofuels:
  - The policy creates two categories of biofuels: basic and advanced. Basic biofuels include first generation bioethanol.
  - Advanced biofuels include second generation ethanol, municipal solid waste, third generation biofuels, bio-CNG etc
- Raw materials:
  - The policy expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing the use of certain items that are unfit for human consumption. These include: (i) sugarcane juice, (ii) materials containing sugar such as sugar beet, (iii) materials containing starch such as corn, cassava, and (iv) damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice, and rotten potatoes.
Farmers are at a risk of not getting appropriate price for their produce during the surplus production phase. Taking this into account, it also allows the use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol for blending with petrol, with the approval of the National Biofuel Coordination Committee. This will likely reduce the cost of producing biofuels and improve affordability for consumers, particularly during times when oil prices reach discomforting levels.

**Financial incentives:**
- The policy indicates a viability gap funding scheme of Rs 5,000 crore in six years for second generation ethanol bio refineries. Further, advanced biofuels will also get additional tax incentives, and higher purchase price as compared to basic biofuels.
- Roles and responsibilities of all the concerned Ministries/Departments with respect to biofuels has been captured in the Policy document to synergise efforts.
- The new policy will also benefit farmers, who will be able to sell various types of agricultural waste to industry at remunerative prices.

**Expected benefits:**
- **Reduce Import Dependency:**
  - The ethanol supply year 2017-18 is likely to see a supply of around 150 crore litres of ethanol which will result in savings of over Rs.4000 crore of forex.
- **Cleaner Environment:**
  - One crore lit of E-10 saves around 20,000 ton of CO2 emissions.
  - For the ethanol supply year 2017-18, there will be lesser emissions of CO2 to the tune of 30 lakh ton. By reducing crop burning & conversion of agricultural residues/wastes to biofuels there will be further reduction in Green House Gas emissions.
- **Health benefits:**
  - Used Cooking Oil is a potential feedstock for biodiesel and its use for making biodiesel will prevent diversion of used cooking oil in the food industry.
- **Municipal solid waste Management:**
  - It is estimated that, annually 62 MMT of Municipal Solid Waste gets generated in India. There are technologies available which can convert waste/plastic, MSW to drop in fuels. One ton of such waste has the potential to provide around 20% of drop in fuels.
- **Infrastructural Investment in Rural Areas:**
  - At present Oil Marketing Companies are in the process of setting up twelve 2G bio refineries with an investment of around Rs.10,000 crore. Further addition of 2G bio refineries across the Country will spur infrastructural investment in the rural areas.
- **Employment Generation:**
  - One 100klpd 2G bio refinery can contribute 1200 jobs in Plant Operations, Village Level Entrepreneurs and Supply Chain Management.
- **Additional Income to Farmers:**
  - By adopting 2G technologies, agricultural residues/waste which otherwise are burnt by the farmers can be converted to ethanol and can fetch a price for these waste if a market is developed for the same.
  - Also, farmers are at a risk of not getting appropriate price for their produce during the surplus production phase. Thus conversion of surplus grains and agricultural biomass can help in price stabilization.

**Concerns with the policy:**
- The policy is totally silent on octane, which has direct consequences on air quality and pollution as it assists in proper combustion of fuels, thereby affecting vehicular emissions.
- **Over ambitious:**
  - The policy states that a viability gap funding scheme for 2G ethanol bio refineries of Rs. 5,000 crore in 6 years in addition to additional tax incentives, higher purchase price as compared to 1G biofuels will be provided.
  - The policy is over ambitious in light of the fact that the capability of 2G has not been realised till today. Therefore, completely relying on a mechanism which has not been proven commercially is flawed.
  - Excessive expenditure from the exchequer is sought to be made by the NPB for a technology (production of 2G) which is untested and has not taken off commercially internationally.
The ways in which companies are selected for driving this policy agenda forward is questioned.
- So far, there’s an investment of Rs.10,000 crore to set up 12 2G biorefineries across 11 States. But concrete steps have not been taken.
- The criteria and reasons for awarding the MoUs is unknown.

Supply-chain infrastructure that is required to deliver biofuels to the final consumer remains inadequate.
- To convert India’s existing biofuel potential into reality, huge investments need to be made in creating bio refinery capacity. However, this is easier said than done. While state-owned oil marketing companies are in the process of setting up 12 bio-refineries, this can only be a base to build on.
- On the ground, private sector investment in this space has been hampered by financial constraints and lack of cohesive support from the Central to the local level.

Efficiently transporting low value biomass to the refineries is another challenge.

Way forward:-
- Centre should steer clear of micromanaging the supply chain but, instead, help in land acquisition for the bio-refineries and working with the stakeholders to fix a reasonable price for the end product.
- The Centre should ensure that it actively involves the private sector in this exercise especially for functions like procurement, storage and distribution.
- The policy should be followed up with coordinated action at the user end to ensure that the larger goal of the policy of cleaning up the air, reducing the carbon footprint and shift to more sustainable renewable fuels is not lost sight of.
- Interim import of ethanol should be considered while 1G production is being increased and technology to produce 2G ethanol is still developing and proving its commercial viability. These corrections in policy will lead to lower fuel prices, cleaner air, foreign currency savings and efficiency in the oil economy.

Conclusion:
- From encouraging the use of biofuels in public transport to ensuring that civic bodies actually realise the potential of municipal waste and sewage the policy needs to be implemented in mission mode on a nationwide basis.

Q) What is biopiracy? Discuss the merits of proposed changes to Nagoya Protocol in tackling biopiracy?(250 words)

Why this question
Nagoya Protocol is the landmark agreement which seeks to protect the biological diversity of the nation. The reforms being discussed here are significant, particularly for India which merits a detailed analysis.

Key demand of the question
The question first requires us to explain what biopiracy is. Thereafter, we need to discuss the proposed changes and debate it’s intent and design as to whether it can curb biopiracy.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention details about Nagoya Protocol and how important it is for India.
Body – Explain biopiracy. discuss the proposed changes and highlight how they seek to curb biopiracy. Examine the merits and demerits of the move and the impact it would have on India. Bring out both aspects of the debate – how the system of taking permission would help natives to protect their traditional knowledge etc from being exploited by unscrupulous corporate houses vs the increased red tapism which would curb research and innovation.
Conclusion – Give your view on the merits of the proposed changes and the impact it would have on India.

Background:-
- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversityis a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- It provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
• Its objective is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Biopiracy:-
• Biopiracy is the practice of commercially exploiting naturally occurring genetic material or biochemical. Biopiracy happens when researchers or research organisations take biological resources without official sanction, largely from less affluent countries or marginalised people.
• Biopiracy is not limited to drug development. It also occurs in agricultural and industrial contexts. Indian products such as the neem tree, tamarind, turmeric, and Darjeeling tea have all been patented by foreign firms for different lucrative purposes.

Proposed changes to Nagoya protocol with respect to biopiracy:-
• Under proposed changes to the Nagoya Protocol, researchers might have to ask a country’s government for permission before using publicly available gene sequences obtained from plants or animals originating there.
• Prior approval from the country is required to use the “digital gene sequencing information” or even the genetic information available on the public platform, obtained from plants and animals of the nation.
• Researchers have to submit the draft of what type of research they intend to do during their visit and, if the nation asks, sharing of benefits from the study.

Merits of this move:-
• Rejection of this change will lead to exploitation of biological wealth of nations by corporations, sometimes at the cost of existing local knowledge and knowledge creation
• Boost to domestic industry:-This will protect domestic bio-tech industry against patents wars
• Combat biopiracy:-
  • Foreign Corporate firms preying on India’s traditional knowledge will have to share benefits.
• Mitigate litigation which happens of getting patent without informing the government.
• Promote biodiversity and ecology conservation.
• System of taking permission would help natives to protect their traditional knowledge etc from being exploited by unscrupulous corporate houses

Demerits :-
• Even if the proposal is accepted, the implementation already looks shaky while it is nearly impossible to impose curbs on data already available on the internet, the US, home to many rich biotech firms, never ratified the CBD and Nagoya Protocol.
  • The United States, however, has not ratified the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which the 2010 Nagoya Protocol is a supplementary agreement, and would not be bound by changes to the protocol.
• Regulatory burden:-
  • Increased regulatory burden on non commercial researchers and institutions will hinder research in key medicines formulation.
• Poor compliance :-
  • Data already available in internet is impossible to curb when compliance history of Nagoya is already shaky.
• Increase cost of research and development thus making the product expensive.
• It will bring populism in science thus curtailing science.
• In recent decades, scientists have assembled massive amounts of genetic information from organisms collected around the world and stored them in publicly available databases for others to study or use. The fight now brewing is whether the protocol applies not just to actual biological samples, but also to this type of information.

Conclusion:-
• Proposed changes to Nagoya protocol is a welcome step for equitable sharing of benefits of genetic resources and combating bio-piracy. Proper implementation of Nagoya protocol is need of the hour.

Q) The centrality of tiger agenda is an ecological necessity for the sustainability of our environment. In this context, examine the steps taken by India to conserve tigers?(250 words)

Why this question
The article on the occasion of international tiger day discusses the tiger conservation programme of India and highlights India’s achievements and challenges going forward. Hence it is important while preparing conservation section of GS 3

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to explain why focussing on conserving tiger is a prime concern for ecology. Thereafter we need to discuss the steps taken by India in its tiger conservation and the impact it has had. The challenges are to be discussed along with way forward.

**Directive word**
Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Discuss the figure of the latest tiger census and highlight that since 1973, India has been taking several steps for tiger conservation.

**Body**
- Mention that tigers are flagship species and top of the food chain, tiger being an umbrella species etc, hence their conservation is critical
- Discuss the steps taken by India for tiger conservation such as Project Tiger and increase in its coverage, formation of NTCA, M-STrIPES etc
- Discuss the impact of these steps including increase in numbers. Highlight the new challenge that it poses in terms of paucity of resources, man animal conflict etc

**Conclusion** – Discuss the way forward to address those challenges.

**Background:-**
- India is one of the few countries, where tigers have their natural habitat. There are an estimated 2,226 tigers in the country and India has 70 per cent of the world’s tiger population, according to the last tiger census.

**Why centrality of tiger agenda is a ecological necessity:-**
- Their protection is human responsibility towards the world and future generations”.
- An umbrella species, the tiger signifies the health of the ecosystem services which support life on the planet. The carbon locked up in tiger forests provide a great adaptation to the threats of climate change.
- Carbon trading hardly has kickstarted in tiger range countries, where it is required most.
- It is flagship species and is on top of the food chain hence conservation is critical.

**Steps taken:-**
- Indian:-
  - Enabling provisions for tiger in the national legislation
  - Creation of National Tiger Conservation Authority
  - India has taken several measures, including bringing out guidelines for tiger safaris, to reduce the pressure of eco-tourism, protect habitats of tigers and conserve its population
  - India had launched Project Tiger in 1973 to conserve tigers.
    - Till now, the coverage of Project Tiger has increased from nine reserves to 50 tiger reserves spread across 18 states.
  - Year-round monitoring of tiger and prey
  - Strict adherence to guidelines for responsible ecotourism in tiger reserves
- Technological:-
  - SOP to strengthen interstate coordination in bordering tiger reserves.
  - Smart patrolling and notification of five more tiger reserves
  - Aerial surveillance, Economic Valuation of Tiger Reserves.
  - Modern protocol for field monitoring (M-STrIPES)
  - Online database of tiger crime
- International:-
  - World leaders had signed the St.Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation, which also decided to celebrate July 29 as Global Tiger Day.
The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) program of the World Bank, using its presence and convening ability, brought global partners together to strengthen the tiger agenda.

Global Tiger Forum (GTF), being the only inter-governmental platform of tiger range countries since 1993, has been consolidating Tiger Action Plans of the range countries. It has forged viable partnerships with several like-minded organizations in India and abroad — IUCN, WWF, WCT, WII, IIFM, IFAW, WTI, WCS, USAID, World Bank, Clemson University.

GTG engagement along with partners in areas of Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS), Security Audit of Tiger Reserves, Management Planning etc. A special High-Altitude project is ongoing with the IUCN’s support for appraisal of tiger status in High Altitude Ecosystems of South Asia. Several other programmes are on the anvil.

**Issues with Indian approach ::**

- **India is a long way from achieving the ambitious target** set in 2010 of doubling the global tiger numbers by 2022.
- They share certain overarching **common issues of concern** such as poaching and habitat loss.
- All the range countries face the challenge to balance the interests of conservation and development.
- Four categories emerge in the context of tiger presence and status across the range countries: forest with no tiger or prey, forest with few tigers and abnormal sex-ratio, empty forests etc
- Paucity of resources
- Man animal conflict.

**Way forward:-**

- **Tiger must be secured at three basic levels**: field formation, national and international. Though a sovereign issue, international engagements between border countries are important for evolving a common portfolio to address the threat of trafficking.
- **The Key Performance Indicators of the ongoing Global Tiger Recovery Program need adequate resources and more commitment.** Donors with green mission need to support regional projects for reducing the threat of trafficking, and addressing resource dependency of locals through gainful portfolios.
- **Citizen’s charter is needed** for green development within sustainable tiger landscapes.

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**GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 4**

*Topic: Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;*

**Q) The concept of ecological consciousness is a market departure from the approach adopted by environmental ethics. Comment.(250 words)**

**Why this question**
The issue is related to GS-4 syllabus under the following heading –  
**Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics;**

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to us to bring out the difference between the two concepts- environmental ethics as it is understood today and the concept of ecological consciousness.

**Directive word**
Comment- We have to express our knowledge and understanding of both the concepts and bring out the difference between the two. Based on our discussion we have to form an opinion on the issue.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction-** Define environmental ethics.

**Body-**
- Discuss the environmental ethics in detail- its approaches and limitations.
• Discuss the concept of ecological consciousness and how it is different from environmental ethics. E.g. departure from the anthropocentric approach, associating man with nature rather than detaching him from it etc. 

Read the reference article given with the question properly to form your opinion on the issue and also to frame your answer.

Conclusion – Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced opinion on the desirability of the two approaches.

Answer:
Environmental ethics is a branch of environmental philosophy that studies the ethical relationship between human beings and the environment. Human beings are a part of the environment and so are the other living beings. They are an integral part of the environment and hence cannot be denied their right to live. By destroying nature, we are denying the life forms this right. This act is unjust and unethical.

Ecological consciousness is a step further from environmental ethics as a part of radical ecology which says that it may not be enough to extend ethics to non-human elements of the environment and that it is necessary to bring changes in the way we live and function. The field of environmental ethics is not limited to realizing our moral obligations towards the environment. It is about realizing ecological consciousness. Once a state of ‘environmental consciousness’ is attained, humans will feel obligated to protect the environment.

According to this non-human elements have an intrinsic worth which is not dependent on their utility for humans. They believe in the need to implement ways to reduce human intervention in the non-human world that leads to the destruction of biodiversity.

In the name of development environment has been degraded and destroyed leading to depletion of natural resources, water and air pollution but environmental ethics failed to protect the environment. But having ecological consciousness people would not hurt nature for their benefits for instance Chipko movement. Both the approaches have their benefits but with ecological consciousness humans feel that other species of life are part of their own self.

Q) What do you understand by ethical hacking. Discuss the issues underlying ethical hacking. (250 words)

Why this question
The question aims to test the ability of the student to analyze the given concept or problem and identify and deliberate upon the issues involved therein. The issue is related to GS-4 syllabus under the following heading –

Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics in private and public relationships.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to define the term ethical hacking. It also wants us to write in detail about various issues involved in ethical hacking from the social/ ethics point of view.

Directive word
Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive which directs us to write at length about the meaning of the term, ethical hacking and issues involved in such an act.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – write a few lines about the meaning of ethical hacking and where it is largely used.

Body
Discuss in points various issues underlying ethical hacking. Be as exhaustive as possible but give priority to the ethical-social and then legal issues if any.
E.g teaching a person to penetrate a system without ensuring that the person may misuse that knowledge. Is it wrong or right?; probability of an insider attack and wrong sense of safety in case of a wrong report from an ethical hacker-compromising the security of the associated persons; invasion of user privacy etc.

Conclusion – mention the benefits of ethical hacking for companies and for general public and based on your convictions and according to the discussion held above, form a fair and a balanced opinion on the issue.

Ethical hacking:-
Ethical hacking refers to the act of locating weaknesses and vulnerabilities of computer and information systems by duplicating the intent and actions of malicious hackers. Ethical hacking is the term which is being used by professionals in order to make the system more secure and safe. A person will be called as an ethical hacker when he will not destroy the security of the system rather he will take care of the security and safety of the system from the view point of the hacker. One of the main requirements for an ethical hacker is its trustworthiness. The customer needs to be 100% certain that information found by the ethical hacker won’t be abused. Another very important ability is patience. An ethical hacker is most trustworthy employee for the organisation who is hired to check about the vulnerabilities and other issues in the computer network system to maintain its security and safety.

Issues underlying ethical hacking:
- The problem of teaching students to hack is still a very serious issue that we are facing today. Experts feel that they will teach students how to improve intrusion which unfortunately not happening so. Understanding the true intentions of the students is very hard to pinpoint the reason why ethical hacking should be used. Teaching students to hack in effect gives them a global knowledge of how to hack into computer systems with the help of subject matter experts. The threat they pose is unimaginable.
- Ethical hackers can and may use their abilities to try and avoid paying for items they have brought because they know they can. They use their power to “help themselves” without being caught, at the expense of others.
- In banking with many online frauds being committed it would create great problems in tracking down ethical hackers and pinning the blame, for having access to accounts will in effect blame the ethical hacker even if they did not commit the crime.
- Being into the company’s insider he has all the rights to access all the confidential data of the company. It is really depends on the true intentions of the ethical hackers that how they do their job well.
- Ethical hacker can easily get the IP addresses of any system and may harm it. For ethical hackers there are many tools available in the global market to help them to do their job effectively
- Ethical Hackers have to break the organizations security policy and procedures violating the code of conduct.
- Privacy of the employer and employees
  - There can be privacy invasion takes place when they do a ethical hack. All confidential employee and partner documents and information can be seen. The ethical hacker is able to view all the weak points of the firewall.

However ethical hacking can ensure safety of our systems if conducted ethically. Ethical hackers are highly paid professionals with a legitimate status and a means of access. They can minimize the risk of impact, clearly identifying benefits and flaws helping senior company directors to understand if such activities should be undertaken. Ethical hackers could explore vulnerabilities in advance to minimize the risk. To counter problems, researchers are looking towards new ways of improving ethical hacking and hacking in general from inside the company. One approach is to use models to monitor employees closely to reduce the risk of impact. One solution is to use a model approach that can seriously help in ethical hacking. Not only does this model helps, but also tries to reduce the impact by identifying implications early enough to help reduce the impact of confrontation.

Considering with view point of consequentialism theory ethical hacking can be identified as ethically correct, because it’s all done for the betterment of the organization.

Q) Discuss the difference between professional and personal ethics. How can one resolve the dichotomy between the two. (250 words)

Why this question
The issue is related to GS- 4 syllabus under the following heading-
Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; dimensions of ethics; ethics in private and public relationships.
Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to bring out the difference between professional and personal ethics and also suggest how to resolve the case of dichotomy between the two in real life.

**Directive word**
Discuss- this is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question- difference between the two concepts and how to resolve the conflict between the two.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction–** define personal and professional ethics in 2-3 lines.

**Body–**
1. Discuss the differences between the two in detail. E.g personal vs professional life; more general vs more specific; more amenable to frequent change vs less amenable to frequent change; role of rules and regulations etc.
2. Discuss how there can be a conflict between the two and give an example. Then discuss how to resolve situations which involve conflict between the two. Take the help of the article attached to the question and other relevant sources to frame your answer.

**Conclusion–** based on your discussion form a fair and balanced opinion on the issue.

**Answer:-**
**Personal ethics** refers to the **ethics** that a person identifies with in respect to people and situations that they deal with in everyday life. **Professional ethics** refers to the **ethics** that a person must adhere to in respect of their interactions and business dealings in their **professional** life.

**Differences:-**

**Personal Ethics** is generally considered as the basic principles and values that govern interactions among individuals. It can also be used to describe a particular person’s own, idiosyncratic principles or habits Sound personal ethics are typically those that positively impact the experience of others when used to govern an individual’s social or business related behavior, and at the very least, such ethics should not have a negative impact on others.

**Professional ethics** encompass the personal, organizational and corporate standards of behavior expected of professionals. Professionals, and those working in acknowledged professions, exercise specialist knowledge and skill. **How the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the public can be considered a moral issue and is termed professional ethics.**

**Codes of professional ethics** are often established by professional organizations to help guide members in performing their job functions according to sound and consistent ethical principles.

**Professional ethics and personal ethics** have two distinct applications as one is involved in one’s own personal life and affects merely their perception. Personal ethics is probably more general, and is simply practicing becoming an excellent human being with respect to people and situations in everyday life. Professional ethics is probably more specific, and is practicing becoming an excellent human being with respect people and situations in work life (co-workers, customers, suppliers, the company).

**Professional ethics** play a unique role in that a person is held to a certain standard when in the workplace and must abide by a specific set of ethics that is required by all employees of the company. So they are less amenable to frequent change unlike personal ethics.

**Dichotomy:-**

**Personal and professional ethics** may clash and cause a moral conflict. For example: A police officer may personally believe that a law that he is required to enforce is wrong. However, under the **Code of Conduct for Police**, he is required to obey all lawful and reasonable instructions to enforce that law unless there is good and sufficient cause to do otherwise.

It is very obvious that every individual are born different and hence they carry their own beliefs, thoughts, behavior, codes, etc. No matter how vast the gap is in their beliefs and values, they are to behave and perform their duties as per the coded professional ethics. **This perhaps turns out into conflicts in organisations.**

**Sometimes the tasks employees are asked to do at work may not be illegal, but they can impose a conflict with what we think is the right thing to do in our personal life.** The majority of professionals solve this by choosing to separate their professional lives from their personal lives.

**How to resolve:-**
It is revealed that the person strong and firm in Personal ethics are more likely to follow Professional Ethics, leaving all conflict aside. Although your personal life is distinctly different from your professional life, your ethics roll over from one to another and if you have good ethical values in one area you will have them in the other.

Professional ethics requires diversity in the workplace, but some individual’s personal ethics might make him uncomfortable with disabled individuals or minority groups. In this situation, adapting or changing personal ethics is a necessity.

There is a need to focus on duties and responsibilities. In the professional world, an individual’s focus is on the duties and responsibilities he/she must follow rather than personal opinions.

Without ethics, man has no future. This is to say, mankind without them cannot be itself. Ethics determine choices and actions and suggest difficult priorities.

Q) Discuss the ethics of weaponized AI and suggest what should be done in this regard?(250 words)

Why this question
Drone strikes, while they are increasing in number, pose a huge question over the ethics of such strikes. Weaponized AI is behind such drone strikes and signature strikes and the ethics of making decisions which impact human life to the extent of taking it away needs to be discussed.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to analyze the utility of having weaponized AI. Thereafter, we need to discuss the ethical ramifications of using AI for signature strikes etc. We need to discuss on how can we reconcile realism with ethics. Finally, a fair and balanced view on the issue needs to be provided.

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

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Explain what is means by weaponized AI

Body
• Discuss why is it finding favour with countries – discuss the utility, and necessity of such technology
• Thereafter, point out that despite its utility it raises several ethical challenges as mentioned in the articles.
• Discuss how can we reconcile the ethics of weaponized AI with its utility. Discuss the need for a legal architecture, and greater transparency in action along with reforms in global governance architecture such as UN

Conclusion – Give your view and emphasize on the need for bringing a change in status quo in light of the huge collateral damage.

Answer:-
New report by the World Economic Forum lists IoT hacking and weaponized AI among what they say will be the top security threats in 2017. Powerful interests from corporations to state agencies, like the military and police are using AI to monitor people, assess them, and to make consequential decisions about their lives. Many of the weapons were developed to minimize the threat to human life in military conflicts.

More advanced applications of AI extend to the domains of foreign, defence and security policies. Deep learning in AI can unravel futuristic functions by augmenting decision making ability of the humans with access to the information derived from large data sets.

AI has many peace time applications as well. It can be used to train soldiers and pilots, simulate war-game, synthesize information from surveillance systems and address critical problems in optimizing logistics, fleet management and maintenance

Law enforcement or internal security requirements for detecting and recognizing individuals or criminals, with multitudes of data streaming from police databases or the network of surveillance cameras.

Ethical issues of weaponised AI:-
However Weaponised AI creates a broader attack surface for cyberattacks for those who want to steal data, disrupt business, attack industrial controls. There have been instances of US drones attacking targets whose identities are unknown in Yemen. The reason being AI software predicted them as targets despite them being innocent civilians.
Predictive policing heatmaps have amplified **racial bias** in our criminal justice system. Facial recognition, which the police are currently testing in cities such as London, has been wrong as much as 98% of the time. When machines become fully autonomous, humans won’t have a deciding role in missions that kill. This **creates a moral dilemma**. Experts anticipate increased malicious use of AI just as criminals, terrorists and authoritarian regimes use electricity, software, and computer networks. As machine intelligence becomes more powerful, pervasive, and connected, embedding AI in all of our personal and industrial computing devices could be attacked and compromise the security infrastructures that protect resources, citizens, and communities. The armed forces of US and China have already invested billions of dollars to develop these weapons intending to gain strategic and tactical advantage over each other. **This runs the risks of an arms race.**

**Way forward:-**
- Policymakers, technical researchers, and cyber security experts should jointly explore, prevent, and mitigate the use of artificial intelligence by hostile entities.
- AI researchers, scientists and engineers should proactively participate in the security ecosystem surrounding artificial intelligence. These professionals should be mindful of the dual use/nature of AI, consistently integrate security features and protocols in their work, and always warn users and policymakers of the potential misuse, vulnerabilities, and risks of the products they are developing.
- Best practices should be defined and established for AI research, including the implementation of more effective and comprehensive methods for addressing dual-use concerns. Ethical standards and reasonable expectations should help shape these practices.
- More people of diverse backgrounds should become stakeholders and domain experts on issues surrounding the malicious applications of AI. Meanwhile, organizations should promote a culture of responsibility when it comes to building the world’s AI security framework.

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**Q) What do you understand by logical positivism. Discuss the association of logical positivism with the ethics. (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to to simply describe the meaning and the salient aspects of logical positivism. It also wants us to write in detail about its association with the ethics- how it describes and understands the ethics.

**Directive word**
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – write a few lines about logical positivism- its birth as a philosophy, its other names, Its primary concern and key proponents like Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap etc.

**Body**-
- **Discuss the doctrine of logical positivism in detail.** E.g it developed out of Positivism and the early Analytic Philosophy movement, and which campaigned for a systematic reduction of all human knowledge to logical and scientific foundations. Thus, a statement is meaningful only if it is either purely formal (essentially, mathematics and logic) or capable of empirical verification; it denied the soundness of metaphysics and traditional philosophy; it asserted that many philosophical problems are indeed meaningless etc.
- **Discuss how the doctrine viewed and understood the ethics as a philosophy.** E.g According to logical positivism, there are only two sources of knowledge: logical reasoning and empirical experience. The former is analytic a priori, while the latter is synthetic a posteriori; hence synthetic a priori knowledge does not exist; It argued that ethical principles are neither true nor false – they are expressions of feeling. Therefore a theory of ethics is impossible etc.

**Conclusion**- Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

**Logical positivism:-**
- It is also known as logical empiricism and neo-positivism, this philosophical school was born in Austria and Germany during the 1920s, and was primarily concerned with the logical analysis of scientific knowledge.
Among its members were Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Hans Reichenbach, Philipp Frank etc. They denied the soundness of metaphysics and traditional philosophy and asserted that many philosophical problems are indeed meaningless.

It campaigned for a systematic reduction of all human knowledge to logical and scientific foundations. Thus, a statement is meaningful only if it is either purely formal (essentially, mathematics and logic) or capable of empirical verification.

Until the 1950s, logical positivism was the leading school in the philosophy of science. Nowadays, the influence of logical positivism persists especially in the way philosophy is practiced.

Association of logical positivism with the ethics:-

One of the main philosophical tenets of Logical Positivism are:-

Verifiability Principle:- According to logical positivism, there are only two sources of knowledge: logical reasoning and empirical experience. The former is analytic a priori, while the latter is synthetic a posteriori hence synthetic a priori knowledge does not exist.

A consequence of the Verifiability Principle is that statements about ethical principles are neither true nor false – they are expressions of feeling. Therefore a theory of ethics is impossible.

According to Schlick, ethics is a descriptive scientific theory. A person always prefers those conditions that do not produce pain or produce pleasure and good is whatever gives pleasure and no pain. Good is thus equivalent to beneficial.

A person’s actions are caused by a wish to benefit. So, the first ethical impulse is an egoistic one.

But the motivations to act are not static as they are subjected to the natural evolution and selection. In a society, it is possible that an altruistic way of action is more beneficial than a purely egoistic one. So, there is a contrast between the very first impulse, which suggests an egoistic behavior, and the tendency to act generated by evolution, which suggests a social behavior. This is the origin of ethical principles.

Q) Do you think politics based on identity is gaining prominence world over? How can the attitude of people be changed towards different races?(250 words)

Why this question
Mesut Ozil’s retirement again brings to the forefront the simmering racial tension in European societies. Racial discrimination has dominated news headlines off late and is an issue that merits discussion from GS4 point of view.

Key demand of the question
The question expects us to analyze news of racial profiling and discrimination, issues related to immigration, the inevitability of multi racial societies etc for the first part of your answer. In the second part we need to discuss how can the attitude of people be made to change.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Mention some incidents of racial profiling and discrimination from around the world to emphasize the magnitude of the problem.

Body
- Discuss status quo. Mention why such incidents are increasing. Discuss from economic, cultural, political, ethical etc point of views.
- Examine the morality and ethics of such discrimination
- Mention how can the attitude of people towards other races be changed

Body – Discuss the severity of the issue and the way forward.

Background :-
“I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose.” This statement by football player Mesut Ozil reflects the agony of dual-heritage players and shines a light on the role identity and race plays in modern-day society. Racism has been evident against other prominent sports players, hate killings in US, alarming rise in xenophobia, racism and intolerance including anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred etc.

Politics based on identity is gaining prominence world over :-
- Explicit hatred and ideologies of racial superiority had moved from the fringe to the mainstream, with bigotry fuelling human rights violations and extreme violence against minorities, refugees, migrants, stateless persons and those internally displaced.
- Racist hate rhetoric was tolerated by political leaders at the highest levels, which had led to uninhibited expressions of hatred, including targeting of the most disadvantaged segments of the population.
  - Far-right political parties and neo-Nazi views were similarly seeing a resurgence.
- Rise of populist nationalism is a product of widespread loss of faith in establishment politics that privilege elites
- Manifestations of racism are an expression of a society's hierarchy: a means for a dominant group or elite to maintain its economic and social power. When an act of racism occurs, it harms the social standing that another person or group of people enjoy. It can also harm the freedom and well-being of its target.
- Ethical:-
  - As the philosopher Immanuel Kantargued, the roots of bad behaviour are ingrained in human nature.
  - It also occurs due to envy and resentment. Racial hostility can be connected with feelings that members of some groups may possess goods that one does not. It is established, for instance, that general levels of racism can be heightened during periods of economic downturn or recession. But even in more prosperous times, feelings of resentment about the perceived advantages of others can arise
  - Racism can also be the product of ignorance and arrogance. It may not necessarily be the case that those who say or do things with racist implications mean to inflict malicious harm. Sometimes the damage can be done innocently or incidentally – because one simply may not know better. This is the case with so-called casual racism,
  - There is a withholding of sympathy or compassion. Thus, victims of racist abuse can be treated as subhuman.

How can the attitude of the people be changed towards different races :-
- The world community, particularly children and youth, need to be taught that racism is a vice and not a value.
- Civil society organizations, social movements, activists and the entire United Nations system must devote renewed energy and attention to tackling the structural drivers of racial inequality,
- Hate crimes must be investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted.
- Government and State authorities need to adopt effective policies as a matter of priority, to urgently tackle the manifestations of incitement to racial violence, and to understand how they affect social cohesion.
- Racism requires individual and collective action. So campaigns like “Racism. It Stops with Me.” can be regarded as a direct response to bystander complacency. The idea is that we can and should do something when we see a racist incident.

Any society concerned with combating racism will necessarily be interested in promoting certain dispositions among its members: tolerance and decency, respect and fairness.

**TOPIC: Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;**

**Q) There is no school equal to a decent home and no teacher equal to a virtuous parent. Comment.(250 words)**

**Why this question**

UPSC almost always asks a questions based on a quotation from some famous personality (here Gandhi)and we have to comment on it. The issue is related to GS- 4 syllabus under the following heading

Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.

**Key demand of the question.**

The question wants us to express our knowledge and understanding of the role of the family and the parents in inculcating and developing values among the children.

**Directive word**

Comment- Here we have to express our understanding of the issue and come up with an opinion (either against or for, the statement/ quotation). However, our opinion should be in consonance with and a reflection of our discussion of the issue.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction**- Mention some related quote by some other famous person OR simply mention that family and parents play a huge role in the overall development of the child, his values and temperament/ attitude etc.
Body–
Discuss the role of family and the parents in inculcating values in a child. E.g role model, shaping of attitude towards people and society, inculcation of prejudices, close contact and high amount of time spent together, role of criticizing actions/ thoughts of the child, development of critical thought process in the child etc.
Take the help of the article attached to the question and take the help of other relevant material to frame your answer.

Conclusion- Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced opinion on the overall issue.

Answer:-

Family is the foundation on which values are built. Moral values like truthfulness, happiness, peace, justice are instilled in children’s thoughts, feelings and actions and they function as ideals and standards that govern their actions in their life.

- The value system practised in the family becomes automatic to the young family members if they are taught moral values systematically. The family, shapes the child’s attitude towards people and society, and helps in mental growth in the child and supports his ambitions and values. Blissful and cheerful atmosphere in the family will develop the love, affection, tolerance, and generosity.
- A child learns his behaviour by modelling what he/she sees around him/her. Family plays a major role in helping a child socialize and has great influence and bearing on the emotional and physical progress of the child.
- Joint family system, the presence of elders in the family plays the effective role in social and moral development of the children. It also helps young generation of the family to imbibe human values and eradicate their negative mental tendencies when they are among elders.
- The behavioural problems are set correct only by the involvement of family in the child’s life as they spend most of their time in adolescence with the parents. Family is the first social organisation that provides the immediate proximity from which the child can learn his behaviour.
- Customs And Traditions followed and taught by the family leads a disciplined and organized life. Families values helps the child to stand strong on his views despite others efforts to break through with opposing beliefs. In addition,

Thus, family is important in developing the moral values of child. There is a close contact between the parents and children, which determine the personality of child.

Modern families are undergoing transformations as they adapt to an ever changing world, which brings changes in the family functions, forms and structures as well as the family education model

- In the modern society the traditional joint family system is rarely seen and many new versions of families are cropping up like single parent families, nuclear families, same sex families etc.
- Materialism and pursuit of money have turned the people especially the youth into cold and callous machines in search of worldly comforts. Man has lost peace of mind and quietude. In the past social norms bound the society together but now the attitudes are changing. These disturbing trends are eating up the vitals of the families and the society.
- The amount of time parents spend with their children has been dropping dramatically. As a result, education responsibility has been taken over by institution and other people, which may lead to the deterioration of family constituting the basis of the proper upbringing of children.
- Increasing consumerism has gradually led to the materialization of society and perception of values formed on the basis of one’s own possessions. As a result, interpersonal relationships have been weakened mainly due to an increased focus on one’s own individual needs as well as self-realization.
- The deepening widening processes of globalization have changed the family structures, relationships among family members and parents perception of parental responsibility. Parents spend more time reaching their goals, which causes a decrease in family interaction.
- The children seem to have difficulty in learning and understanding the importance of the moral values determining a child’s attitudes and behaviour.
- Modern parents decision to have children is associated with their belief about prestige, life satisfaction and important investment.
Children are considered both parents tools to fulfil their dreams or plans and evidence of social status and economic possibilities of the family. Parents in today's society are also restricted as to how to discipline their children in many cases parents are getting sued.

In the modern family material goods, family traditions or moral values are not traditionally handed down from generation to generation. Limitations of contacts between grandparents and grandchildren have a negative effect on children's development, depriving them of many valuable experiences

- Spending the time with people from the older generation children can broaden their knowledge, get to know moral norms, learn empathy and understanding for others.
- Weak bonds with the family may lead young people to emotional instability and moral confusion. That, in turn, may result in dangerous activities, self-destruction, aggression and brutal behaviours.

Only a well axiomatically prepared young person can resist such negative influences of the modern world. That is why entering the world of values must take place from the earliest years of life of the child in its family environment, and should be based on normal relationships between all its members. Despite the changing face of the family, it is still the way in which most people live. The family remains an institution that plays a key role in the way society is organised and controlled, and which adapts, not to the whims of individuals, but to the conflicting priorities placed upon it by the world at large.

Q) You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation. Comment. (250 words)

Key demand of the question
The question wants to check our analytical skills and come up with an opinion on the issue- whether a person reveals himself more in a play than in a conversation; why/why not.

Directive word
Introduction – write a few lines about the behaviour of a person and what are the important factors deciding a particular behaviour/disposition.

Body- Discuss how a person will reveal himself more during a playful event rather than during a planned/unplanned conversation. Try to brainstorm and find the reasons behind such behaviour. E.g less control over behaviour during a play; competitive nature of the play which brings out the true character of the participants; broad set of behaviours involved during a play than during a conversation; higher consciousness and a relaxed atmosphere during conversation which favours more control over one's behaviour etc. These examples are just for guidance purposes and it is advised to refer the articles attached to the question and other relevant material, to frame your answer. The purpose of the question is to build your analytical capabilities, which should be the prime concern while answering this question. If you can relate the quote to static portion of ethics-behaviour, determinants of ethics; emotional intelligence; attitude etc. then the purpose of the question will be well served.

Conclusion– Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the above issue.

Human behaviour is the responses of individuals or groups of humans to internal and external stimuli. The way an individual addresses a situation single-handedly or say in a group is influenced by many factors. The key factors influencing an individual’s attitude in personal as well as social life are Abilities, Race and culture, attribution, Perception, Attitude etc.

Most people will go kind of easy in conversation. Say the safe things, say what they think the other person wants to hear. If they disagree, they generally don’t do so loudly or rudely. If they agree, it will probably be equally subdued.

Well, playing carry more information because a normal conversation is quite structured that means that a conversation carries too little information per time because it uses only a few 'information channels'. Playing has usually much more 'information channels'. For that reason one can use games not only to know a person better,
but also to achieve knowledge in a quick and creative way – because of the higher number of ‘information channels’.

**When a person plays, he/she shows his/her original character as they have to give the best of theirs in a limited time.** So in a way it reflects a person’s personality as the behaviour during the play is spontaneous and is under less control.

**A play is unpredictable and it puts a person in different complicated situations where the person’s character is truly tested.** Great sports personalities like Federer, Nadal, S. Tendulkar, Dravid etc are respected for the way they play the game and people take inspiration from their personalities. However sometimes during play due to competition a person reacts differently which might be totally different than what he/she reacts outside of play. **But to a large extent a one of play can determine a person’s character.**

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**Q) Discuss the contribution of David Hume to the philosophy of religion. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
David Hume occupies a unique position in intellectual thought and is regarded as one of the most. He challenged the traditional philosophy of religion and made many other contributions to philosophy.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to write in detail about the philosophy and thoughts of David Hume on religion.

**Directive word**
Discuss- This is an all-encompassing directive. Here we have to write in detail about the key demand of the question delving deep into the philosophy of David Hume.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Write a few introductory lines about Hume. You can also write the introductory quote for Hume, mentioned in the article attached to the question.

**Body**-
Discuss the contribution of Hume to the philosophy of religion. E.g Hume’s opposition to the teleological argument for God’s existence, the argument from design, is generally regarded as the most intellectually significant attempt to rebut the argument prior to Darwinism; it is unreasonable to believe testimonies of alleged miraculous events, and he hints, accordingly, that we should reject religions that are founded on miracle testimonies; he offered one of the first purely secular moral theories, which grounded morality in the pleasing and useful consequences that result from our actions. He introduced the term “utility” into our moral vocabulary, and his theory is the immediate forerunner to the classic utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. He is famous for the position that we cannot derive ought from is, the view that statements of moral obligation cannot simply be deduced from statements of fact etc.

**Conclusion**– Form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the contribution of Hume to the philosophy of religion and mention a few other important works of David Hume.

**Answer:**
David hume was a Scottish writer and philosopher who paved the way for the future of the skeptical school of thought. A dogmatic skeptic, he devoted a substantial portion of his work to investigating the limits of human reasoning.

Hume wrote forcefully and incisively on almost every central question in the philosophy of religion. His various writings concerning problems of religion are among the most important and influential contributions on this topic. **Hume advances a systematic, sceptical critique of the philosophical foundations of various theological systems.** Whatever interpretation one takes of Hume’s philosophy as a whole, it is certainly true that one of his most basic philosophical objectives is to **discredit the doctrines and dogmas of traditional theistic belief.**

Hume said that, regardless of how strong the testimony of miracle it can never come close to the overwhelming experience of unvaried laws of nature. **Thus, according to Hume, wise person must reject the evidence concerning the alleged miracle.**

The argument from design, is generally regarded as the most intellectually significant attempt to rebut the argument prior to Darwinism.

He offered one of the first purely secular moral theories, which grounded morality in the pleasing and useful consequences that result from our actions. He introduced the term “utility” into our moral vocabulary, and his theory is the immediate forerunner to the classic utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.
He also applied his skeptical approach to science and religion saying that even though neither was capable of fully explaining anything science was stronger because it could admit that it would never be absolutely correct.

**Natural and Revealed religion:**
During period of enlightenment, there were two pillars of traditional Christian belief i.e. Natural and Revealed. Former involves knowledge of god based upon logic and reason and latter involves knowledge of god based upon revelation through religious texts like Bible, Hume had argued for Natural Religion.

**Psychology of Religious belief:**
Another attack on revealed religion appears in Hume's essay “The Natural History of Religion”. His thesis is that, natural instincts such as fear is the true cause of religious belief and not the rational argument.

He is famous for the position that we cannot derive ought from is, the view that statements of moral obligation cannot simply be deduced from statements of fact etc.

Hume is one of the first philosophers to systematically explore religion as a natural phenomenon, suggesting how religious belief can arise from natural, rather than supernatural means.

He leveled moral, skeptical, and pragmatic objections against both popular religion and the religion of the philosophers.

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**Q) Nelson Mandela’s life offers many lessons which are of relevance to us more now than ever. Comment (250 words)**

**Why this question**
On Nelson Mandela’s birth anniversary, it is apt to discuss about the values he held dear, and which made him so successful politically and set an example for all of us.

**Key demand of the question**
The question expects us to draw values from him life and struggles examine their relevance in contemporary times and how can we ensure that we don’t forget his values by discussing what lessons can we implement in India.

**Directive word**
Comment – When you are asked to comment, you have to pick main points and give your ‘opinion’ on them based on evidences or arguments stemming from your wide reading. Your opinion may be for or against, but you must back your argument with evidences. These types of question offer you a chance to consolidate your reading of different subjects to justify your opinion.

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – Introduce Nelson Mandela and the stellar role he played as a moral and political leader.

**Body** – Discuss about his greatest achievements – rethink politics in terms of an ethics of empathy, a politics of forgiveness, and a revolution of values. Discuss the values he espoused – freedom of speech, fight against atrocities, politics of empathy etc and how his teachings are relevant in contemporary times for the world in general and India in particular.

**Conclusion** – Mention the key lessons that you draw from his life, which you feel is relevant in our current political climate.

Answer:-

Nelson Mandela was a man who cherished the ideal of a free society all his life. During his lifetime, Mandela dedicated himself to the freedom struggle of the African people, and in doing so, fought against White and Black domination in South Africa. But more than anything else, he fought for democracy as a plural society in which all races, languages and opinions could live together in harmony, and with equal opportunity. South Africa’s transition to democracy, under the leadership of Mandela, was a great work of political creativity and moral wisdom.

As an activist, as a prisoner or as a leader in government, he remained intensely conscious of his moral and political responsibilities as a man in search for excellence.

**Lessons to be learnt:-**
- **Individually:-**
- He extended and expanded human capacity to rethink politics in terms of an ethics of empathy, a politics of forgiveness, and a revolution of values.
- Mandela had very clear objectives in that he was committed to ending apartheid and a terribly unjust society. He knew that the road would be paved with enormous difficulties. But he never gave up.
• Whether in politics or in relationships, compromising and negotiating are essential tools. According to him “You mustn’t compromise your principles, but you mustn’t humiliate the opposition. No one is more dangerous than one who is humiliated.”
• Reconciliation and negotiation were far more effective and powerful weapons and that should never be forgotten
• Although lives are marked by illness, tragedy, misfortune and pain, people should never get discouraged. Those negative experiences can teach more than anything else. And they can teach that you have to remain faithful to your values and ethics. Mandela wanted freedom from apartheid, and while he changed strategy, he never changed that one principle.

India and the world:
• His subtle style of leadership has many lessons in it for today’s leaders. His idea of leadership was as much about delivering results as it was about uplifting those who worked and strove with him. His experience of discrimination ensured that he never allowed immediate situations to overshadow the true purpose of his activity, to create a world where there is space for everyone to live a life of dignity.
• Today, as the world battles climate change, religious bigotry and rising intolerance, world leaders have much to learn from this South African hero. His fundamental message was that unless we learn to put aside our differences and work together, we will never create a better world.
• It is only through forgiveness and a genuine desire to move ahead that enemies can turn into friends. Whether it is India and Pakistan, Israel and Palestine, or many other political and regional hotspots around the planet, the leaders of these nations would do their people a world of good if they applied Mandela’s words of wisdom to their respective situations.

TOPIC: Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.

Q) A dilemma is more demanding than a problem and it comes with a prescription to argue, not act. Comment (250 words)

Why this question
Ethics, particularly the practical aspect of it, more or less revolves around dilemmas of various sorts. However the concept is often confused with “problem”, which has a very different meaning altogether. This is one of the basic concepts in ethics and is related to GS-4 syllabus under the following heading: Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance.

Key demand of the question.
The question wants us to explain and bring out the difference between a problem and a dilemma and explain how dilemma is more wider and demanding than a problem.

Directive word
Comment- we have to take the stand on the given statement and then present justifications in favour of our opinion in the answer.

Structure of the answer
Introduction– define what is a problem
Body-
• define a dilemma
• discuss its meaning in relation to a problem- e.g two possible alternatives none of which is more desirable than the other, caught on the horns of a dilemma, sacrifice of one alternative in favour of another, more inclined to argue rather than act as taking decision is more protracted and difficult etc.
• Discuss how to solve a dilemma- i.e the terms of reference should be altered and the whole situation is reformulated and redefined so that full account is taken and due respect paid to the warring value options, which are then ordered and linked among themselves in a more systematic and coherent manner.
Conclusion: present your conclusion of the above discussion in relation to the demand of the question.

Answer:
A problem is a situation in which a gap is found between what is and what ought to be. How a problem is framed depends on who is doing the defining. Dilemmas are messy, complicated, and conflict-filled situations that require undesirable choices between highly prized values that cannot be simultaneously or fully-solved. In short, problems can be solved, but dilemmas only managed.

Example:-
A classroom teacher wants to video, digitize and then upload as a videocast his classes so students who are absent or want to review can download and watch the lesson. The tech director is concerned that students privacy rights (and board policy) will be violated if students can be recognized in the videocast.

The above example shows that dilemmas are conditions that can only be managed, not solved because they involve conflicts in values. Because of individual priorities and problem frames, it is impossible to deal with these issues so that everyone gets what she/he desires.

It is not surprising that organizations, especially those suffering from bureaucratic deficiencies in their reasoning and decision-making procedures, tend to confuse problems with dilemmas, and treat them indiscriminately. Usually, problems can be solved with a single, discrete solution. Dilemmas do not present a clear solution and in most cases are unable to be solved, but have to be managed over time towards a resolution.

Dilemmas, unlike problems, cannot be solved in the terms in which they are initially presented to the decision-maker. Caught on the horns of a dilemma the decision-maker is not only faced with opposed and perhaps equally unwelcome alternatives; even worse their incompatible juxtaposition also implies that they are mutually exclusive in the sense that the satisfaction of the one can only be made if the other is sacrificed.

It is then the case that solving a dilemma resembles a zero sum game, whereby the choice of one value alternative is necessarily followed by the negation of the other. ‘Solving’ the dilemma in such a way would, therefore, be a contradiction since the solution reached likewise would seem to be no more than a a dichotomic split of the intertwined aspects of the issue at hand.

Dilemma is content specific where as problem is target specific and so in case of problem always a desired set of target is achieved whereas in case of dilemma a set of targets are sacrificed in lieu of a befitting one which not very often leads to accomplishment.

A dilemma may be dealt with in a more effective and appropriate way if the terms of reference are altered and the whole situation is reformulated and redefined so that full account is taken and due respect paid to the warring value options, which are then ordered and linked among themselves in a more systematic and coherent manner.

Q) What do you understand by a healthy competition. Can competition be a reason of worry for an organisation. Comment. (250 words)

Why this question
It is quite logical to view competition as a source of remarkable human progress and growth. However, it also brings several undesired ethical problems along with it.

Key demand of the question
The question wants us to explain the meaning and relevance of healthy competition vis a vis how an unhealthy competition can be a cause of worry for any organisation.

Directive word
What- it simply directs that we should define and briefly explain the term.
Comment- we have to form a personal opinion on the issue but that opinion should be based upon a proper presentation in the form of our knowledge and understanding of the issue.

Structure of the answer
Introduction – Give a simple but a complete definition of the term, healthy competition.
Body-
Discuss whether competition can be a source of worry for an organisation. Why / why not. E.g. Discuss what is competition and its types; Competition as an intrinsic source of motivation; its benefits in the short run and problems posed in the long run. Take the help of the article attached to the question and also other relevant study material, to frame your answer.

Discuss healthy competition further and discuss how it can be inculcated in an organization.

Conclusion – Bring out a summary of your above discussion and state them in slightly different words but the conclusion in itself should not introduce anything not already discussed in the answer.

Healthy competition:-
- Unhealthy competition encourages children to be better than someone else. The primary goal is to win.
- Healthy competition, on the other hand, is more intrapersonal. The focus is on improving ourselves beating our personal record, learning something new. Healthy competition:
  - Motivates us to improve
  - Encourages teamwork
  - Builds a strong work ethic
  - Teaches the importance of preparation
  - Instills discipline

Competition can be cause of worry:-
- Use of unrestrained means by the competitors (or rivals) into achieving the final end. That is, attention is drawn to the final end rather than to the means of achieving it.
- When you are competing just to compete you are putting yourself in the same category as the other average competitors. You are too focused on what others are doing and end up doing the same things in the same way.

However Competition motivates people to achieve more, to push past their limits. Competition also inspires innovation and improves quality.

Competition builds emotional intelligence (EQ) and social intelligence (SI), both of which are necessary to build and consolidate relationships.

Competition teaches you to bounce back from failure and respond positively to pressure and challenges, and then adapt to move forward towards greater success.

Competition teaches preparation. Competition teaches people about goal setting. Creating and setting goals is an important part of being in any competitive landscape.

How to promote healthy competition:-
- Competition can create conflict between and among employees. Jockeying for limited resources may cause tension. However, when a team’s members understand how to have healthy debate and share their opinions openly, competition becomes a catalyst for innovation and improvement.
- Your employees should compete not just with others in your organization or your organization’s competitors, they should compete against their previous efforts. Continuously raising the bar and setting loftier goals will help your employees be their best.
- Telling an employee when he or she does well or else misses the mark will increase performance. Employees need both rewards and consequences to perform well.
- Encourage your child to focus on improvement

Q) Discuss the seven principles of Standards in Public Life enunciated by first report of the Nolan Committee.(250 words)

Why this question
The Nolan Committee inquired into the standards in British public life and gave a report which contain inter-alia, seven principles of standards in public life.

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to simply write in detail about the seven principles of standards in public life as enunciated by the Nolan Committee report.

**Directive word**
Discuss - This is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question.

**Structure of the answer**
**Introduction** – Write a few lines about the Nolan Committee.

**Body** – Discuss in points about the seven principles of Nolan Committee on standards in public life. E.g { I-SHOLA-O }

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

Discuss each of these principles individually.

**Conclusion** – Add a few more important principles that you think are necessary in public life and form a fair and balanced conclusion on the issue.

**Answer:**
Citizens expect public servants to serve the public interest with fairness and to manage public resources properly. Following cases of corruption and misuse of office all over the world, most advanced countries have prescribed a Code of Ethics for public servants.

Nolan, in his famous report of Committee of standards of Public life in Britain gave seven principles of standards in public life and it is universally applicable to everyone in public life, public officials can and should be punished for transgressing them without needing detailed explanations about the principles.

**Seven Principles of Public Life**

- **Selflessness**
  - Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

- **Integrity**
  - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

- **Objectivity**
  - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

- **Accountability**
  - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

- **Openness**
  - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

- **Honesty**
  - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

- **Leadership**
  - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These principles apply to all aspects of public life. The Committee has set them out
here for the benefit of all who serve the public in any way.

**TOPIC: Probit in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen’s Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.**

**Q) How do you see the six perceived governance quality measures enunciated by the 2nd ARC report, in the context of the present India. Critically Comment. (250 words)**

**Key demand of the question.**
The question wants us to highlight and describe the six perceived governance quality measures as enunciated by the 2nd ARC report and express our opinion on their status, desirability etc in the present Indian narrative.

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

**Structure of the answer**

**Introduction** – write a few lines about the 2nd ARC report and its purpose of constitution.

**Body**-
- Mention and briefly discuss each of the six perceived governance quality measures- voice and accountability; absence of political instability and violence; government effectiveness; reasonableness of the regulatory burden; the rule of law; and the absence of graft.
- Now compare these measures with, where India stands today. Mention various indices/ statistics related to these measure which highlight India’s position. Give your personal opinion as to what you perceive about the present context.

**Conclusion**– Conclusion- Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

**Answer:**
Elimination of corruption is not only a moral imperative but an economic necessity for a nation aspiring to catch up with the rest of the world. Improved governance in the form of non-expropriation, contract enforcement, and decrease in bureaucratic delays and corruption can raise the GDP growth rate significantly.

**Six perceived governance quality measures:-**
Six perceived governance quality measures are voice and accountability, absence of political instability and violence, government effectiveness, reasonableness of the regulatory burden, the rule of law and the absence of graft. Of these, the last two are the most directly significant in the context of ethical governance.

**Voice and accountability:**
Right to dissent and right to speak up is the fundamental nature for a citizen to show their active participation in the political governance of the nation. Over the years governments have become more accountable with citizen charters, Right to information, involving multiple stakeholders etc.

**Absence of political instability and violence:**
When there is a stable government which enjoys the trust of the people violence would decrease. For instance states in India with political stability are more peaceful than the ones which do not have such governments.

**Government effectiveness:**
The efficiency and effectiveness of government depends on the strengthening of the cohesion among different communities in the nation, increasing the standard of living of the citizens, making people more tolerant and Uphold India’s unity and diversity. Most of the governments have been successful but still communal riots, religious conflicts, mob lynching, farmers suicides etc persist.

**Reasonableness of the regulatory burden:**
There need to be proper balance between regulation and reasonableness in the governance of the nation.

**The rule of law:**
‘Rule of law’ measures whether crime is properly punished or not; enforceability of contracts; extent of black market; enforceable rights of property; extent of tax evasion; judiciary’s independence; ability of business and people to challenge government action in courts etc.
Absence of graft:-

'Absence of graft' measures relative absence of corruption among government, political and bureaucratic officials; of bribes related to securing of permits and licences; of corruption in the judiciary; of corruption that scares off foreign investors.

There is a perception that the public services have remained largely exempt from the imposition of penalties due to the complicated procedures that have arisen out of the Constitutional guarantee against arbitrary and vindictive action.

Good governance must be founded on moral virtues ensuring stability and harmony. Confucius described righteousness as the foundation of good governance and peace. The art of good governance simply lies in making things right and putting them in their right place. **Confucius's prescription for good governance is ideally suited for a country like India where many of our present day players in governance do not adhere to any principle and ensure only their own interests.**

**Topic- Case studies on ethics.**

Q) One of the partners from an accounting firm, goes to one of the computer technicians, and recommends him to go to one of their clients from the firm and installs a computer program with one of the licenses from the firm. The technician tells the partner that he cannot install the program, because it is illegal to install programs in other computers without the right licensing. The technician also recommended that it would be better for the client to buy the license and that he would install the program for his company. His boss answered that he is one of the most important clients in the office and that the client wasn’t interested in buying the program. Nevertheless, he promised that they would install the program, and that he shouldn’t worry because he would make himself responsible.

**What are the possible solutions available to the technician and what should he do?(250 words)**

**Key demand of the question.**

The question is an example of a typical problem concerning ethics, that we encounter in our everyday life. Its main purpose is to test our ability to identify the key ethical issues involved in the question and form a practical yet ethical opinion as to what should be done in this regard.

**Structure of the answer**

1. Discuss in points the possible alternative solutions available in this situation. E.g installing the software; not installing the software; installing as well as informing all the stakeholders etc.
2. Discuss the ethical, legal and professional implications of each of the decisions/solutions.
3. Based on your discussion, form a personal opinion as to what should be done in this regard.

**Answer :-**

The above case study deals with the employee facing the ethical dilemma whether to follow his employer’s orders or do the job ethically.

**The possible options available to the computer technician are :-**

The computer technician can follow his superior’s orders and install the program for the client’s company. This would ensure the job of the technician is not lost and as the employer itself has already told the technician that he would take responsibility if any thing goes wrong so he can install the software freely without any liability.

The computer technician can reject his superior’s orders and act ethically by rejecting it. He can make the employer understand the consequences of the move adversely. Even when the employer does not listen then he might reject the order.
It would be unethical for the technician to install the software. The technician is being asked to install the software on someone else’s computer, not the computer of the technician’s company. Were it the computer of the technician’s company, the technician could claim that he or she is only following orders for partner’s responsibility. But assuming the software has the customary non-transferability clause, meaning the holder of the license cannot extend the license to others, the partner is not only creating liability for the technician but for the client, as well. The partner cannot make himself responsible for doing something that the client is liable for. As with most property cases this one touches on fairly well developed legal notions. The ethical thing for the technician to do is also the legally correct thing to do: to refuse to carry out the instructions. As a practical matter, the technician probably has to weigh the extent and role of corruption in the situation, the consequences for refusal, and the protections for people who do the right thing. Ethics is not about always doing the right thing, but about being able to know the difference between right and wrong.

Q) Mahesh, a pre-med. student, works two part-time jobs while attending Prestigious University. Mahesh finds his course load for the spring semester very challenging and he struggles to keep up with the assignments in his anthropology course. Mahesh knows anthropology instructor, Dr. B., thinks highly of him and that Dr. B has a reputation of being somewhat of a softy when it comes to “good” students. So, having missed the deadline for submission of an important paper, Mahesh goes to Dr. B with the story that he and his twin brother were in a serious car accident over the weekend. Mahesh explains that he didn’t hand in the assignment because he has been at the hospital sitting at his brother’s bedside in the intensive care unit where his brother is now on life support. Dr. B is of course very sympathetic and grants Mahesh an extension on the assignment. Later in the semester Mahesh once again finds himself behind the eight ball on an assignment...

Consider each of the following questions and evaluate the case study:

What is the action or inaction that is the cause for concern?

Who or what may be affected?

How will they be affected? (i.e., what are the possible consequences?) (250 words)

1. **What is the action or inaction that is the cause for concern?**
   The action taken by Mahesh by lying to the professor is a cause of concern as instead of saying the truth he made a story up to exploit the sympathetic nature of the professor.
   If he continues lying when ever he is unable to finish the work on time he might get caught by the professor.
   Professor needs to verify the facts before permitting the student to submit the assignment later. Without adequate verification students can take this as an excuse and lie to him.

2. **Who or what may be affected?**
   The relationship between the professor and the students can be affected if professor finds out that Mahesh is lying. Then Professor might stop considering the difficult situations of the students. Mahesh grades might be affected as he is submitting the assignment late and his chance of getting into medical school might be affected too if he keeps repeating similar excuses in future which shows his insincerity.

3. **How will they be affected? (i.e., what are the possible consequences?) (250 words)**
   Relationships build on trust. So with the lie by Mahesh to the professor and when professor finds the truth that trust is broken and it is very difficult to repair and mend it.
   The way professor performs his duty might be different if he finds out the truth and he can be more careful and check the facts before permitting extension of dates for assignments.

4. **What actions might be taken and what would the consequences of these actions be?**
   Mahesh need to stand up for himself by conveying the truth to the professor as he has a genuine reason of working very hard which led to him unable to manage time properly. The professor might consider his condition, might even help him with time management and extend the submission of the assignment.
However if he keeps continuing in the path mentioned in the case study where he is making excuses to gain lenient attitude from the professor he might ultimately lose the trust of the professor which can harm other students as well. In this case he might be relegated from the institution which can harm his career in future as well.

**Q) Richa wants to become an intern in ABC institute of learning. She posted negative remarks on Facebook about an internship for which she had applied. The negative comments were focused on the policy for professional dress as an intern. After the director saw the comment, the student was not selected for the internship.**

**Is the situation described an ethical issue?**

**What could be the implications of the act done by Richa. (250 words)**

**Why this question**
This is one of the most important problems faced by government as well as private sector employees. It is important to analyze and discuss upon the situation in order to broaden our ethical understanding.

**Structure of the answer**

**Hint for answer**
- It appears to be both an ethical and legal issue. From a legal perspective, one would need to consider if the information was legally obtained and was it a lawful use of the information on part of the director; the ethical issue is that whether the negative comment was the reason why the individual was not selected to that internship; A lack of respect for the value of integrity and professional behaviors seems evident in this situation etc.
- If the information was publically available, the intern applicant would have very little legal protection here. The rights to free speech are not as broad and generally would not apply in this case; Postings on Facebook may have long term negative implications since once the post is made, the originator no longer has control over who views it or how it is used etc.

Take the help of these hints to from a complete answer for both the questions.

**Answer :-**
Social media is booming with networking opportunities and the chance to share your accomplishments but it could also lead to the end of your career if used incorrectly.
The stakeholders involved in this case study are Richa, director etc.

**The ethical issues involved in this scenario are :-**

**Freedom of expression** of Richa on social media however has some restrictions because if Richa made sweeping statements defaming the other organization it can be a legal issue but if she just stated the fact then it might not be an ethical issue.
The way the organization got to read her post vs **Right to privacy** of Richa.
Whether Internship was rejected to Richa because of her facebook posts or she was genuinely **not qualified enough for the position is an ethical issue.**
Also without being part of the institution itself Richa has made statements which can adversely impact the institution so this might have been seen as an **act of disloyalty** by the organization.

**Implications of the act done by Richa are:-**
The ABC institute of learning can be seen in a bad light and that would harm its reputation as social media outreach is huge. The institute might even go for legal discourse.
Richa might not only be rejected by this organization but she might face the same issue with future employers as well.
The facebook post might lead to the institute ensuring proper clarification leading to healthier debate.